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MAYOR EMANUEL AND CPS ANNOUNCE NEW SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR ALL INCOMING FRESHMEN; SUMMER INTENSIVE PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK EIGHTH-GRADERS

Funds generated by tobacco tax to provide high school preparation for 20,000 incoming freshmen

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Chief Education Officer Janice K. Jackson today introduced two new programs designed to ensure that all students begin their freshman year of high school prepared to succeed, both academically and socially. The initiatives – which include a one-week summer transition program for all incoming CPS freshmen, as well as a more intensive summer remediation program for at-risk incoming eighth graders – are supported by the University of Chicago's Urban Labs.

Both programs, which will be offered beginning this summer, will be funded through approximately \$6 million in new tobacco taxes that will be introduced at a City Council meeting this month.

“Chicago’s students are already making unprecedented gains and outpacing their peers nationwide in academic achievement. These programs will build on that progress by ensuring that students are prepared going into their high school years,” said Mayor Emanuel. “This ordinance is a win-win, as it not only invests in the education of our youth, but works to prevent them from ever picking up smoking.”

The investments announced today are part of larger menu of efforts that will help CPS reach a graduation rate of 85 percent by 2019—a commitment made by Mayor Emanuel in his second term. Next year, CPS will begin offering a universal, one-week orientation program to support all 20,000 incoming freshman in preparing for success in high school, both academically and socially. The program has been modeled after a program that works with incoming freshmen early-on so that they can: form good study habits, build relationships with their teachers and peers, and learn the ropes at their new school. The new program is modeled after a similar one-week freshman orientation for incoming students at Walter Payton College Preparatory High School.

At the same time, CPS will also provide summer programming for incoming eighth graders that CPS and the University of Chicago's Urban Lab identify as being “at risk” for dropping out of school before they reach high school.

“Our students, teachers and schools are making great progress every day in our classrooms, and we are pleased that this new investment will allow us to continue building on the success we have already seen,” said Dr. Janice Jackson. “As a former principal, I know that in-depth high school

orientation that focuses on both academics and social adjustments is critical in ensuring that all students who come through our doors are successful from day one, so that every student can graduate on time and prepared for post-secondary success.”

The intensive summer outreach component will be designed with the input of the University of Chicago Urban Labs to both identify eighth graders at risk for dropping out of school and tailor interventions to address academic barriers. Programs will provide students with the studying and emotional readiness skills they need to succeed in eighth grade and advance to high school.

“Freshman year is a pivotal time to engage students and set them down a path that makes them more likely to graduate high school and achieve future success,” said University of Chicago Urban Labs Director Tim Knowles. “As Chicago’s students continue making educational strides and the number of freshman on track each year continues to rise, Urban Labs is committed to working with schools across the city to ensure every student has the opportunity to excel and complete high school.”

The ordinance supporting the programs would enact a citywide tax on smokeless tobacco and cigars to generate funds to support both of the programs. If approved by City Council, the tax would go into effect later this year.

Currently, Chicago taxes cigarettes and e-cigarettes, but not other products, such as cigars and chewing tobacco, which pose serious health risks, especially for young users. A tax on smokeless tobacco was proposed by 1st Ward Alderman Joe Moreno in fall of 2015 as a means to generate further revenue and build on City efforts to curb smoking. This ordinance, which has been proposed by Mayor Emanuel to fill the tobacco tax gap and protect youth, is being co-sponsored by Alderman Moreno and 4th Ward Alderman and Chair to the Education Committee, Will Burns, with support from other members of the Council.

If approved, the proposed ordinance will establish the following taxes to place other tobacco products on par with cigarettes:

- \$0.15 per little cigar, raising the price of a 20-pack from \$5.79 – roughly half the price of a pack of cigarettes – to \$8.79
- \$0.90 per cigar, raising the price of the average two-pack of cigars from \$2.25 to \$4.05
- \$6.60 per ounce of roll-your-own tobacco, raising the average price of a small pouch from \$7.25 to \$11.54
- \$1.80 per ounce of smokeless tobacco, raising the price of the standard 1.2 ounce can from \$4.19 to \$6.35

Under Mayor Emanuel, Chicago has become a national leader in reducing tobacco use by launching an innovative array of programs and laws. Working with partners in the public health community, the City has helped reduce youth smoking to an all-time low. Following years of tobacco reduction efforts, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found in 2013 that only 10.7 percent of Chicago high school students were smokers—down from 13.6 percent in 2011, when Mayor Emanuel took office.

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