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**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL AND CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS CEO BARBARA BYRD-BENNETT
TOUR KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM BENEFITING FROM FIRST YEAR EVER OF FULL-DAY
KINDERGARTEN FOR ALL CPS STUDENTS**

*This Fall, for the First Time Ever, CPS Will Provide Universal Access for Each and Every CPS Student
to Attend a Full, 7 Hour Day Kindergarten, Impacting Over 30,000 Children*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and CEO of Chicago Public Schools Barbara Byrd-Bennett toured the new kindergarten classrooms at Tonti Elementary School, one of the new schools benefiting from CPS instituting for the first time ever a full day of kindergarten for its over 30,000 children.

"While CPS has been making this investment steadily for years, today we are moving over the goal line, making the firm commitment that every child – over 30,000 CPS students -- will have full day kindergarten," Mayor Rahm Emanuel said. "From investments in early childhood education to pushing for a full school day to ensuring strong principals and teachers in our schools, we are doing everything we can to make sure Chicago's children can thrive and succeed."

In February, the Mayor announced that Chicago Public Schools will guarantee full-day kindergarten for all students, beginning in the 2013-14 school year. In previous years, students had the options of attending half-day kindergarten (between 3 to 4 hours) and a full day kindergarten (7 hours). By guaranteeing all kindergarteners a full day of kindergarten, 50% more children will have a full day since Mayor Emanuel came into office. This announcement builds upon the unprecedented \$36M investment in early childhood education to increase access to and raise the quality of pre-kindergarten programs for children.

"Despite the District's financial crisis, we protected this investment in our children because education at this early age is critical to their long-term development and success," said CEO Byrd-Bennett. "Our children cannot afford to wait for pension reform in Springfield to provide the structural financial relief the District needs and until then we must use every tool available to ensure they receive the high-quality education they deserve from the first day they walk through our doors."

For the first time for CPS, kindergarten will be funded just like first through third grade. Principals will be able to count on these funds and not have to patch together resources. Because there have been a mix of funding sources, CPS will consolidate and coordinate funding streams to

be more efficient.

Illinois school districts are not required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students. Only ten states and the District of Columbia require by statute that school districts provide publicly funded Full-Day K. An additional 34 states require school districts to provide half-day kindergarten, and six do not require districts to provide kindergarten at all. The majority of states in the country do not require kindergarten to be the same length of day as the other grades in the system, nor does funding for Full-Day K appear in state statute along with funding requirements for grades 1-12.

Studies show children who attend a quality Full Day Kindergarten demonstrate strong academic and socio-emotional advantages in later grades. Full-day kindergarteners exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement, and productivity in work with peers than half-day kindergarteners. Parents of children in full-day kindergarten report higher levels of satisfaction with their children's schedule and curriculum and the program's support for working families.

The Mayor, CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett, Assistant Principal of Tonti Elementary School, Sergio Ramirez, State Senator Martin Sandoval and State Representative Dan Burke participated in a ribbon cutting for the new kindergarten classrooms at Tonti Elementary School. Several facilities such as Tonti Elementary School did not have adequate space to accommodate full day kindergarten. CPS engaged the Public Building Commission to install modular units with four classrooms each at six elementary schools across Chicago.

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