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The Educational Attainment of Chicago Public Schools Students: 2021

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Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages: <https://images.all4ed.org/four-high-school-students-on-stairs>

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If current rates hold,
27%
of current CPS ninth-graders would complete a
college credential within 10 years.

This annual analysis provides a district-level view of students' patterns of educational attainment. It presents a starting place for thinking about *why* these patterns exist and *what can be done* to improve these patterns.

We focus on three key milestones—high school graduation, college enrollment, and college completion—and use them to calculate a Post-secondary Attainment Index (PAI). Where possible, we disaggregate the data by race/ethnicity and gender, disability status, and English Learner (EL) status. Continue scrolling for more details on each of these components and key findings for each. To see what these attainment rates and educational milestones look like in *your* school or community, visit the online [To&Through Milestones Tool: https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/cps/](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/cps/).

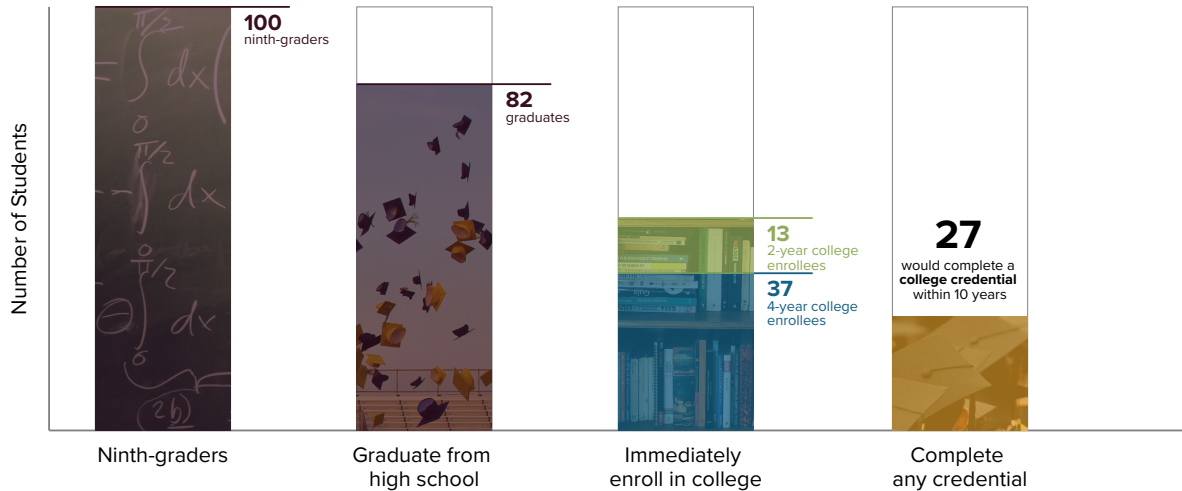
Supporting CPS students throughout their high school *and* college journeys will likely require an unprecedented level of investment and new partnerships across the city. We also need an understanding of the lived experiences of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students and graduates impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to inform investments, partnerships, and changes to practice. See the stories the To&Through Project has collected so far: <https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/student-perspectives>.

Post-secondary Attainment Index

FIGURE 1

2021 Post-secondary Attainment Index

If 100 ninth-graders began in CPS today, 27 would earn a college credential by the time they're about 25 years old, if current rates of attainment stayed the same.



Note: The high school graduation rates used in calculating the PAI are the four-year high school graduation rates, and the denominators of all college enrollment and completion rates are also limited to students who graduated from high school within four years. For this reason, the enrollment and completion rates used in calculating the PAI (available in Appendix A, Table A.2) do not match those included in Figures 6–11 in this report, which show college enrollment and completion rates for all CPS high school graduates, including those who graduated high school in five or six years. Photos by Jasmin Awad / Nate Umstead / Alfredo Lietor / baona for Getty Images.

To understand the most recent available rates of high school and college attainment in tandem, we calculate the Post-secondary Attainment Index (PAI),¹ which represents the proportion of current CPS ninth-graders who would complete any degree or certificate from a two-year or four-year college within 10 years, if current rates of attainment were to hold constant over the next decade.

Note that the PAI is not intended to be a prediction of what will happen. Continued efforts to improve rates of attainment will hopefully result in more CPS students completing high school and college. The PAI is intended to summarize current rates of high school and college attainment and put these rates in context with one another, as a starting place for thinking about why these patterns exist and what can be done to change these patterns. To find the high school and college attainment rates² used to calculate the PAI, see the Appendices.

¹ The PAI is not a true cohort attainment rate, in that it does not follow one single cohort of students for 10 consecutive years. Instead, to provide more timely information, it combines information from multiple recent cohorts to suggest what their college outcomes might be, if the most recent available rates of attainment were to hold constant during the next decade.

² The 2021 PAI synthesizes four-year high school graduation data for the class of 2021, immediate college enrollment data for the class of 2021, and six-year college outcomes for the class of 2014.

2021 PAI — Key Points

- If 2021 rates hold over the next decade, of 100 current CPS ninth-graders, 82 would graduate from high school within four years.
- Of those 82 graduates, 37 would immediately enroll in a four-year college, 13 would immediately enroll in a two-year college, and 32 would not immediately enroll in college.
- Six years after high-school graduation, a total of 27 of the original 82 high school graduates would have earned a college credential—21 of the 37 students who enrolled in a four-year college, four of the 13 students who enrolled in a two-year college, and two of the 32 students who did not immediately enroll in college.³
- The 2021 PAI of 27.0% is almost the same as the 2020 PAI of 27.1%.⁴

2021 PAI by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

To learn more about how we disaggregate by race/ethnicity and gender, see the Appendices. Before examining the PAI for different student groups, it is critical to restate that the PAI should be understood as the product of the cumulative effects of historical and present systemic racism, including oppressive policies and structures in high schools and colleges. The PAI also reflects the broader context of systemic racism that differentially impacts rates of attainment by race/ethnicity and gender. We report these numbers to contribute to critical examinations about how those working within the education field can change practices and disrupt policies that have contributed to these inequitable outcomes.

³ The high school graduation rates used in calculating the PAI are the four-year high school graduation rates, and the denominators of all college enrollment and completion rates are also limited to students who graduated from high school within four years, which is why the denominator here is comprised of the 82 high school graduates.

⁴ Malone, M., Mahaffie, S., Hernandez, G., Usher, A., & Nagaoka, J. (2021). *The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students: 2020*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. Earlier PAI rates are available in the Appendices.

Interpreting Disaggregated Data Within the Context of Structural Oppression

Where possible, we disaggregate data by race/ethnicity and gender, disability status, and English Learner (EL) status to understand which students face more barriers to educational attainment and where different strategies and supports are needed. We report these numbers to contribute to critical examinations about whether high schools and colleges are making progress towards fostering equitable outcomes, and how high schools and colleges can further change practices and disrupt policies contributing to inequitable outcomes.

We urge readers to examine disaggregated rates of educational attainment within the context of structural oppression—particularly the history and present reality of systemic racism—while moving through the stages of questioning needed to affect change. There is a considerable body of research that has informed our understanding of the role that systemic racism plays in Chicago’s schools and history, which we recommend as a starting place for readers seeking to learn more.^a Specifically, we hope readers will...

- Interrogate how disparities in attainment are due to issues of equity—particularly racial equity—within the district and higher education institutions in addition to the broader context of systemic racism in which schools are situated.
- Beyond questioning why these disparities exist, question what can be done, both within and outside of education, to change them.
- Understand that, while important, examining these data is only a part of the efforts necessary to determine what questions should be asked to understand and improve students’ experiences at CPS and after graduation.

