

INSIGHTS

George Washington High School, a neighborhood school on Chicago's far south side, began the 2012-13 school year with a college enrollment rate well below average for Chicago Public Schools: just 35 percent of Washington High's graduating seniors enrolled in college. Washington High's leadership decided they wanted school-wide culture change and launched not just a postsecondary leadership team (PLT), but also recruited every teacher in the building to take a more active role in discussing college choice with their students.

STRATEGIES

Working in partnership with the Network for College Success, Washington High's postsecondary strategy enlists the PLT and all building staff in executing ideas for interventions and instilling college-going culture throughout the school:

The PLT recruits teachers to host one-on-one and small group conferences where they engage students of all grade levels in conversations about planning for college and career. Teachers are equipped with data and knowledge to develop their capacity to be quality advisers, helping take on a task traditionally owned solely by the counseling department.

Washington hosts an annual "parent phone-a-thon" to engage families in discussions about academic progress and postsecondary plans. Teachers use a conversation guide to cover different key points tailored to each family's needs and extend invitations to the school's "college parent nights," which are offered throughout the year.

To prevent "summer melt"—the phenomenon where each year approximately 10 percent of CPS students admitted to college in the spring do not show up for college in the fall—the school hosts a Summerfest event to double-check that admitted students have paid deposits, signed promissory notes, enrolled in health insurance, and made their college course selections.

Washington High's PLT alerts students when their GPA crosses key thresholds, such as a dip below the 3.0 threshold necessary for admittance to many four-year colleges and offers of financial aid. This helps students be more aware of their GPA and how it affects their college options throughout their high school career.

All Washington seniors receive a Postsecondary Passport to help them track their applications, college visits, scholarships, and financial aid application status. In particular, the PLT focuses on providing tailored supports to help students find and apply for scholarships.



SCHOOL OVERVIEW

GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

School Type	Neighborhood
School Enrollment	1,418
Low Income	91%
African American	7%
Hispanic or Latino	87%
Diverse Learners	13%

Source: Chicago Public Schools, 1/7/2016 at: http://cps.edu/Schools/Find_a_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx

RESULTS

Washington High School has seen college enrollment rates skyrocket from 37 percent in 2009-10 to 59 percent in 2014-15 and more Washington High graduating seniors enroll in highly selective colleges, including the University of Chicago and Pomona College.

Since Washington High established its postsecondary leadership team, scholarship dollars awarded to students have more than quintupled—climbing from \$2.2 million in 2012 to over \$13 million already awarded to the class of 2016.

For more information about George Washington High School's postsecondary leadership team, contact: Anthony Malcolm, Assistant Principal and PLT lead | almalcolm@cps.edu