



EXPANDING HIGH QUALITY CHOICES AND EMPOWERING LOCAL LEADERS: A PLAN TO CONTINUE GAINS AT NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT CHICAGO

Since taking office, Rahm has had a singular goal for Chicago's kids: ensure that every child – no matter where they live – has access to a great neighborhood public school and is given the resources they need to graduate 100% college-ready and 100% college-bound. These reforms began with Rahm's work to provide every student the full school day they deserve, resulting in 2.5 years of additional learning from kindergarten to 12th grade. Rahm has also made unprecedented investments in early education, providing a full day of kindergarten for all CPS students for the first time and guaranteeing free pre-k for all 25,000 four-year-olds from low-income families. To strengthen leadership and instruction in our schools, Rahm and schools CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett worked with teachers to change the way they are evaluated and he empowered principals to lead their schools.

The results are indisputable: More students are in school every day, with more time for learning, and graduation rates are at an all-time high.

Rahm also implemented similarly sweeping change at the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), which for too long graduated less than 10% of its students. Through the Colleges to Careers program, Rahm and CCC Chancellor Cheryl Hyman linked the course work at our City Colleges to jobs in fast-growing industries. These reforms are clearly paying off as the graduation rate doubled from 7 percent and is on track to triple by the end of 2018.

RAHM'S PLAN: MAINTAIN MOMENTUM ON IMPROVING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

Invest in preparing students for college and beyond. After achieving record graduation rates at both the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and CCC, Rahm will work with stakeholders to make the necessary investments to help more students graduate and ensure they are ready for college and careers. In the next four years, Rahm will:

- **Graduate 85% of CPS students by 2019.** This past year, CPS reached an all-time high CPS graduation rate of just under 70%, with 84% of our sophomore class on track to graduate. Rahm's goal is to build upon this momentum and reach a CPS graduation rate of 85% by 2019. Reaching this goal would place Chicago well ahead of large school systems in New York City and Los Angeles and on par with emerging technology centers like San Francisco, Austin, and Seattle. To reach this goal, Rahm will invest in better preparing our students for success in high school and college through the following initiatives:
 - **Support the transition to high school.** CPS has reached a historic graduation rate in large part by focusing on keeping our 9th graders on track. The next step in pushing our graduation rates even higher is to invest in ensuring that every rising 9th grader arrives at high school with the tools they need to succeed. We can do this by offering a

Freshman Connection program to every incoming 9th grader who needs it in order to support the transition to high school. This would include academic and enrichment support with employment and leadership opportunities for rising 11th and 12th graders to serve as peer mentors to incoming freshmen.

- o **Reimagine senior year.** To better prepare students for success in college and career, the final year of high school must set up students for success. To do this, CPS will offer every student the opportunity to graduate high school with at least one of the following four “early college and career credentials” in addition to their HS diploma: AP credit, IB Diploma, industry-recognized certification, or dual credit and dual enrollment. CPS will work with post-secondary and industry partners to expand access to internships, work-based learning and other early college and career opportunities. And CPS will increase the number of students participating in its dual credit and dual enrollment program – which allows high school seniors to earn City College credit – from roughly 300 students in 2011 to more than 6000 in 2016 and seek out new opportunities with four-year universities like the recently announced partnership between Von Steuben High School and the Illinois Institute of Technology.
- **Achieve a City Colleges graduation rate of 21 percent by 2018.** The current CCC graduation rate of 13% is roughly twice what it was several years ago and is on track to exceed 20% by 2018. Rahm will continue to revitalize the quality of CCC by:
 - o **Requiring an individual education plan for every student.** To better ensure that all of our CCC students are on the path to a degree, professional certification, or a job, Rahm will ensure that every CCC student has an education plan by Fall 2015. This plan will be the student's semester-by-semester roadmap from the first day of registration to graduation and beyond, guided by his or her career goals. With a plan in hand, students can more clearly envision their end goal of further college or a career, understand the steps needed to reach their goal, and more easily track progress toward that achievement.
 - o **Offering free summer classes.** CCC will provide two free summer classes for up to 500 students each year who take 15 credits in both of the preceding fall and spring semesters. Research shows that students who take a full course load (15 credits each semester) are more likely to complete their program of study in a timely fashion.
 - o **Establishing Job Ready Chicago to provide paid training opportunities with companies.** To help more students secure a job upon graduation as part of College to Careers, the Mayor will expand on current job placement efforts by creating a new program called “Job Ready Chicago” under which employers create paid apprenticeships, internships and job placement opportunities for students while enrolled at CCC to boost both their earnings and job prospects. This would build on existing efforts to strengthen the College to Careers pathways at CCC and would provide another incentive for companies looking to relocate or expand in the city.
- **Connect digital badges to employment opportunities.** In his first four years in office, Rahm launched the nationally recognized Chicago City of Learning program to combat the summer slide and recognize students for their efforts with digital badges. By making digital badges more meaningful and connecting them to employment opportunities, Rahm will take the

program to the next level. Rahm will work with national corporations to provide students with digital badges a leg up at entry-level job opportunities.