Finally, limitations to note include:

- We do not have information on students who pursue post-secondary pathways other than a college degree such as the workforce or the military. We are also limited by the data CPS collects on students’ race/ethnicity,^b gender,^c disability status, and other identifiers.
- These data represent individual students who face and overcome barriers to educational attainment every day. Students can bring a wealth of lived experience to bear on the inequitable policies and practices that prevent CPS students from reaching their full potential.

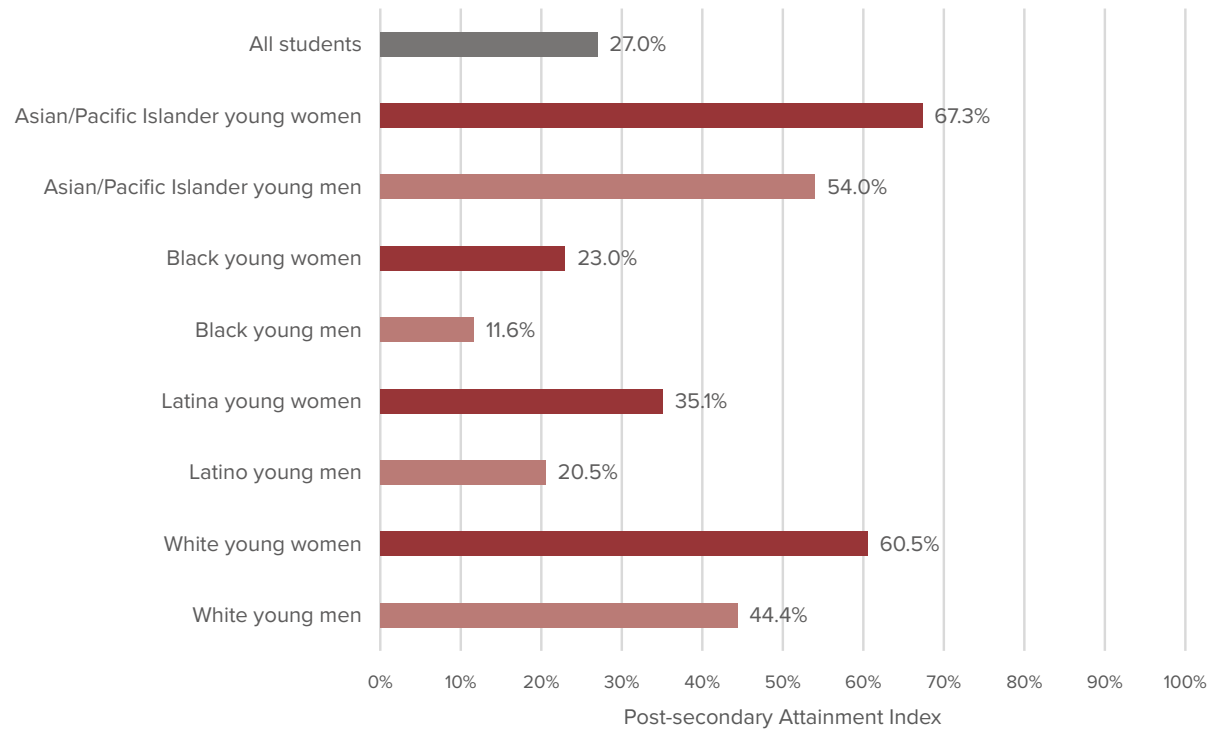
^a The following publications are a few of those that the authors have found helpful: *Ewing (2018)*; *Payne (2008)*; *Todd-Breland (2018)*; *Chicago Beyond Equity Series (2019)*; *Drake & Clayton (1945)*; *Henricks, Lewis, Arenas, & Lewis (2017)*; *Moore (2016)*; *Rothstein (2017)*; *Sampson (2011)*; *Wilson (1987)*.

^b We acknowledge that the race/ethnicity and gender categories available in our data are limited and do not fully reflect the spectrum of identities embodied by CPS students. Further, we have chosen to combine or suppress data for several groups because the small numbers of students in those groups makes it difficult to reliably interpret their rates. More specifically, CPS changed its race/ethnicity categories in the 2010–11 school year to include a Multiracial option and the Asian/Pacific Islander category was split into two categories: Pacific Islander/Hawaiian and Asian. In this brief, our “Asian American/Pacific Islander” category combines three CPS data categories—Asian, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian, and Asian/Pacific Islander—due to the small number of students in the latter two categories. Students who identified as Native American/Alaskan Native and Multiracial students were not included in the analysis, also due to the small numbers of students in these categories.

^c Many students do not fit into one of the two gender categories CPS has historically collected data on (male and female), but we believe that there are still insights to be gained from analysis of this data. Starting in 2020–21 the gender categories in the CPS demographic questionnaire were: Male, Female, and Non-binary; however, we are not currently reporting data on non-binary students due to small group sizes. We hope in the future to be able to report data that more fully describes the identities of CPS students.

FIGURE 2

2021 Post-secondary Attainment Index by race/ethnicity and gender



Note: The high school graduation rates used in calculating the PAI are the four-year high school graduation rates, and the denominators of all college enrollment and completion rates are also limited to students who graduated from high school within four years. For this reason, the enrollment and completion rates used in calculating the PAI (available in Appendix A, Table A.2) do not match those included in Figures 6–11 in this report, which show college enrollment and completion rates for all CPS high school graduates, including those who graduated high school in five or six years. Data for Multiracial, Native American/Alaskan Native, and students who didn't report their race/ethnicity in CPS records are not included because we suppressed rates for groups of fewer than 100 students to avoid reporting fluctuations in rates that do not reflect consistent trends in student outcomes.

2021 PAI by Race/Ethnicity and Gender — Key Point

- In 2019, nearly 75 percent of CPS ninth-graders indicated that they aspired to obtain at least an associate degree or certificate.⁵ However, no race/ethnicity and gender group would have 75 percent of students attain a college degree or certificate in 10 years, if the most recent available rates of attainment for CPS students were not to change over the next decade.

⁵ University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UChicago Consortium) analysis of the 2019 *5Essentials* Survey. In 2019, 74.1 percent of CPS ninth-graders indicated that they wanted to complete at least an associate degree or certificate. The survey's response rate was 81.4 percent, and 78.4 percent of respondents answered this question.

CPS Rates of Attainment Reported by the UChicago To&Through Project

The To&Through Project also reports rates of attainment—high school graduation, college enrollment, and college completion—and more for each CPS high school and each community area in Chicago on the [To&Through Milestones Tool](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/cps/): <https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/cps/>.

