



# Understanding Research & Applying Data



**Understanding the Conditions for Postsecondary Success**

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**Integrating a Developmental Approach to College Access**

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**Developing Systems to Monitor College Applications**

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**Suggested Learnings**

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# Understanding the Conditions for Postsecondary Success

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**From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College** Coming soon!

**Increasing College Success for High School Seniors** Coming soon!

**Potholes Case Studies and Analysis Exercise**

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## Purpose

Quality research can support educator practice and drive school improvement. The Network for College Success postsecondary approach stems from research coming out of the UChicago Consortium on School Research. Specifically, the 2008 *From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College* report continues to help our Coaches and partner educators better understand the school conditions that foster or hinder student postsecondary success. The accompanying case studies explore real student and school assets as well as barriers when navigating the process to and through college.

## How & When to Use

Reading the *Potholes* report is an excellent way to begin connecting postsecondary research with school practice. The report summary and case studies can be used in professional learning communities to explore school systems and structures that foster college enrollment and success. The sample research presentation further explores the major findings from *Potholes* and invites Counselors and other educators to think about how to apply school-wide postsecondary supports in their unique contexts.



## Understanding the Conditions for Postsecondary Success

# From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College

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The goal of this research report is to help Counselors, educators, district leaders, and policymakers understand the adaptive challenges and practical steps to improve postsecondary outcomes for first-generation students and students of color, who now overwhelmingly aspire to go to college. The report uses qualitative and quantitative data from seniors in Chicago Public Schools in 2005.

The executive summary of the report is included in this Toolkit. For the entire report, [click here >>](#)

To access the corresponding research presentation and video, [click here >>](#) Coming soon!



CONSORTIUM ON  
CHICAGO SCHOOL RESEARCH  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Executive Summary

# From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College



Melissa Roderick, Jenny Nagaoka, Vanessa Coca, Eliza Moeller  
*with* Karen Roddie, Jamiliyah Gilliam, and Desmond Patton



# Executive Summary

Over the past several decades, the United States has witnessed a dramatic shift in the educational aspirations of high school students, particularly among low-income and minority students. Thirty years ago, the task of applying to college was not on the agenda of most students in American high schools. In 1980, only 40 percent of all tenth-graders and only 20 percent of low-income tenth-graders hoped to complete at least a bachelor's degree.<sup>1</sup> In 2005, 83 percent of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) seniors stated that they hoped to earn a bachelor's degree or higher, and an additional 13 percent aspired to attain a two-year or vocational degree.

Since 2004, the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) has tracked the postsecondary experiences of successive cohorts of graduating CPS students and examined the relationship among high school preparation, support, college choice, and postsecondary outcomes. The goal of this research is to help CPS understand the determinants of students' postsecondary success and to identify key levers for improvement. Our first report in this series, *From High School to the Future: A First Look at Chicago Public School Graduates' College Enrollment, College Preparation, and Graduation from Four-Year Colleges*, provided a baseline of where CPS stood as a school system. We looked at how many students enrolled in college and what types of schools they attended, and we examined the role of students' qualifications (e.g., grades, test scores, and course-taking patterns) in shaping access to and graduation from college. The conclusion of our first report, confirming a significant body of research on the link between high school performance and college access and graduation, is that increasing qualifications is the most important strategy for CPS students to improve college participation, access to four-year and more selective colleges, and ultimately college graduation rates.

This report, the second report in the series, looks beyond qualifications to examine whether CPS students who aspire to four-year colleges are effectively participating in the college search and application process and where they encounter potholes on the road to college. Drawing on prior research, we examine both how students manage the college application process and what types of colleges students apply to and ultimately enroll in. First, are CPS students who aspire to attend a four-year college taking the steps they need to enroll in a four-year college? Second, do CPS students effectively participate in college search and

get the support they need to make informed choices about what colleges they could apply to and what colleges may best fit their needs?

A critical goal of this report is to understand where CPS students encounter difficulty and success as they navigate the college search and application process, as well as the extent to which high school educators can create environments that support students in thoroughly engaging in this process. Thus, throughout this report, we pay particular attention to differences in students' experiences across high schools. We examine whether the norms for college enrollment of high school environments shape students' likelihood to plan to attend, apply to, and enroll in four-year colleges. Supporting students in the college search and application process also requires that high schools be organized to maximize information and guidance for students as they cross critical hurdles. While this report is not intended to provide a blueprint for what high schools should be doing, wherever possible we have tried to examine the impact of these critical steps in determining whether and where students who aspire to attend a four-year college ultimately enroll.

## Examining Students' College Search, Application, and Match Process: The Data and Organization of this Report

In this report we use both qualitative and quantitative data to identify the barriers students face, and we focus specifically on the extent to which high school practices and environment shape students' participation in the college search and application process and their college enrollment patterns. We surveyed seniors about their college plans and activities and used CPS's postsecondary tracking system to follow successive cohorts of CPS graduates into college. We also talked to students. In addition to using qualitative data to elaborate on some of the findings presented in this report, we also present case studies from our qualitative study, each of which highlights a student who struggled at a different point in the postsecondary planning process. These case studies draw on our longitudinal, qualitative study of 105 CPS students in three high schools. They represent common themes that emerged from our qualitative work. All of the case studies can be downloaded at: [ccsr.uchicago.edu/potholes](http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/potholes).

For students to enroll in a suitable four-year college, they must effectively negotiate two sets of tasks. First, they must take a series of basic steps for four-year college enrollment: they must submit applications on time, apply for financial aid, gain acceptance, and ultimately enroll. Second, throughout this process, beyond hitting benchmarks, students must also be fully engaged in the often overwhelming task of finding the right college for them. This means thinking about what kinds of colleges they will likely be admitted to, what kind of college experience they want, and which colleges fit those descriptions. They must search for and decide upon a set of colleges that best meet their needs and provide a good college match. As we will illustrate in Chapter 1, CPS students are predominantly low-income, first-generation college-goers, and previous research finds that these students are particularly likely to encounter problems in both of these sets of tasks.

Clearly, these two sets of tasks are intertwined and are part of a larger process of college search and selection, but it is important to distinguish between these two ideas: taking the steps to enroll in college and engaging in the process of finding the right college. Students could take the steps necessary to enroll in a four-year college but fail to conduct a broad college search, limiting their applications. Or, students could conduct a broad college search, but miss important steps or deadlines. In Chapter 2, we focus on the first set of tasks: do students who aspire to attain a four-year college degree take the steps necessary to enroll in a four-year college? In Chapter 3, we look at the second set of tasks and consider the messier question of college match. In these two chapters, we analyze how students' negotiation of these tasks, as well as their schools' college climate, impacts *whether* they enroll in a four-year college (Chapter 2) and *where* they enroll (Chapter 3).

## Key Findings

### 1. CPS students who aspire to complete a four-year degree do not effectively participate in the college application process.

Among CPS students who aspire to attain a four-year degree, only 41 percent took the steps necessary in their senior year to apply to and enroll in a four-year college. An additional 9 percent of students managed to enroll in a four-year college without following the standard steps, for a total of 50 percent of all CPS students who aspired to a four-year degree. Our look at CPS seniors' road from college

aspirations to enrollment identifies three critical benchmarks that even well-qualified students too often failed to make. First, many students opt to attend a two-year or vocational school instead of a four-year college. Fewer than three-quarters (72 percent) of students who aspired to attain a four-year degree stated in the spring that they planned to attend a four-year college in the fall. Second, many students who hoped to attend a four-year college do not apply. Only 59 percent of CPS graduates who stated that they aspired to attain a four-year degree ever applied to a four-year college. Third, even students who apply to and are accepted at a four-year college do not always enroll.

- **Students of all levels of qualifications have difficulty taking the steps to enroll in a four-year college.**

Students who aspired to attain a four-year degree and graduated with low GPAs and ACT scores, and thus very limited access to college, were unlikely to plan to attend, apply to, or be accepted to four-year colleges. However, many of the more qualified students did not consider attending a four-year college, and even some who planned to attend did not apply. Only 73 percent of students qualified to attend a somewhat selective college (the majority of four-year colleges in Illinois) expected to attend a four-year college in the fall, and only 61 percent applied. Similarly, only 76 percent of students qualified to attend a selective four-year college applied to a four-year college, even though students with access to a selective four-year college were accepted at very high rates when they applied.

- **Latino students have the most difficulty managing college enrollment.**

Latino students were the least likely to plan to enroll in a four-year college after graduation and the least likely to apply to a four-year college. Only 60 percent of Latino graduates who aspired to attain a four-year degree planned to attend a four-year college in the fall, compared to 77 percent of African-American and 76 percent of White/Other Ethnic graduates. Fewer than half of Latino students who aspired to a four-year degree applied to a four-year college, compared to about 65 percent of their African-American and White/Other Ethnic counterparts. One common explanation for why Latino CPS students do not enroll in four-year colleges is that they are immigrants. However, we found that immigrant status does not fully explain the gap in college enrollment between Latino and other students; after controlling

for immigrant status, qualifications, and other student characteristics, Latino students are still 13 percentage points less likely to enroll in a four-year college than African-American students.

**2. Attending a high school with a strong college-going culture shapes students' participation in the college application process.**

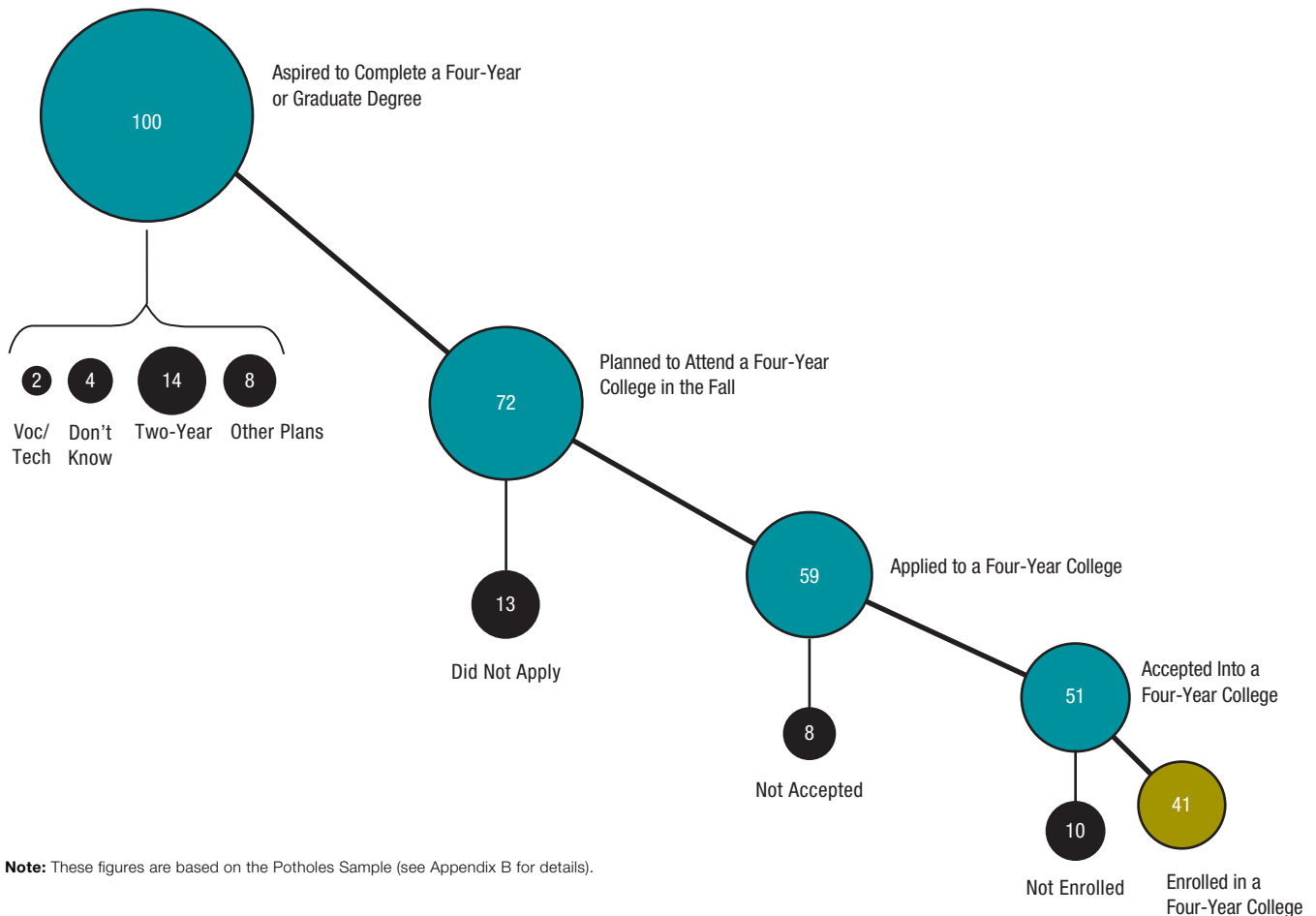
Across all our analyses, the single most consistent predictor of whether students took steps toward college enrollment was whether their teachers reported that their high school had a strong college climate, that is, they and their colleagues pushed students to go to college, worked to ensure that students would be prepared, and were involved in

supporting students in completing their college applications. Indeed, students who attended high schools in which teachers reported a strong college climate were significantly more likely to plan to attend a four-year school, apply, be accepted, and enroll. Importantly, having a strong college climate seemed to make the biggest difference for students with lower levels of qualifications. In addition, the college plans and behaviors of Latino students in CPS are particularly shaped by the expectations of their teachers and counselors and by connections with teachers. This suggests that Latino students may be much more reliant than other students on teachers and their school for guidance and information, and that their college plans are more dependent on their connections to school.

