



To&Through PRESS KIT

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**FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND ONLINE TOOL SUPPORTS EDUCATORS AND FAMILIES IN
HELPING MORE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EARN COLLEGE DEGREES**

The To&Through Project aims to close the gap between students' college aspirations and attainment—to help give every student who aspires to earn a college degree the opportunity and support to do so

CHICAGO – Today, the University of Chicago's Urban Education Institute (UEI) and Network for College Success launched the To&Through Campaign and a first-of-its-kind, publically available online data tool designed to help give every Chicago Public Schools (CPS) student who wants to earn a college degree the opportunity and support to achieve their goal.

Across America, the vast majority of high school students aspire to earn a bachelor's degree, yet only 22 percent are projected to earn a bachelor's degree within 10 years of finishing high school. In Chicago, 76 percent of CPS freshmen aspire to earn a bachelor's degree, but only 18 percent are projected to do so within 10 years of starting high school. Addressing these immense gaps is the mission of The To&Through Campaign—a partnership between the University of Chicago's Urban Education Institute and Network for College Success to provide all stakeholders in education with actionable research, data, and resources designed to move more students to and through high school and college.

In December of 2014, To&Through brought together the Chicago education community to mark the district's attainment on key milestones, including rising high school and college graduation rates. On September 20, the To&Through Campaign launch event will mark the beginning of an effort to make To&Through Project research, data, and resources accessible to all in a position to help propel more youth to and through high school and college, from school leaders and partners, to community leaders and families.

“In Chicago we have clearly seen that when good, actionable evidence is in the hands of practitioners, parents, and policymakers we can dramatically improve outcomes for young people,” said UEI Chairman Tim Knowles. “The launch of the To&Through campaign makes essential data and tools available to all education stakeholders in Chicago—and creates a model for the nation—as we aim to propel thousands more students to and through college.”

Helping more students earn college degrees isn't just an individual issue; it's a social imperative. Research continues to show people who finish college are [healthier](#), [wealthier](#), and [happier](#): less likely to commit crimes, face financial hardship, or suffer from illness, and more likely to volunteer, vote, engage in their communities, and even live longer.

Equal Access to Education Attainment Data

Historically, data on the milestones that matter most for students' high school and college success has not been widely accessible or centralized. The To&Through online tool will make data on the milestones that research shows matter most for students' high school and college success—Freshman On Track, high

school graduation, college enrollment, college persistence, and college graduation—available to a broad range of education stakeholders in one, online hub for the first time.

Aggregating information spanning over more than a decade, the To&Through online tool also links CPS high schools to college outcomes for the first time, providing the full picture of CPS students' educational progress, from the middle grades through college graduation.

District and school leaders, school partners, families, and policymakers will be able to use the tool to:

- Examine patterns of educational attainment among different student subgroups, including students of different races, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, and academic achievement records
- See how individual high schools are doing on a particular milestone along the path to and through college, and how different schools compare to similar schools as well as the district as a whole
- See what colleges and universities students from CPS schools are choosing, and what the graduation rates of those institutions are

The tool will live on To&Through's new website—a repository for a broad range of free resources school leaders, school partners, and families can use to help more students realize their college aspirations, including: "To&Through In Action" profiles, which highlight strategies schools are using to improve high school and college attainment; infographics that illuminate key research findings; "mythbusters" that debunk common misconceptions about what matters most for high school and college success; and a Freshman On Track toolkit that equips schools with ample resources to better support students through their critical first year of high school.

To&Through Training

Ongoing training on how to use research and data to improve student outcomes is another key To&Through pillar. The University of Chicago's Network for College Success works with Chicago Public Schools to provide quarterly trainings for every network chief, high school principal, and high school leadership team on how to use data on key student attainment milestones to identify where students struggle, and develop strategies for moving more students to and through high school and college.

A model that brings it all together

Building on a close collaboration with CPS and other education stakeholders, the To&Through project provides a model for districts around the country aiming to move more students to and through high school and college. It provides a broad range of education stakeholders with research, data, and training to accelerate progress in our schools.

For example, Chicago's George Washington High School began the 2012-13 school year with a college enrollment rate well below the CPS average, so set out to establish a stronger college-going culture. Working with the Network for College Success, the school's leadership created a post-secondary leadership team (PLT), and also recruited every teacher in the building to take a more active role in discussing college choice with their students. 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. The school also focused on improving communication with families, and created alerts for students with GPAs below 3.0, a key threshold for

admission to somewhat selective colleges. Washington's college enrollment rates have increased dramatically, from 35 percent in 2012-13 to 59 percent in 2014-15.

Though To&Through is a Chicago-based campaign, the aspiration-attainment gap exists nationwide. The vast majority of high school students in America aspire to earn a bachelor's degree, yet less than one in three succeed. This is a national issue that To&Through is proactively tackling on a local level, with the ultimate goal of changing the odds and propelling more of the city's, and the nation's, youth to and through high school and college.

"Chicago—with the right research, data, and training—has moved thousands more students to and through high school and college. As a nation, we can move millions," said former United States Secretary of Education and current Managing Partner of the Emerson Collective, Arne Duncan.

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The To&Through Project is a partnership among the University of Chicago's Urban Education Institute and Network for College Success that brings together expertise across the key domains of research, data, and training resources. **The Urban Education Institute's UChicago Consortium** has conducted more than two decades of research on Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to discover what matters most for school improvement and student success, providing the insight and knowledge that ground The To&Through Project. **UChicago Impact, the Urban Education Institute's not-for-profit LLC**, designed the To&Through online tool and partners with districts and schools across the country to provide other empirically based tools and support services that foster reliably excellent schooling. UChicago Impact currently works in more than 4,500 schools across 60 major cities in 33 states and reaches more than 2.8 million students nationwide. **The Network for College Success (NCS)** at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration designs and provides training and support resources to help build schools leaders' capacity to use research and data to improve student outcomes. The To&Through Project has also benefited from ongoing collaboration with CPS and other education stakeholders.



**the
To&Through
project**

Over the past decade, Chicago has made tremendous progress on high school graduation and college enrollment; college graduation, however, has improved only slightly and a large gap between our students' college aspirations and attainment remains. 76 percent of Chicago Public Schools high school freshmen aspire to earn a college degree, yet only 18 percent are projected to do so within ten years of starting high school. Nationally, we estimate that only 22 percent of today's high school freshmen will enroll in a four-year college and earn a bachelor's degree by the age of 25. Closing this gap is critical because research tells us that a college degree is still the most effective path out of poverty. People who finish college also tend to be healthier and happier—even live longer.

The To&Through Project provides educators, policymakers, and families with research, data, and resources on the milestones that matter most for college success so that, together, we can close the gap between our students' college aspirations and attainment.

The five key milestones along the path to and through high school and college:



**Freshman
On-Track**



**High School
Graduation**



**College
Enrollment**



**College
Persistence**



**College
Graduation**

With **research** illuminating what it takes to reach these milestones, **data** tracking our district and individual schools' progress, and **resources** that help education stakeholders put that research and data into practice, we can help give every student who aspires to earn a college degree the opportunity and support to do so.

Learn how you can help move more students to and through college



Research

Illuminating what it takes for students to make it to and through high school and college



Data

Systematically tracking district and school progress on the milestones that matter most for college success

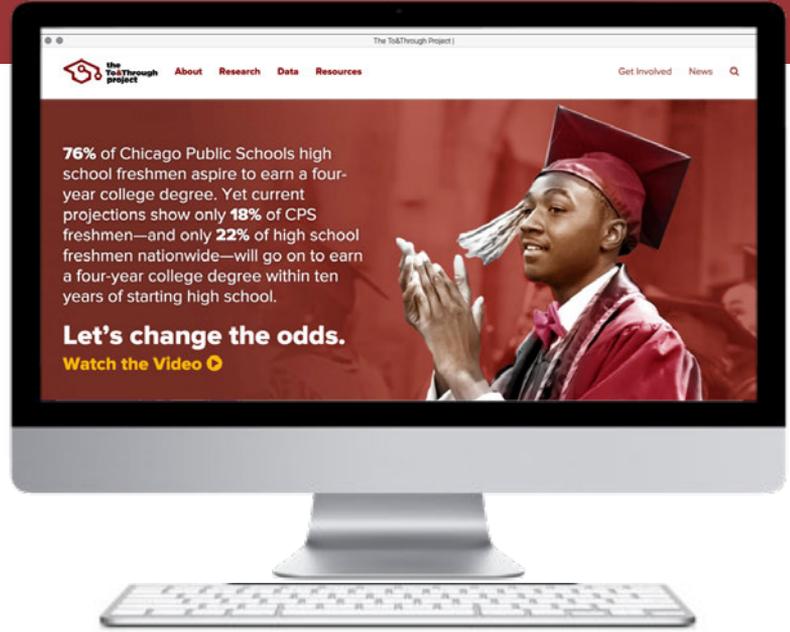


Resources

Helping education stakeholders translate research and data into improved practice

The To&Through Website

is an online hub full of research, data, and resources designed to help move more students to and through high school and college.