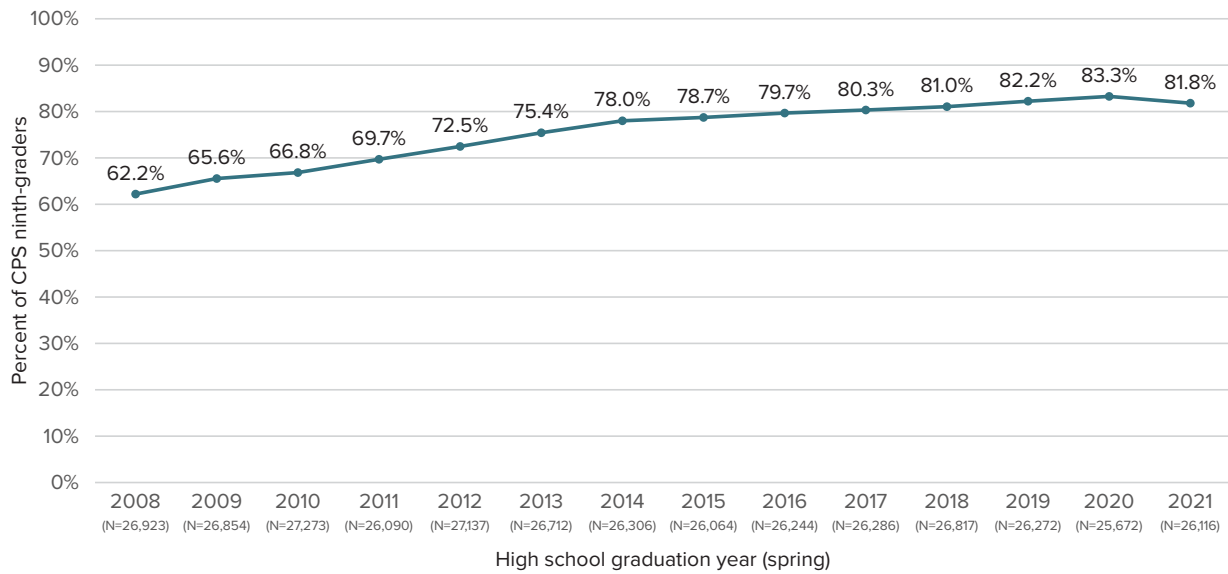
Both this annual report and the Tool report annual data, and are updated at the end of each calendar year. This web page is updated annually, to report on how attainment rates are changing in the district year-over-year. The Tool is typically also updated annually, but may also have more frequent updates to provide users with timely data. In that case, data on the Tool may differ from the data on this annual report web page.

CPS High School Graduation Rate

Among 2017–18 first-time ninth-graders, 82% graduated from high school by spring 2021, a decline of about one percentage point compared to 2020. This is the first year of decline in CPS’s high school graduation rate in recent history.

For detailed information on how this metric is calculated, see the Appendices.

FIGURE 3
Four-year high school graduation rates of CPS ninth-grade cohorts over time



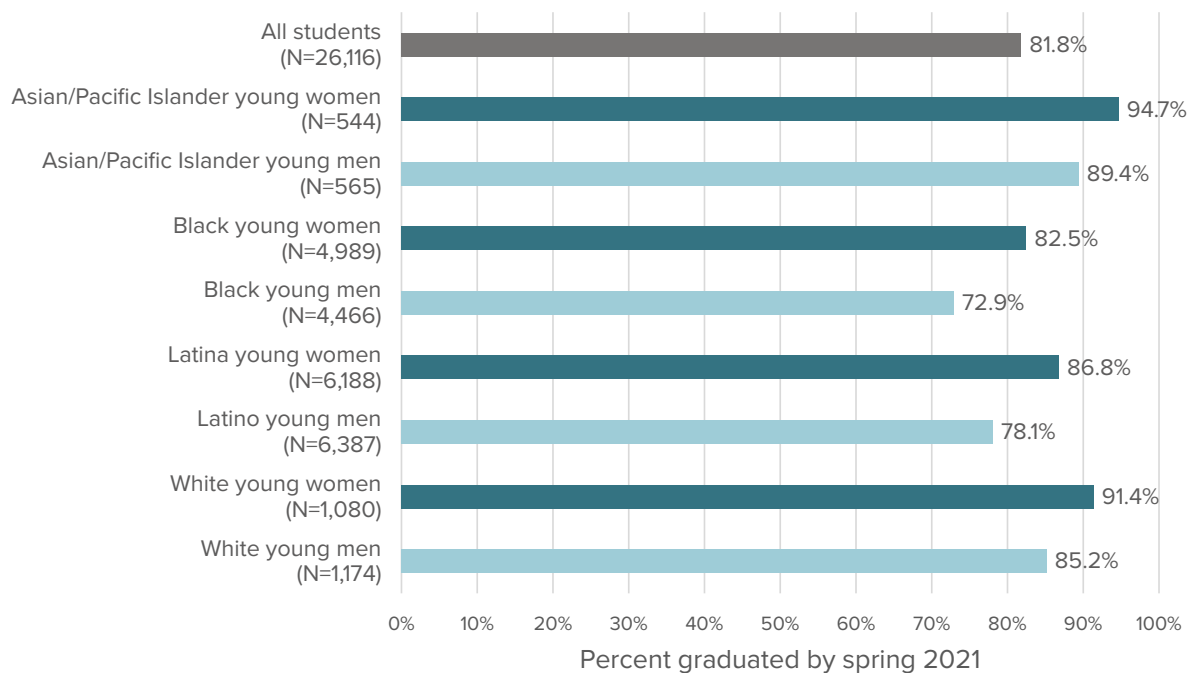
Note: All CPS high school students, including charter and Options school students, were included in this analysis. Students were counted as high school graduates if they completed high school within four years of their first-time ninth-grade year of high school—the 2021 high school graduation year rate, for example, represents students who began high school in the fall of 2017. Ns represent the total number of ninth-graders in each cohort. Students who transferred to a non-CPS school during high school were excluded from this analysis.

2021 CPS High School Graduation Rate — Key Points

- The high school graduation rate of CPS students fell slightly in 2021 for the first time in more than a decade, from 83.3% in 2020 to 81.8% in 2021. The 2020 school year was the second year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the only school year when the majority of instructional days were remote in CPS.
- Despite the slight decline in 2021, the high school graduation rate increased significantly over the past decade, from 69.7% in 2011 to 81.8% in 2021.

High School Graduation: Disaggregated Data High School Graduation by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

FIGURE 4
Four-year high school graduation rates by race/ethnicity and gender (2017–18 CPS ninth-grade cohort)



Note: All CPS high school students, including charter and Options school students, were included in this analysis. Students were counted as high school graduates if they completed high school within four years of their first-time ninth-grade year of high school. Students who transferred to a non-CPS school during high school were excluded from this analysis. The number of students in each of the race/ethnicity and gender categories does not add to equal the number of students in the “All students” category because there were some students whose specific race/ethnicity groups are not shown in the figure, but who are included in the overall numbers. Specifically, Native American/Alaskan Native students, Multiracial students, and students whose did not report their race/ethnicity are not shown because fewer than 100 students identified in each of those categories, making it difficult to reliably interpret rates.

High School Graduation Rate by Race/Ethnicity and Gender — Key Points

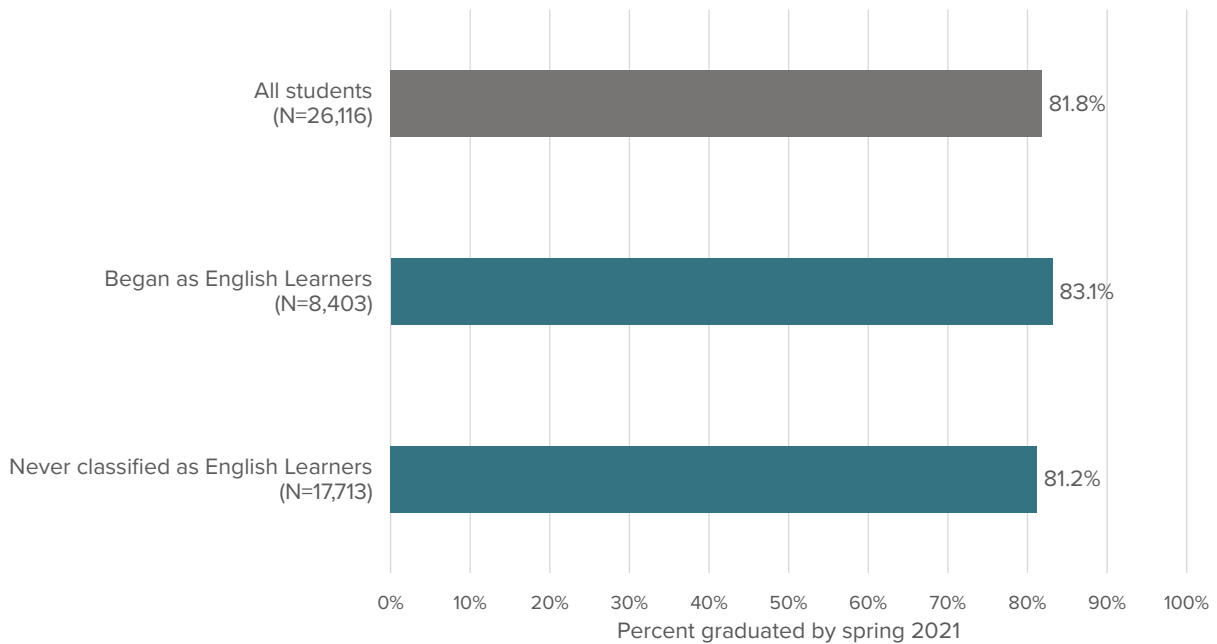
- Within each race/ethnicity group, young men graduated from high school at a rate lower than young women of the same race/ethnicity.
- The graduation rates for Black young men (72.9%) and Latino young men (78.1%) were below the district average (81.8%).

