Tracking Overall Enrollment Rates

Collage enrollment extends long beyond the fall after high school graduation—19% of CPS 2009 graduates delayed enrollment, of whom almost three-quarters enrolled in a 2-year college.

This confirms that we only pay attention to the students who make the immediate transition to college after high school graduation—as much research, policy, and practice has done to date—may be overlooking a large number of students who likely need a different set of supports.

Additional Supports Needed for the Transition to College

Learning about why students delay enrollment could potentially lead to solutions—in both K-12 and higher education, in both practice and policy—to help students enroll earlier and with more support. We are looking at CPS graduates to see if patterns we are overlooking a large number of students who likely need a different set of supports.

A sizable number of CPS graduates enroll in multiple institutions during their college career.

• Students who delayed entry into 4-year colleges and large portion of students who delayed entry into 2-year colleges suggest that 2-year institutions offer a more flexible post-secondary option.

Asking similar questions about students who transferred and students who do not enroll (many of whom almost threequarters enrolled in a 2-year college).

Implications for K-12 and Postsecondary Education

As students who started at a 2-year or 4-year college and transferred to another college at the same level, or who may have stopped out and return to the same college or enroll in another. While we don’t know the full picture of CPS graduates’ college enrollment, these findings prompt questions:

• What drives students’ enrollment choices? How can the K-12 and higher education sectors improve college access and success for CPS graduates.

• Asking similar questions about students who delayed entry into 4-year colleges and large portion of students who delayed entry into 2-year colleges suggest that 2-year institutions offer a more flexible post-secondary option.

• However, this flexibility often comes at a cost.

• Research has shown that students who delay college entry are less likely to attain a degree than those who enter college immediately after high school, even after controlling for measureable differences across the two groups.

• Asking similar questions about students who transfer and students who do not enroll (many of whom are well-qualified), and the role that colleges play in these patterns, could also help improve college access and success for CPS graduates.

“Im“If we only pay attention to the students who make the immediate transition to college after high school graduation, we are overlooking a large number of students who likely need a different set of supports.”
Research Findings

Immediate Enrollment

More CPS graduates are enrolling in college immediately after high school.

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 1

CPS Graduates’ Immediate College Enrollment Rates Increased Over the Last Decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2-Year College</th>
<th>4-Year College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delays in college enrollment overall:

- Students didn’t enroll in college immediately at all.
- Many 2-year enrollees did not enroll in college immediately after high school.
- 20% of students immediately enrolled in a 2-year college.
- 14% of students delayed enrollment in a 2-year college.
- 45% of students who started at a 2-year college were delayed enrollees.

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 2

8% of 2009 CPS Graduates Delayed Enrolling in College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2-Year College</th>
<th>4-Year College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delayed Enrollment

Where and when did CPS graduates start their college careers?

- In 2009, 16% of CPS graduates delayed enrollment in college.
- More than 16% of 2009 CPS graduates delayed enrollment in college.
- Most 4-year enrollees enrolled in college immediately after high school.
- 37% of graduates immediately enrolled in a 4-year college.
- 5% of graduates delayed enrollment in a 4-year college.
- 12% of graduates who started at a 4-year college were delayed enrollees.

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 3

One in Four CPS Graduates Who First Enrolled in a Four-Year College Transferred to a Two-Year College Within Four Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006-09</th>
<th>2010-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking Beyond Immediate Enrollment

Focusing only on immediate college enrollment masks the complexity of college enrollment and transfer patterns. This report looks at three other enrollment patterns of CPS 2009 high school graduates. The percentage of delayed college enrollment in a 2-year and 4-year college is as follows:

1. Delayed Enrollment: Where and when did CPS graduates start their college career?
2. Overall Enrollment Patterns Six Years Out: How many CPS graduates from the classes of 2006–09 enrolled in 2-year and 4-year colleges (or both) within six years of graduating high school?
3. Transfers Between 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges: How many immediate enrollees transferred between levels of institution within four years: from 2-year to 4-year college; from 4-year to 2-year college; or from 4-year to a 2-year college?
4. Transfers Between 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges:
   - 16% of 2009 immediate 2-year enrollees transferred to a 4-year college.
   - 26% of 2009 immediate 4-year enrollees transferred to a 2-year college.

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 4

One in Four CPS Graduates Who First Enrolled in a Four-Year College Transferred to a Two-Year College Within Four Years of Graduating High School

Overall Enrollment Patterns Six Years Out

How many CPS graduates from the classes of 2006–09 enrolled in 2-year and 4-year colleges (or both) within six years of graduating high school?