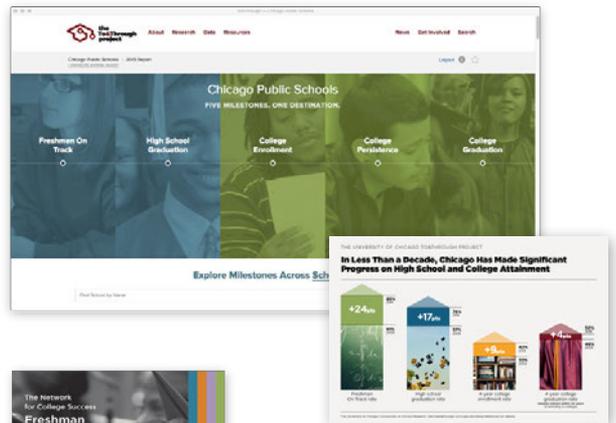
Visit us to find and share:



Research: including research reports and summaries illuminating what matters most for students' high school and college success, and mythbusters debunking common misconceptions about what fosters college attainment



Data: aggregating information spanning over more than a decade, the To&Through online tool links Chicago public high schools to college outcomes for the first time, providing the full picture of students' educational progress, from the middle grades through college graduation



Resources: featuring the Network for College Success's Freshman On-Track Toolkit which provides a complete roadmap for the groundwork that helped Chicago raise its high school graduation rate by 17 points in less than a decade.

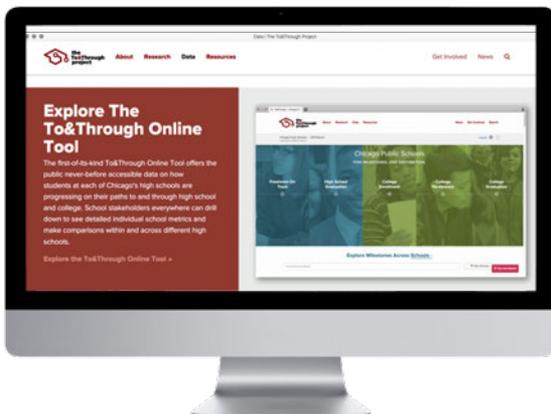
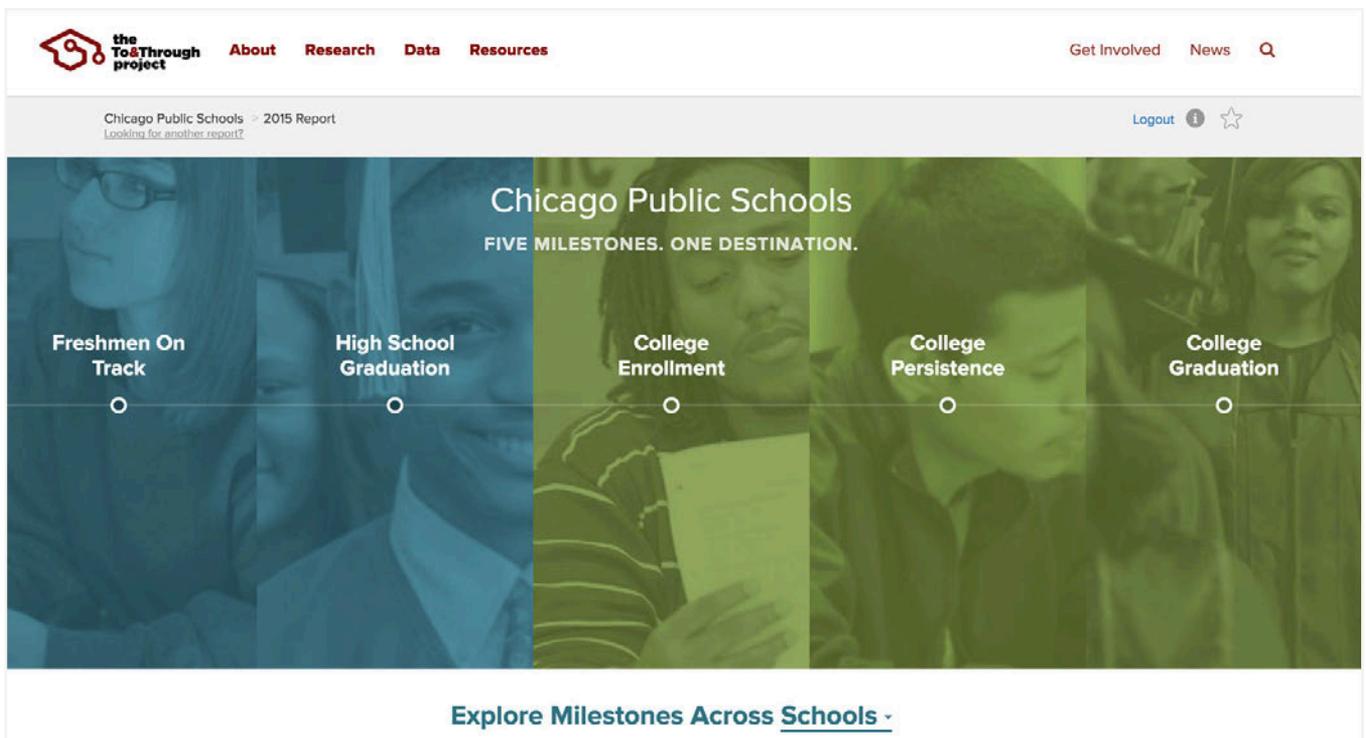


For all of this and more, visit toandthrough.uchicago.edu





The To&Through Online Tool makes data on the milestones that research shows matter most for students' high school and college success available to a broad range of education stakeholders in one, online hub for the first time. The tool is also the first to link Chicago public high schools to college outcomes, providing the full picture of students' educational progress, from the middle grades through college graduation. District and school leaders, school partners, families, and policymakers can interrogate district and school-level data and drill down to explore key metrics and make comparisons within and across schools.



The tool allows all of us to dive into data on the milestones that matter most for high school and college success so we can better understand our district and individual schools and better support our students.

Learn more about how you can use the To&Through Online Tool

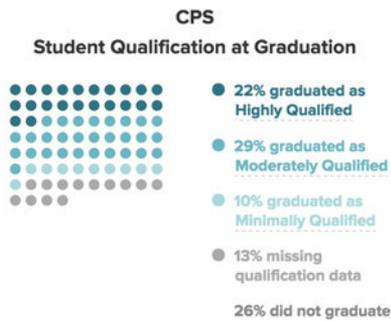


District and school leaders, school partners, families, and policymakers can use the tool to:

- Examine patterns of educational attainment among different student subgroups, including students of different races, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, and academic achievement records
- See how individual high schools are doing on a particular milestone along the path to and through college, and how different schools compare to similar schools as well as the district as a whole
- See what colleges and universities students from Chicago Public Schools are choosing, and what the graduation rates of those institutions are

Using the district-level breakdown, a district leader can quickly see how many students are graduating from high school highly qualified for college

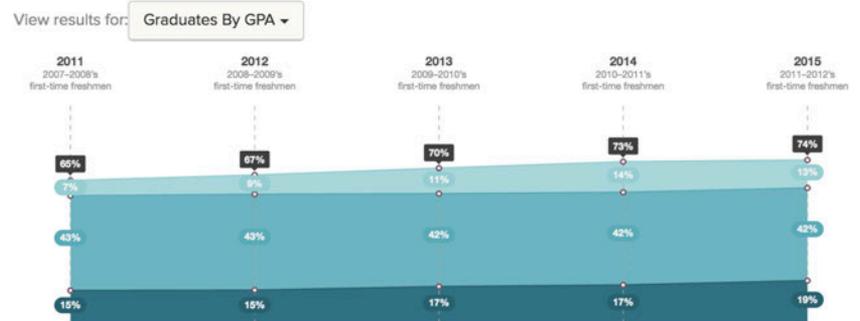
Breakdown



A policymaker who wants to investigate the district's progress on getting students ready for college can see how graduating seniors' GPAs have changed over time

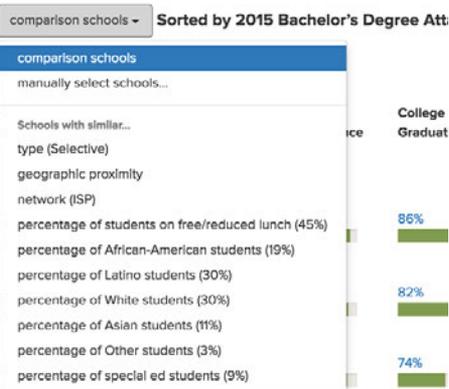
Across Years

4-year high school graduation rates since 2011



A principal who wants to find a similar school that is doing well on a particular metric can search for comparison schools by various characteristics

Explore Milestones Across Schools



A high school counselor who wants to help give students the best chance of graduating from college can see what colleges and universities students from the school are choosing, and what those schools' graduation rates are

	Graduates Enrolled	Institutional Grad Rate
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	23	84%
University of Illinois at Chicago	17	60%
DePaul University	16	71%
Loyola University Chicago	8	73%

Families can see how different high schools are supporting college attainment, using comparisons to similar schools and options to drill down by student characteristics like race, gender, and GPA

Within My School





**the
To&Through
project**



Busting Myths About What Matters for High School and College Success

The path to and through high school and college is riddled with misguided notions and outdated assumptions about what students should know, do, and focus on in order to maximize their chances for success. Fortunately, more than a decade's worth of research and data from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research has helped solidify the facts and dispel myths about what it takes to make it to and through college.