To learn more about how we disaggregate by race/ethnicity and gender, see the Appendices. To track high school graduation rates disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender over time, see the [To&Through Milestones Tool](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/): <https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/>.⁶

High School Graduation by English Learner Status

FIGURE 5

Four-year high school graduation rates by English Learner (EL) status (2017–18 CPS ninth-grade cohort)



Note: All CPS high school students, including charter and Options school students, were included in this analysis. Students were counted as high school graduates if they completed high school within four years of their first-time ninth-grade year of high school. Students who transferred to a non-CPS school during high school were excluded from this analysis. The “began as English Learners” category includes students who took the ACCESS test at any point after their entry into CPS—which includes both 1) students who later demonstrated English proficiency (scoring above the cut score) on the ACCESS test, and thus were no longer classified as English Learners, and 2) students who remained as active English Learners throughout high school. We define students who were never classified as English Learners as students who were never eligible to receive EL services, either because their native language was English or because they took the English proficiency screening test when they began school in CPS and scored high enough to be considered proficient in English.

⁶ The [To&Through Milestones Tool](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/) is a public resource that allows users to explore rates of educational attainment across a variety of metrics, for individual CPS schools and the district as a whole.

High School Graduation Rate by English Learner Status — Key Points⁷

- Among 2017–18 first-time ninth-graders, students who began as English Learners in CPS graduated from high school at a rate 2 percentage points higher than students who were never classified as English Learners.
- Students who began as English Learners graduated at a slightly higher rate (83.1%) than students who were never classified as English Learners (81.2%).
- Around 32% of 2017–18 CPS ninth-graders were at one point classified as English Learners.

We define **students who began as English Learners** as students who took the ACCESS test of English proficiency at any point during their time in CPS. This category includes students who later became former English Learners⁸ by demonstrating English proficiency (scoring above the cut score) on the ACCESS test as well as students who remained as active English Learners throughout high school. We define **students who were never classified as English Learners** as students who were never eligible to receive EL services. To learn more about how and why we disaggregate data by English Learner status, see the Appendices.

High School Graduation by Disability Status

TABLE 1

Four-year CPS high school graduation rates by disability category

2017–18 CPS ninth-grade cohort (percent graduated by spring 2021)		
	Students	Four-year graduation rate
All students	26,116	81.8%
Students with an IEP related to a learning disability	2,644	77.5%
Students with an IEP related to another disability	1,420	46.4%
Students without an IEP	22,052	84.6%

Note: All CPS high school students, including charter and Options school students, were included in this analysis. Students were counted as high school graduates if they completed high school within four years of their first-time ninth-grade year of high school. Students who transferred to a non-CPS school during high school were excluded from this analysis. Please see the Appendices for details about the disability categories used in this table.

⁷ Hundreds of CPS schools have been cited by the district in recent years for not supporting English Learners to the degree legally required (*Belsha, 2017 June 28*). We acknowledge this reality with the aim of preventing people from ascribing English Learners' educational outcomes solely to the choices and capacity of English Learner students and their families.

⁸ Students can exit out of EL status as early as the first year during which they were classified as English Learners, including if that year is Kindergarten. CPS kindergarteners who were designated as English Learners and exited out of EL status at the end of kindergarten are included in "students who began as English Learners." Many students who began as English Learners exited out of EL status by the third grade. Furthermore, most students who began as English Learners exited out of EL status by the time they reached high school. About one in five students who began as English Learners remained classified as English Learners upon high school enrollment (*de la Torre et al, 2019*).

High School Graduation Rate by Disability Status — Key Points

- Overall, the four-year graduation rate for all students with and without disabilities was 81.8%.
- Among 2017 first-time ninth-graders, students with a learning disability graduated from high school within four years at a rate that approaches the four-year district average.
 - The four-year graduation rate for the 2,644 2017–18 CPS ninth-graders receiving services related to a learning disability was 77.5%.
- The four-year graduation rate for the 1,420 2017–18 CPS ninth-graders receiving services related to another disability was 46.4%.

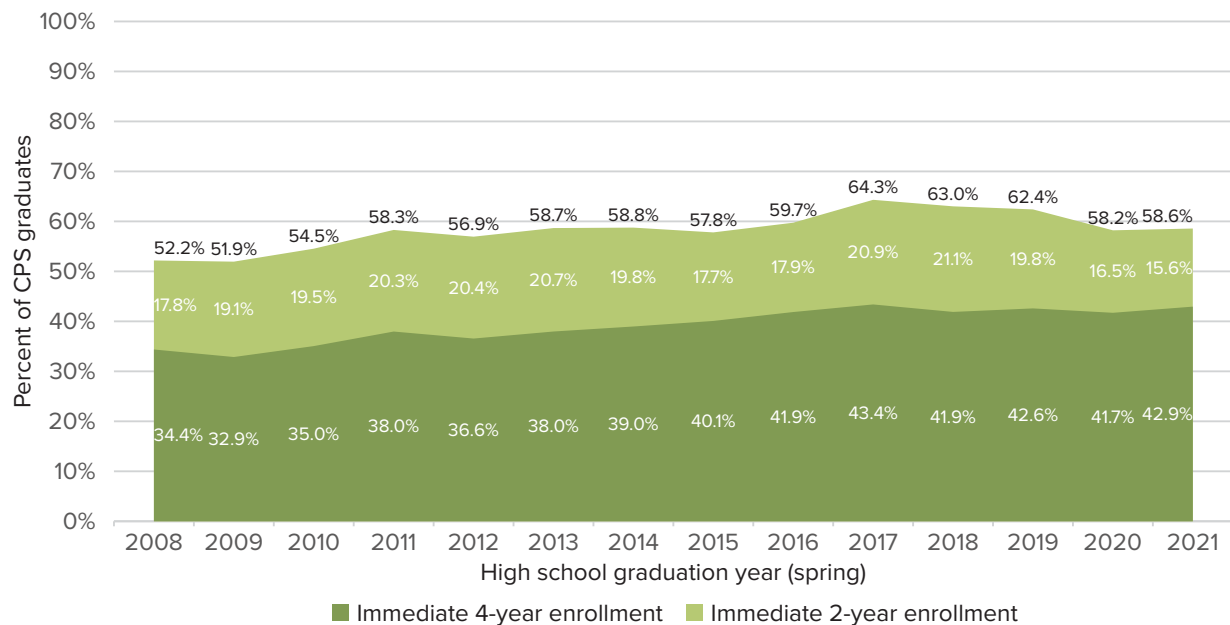
To learn how we disaggregate by disability status, see the Appendices.

