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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CPS CEO BYRD-BENNETT PROMOTE FIRST-DAY ATTENDANCE AT LAUNCH
OF BACK-TO-SCHOOL CAMPAIGN**

*Under new calendar all CPS schools begin Monday, August 26th – one week ahead of the traditional
post-Labor Day start*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Barbara Byrd-Bennett today launched the School Year 2013-2014 back-to-school campaign at Brennemann Elementary School, 4251 N. Clarendon. Over the course of the next four weeks, CPS will lead an aggressive grassroots campaign to engage students and families around this year's early start date, along with the importance of attendance on the first day of school and everyday throughout the year.

"Our Back to School Campaign is intended to ensure our students have the excitement, energy and resources to hit the ground running on the first day of school on the path towards success in the classroom and in life," Mayor Rahm Emanuel said. "We are working with the community to engage students and parents about the importance of attendance on the first day of school and beyond, so that a great education is the expectation, not the exception, for every student."

"Studies have long proven that attendance on the first day of school is essential to the academic success of students throughout the school year," said CEO Byrd-Bennett. "In collaboration with our school community and corporate partners, we will be engaging all CPS parents and guardians as part of a rigorous Back to School campaign to ensure their children are at school on the first day, and every day, of the new school year ready to learn and succeed."

This year's integrated back-to-school campaign aims to energize citywide and community based partners to work in cooperation to promote the shift from a two-track system (Track E and Regular Track) to a single track model, starting on a Monday, August 26th. Back-to-school activities include:

- Door to door outreach
- Robo calls to CPS households
- Targeted literature drops El stations, bus stations and neighborhood festivals
- Phone bank calls to parents
- CTA ad campaign
- Text messages and e-mails blasts to parents regarding August 26th start date

CPS has a rich history of uniting with the faith community to promote back-to-school efforts. This year, faith-based organizations have pledged to:

- Announce back-to-school date during worship services and programs
- Place back-to-school date in their church bulletins
- Post the back-to-school date on their marquees and flyers in common areas
- Send email blasts to their congregations and community partners
- Forward back-to-school letters to parents of children participating in the Safe Haven Program

Corporate sponsors have also supported the back-to-school efforts through generous donations. These sponsors include, Chase, Peoples Gas, CTA, Comcast, NBC5, Telemundo, Museum of Science and Industry (MSI), Aramark, BMO Harris Bank, Discover, Fifth Third Bank, State Farm, Baxter International, Target, Groupon, Clear Channel and Cabrera Capital Markets.

As part of the Back to School campaign kickoff, the Mayor and Barbara Bryd-Bennett toured Brennemann Elementary School, which is a Welcoming School, and was hosting students from its sending school, Stewart Elementary. The students were participating in relationship building activities, which are part of the school's efforts to build new, positive bonds among students from both schools prior to the start of the new school year.

CPS encourages parents to visit their school and/or visit www.cps.edu/firstday, or call the back-to-school hotline at (773) 553-3CPS (3277) for additional information.

The Chicago Public Schools serves approximately 402,000 students in 681 schools. It is the nation's third-largest school district.

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