MYTH: Students' academic trajectories are pretty much set by the time they enter high school: either they're college-bound at that point or they're not.

FACTS:

Ninth grade is a “make it or break it” year for students at all achievement levels. Academic performance sometimes changes dramatically in the shift from eighth to ninth grade, and how students perform in eighth grade is crucial for eventual high school graduation and college readiness. In fact, course performance in the ninth grade is more predictive of a student’s odds of graduating high school than all other factors, including race, gender, socioeconomic status, and prior academic achievement, combined. Freshmen who are “on-track” in the ninth grade, earning five full-year credits and no more than one semester F in a core class, are nearly four times more likely than their off-track peers to graduate from high school. And the main driver of course failure is absences: Course attendance is eight times more predictive of course failure in the freshman year than eighth-grade test scores.

Allensworth, E., & Easton, J.Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago public high schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year.* University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

Allensworth, E., & Easton, J.Q. (2005). *The on-track indicator as a predictor of high school graduation.* University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.



MYTH: Missing a day or two of school each month is no big deal.

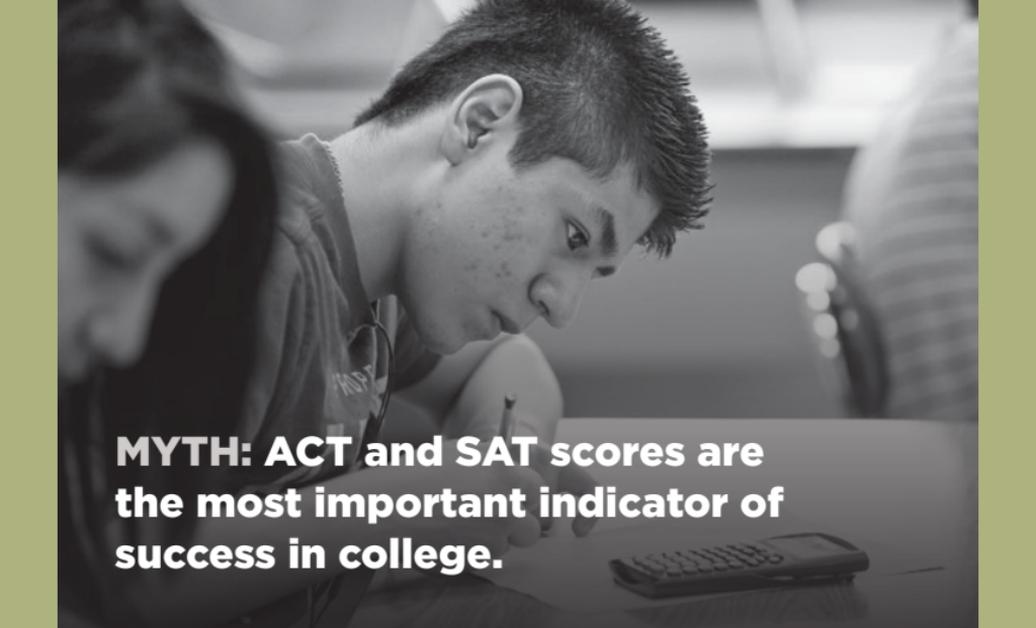
 **FACTS:**

Attendance contributes more than any other factor to course failure and low grades. College-ready students (those who have the best chance of enrolling and persisting in college) have average attendance rates of 98 percent, meaning they miss less than a week over the course of the entire school year. Yet, in Chicago Public Schools, 30 percent of ninth-graders are chronically absent, attending school less than 90 percent of the time. Each week of absence per semester in ninth grade is associated with a more than 20 percentage point decline in the probability of graduating from high school. In light of this, schools are working to help students and families understand the cost of frequent absences, and using close data monitoring and support from teachers and staff to help students get to class.

Rosenkranz, T., et al. (2014). *Free to fail or on-track to college: Why grades drop when students enter high school and what adults can do about it*. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

Allensworth, E., & Easton, J.Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago public high schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year*. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

Allensworth, E., et al. (2014). *Looking forward to high school and college: Middle grade indicators of readiness in Chicago Public Schools*. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.



MYTH: ACT and SAT scores are the most important indicator of success in college.

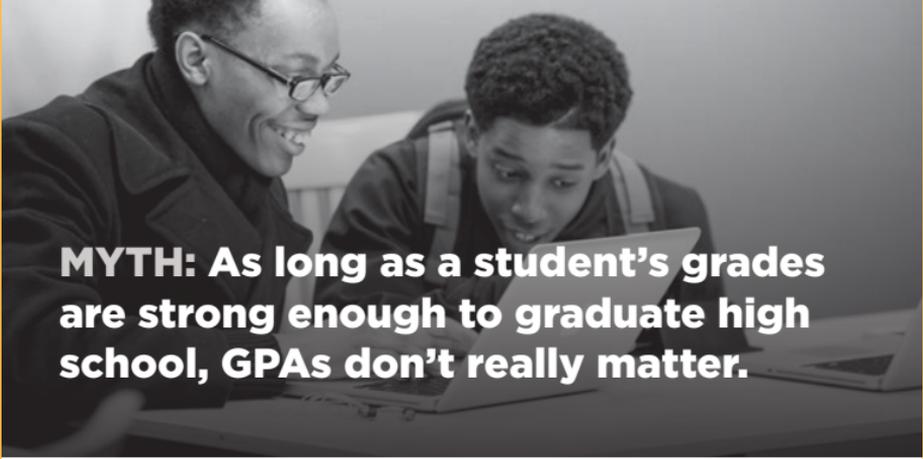
 **FACTS:**

A good ACT or SAT score isn't a slam dunk for college success. While ACT/SAT scores matter for college access, grades (GPAs) are much more predictive of college success. In fact, strong grades—earning As and Bs in high school—are the strongest indicator of college readiness and are much more predictive of college graduation than any test score. Students with an ACT score of 21-23 have about a 50 percent chance of graduating college if their high school GPA is between 2.5 and 2.9. Yet students with ACT scores in the same range of 21-23 but with high school GPAs between 3.0 and 3.4 graduate college at rates of nearly 70 percent.

MYTH: Using class time to prep for the ACT and SAT is a good way to improve students' scores.

FACTS:

Spending class time on test prep does not make students more prepared for the ACT and SAT. In-class test prep takes time away from developing the higher-level reasoning skills needed to get better scores. In-class test preparation also tends to be ineffective at raising test scores and can even give a false sense of the test and testing conditions. Instead, a challenging academic atmosphere and a class curriculum that teaches critical thinking gives students the best shot at succeeding on the ACT. For students, the most effective way to improve ACT scores is to work hard in academic classes: students who earn As and Bs in their classes make larger test gains during the year than students who get lower grades. To be effective, test prep should involve full, timed practice tests, and students and teachers or tutors should work together to interpret the results to figure out what it is that students need to work on to improve their scores.



MYTH: As long as a student's grades are strong enough to graduate high school, GPAs don't really matter.

 **FACTS:**

Earning As and Bs matters for success in both high school and college. Strong grades are a sign that students are able to meet academic challenges, and are developing the skills they need to handle new academic challenges in the future. More than 95 percent of students with a B average or better their freshman year graduate from high school, compared to 72 percent of students with a C average and 28 percent of students with a D average. Students may be admitted to some colleges with less than a 3.0 GPA, but only students who enter college with a high school GPA of 3.0 or above have greater than a 50 percent chance of earning a four-year college degree within six years of graduating high school.

Allensworth, E., & Easton, J.Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago public high schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year.* University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

Roderick, M., et al. (2006). *From high school to the future: A first look at Chicago public school graduates' college enrollment, college preparation, and graduation from four-year colleges.* University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

MYTH: Students who really want to go to college will get there. If they have the will, they'll figure out the way.

FACTS:

76 percent of CPS freshmen aspire to earn a bachelor's degree, yet only 42 percent of graduates enroll in a four-year college immediately after completing high school. This gap between students' college aspirations and enrollment isn't unique to Chicago; nationally, 80 percent of high school students aspire to earn a bachelor's degree, yet only 44 percent enroll immediately in a four-year college. The gap persists, in large part, because of the "potholes" students face along the path to and through college, such as navigating a complex financial aid application process and sorting through college options to target their applications to schools that are a good match for their qualifications and have strong institutional graduation rates. Helping students overcome barriers like these can go a long way toward helping them succeed in college. For example, students accepted into a four-year college are 50 percent more likely to actually enroll in college if they have completed their federal financial aid application (FAFSA)—a process that the U.S. Department of Education and many districts have been working to streamline.

MYTH: Talking to students about their college plans is primarily a job for their school counselors.

FACTS:

Most high school counselors are responsible for hundreds of students and struggle to find the time to routinely meet with students one-on-one. Teachers, however, interact with students every day, and can capitalize on those opportunities to share information and encouragement. The entire high school has a role to play in helping students make it to and through college by creating a strong college-going culture. In fact, a college-going culture is the single most consistent predictor of whether students take steps toward college enrollment. Students who attend high schools in which teachers report a strong college-going culture—where a school leader has established college attainment as a clear and shared goal for students and where teachers and counselors are involved in supporting students in completing their college applications—are 12 percentage points more likely to apply to and 14 percentage points more likely to enroll in a four-year college than students who attend high schools in which teachers do not report a strong college-going culture.