- Most 2009 graduates (76%) enrolled in college at some point within six years of finishing high school.
- Slightly more than half (52%) of the graduates enrolled in college at some point in a 4-year college (48%); 31% enrolled in college at some point in a 2-year college (47%).
- 1 out of 5 graduates enrolled in both a 2-year and a 4-year college during their college career.
- The increase in overall enrollment (60% to 76%) from 2006–09 was driven mostly by an increase in 2-year enrollment.

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 5

Four in Four CPS Graduates Enrolled in College Within Six Years of Graduating High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006-09</th>
<th>2010-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Data and methods are described in Appendix A; see full report.
Research Findings

Immediate Enrollment

More CPS graduates are enrolling in college immediately after high school.

Delayed Enrollment

Where and when did CPS graduates start their college careers?

- 18% of 2009 CPS graduates delayed enrollment in college.
- Many 2-year enrollees did not enroll in college immediately after high school.
- 20% of graduates immediately enrolled in a 2-year college.
- 14% of delayed enrollment in a 2-year college.
- 42% of students who started at a 2-year college were delayed enrollees.
- Most 4-year enrollees enrolled in college immediately after high school.
- 37% of graduates immediately enrolled in a 4-year college.
- 5% of delayed enrollment in a 4-year college.
- 12% of students who started at a 4-year college were delayed enrollees.

Looking Beyond Immediate Enrollment

Focusing only on immediate college enrollment masks the complexity of college enrollment and transfer patterns. This report looks at three other enrollment patterns of CPS 2009 high school graduates to gain a clearer picture of college enrollment.

1. Delayed Enrollment: Where and when did CPS graduates start their college careers?
2. Overall Enrollment Patterns Six Years Later: How many CPS graduates from the classes of 2006–09 enrolled in 3-year and 4-year colleges (or both) within six years of graduating high school?
3. Transfers Between 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges: How many immediate enrollees transferred between level of institution within four years: from a 2-year to a 4-year college; or from a 4-year to a 2-year college?

Rates of Enrollment: 2015 vs 2006

Overall Enrollment Patterns Six Years Out

How many CPS graduates from the classes of 2006–09 enrolled in 2-year and 4-year colleges (or both) within six years of graduating high school?

- Most 2009 graduates (76%) enrolled in college at some point within six years of finishing high school.
- Slightly the same percentage of CPS graduates enrolled at some point in a 4-year college (48%) as enrolled at some point in a 2-year college (47%).
- 1 in 5 graduates enrolled in both a 2-year and a 4-year college during their college career.

Transfers Between 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges

How many immediate enrollees transferred between level of institution within four years: from a 2-year to a 4-year college; or from a 4-year to a 2-year college?

- 16% of 2009 immediate 2-year enrollees transferred to a 4-year college.
- 26% of 2009 immediate 4-year enrollees transferred to a 2-year college.
- 1702 of 6477 immediate 4-year enrollees transferred to a 2-year college.

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 1

CPS Graduates’ Immediate College Enrollment Rates Increased Over the Last Decade

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 2

30% of 2009 CPS Graduates Delayed Enrolling in College

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 3

One in Four CPS Graduates Who First Enrolled in a Four-Year College Transferred to a Two-Year College Within Four Years

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 4

Overall Enrollment Patterns Six Years Out

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 5

Three in Four CPS Graduates Enrolled in College Within Six Years of Graduating High School

Note: Unless otherwise specified in the table, rates are not rounded. Data and methods are described in Appendix A; see full report.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Data and methods are described in Appendix A; see full report.

Note: Graphs are not to scale. Transfers are not piecemeal. Some point had enrolled in college immediately, but did not enroll in college at some point within six years of high school graduation. Students who transferred institution but did not change “level” of institution are not included in our transfer numbers.

Note: Graphs are not to scale. Transfers are not piecemeal. Some point had enrolled in college immediately, but did not enroll in college at some point within six years of high school graduation. Students who transferred institution but did not change “level” of institution are not included in our transfer numbers.
Delayed Enrollment
Where and when did CPS graduates start their college careers?
- 16% of 2009 CPS graduates delayed enrolling in college.
  - Many 2-year enrollees did not enroll in college immediately after high school
  - 20% of graduates immediately enrolled in a 2-year college
  - 14% of delayed enrollment in a 2-year college
  - 40% of graduates who started at a 2-year college were delayed enrollees.
- 5% of 4-year enrollees delayed enrollment in a 4-year college.
- 12% of graduates who started at a 4-year college were delayed enrollees.