- **Continue the transformation of libraries into centers of year-round learning.** Over the past four years, Rahm invested in turning our libraries into centers of learning by providing 24/7 homework help in English and Spanish, expanding learning opportunities in digital media and 3D printing, and launching initiatives like Rahm's Readers to encourage youth to read. Rahm will build upon this in the second term by providing more year-round learning opportunities at our libraries. This will include further expanding our YouMedia program – which offers teens training in digital media skills – by building digital labs at additional libraries like Sulzer Regional, Woodson Regional, Legler, and the new Chinatown branch. Rahm will offer an early learning bus that will provide science technology engineering and math activities at child centers. And he will continue to increase his targets for Rahm's Readers year after year.
- **Launch a citywide volunteer initiative.** Rahm will call upon the entire City to help provide Chicago youth with the opportunity to be paired with positive role models by working with Alderman Danny Solis to launch a bold new initiative called the Chicago Service Corps. This effort will provide a centralized system for connecting volunteers to opportunities and simplify the process for potential volunteers to sign up to help.

Expand high quality options across the City. Rahm believes that every child in every neighborhood deserves the opportunity to receive a high quality education. That's why he has made unprecedented investments in early education and expanded quality high school options like International Baccalaureate and STEM schools. Over the next four years, Rahm will continue investing in improving the quality of educational options for families and:

- **Invest in tripling the number of full-day pre-k classrooms.** Rahm has made the investments needed to provide universal free pre-K to the 25,000 4-year olds that qualify for the free or reduced school lunch program. Over the next four years, Rahm will double down on his commitment to early education by tripling the number of full-day pre-K programs – from 100 classrooms today to 300 classrooms by 2019 – providing opportunities to an additional 4,000 children. Studies clearly show the benefits of full day pre-k as compared to half day, and a full day helps parents balance work and family.
- **Ensure that every family is within three miles of a quality neighborhood high school program.** A strong high school system is critical to keeping families in Chicago and ensuring our children success in life. Since coming into office Rahm has expanded high-quality options, including STEM schools, IB, Career and Technical Education programs, selective enrollment and military academies. In the next four years, Rahm will invest to ensure that every family is within three miles of a quality neighborhood high school program.
- **Double down on STEM education.** In his first four years, Rahm launched a STEM strategy that will train 1,000 teachers in STEM education over the next five years and triple the number of students that receive STEM credentials by the end of 2018. CPS also began to implement the most comprehensive K-12 computer science education plan in a major school district, which includes creating a pipeline for foundational computer science skills in elementary schools, offering at least one computer science class at every high school, and making computer science a graduation requirement. Over the next four years, Rahm will take this strategy to the next level by:

- **Expanding wi-fi to every classroom and ensuring every child has a wi-fi connected device.** While nationwide, less than one in three classrooms has internet access that supports digital learning, Chicago has dramatically increased technology infrastructure and access. Over the past four years, the number of schools with sufficient IT infrastructure has increased more than tenfold, CPS completed the installation of a fiber broadband internet connection with a minimum of 50 Mbps of bandwidth in every CPS facility, and CPS distributed over 15,000 iPads to students in welcoming schools. By 2017, Rahm will double the bandwidth in every school, ensure that every classroom receives its own wi-fi connection, and provide every student with a wi-fi connected device.
- **Ensuring every student graduates with technology literacy.** Since taking office Rahm has increased STEM opportunities. Coding and designing were the most popular opportunities at Chicago City of Learning in Summer 2014, and the City and its partners are working to increase the proportion of students accessing STEM learning opportunities in robotics, electronics, biotechnology, 3-D printing, and more. Rahm will invest in expanding STEM education options to ensure that at CPS, every grade level undergoes STEM coursework or participates in STEM-related extracurricular activities. He will ensure that every high school student has the opportunity to earn college credits or industry-recognized credentials while in high school and has access to quality STEM mentoring.