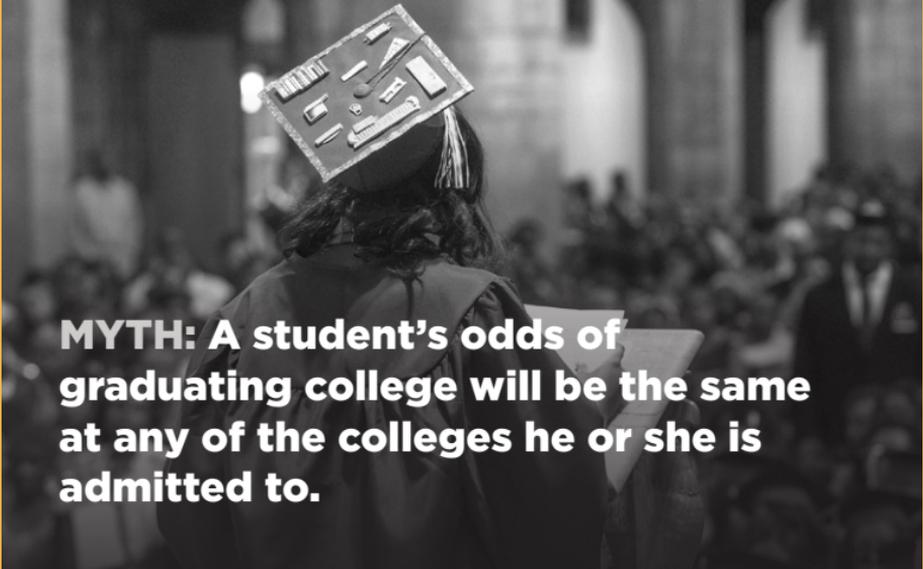
MYTH: Starting at a two-year college provides the same opportunity to a four-year degree as starting at a four-year college.

 **FACTS:**

For students with weaker qualifications, two-year colleges are an option that can keep them on a path toward a four-year degree. However, students who are highly qualified for a four-year college have dramatically lower odds of degree completion if they start at a two-year college. In Chicago, only 8 percent of students who begin at a two-year college complete a bachelor's degree within six years of graduating high school. Nearly 90 percent of students who ultimately attain a bachelor's degree enroll in a four-year college directly after their senior year of high school. Thus, enrolling in a four-year college directly after high school remains the "surest path" to a bachelor's degree.

Roderick, M., et al. (2006). *From high school to the future: A first look at Chicago public school graduates' college enrollment, college preparation, and graduation from four-year colleges*. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

Nagaoka, J., & Healey, K. (2016). *The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students: 2015: A focus on four-year college degrees*. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.



MYTH: A student's odds of graduating college will be the same at any of the colleges he or she is admitted to.

 **FACTS:**

Students of all qualification levels are more likely to graduate from college if they attend a post-secondary institution with a high institutional graduation rate. This is even true for students with strong grades in high school; in fact, college choice matters the most for students with strong academic qualifications. Ultimately, institutional graduation rates are just one factor to consider in finding a good college match, but they can signal to college-bound students how well the institutions they're interested in are able to support students in their quests to graduate from college.

Roderick, M., et al. (2008). *From high school to the future: Potholes on the road to college*. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

Nagaoka, J., & Healey, K. (2016). *The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students: 2015: A focus on four-year college degrees*. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

MYTH: The hardest part of college is getting in. Once you're in, you're set.

FACTS:

Even students who are admitted to college and are academically well prepared for college can struggle along the way to their degrees. Colleges that have an institutional culture where administrators, faculty, and staff see it as their role to provide support in the transition to college can be particularly beneficial for students who didn't grow up in contexts where college-going is the norm, such as those who are from low-income families or who are first-generation college-goers. Colleges can support students by tailoring orientation sessions, providing additional counselors and mentors, ensuring students are enrolling in classes that lead to degrees, being responsive to financial needs, and encouraging first-generation students to connect with each other and with affinity groups. Absent supports, it's easy for students to fall off track: currently just 11 percent of low-income students who are the first in their family to attend college earn their degrees within six years of enrolling in college.

Day, B.J., et al. (forthcoming journal article). "Inside the black box of college match: The academic, social, and institutional experiences of high-achieving, urban high school graduates in college."

Engle, J., & Tinto, V. (2008). *Moving beyond access: College success for low-income, first-generation students*. The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education.