Looking Beyond Immediate Enrollment
Focusing only on immediate college enrollment masks the complexity of college enrollment and transfer patterns. This report looks at three other patterns of CPS 2009 high school graduates to gain a clearer picture of college enrollment overall:

1. Delayed Enrollment: Where and when did CPS graduates start their college careers?
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3. Transfers Between 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges: How many immediate enrollees transferred between level of institution within four years: from a 2-year to a 4-year college; from a 4-year to a 2-year college; or from a 2-year to 4-year college?

11 14 Increases in 1-Year 2-Year College Percentages
1-Year College Immediate Enrollment
2-Year College Immediate Enrollment
3-Year College Immediate Enrollment
4-Year College Immediate Enrollment
5-Year College Immediate Enrollment
6-Year College Immediate Enrollment

Percentages of CPS graduates' immediate enrollment rates increased over the last decade. Rates of college enrollment than it did in the past. As a result of these changes, 2-year enrollment now accounts for a smaller share of overall college enrollment than it did in the past.

Number of Total Immediate Enrollees Percent of Total Immediate Enrollees 4-Year College 2-Year College 4-Year College
4,832 11 3,677 14 1,165 6,547 50% 4,832 3,677 11
2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

• Immediate Enrollment: Students graduated high school in June and enrolled in college in the fall.
• Delayed Enrollment: Students didn’t enroll or college immediately, but did enroll in college at some point within six years of graduating high school.
• Transfer: At some point in their college career, students changed “level” of institution—from 2-year to 4-year, or from 4-year to 2-year colleges. Students who took time off or between switching levels of institutions are included in our transfer numbers. Students who transferred institution but did not change “level” of institution were not included in our transfer numbers.

Overall Enrollment: Students enrolled in college at any time within six years of high school graduation (includes immediate enrollees, delayed enrollees, and transfers between levels of institution).

Note: Percentages of 2-year and 4-year enrollees may not add up to total enrollees due to rounding. Data and methods are described in Appendix A; see full report.
College enrollment is fluid—some students delay enrollment, some transfer, and some stop out and return to the same college or enroll in another. While we don’t know the full picture of CPS graduates’ college enrollment, these findings prompt questions: What drives students’ enrollment choices? How can the K-12 and higher education sectors better support students? These supports are most likely to be successful if practitioners and policy makers dig into available data, ask questions, and gain insights that lead to adjustments in practice and updated policies that support CPS students and graduates.

**Tracking Overall Enrollment Rates**

College enrollment extends long beyond the fall after high school graduation:

- 19% of CPS 2009 graduates delayed enrollment, of whom almost three-quarters enrolled in a 2-year college.
- This confirms that it is only an option to pay attention to the students who make the immediate transition to college after high school graduation—as much research, policy, and practice has done to date. We are overlooking a large number of students who likely need a different set of supports.

A sizable number of CPS graduates enroll in multiple institutions during their college career. The result is the University of Chicago Consortium’s most comprehensive look at CPS graduates’ college enrollment trends to date.

### Additional Supports Needed for the Transition to College

Learning about why students delay enrollment could potentially lead to solutions—in both K-12 and higher education; in both practice and policy—to help students enroll earlier and with more ready access to flexible post-secondary options.

- The small portion of students who delayed entry into 4-year colleges and large portion of students who delayed entry into 2-year colleges suggest that 2-year institutions offer a more flexible post-secondary option.

However, this flexibility often comes at a cost. Research has shown that students who delay college entry are less likely to attain a degree than those who enter college immediately after high school, even after controlling for measureable differences across the two groups.

- Asking similar questions about students who transfer and students who do not enroll (many of whom are well-qualified), and the role that transfer and students who do not enroll (many of whom are well-qualified), and the role that multiple institutions play in these patterns, could also help students plan for, enroll in, and succeed in flexible post-secondary options.

- Research that illuminates what matters most for students’ high school and college success.
- Data that guides efforts to improve students’ attainment of key milestones.
- Professional learning that helps translate research and data into improved practice.

