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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL
MAYOR

April 30, 2014

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with Alderman Thomas, a congratulatory resolution concerning Chicago Public School graduation rates.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Mayor

Very truly yours,

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*adopted by The City Council
of the City of Chicago, Illinois*

ALDERMAN LATASHA R. THOMAS

presented by MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL

on APRIL 30, 2014

BY6CIS ' Chicago Public School high school students are on-track to achieve an 82 percent graduation rate, an increase of 25 percent from 2007, including 9 percent since Mayor Emanuel took office in 2011; and

WHEREAS, As noted by Dr. Timothy Knowles, the director of the University of Chicago's Urban Education Institute, this upward trend began with smart research and good data. In reports released in 2005 and 2007, researchers at the Institute's Consortium on Chicago School Research made the groundbreaking discovery that likelihood of graduation is largely determined in the ninth grade. In fact, ninth graders who are on track to graduate are four times more likely to graduate than students who are off track; and

WHEREAS, This research thereby identified a single, manageable intervention point: ninth grade course performance; and

WHEREAS, Based on this discovery, the City developed tools that allow monitoring of student performance in real time, starting on the first day of school. Teachers and principals pay scrupulous attention to their freshman and intervene quickly - as soon as a student has unexcused absences, neglects to turn in homework, or fails a test, school staff immediately get to work to lead the student back on track; and

WHEREAS, The City's early intervention takes myriad forms, including tutoring, counseling, and even early morning wake-up calls. In 20 neighborhood schools, teachers consulted with the University of Chicago's Network for College Success to develop specific

strategies to keep students on track to graduate; and

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WHEREAS, As Dr. Knowles has observed, the widespread success that the City has achieved in raising graduation rates is a remarkable achievement. Many things could have gone wrong - avoiding course failure could have led to grade inflation; focusing on ninth graders could have simply delayed declines in performance until the sophomore or junior year; and keeping low-performing students in school could have dragged down school-wide test scores. But these anticipated problems have not manifested in Chicago. On-track-to-graduate rates are being sustained through high school, with low-achieving students seeing the most dramatic gains, and the rates for African-American and Latino young men in particular rising the fastest, by more than 25 percentage points; and

WHEREAS, The City's success on this front is only one dimension of the education program promoted by Mayor Emanuel and Chicago Public Schools CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett, who are also committed to expanding early childhood education, providing a full school day and full school year, and increasing access to different school models, such as International Baccalaureate campuses and selective enrollment programs, in order to give parents and guardians more high-quality academic choices for their children; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this thirtieth day of April, 2014, do hereby recognize our City's improved graduation rates as a testament to our effort to provide high-quality learning environments for our students, and, most important, to the hard work and dedication of those students, their parents, and their teachers and principals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to representatives of the Chicago Public Schools in acknowledgement of this inspiring educational trend, and as a symbol of our unflagging commitment to our children's future.