



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS (DCASE) CELEBRATE ARTS AND CULTURE AT SOLORIO ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL**

*The Mayor shares her commitment to Chicago's artists and arts institutions and the need for every young Chicagoan to have access to high-quality arts education*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lightfoot today joined CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson, DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly and leaders of Chicago's Arts + Culture community for a post-National Arts in Education Week celebration. The 2019 National Arts in Education Week, September 9-13, was launched in Chicago by the national non-profit Americans for the Arts which recognizes the transformative power of the arts in education.

"Arts education helps young people grow self-esteem, explore identity, develop creative problem-solving skills, practice empathy, build relationships with their fellow students, and develop new skills and talents that can take them on journeys as varied as becoming an economist, a professional musician, or a public school teacher," said Mayor Lightfoot. "While we have made many gains in equitable access and opportunities to arts and culture, there is much we need to do to ensure that young people have access to creative outlets, that we improve ways for artists to make a viable living, and invest in public art and programming in every neighborhood in Chicago.

Solorio Academy High School has robust arts and music programs which were featured during today's visit. The Mayor also toured classrooms with Principal Victor Iturralde and spoke with students about the impact music and the arts has had on their lives and academic success.

The Mayor outlined her commitment to equitable access to and representation of Arts + Culture in the city and ensuring that all 77 communities across Chicago are equal contributors in advancing and expanding participation, and investment in the arts. The Mayor, along with Dr. Janice K. Jackson, is committed to ensuring equitable access to high-quality arts education for all of Chicago's young people.



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“The arts have the power to change people’s lives – especially when we expose children at a young age to the joy and creative influence of an arts education,” said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. “Providing students with opportunities in the arts can help them improve their academic performance, discover their talents and interests, and build a foundation for success inside and outside of the classroom.”

The Mayor also announced the launch of an inter-departmental working group on arts and culture, where representatives from every city department and sister agency will be charged with (1) ensuring that the City’s entire investment in artists and art communities fully transparent and that departmental investments are coordinated and strategic; and (2) that the needs of our arts and culture communities are comprehensively addressed and integrated into critical conversations and the development of policies. There will also be an expanded Cultural Advisory Council comprised of diverse representatives from Chicago’s creative industries, policymakers, advocates and community voice. These members will serve as advisors and accountability partners to ensure and measure the progress of equitable access to the range of City investments and policies, including arts and cultural education and programs. Today’s event will be followed with a robust community engagement process that will engage stakeholders on every level on ways to enhance arts and culture in every neighborhood and improve and refine the City’s arts and culture programs and policies.

The Mayor’s first 100 Days were marked with significant gains in Chicago’s arts and culture landscape, including \$1.3 million of direct local theatre grants; nine local theatre companies providing free public performances through the Millennium Park theatre residences, an expansion of the summer and fall Latinx programming, a partnership between DCASE and the Chicago Park District, new public artwork in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, and 42<sup>nd</sup> wards through the Chicago Public Art Program, as well as the relaunch of Maxwell Street Market and the Taste of Chicago Community Eats program that provided free, hot meals for local nonprofits serving seniors, advocates for abused and neglected children, homeless advocates, Gold Star families and others. In addition, more than 200,000 CPS students enrolled in schools with strong arts programs, as well as 90% of CPS schools reporting a dedicated arts budget;

“The Arts are a vital aspect of our world and connects each of us to our past and to each other, bridging cultural and language barriers,” said DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly. “Today marks an exciting time for the City as we celebrate our vibrant arts and culture scene and begin the work to further improve access to the arts in every neighborhood throughout Chicago and ensure that our youth have the opportunity to develop their talents and skills and share them with the world.”



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