**FIGURE 11**

**Only 41 percent of CPS graduates who aspired to complete a four-year degree took these steps and enrolled in a four-year college in the fall after graduation—an additional 9 percent enrolled in college without taking these steps**

*Tracking students through the steps to college enrollment:*



**3. Filing a FAFSA and applying to multiple colleges shape students' likelihood of being accepted to and enrolling in a four-year college.**

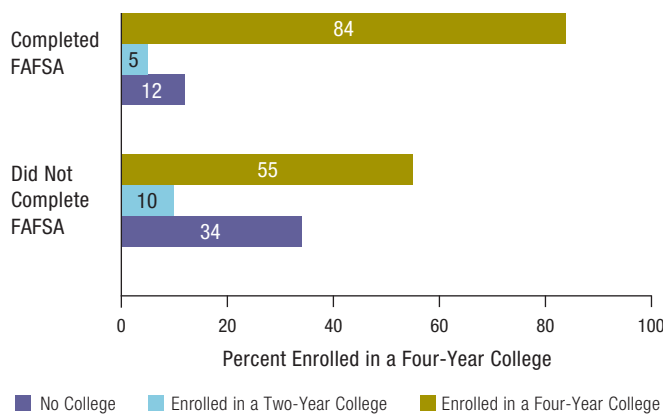
Applying for financial aid is not easy, but it may be the most critical step for low-income students on the road to college. It is also one of the most confusing steps, and it is a point at which many CPS students stumble. Our analysis finds, moreover, that many CPS students may end up facing higher costs for college because they do not take the step of filing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is needed to maximize federal, state, and institutional support. In addition, CPS has set the goal that students should apply to at least five colleges to maximize their options. Our analysis supports this approach.

- **Not filing a FAFSA may be a significant barrier to college enrollment for CPS students.**

Students who reported completing a FAFSA by May and had been accepted into a four-year college were more than 50 percent more likely to enroll than students who had not completed a FAFSA. This strong association holds even after we control for differences in students' qualifications, family background and neighborhood characteristics, and support from teachers, counselors, and parents. Not surprisingly, Latino students who aspire to complete a four-year degree were the least likely to report that they had completed a FAFSA.

**FIGURE 19**  
**Students who were accepted into a four-year college were much more likely to enroll if they completed the FAFSA**

*Difference in college enrollment by whether students completed their FAFSA among students who were accepted into a four-year college:*



**Note:** FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion rates come from student responses to the 2005 CPS Senior Exit Questionnaire. Numbers are based on the Potholes Sample (see Appendix B for details).

- **Applying to multiple colleges makes it more likely that students will be accepted to a four-year college.**

Controlling for students' qualifications, family background, and reports of the individual support they received from teachers, counselors, and parents, students who applied to at least one four-year college were more likely to be accepted if they applied to three or more, and particularly six or more, schools. The effect of multiple applications was most significant for students who have lower levels of qualifications. It is these students who may have the most difficulty getting accepted at a four-year college. Their likelihood of acceptance is most affected by whether they are active in the application process and by whether they attend schools where the norm is applying to multiple colleges.

**4. Only about one-third of CPS students who aspire to complete a four-year degree enroll in a college that matches their qualifications.**

In this report, we use the concept of “match” to describe whether a student enrolled in a college with a selectivity level that matched the kind of colleges the student would likely have been accepted to, given his or her high school qualifications. College “match” is an easily quantifiable outcome, but ultimately finding the right college means more than gaining acceptance to the most competitive college possible. It is about finding a place that is a good “fit:” a college that meets a student’s educational and social needs, as well as one that will best support his or her intellectual and social development. Match is just one consideration of the larger process of engaging in an effective college search, but it is also an important indicator of whether students are engaged more broadly in a search that incorporates the larger question of fit. Furthermore, research, including our own, has consistently found that college choice matters, particularly for well-qualified students; there is wide variation in college graduation rates, even among colleges that serve similar students.<sup>2</sup>

When we examined match among CPS students, the dominant pattern of behavior for students who mismatch is not that they choose to attend a four-year college slightly below their match. Rather, many students mismatch by enrolling in two-year colleges or not enrolling in college at all. Across all students, about two-thirds (62 percent) of students attended a college with a selectivity level that was below the kinds of colleges they would have most likely been accepted to, given their level of qualifications.



- **Among the most highly qualified students in CPS, only 38 percent enroll in a match college.**

One-quarter of students with qualifications to attend a very selective college enrolled in a college with a slightly lower level of selectivity (a selective college). About 20 percent enrolled in a somewhat selective college (a college with a selectivity rating far below their level of qualifications). An additional 17 percent enrolled in a nonselective four-year college, a two-year college, or no college at all. Taken together, the most-qualified students were equally likely to not enroll in college or enroll in a college far below their match (37 percent) as they were to enroll in a very selective college (38 percent).

- **Mismatch is an issue among CPS students of all levels of qualifications.**

Students in our sample with access to selective colleges (e.g., DePaul University or Loyola University) were actually less likely to match than their classmates with access to very selective colleges. Only 16 percent of students with access to selective colleges enrolled in a match college. An additional 11 percent enrolled in a very selective college, a rating higher than their match category—what we term “above match.” Thus only 27 percent of CPS graduates in the Match Sample with access to a selective college enrolled in a selective or very selective college, while fully 29 percent of these students enrolled in a two-year college or did not enroll at all. This mismatch problem is nearly as acute for students who had access to somewhat selective colleges (the majority of four-year public colleges in Illinois).

**5. Among the most highly qualified students, having discussions on postsecondary planning and having strong connections to teachers is particularly important in shaping the likelihood of enrolling in a match school.**

In addition, we found that all students were much more likely to match if they attended schools with strong college-going cultures. Thus, attending a high school where teachers are oriented to prepare and support students in their postsecondary aspirations has a strong impact on whether students go on to attend a match college.

## Concluding Points

No Child Left Behind has made closing the gap in educational achievement among racial/ethnic groups and between low-income students and their more advantaged peers a priority of every school in the United States. One area where we have seen dramatic reductions in gaps across race/ethnicity and income is in educational aspirations. But we know that closing the gap in high school performance is critical if we are to help students attain their college aspirations. In our last report, we found that poor qualifications undermined CPS students’ college access and performance. We argued that central to improving college access was getting students to increase their qualifications, work harder, and value their classroom performance.

If we are to ask students to work harder and value achievement, educators and policymakers must work equally as hard to deliver on the promise that if students achieve high levels of qualifications, they will have equal access to the kinds of colleges and opportunities as their more advantaged counterparts. In a world of rising college costs, CPS educators unfortunately will have difficulty delivering on that promise. But, the findings of this report demonstrate the myriad of ways in which CPS students, even the highest performers, are disadvantaged as they work to translate those qualifications into college enrollment. Too many Chicago students who aspire to attain a four-year college degree do not even apply to a four-year college. Too many students who are accepted do not enroll. In this report, we show how the social capital gap—the extent to which students have access to norms for college enrollment, information on how to prepare and effectively participate in college search and selection, and effective guidance and support in making decisions about college—shapes students’ college access. Like previous research, we find that low-income students struggle in the process of college search and application and encounter potholes that divert them off the road to four-year colleges. The good news in this report is there are ways that CPS teachers, counselors, and administrators can improve college access for students: ensuring that students who aspire to attain a four-year degree get the help they need to understand how to make decisions about potential colleges, making sure that students effectively participate in the college application process and apply for financial aid in time to maximize their financial support, and urging students to apply to colleges that match their qualifications.

“The rising aspirations of urban students demands that high school educators see themselves as playing a new and important role in students’ lives...Ensuring that students effectively participate in the college search and financial aid processes is not just important for students’ college outcomes. It may also be a critical component of any larger high school reform effort.”

—Interpretive Summary, *From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College*

To download a copy of the full report or request a printed copy, visit: [ccsr.uchicago.edu/potholes](http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/potholes)

The analysis in this report suggests two important take-home messages to educators. The first is that educators must realize that preparation will not necessarily translate into college enrollment if high schools do not provide better structure and support for students in the college search, planning, and application process.<sup>3</sup> The second take-home message is that if the most highly qualified students do not attend colleges that demand high qualifications, then their hard work has not paid off. Making hard work worthwhile must be a central goal if CPS is going to ask all students to work hard and value their course performance and achievement.

Paying attention to whether students effectively participate in the college search and application process could be an essential support for high school reform if we use it to convince students that working hard in high school and valuing achievement will pay off for them in the future. This task is not an easy one. The interpretive summary highlights three critical areas that high schools must develop if they are to help students understand why achievement matters, aspire to postsecondary institutions that demand that achievement, and obtain access to those institutions by effectively participating in college search and selection. These areas are: (1) building strong systems of support for the college search and application process during junior and senior years; (2) creating strong college-going cultures that set norms for college attendance and provide information,

relationships, and access to concrete supports and expert knowledge to build bridges to the future; and (3) providing access to information and guidance in obtaining financial aid, information about how to afford colleges, and the true costs of different college options.

Indeed, the findings of this report raise the question: What will it take to build new systems of support and new capacity at the district, school, and classroom levels? The problems outlined in this report are complex, and we have provided no easy list of solutions. The scope suggests that multiple and varied solutions will be required and must include a focus on building capacity. What are we asking teachers, counselors, and school staff to accomplish? What are the best ways of organizing systems of supports, staffing, and information that will build the capacity of teachers, counselors, and schools—and ultimately of parents and students? What kinds of incentives, programmatic and personnel resources, and management systems will best promote a strong focus on college access in a diverse set of high schools? CPS has already begun to take the first steps to build a system to support its students on the road to college with its postsecondary initiatives, but the task will also require substantial resources from the district and strong commitments from each high school to develop new approaches and capacity. We hope the analysis and data provided in this report provide a useful tool for policymakers, educators, and the larger community to begin this work.

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## Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2004).
- 2 Titus (2004); Roderick, Nagaoka, and Allensworth (2006).
- 3 McDonough (1997); Cabrera and La Nasa (2000); Gonzales, Stoner, and Jovel (2003).



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Consortium researchers spent nearly two years interviewing and tracking the academic progress of 105 students in three Chicago high schools. Each of the ten case studies included in the “Potholes” report tells the story of an individual student but also highlights the difficulties faced by many students in the postsecondary planning process.

“My parents told me to do whatever I want, that money isn’t an issue, but I think it is. So...I’m going to pick a college that would make it easier for my family.”—*Javier, a first-generation college student, lacked strong college guidance from his school and enrolled in an automotive technical school, despite an academic record that qualified him for a selective college.*

“I just keep seeing those essays. I’m like, ‘OK, I’m going to get back to that. And then...I just feel like I don’t have enough time in the day.” —*Sabrina, a highly qualified student with an overwhelming senior year workload, became too focused on one college option and never enrolled in college in the fall after graduation.*

“I have no idea. I want to go to college, but I’m at the point [where] I don’t know what I want to be. That’s pretty much how you’re spending the rest of your life...so I find it’s a pretty big decision.”—*Jennie, a well-rounded student who earned top grades in a rigorous International Baccalaureate program but made an early decision to attend a two-year college.*

“I’m going to apply to many different schools because I don’t want to get stuck and focus on one university and that doesn’t go through.”—*Franklin, a charismatic student with modest academic qualifications and strong support at home who conducted a thorough college search and landed in a well-matched state public university.*

To read their stories and download the case studies, see: [ccsr.uchicago.edu/potholes](https://ccsr.uchicago.edu/potholes)



## Understanding the Conditions for Postsecondary Success

# Increasing College Success for High School Seniors

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A sample research presentation on the importance of a school-wide focus on college success in order to increase student enrollment and persistence. The presentation was created with Network for College Success Coaches and a UChicago Consortium researcher.

[Click here to view >>](#) Coming soon!





## Understanding the Conditions for Postsecondary Success

# Potholes Case Studies and Analysis Exercise

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The case studies included in the *Potholes* research report highlight ten students who struggled at different points in the postsecondary planning process. The corresponding analysis exercise can help Counselors and other educators analyze the case studies and collectively think about the implications for practice.

Three case studies are included in this Toolkit. To read all of the case studies, [click here >>](#)



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Case Studies

# From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College



Melissa Roderick, Jenny Nagaoka, Vanessa Coca, Eliza Moeller  
*with* Karen Roddie, Jamilyah Gilliam, and Desmond Patton

# Clara—A Case Study

## Making her hard work pay off all by herself

Can it be assumed that smart, motivated students can manage the postsecondary planning process just fine on their own? Clara shows that, when it comes to college planning, even the best students in a school can go almost unnoticed by adults.

From the first semester of her freshman year until the day she walked across the stage at graduation, Clara<sup>1</sup> was the one of the top students in her class at Ellison High School. She graduated from the IB program with a weighted GPA of 4.7 and an ACT score of 24. Her stellar high school performance afforded her the opportunity to attend not only a very selective school but almost any college or university in the country. Clara's teachers confirmed her academic ability. Her English teacher described her as: "A rare individual. The only problem or weakness I see in this student is the pressure she places on herself." Her math teacher said: "She has extremely high expectations of herself and has a strong work ethic that allows her to meet her high standards. At the same time, she always helps her peers." Clara was a prolific writer of fiction and poetry, for which she won numerous awards, including some scholarships. In the minds of her teachers, peers, and family, there were few doors not open to this remarkable young woman.