CPS Immediate College Enrollment Rate

Among the CPS graduating class of 2021, 59% enrolled in a two-year or four-year college in the first summer or fall following high school graduation.⁹

For detailed information on how this metric is calculated, see the Appendices.

FIGURE 6
Immediate college enrollment of CPS graduates over time



Note: Due to rounding, individual rates may not sum exactly to the total rate displayed. These are immediate college enrollment rates for all CPS high school graduates, including those who graduated high school in five or six years. Enrollments from North Park University are missing from 2020 and 2021 rates. In 2019, North Park University enrollees comprised around 1% of all immediate enrollees from CPS.

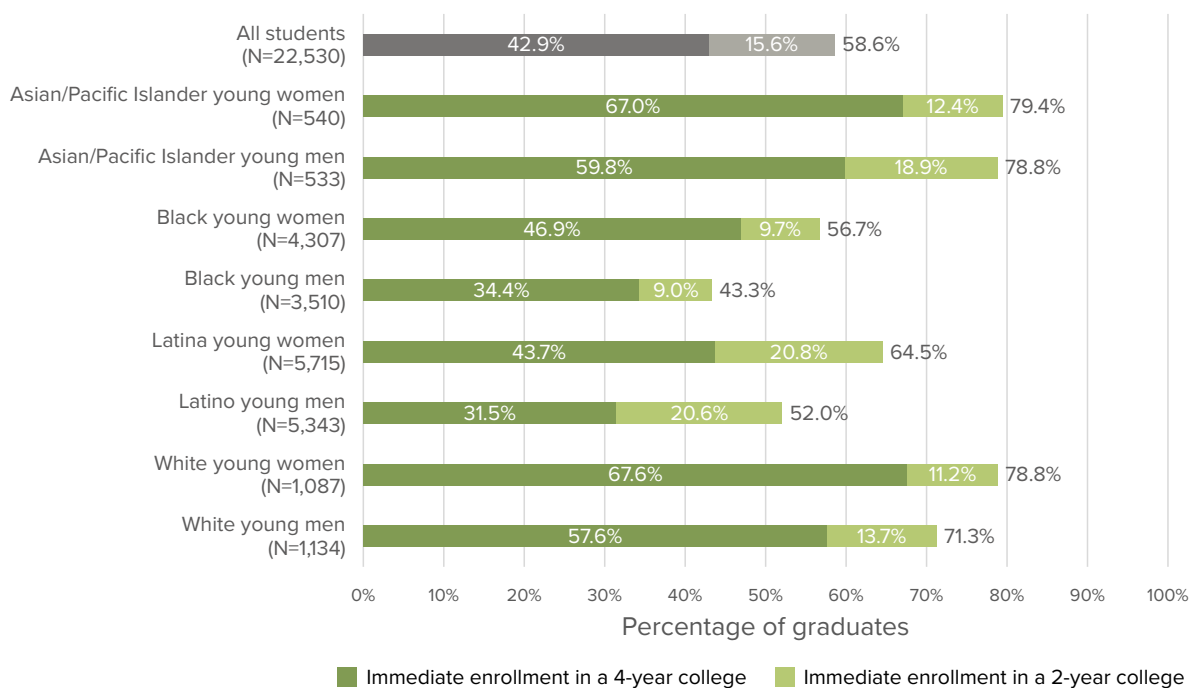
⁹ Note that the To&Through Project's definition of immediate college enrollment differs from CPS's definition of college enrollment in that CPS includes spring enrollments as immediate enrollments. The figures in this report include only immediate summer and fall enrollments as immediate enrollments.

2021 CPS Immediate College Enrollment Rate — Key Points

- Four-year college enrollment rates increased from 2008, but the two-year college enrollment rate has seen more fluctuations.
 - Since 2008, the proportion of CPS graduates enrolling immediately in a four-year college increased about 8.5 total percentage points, and the proportion enrolling immediately in a two-year college fell about 2.2 total percentage points (mostly due to the decline from 2019–20).
- The rate of immediate two-year college enrollment declined significantly in 2020 during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the immediate four-year enrollment rate declined slightly. In 2021, the four-year enrollment rate recovered to pre-pandemic levels, but the two-year enrollment rate remained low, actually decreasing slightly to 15.6% in 2021.

Immediate College Enrollment: Disaggregated Data Immediate College Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

FIGURE 7
Immediate college enrollment by race/ethnicity and gender (spring 2021 high school graduates)



Note: These are immediate college enrollment rates for all CPS high school graduates, including those who graduated high school in five or six years. Enrollments from North Park University are missing from 2020 and 2021 rates. In 2019, North Park University enrollees comprised around 1% of all immediate enrollees from CPS. Due to rounding, individual rates may not sum exactly to the total rate displayed. The number of students in each of the race/ethnicity and gender categories does not add to equal the number of students in the “All students” category because there were some students whose specific race/ethnicity groups are not shown in the figure, but who are included in the overall numbers. Specifically, Native American/Alaskan Native students, Multiracial students, and students whose did not report their race/ethnicity are not shown because fewer than 100 students identified in each of those categories, making it difficult to reliably interpret rates.

Immediate College Enrollment Rate by Race/Ethnicity and Gender — Key Points

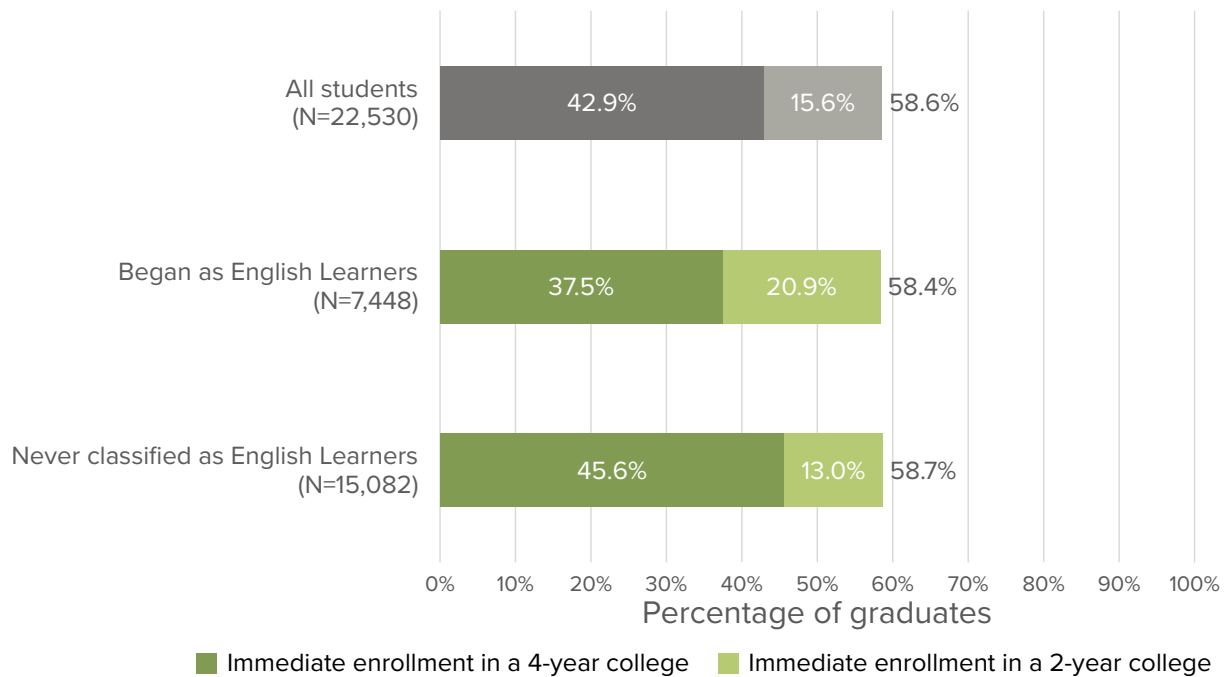
- In 2021, young women of all race/ethnicity groups immediately enrolled in four-year colleges at a rate higher than young men.
- Rates of immediate college enrollment varied more across race/ethnicity and gender than high school graduation rates in 2021.
- Only 31.5% of Latino young men immediately enrolled in a four-year college, vs. the district-wide enrollment rate of 42.9%. However, Latino young men and Latina young women enrolled in two-year colleges at the highest rates among all groups (20.6% and 20.8% respectively, vs. a district-wide average of 15.6%).