the **To&Through** project

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DATA



the
To&Through
project

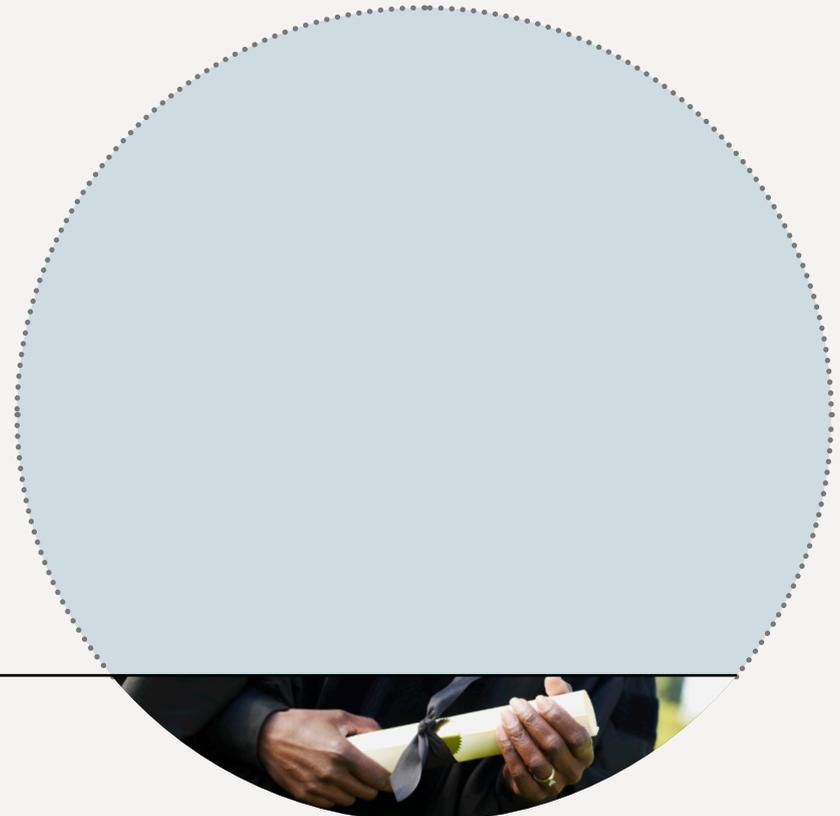
INSIGHTS

The College Aspiration-Attainment Gap in Chicago Public Schools



76%

76% of Chicago Public Schools freshmen aspire to earn a bachelor's degree

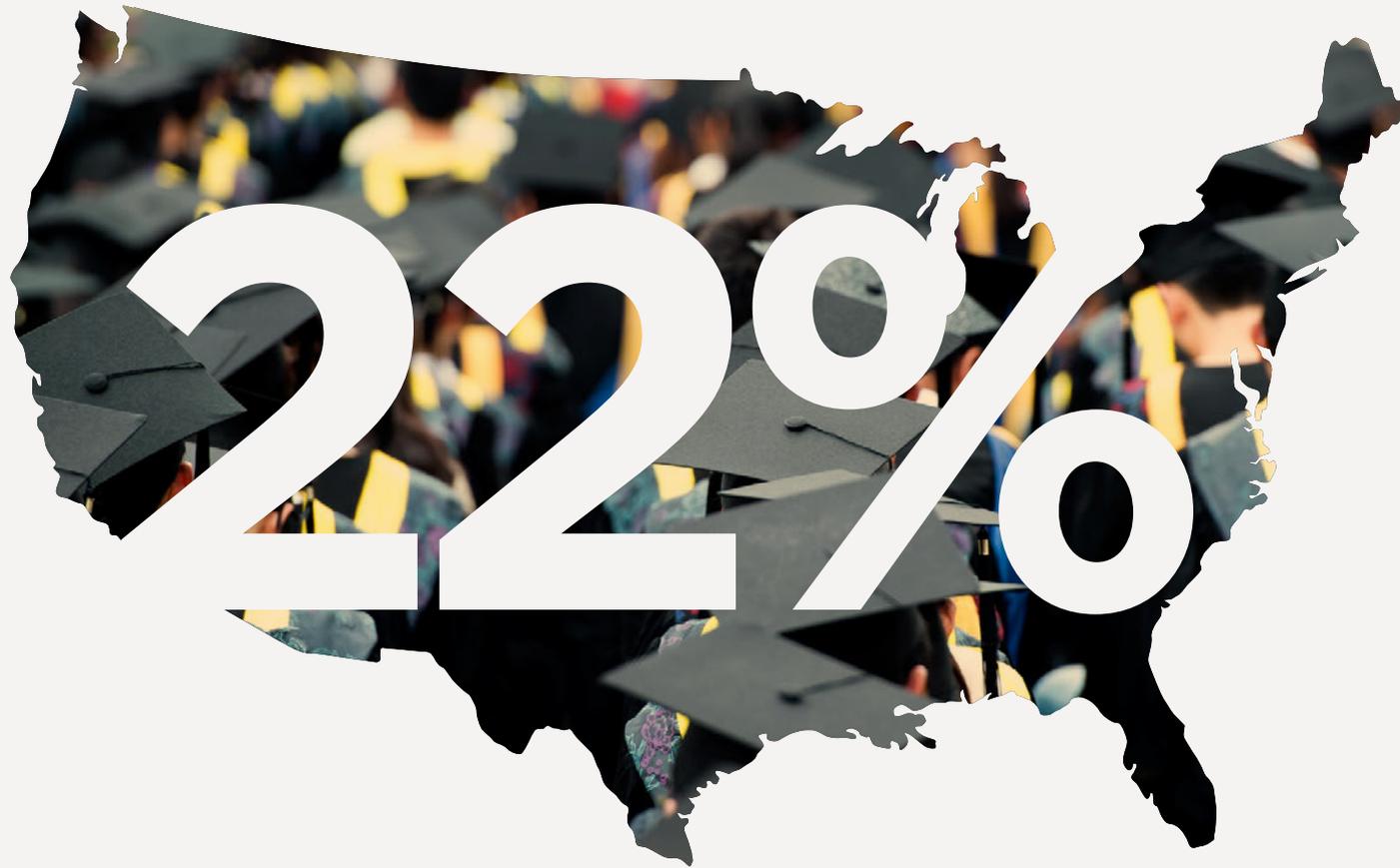


18%

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

College Attainment in the United States

Nationally, **only 22%** of high school freshmen are projected to graduate from high school in four years, enroll immediately in a 4-year college, and earn their degrees within six years of starting college

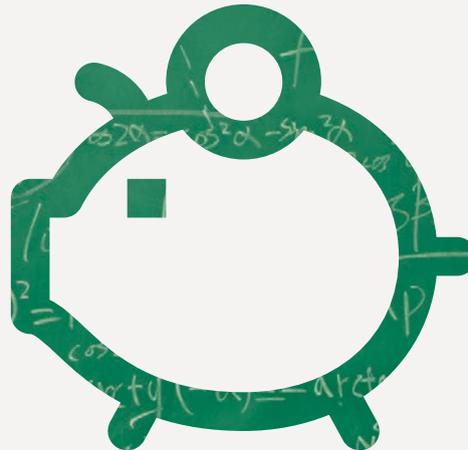


People Who Earn College Degrees Tend to be Healthier, Wealthier, and Happier

PEOPLE WHO EARN A **BACHELOR'S DEGREE** ARE:



More likely to
LIVE LONGER

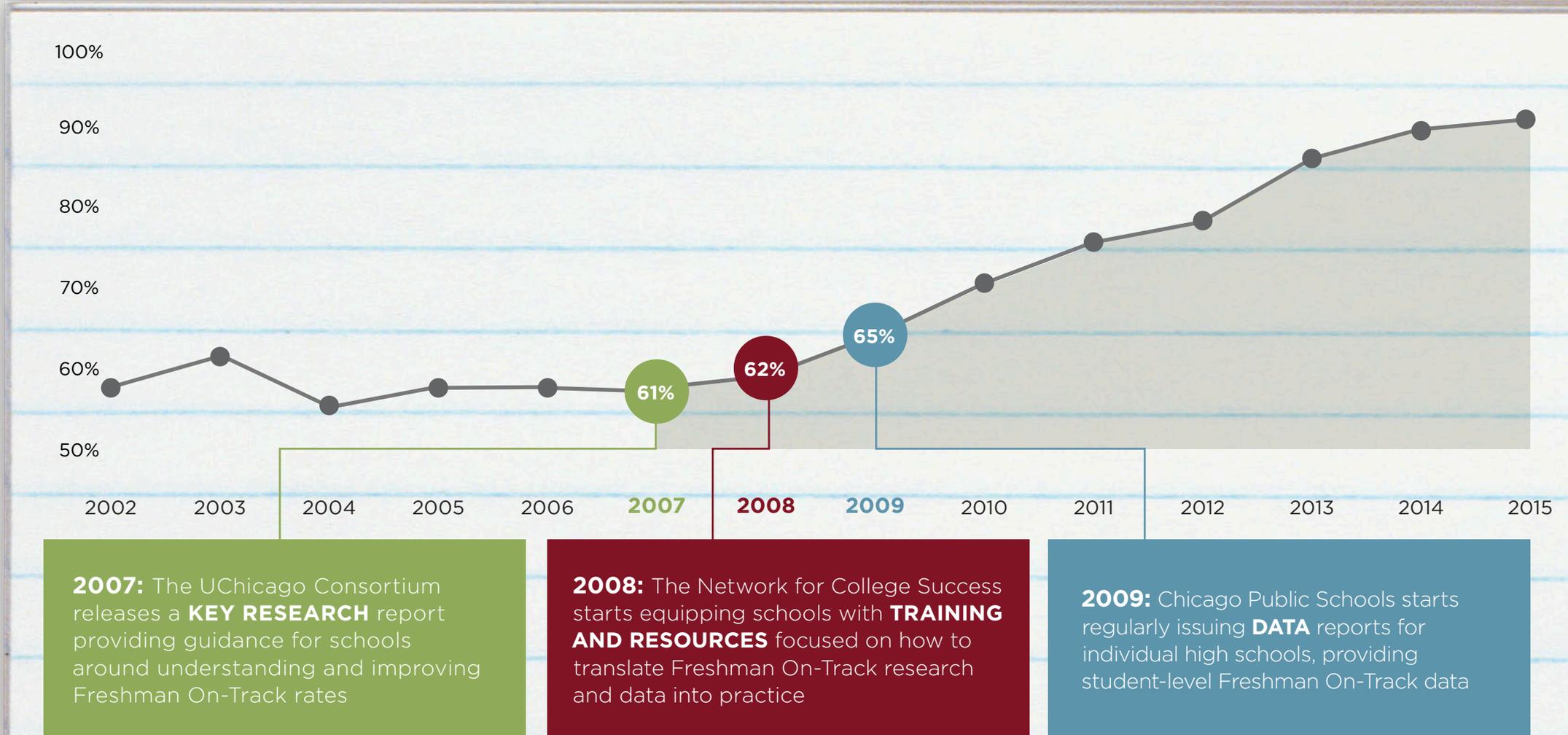


5x likelier to
ESCAPE POVERTY

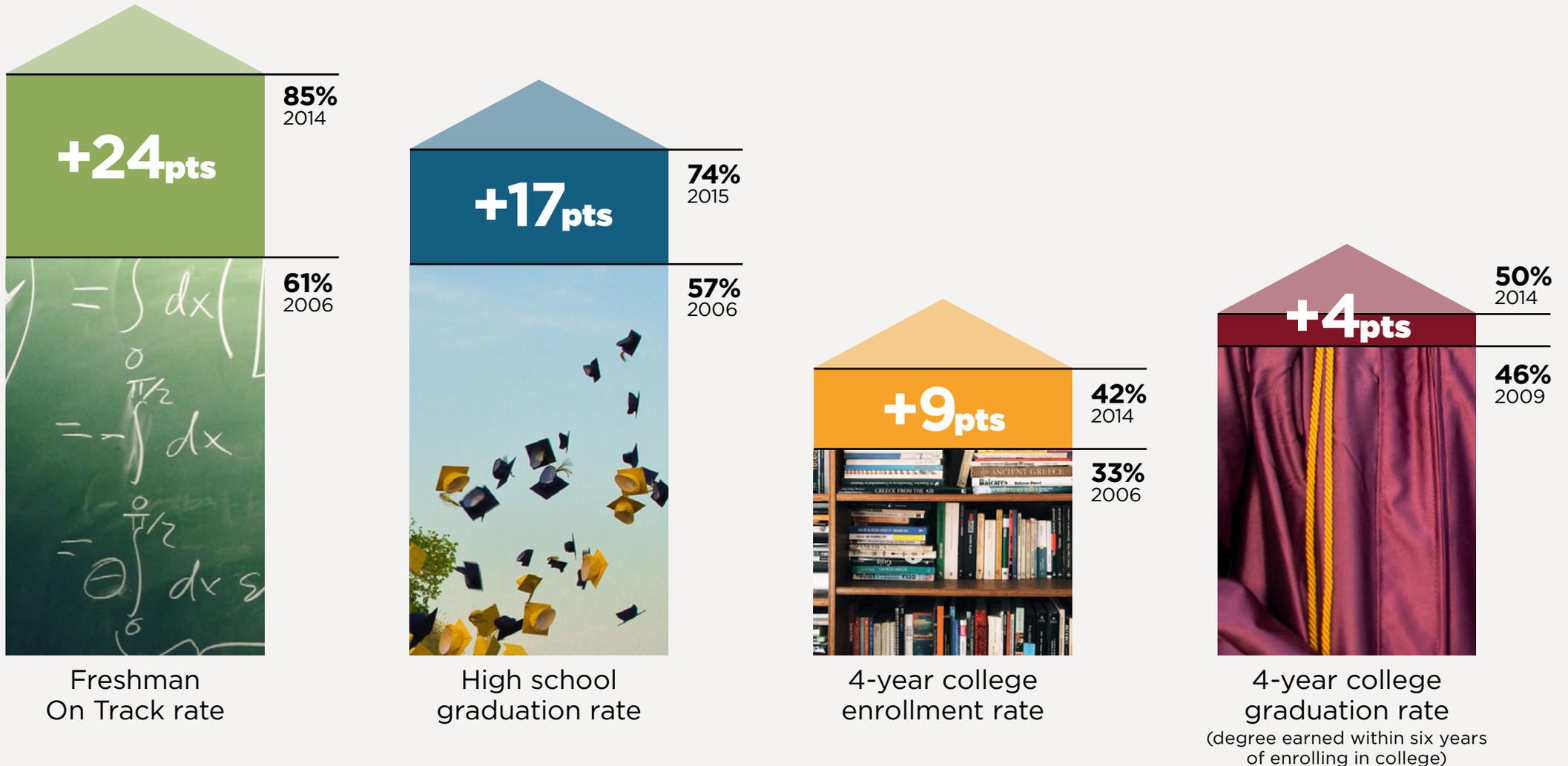


More likely to
VOTE, VOLUNTEER,
and **ENGAGE** with
their communities

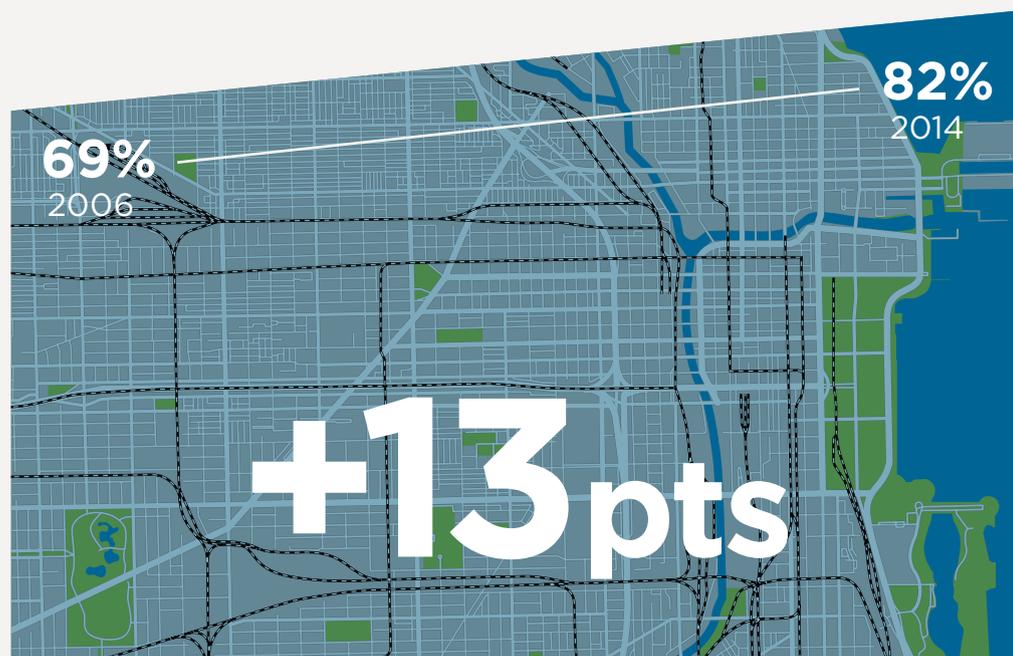
Chicago's Freshman On-Track Rate Skyrocketed When Schools Were Equipped with Research, Data, and Resources



In Less Than a Decade, Chicago Has Made Significant Progress on High School and College Attainment



Since 2006, Chicago's High School Graduation Rate Has Risen Among Students of All Socioeconomic Backgrounds



HIGHER-INCOME COMMUNITIES' HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE



LOWER-INCOME COMMUNITIES' HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

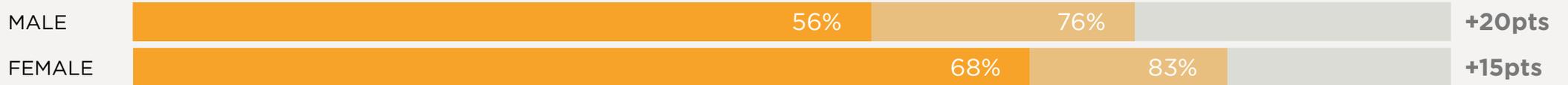
Since 2006, Chicago's High School Graduation Rate Has Risen Among Students of All Races and Genders

Graduation rate increases in CPS from 2006-2014

AFRICAN AMERICAN



LATINO



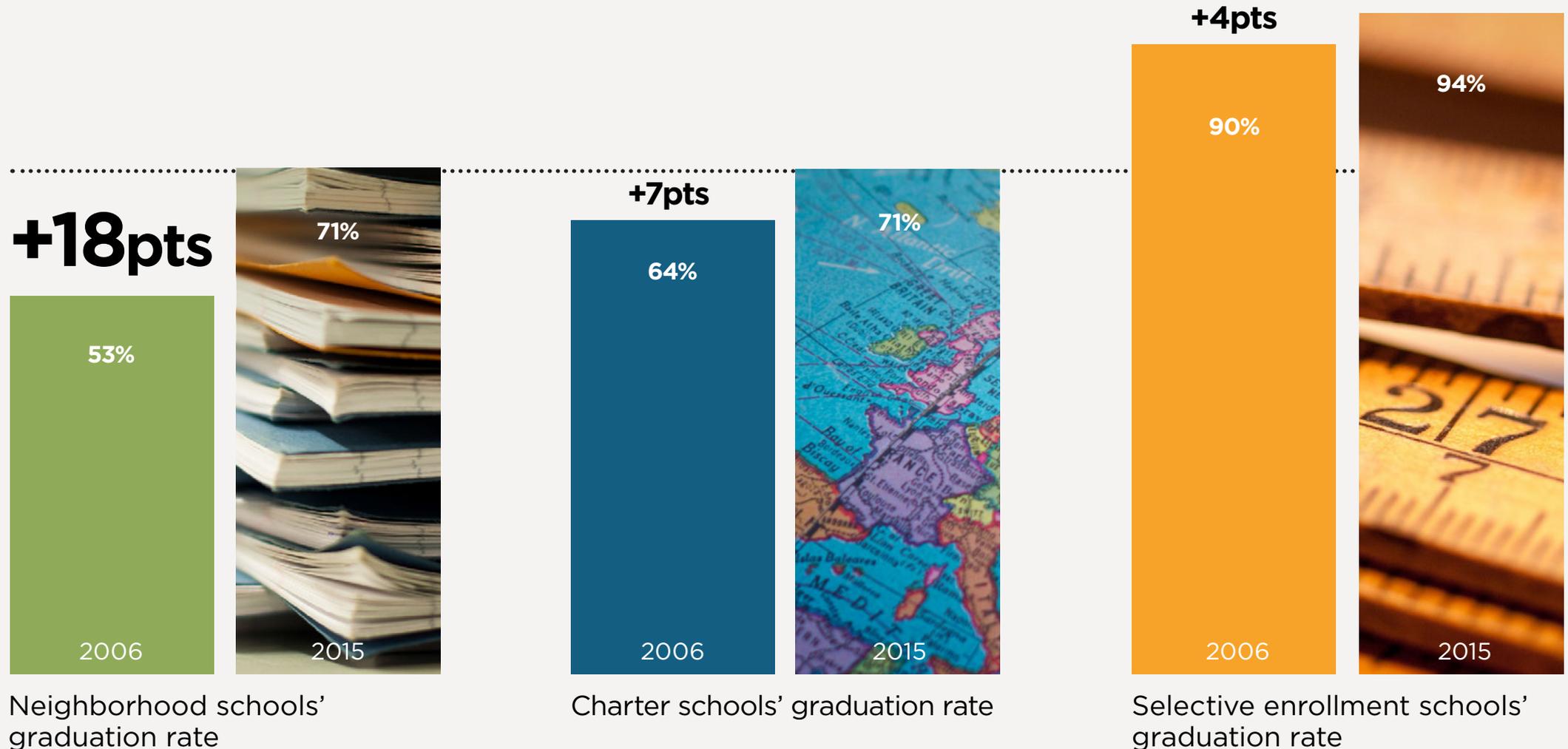
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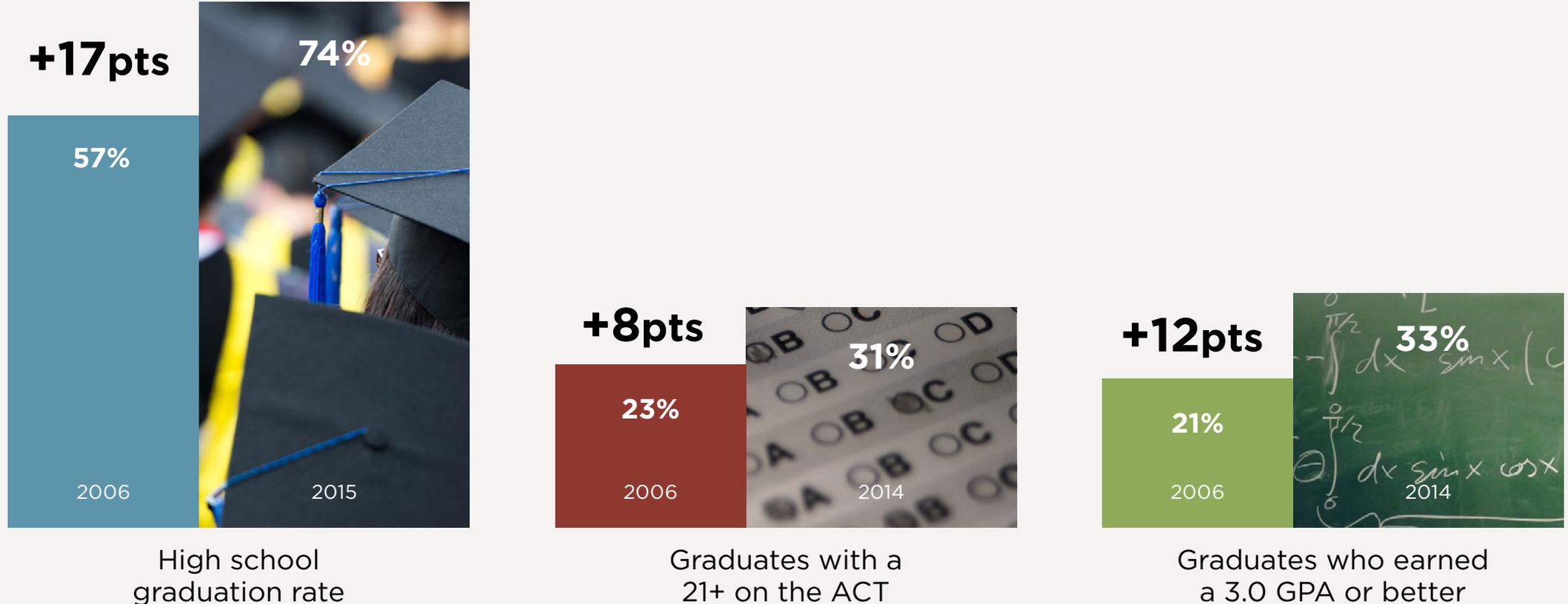
ASIAN



