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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2011

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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES PENNANT DRIVE TO PROMOTE COLLEGE AS A GOAL FOR EVERY STUDENT IN THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Best practice from Noble Network of Charter Schools will be replicated throughout CPS system

Today, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Public Schools CEO JC Brizard held a roundtable event with current and former students of Pritzker College Prep, part of the Noble Network of Charter Schools. The roundtable discussion involved discussions with the students about their aspirations for college. After the discussion, the Mayor announced a college pennant drive that will be showcased throughout the Chicago Public Schools.

“An integral part of the school culture at Noble schools is to set high expectations – they expect that all of their students will go to college,” said Mayor Emanuel. “We are going to replicate this best practice in every elementary and high school in the city by hanging school pennants. In every hallway of every CPS school, our students will be thinking about college and the prospect of continuing their education in the future.”

The Mayor's office contacted more than 250 colleges to participate in the college pennant drive, in which colleges from throughout the United States donate pennants that will then be hung in CPS schools. To date 61 schools are participating or have committed to participate in the pennant project, for a total of 5,187 pennants donated or committed by schools. Teachers and staff members are able to hang the pennants of their alma maters directly next to the door, outside of their room, providing consistent inspiration and reminders for the students about the prospect and value of a college education.

“It is essential that we search everywhere for best practices and great ideas that can inspire our students,” said JC Brizard. “The Noble Schools celebrate the achievements of their alumni and promote the idea of college, and this is something that we want to replicate throughout our system. All CPS schools should be setting high standards for themselves and their students.”



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Every Noble campus that has alumni, five to date, has created an 'alumni hall,' a portion of the campus that is centrally located so that every student will see it every single day. Pennants are hung from the colleges that alumni of the Noble School attend, along with plaques to commemorate the graduated students who attend those schools. The purpose is to celebrate those students who have gone on and graduated from college and to motivate current students to achieve the successes as their peers.

"We think it's important for students to see that each of the adults in the building has achieved the goal we're expecting for them - college graduation," said Michael Milkie, CEO and superintendent of Noble Network of Charter Schools. "This also gives students an opportunity to reach out to someone who has attended a college they are considering. And finally, it opens the doors for communication about a wide range of school locations, conferences, sizes and programs."

Outside of the pennants, the Noble Schools have achieved tremendous success in a short period of time and have become the inspiration for many approaches and best practices being used throughout CPS. The schools are known for strong leadership, data-driven analysis and decision-making, and a high degree of accountability.

The results are striking. Seven of the top 10 non-selective high schools in the city are Noble Schools. The schools serve 6,500 students and have a waitlist of more than 3,000, and the average ACT score is nearly 3 points higher at Noble Schools than in the rest of the CPS system. Last year, 1,976 people applied for the 126 open teaching positions at Noble.

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