Clara lived with both her parents and younger sister. Although Clara's parents, who are of Puerto Rican descent, had virtually no experience with college, Clara made it clear her mother was her greatest ally in college planning. Clara's mother insisted that Clara attend a "good school," but neither Clara nor her mother was sure what schools are considered "good."

### Junior Year: An Active but Uninformed College Search

During the spring of her junior year, Clara was clear about her intent to go to a four-year college but had a hard time describing her ideal college. She did, however, know that she wanted to stay in Chicago so she could continue to live at home and that she preferred a small college. And while Clara had never taken an art class

in high school, she wanted to study art and design. When asked why she said:

"I'm not really sure what [graphic design] consists of. I just know it's like you're designing. There's this website and you make your own pages with all these codes, and I did it and I liked the results. And that's why I really want to go into graphic design."

By the end of junior year, Clara's plan was to study art or design at a school where she could take a variety of courses. A teacher had encouraged her to attend a more comprehensive college than an art and design school. Clara liked this idea because it would allow her to experiment with different kinds of courses. In the end, though, her list of colleges was the same as many of her less-qualified peers, including schools like Northeastern Illinois University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Loyola University. Clara wasn't excited about attending any of them.

### Summer: Doing Her Research Campus by Campus

Clara's mother was as active as Clara in the process of college search and selection. Every time Clara mentioned a college that she was interested in attending, her mother insisted on driving to the campus for a tour and even sitting in on classes. Clara and her mother visited several colleges over the summer, and Clara completed a week of classes at the Illinois Institute of Art.

### Fall Senior Year: Making Up Her Mind

In the fall of her senior year, Clara continued a college search that was extensive, but not well directed. Clara spoke casually with her teachers about her college plans, but she had not spoken with a counselor or had a



serious conversation about her college choices with any educator at her school. Clara reported an incident in the counseling office when she was trying to figure out the difference between official and unofficial transcripts:

“Everyone’s so grouchy . . . in the [counseling] office. I guess I can understand, because they wouldn’t remember one single application, but I don’t know . . . they could be more approachable.”

Clara invested significant time and energy in completing applications to about eight schools. Many of Clara’s peers in the IB program struggled to balance the demands of rigorous IB culminating projects and the college application process. Clara got everything done on time—even submitting applications for Loyola and Columbia College in Chicago (a nonselective four-year college) by the priority deadlines—without her school work suffering. In the fall, Clara said she planned to attend Columbia “*for sure*.” She toured the school, enjoyed the atmosphere and downtown location, and knew she could study graphic design.

### Winter Senior Year: Changing Her Mind

During her winter interview, Clara said she changed her mind and decided to “*definitely*” attend Loyola, again based largely on having toured the campus and sat in on a class there, which she enjoyed. She was accepted to Loyola and Columbia, and Loyola offered her a merit-based scholarship to cover some of her tuition. Though Clara had no problem completing her college applications, she was overwhelmed by the process of applying for financial aid. She was familiar with tax documents because she helped her parents complete their forms, but she was confused by certain questions on the FAFSA. Clara was confident she’d figure it out and complete her financial aid applications by April or May. She never met with a counselor.

### Spring Senior Year: Changing Her Mind Again

Clara changed her mind about which college to attend one more time before graduation, and finally planned to attend a small, in-state liberal arts school ranked as somewhat selective.<sup>2</sup> Spring of her senior year was the first time she ever mentioned this school:

Interviewer: [That school] is not on this list. Last time you said Loyola, UIC, and Columbia . . . [laughing] What happened?

Clara: [Laughing] [My mom and I] passed by the school, and I’m like, ‘This is a nice school. What is that?’ So my mom started looking up stuff. She [told me], ‘I think you’d like this school.’ And so we looked at it, the web page and then we signed up for the tour. I really love this school.

Clara was one of the top five students in her graduating class, but she never considered applying to a very selective college. Apparently, no one steered her to one either. Her teachers recognized that she was a remarkable young woman, but she never spoke to a counselor and never seriously discussed her plans for the future with any adult at her school.

Not surprisingly, Clara was accepted at all the institutions to which she applied. Though her confusion over financial aid looked like it might have been a serious stumbling block when she discussed it in February, Clara ended up figuring out financial aid, presumably with the help of her new college, and she did end up receiving enough federal, institutional, and private scholarship money to make her college education affordable for her and her family.<sup>3</sup> Clara’s IB coursework and test scores helped place her into advanced freshmen courses at her college. In the fall, she was thoroughly engaged as an English major and very happy with her college choice.

With the help of an exceptionally involved parent, Clara managed to find her way to a school that made her feel at home, took care of her as a first-generation college student, and promised to support her academic ambitions throughout college. It is also apparent that this choice was arrived at through no small amount of luck, with Clara and her mother accidentally happening upon a college that proved a good fit for Clara. With such limited guidance from her school, it is easy to imagine how Clara’s story might not have had such a positive ending.

*Endnotes for this case study can be found on page 96.*



# Javier—A Case Study

## When schools talk about college, students listen

How closely do students listen to the messages schools convey about postsecondary education? Javier, a quiet teen with a strong drive to attend college and excellent academic qualifications, illustrates how first-generation college-goers depend on their schools to provide postsecondary guidance.

A Mexican-American student born and raised in Chicago, Javier<sup>1</sup> graduated from Silverstein High School with a 3.95 weighted GPA and a 21 on the ACT, earning him access to a selective college. Javier—with an easygoing nature and genuine desire to learn—thrived in the classroom. His teacher described him as “very gifted . . . his reading, writing, and composition skills are superior. He is focused, motivated and a true pleasure to have in class.” Like many other well-qualified students, Javier managed to apply to multiple colleges, but without guidance, this wasn’t enough to ensure he would consider colleges that matched his qualifications.

### Junior Year: Seeking the Right Information

Javier and his entire family expected that he would attend a four-year college. He believed college would make life easier. Javier’s drafting teacher, a former architect, often talked to the class about college requirements and deadlines. Javier was very invested in this class and spoke at length with his teacher, who provided him with career guidance, including information about internship opportunities. From that point on, Javier was set on becoming an architect.

Javier chose a rigorous senior year course schedule to prepare to attend a four-year college. He enrolled in AP English and honors college algebra.

“I chose math because I just couldn’t see next year without math, I would be all confused the first year of college. I think colleges are looking for the students that take challenges.”

Javier also participated in a program in his junior and senior years that allowed him to earn college credit

by taking a computer information technology class at Northwestern Business College every Saturday morning. At the end of junior year, Javier started researching colleges on the Internet, but his college search was limited to schools he heard about on television or who sent him information.

### Fall Senior Year: Confused Search, Diligent Applications

Javier returned to school from summer vacation and continued to struggle to understand how the college search process worked. Applying to college was new territory for him and his family, so he needed all the help he could get: “*I don’t know anything about college, so information is information.*” He listened intently to his teachers as they shared scholarship information and important deadlines, but they never talked to him one-on-one about college. As advised, he retook the ACT and improved his score from a 19 to a 21. He never spoke with a counselor about his postsecondary plans. He explained:

“She doesn’t talk to us individually. We could go talk to her, but . . . she’s always busy.”

Even without personalized help, Javier eagerly participated in the college search process with what limited information he had. He now planned to study computer engineering and diligently researched application deadlines and admissions requirements on the Internet. However, he still was only able to identify a few college possibilities and couldn’t answer why he believed those schools would be a good choice for him.

Despite his lack of information, Javier was ahead of the game with his applications. By November, he had already applied to three schools, all far below his

match: DeVry University, Robert Morris College, and Northwestern Business College. Javier continued to attend classes at Northwestern Business College and was rewarded with an \$11,000 scholarship for completing the program and having a GPA over 3.5.<sup>6</sup> This would cover the bulk of his tuition, but he would still be responsible for a few thousand dollars. Even with the scholarship, he was still concerned about paying for college. He believed that the bulk of his tuition should be paid for through independent scholarships, so he put great energy into searching the Internet for scholarships. Javier also expected to take out loans but hadn't begun to make sense of how to do this. When he spoke to his mother about tuition, she told him not to worry about the cost, but he still saw it as a barrier:

“[My parents] told me...money isn't an issue, but I think it is. So I'm trying to pick a college that would make it easier for my family.”

Javier would be the first in his family to pursue higher education. Although his parents couldn't offer specific advice as he searched for colleges, they always supported his decision to attend college.

### Winter Senior Year: Now What?

By February, Javier was at a standstill. He hadn't researched or applied to any additional colleges. All three colleges he applied to had accepted him, but he was ambivalent about which he wanted to attend, even though Northwestern Business College had offered him a scholarship. He put the college decision on the back burner while he waited for his parents to finish filing their taxes so he could complete the FAFSA. He figured he'd decide after the financial aid letters arrived.

### Spring Senior Year: A Choice He Understands

At the end of senior year, Javier shifted gears again. His drafting teacher brought in a representative from the Universal Technical Institute (UTI), a local automotive and diesel repair school with an 18-month job certification program. Right away, Javier became very interested in an automotive repair career. After the presentation, Javier asked the UTI representative for his

card, contacted him, and the representative arranged a meeting at Javier's home. During this home visit, Javier filled out the application and was soon accepted. His parents were supportive of their son's decision. Javier never visited UTI, but it seemed like a practical option and he latched onto it.

“I decided to go to UTI because I was more interested in the program, and it's less time. The other colleges would have been three or four years. I just want to get the studies over with and go to work.”

This was the first time an adult sat down and asked Javier specific questions about college and walked him through the steps to apply and enroll in school. UTI also offered the small class size that Javier preferred and would help him find a job while in school. No other college provided Javier with information and attention like UTI.

At that point, Javier decided the cost of the school was no longer a concern. To cover the \$23,000 tuition, Javier would continue to work part-time and was assured that UTI would help him find a higher paying job when classes started. He reported that the school gave him modest financial aid: \$1,900 for books and supplies. He was still waiting to hear back about his FAFSA, and UTI told Javier they would “*check into it.*” It is unclear whether or not he applied for financial aid correctly and why he chose UTI over Northwestern Business College, where he had already received a substantial scholarship. UTI seemed to be a safe choice; he had someone who had taken an interest in his future and personally walked him through the process.

During high school, Javier attended presentations by four postsecondary institutions—the only four schools to which he applied. Javier's college search barely went beyond these four schools and never included even one selective college. Javier is an example of an intelligent, motivated student whose limited information prevented him from completing a thorough search for a match school. A one-on-one conversation with an adult at school who recognized his academic potential could have altered his outcome dramatically, ensuring he at least considered schools he was qualified to attend.

# Franklin—A Case Study

## A successful search with modest qualifications

Does a student have to be highly qualified to thoroughly engage in the college search and application process? Franklin demonstrates that with the right information, strong supports at home, and a drive to attend college, a student with modest qualifications can make a college match—and a successful transition.

A charismatic African-American student at Ellison High School, Franklin<sup>1</sup> graduated with a B average and an ACT score of 19, giving him access to a somewhat selective college. Since many of the colleges in Illinois are considered somewhat selective, Franklin was at an advantage in finding a match school. His thoughtful, extroverted nature brought enthusiasm to his baseball team and a liveliness to the classroom. When asked about his future, Franklin never wavered in his desire to attend a four-year college. To Franklin, success meant some day owning a music production company, and he demonstrated his commitment to this goal by spending countless hours in his cousin's recording studio. He planned to major in business.

Though Franklin was committed to his schoolwork, he did not achieve the highest grades. Teachers and staff at Ellison knew Franklin well and recognized his potential to mature. His English teacher described him as “lively, funny, and creative . . . he very much needs to hear that he has potential, not only in the music world but also academically.” Another teacher nominated him for a leadership program, and Franklin took his role as a leader seriously.

### Junior Year: Ahead of the Game With His Search

Unlike most students, Franklin knew his way around a college campus because he spent many weekends with his brother, a Northern Illinois University student. Franklin liked Northern and could see himself as a student there, but he hesitated to follow in his brother's footsteps.

Thanks to his family's guidance, Franklin never seemed overwhelmed by the college search process, a problem that stymied so many of his peers. In the fall, Franklin started making a list of possible colleges,

including Northern, the University of Illinois, and Illinois State University. He zeroed in on schools that offered a business major and the opportunity to play baseball. Franklin's brother played an important role in his search, and his mother pushed him to attend college outside the Chicago area.

Franklin knew his grades were crucial for college acceptance, and he worked harder in his junior year classes than he had in previous years. He took a business class, improved his writing, and relished the challenge of his AP and honors classes:

“Colleges, they look at that and see [me] getting As and Bs in honors classes . . . and [they say], ‘I think he can do well in a college class.’”

Franklin completed his junior year feeling confident about his achievements and his decisions for senior year. After careful thought, he decided not to take a math class during his senior year; instead, he decided to take a class in which he was sure to earn an A or B in order to keep his GPA high.

### Summer: A Little Work, a Little Play

Over the summer, Franklin spent many hours working on his music at his cousin's recording studio. At his mother's suggestion, he got a job at the library—which he held throughout his senior year and felt strengthened his “*people skills*.” He also attended baseball camps around the Midwest, including one camp at Ohio University. While there, Franklin decided to add Ohio University to his list of possible schools. For Franklin, a pattern was emerging: each college campus he visited made its way onto his college list.

### Fall Senior Year: Relying on Family, Honing His List

In the fall, Franklin carefully narrowed his list. School brochures accumulated, and Franklin diligently read each piece of mail. He fell behind schedule because he spent more time looking at applications than filling them out. He said:

“I’m not going to rush to make a decision. I’m going to apply to many different schools because I don’t want to get stuck and focus on one university and that doesn’t go through.”