To learn more about how we disaggregate by race/ethnicity and gender, see the Appendices. To track immediate college enrollment rates disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender over time, see the [To&Through Milestones Tool: https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/).¹⁰

Immediate College Enrollment by English Learner Status

FIGURE 8

Immediate college enrollment by English Learner (EL) status (spring 2021 CPS high school graduates)



Note: These are immediate college enrollment rates for all CPS high school graduates, including those who graduated high school in five or six years. Enrollments from North Park University are missing from 2020 and 2021 rates. In 2019, North Park University enrollees comprised around 1% of all immediate enrollees from CPS. Due to rounding, individual rates may not sum exactly to the total rate displayed. The “began as English Learners” category includes students who took the ACCESS test at any point after their entry into CPS—which includes both 1) students who later demonstrated English proficiency (scoring above the cut score) on the ACCESS test, and thus were no longer classified as English Learners, and 2) students who remained as active English Learners throughout high school. We define students who were never classified as English Learners as students who were never eligible to receive EL services, either because their native language was English or because they took the English proficiency screening test when they began school in CPS and scored high enough to be considered proficient in English.

¹⁰ The [To&Through Milestones Tool](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/) is a public resource that allows users to explore rates of educational attainment across a variety of metrics, for individual CPS schools and the district as a whole.

Immediate College Enrollment Rate by English Learner Status — Key Points¹¹

- Among 2021 high school graduates, students who began as English Learners at CPS immediately enrolled in college at about the same rate overall as students who were never classified as English Learners.
- CPS graduates who began as English Learners enrolled immediately in a four-year college at a lower rate (37%) than their peers who were never classified as English Learners (46%).
- However, CPS graduates who began as English Learners immediately enrolled in two-year colleges at a significantly higher rate (21%) than graduates who were never classified as English Learners (13%).

We define **students who began as English Learners** as students who took the ACCESS¹² test of English proficiency at any point during their time in CPS. This category includes students who later became former English Learners¹³ by demonstrating English proficiency (scoring above the cut score) on the ACCESS test as well as students who remained as active English Learners throughout high school. We define **students who were never classified as English Learners** as students who were never eligible to receive EL services. To learn more about how and why we disaggregate data by English Learner status, see the Appendices.

Immediate College Enrollment by Disability Status

TABLE 2
Immediate college enrollment rates by disability category

2021 CPS graduates			
	Students	Immediate enrollment rate in 4-year colleges	Immediate enrollment rate in 2-year colleges
All students	22,530	42.9%	15.6%
Students with an IEP related to a learning disability	2,073	22.3%	18.4%
Students with an IEP related to another disability	846	21.7%	13.4%
Students without an IEP	19,611	46.0%	15.4%

Note: These are immediate college enrollment rates for all CPS high school graduates, including those who graduated high school in five or six years. Enrollments from North Park University are missing from 2020 and 2021 rates. In 2019, North Park University enrollees comprised around 1% of all immediate enrollees from CPS. Please see the Appendices for details about the disability categories used in this table.

¹¹ Hundreds of CPS schools have been cited by the district in recent years for not supporting English Learners to the degree legally required (*Be/Sha*, 2017 June 28). We acknowledge this reality with the aim of preventing people from ascribing English Learners' educational outcomes solely to the choices and capacity of English Learner students and their families.

¹² We cannot yet report on rates of college completion for students who began as English Learners because the earliest CPS ninth-grade cohort for which kindergarten ACCESS test scores are available is the 2016 ninth-grade cohort, and we use a six-year time frame after high school graduation to track students' college outcomes. ACCESS assesses social and academic English proficiency and is administered to students as early as kindergarten. For more details, see: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/ACCESS-for-ELLs.aspx>.

¹³ Students can exit out of EL status as early as the first year during which they were classified as English Learners, including if that year is Kindergarten. CPS kindergarteners who were designated as English Learners and exited out of EL status at the end of kindergarten are included in "students who began as English Learners." Many students who began as English Learners exited out of EL status by the third grade. Furthermore, most students who began as English Learners exited out of EL status by the time they reached high school. About one in five students who began as English Learners remained classified as English Learners upon high school enrollment (*de la Torre et al*, 2019).

Immediate College Enrollment Rates by Disability Status — Key Points

- The immediate enrollment rate into two-year colleges was higher for students receiving services related to a learning disability (18%) than for students with no disabilities (15%). However, students with no disabilities immediately enrolled into four-year colleges at over twice the rate (46%) of students receiving services related to a learning disability (22%) or students receiving services related to another disability (22%).
- The immediate enrollment rate into four-year colleges was similar for students receiving services related to a learning disability (22%) and students receiving services related to another disability (22%).
- The immediate enrollment rate into two-year colleges differed by 5 percentage points between students receiving services related to a learning disability (18%) and students receiving services related to another disability (13%).

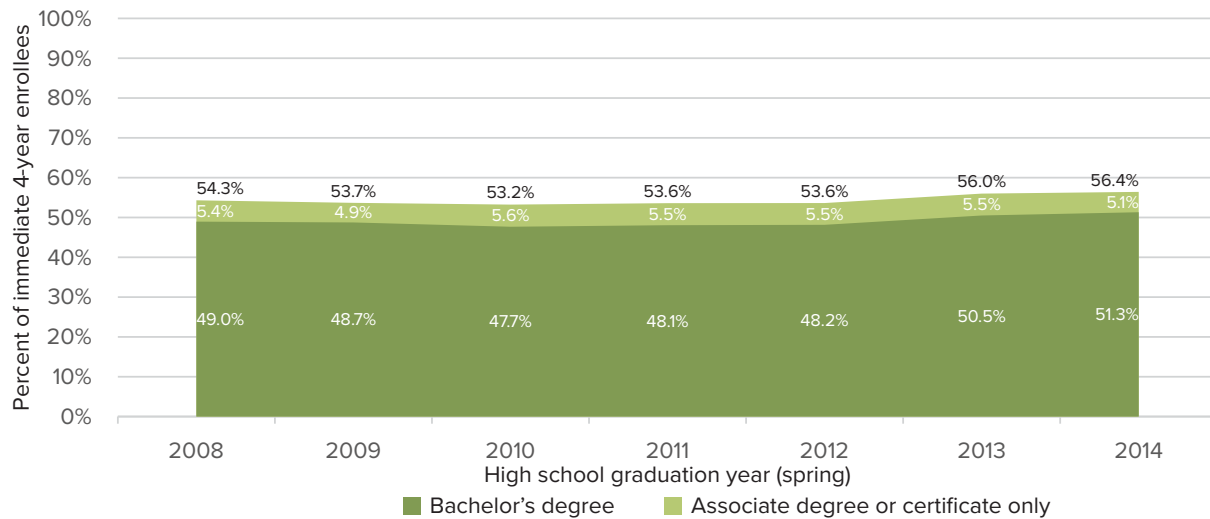
To learn how we disaggregate by disability status, see the Appendices.

