

# CPS Students Set Record-High Freshman On-Track Rate in 2014

*Students Demonstrate Preparation for Graduation for the Seventh Consecutive Year*

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Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett today announced that rate for freshmen on-track to graduate for School Year (SY) 2013-2014 is the highest measure on record at 84.1 percent, up 2.6 percentage points from 2013. Since Mayor Emanuel took office in 2011, the freshman on-track rate has increased 11.5 percent.

"The record-high freshman on track and graduation rates are representative of the dedication and hard work of our students, teachers, principals and parents, who are working together to prepare Chicago's next generation for graduation and a brighter future," said Mayor Emanuel. "We will continue to make critical investments in our students and their learning, because while these results are promising, we still have a ways to go to ensure that each of our children has access to a high-quality education that will prepare them for success in college, career and in life."

In 2008, the District began measuring the freshman on-track rate, developed by the University of Chicago. According to the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR), freshmen who are on-track are three and a half times more likely to graduate from high school in four years than students who are off-track. The measurement looks at course grades and credits in the first year of high school and students are considered on-track at the end of their freshman year if they accumulated at least five course credits and failed no more than one semester course in a core subject during the school year.

"This record on-track rate is a testament to the progress our students are making, thanks to the remarkable things our teachers do every day in the classroom," said CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett. "On top of our record graduation rate, improved test scores and increases in attendance, this measure demonstrates the value of our investments."

The data released today also suggest that students continuing to make progress in the core subjects while preparing to graduate college and career ready. An average ACT score of 18.0, announced last week, continues the District's five-year trend of rising ACT scores, and demonstrates that students are outpacing the state in the core subjects of mathematics and reading.

This comes on the heels of Mayor Emanuel and CEO Byrd-Bennett announcing the District's all-time highest graduation rate to date: 69.4 percent. The 2014 rate represents an increase of four percentage points—up from the 2013 rate of 65.4 percent—and is the second consecutive annual increase of four or more percentage points. The 8.2 percentage point gain since 2012 is the largest two-year gain in graduation rate in CPS history.

Attendance is critical for a student to remain on-track for graduation, as missed instructional time can negatively impact student performance. In 2014, average attendance hit 93.2 percent—with rates improving across every grade from kindergarten through 12th—an increase in 0.7 percent from the year prior. As part of this increase, 181,306 students improved their attendance rates over the previous year.

The freshman on-track metric allows teachers and schools to support students during the critical transition year of 9th grade. With the supports of the on-track metric, more students than ever before are staying in school, as schools are now able to identify issues early on so that students are able to get on-track and stay on-track. Together, this has allowed the District to sustain progress in this area, and to increase graduation rates every year since 2007.

The District will continue to build upon this progress with investments in early education funds and other investments that keep students in the classroom so that they are able to receive the instruction necessary to prepare for high school graduation and success thereafter. Since Mayor Emanuel took office in 2011, the City has established a full school day and full school year, a full day of kindergarten for every student in Chicago and is currently looking to increase access to 4-year old pre-k programs for low-income families.

Chicago Public Schools serves 400,000 students in 665 schools. It is the nation's third-largest school district.

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Chicago Public Schools is the third largest school district in the United States with more than 600 schools providing education to approximately 400,000 children. Our vision is that every student in every neighborhood will be engaged in a rigorous, well-rounded instructional program and will graduate prepared for success in college, career and life.

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