Franklin recognized which schools were realistic for him and considered schools he knew matched his qualifications, as well as a few “reach schools.” Franklin was aware that colleges look beyond academic qualifications and also consider a student’s personal qualities. He knew it would be important to portray himself well in his essays.

Despite all of his hard work, Franklin had not spent much time talking to adults in his school. He had not visited his counselor, but he knew he needed to do so to obtain his transcripts. Although he always sought his mother’s counsel, his main source of guidance was his brother who Franklin credited with providing the best advice about how to pick the right school.

When it came to financing college, Franklin was in a better position than many of his peers. Franklin’s mother and brother both were attending college and had experience with applying for financial aid. Franklin’s mother assured him she would handle it, which he reported she did in February. The cost of college never intimidated Franklin; he felt comfortable taking on college loans to attend the school of his choice. He and his mother spoke often about the cost of college, and they both agreed he would attend college no matter what it took. If it took him 30 years to pay off his college debt, he was OK with that. Above all, he wanted to identify a college he could both enjoy and afford.

### Winter Senior Year: Finding His Favorites

Late in the fall, Franklin visited a friend at Southern Illinois University. He immediately felt comfortable

there and added Southern to his list—in fact, he moved it to the top. Because Franklin applied primarily to state schools with less complex applications, he was able to start and finish his applications in January and not miss any deadlines. He worked on his personal statement in his business class and submitted it to his two top schools. Before applying, he had asked both his teacher and mother to read his essay. In total, Franklin applied to seven schools.

### Spring Senior Year: Filling in the Final Details

By the end of his senior year, Franklin had taken all the necessary steps to ensure he would attend college. While he did not always meet priority deadlines, he still applied early enough to gain acceptance to all seven schools. One final campus visit sold Franklin on attending Southern. He liked the environment and location of the university, felt comfortable among the students, liked the business program, and could afford the tuition. By spring, Franklin had already attended orientation, spoken with business professors, and registered for classes. Overall, Franklin felt his high school did a good job preparing students for college, but the responsibility for following through largely fell to the student:

“It was like we couldn’t always rely on them being there to help us through every little step, even though the guidance is good, but still as a student you still have to push forward and get it done.”

Franklin did not know the specifics of his financial aid package but knew he was in good shape.<sup>7</sup> Because he would be the third person in his family enrolled in college, he was offered an aid package that made it affordable for him to attend Southern. At the end of senior year, he had met his goals of graduating on time and getting all As except for one B. By fall after graduation, Franklin was happily enrolled at Southern and active in campus life. He played intramural baseball, joined a business fraternity, and worked at a radio station. Franklin was a rare example of a student who navigated the college process successfully and landed in a well-matched college.



## Case Studies Analysis Exercise

The Analysis Exercise can be used during school team meetings to discuss the *Potholes* report Case Studies. Teams can divide into small groups to read different case studies and answer the following questions. Someone from each small group should take notes and prepare to share with the larger group.

<p><b>Share this student’s college match story in one minute or less.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were his or her aspirations?</li> <li>• What kind of colleges could he or she have enrolled in?</li> <li>• Where did he or she end up?</li> </ul>	<p>Notes</p>
<p><b>What strengths did the student have regarding college planning and/or during the transition to college?</b></p>	<p>Notes</p>
<p><b>What would this student have needed in order to make a better transition to college? What was he or she missing? Specifically:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What INFORMATION was the student lacking?</li> <li>• What RESOURCES seemed to be missing?</li> <li>• What SUPPORT could the student have benefited from if it was available to him or her?</li> </ul>	<p>Notes</p>



## Understanding the Conditions for Postsecondary Success

# To&Through Issue Brief: College Choice

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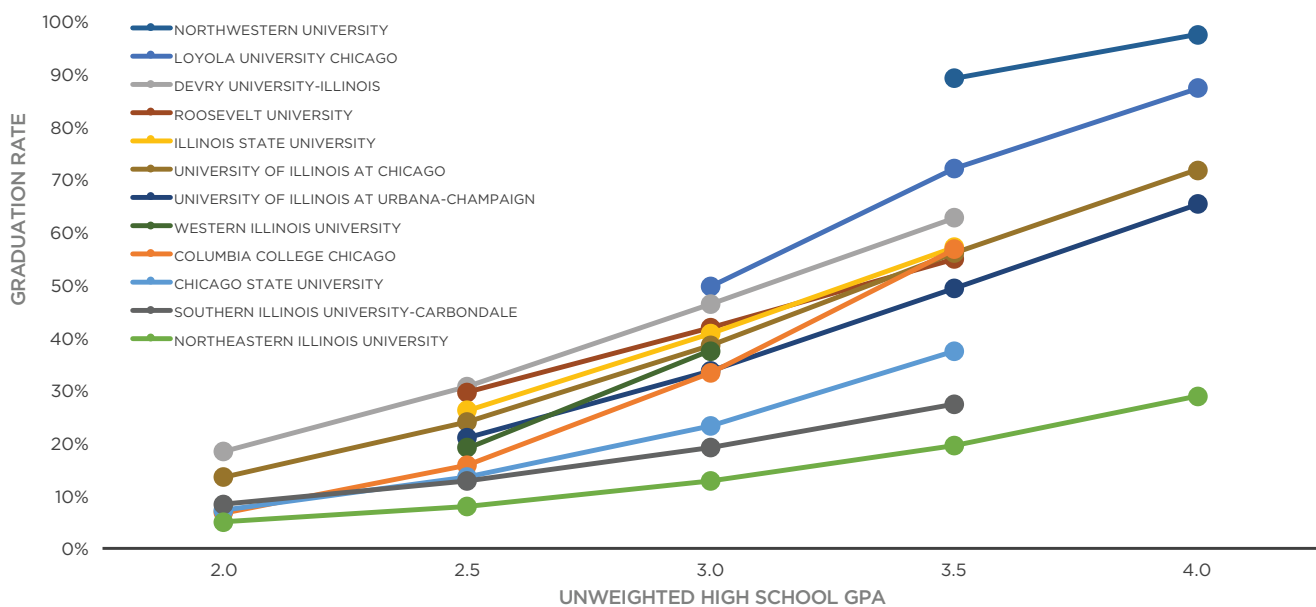
A two-page brief summarizing the UChicago Consortium's latest research on why college choice matters and strategies schools are using to help students navigate the college selection process.

## What does UChicago Consortium research say about why college choice matters?

Research from UChicago Consortium shows that for students to successfully navigate the road to college graduation, they must fully engage in a many-stepped process including college search, college choice, and college enrollment. Some of these steps are technical in nature—including the timely submission of college and financial aid applications and forms—but others are more complex, particularly for students who are the first generation in their families to attend college.

An important factor that can inform students' choice is a college's institutional or underrepresented minority graduation rate. Regardless of their academic qualifications, students' likelihood of graduating from a given college mirrors the institutional graduation rate. This is also true for students with strong grades in high school; in fact, college choice matters the most for students with strong academic qualifications.

Other important factors for students to consider in making a college choice include whether or not a college represents a good match for their qualifications and a good fit with their needs and interests. A college “match” occurs when a student applies to and enrolls in a college with a selectivity level that matches the kind of colleges that accept other students with similar high school qualifications. College “fit” goes beyond just beyond selectivity and institutional graduation rate. A good fit meets a student's educational and social needs and best supports his or her intellectual and social development. A student is far more likely to persist through college if he or she feels a sense of belonging and engagement.



These lines come from logistic regression models performed for each high school, predicting graduation with GPA. The regression lines are based on data from all students at each college based on their actual (not rounded) GPA. However, points are included on the graph for a college only if at least 20 students at that college had a rounded high school GPA at that point.

## What strategies are some high schools using to work on college choice?

### Creating a strong, school-wide college-going culture

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, where teachers are well-versed on the most important factors for college admission and success, 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.

### Encouraging students to apply to multiple colleges and strongly consider institutional graduation rates

Students who apply to at least three, and particularly six or more, schools are much more likely to be accepted. This effect is especially strong for students with lower levels of qualifications. Many schools require every senior to submit at least three applications. Moreover, either during the application process or when a student is choosing which college to attend, some schools encourage students to look at institutional graduation rates as a proxy for how well the college or university supports its students.

### Ensuring students complete the FAFSA as early as possible

Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is an essential step in the road to college. Completing the FAFSA as early as possible is critical; many colleges and states have early deadlines or give financial aid on a first-come, first-served basis. For the last decade, CPS has centrally tracked how many students are completing the FAFSA and worked with counselors to support students who haven't.

### Building a post-secondary team that oversees students' college-going process and the school's college-going culture

Trusted adults like school counselors, administrators, outside community partners, and senior teachers can build a post-secondary team to guide high school students to and through the college-going process. Building strong systems of support for the college search and application process during junior and senior year can have a positive effect on college enrollment. At some schools this team meets monthly or bi-weekly to review data on students' college applications, admissions, financial aid, and scholarships. Some teams also get involved during the summer and fall after graduation, looking to intervene with graduates students who were admitted to college, but might not enroll.

## References

Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., Coca, V., and Moeller, E. (2008). *From high school to the future: Potholes on the road to college*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.





# Integrating a Developmental Approach to College Access

## Contents

**Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework**

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**Building Behaviors, Beliefs, and Identity in College Counseling**

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**Ready, Willing, and Able Educational Leadership Article**

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**Exploring Identity Statuses**

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## Purpose

College access initiatives should focus on adolescent development so that students develop a sense of active agency as they explore postsecondary options. In Tool Set B, the Network for College Success highlights two sources that can help Counselors and other educators as they integrate a developmental approach to college access: *Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Development Framework* by the UChicago Consortium and *Ready, Willing, and Able* by Savitz-Romer and Bouffard. The UChicago Consortium research offers a developmental framework to consider students' needs from preschool to young adulthood. *Ready, Willing, and Able* posits how adolescents move toward their postsecondary destinations and how educators can help support them through college readiness activities.

## How & When to Use

Counselors and other educators can use the resources in Tool Set B to deepen their understanding of the social-emotional learning (SEL) conditions and non-cognitive factors that promote postsecondary success. The Exploring Identity Statuses activity can help frame adolescent development in terms of an individual student's SEL needs on the road to college. The UChicago Consortium presentation marries this research with the research in [Tool Set A: Understanding the Conditions of Postsecondary Success](#).



## Integrating a Developmental Approach to College Access

# Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework

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This research report offers wide-ranging evidence on what young people need to develop from preschool to young adulthood in order to succeed in college and career as well as have healthy relationships, be engaged citizens, and make wise choices.

The summary of the report is included in this Toolkit. For the entire report, [click here >>](#)

CONCEPT PAPER FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE JUNE 2015

# Foundations for Young Adult Success

## A Developmental Framework



Jenny Nagaoka, Camille A. Farrington, Stacy B. Ehrlich, and Ryan D. Heath  
with David W. Johnson, Sarah Dickson, Ashley Cureton Turner, Ashley Mayo, and Kathleen Hayes

# Executive Summary

Every society in every age needs to grapple with the question of what outcomes it hopes to produce in raising its young. What exactly do we hope our children will be able to accomplish as adults? What vision guides our work? How do we make that vision a reality for all children? How do we better harness what is known in the research, practice, and policy arenas to ensure that all youth have what they need to successfully meet the complex challenges of young adulthood? Preparing all youth for meaningful, productive futures requires coordinated efforts and intentional practices by adults across all the settings youth inhabit on a daily basis.

To address these questions, this report aims to build a common understanding of young people’s developmental needs from early childhood through young adulthood and proposes a developmental framework of the Foundations for Young Adult Success. The framework is the result of synthesizing research, theory, and practice knowledge from a range of disciplines and approaches. This work is influenced by ideas spanning the last century, from Dewey’s theory of learning from nearly a century ago to cutting-edge findings in neuroscience on how the brain works. It integrates these perspectives into an accessible framework designed to guide the efforts of all adults who are responsible for raising, educating, or otherwise working with children and youth.

In the past several years, a large number of frameworks and standards have been created to provide guidance on what young people need to learn. The Foundations for Young Adult Success developmental framework describes how to enact these frameworks and standards across the settings in school, out of school, and at home. It characterizes the experiences and relationships youth need to develop into young adults who have agency, an integrated identity, and the requisite competencies to successfully meet the complex challenges of young adulthood and become thriving, contributing members of their communities. The approach described in this report: (1) identifies three key factors of young adult success (agency, an integrated

identity, and competencies) and four foundational components (self-regulation, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values) that underlie them, (2) takes into account what we know about how children develop, (3) considers how the backgrounds of and contexts in which young people live affect their development, and (4) makes the intentional provision of opportunities for young people to experience, interact, and make meaning of their experiences the central vehicle for learning and development.

## What Do We Mean by “Success” in Young Adulthood?

Most policy efforts attempt to address socioeconomic gaps in youth outcomes by focusing on educational attainment as the central investment in preparing youth for adulthood. However, while building an educated workforce is one of the core goals of our investments in young people, it is far from the only goal. Success also means that young people can fulfill individual goals and have the agency and competencies to influence the world around them. This broader definition of success is based on the synthesis of literature from various fields, as well as interviews with practice experts and youth service providers (see box entitled *Project Overview and Methodology* p.3), who articulated their larger role as helping young people develop an awareness of themselves and of the wide range of options before them,



competencies to pursue those options, and the ability to make good future choices for their lives as engaged citizens in the world. This larger focus is inseparable from goals related to college and career.