In the Past Decade, High School Graduation Rates at Neighborhood Schools Have Increased the Most



From 2006 to 2015, CPS Students' Educational Attainment Improved Considerably, but Not at the Expense of Achievement



The Most Promising Path to a College Degree is the Most Direct Path



4%

of students who did not immediately enroll in college after high school earned a bachelor's degree within six years of graduating high school

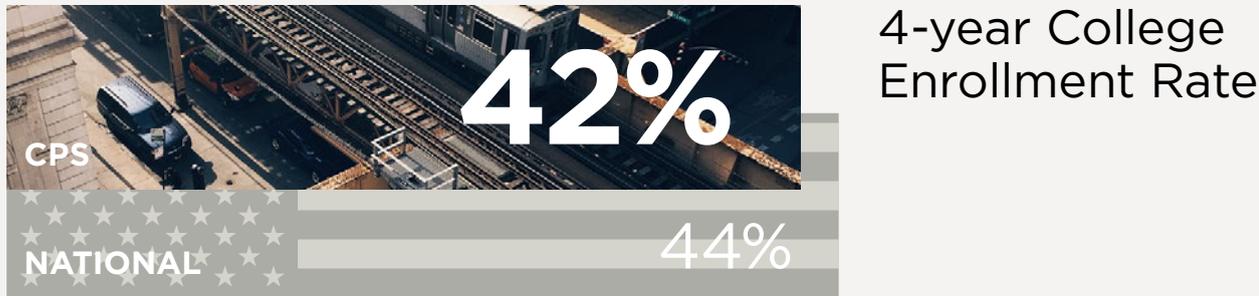
8%

of students who immediately enrolled in a 2-year college after high school earned a bachelor's degree within six years of graduating high school

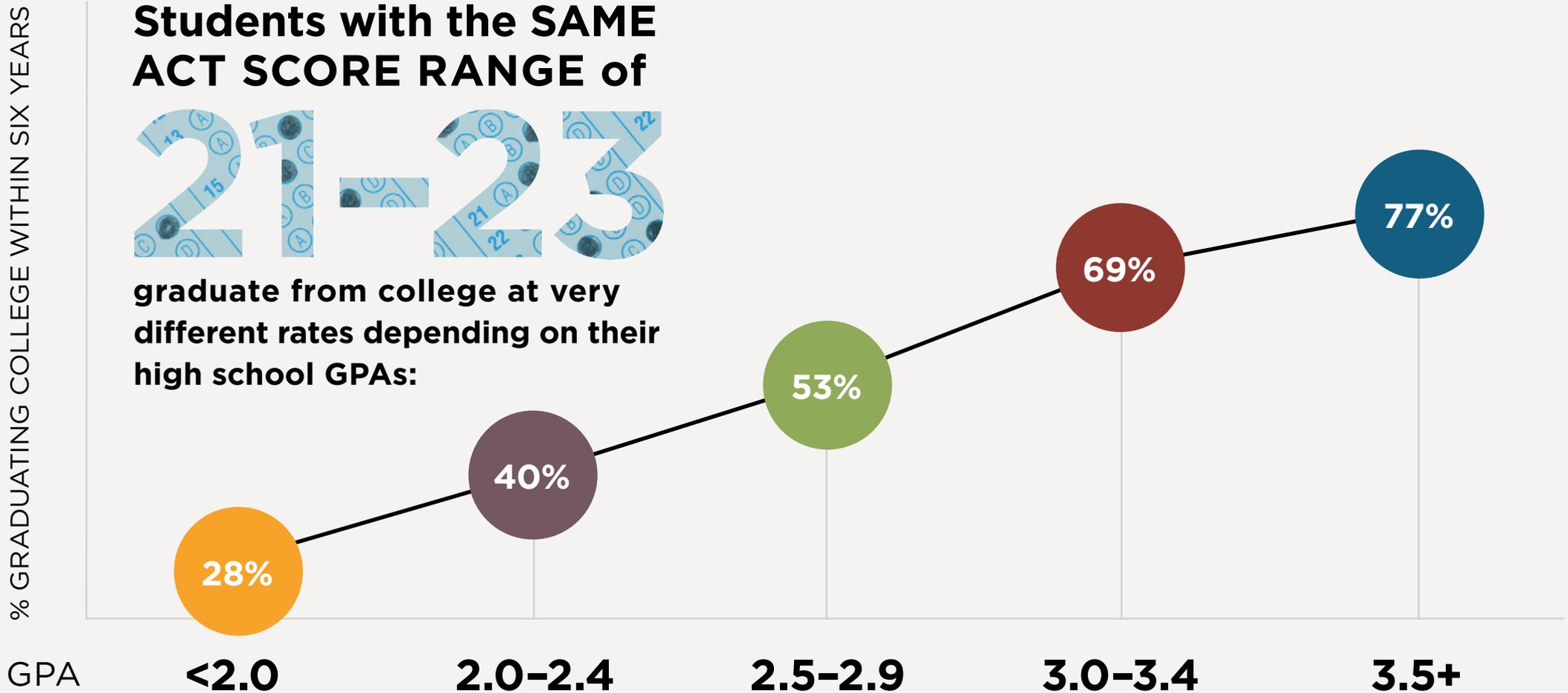
50%

of students who immediately enrolled in a 4-year college after high school earned a bachelor's degree within six years of graduating high school