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

### Implications

**COLLEGE ENROLLMENT**

As more jobs than ever require a college degree, young people are increasingly reporting that they want to go to college. Educators and advocates around the U.S.—including school districts, community and non-profit organizations, and the higher education sector—are focusing more and more on helping students plan for, enroll in, and succeed in college. The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UChicago Consortium) has previously reported on the rates at which Chicago Public Schools (CPS) high school graduates enroll in 4-year colleges immediately after high school. However, many students also enroll in 2-year colleges, enter college after finishing high school, or transfer from one institution to another during their time in higher education. In an effort to help practitioners and policymakers better understand the extent to which CPS graduates are making the transition to college, and who may benefit from additional support, the UChicago Consortium published a report in October 2017, Patterns of Two-Year and Four-Year College Enrollment Among Chicago Public Schools Graduates. This report made use of an expanded dataset to examine immediate, delayed, and overall enrollment in 2-year and 4-year colleges over a 5-year period, as well as transfers between 2-year and 4-year colleges. The result is the UChicago Consortium’s most comprehensive look at CPS graduates’ college enrollment trends to date.

Published: October 2017

**To read the full report, visit:**


**ABSTRACT**

Patterns of two-year and four-year college enrollment among Chicago Public Schools graduates. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. (2017)

**About the UChicago Consortium**

The UChicago Consortium on School Research conducts research of high technical quality that can inform and assess policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools. We seek to expand communication among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners as we support the search for solutions to the problems of school reform. The UChicago Consortium encourages the use of research in policy action and improvement of practice, but does not argue for particular policies or programs. Rather, we help to build capacity for school reform by identifying what matters for student success and school improvement, creating critical indicators to chart progress, and conducting theory-driven evaluation to identify how programs and policies are working. The UChicago Consortium is a unit of the Urban Education Institute.

**Summary**

Patterns of two-year and four-year college enrollment among Chicago Public Schools graduates. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. (2017)
Research that illuminates what matters most for students’ attainment.

Data that guides efforts to improve students’ attainment.

Policy makers dig into available data, ask questions, and gain insights that lead to adjustments.

“If we only pay attention to the students who make the immediate transition to college after high school graduation—as much research, policy, and practice has done to date—we are overlooking a large number of students who likely need a different set of supports.

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research conducts research of high technical quality that can inform and assess policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools. We seek to expand communication among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, and to help the search for solutions to the problems of school reform. The UChicago Consortium encourages the use of research in policy action and improvement of practice, but does not engage in particular policies or programs. Rather, we help to build capacity for school reform by identifying what matters for student success and school improvement, creating critical indicators to chart progress, and developing theory-driven evaluation to identify how programs and policies are working. The UChicago Consortium is a part of the Urban Education Institute.

Additional Supports Needed for the Transition to College

Learning about why students delay enrollment could potentially lead to solutions—both K-12 and higher education; in both practice and policy—to help students enroll earlier and with more support.

The small portion of students who delayed entry into 4-year colleges and large portion of students who delayed entry into 2-year colleges suggest that 2-year institutions offer a more flexible post-secondary option.

However, this flexibility often comes at a cost.

Research has shown that students who delay college entry are less likely to attain a degree than those who enter college immediately after high school, even after controlling for measureable differences across the two groups.

Asking similar questions about students who transfer and students who do not enroll (many of whom are well-qualified), and the role that families play in these patterns, could also help improve college access and success for CPS graduates.

Data that guides efforts to improve students’ attainment.

Policy makers dig into available data, ask questions, and gain insights that lead to adjustments.

College enrollment is fluid—some students delay enrollment, some transfer, and some drop out and return to the same college or enroll in another. While we don’t know the full picture of CPS graduates’ college enrollment, these findings prompt questions:

• Multiple institutions during their college career
• Sizable number of CPS graduates enroll in 2-year colleges
• Significant number of CPS graduates enroll in 2-year colleges
• Time to college entry is fluid—some students delay enrollment, some transfer, and some stop out and return to the same college or enroll in another.

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

In an effort to help practitioners and policymakers better understand the extent to which CPS graduates are making the transition to college, and who may benefit from additional support, the UChicago Consortium published a report in October 2017, Patterns of Two-Year and Four-Year College Enrollment Among Chicago Public Schools Graduates. This report made use of an expanded dataset to examine immediate, delayed, and overall enrollment in 2-year and 4-year colleges over a 5-year period, as well as transfers between 2-year and 4-year colleges.

The result is the UChicago Consortium’s most comprehensive look at CPS graduates’ college enrollment trends to date.

"More CPS graduates are enrolling in college immediately after high school...but focusing only on immediate college enrollment masks the complexity of college enrollment and transfer patterns."