Empower teachers, principals, and parents. Rahm and Barbara know that the local community, principals and teachers who work on the front lines are critical to the success of our schools. Since taking office, Rahm has empowered principals with more authority to run their schools and worked with teachers to revamp their evaluation system. Over the next four years, they will work with parents, teachers and principals to undertake additional reforms to improve our schools. These initiatives will include:

- **Establish a one-year residency requirement for student teachers.** Studies show that additional student field experience for teachers helps with retention, which is too often a challenge in low-income schools. Rahm will provide incoming teachers with more experience during their academic years by requiring feeder schools to establish minimally half-year or full-year residencies for student teachers.
- **Reward highly effective educators.** Rahm and CPS will work to recognize and support quality educators across the City. In the next four years, Rahm will:
 - **Establish an educator recognition program.** Rahm knows that effective educators are the key to a school system that works. That's why Rahm will create a program that recognizes teachers and principals from across the City who are achieving college and career ready outcomes in partnership with the communities that need them the most. The program will identify educator teams in neighborhood schools where students are on-track to success in college and career, will celebrate their stories through a city-wide recognition campaign, and will reward these educator teams with small grants to continue and expand their great work.
 - **Launch a Teacher Advisory Council.** Rahm and Barbara will establish a new Teacher Advisory Council that will engage teachers in policy decisions affecting their work.
- **Provide innovative principals and teachers with additional tools, and sharing their success citywide.** Rapidly improving schools deserve additional tools and support to remain

on the right track, and should be widely recognized for their work. Rahm will create a program where schools that achieve a top-quality rating for three years in a row will be designated as “Independent Schools” and receive additional freedoms and flexibility to innovate to serve their students. Principals of schools that achieve this status will receive more freedom to innovate with their curricula, to allocate resources to meet their school-specific needs, and to guide professional development at their schools. These principals will also receive coaching and support tailored to their school and student needs and the opportunity to work with national experts in their schools. As they solidify their results, the Independent Schools will serve as “learning labs,” welcoming other educators and parents from across the city who want to learn more about how 21st Century learning works to advance the goals of 100% college and career ready.

- **Strengthening the Local School Councils.** Chicago’s elected Local School Councils (LSCs) provide communities with a strong voice in their local schools, participating in the selection of the principal and approval of school budgets. Yet in the last LSC election, nearly 1 in 5 schools had no parental participation. In the next four years, Rahm will work to change that by partnering with community organizations to increase participation in the LSC election. And to ensure that LSC members are ready to play their important role, CPS will invest in providing LSCs with additional training and tools.
- **Creating a Connect4Kids text message program.** As part of Rahm’s reform of the 311 system and building upon the success of programs like Text4Baby that provide important information to parents of infants, he will establish a service that provides informational text messages to parents of children above the age of 1 with information on educational options, learning and cultural events, and health.
- **Expand parent engagement centers and Parent Universities in schools.** CPS’s in-school Parent Engagement Centers have been a critical tool to keep parents engaged in their child’s work and their school community. The Centers promote parent engagement and improve student learning by helping parents become computer savvy and offering GED, ESL, and other courses. Currently, 31 schools have a Parent Engagement Center. In the next four years, Rahm will double the number of schools with these centers.
- **Deliver early literacy support for new parents at public libraries.** Rahm will leverage the Chicago Public Libraries to help new parents become their children’s first educators. Our libraries will host family-focused workshops to equip families with tools to support early literacy.

RAHM'S RECORD ON EDUCATION: A CRADLE-TO-CAREER VISION FOR CHICAGO KIDS

Mayor Emanuel believes that every child in every neighborhood in Chicago deserves a high-quality education that prepares them to graduate 100% college ready and 100% college-bound. Just four years ago, Chicago schools had the shortest school day of any major city in the country, not every student had access to a full day of kindergarten or the classroom resources they needed to succeed, thousands of kids were turned away from after-school programming, and only 7% of City College students who came for a credential earned one. This means that too many CPS students were being short-changed.

More than three years later, the City is experiencing progress on all fronts:

- CPS graduation rates have reached a record high of nearly 70%, up from 58.3% in 2011
- More than 84% of high school freshmen are on track to graduate, up from 72.6% in 2011
- CPS's 2014 graduating class received a record high of nearly \$800 million in scholarship offers
- The City Colleges graduation rate has doubled and is expected to triple by 2018
- CPS has reached a record high of level 1 schools at 295, up from 154 in 2011
- A record number of more than 20,000 students took an Advanced Placement (AP) test last year
 - Chicago ranks second in the nation of school districts with the most African-American students enrolled in AP courses
 - Since Rahm took office, the number of student participating in AP courses has increased by 40%
- Since Rahm took office, the number of children starting kindergarten ready to learn has nearly doubled – from 25 to 47 percent

These improvements have followed important reforms:

- ***Implementing a Full School Day.*** With the full school day, a student entering kindergarten now receives nearly 2.5 additional years of instructional time by the time they graduate high school.
- ***Expanding Early Childhood Education.*** The Mayor has implemented universal full-day kindergarten for the first time in Chicago and has invested to ensure that each of the 25,000 four-year olds that qualify for free or reduced school lunch have access to high quality pre-K.
- ***Expanding International Baccalaureate Programs.*** A University of Chicago study showed that students who attend International Baccalaureate (IB) programs in Chicago are 40% more likely to attend a four-year college and 50% more likely to attend a more selective college. Chicago now boasts the largest IB network in the country, with 7 wall-to-wall IB high schools, 6 new IB high school campuses, and 10 new IB elementary school campuses.
- ***Implementing Student Discipline Reform in Chicago Public Schools.*** The 2013-2014 school year was the safest on record since the City began tracking student safety data. The Mayor's Office, Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Police Department have implemented a comprehensive strategy to improve school climate, reverse the "zero tolerance" policy of the past that funneled students to the criminal justice system, incorporate a restorative approach to student misconduct, reduce youth violence, and keep youth in class and on the path to success. Compared to the 2010-2011 School Year, this School Year there were:
 - Over 27,000 fewer out of school suspensions – **a 33% drop**
 - Nearly 1,300 fewer CPS students referred for expulsion – **a 37% drop**
 - Over 1,000 fewer in-school arrests of CPS students – **a 35% drop**

- 49 fewer CPS students who were victims of shooting – **a 21% drop in the CPS student shooting victimization rate**
- **A 11% drop in students who were homicide victims**, including a 33% decline over the 2012-13 school year
- More than 260 schools use restorative practices – **a 50% increase**
- ***Expanding Parent Engagement Centers.*** In partnership with Microsoft and the United Way, the Mayor opened new Parent Engagement Centers in CPS schools across the city. These centers are focused on engaging parents in their children's education and are aimed at closing the digital divide. CPS now hosts 31 Parent Engagement Centers.
- ***Establishing Early College STEM Schools.*** The Mayor approached five global corporate partners who understood the importance of investing in our future workforce to create 5 Early College STEM High Schools, focused on honing students' skills in science, technology, engineering, and math to prepare students for success in college and in life. With Cisco, IBM, Microsoft, Motorola Solutions, and Verizon Wireless, these five Early College STEM Schools, mostly located on the south, southwest, and west sides, connect high school, college, and the world of work. Industry partners have already provided over 1,000 work-based learning opportunities and 900 mentorships to 1,300 students.
- ***Expanding Early College Options for High School Students.*** The City Colleges has expanded its Dual Enrollment program that allows eligible CPS high school students the opportunity to take college courses, free of charge. City Colleges has also partnered with a number of high schools to offer college credit classes at the high school. This year, more than 2,680 students benefited, a nearly three-fold increase in just three years, and CPS is on track to bring the total number of students enrolling college courses to 4,100 students in the 2015-16 school year. There are currently 45 high schools offering dual enrollment/dual credit programs, up from zero in 2011.
- ***Expanded ESL and GED Offsite Locations.*** Through a partnership between the City Colleges of Chicago and community based organizations, 24 new locations are now open in neighborhoods from Brighton Park to Avondale, supporting adults looking to earn a GED, improve their English language skills or become college ready. Six additional new sites are expected to open in the coming months to meet community demand.
- ***Launching Groundbreaking College to Careers.*** To create the economy of tomorrow, we must ensure that Chicago residents are ready for jobs in high-growth industries. College to Careers is a nationally recognized initiative of Mayor Emanuel's, designed to ensure that students gain the skills and knowledge to succeed in the jobs of today and the careers of tomorrow in seven industries: healthcare; business; information technology; culinary and hospitality; transportation, distribution, and logistics; advanced manufacturing; and education, human and natural sciences. Over 150 local and national businesses and organizations are committed partners with the City Colleges of Chicago to build out curriculum, offer internships and work experience, and make graduates first in line for jobs. To date, over 1,000 CCC students have landed jobs or internships through College to Careers.
- ***Launching the Chicago STAR Scholarship.*** The Mayor and City Colleges of Chicago Chancellor Cheryl Hyman announced The Chicago STAR Scholarship, a program that will ensure that more Chicago Public High School students are able to pursue the dream of college without accumulating burdensome debt. Through the Chicago STAR Scholarship, CCC will provide scholarships in the form of tuition, fee, and book waivers to qualifying CPS high school graduates, who will be able to earn their Associate Degree at CCC with no out-of-pocket costs.

- ***Chicago City of Learning.*** Mayor Emanuel launched Chicago Summer of Learning in 2013 to call together the entire city to an all-hands-on-deck effort to make summer count and support learning science, technology, engineering, art, and math for students of all ages. Through Chicago Summer of Learning, over 200,000 summer learning opportunities and youth jobs were available to Chicago's young people across 100 organizations. As part of this effort, Chicago launched the world's first citywide digital badging system to recognize out-of-school student learning. Chicago is the first city to revolutionize learning in this way and now, communities across the country, from Los Angeles to Dallas, have established their own Summers of Learning, and Chicago has expanded the summer learning program into a year-round initiative.