## Context Plays a Crucial Role in Providing Equal Opportunities to All Youth

The picture of young people as self-actualized masters of destiny is complicated by persuasive research on the role of context in shaping youth outcomes, specifically, structural forces that govern socioeconomic life in the United States (e.g., segregation, discrimination, joblessness).<sup>1</sup> From this perspective, a young person is fundamentally the product of experiences and social interactions, within and across a range of contexts, from the immediate setting to larger institutions to cultural norms, all of which collectively shape the developing individual.<sup>2</sup> Larger contextual factors of society, the economy, and institutions (such as schools) play a central role in the inequitable opportunities afforded to young people, as well as in their ability to see opportunities as viable options and take advantage of them. The obstacles to following a successful path to adulthood and the opportunities available to young adults vary greatly by the contexts they inhabit. Thus, there is a fundamental tension between preparing children to live in the world that is often cast as a tacit acceptance of a profoundly unjust status quo and equipping them to face, navigate, and challenge the inequitable distributions of resources and access that so often limit their opportunities and constrain their potential. It is within these tensions that we explore broad multidisciplinary evidence from research and practice about the underlying constructs that support a successful transition into young adulthood.

## Ingredients of “Success” that Comprise the Developmental Framework for Young Adult Success

What are the ingredients necessary for young adults to succeed? Building a common set of objectives and having a clear understanding of how to foster development is a

critical step in eliminating the silos that adults working with young people often operate within. To this end, the report provides a framework of foundational components and key factors for success in young adulthood. The report organizes the definition of young adult success around three **key factors**; these are *agency*, *integrated identity*, and *competencies*. These factors capture how a young adult poised for success interacts with the world (agency), the internal compass that a young adult uses to make decisions consistent with her values, beliefs, and goals (an integrated identity), and how she is able to be effective in different tasks (competencies). The three key factors allow a young adult to manage and adapt to changing demands and successfully navigate various settings with different cultures and expectations. However, a person can have strong agency, identity, and competencies in one setting without being able to automatically transfer those to a new setting; having an *integrated identity* means that a person has consistency and coherence across different roles in different settings.

### The Three Key Factors

**Agency** is the ability to make choices about and take an active role in one’s life path, rather than solely being the product of one’s circumstances. Agency requires the intentionality and forethought to derive a course of action and adjust course as needed to reflect one’s identity, competencies, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values.

**Integrated Identity** is a sense of internal consistency of who one is across time and across multiple social identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, profession, culture, gender, religion). An integrated identity serves as an internal framework for making choices and provides a stable base from which one can act in the world.

**Competencies** are the abilities that enable people to effectively perform roles, complete complex tasks, or achieve specific objectives. Successful young adults have sets of competencies (e.g., critical thinking, responsible decision-making, ability to collaborate) that allow them to be productive and engaged, navigate

<sup>1</sup> Bowles & Gintis (1976, 2002); Duncan & Murnane (2011); Lewis (2011); Massey & Denton (1993); Putnam (2015); Wilson (1990, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Neal & Neal (2013); Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979, 1986).

## Project Overview and Methodology

In November 2013, the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UChicago CCSR) was awarded a competitive grant from the Wallace Foundation to build a conceptual framework that articulates what is needed to guide children and youth to become successful young adults. The charge was to analyze and synthesize the best of research evidence, theory, expert opinion, and practice wisdom in the service of identifying the broad range of factors critical for young adult success. We consolidated current understanding of how these factors can be fostered in schools, communities, and homes from early childhood to young adulthood. In addition to a thorough grounding in published research, the project included interviewing and holding convenings and meetings with experts in research, policy, and practice across a range of fields and disciplines. To further ground the synthesis in real-world problems, we also interviewed a diverse selection of nine youth and the adults who work with them in schools, community programs, and agencies in Chicago and developed youth profiles. We sought to find the points of agreement across disparate perspectives, raise the points of contention, and leverage the collective wisdom to best understand the full scope of factors essential to young adult success and how to develop them.

### The Three Phases of the Project

To achieve a cohesive and comprehensive framework, the project team undertook three phases of information-gathering. Each successive phase built upon the work of the previous phase, and each phase was defined by a different goal and set of questions:

- **Phase I:** We focused on defining “success” and identifying the factors that are critical for success in young adulthood, particularly in college and at the beginning of a career.
- **Phase II:** Building on the critical factors identified in Phase I, we sought to understand how each factor developed over the course of early life, from the preschool years through young adulthood. We focused on the identification of leverage points for best supporting children’s holistic development, keeping in mind that child and youth development occurs in multiple settings.
- **Phase III:** We aimed to consolidate current understanding of how critical factors of young adult success can be fostered in a holistic, coordinated way across schools, community organizations, and homes, from early childhood to young adulthood. We focused on a ground-level, practitioner perspective in considering how to best organize adult efforts to promote the development of children and youth.

Each phase of work culminated in internal working documents to help us consolidate our progress and thinking. The white paper that resulted from Phase I, *A Framework for Developing Young Adult Success in the 21st Century: Defining Young Adult Success*, is available at <http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Wallace%20Framework%20White%20Paper.pdf>. The current report is a culmination of the three phases of work outlined above, with an emphasis on our learnings from Phases I and II. Findings from Phase III will be explored in future work.

across contexts, perform effectively in different settings, and adapt to different task and setting demands.

### The Four Foundational Components

Underlying the capacity for the three key factors are four **foundational components** that span both cognitive and noncognitive factors. These four foundational components are *self-regulation*, *knowledge and skills*, *mindsets*, and *values*. The foundational components are

developed and expressed in multiple spheres—within the self, in relation to others, and in the broader world(s) one inhabits.<sup>3</sup> The role of each component is threefold. First, when young people have experiences and make meaning of those experiences, each component interacts to promote the development of the other foundational components and the three key factors. Second, they enable healthy and productive functioning at every stage of life. Finally, they directly contribute to young adult

<sup>3</sup> The notion that positive youth development requires skills in both the interpersonal (or social) and intrapersonal (or self) domains has been put forth by other models and frameworks

of skills necessary for success in the 21st century (e.g., Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013).

success. The foundational components were chosen because they are malleable; that is, they can be changed by experiences and the efforts of and interactions with other people, in both positive and negative ways, and then be internalized. As young people engage in ongoing experiences that help them develop the foundational components, these components can become internalized as automatic responses (or habits) that become a core part of their identity; this automatic behavior allows them to then be transferred across contexts. While all of the foundational components develop throughout every stage of a young person’s life, the development of specific components is more salient during some stages than others. Young people develop the foundational components and key factors through experiences and relationships, and these are always embedded within larger societal, economic, and institutional contexts that influence how youth perceive the opportunities and obstacles posed by their environments.

**Self-Regulation** is the awareness of oneself and one’s surroundings, and the ability to manage one’s attention, emotions, and behaviors in goal-directed ways. Self-regulation has numerous forms, including cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and attentional regulation. Self-regulation is a key developmental task during early and middle childhood.

**Knowledge** is the sets of facts, information, or understanding about oneself, others, and the world. **Skills** are the learned abilities to carry out a task with intended results or goals. Building academic knowledge and skills is a key developmental task during early and middle childhood, although it occurs through all stages of development.

**Mindsets** are beliefs and attitudes about oneself, the external world, and the interaction between the two. They are the default lenses that individuals use to process everyday experiences. Mindsets reflect a person’s unconscious biases, natural tendencies, and past experiences. Though mindsets are malleable, they tend to persist until disrupted and replaced with a different belief or attitude.

**Values** are enduring, often culturally defined beliefs about what is good or bad, and what is important in life. Values include both the moral code of conduct one uses in daily activities (e.g., being kind, being truthful) and long-term “outcomes” of importance (e.g., getting an education, having a family, contributing to the community) that may not necessarily have a right or wrong valence. Values develop through a process of exploration and experimentation, where young people make sense of their experiences and refine what they believe in. Values are a key developmental task during middle adolescence and young adulthood.

### Developmental Experiences and Relationships Support Success

Development is a natural, ongoing process that happens as young people observe the world, interact with others, and make meaning of their experiences. Regardless of the degree of adult guidance, children will still “develop” in some way, learning how to do things and coming to conclusions about themselves, their prospects, and their paths forward. They will develop some skills and preferences, and they will likely figure out what they need to know to get by. And yet, the developmental benefit of children’s experiences can be enhanced and directed by others to help youth best formulate and internalize the developmental “lessons” from these experiences.<sup>4</sup> However, the nature and number of children’s opportunities for development vary significantly by race and socioeconomic class.

The foundational components and key factors of young adult success are mutually reinforcing, helping young people to both learn from and proactively shape their worlds. The core question for practice is how these foundational components and key factors can be intentionally developed. How do children learn knowledge, skills, values, mindsets, and the complex processes of self-regulation, as well as develop competencies essential to success in the 21st century? The essential social context for this process is what we term **developmental experiences**. Developmental experiences are most supportive of youth’s needs when they occur within what the Search Institute calls **developmental**

4 Vygotsky (1978).

**relationships.**<sup>5</sup> Development is nurtured in the context of strong, supportive, and sustained developmental relationships with adults and peers. Developmental experiences offer opportunities for young people to engage in various forms of *action* and *reflection*. It is through ongoing cycles of age-appropriate action and reflection experiences that young people build the four foundational components (self-regulation; knowledge and skills; mindsets; and values), and develop agency, an integrated identity, and competencies.

### Developmental Experiences

Developmental experiences are opportunities for action and reflection that help young people build self-regulation, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values, and develop agency, an integrated identity, and competencies. These experiences are “*maximized*” in the context of social interactions with others. Experience must be assigned meaning and be integrated into one’s emerging sense of identity if it is to have lasting or transferrable benefit. Mediating young people’s thinking about their experience is one important way that adults aid in learning and development.

When young people have the opportunity to make contributions that are valued by others, they gain self-confidence and come to see themselves as capable and able to effect change in their own lives and in the larger world. What matters most for development is not the intentions of adults, but their actual enactment of practices in relation to young people, how young people experience those practices, and the meaning young people make of those experiences. This has training and professional development implications for teachers, parents, childcare providers, and youth workers.

### Developmental Relationships

Critical to the process of making meaning out of developmental experiences are strong, supportive, and sustained relationships with caring adults who can encourage young people to reflect on their experiences and help them to interpret those experiences in ways that expand their sense of themselves and their horizons.

The iterative and fundamentally relational processes of experiencing, interacting, and reflecting represent a critical engine for children’s development and as such are the core of the conceptual model linking experiences and relationships with outcomes.

Strong, supported, and sustained relationships with caring adults provide an important space for youth to experiment, try out roles and behaviors, and receive feedback that helps to build an integrated identity. However, in order to provide the best experiences for youth, it is imperative to understand where youth are *developmentally* throughout their young lives. This understanding allows for more appropriate interactions between adults and youth. A contextual understanding of children’s development offers guidance on how to design direct experiences in ways that provide the right kinds of support and challenges to growth at various stages of early life. Each component develops at different rates over the life course. So when is the most crucial time to be focusing on supporting the maturation of each of our four components? Do they all hold equal weight at different stages of development?

## Developmental Progression toward Young Adulthood

Development is multifaceted (social, emotional, attitudinal, behavioral, cognitive, physical) and each aspect of development is inextricably connected to the others. This report takes a developmental perspective because, in order to design and deliver the most effective experiences for youth, it is imperative to understand where youth are developmentally throughout their young lives. This understanding makes it possible for adults to match more appropriate experiences and interactions to the developmental needs of young people.

The practices of adults are more effective when they are intentional, are focused on the foundational components and key factors that support the ability to transition successfully into young adulthood, and are based on an understanding of where youth are developmentally. The development of the key factors of young adult success (competencies, identity, and agency) and

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5 Search Institute (2014).

the four foundational components that underlie them (self-regulation, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values) occurs at different rates from early childhood through young adulthood. Consistent and supportive interactions with caregivers provide the greatest opportunity for cognitive stimulation, and in ways that can have long-lasting impacts on children’s development. Whereas appropriate stimulation supports continuing development, a lack of stimulation can create barriers to later development, potentially requiring more intensive intervention later.

Different factors develop at different rates over the course of life. So when is the most crucial time to be focusing on supporting the maturation of each of the four components or three key factors? Do they all hold equal weight at different stages of development? Below, we highlight the most salient areas of growth during each stage of development, with an eye toward (1) which foundational components or key factors are most influenced by input, experiences, and interactions with others; and (2) which components or key factors need to be developed during the earlier stages to facilitate positive development at later stages. However, it is crucial that adults not exclude other areas of development when engaging with children and youth; nearly every aspect of the foundational components and key factors is forming, or is at least being influenced by the experiences youth encounter, at every stage of life.

In brief, the key developmental tasks during early stages of development are:

- Early childhood (ages 3 to 5): Self-regulation; interpersonal (social-emotional) knowledge and skills
  - Middle childhood (ages 6 to 10): Self-regulation (self-awareness and self-control); learning-related skills and knowledge; interpersonal skills
  - Early adolescence (ages 11 to 14): Group-based identity; emerging mindsets
  - Middle adolescence (ages 15 to 18): Sense of values; individuated identity
  - Young adulthood (ages 19 to 22): Integrated identity
- What happens as adolescents transition into young

adulthood is strongly shaped by the ways in which and degrees to which earlier developmental tasks were met. They draw upon the foundation laid in each preceding stage or the interventions that have successfully compensated for prior developmental lapses. To meet the development tasks as one embarks on young adulthood, a young person should be able to draw upon strong relationships with adults and peers; the foundational components of self-regulation, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values; and the agency, an integrated identity, and competencies to take an active role in shaping their life course.

