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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2021

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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT NAMES PEDRO MARTINEZ AS THE NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Martinez's appointment marks first every Latino to hold the position permanently

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today named San Antonio Independent School District Superintendent (SAISD) Pedro Martinez as the next Chief Executive Officer at Chicago Public Schools (CPS), becoming the first Latino to hold this position in the city's history outside of an interim capacity. A native of Aguascalientes, Mexico, his family moved when he was five years old in search of a better life. Martinez graduated from Benito Juarez High School and grew up in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood. He replaces Interim CEO Dr. José M. Torres, who filled the role following the resignation of Dr. Janice K. Jackson in June of this year. Jackson was appointed CEO by former Mayor Rahm Emanuel in 2017.

"Throughout the entirety of our search for CPS's next CEO, we remained laser-focused on selecting a candidate that not only has expertise overseeing a public school system as large and diverse as Chicago's, but shares the lived experiences of our students and their families," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I am beyond pleased to share that Pedro exceeds these requirements and his historic appointment as CPS's first Latinx CEO is a true value add to our entire city. CPS and I want to formally congratulate Pedro on his new role and are confident that he will continue our school district's long, proud history of driving student excellence in an equitable and inclusive way."

Martinez joined SAISD, one of the 17 school districts in San Antonio, in 2015 overseeing the District's 48,000 students. Throughout his tenure, he brought a laser focus to improving academic achievement so that many more students performed at higher levels and were well-prepared for college. He also outlined an ambitious plan to improve student outcomes and built successful partnerships with local organizations to achieve these goals. Martinez and his school board put together a bold five-year plan to begin tackling these issues, from increasing college readiness to improving teacher retention. He also increased the District grade from an "F" to a "B," receiving Statewide recognition from the Governor and Commissioner of



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Education as the fastest improving large District and having the highest achievement gains of any District. Under his leadership, the District improved graduation and college-going rates from 82% to 85%. Martinez also redesigned ten underutilized neighborhood schools and implemented innovative, inclusive school models of education.

"I am honored to join Chicago Public Schools and work with this incredible team and build upon the success to make CPS the best large school district in the country," said Martinez. "Education is the best equalizer in society, and I will work every day to strengthen our public schools for generations to come. As an immigrant from Mexico whose roots began in Pilsen, I understand a focus on equity and commitment to engaging communities and elevating student and family voices are central to the task at hand. I want to thank the Mayor for this incredible opportunity and for believing in my vision to see all children reach their potential, regardless of their ethnic background or income level."

Before coming to SAISD, Martinez was Superintendent-in-Residence for the Nevada Department of Education and was responsible for advising the Governor's office and the State Superintendent of Instruction on education reforms. Prior to that, he served as superintendent for the 65,000-student Washoe County School District, covering the Reno, Nevada area. He raised graduation rates from 66% to 73%, reduced remediation rates by 33%, and increased student participation and performance in the advanced placement courses by 40% for Latino students and 20% for African American students. Martinez also previously served as Chief Financial Officer at Chicago Public Schools managing an operating budget of \$5 billion. Over six years, he helped create and streamline systems to help educators improve outcomes for the district's students, raising the high school graduation rate by 20%.

"The board is looking forward to working with our new CEO who was selected as a result of an unprecedented process that Mayor Lightfoot put together to ensure broad participation in the screening of candidates. The screening process was intentionally inclusive. It included principals, teachers, and parents on a screening committee and a public survey. Hundreds of people participated in the process. The Mayor has created a new template for selection of new CPS CEOs. A template that will exist, I hope, for decades to come," said Miguel del Valle, President of Chicago's Board of Education.

Martinez has more than 20 years of experience in the private, nonprofit and public education sectors and is an experienced, and data-driven leader with a strong financial background, an in-depth knowledge of academics, strategic planning, talent management, staff and community engagement. He holds an M.B.A. from



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DePaul University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He also is a graduate of the Broad Superintendents Academy. As the oldest of 12 children, he was first to graduate from high school and college. Martinez and his wife have two children, ages 11 and 7. He spends his free time with his family which includes frequent trips to the library where his children take out several books each week.

The search to select Pedro Martinez was the most inclusive CPS CEO search process conducted in recent history. It included 30 focus groups that collected feedback from more than 300 stakeholders, including parents, teachers, staff, LSC members, students, and community partners; a district-wide survey to gather feedback from all stakeholders; and a dedicated webpage that provided community updates about the status of the CEO search. The district also enlisted BWP & Associates to facilitate the selection process.

"Past leadership has gotten us here and has been really fundamental in setting the stage for this moment. Pedro Martinez's previous financial experience in the district and knowledge of Chicago affords him opportunity to move the district forward and made him the best qualified candidate to assume the role of CEO at this time," said 24th Ward Alderman Michael Scott, Jr., Chairman of the Committee on Education and Child Development.

"We are delighted to extend a warm welcome to Chicago Public Schools' new CEO, Pedro Martinez. We often had the opportunity to work with him while he was the Chief Financial Officer at CPS and have followed his career closely ever since," said The Chicago Public Education Fund CEO Heather Y. Anichini. "His work in San Antonio stands as an example of how data-informed leadership can have a transformative impact on student outcomes. I am confident that, as a CPS graduate and an experienced education leader, Pedro will bring the same thoughtful approach to his new role," said Heather Y. Anichini, President & CEO, The Chicago Public Education Fund.

"Pedro Martinez is an unbelievably student-focused leader who is committed to improving outcomes for all students," said Mike Morath, Commissioner of Education for the State of Texas. "What he has done for the nearly 50,000 children of the San Antonio Independent School District is truly remarkable. While I'm sad that he will no longer be serving kids in Texas, his hire is great news for the kids of Chicago.

"I am so proud of Pedro Martinez and more importantly elated that he's going back home where he grew up. I am very happy Chicagoans are getting a genuine person with a heart of gold," said Estela Gutierrez, former Board Chair, Washoe County



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School Board (Nevada). “Pedro Martinez is a transformational leader, and I know he will do very well in his hometown. Just like me, everyone will be very impressed.

“Pedro Martinez has success as both an educator and businessman. He brings to the role the ability to know that it’s all about what happens in the classroom and make sure the school district operates as an effective and efficient business as well. He makes sure that students and teachers are the priority in school districts,” said Dr. Peter Gorman, Chief in Residence, Chiefs for Change.

“Pedro is well qualified to lead Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in this arduous environment. As a product of CPS he understands the challenges and believes that every child should have the opportunity to succeed regardless of race, ethnicity, and/or immigration status. Pedro will add tremendous leadership integrity and resolve given his humble beginnings in Chicago,” said Raul Raymundo, CEO, The Resurrection Project.

“Congratulations to Superintendent Martinez and the Chicago Public Schools on their journey to providing a strong quality public education for all students and supporting the educators who provide instruction,” said Reuben Murillo, past President, Nevada State Education Association and Clark County Education Association.

“As a mother of three Chicago Public School students and an active parent leader in Little Village, I am thrilled about Pedro Martinez’s historic appointment as the first Latino CEO of Chicago Public Schools,” said Nury Oretga, CPS Parent. “Like me, Pedro is an immigrant from Mexico. Because of his lived experiences, including as a CPS student, I am confident that he understands the sacrifices CPS families make and challenges they face each and every day to secure their children’s futures. I know Pedro’s passion for Chicago, equity, and education will help every student in CPS – regardless of race, ethnicity or immigration status.”

Martinez’s appointment to the CEO position is subject to approval by the Chicago Board of Education.

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