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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES NEW LEADERSHIP AT CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT BOARD

Jesse Ruiz Will Replace Dr. Bryan Traubert, Lead New Long-Term Parks Plan

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced he is appointing Jesse Ruiz to the Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District and recommending he be elected President by the other commissioners. Ruiz will replace Dr. Bryan Traubert, who has led the board since 2010 and is stepping down at the end of the year.

"Jesse and Bryan are both committed public servants who have worked tirelessly to improve Chicago's schools and parks," said Mayor Emanuel. "Jesse's leadership is ideal to build on the incredible progress made during Bryan's tenure. Jesse is the perfect choice to lead the Park District Board as it moves forward under the long-term plan for our parks that I will outline later this year."

Dr. Traubert has led the board since 2010. Under his leadership, Chicago's park system has grown at a dramatic pace with the addition of nearly 1,000 acres of new park land, 27 new turf fields, 17 new parks, 11 new community facilities, 225 refurbished playgrounds and more than \$500 million in capital investment. From playgrounds, basketball courts and artificial turf fields at neighborhood parks to world-class projects including the 606 and Maggie Daley Park, the improvements have touched the lives of residents and visitors in every Chicago neighborhood. Last year the Park District won the 2014 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management – the first time any urban park district has received this prestigious award.

Dr. Traubert's commitment was exemplary. He carried through the Mayor's agenda of reform and transparency, establishing an audit committee of the Board and establishing the office of Inspector General. He has overseen 5 straight consecutive years of balanced budgets. He has chaired 59 straight board meetings without an absence, and he personally supported park investments through his Take the Field Foundation.

“Dr. Bryan Traubert’s leadership has driven historic improvements to our park system,” Emanuel continued. “From Maggie Daley Park, the 606, and La Villita Park to the nearly 1,000 new acres of parkland in neighborhoods across Chicago, Dr. Traubert’s work will touch the lives of people across Chicago for generations to come.”

Ruiz will take the helm at the park district as Mayor Emanuel is set to announce a major parks initiative in December.

He has served as Vice President of the Chicago Board of Education since May of 2011, and in 2015 he served as Interim CEO of Chicago Public Schools. Since 2011 and with the support of the Chicago Board of Education, CPS has made investments in key programs that are proven to help prepare students for high school graduation and the rigors of 21st century college coursework. By placing a focus on the expansion of demanding, rigorous coursework through IB, STEM, AP and dual-credit programs, the District has elevated expectations in order to better prepare students for the ACT and other college readiness benchmarks. Ruiz has also recently served on the U.S. Department of Education Equity and Excellence Commission. Previously he served as Chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education from September 2004 to May 2011.

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