

INSIGHTS

When North Lawndale College Prep High School (NLCP), an open-enrollment charter school on Chicago's west side, examined its postsecondary success data, some eye-opening insights emerged:

Students with a 3.0 grade point average—"B's or better"—were finishing college at a rate of 60 percent, whereas student in the 2.5 to 2.9 GPA range were completing their degrees at only half that rate.

At colleges with a 50 percent or higher graduation rate for underrepresented minorities, which NLCP dubs "Success Colleges," NLCP graduates were also excelling: 65 percent of them had successfully earned degrees. At the same time, students' odds of success were much lower at colleges with institutional graduation rates below 50 percent: only 36 percent of NLCP graduates who attended these colleges ever earned their degrees.

Students who graduated high school with a 3.0 GPA *and* attended a Success College were even more likely to succeed: 81 percent made it to and through college.

STRATEGIES

Based on those insights, NLCP focused resources and built partnerships to ensure that more students earn B's or better and attend Success Colleges:

NLCP has worked to instill in underclassmen the importance of maintaining at least a 3.0 GPA and considering colleges with institutional graduation rates greater than 50 percent. The school aggressively fundraised to establish the Phoenix Pact, an endowment that ensures students with a 3.0 GPA who enroll at a designated Success College can attend without any out-of-pocket costs.

NLCP builds relationships with Success Colleges to encourage them to admit and support the school's graduates. North Lawndale persuaded a number of schools to commit to eliminate financial barriers and consider admitting NLCP students with strong GPAs even if they had lackluster ACT scores. They did this by sharing data about North Lawndale alumni with similar GPA and ACT profiles who enrolled in and graduated from Success Colleges.

NLCP devotes both staff and infrastructure resources to its postsecondary strategies. A full-time staff member is devoted to tracking, communicating with, and problem-solving on behalf of alumni throughout their collegiate experience.



SCHOOL OVERVIEW

NORTH LAWNDALE COLLEGE PREP

School Type	Charter 2 CAMPUSES
School Enrollment	900
Low Income	97%
African American	98%
Hispanic or Latino	2%
Diverse Learners	16%

Source: North Lawndale College Prep. 1/7/2016 at: <http://nlcphs.org/school-profile>
Source: Chicago Public Schools. 1/7/2016 at: http://cps.edu/Schools/Find_a_school/Pages/findschool.aspx

RESULTS

Staff members perceive notable culture shifts among students and staff around understanding the importance of GPA and prioritizing institutional graduation rate when evaluating college options.

When North Lawndale began its postsecondary work, only 10 percent of eligible students were choosing Success Colleges. **Of the 85 students in the class of 2015 who graduated with a 3.0 or better, nearly 50 percent enrolled in a Success College.**

For more information on North Lawndale's postsecondary success strategy, contact: Chris Kelly | ckelly@phoenixpact.org