## Implications for Practice, Policy, and Research

The vision behind the Foundations for Young Adult Success developmental framework is about building a society where all children grow up to reach their full potential, regardless of which side of the economic divide they were born. Currently, opportunities for rich and varied developmental experiences through K-12 schooling and informal education are largely determined by family resources; to address these inequities, it will not be enough to simply expand options by adding more well-run programs, providing a few more resources, or reforming a subset of schools. It will take a transformation of adult beliefs and practices within the existing institutions and structures that shape children’s learning and development. It will mean building a collective sense of responsibility for expanding the possibilities for all young people, not just for our own children. It means integrating afterschool providers’ lens of youth development with educators’ knowledge of learning theory with families’ deep understanding of the unique needs and circumstances of their children. By drawing from the knowledge, approaches, and experience of many different adults from many different settings, we can give the next generation of young people the opportunities they need to meet their full potential.

The Foundations for Young Adult Success developmental framework has clear implications for schools, youth organizations, and families; but without larger transformations in the policy landscape and larger societal and economic context, there are limits to what



can be achieved. Many questions remain about how to more effectively support the development of young people and what policies and structural changes are needed; these form the basis for the research agenda needed to guide these transformations. Along with parents and families, the world we envision for the next generation of young people will require the joint efforts of educators and youth practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. Below we provide implications for teachers, youth practitioners, parents and families, policymakers, and researchers.

## Implications for Educators, Youth Practitioners, and Parents and Families

1. **A narrow focus on content knowledge in isolation from the other foundational components undermines learning and development.** Learning and development are holistic processes dependent on interactions among all of the foundational components (self-regulation, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values). There may be conceptual reasons for distinguishing between “*cognitive*” and “*noncognitive*” factors, but this distinction has no functional meaning. Cognition, emotion, affect, and behavior are reflexive, mutually reinforcing, and inextricably associated with one another as a part of development and learning. Adults will make little headway if they target only one particular component or subcomponent in isolation.
2. **Taking a developmental lens is essential to ensuring that structures and practices meet the developmental needs of the young people being served.** Although a lot is known about development, too often, there is a mismatch between the structures or practices in a youth setting and the developmental needs of the young people being served. Schools, youth programs, and even families are too often oriented to adult needs and goals (e.g., maintaining classroom discipline) instead of taking a youth-centered approach.

3. **Ensuring all young people have access to a multitude of rich developmental experiences is imperative to their success.** Growing up in marginalized communities adds to the complexity of developing into a young adult who is poised for success. While having agency equips young people to make choices and take action, their ability to successfully pursue a desired path also depends on social relationships, financial resources, and countless other external factors that are inequitably distributed. Further, the task of “*integrating*” one’s identity is vastly more complicated for low-income youth and youth of color than it is for children who grow up within the social and behavioral norms of the dominant white, middle-class culture.<sup>6</sup> Responding to this reality requires a careful balance of pragmatism and aspiration. The Foundations for Young Adult Success developmental framework is designed to strike a balance between helping youth thrive in the world as it is, and develop the skills and dispositions they need to challenge a profoundly unjust status quo.<sup>7</sup>

## Implications for Education and Youth Policy

1. **The current policy emphasis on content knowledge and test-based accountability undermines practitioners’ ability to provide developmental experiences.** Content knowledge is an essential part of what young people need to learn for the future, whether in school, at home, or in afterschool programs, but it is far from the only thing that matters. Policies that put too great an emphasis on content knowledge and standardized tests create incentives for practitioners to see the teaching of content knowledge as the sole outcome of interest. As this report has shown, the other foundational components not only facilitate engagement and learning of content knowledge, but they also are important developmental outcomes in and of themselves. Policies that promote these other foundational components would help to create conditions that foster both the learning of academic content and the development of young people more holistically.

6 Deutsch (2008); Fedelina Chávez & Guido-DiBrito (1999); Phinney (1989); Phinney & Rosenthal (1992).

7 This report does not directly address how development of the key factors and foundational components may play out differently for different groups (e.g., by gender, sexual

orientation, immigrant status, involvement in the juvenile justice system) and what specific barriers, assets, and needs each subgroup may have. This is a critical area of investigation that should be pursued.

2. Proceed carefully with incorporating “*noncognitive*” measures into accountability systems. The policy window for a more holistic approach to the development and learning of young people is opening; there is growing discontent over standardized testing. Recently, a movement to integrate alternative measures of student success into school accountability systems has gained some momentum, exemplified by the California “*CORE*” districts that have received No Child Left Behind waivers allowing them to include social-emotional factors and school climate measures in place of test scores as accountability metrics. This holistic approach to evaluating students is in alignment with the Foundations for Young Adult Success developmental framework; however, some caution is necessary when using these new measures for accountability purposes. Many important questions remain about measuring noncognitive or social-emotional factors and about their suitability for an accountability system that was developed around standardized tests.<sup>8</sup>
3. Policy needs to provide the “*safe space*” for schools and out-of-school programs to become learning organizations. The ambitious vision given in the Foundations for Young Adult Success developmental framework does not provide a clear roadmap of specific practices, strategies, or programs to implement. Moving from the current approach to schooling to a more holistic and developmentally aligned approach will require trial and error. Just as young people need opportunities to tinker and practice in order to learn, practitioners also need opportunities for tinkering and practicing, as well as making mistakes, as they learn new ways of teaching and working with young people. In an age when accountability is a dominant way of managing schools, and increasingly out-of-school programs as well, the space to make mistakes is very small. For real shifts to happen in practice, schools and out-of-school programs need to become learning organizations that provide opportunities for adults to learn, and policy needs to provide the “*safe space*” to do so.

## Gaps in the Research

1. What practices and strategies promote the development of identity and agency? While researchers have learned a tremendous amount about development in the last several decades, many questions remain unanswered. In this report, we provided a developmental trajectory for the key factors for young adult success—agency, an integrated identity, and competencies. However, this relied on piecing together a number of existing theories; rarely if ever has the development of agency, for example, been studied longitudinally from early childhood through young adulthood. Theory has provided guidance on how an early sense of “*self*” underlies later identity formation, but this area is understudied in empirical research. While there is converging evidence that supports each of the developmental experiences we identify in this report, as well as the importance of developmental relationships, we do not know which specific combination of experiences would best promote the formation of an integrated identity and agency. We also still lack a strong understanding of how all of the foundational components outlined here link directly to the development of agency, an integrated identity, and competencies.
2. What can be done to intervene with young people after developmental windows close? The Foundations for Young Adult Success developmental framework includes four foundational components—self-regulation, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values—which are all crucial factors in a person’s development toward optimal capacity. What happens if youth do not grow each of these foundational components in the developmental period during which they are most malleable? What types of interventions should we invest in—and for whom and at what period in their lives—if children seem to be falling behind? And for the youngest children, how can we even be sure that a child is falling outside of “*normative*” development, given how very wide the range of development is during the early years?

<sup>8</sup> See Duckworth & Yeager (2015) for a discussion of the uses and limitations of existing measures.

**3. What is the interaction of experiences in different settings?** This report also raises a number of questions about the experiences youth encounter in the various settings they inhabit on a daily basis. We know quite well that what youth experience in school often varies from their experiences with friends, at home, or even in other educational settings. What we do not know is the extent to which those experiences need to be coordinated and supportive of each other, even if they are not teaching the same skills. How much do practices at home support or inhibit what teachers, youth workers, and others aim to do with youth? How aligned do those practices need to be? And can effective practices in one setting ameliorate negative experiences in another setting?

**4. How can the key factors and foundational components best be measured for different purposes?** Measurement is a core part of evaluating needs and gauging progress in any field. With the growing interest in factors other than academic content knowledge and skills, the number of assessments created to measure these factors has also grown. As discussed in the policy implications section, a number of questions about these factors and the assessments complicate their immediate implementation into practice. Some key questions include: Is this factor best conceived as an individual characteristic that can be cultivated over time or as a situational response to particular settings, opportunities, or expectations? How can we disentangle young people's prior capacities from changes induced by setting factors such as adult practice, opportunities for developmental relationships and developmental experiences, or the culture and climate of the place? What is the developmental trajectory on these measures and what are thresholds for what young people need?

In short, the demand for measures of noncognitive or social-emotional factors has far outpaced the state of the field of measurement for these same constructs. In

a case such as this, there is great potential for measurement instruments to be misused, to produce faulty data, to conflate statistical significance with meaningfulness, or to otherwise lead practitioners down a fruitless path. We strongly urge caution in the use of measurement tools until the science of measuring these important constructs catches up with the interest in and demand for them.

## Conclusion

The Foundations for Young Adult Success developmental framework is a first step in guiding practitioners, policymakers, parents, and researchers in working together around a vision of building a society where all children grow up to reach their full potential regardless of differences in their backgrounds. Ensuring that young people grow into successful young adults requires investments in their learning and development from birth to young adulthood so that all of them have ongoing opportunities to truly reach their potential.

Making this vision a reality will require a collective responsibility for all young people. It means asking practitioners to question their own beliefs about what is possible and rethink how they work with young people on a day-to-day basis. It means asking policymakers to focus on a bigger picture and broader set of outcomes and to consider policies that would support the efforts of practitioners in developing young people. It means asking researchers to provide accessible, meaningful, and actionable answers to core questions of policy and practice. It means asking families to understand the needs of their children and work with the institutions they cross everyday so that these needs are met. It means asking for change within existing institutions and structures while also asking what new institutions and structures might better serve our vision. Addressing the inequities of opportunities facing young adults will require more than equipping young people with the capacity to navigate the world as it exists now, it will mean that they are also able to envision and create a better world for future generations.



## Integrating a Developmental Approach to College Access

# Building Behaviors, Beliefs, and Identity in College Counseling

A UChicago Consortium research presentation that brings together two strands of related research: 1) postsecondary access and attainment, and 2) adolescent development.



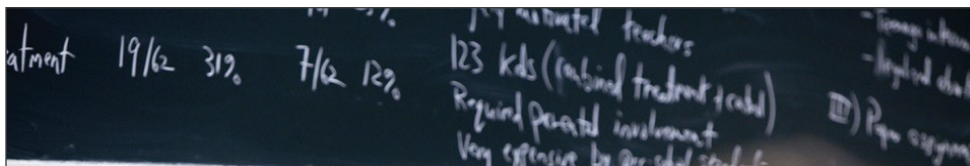
# Building Behaviors, Beliefs, and Identity in College Counseling

## From a Case Management to a Developmental Approach

David W. Johnson  
Senior Research Analyst  
UChicago Consortium on School Research

UCHICAGO Consortium

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## Objectives for Today

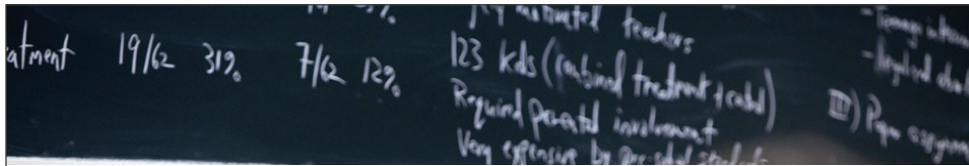
- Bring together two strands of related research
  - Postsecondary access and attainment
  - Adolescent development and identity



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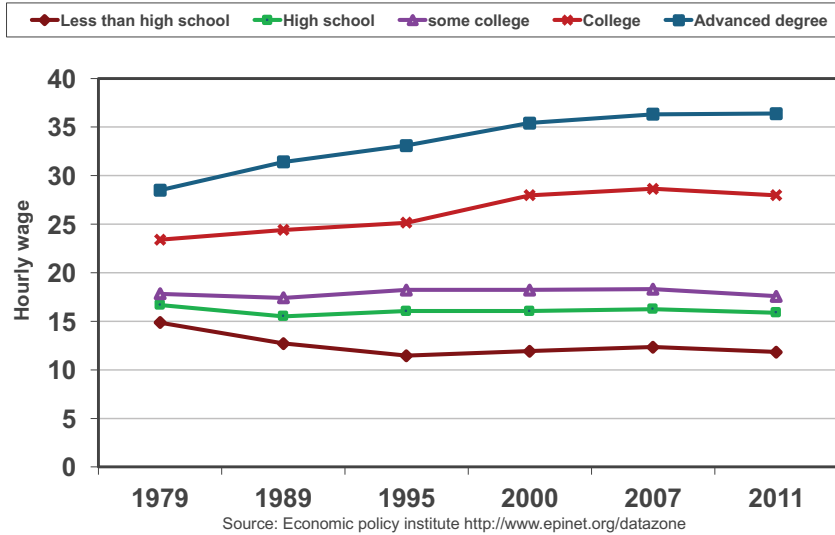


## Why focus on college?

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## Men's Real Hourly Wages by Education (2011 Dollars)



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## Great News

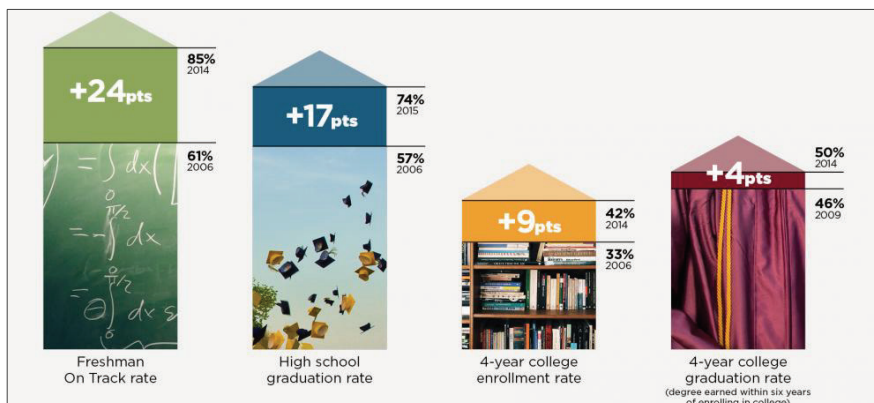
All indicators of educational attainment are going UP in Chicago Public Schools (CPS):