CPS College Completion Rate

Among the CPS graduating class of 2014, 46%¹⁴ of students who immediately enrolled in college completed a bachelor’s degree, associate degree, or certificate within six years.

We show college completion for the CPS graduating class of 2014 disaggregated by their college enrollment status immediately after high school graduation. **Figures 9 and 10** show how many students who immediately enrolled in a four-year college or a two-year college, respectively, completed a degree or certificate. **Figure 11** shows how many delayed and non-enrollees¹⁵ completed a degree or certificate. For detailed information on how this metric is calculated, see the Appendices.

FIGURE 9
Completion rates among immediate *four-year enrollees* over time (CPS graduating classes of 2008–2014)



Note: Due to rounding, individual rates may not sum exactly to the total rate displayed. These are college completion rates for CPS high school graduates who graduated high school within six years. Students are counted as having completed college if they completed a credential within six years of graduating from high school. For example, our 2014 rate includes all 2014 CPS graduates who completed a degree or credential by spring of 2020. The bachelor’s degree category includes students who completed an associate degree or certificate in addition to their bachelor’s degree. Fewer than 1.7 percent of 2014 CPS graduates who immediately enrolled in a four-year college completed both a bachelor’s degree and an associate degree/certificate.

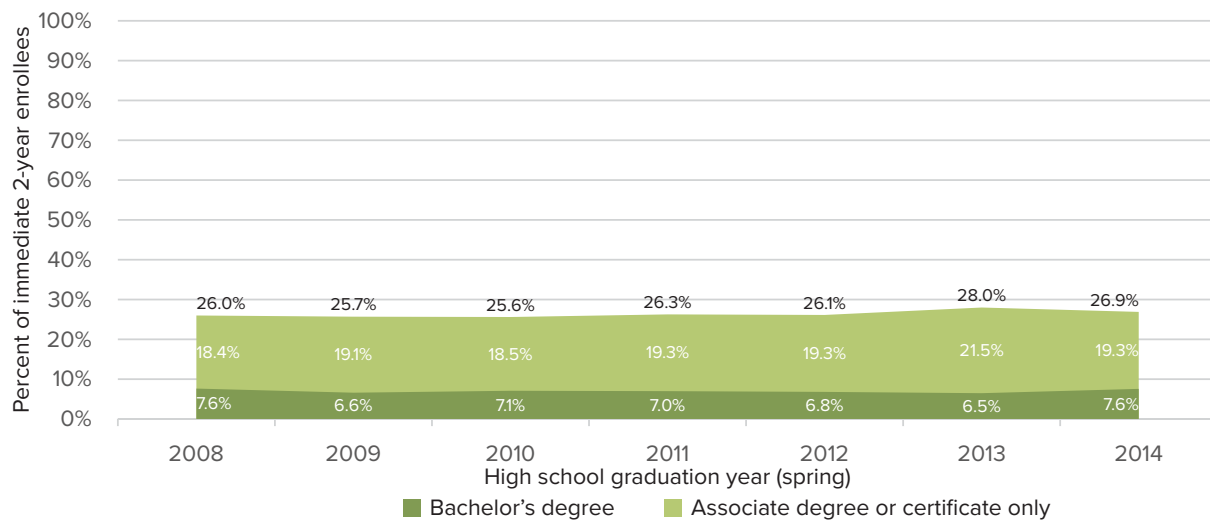
¹⁴ The [To&Through Milestones Tool](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/cps/hs/2021/details/#/college-completion/across-years): <https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/cps/hs/2021/details/#/college-completion/across-years> is a public resource that allows users to explore rates of educational attainment across a variety of metrics, for individual CPS schools and the district as a whole.

¹⁵ We define delayed enrollees as graduates who delayed entry into college to the spring following high school graduation or later, and we define non-enrollees as graduates who did not enroll in college within six years of high school graduation.

2020 CPS Six-Year College Completion Rate Among Immediate Four-Year Enrollees — Key Points

- The proportion of high school graduates who immediately enrolled in a four-year college and completed a bachelor’s degree has increased by 3 percentage points since 2010, while the proportion who completed an associate degree or certificate declined slightly.
- Slightly more than one-half of 2014 CPS graduates (51.3%) who immediately enrolled in a four-year college completed a bachelor’s degree within six years. This proportion increased slightly over the prior four years.
- The proportion of immediate four-year enrollees who completed an associate degree or certificate fell slightly among 2014 graduates to 5.1%, after remaining at 5.5% over the prior three years.

FIGURE 10
Completion rates among immediate *two-year enrollees* over time (CPS graduating classes of 2008–2014)

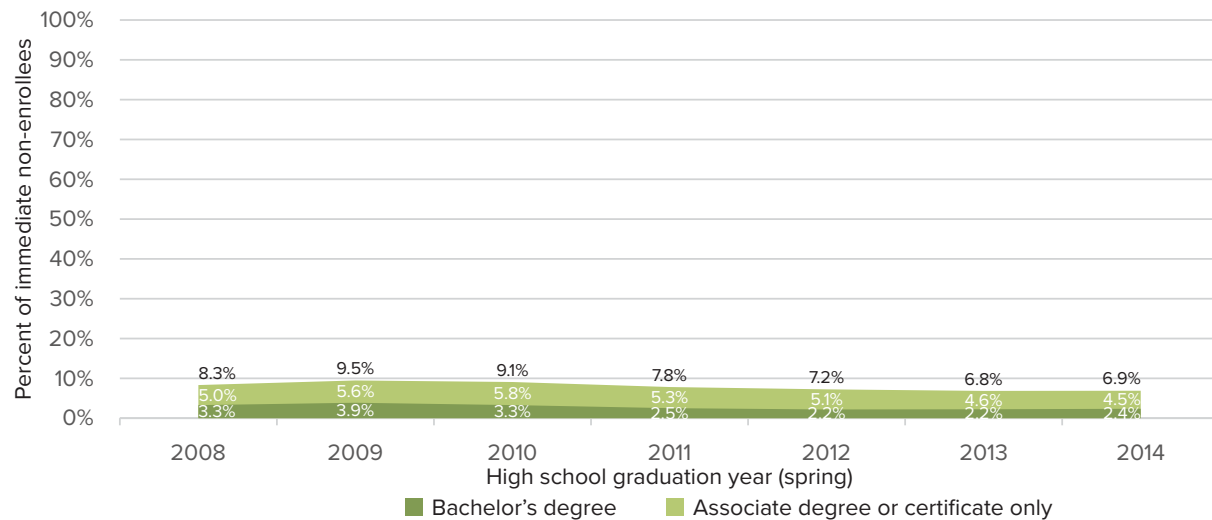


Note: Due to rounding, individual rates may not sum exactly to the total rate displayed. These are college completion rates for CPS high school graduates who graduated high school within six years. Students are counted as having completed college if they completed a credential within six years of graduating from high school. For example, our 2014 rate includes all 2014 CPS graduates who completed a degree or credential by spring of 2020. Although calculating a six-year completion rate for two-year programs is not standard, we do so here to maintain consistency with our other completion metrics. The bachelor’s degree category includes students who completed an associate degree or certificate in addition to their bachelor’s degree. About 4.9 percent of 2014 CPS graduates who immediately enrolled in a two-year college completed both a bachelor’s degree and an associate degree/certificate.

