DATA INSIGHTS
About the To&Through Project

The To&Through Project integrates research, data, and professional learning to help more students get to and through high school and college.

In collaboration with educators, policymakers, and communities, the To&Through Project aims to significantly increase the percentage of Chicago Public Schools freshmen who graduate from high school and go on to earn a college degree, and to share the learning from Chicago with education stakeholders across the country.

- Research illuminating what matters most for students’ high school and college success
- Data guiding efforts to improve students’ attainment of key milestones
- Professional Learning translating research and data into improved practice

About the To&Through Project’s Data Insights

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UChicago Consortium) has conducted decades of rigorous research based on hundreds of schools and tens of thousands of students to identify the factors that indicate and impact college success. This collection of data insights illuminates the UChicago Consortium’s most important discoveries about what fosters high school and college success and the attainment trajectory of Chicago Public Schools students.

Please visit toandthrough.uchicago.edu to learn more about the To&Through Project and the robust body of research behind this collection of data insights.
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Since 2006, Chicago’s high school graduation rate has risen among students of all races and genders. Gaps in high school graduation rates by gender have narrowed over time, but remain significant. Over the past decade, CPS graduates’ enrollment in 4-year colleges increased while enrollment in 2-year colleges remained relatively flat. Chicago’s 4-year college enrollment rate has risen across all races and genders. Gaps in 4-year college enrollment between female and male graduates have widened. Male and female graduates of every race have enrolled in 2-year colleges at roughly the same rate. While CPS graduates from across the socioeconomic spectrum enrolled in 2-year colleges at roughly the same rate, gaps remain in 4-year college enrollment. Many CPS graduates who were academically qualified for college did not immediately enroll. More CPS graduates transferred from 4-year to 2-year colleges than from 2-year to 4-year colleges. About 1 in 5 CPS graduates delayed entrance to college, but did eventually enroll within six years. Of the 1 in 5 CPS graduates who delayed entry to college but enrolled within six years, more started at 2-year rather than 4-year colleges. More CPS graduates have enrolled in 4-year colleges with institutional graduation rates above 50% over the past decade. Many 4-Year Illinois colleges and universities have improved their graduation rates for underrepresented minority students.
Introduction
A college education has grown more critical to success in the workforce

Of the 11.6 million jobs that have been added in the post-Great Recession economy, 99% have gone to workers with at least some college education.

A college education fosters greater health, wealth, and happiness

People who earn at least a 2-year college degree:

- Live an average of 7 YEARS LONGER
- Earn at least 51% MORE
- Are 26% more likely to be “VERY HAPPY”

There is a significant gap between CPS students’ college aspirations and attainment

In 2016, **71%** of Chicago Public Schools freshmen aspired to earn a bachelor’s degree

**Only 18%** are projected to do so within ten years of starting high school

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A similar gap between students’ college aspirations and attainment exists nationwide

The vast majority of high school students aspire to earn a bachelor’s degree, yet less than one in three will succeed.

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_104.91.asp
Research on What Fosters High School and College Success
Freshman OnTrack is more predictive of a student’s odds of graduating from high school than all other factors combined.

Predictive Ability of Indicators of High School Graduation

Students who are “on-track” in freshman year are

- 80% more likely than their off-track peers to graduate from high school
- 4x more likely than all other factors combined
- 65% for all other factors*

* All Other Factors: Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, 8th-Grade Test Scores, Mobility Prior to High School, and Overage for Grade.

A majority of CPS freshmen who earned a **3.0+ GPA** missed fewer than 5 days of school per semester.
Freshman year GPA predicts later educational attainment better than test scores

Freshman year GPA is nearly 2x as predictive of high school graduation as Explore and PLAN scores

Students who do not end freshman year with a 3.0+ GPA have a difficult time attaining one by the time they graduate.

Freshman students’ odds of having a 3.0+ GPA at high school graduation:

- Students who are on-track with 3.0+ GPA at the end of their freshman year: 67%
- Students who are on-track with <3.0 GPA at the end of their freshman year: 6%
- Students who are off-track at the end of their freshman year: 0%
Freshman year GPA is highly predictive of access to selective colleges

Students’ likelihood of graduating from high school with access to selective colleges

- Students who were on-track and had >3.0 GPA at the end of freshman year: 66%
- Students who were on-track and had <3.0 GPA at the end of freshman year: 13%
- Students who were off-track at the end of freshman year: 1%

The To&Through Online Tool. See: toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool
A higher high school GPA increases the odds of making it through college

Graduation rates from 4-year colleges for CPS students by graduating high school GPA

- <2.0: 18%
- 2.0–2.4: 33%
- 2.5–2.9: 47%
- 3.0–3.4: 65%
- 3.5+: 82%

The To&Through Online Tool. See: toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool
GPAs — not ACT scores — are the strongest predictor of college graduation

Students with the SAME ACT SCORE RANGE of 21-23 graduate from college at very different rates depending on their high school GPAs:

- **<2.0**: 28%
- **2.0-2.4**: 40%
- **2.5-2.9**: 53%
- **3.0-3.4**: 69%
- **3.5+**: 77%

GPAs — not ACT scores — are the strongest predictor of college graduation

Students with the SAME ACT SCORE RANGE of 18–20 graduate from college at very different rates depending on their high school GPAs:

- GPA <2.0: 20%
- 2.0–2.4: 26%
- 2.5–2.9: 43%
- 3.0–3.4: 59%
- 3.5+: 73%

A strong college-going culture spurs steps toward college

Students who attend high schools with strong college-going cultures are 12% more likely to apply to college than students who attend high schools with weak college-going cultures.

