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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CPS to Host Huge Year-End Rally for School Funding and Safety
About 35,000 Students Will Have Their Voices Heard at Soldier Field on June 10

CPS students will take center stage to talk about school funding and safety on Tuesday, June 10 at Soldier Field. The “Shout-Out for Schools” rally will give our city’s young people the opportunity to have their voices heard on the issues that affect their everyday lives and future opportunities. The event will be from 10 a.m. to noon, and about 35,000 students from all across the city have signed up for school-organized field trips to the “Shout-Out” rally.

“This is the time for our students to be heard on the critical issues of school funding and safer communities,” said Chicago Board of Education President Rufus Williams. “Every year, we fight in Springfield for a better funding system for our schools—one that is fair and that provides an increased and sustained investment in our students. Our legislators now need to hear from the people who are most affected by their failure to reform school funding.”

The state budget approved over the weekend and now under review by Gov. Rod Blagojevich is estimated to provide about \$98 million in new revenue to the CPS. About \$17 million of that funding is targeted for new programs. That means about \$81 million of the revenue boost could be used by the CPS to reduce its \$180 million budget gap, leaving a \$99 million hole and forcing the school district to look for deeper cuts and additional revenue sources. Because of the uncertainty in Springfield, the CPS is expected to push approval of its Fiscal Year 2009 budget back to August.

The June 10 “Shout-Out for Schools” rally will feature speeches from many CPS students, as well as from education leaders from Chicago and across the state, and a call to action organized by students leaders involved in the Mikva Challenge program. The event will also include an entertainment lineup that features Jeff Tweedy, Kid Sister, Rich Kiddz, Kuumba Lynx, Uni, Ben One, and CPS student finalists from the “Louder Than A Bomb” poetry-slam competition.

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“I’ve met so many outstanding student leaders in our schools over the past several years,” added CPS Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan. “We need to shine the spotlight on them, because they are the ones who will bring about change. Education is the civil rights issue of our generation. Our funding system in Illinois creates separate and unequal school districts, and we need to listen to what our young people have to say about that.”