



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Thursday, August 29, 2019

For more information, contact:  
**CPS Office of Communications**  
Phone: 773-553-1620  
Website: <http://www.cps.edu>  
Facebook: [ChicagoPublicSchools](https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoPublicSchools)  
Twitter: [@ChiPubSchools](https://twitter.com/ChiPubSchools)

## **Mayor Lightfoot and Chicago Public Schools Announce More CPS Students are Graduating from High School Than Ever Before**

*Record High Graduation Rate of 78.9 Percent Driven by Progress of African American Students; More Students Earning Diplomas than Ever Before*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Jackson announced today that CPS students have set a new record high 5-year graduation rate of 78.9 percent, which was propelled by the academic progress of African American students. This year’s graduation rate marks an increase of 22 percentage points from 2011, when only 56.9 percent of CPS students earned a high school diploma.



“This incredible accomplishment marks the latest in a series of record-breaking achievements by our students, thanks to the passion and hard work of our community of teachers, principals, staff members, administrators, and families,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Our city’s future rests on our ability to nurture our young people and develop the incredible talent that exists in our classrooms. These results underscore both the progress we have made and the opportunities that lie ahead as we continue to transform the life of our city and inspire our young people to reach ever-increasing heights of promise and success.”

“Making sure our students have access to rigorous academic programs, opportunities in career and technical education, and social and emotional support has helped more students than ever before earn a diploma,” said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. “While we celebrate the hard work of our educators, students and

communities, moving forward, we will continue to focus on closing the opportunity gap by ensuring low income students of color have the support and opportunities they need to graduate and succeed after high school. While moving a tassel from right to left only takes a moment, it symbolizes years of hard work and persistence from our teachers, principals and, most importantly, our students.”

African American students are driving the district’s record-high graduation rate, improving 1.5 percentage points since last school year (71.8 percent to 73.3 percent), twice the rate of the district’s overall improvement during that time period. Since 2016, the percentage of African American students earning a diploma has increased by 6.6 percentage points, which is the highest increase among all major racial groups in the district. Improvements in the graduation rate at neighborhood schools also contributed to the district’s record-high graduation rate.

### ***Diverse CPS Schools Across Chicago Achieve Highest Graduation Rates***

Schools with the highest 5-year graduation rates in 2019 represent a diverse group of schools, with multiple school-types and geographic regions represented, including selective enrollment, military academies, and a neighborhood IB school. The top ten schools with the highest 5-year graduation rates are: Whitney Young, Northside College Prep, Back of the Yards High School, King College Prep, Lane Tech, Walter Payton, Jones College Prep, Carver Military, Phoenix Military, and Lindblom Math & Science Academy.

### ***Building on Success***

In order to continue building upon the district’s progress, CPS is prioritizing the following initiatives centered on equity that engage vulnerable youth, increase school support staff, and expand access to high-quality programmatic options across the city:

- **Learn.Plan.Succeed.:** To build upon its academic progress, the district’s Learn.Plan.Succeed. (LPS) initiative will ensure every high school student leaves high school with their own concrete plan for postsecondary success.
- **Hiring Additional Support Staff:** In order to support schools serving our highest-needs students, Mayor Lightfoot and CEO Jackson committed to hiring 200 social workers, 250 nurses and additional special education case managers over the next five years.
- **Strengthening CTE and College-Level Programming:** To support more high school students in achieving college and career success, Mayor Lightfoot and Dr. Jackson set new goals to increase the quality of career and technical education programs. Under their plan, by 2023, all CTE students will receive some form of career exposure experience by the time they graduate, such as a job shadow, mock interview, or career site visit. Earlier this year, the district also announced its largest-ever academic program expansion, adding programs that include IB and STEM to increase opportunities for students to earn early college and career credentials.
- **Curriculum Equity Initiative:** The Curriculum Equity Initiative will create a standards-aligned, culturally relevant library of teacher resources to ensure that students in every part of Chicago can benefit from a high-quality curriculum and instructional resources.
- **Options School Redesign:** The district established a partnership with the University of Chicago Education Labs to evaluate how Options Schools can provide the best possible educational experience and social-emotional support to the city’s most vulnerable students.

In addition to the graduation rate, the district saw the highest year-over-year increase in the raw number of graduates since 2013, and the highest number of CPS graduates overall:

- By summer 2019, 21,282 students from the 2014-2015 cohort graduated.
- By summer 2018, 20,717 students from the 2013-2014 cohort graduated.
- By summer 2017, 20,525 students from the 2012-2013 cohort graduated.
- By summer 2016, 20,438 students from the 2011-2012 cohort graduated.
- By summer 2015, 20,316 students from the 2010-2011 cohort graduated.
- By summer 2014, 20,232 students from the 2009-2010 cohort graduated.

- By summer 2013, 19,906 students from the 2008-2009 cohort graduated.
- By summer 2012, 18,577 students from the 2007-2008 cohort graduated.
- By summer 2011, 18,446 students from the 2006-2007 cohort graduated.

*Chicago Public Schools serves 361,000 students in 644 schools. It is the nation's third-largest school district.*

###