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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 12, 2018

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**MAYOR EMANUEL, ALDERMAN MITCHELL AND CPS OPEN ECKERSALL STADIUM**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined 7<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Greg Mitchell and CPS to cut the ribbon on Eckersall Stadium and Athletic Fields, a premier athletic facility which will serve area schools and the Special Olympics. The sodded athletic facility was transformed to include a football and soccer field with high-performance synthetic turf, and a track and field to support running, discus, high jump, long jump, pole vault and shot put.

"Eckersall Park is a great asset to the community, which will only be strengthened by the investment to make the Stadium a high-quality recreational facility for residents on the South Side," said Mayor Emanuel. "The Eckersall Stadium and Athletic Fields will help students' lead active, engaging lives; help improve the quality of life for residents; and build stronger neighborhoods that create a better Chicago."

The improved facility also now includes a new press box and scoreboard, new drinking fountains and a sodded lawn with drainage infrastructure.

"Our hard-working students, residents and Special Olympics athletes deserve a high-performance facility that matches their determination and commitment," said Alderman Greg Mitchell, 7<sup>th</sup> Ward. "Thanks to the commitment and determination from the community, people across the south side now have a brand new athletic fields to stay safe, to stay engaged and to stay on track to a brighter future."

While Eckersall Stadium and Athletic Fields will serve all surrounding neighborhoods, South Shore, Washington, CVS, Bowen, UIC Woodlawn, Caldwell, Black, Warren and Coles will utilize the facilities regularly for school programming. Special Olympics events will also regularly host events for athletes.

"Playing on a team teaches students sportsmanship and promotes a healthy lifestyle - which helps students live a balanced and focused life inside and outside of the classroom," said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. "This stadium will provide athletic opportunities and great memories for the surrounding schools and the community for generations to come."

The Chicago Park District and Chicago Public Schools have invested in athletic facilities for students and residents across the city. Since 2011, Chicago Park District has built and improved 251 natural

grass football and soccer combination fields, 35 artificial soccer and football fields and 10 outdoor turf track sites. Additional significant athletic facilities include baseball fields, basketball courts, pools, tennis courts and playgrounds.

New athletic facilities, like at Eckersall Stadium and Athletic Fields, are key components of Building on Burnham, the Mayor's comprehensive plan to invest in the Lakefront, the Chicago River, natural areas and recreational opportunities in neighborhoods across the city. Under the Building on Burnham plan.

985 acres of parks have been acquired and 5.5 miles of waterfront access have been developed since 2011, with continued plans to acquire additional parkland and further develop the waterfront in the coming years.

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