- High school graduation
- FAFSA completion
- College enrollment
- College completion

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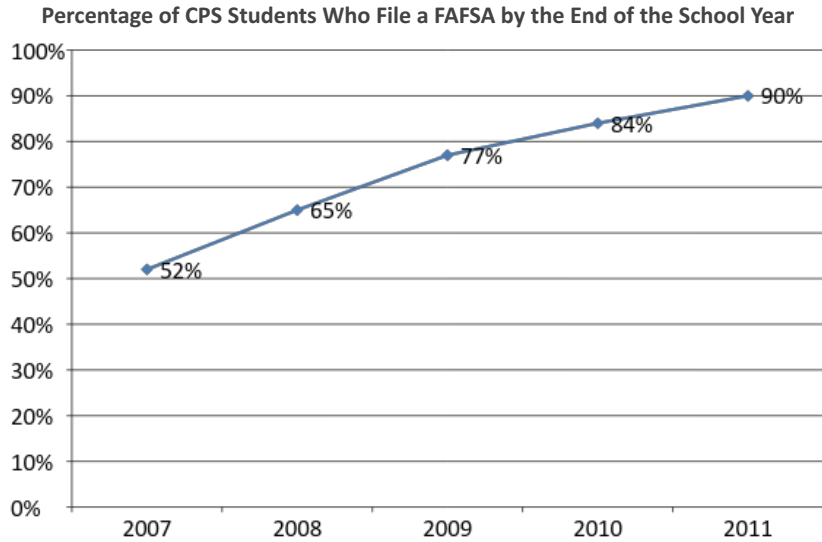
## In Less Than a Decade, Chicago has Made Significant Progress on High School and College Attainment



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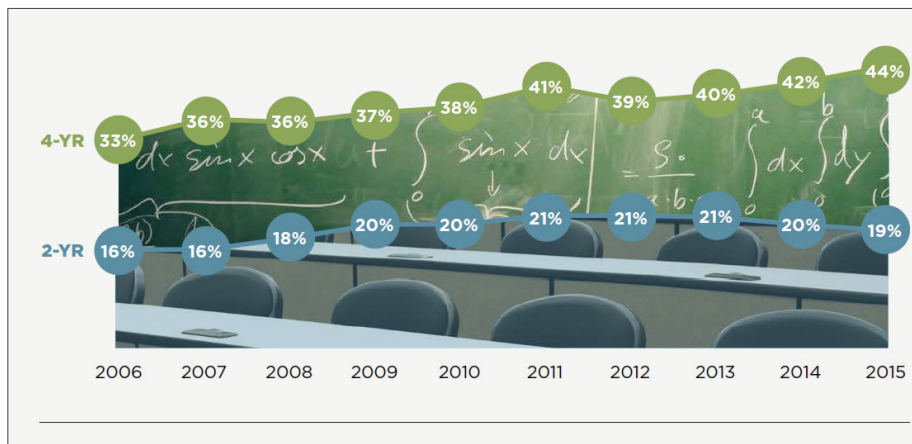
## Rates of FAFSA Completion are also Increasing Rapidly



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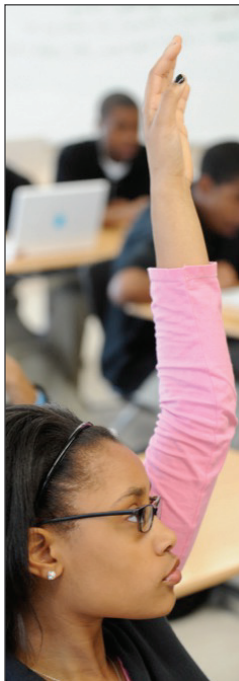
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## CPS Enrollment Rates are also Going Up



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## Less-Than-Great-News

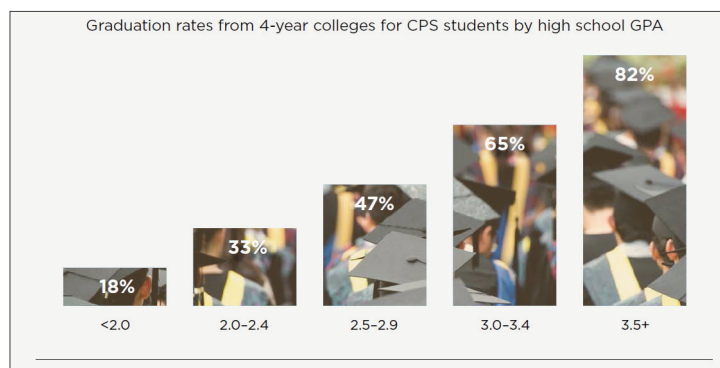
College success is largely stagnant:

- College graduation rates are going up only very slightly
- Important early indicators of college success, such as high school GPA and college choice, are improving more slowly

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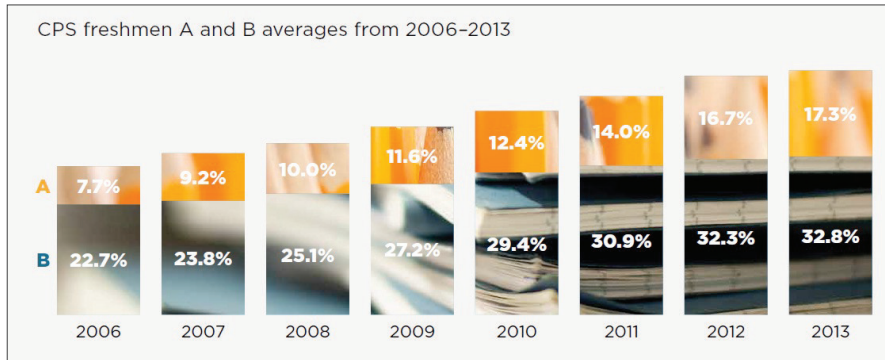
## Ultimately, a Higher High School GPA Increases the Odds of Making it *Through* College



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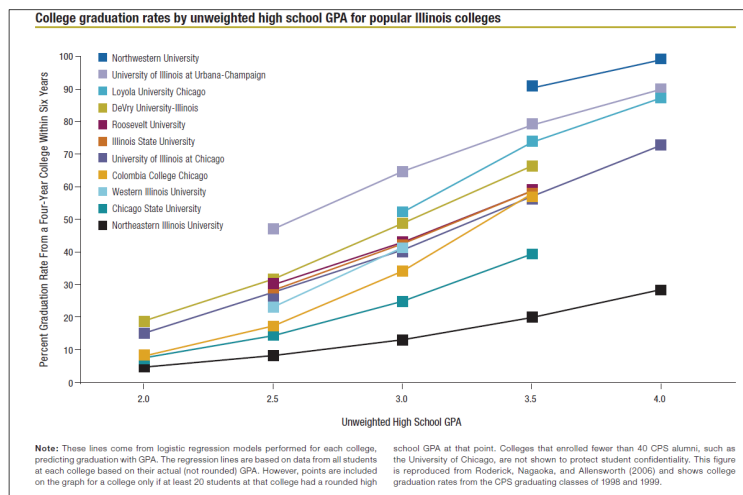
## CPS Students' Ninth-Grade GPAs have Risen Steadily Since 2006



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## College Choice Matters for College Completion

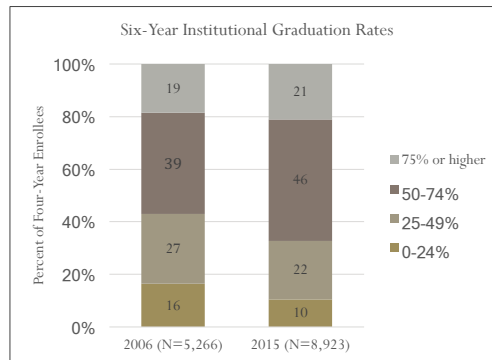


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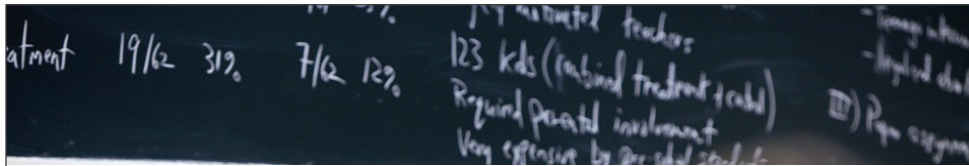


## More CPS Students have Enrolled in Four-Year Colleges with Graduation Rates above 50 percent over the Past Decade



## What's the next stage of our work?

- Celebrate success – we've made huge strides on postsecondary work
- Evaluate our practice – what are we doing:
  - RIGHT that's leading to higher enrollment
  - NOT-YET-RIGHT that's not supporting higher levels of persistence?



## Building Social Capital for CPS Students

- Students with limited access to college-educated adults in their families and communities are especially reliant on their schools for “college knowledge”
- Some of this work we can do by changing *behaviors*; some of the work requires changing *beliefs*

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## Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges

- You can solve some problems by changing students’ *behaviors*
  - Coming to class and passing
  - Filling out college applications
  - Submitting the FAFSA
- Other problems require a change in deeply-held beliefs
  - Supporting deeper learning
  - Leveraging college choice
  - *Building a college-going identity*

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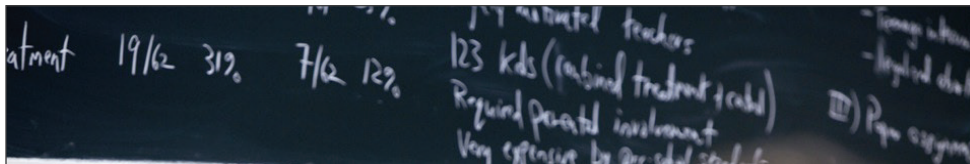
## Behaviors vs. Beliefs

### Behaviors

- I filled out my FAFSA
- I applied to five colleges
- I got accepted to a match college
- I can come to class on time

### Beliefs

- I understand what I have to do to afford college
- There are five colleges that I am excited to attend
- I believe I will be successful at a selective college
- I know what it takes to achieve mastery of this course material



## Reframing our Counseling Approach Using a Developmental Lens

- Changing students beliefs requires a developmental lens and a broader understanding of “success”
- Agency and identity are important traits for college-bound students to build
- Developmental experiences and developmental relationships are the key tools for supporting students’ development



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## Defining success

- We know we have to focus on college
- How do we think about young adult success more broadly?



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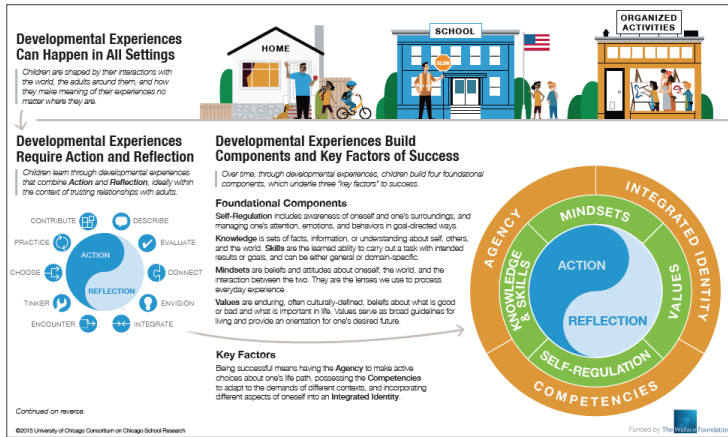
## Critical Questions

- What does “success” in early adulthood look like?
  - What roles do “agency” and “identity” play in success?
- What are the foundational components that underlie success in young adulthood, based on our definition?
- What is the developmental trajectory of these factors from early childhood through young adulthood?
- What do we know about how adults can support this development?
- *For more information on this framework, visit:*  
<http://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/foundations-young-adult-success-developmental-framework>

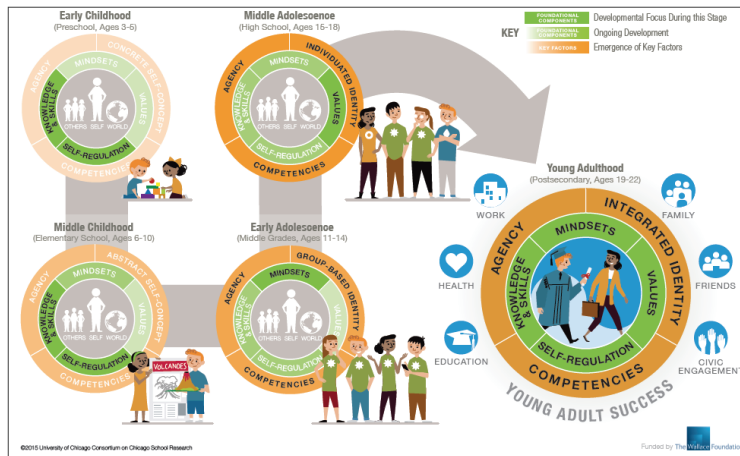
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# Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework



# Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework





## What defines a successful young adult?

*“We define a person who is ready to make a successful transition into adulthood as having three key factors: the **agency** to take an active role in shaping one’s path; the ability to incorporate different aspects of one’s self into an **integrated identity**, and the **competencies** needed to successfully navigate a range of social contexts...*