Chicago's Educational Attainment is Catching Up to the Nation's

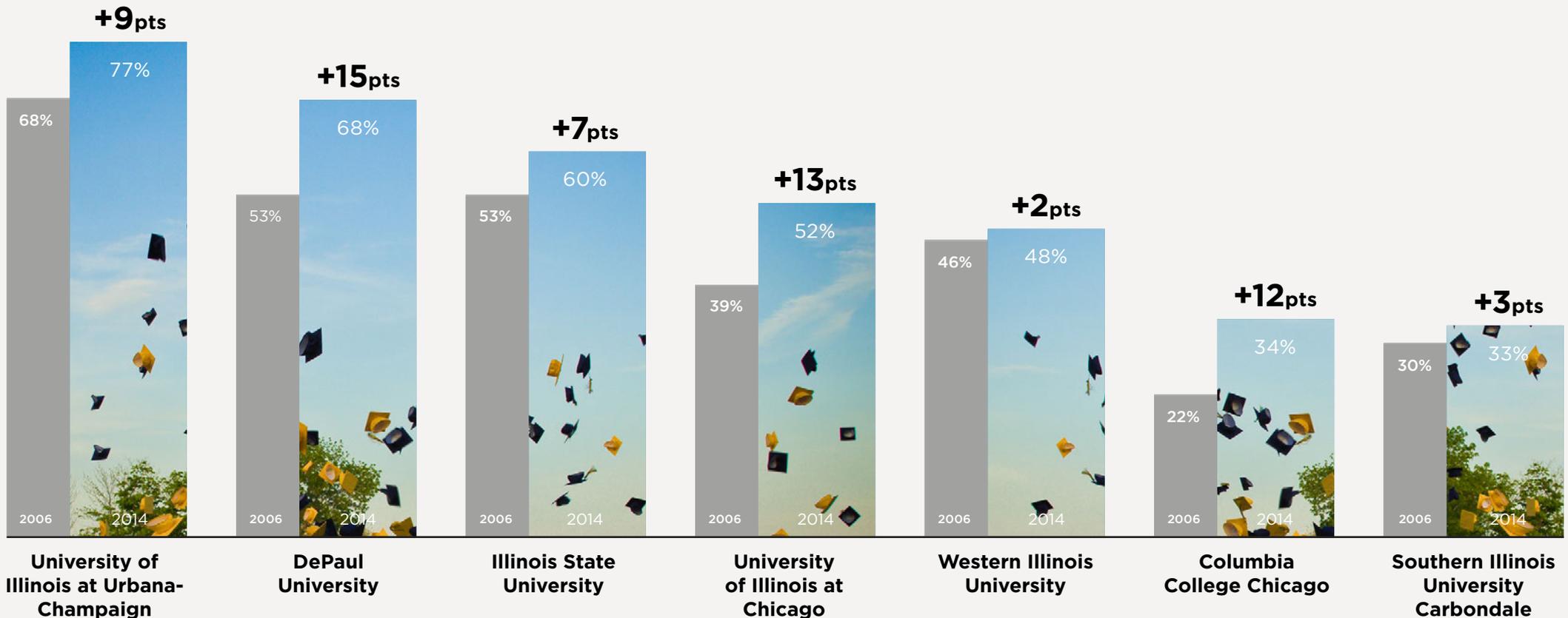


GPA—Not ACT Scores—Are the Strongest Predictor of College Graduation



Many Illinois Colleges and Universities are Improving Their Graduation Rates for Underrepresented Minority Students

Six-year Underrepresented Minority (URM) Graduation Rate





**the
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DATA

INSIGHTS

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High schools and colleges across Chicago are putting To&Through research, data, and resources into action to help more students reach the milestones that matter most for college success.

[Learn more about their To&Through strategies and results inside »](#)

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

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

INSIGHTS

Thomas Kelly High School, a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood school on the southwest side of Chicago, examined its class of 2013 college enrollment data and found:

Students who were qualified to attend somewhat selective colleges were unlikely to enroll in a school that matched their qualifications. Many students qualified for four-year colleges in Illinois, but only 18 percent were going to a 4-year school, and 52 percent weren't enrolling in college at all.

Working with the University of Chicago's Network for College Success and using college enrollment data reports as a guide, the school's postsecondary leadership team (PLT) asked probing questions: were students not applying to four-year schools, deciding not to enroll in them, or some combination of both? Kelly's PLT then analyzed data on the quality of students' college applications and match between students' qualifications and college choices.

STRATEGIES

The PLT at Kelly targeted students whose grades and ACT scores made them eligible for somewhat selective four-year colleges for one-on-one conversations about college choice. In the course of those conversations, the team identified common barriers and began to outline strategies for addressing them:

Financial aid was the source of a great deal of anxiety and confusion. Kelly's PLT is now beginning conversations about financial aid much earlier, so that students and families can grow more familiar with process of applying for financial aid and gain a deeper understanding of their options.

Many students thought they should only pursue a four-year degree if they had definitively chosen a career path. Kelly staff are now actively working to help students understand that, while course sequencing and major selection are important, they are not prerequisites for applying.

Many students qualified for four-year colleges had ACT scores near the lower threshold of those schools' application eligibility cut-offs. Kelly is now flagging those students to make sure they are exposed to more "alternative admissions" and test-optional schools where test scores are less likely to be barriers to admission or receiving financial aid.



SCHOOL OVERVIEW

THOMAS KELLY HIGH SCHOOL

School Type	Neighborhood
School Enrollment	2,188
Low Income	95%
African American	3%
Hispanic or Latino	80%
Diverse Learners	14%

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

RESULTS

The 2013-14 school year was the first time all 579 of Kelly High's graduating seniors applied to at least one college. By 2014-15, 100 percent of seniors applied to three or more schools, and 80 percent of those applications were to colleges that matched students' qualifications. All of Kelly's high-achieving students applied to at least one match college.

For more information about Kelly High School's postsecondary team, contact: Aurora Flores Garcia, College & Career Coach | afloresgarc@cps.edu

INSIGHTS

National Louis University (NLU), a private nonprofit university based in downtown Chicago that has historically served adult, part-time graduate and undergraduate students, recently reengineered its offerings for first-time, full-time freshmen with the objective of dramatically increasing first-generation college-goers' access to and ability to complete a bachelor's degree.

This reimagining was prompted by a 2014 University of Chicago Consortium on School Research report, which detailed that only 14 percent of Chicago Public Schools high school freshmen go on to earn their bachelors' degrees. Evidence further showed that many capable students—particularly those between a 2.0 and 3.0 GPA—did not enroll in college at all, and others enrolled but did not graduate. National Louis created the Harrison Professional Pathways Program to meet the needs of the large number of students who graduate high school and who are qualified for college but historically have enrolled, persisted, and graduated at low rates. These students are often first-generation college-goers, low-income, and underrepresented minorities.

STRATEGIES

In order to increase the effectiveness of the Pathways Program, NLU structured it with common barriers to college success in mind:

It is affordable (\$10,000 a year), and flexible, with two days a week for in-person instruction and access to an online learning platform which functions as their textbook throughout their coursework, thus enabling students to balance school with personal responsibilities such as work and family.

To help ensure that students are selecting courses that build to a degree, they choose from one of three "meta-majors," and the first two years of courses are pre-defined.

NLU strives to offer a personalized experience, capping class sizes at 30 students, utilizing adaptive courseware and a flipped classroom environment, and providing students with a Success Coach who serves as a counselor and mentor for all four years.

When data revealed that the strongest predictor of Pathways students' GPAs at NLU was not their high school GPAs or ACT scores but rather their level of college attendance and online courseware engagement, staff crafted messaging that communicated to students' that their efforts would pay off.

A dedicated data strategist equips professors and the program's success coaches with weekly data reports that flag students with "red light" patterns of attendance and assignment performance, supporting individualized intervention planning.



SCHOOL OVERVIEW NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

School Type	Private
Undergraduate Enrollment	1,393
Pell Grant recipients	49%
African American	41%
Hispanic or Latino	25%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, 8/31/2016 at: <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/school/?147536-National-Louis-University>

RESULTS

By the end of the first year of the program, 60 percent of students were on-track to graduate within four years based on their GPA, while only 20 percent were on-track early in the first quarter; i.e., **many students showed growth throughout the year.**

The Pathways Program is projecting that nearly 70 percent of its initial enrollees will return in the fall of their sophomore year, whereas the average retention rate for CPS graduates with a similar academic profile (2.5 average high school GPA and average ACT score of 16) is approximately 55 percent.

For more information on NLU's To&Through work, contact: Aarti Dhupelia, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives | adhupelia@nl.edu

INSIGHTS

In 2012, the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)— a public, urban, research university serving over 27,000 students —had a six-year graduation rate of 57 percent. This rate had nearly doubled over the preceding 17 years from 31 percent in 1998. The Chancellor of UIC launched a planning process aimed at continuing to increase student success with the immediate goal of raising UIC’s graduation rate to 65 percent and retention rate to 85 percent with racial and ethnic parity. Over 200 faculty, staff, and students serving on eight task forces conducted research and submitted recommendations, outlined in a “Student Success Plan,” to meet these goals.

STRATEGIES

Dedicated staff from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs serve as strategic leaders of the overarching Student Success Initiative and ensure coordination across the school’s nine undergraduate-serving colleges, all of which are responsible for their own admissions and advising. Other key partners include support units (athletics, career services, etc.), student cultural and affinity groups, and external nonprofit organizations.

Several of the University’s highly enrolled first-year courses have an “early alert” protocol so that an instructor who is concerned about any aspect of student performance can alert the students’ advisors. A new data system also allows coaches from nonprofit partners to access and monitor data on students’ grades and financial aid status.

UIC is exploring how students’ noncognitive factors relate to the challenges they face and the supports they need. A noncognitive survey showed promising links between noncognitive factors, grades, credit accumulation, and retention. Efforts have since been aimed at creating indexes of student strengths and challenges that map to interventions around noncognitive factors such as academic mindsets, perseverance, and time management.

UIC and Chicago Public Schools are partnering to use To&Through data to identify high schools that have large numbers of college-ready students who ultimately do not attend. Students from these partner schools receive transition coaching support while in high school, and those who enroll continue to be supported at UIC.



SCHOOL OVERVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

School Type	Public
Undergraduate Enrollment	17,959
Pell Grant recipients	52%
African American	8%
Hispanic or Latino	31%

Source: University of Illinois at Chicago: Office of Institutional Research. 9/15/2016 at: <http://www2.oir.uic.edu/index.html>

RESULTS

The outcome of the task forces led to a number of prioritized projects of which 20 have been initiated and 9 have been completed. New projects continue to be introduced at UIC.

In 2015, over 2,100 alerts were initiated by instructors for students enrolled in first-year courses.

A prematriculation inventory was implemented starting with the 2015 first-year cohort to assess students’ noncognitive strengths.

Due to the early success of the transition coaching program with students attending two CPS high schools, UIC has created partnerships with additional high schools.

For more information on University of Illinois at Chicago’s To&Through work, contact: Sue Farruggia, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs | spf@uic.edu or Tom Moss, Associate Vice Provost | tommos@uic.edu

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