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MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS EXPAND HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND ACCESS TO EVERY STUDENT IN EVERY CLASSROOM

FCC Awards a \$38 Million Grant to Improve Bandwidth in Schools, Accelerate Chicago's Computer Science Initiative by One Year

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Forrest Claypool to announce that every student in every classroom will soon have access to high-speed broadband and Wi-Fi, with the support of a \$37.7 million federal grant awarded to CPS. This investment accelerates the timeline for this work by one year, and is part of a larger effort to ensure that every classroom is outfitted for 21st century learning.

“By putting 21st century technology directly in the hands of our students, we are putting 21st century opportunities within their reach,” Mayor Emanuel said. “With this investment by the FCC, Chicago can accelerate our plan to make computer science a graduation requirement for all students, because bandwidth will no longer be a barrier. Building 21st century skills with our children will attract more top employers to Chicago, and will ensure our students are prepared to compete for the jobs of the future.”

Beginning next year, students will no longer be limited to learning technology in the computer lab, but will be able to integrate technology into their learning on a one-to-one basis. For the youngest learners, this will allow access to technology, tools and programs when they first set foot in a classroom. Infusing technology into education early on will allow the next generation to build a proficiency in the language of the 21st century, ensuring competitiveness and competency for college and careers of the future.

“Chicago is already leading the way when it comes to putting computer science front and center, and we are building on our efforts by making sure that technology is as much a part of everyday learning as it is of everyday life,” CPS CEO Forrest Claypool said. “Whether you’re a language student who can talk to other students across the world or a biology student who can see your lessons come to life, technology can make learning come alive.”

This federal funding will fast-track another commitment made by Mayor Emanuel under the Computer Science 4 All (CS4All) Initiative. Increasing bandwidth in schools will bring Computer Science as a graduation requirement across all high schools in 2016—a year ahead of the original

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three-year schedule. CS4All Initiative was designed to provide every CPS student with web-based computer science curriculum and is the most comprehensive K-12 computer science education plan of any major school district in the country.

These improvements are made possible by the FCC through the E-rate program. E-Rate, also known as the Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries, makes it more affordable for schools and libraries to connect to high-speed Internet – with the goal of making high gigabit speed (1 gig) the norm in schools across the country. The E-rate funds will be used for modernization upgrades for 557 schools, as well as for operational support.

Improving connectivity in schools will enable teachers to integrate the latest, cutting-edge learning techniques and technology into any subject. Teachers can now opt for new units and lesson plans to teach based on limitless technology available. Expanded access will allow students and teachers alike to engage in more collaboration for both learning and teaching.

Modernization work to outfit schools with modern internet access has already begun at 50 schools and will be completed in fall of 2016.

This vital investment—part of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)’s ConnectED initiative—supports a larger commitment by the District to improve access to computer science at an earlier age to bridge the digital divide and gender gap. While computing occupations are among the highest-paying jobs for new graduates, fewer than 3 percent of college students across the nation will graduate with a degree in computer science—and of all students taking Advanced Placement Computer Science, fewer than 20 percent are women and fewer than 10 percent are African American or Latino.

Since the Mayor launched the Computer Science for All (CS4All) initiative in 2013, Computer Science coursework has been implemented across 107 schools this school year. CS4All elevates the importance of this field and provides the following commitments:

- Computer Science will be in every high school by SY17
- Computer Science will be in at least 25 percent or more of elementary schools by SY19
- Computer Science will become a high school graduation requirement

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