*...developing [these factors] is likely do be a lifelong endeavor, but the foundations lay in childhood and adolescence... thus, the development of [these factors] is the central task of raising and educating young people to prepare them for the life changes that can begin in young adulthood.”*

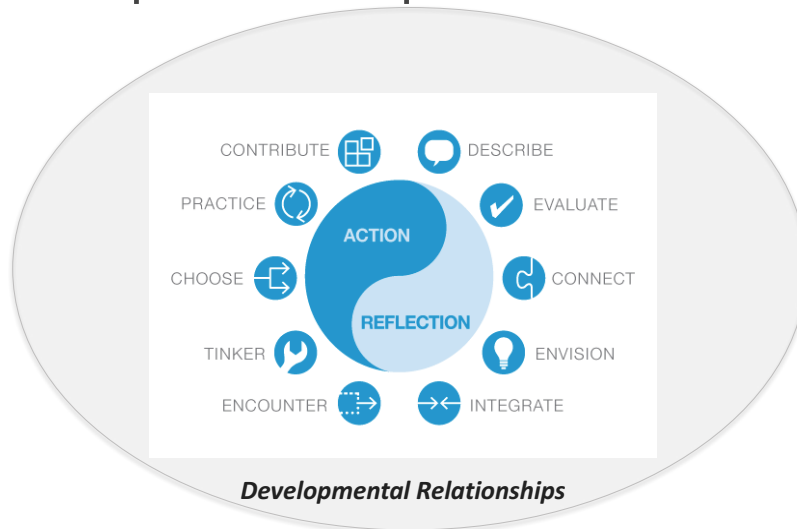
## Agency

- Agency is the ability and opportunity to **take an active role in shaping and managing one’s chosen path**, rather than being at the mercy of circumstances
  - Taking an *active* role does not mean taking a *solo* role
  - Managing one’s chosen path does not mean navigating without aid or succeeding without *support*
  - The development of agency and integrated identity are fundamentally social processes, embedded in **relationships**

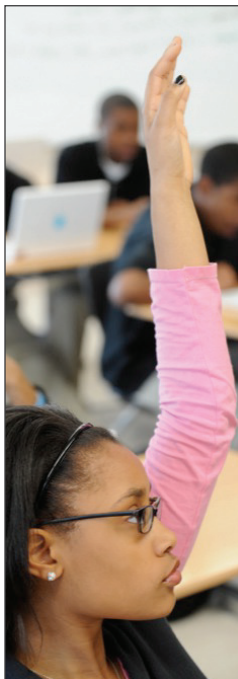
## Integrated Identity

- Integrated identity is a sense of internal consistency of who one is across time and across multiple social identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, profession, culture, gender, religion).
  - Serves as an internal framework for making choices and provides a stable base from which one can act in the world.
  - Presents an extra challenge to students who are marginalized in any way (by race/ethnicity, gender identity, income status, or sexual orientation).

## Youth Learn and Grow through Developmental Experiences



Action		Reflection	
<b>Encounter</b>	Opportunities to access new people, new ideas, new roles, and new places	<b>Describe</b>	Opportunities to discuss observations, behaviors, feelings, thoughts, and experiences
<b>Tinker</b>	Opportunities to actively discover, design, puzzle, build, experiment, create, play, imagine, test, and jump in and <i>do</i>	<b>Evaluate</b>	Opportunities to interpret, frame, and assess behaviors, feelings, thoughts, and experiences
<b>Choose</b>	Opportunities to choose and control experiences, within understood constraints	<b>Connect</b>	Opportunities to connect new information or experiences to existing knowledge
<b>Practice</b>	Opportunities to develop expertise through supported repetition and feedback	<b>Envision</b>	Opportunities to envision oneself positively in the future, linked to specific behaviors or strategies for self actualization
<b>Contribute</b>	Opportunities to solve problems or bring into the world works of value to self and others	<b>Integrate</b>	Opportunities to integrate insights, skills, and learning from new experiences into a larger sense of self



## Planning a College Trip...

- Turn to an elbow partner and discuss:
  - What would look different (and how) if we approached planning a college trip as creating a developmental experience?
    - How would the goal or objective for the visit potentially change?
    - What aspects of *action* would be important? Why?
    - What elements of *reflection* would you include? Why?
- Share out

## Key Takeaways for Practice

- Development is always happening everywhere.
- Development is multifaceted and interconnected.
- Experiences and social interactions are the vehicles for development – and depend on how children make meaning of them.
- Development is facilitated by strong, supportive, and sustained relationships with adults and peers.
- Adult practices are more effective when intentional, developmental, and focused on key factors that matter.



## Integrating a Developmental Approach to College Access

# Ready, Willing, and Able Educational Leadership Article

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In *Ready, Willing, and Able*, Savitz-Romer and Bouffard call for a new approach to postsecondary work: one that emphasizes the key developmental tasks and processes of adolescence and integrates them into existing college-access practices in meaningful ways. Rather than treating young people as passive recipients of services, they argue adults can engage them as active agents in the construction of their own futures.

[Click here to read >>](#)





## Integrating a Developmental Approach to College Access

# Exploring Identity Statuses

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This activity explores the four statuses of College-Going Identity as discussed in *Ready, Willing, and Able* by Savitz-Romer and Bouffard. This could be useful when Counselors and other educators want to reflect on students' statuses and the supports they need to succeed.

## Exploring Identity Statuses

### Directions

On page 70-71 of *Ready, Willing, and Able*, Savitz-Romer & Bouffard identify four statuses in the process of developing a college-going identity: identity diffused, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achieved. In this activity, you are assigned one of the four statuses. Read the descriptions below to reflect on a current student who you feel fits into your assigned status.

- **Identity diffused** describes the individual who has not yet confronted the task of resolving his identity and as such may be confused. This student has little awareness of future postsecondary options and mostly feels overwhelmed by the process.
- **Foreclosure** refers to the state of an individual who has prematurely made a decision about an aspect of identity without a full exploration. This student has ruled out going to college without seeking or receiving appropriate information.
- **Moratorium** refers to the time when individuals are actively exploring aspects of identity and working toward a unifying sense of self. This student is trying on the possibility of going to college but has not yet made a full commitment.
- **Identity achieved** describes the point at which an individual has fully explored his identity options and made a commitment to a particular element of identity. This student has talked with teachers, counselors, family, and/or peers and sees himself as firmly on the path to college.

1. The student you are currently thinking about falls into the \_\_\_\_\_ status. What is your evidence for placing the student in that status?

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**2. What adjustments do you need to make in your approach to working with this student?**

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**3. How do you tailor your college access efforts to meet the needs of his or her status?**

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# Developing Systems to Monitor College Applications

## Contents

**Integrating the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Approach** [Coming soon!](#)

**Calculating College Access Video** [Coming soon!](#)

**Calculating Application Match Video** [Coming soon!](#)

**College Access Progress (CAP) Report: Video and Sample** [Coming soon!](#)

## Purpose

One of the pillars of the Network for College Success postsecondary approach is using data-based practice. Data should be used continually for improvement, not just for summative evaluation after the fact. The tools in Tool Set C describe practical techniques for using real-time operational data in order to shape strategy and guide practice.

## How & When to Use

The methods and approaches described in the following presentation and video series can be used when schools have technical systems in place for tracking college application data and want to begin leveraging that data to inform everyday college counseling practice.



## Developing Systems to Monitor College Applications

# Integrating the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Approach

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This Network for College Success presentation showcases effective data-driven strategies to reach students through tiered interventions in the college application process. The accompanying video describes this theory of action at a high level in order to set the context for the more detailed instructional videos later in Tool Set C.

To view the presentation, [click here >>](#) Coming soon!

To view the video, [click here >>](#) Coming soon!



## Developing Systems to Monitor College Applications

# Calculating College Access Video

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In order to develop an effective multi-tiered systems of support approach, Counselors and other educators must make informed estimates on how likely each student is to be admitted to his or her most selective college choice. This video describes some practical steps to calculating college access at the student level, including an examination of a research-based framework that makes this possible.

[Click here to watch >>](#) Coming soon!





## Developing Systems to Monitor College Applications

# Calculating Application Match Video

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Keeping track of each student's various college applications is an important but challenging task. Not only must a Counselor or College & Career Coach track a large number of applications, but this data changes quickly, and each application comes with its own set of deadlines and follow-up work in order to move forward. This video describes a practical approach Counselors and other educators can use with application data to identify the students who need Tier II application supports. The video further offers ways to be strategic about seeking out the students who will most benefit from extra help.

[Click here to watch >>](#) Coming soon!



## Developing Systems to Monitor College Applications

# College Access Progress (CAP) Report: Video and Sample

Creating an effective multi-tiered system of supports starts with establishing strong universal practices that benefit all students. One way to create school-wide Tier I college application practices is to ensure that students are informed about their own college access level and which specific colleges are good academic matches for them. The sample CAP Report is a one-page college access summary that Counselors can give directly to students. The video describes the technical steps - using standard Microsoft Office software programs - to create reports like this quickly for a large number of students.

[Click here to watch >>](#) Coming soon!



## College Access Progress (CAP) Report

### Senior Student: 43334158

Cumulative GPA: 4.0 unweighted | Highest ACT: 24 | College Access Level: Very Selective

### Financial Information

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): \$0.00 | FAFSA Status: Submitted | PELL Estimate: \$5,815.00  
MAP Eligible: No | Stafford Estimate: \$5,500.00

### Application Summary

# of Applications Submitted: 9

### Selectivity Level of Applications Submitted

Too Safe	Safety	Match	Reach	Too Selective
3	4	2	0	0

Institution	Match Level	Status	Result	Institutional Graduation Rate (six-year)
Stanford University	Match	Pending	Unknown	92
University of Chicago	Match	Initial Docs	Unknown	92
DePaul University	Safety	Initial Docs	Unknown	68
Franklin College of Indiana	Too Safe	Initial Docs	Unknown	60
University of Illinois at Chicago	Too Safe	Initial Docs	Unknown	58
Loyola University Chicago	Safety	Initial Docs	Unknown	70
Roosevelt University	Safety	Initial Docs	Unknown	42
Saint Louis University	Too Safe	Initial Docs	Unknown	70
The Ohio State University	Safety	Initial Docs	Unknown	82

### Course Schedule and Grades

Course	Teacher	Period	Avg.	Letter
HS1 PE-Personal Fit/Well II	Smith	1	93	A
AS1 AP Biology Extended	Mendoza	2	71	C
AS1 AP Calculus AB	Johnson	3	95	A
HS1 English IV	Baer	4	97	A
AS1 AP Psychology	Bird	5	93	A
HS1 Human Geography	Wallace	6	98	A
HS1 Biomedical Innovation	LaSalle	7	100	A

**Current GPA: 3.714 GPA | Difference (Cumulative to Current): -0.286**



# Suggested Learnings

## Contents

### Suggested Readings and Resources

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## Purpose

At the Network for College Success, we believe in the constant interplay of research, practice, and learning. Our partnership with the UChicago Consortium means our Coaches and partner schools are immersed in the latest research that supports postsecondary work. In addition, the Network for College Success uses a wide range of research, reports, books, studies, and other media to deepen our collective understanding of how to best serve students and move them toward better college and career outcomes.

## How & When to Use

The bibliography in Tool Set D contains a wealth of resources for additional reading and learning that can be used individually or in a professional learning community focused on postsecondary success.



## Suggested Learnings

# Suggested Readings and Resources

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A bibliography of scholarly articles, books, and other media that can be used to reflect on and develop postsecondary work vested in research and best practices.



## Suggested Readings and Resources

### Relevant UChicago Consortium Research

[ACT Success: Good Grades, Not Test Practice. \(2008\). UChicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1-2.](#)

[Allensworth, E. M., & 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. Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1-68.](#)

[Freshman Year: The Make-it or Break-it Year. \(2007\). UChicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1-2.](#)

[Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., Coca, V., & Moeller, E. \(2009\). From High School to the Future: Making Hard Work Pay Off. UChicago Consortium on School Research, 1-88.](#)

[Roderick, M., Coca, V., Moeller, E., & Kelly-Kemple, T. \(2013\). From High School to the Future: The Challenge of Senior Year in Chicago Public Schools. UChicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.](#)

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[ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student \(Rep.\). \(2014\). American School Counselor Association.](#)

[Black Lives Matter: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males \(pp. 1-68, Rep.\). \(2015\). The Schott Foundation.](#)

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[Castleman, B. L., Page, L. C., & Schooley, K. \(2013\). The Forgotten Summer: Does the Offer of College Counseling After High School Mitigate Summer Melt Among College-Intending, Low-Income High School Graduates? \(pp. 1-40, Working paper\). EdPolicy Works.](#)

[Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., Saez, E., Turner, N., & Yagan, D. \(2017\). Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility \(pp. 1-96, Issue brief\). The Equality of Opportunity Project.](#)

[Corwin, Z. B., & Tierney, W. G. \(2007\). Getting There - and Beyond: Building a Culture of College-going in High Schools \(pp. 1-32, Rep.\). USC Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis.](#)

[Creating a College-Going Culture Guide \(pp. 1-22, Rep.\). \(2006\). CollegeBoard.](#)

[Crenshaw, K. W., Ocen, P., & Nanda, J. \(2015\). Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced and Underprotected \(pp. 1-53, Rep.\). Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies.](#)

[Dymnicki, A., Sambolt, M., & Kidron, Y. \(2013\). Improving College and Career Readiness by Incorporation Social and Emotional Learning \(pp. 1-23, Rep.\). American Institutes for Research.](#)

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