About the To&Through Project

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

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

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

About the To&Through Project’s Data Insights

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

Please visit toandthrough.uchicago.edu to learn more about the To&Through Project and the robust body of research behind this collection of data insights.
The Freshman Year: A Critical Juncture in Students’ Journeys To&Through High School and College
Freshman OnTrack is more predictive of a student’s odds of graduating from high school than all other factors combined

Predictive Ability of Indicators of High School Graduation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All other factors*</th>
<th>Freshman OnTrack (freshman core course passing and credits)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students who are “on-track” in freshman year are 3x more likely than their off-track peers to graduate from high school

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

Strong attendance correlates with strong grades

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

Freshman year GPA is nearly 2x as predictive of high school graduation as standardized test scores*

* Explore and PLAN scores

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

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

- 69% are on-track with 3.0+ GPA at the end of their freshman year.
- 6% are on-track with <3.0 GPA at the end of their freshman year.
- 0% are off-track at the end of their freshman year.

The To&Through Online Tool. See: toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool
Freshman year GPA is highly predictive of access to selective colleges

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

- Students who were on-track and had 3.0+ GPA at the end of freshman year: 69%
- Students who were on-track and had <3.0 GPA at the end of freshman year: 13%
- Students who were off-track at the end of freshman year: 1%
CPS students’ freshman year GPAs have risen steadily since 2009

Increase in CPS freshman year GPAs of 3.0+ from 2009–2017*

* GPAs do not include charter school students because we do not have grades data for these students. 27 percent of the 2016-17 freshman cohort attended charter schools. The proportion of freshmen in charter schools in 2009 was 15 percent.

The To&Through Online Tool. See: toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool
Still, students fail many more courses in 9th grade than they failed in 8th grade

Percentage of students who failed at least one semester of any course

This analysis includes students who were first-time freshmen in Chicago Public Schools in 2016-17. Students were included in this analysis only if their grades for both 8th and 9th grade were available. This excludes students who attended a charter school for the duration of either 8th or 9th grade.

**Even high achieving students see their core GPAs decline between 8th and 9th grade**

Core GPAs of freshmen in 8th and 9th grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core GPA</th>
<th>8th Grade</th>
<th>9th Grade</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.5–4.0 (n=4,495)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0–3.4 (n=3,690)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.4 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0–2.9 (n=5,696)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.2 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;2.0 (n=2,033)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>+0.1 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The core GPAs of high-achieving Black students fall twice as much as those of their White and Asian peers

Drop in core GPA between 8th and 9th grade among students with an 8th grade core GPA of 3.5-4.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th>LATINO</th>
<th>WHITE</th>
<th>ASIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-.73</td>
<td>-.54</td>
<td>-.35</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis includes students who were first-time freshmen in Chicago Public Schools in 2016-17. Students were included in this analysis only if their grades for both 8th and 9th grade were available. This excludes students who attended a charter school for the duration of either 8th or 9th grade.

A non-core failure is just as detrimental as a core failure to freshmen students’ likelihood of graduating from high school.

High school graduation rate by number of 9th grade course failures:

- **90%** with zero failures
- **70%** with one core failure and no other failures
- **68%** with one non-core failure and no other failures

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Students lose significantly more GPA points in PE/Health and the Arts than in core subjects from 8th to 9th grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>GPA Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PE/Health</td>
<td>-0.8 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>-0.6 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>-0.3 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The PE/Health grades of Black and Latino young men fall almost a full letter grade (1 GPA point) from 8th to 9th grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td>-0.99</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latino</strong></td>
<td>-0.90</td>
<td>-0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>-0.70</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian</strong></td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Almost as many CPS freshmen fail at least one semester of PE/Health as fail at least one semester of Science

Percentage of students with at least one 9th grade semester failure, by subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MATH (n=15,371)</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLISH (n=15,855)</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIENCE (n=15,680)</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE/HEALTH (n=15,453)</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC. STUDIES (n=15,435)</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTS (n=8,693)</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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District Trends:
The Attainment Trajectory of Chicago Public Schools Students
Chicago has made significant improvements in the past decade in students’ high school and college attainment

- **Freshman OnTrack rate**
  - 2006: 61%
  - 2017: 89%
  - Improvement: +28 pts

- **High school graduation rate**
  - 2006: 57%
  - 2017: 75%
  - Improvement: +18 pts

- **2-year college enrollment rate**
  - 2006: 16%
  - 2016: 19%
  - Improvement: +3 pts

- **4-year college enrollment rate**
  - 2006: 33%
  - 2016: 47%
  - Improvement: +14 pts

- **4-year college graduation rate**
  - 2009**: 19%
  - 2016: 46%
  - Improvement: +3 pts

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* 2016 is the most recent year of National Student Clearinghouse data available on CPS graduates.
** The National Student Clearinghouse changed the way they matched students’ high school data to their college graduation data for the class of 2003. 46 percent represents the proportion of the Chicago Public Schools class of 2003 who graduated from college in 2009, within six years of enrolling in college.

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

- **High School Graduation Rate**
  - CPS 2017: 75%
  - Nation 2016: 84%

- **2-year College Enrollment Rate**
  - CPS 2016: 19%
  - Nation 2016: 25%

- **4-year College Enrollment Rate**
  - CPS 2016: 47%
  - Nation 2016: 46%

- **4-year College Graduation Rate**
  - CPS 2016: 49%
  - Nation 2016: 60%

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

- Percent of graduates with a 21+ on the ACT: 23% in 2006, 33% in 2016 (+10pts)
- Percent of graduates who earned a 3.0 GPA or better: 23% in 2006, 34% in 2016 (+11pts)

Girls have earned higher grades than boys

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

50% 33%

Percentage of freshman students earning B’s or better by gender, 2016–2017
Since 2006, Chicago’s high school graduation rate has risen among students of all races and genders

Graduation rate increases in CPS, 2006 vs. 2017

**BLACK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male 2006</th>
<th>Male 2017</th>
<th>Female 2006</th>
<th>Female 2017</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+12pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LATINO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male 2006</th>
<th>Male 2017</th>
<th>Female 2006</th>
<th>Female 2017</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+24pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+16pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHITE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male 2006</th>
<th>Male 2017</th>
<th>Female 2006</th>
<th>Female 2017</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+17pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+13pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASIAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male 2006</th>
<th>Male 2017</th>
<th>Female 2006</th>
<th>Female 2017</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>+10pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>+6pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

**BLACK**
- 2006: 19% gap, 41% female, 60% male
- 2017: 11% gap, 61% female, 72% male

**LATINO**
- 2006: 15% gap, 51% female, 66% male
- 2017: 7% gap, 75% female, 82% male

**WHITE**
- 2006: 11% gap, 65% female, 76% male
- 2017: 7% gap, 82% female, 89% male

**ASIAN**
- 2006: 9% gap, 80% female, 89% male
- 2017: 5% gap, 90% female, 95% male
