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## Leading the Way to Better Health

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## Leading the Way to Better Health

### Stephanie Whyte '91 is new chief health officer for Chicago schools.

A familiar face will be leading the Chicago Public Schools' efforts to improve student health. Stephanie Whyte, a CPS graduate herself, is the district's new chief health officer. The recently created role will oversee critical student health programs within CPS and collaborate with the Chicago Department of Public Health.

"I am excited to have Dr. Whyte as part of the CPS team. We know through research that the overall health and well-being of our students is critical to ensuring their attendance, attentiveness and classroom achievement," said CPS CEO Jean-Claude Brizard. "Her appointment as chief health officer will fulfill a key element of CPS's efforts to promote wellness and academic student achievement." The nation's third-largest school system, CPS serves about 405,000 students in more than 675 schools.

Whyte, who graduated from Illinois Wesleyan in 1991 with a degree in biology, also holds degrees in medicine and business. She earned her M.D. in 1996 from Fitch University of Health Science/The Chicago Medical School and completed a residency in pediatrics at Louisiana State University Medical Center. In 2009, she earned an M.B.A. with a focus on public and nonprofit management from St. Xavier University. She is a board-certified pediatric physician and fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.



*Whyte, who was a biology major at Illinois Wesleyan, will oversee health services for more than 400,000 students in the nation's third-largest school district.*

The chief health officer position is part of the Healthy Chicago initiative, which defines citywide health and wellness priorities such as obesity prevention, HIV prevention, tobacco use, chronic disease management, healthy homes and adolescent health. Whyte will be spearheading the Healthy Schools component of the initiative, focusing on areas such as asthma, teen pregnancy and motherhood, school bullying and sexually transmitted infection and disease prevention.

Prior to joining CPS, Whyte served as medical director for the Mobile CARE Foundation, which operates mobile medical units that bring needed asthma care and education to hundreds of students each year at dozens of schools and Head Start sites across Chicago. She has served on local, regional and national advisory boards and as a spokesperson for the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago's Asthma Education Campaign targeting African-American communities.

Research shows the health of students is a key factor in attendance, engagement and academic performance. Students who require more frequent and intricate medical services will often experience a higher incidence of school absences, which can translate, over time, to a decrease in educational outcomes.

"I am honored to serve in a capacity that will focus on and promote the indisputable link between healthy students and schools and academic achievement," Whyte said. "I look forward to working with the leadership team to positively impact student health and increase achievement in the classroom."