A college’s overall graduation rate is a strong indicator of an individual student’s likelihood to graduate.

Similar students who choose a college with a higher institutional graduation rate are up to 4x more likely to graduate from college.

Data on the Attainment Trajectory of Chicago Public Schools Students
Chicago has made significant improvements in the past decade in students’ high school and college attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman OnTrack rate</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>+27pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduation rate</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>+17pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year college enrollment rate</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>+3pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year college enrollment rate</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>+11pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year college graduation rate</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>+2pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2015 is the most recent year of National Student Clearinghouse data available on CPS graduates.
** The National Student Clearinghouse changed the way they matched students’ high school data to their college graduation data for the class of 2003. 46 percent represents the proportion of the Chicago Public Schools class of 2003 who graduated from college in 2009, within six years of enrolling in college.

Chicago’s educational attainment has been catching up to the nation’s

- **High School Graduation Rate**
  - CPS 2016: 74%
  - Nation 2015: 83%

- **2-year College Enrollment Rate**
  - CPS 2015: 19%
  - Nation 2015: 25%

- **4-year College Enrollment Rate**
  - CPS 2015: 44%
  - Nation 2015: 44%

- **4-year College Graduation Rate**
  - CPS 2015: 48%
  - Nation 2015: 59%

The improvements in CPS students’ high school graduation rates have not come at the expense of academic achievement.

- Percent of students taking AP courses: 26% in 2006 vs. 38% in 2015 (+12pts)
- Graduates with a 21+ on the ACT: 23% in 2006 vs. 33% in 2015 (+10pts)
- Graduates who earned a 3.0 GPA or better: 21% in 2006 vs. 32% in 2015 (+11pts)

* Data on students’ AP course taking comes from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research data archives.

CPS students’ freshman year GPAs have risen steadily since 2009

Increase in CPS freshman year GPAs of $3.0+$ from 2009–2016*

* GPAs do not include charter school students because we do not have grades data for these students. Charter school students constituted 22 percent of 2016 high school students.
Girls earned higher grades than boys

Girls were more likely than boys to earn B’s or better during their freshman year.

48% 31%

Percentage of freshman students earning B’s or better by gender, 2016

GPAs have varied greatly by race

Percentage distribution of freshman year GPA by race/ethnicity from 2006-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BLACK</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LATINO</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHITE</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASIAN</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 2006, Chicago’s high school graduation rate has risen among students of all races and genders.

Graduation rate increases in CPS from 2006–2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>+18pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>+11pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LATINO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>+22pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>+17pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>+18pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>+13pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIAN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>+11pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>+4pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gaps in high school graduation rates by gender have narrowed over time, but remain significant

More female than male CPS students of all races graduated from high school

Over the past decade, CPS graduates’ enrollment in 4-year colleges increased while enrollment in 2-year colleges remained relatively flat.
Chicago’s 4-year college enrollment rate has risen across all races and genders

4-year college enrollment rates by race and gender, 2006 vs. 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BLACK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>+10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>+14pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LATINO</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>+12pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>+14pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHITE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>+15pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>+17pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASIAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>+3pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>+11pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gaps in 4-year college enrollment between female and male graduates have widened

4-year college enrollment rates by race and gender, 2006 vs. 2015

BLACK

2006: 30% (men), 36% (women) → 2015: 36% (men), 50% (women)

LATINO

2006: 21% (men), 26% (women) → 2015: 33% (men), 40% (women)

WHITE

2006: 42% (men), 49% (women) → 2015: 57% (men), 66% (women)

ASIAN

2006: 56% (men), 60% (women) → 2015: 59% (men), 71% (women)

Male and female graduates of every race have enrolled in 2-year colleges at roughly the same rate

Enrollment in 2-year colleges, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LATINO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIAN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While CPS graduates from across the socioeconomic spectrum enrolled in 2-year colleges at roughly the same rate, gaps remain in 4-year college enrollment.

Many CPS graduates who were academically qualified for college did not immediately enroll

Nearly 1 in 5 CPS graduates with a 3.0 or higher GPA did not immediately enroll in either a 2-year or 4-year college

More CPS graduates transferred from 4-year to 2-year colleges than from 2-year to 4-year colleges

16% of CPS graduates who enrolled immediately in two-year colleges transferred to four-year colleges, and 26% who immediately enrolled in four-year colleges transferred to two-year colleges.*

About 1 in 5 CPS graduates delayed entrance to college, but did eventually enroll within six years

Percentage of 2009 CPS graduates who enrolled in college within six years of graduating from high school

Of the ~1 in 5 CPS graduates who delayed entry to college but enrolled within six years, more started at 2-year rather than 4-year colleges

26% of delayed enrollees

74% of delayed enrollees

More CPS graduates have enrolled in 4-year colleges with institutional graduation rates above 50% over the past decade

Percentage of CPS graduates who enrolled in colleges with six-year institutional graduation rates of 50% or higher

2006 58%  
2015 67%

Many 4-year Illinois colleges and universities have improved their graduation rates for underrepresented minority students

Six-year underrepresented minority (URM) graduation rate

- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: +9 pts, 2006 - 77%
- DePaul University: +15 pts, 2006 - 68%
- Illinois State University: +7 pts, 2006 - 60%
- University of Illinois at Chicago: +13 pts, 2006 - 46%
- Western Illinois University: +2 pts, 2006 - 48%
- Columbia College Chicago: +12 pts, 2006 - 22%
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale: +3 pts, 2006 - 30%