2020 CPS Six-Year College Completion Rate Among Immediate Two-Year Enrollees — Key Points

- Among high school graduates who immediately enrolled in a two-year college, completion rates have remained relatively steady since 2008.
- Among immediate two-year college enrollees, 7.6% of 2014 graduates completed a bachelor's degree within six years, and an additional 19.3% completed an associate degree or certificate.
- Almost three quarters (73.1%) of immediate two-year college enrollees had not completed any credential by the end of six years.

FIGURE 11
Completion rates among *delayed and non-enrollees* over time (CPS graduating classes of 2008–2014)



Note: Due to rounding, individual rates may not sum exactly to the total rate displayed. These are college completion rates for CPS high school graduates who graduated high school within six years. Students are counted as having completed college if they completed a credential within six years of graduating from high school. For example, our 2014 rate includes all 2014 CPS graduates who completed a degree or credential by spring of 2020. We define delayed enrollees as graduates who delayed entry into college, and non-enrollees as graduates who did not enroll in college within six years of high school graduation. The bachelor's degree category includes students who completed an associate degree or certificate in addition to their bachelor's degree. About 0.5 percent of 2014 CPS graduates who were delayed or non-enrollees completed both a bachelor's degree and an associate degree/certificate.

2020 CPS Six-Year College Completion Rate Among Delayed/Non-Enrollees — Key Points

- Among CPS graduates who did not immediately enroll in college, only 2.4% completed a bachelor's degree within six years. An additional 4.5% of students who did not immediately enroll completed an associate degree or certificate.
- Six-year completion rates among students who did not immediately enroll in college have been falling slightly over time.

College Completion: Disaggregated Data

College Completion by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

TABLE 3

College completion rates among immediate enrollees (CPS graduating class of 2014)

	Bachelor's degree	Associate degree or certificate only	Total
All students	36.6%	9.9%	46.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander young women	69.4%	10.8%	80.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander young men	58.3%	11.7%	70.0%
Black young women	31.0%	7.7%	38.8%
Black young men	22.2%	5.4%	27.6%
Latina young women	38.3%	14.3%	52.6%
Latino young men	29.9%	12.3%	42.2%
White young women	66.8%	8.1%	74.9%
White young men	55.1%	7.8%	62.9%

Note: Data for Multiracial, Native American/Alaskan Native, and students who didn't report their race/ethnicity in CPS records are not included because we suppressed rates for groups of fewer than 100 students to avoid reporting fluctuations in rates that do not reflect consistent trends in student outcomes. These are college completion rates for CPS high school graduates who graduated high school within six years. Students are counted as having completed college if they completed a credential within six years of graduating from high school.

College Completion Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender — Key Points

- Among Latinx students and Black students in the CPS graduating class of 2014, fewer than 2 in 5 students who immediately enrolled in college completed a bachelor's degree within six years.
- Latina young women, Asian/Pacific Islander students, and White students completed a college degree or certificate at a rate higher than the CPS average in 2020.
- Young men were less likely to complete a college degree or certificate than young women of the same race/ethnicity, particularly among Black students and White students.
- Latina young women were the most likely to complete an associate degree or certificate only.

To learn more about how we disaggregate by race/ethnicity and gender, see the Appendices. To track college completion rates disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender over time, see the [To&Through Milestones Tool](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/): <https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/>.¹⁶

We do not examine rates of college completion for students with disabilities because there is a relatively low number of immediate college enrollees among students in certain disability categories, and we suppress rates for groups of fewer than 100 students to avoid reporting fluctuations in rates that do not reflect consistent trends in student outcomes. To learn how and why we disaggregate by disability status, see the Appendices.

¹⁶ The [To&Through Milestones Tool](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool/) is a public resource that allows users to explore rates of educational attainment across a variety of metrics, for individual CPS schools and the district as a whole.

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2014

Healey, K., Nagaoka, J., & Michelman, V. (2014). [*The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students: A focus on four-year college degrees*](#). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

2015

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

2016

Nagaoka, J., Seeskin, A., & Coca, V.M. (2017). [*The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students: 2016*](#). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

2017

Nagaoka, J., & Seeskin, A. (2018). [*The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students: 2017*](#). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

2018

Nagaoka, J., & Seeskin, A. (2019). [*The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students: 2018*](#). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

2019

Nagaoka, J., Mahaffie, S., Usher, A., & Seeskin, A. (2020). [*The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students: 2019*](#). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

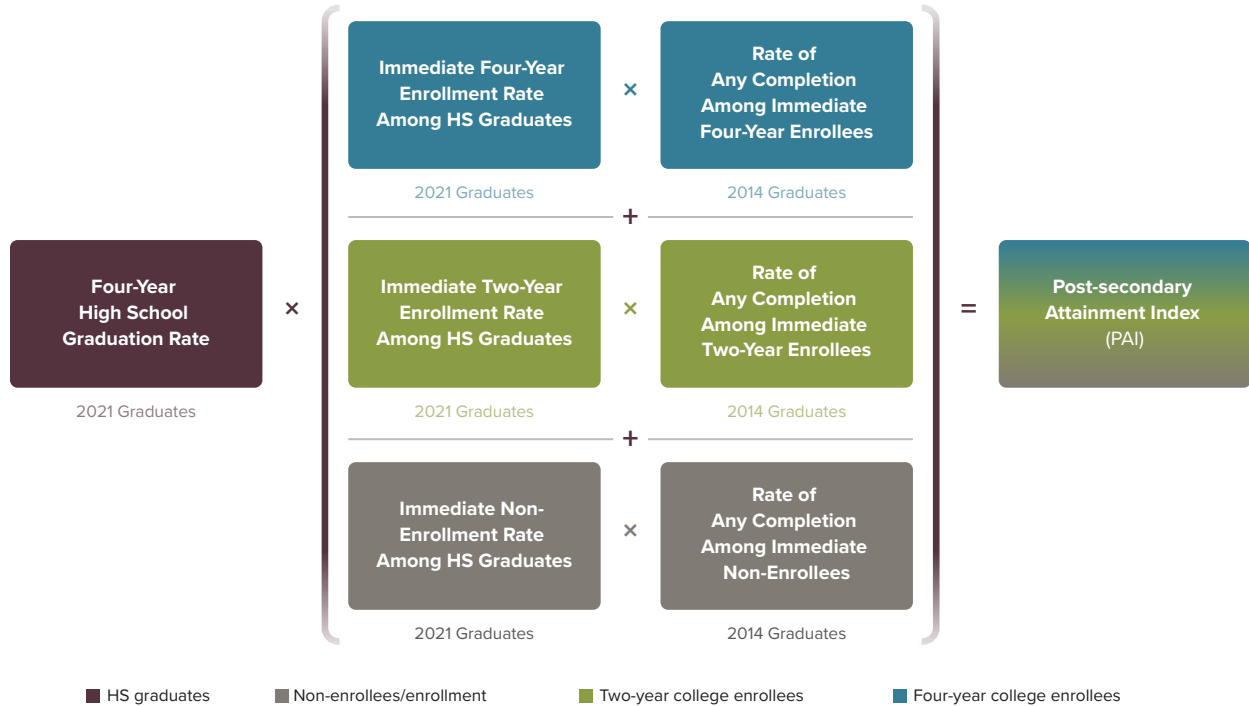
2020

Malone, M., Mahaffie, S., Hernandez, G., Usher, A., & Nagaoka, J. (2021). [*The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students: 2020*](#). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

Appendix A: Additional Figures

In this appendix, you can find more detail about how the Post-secondary Attainment Index (PAI) is calculated, and how the PAI and its components have changed over time. Additionally, this appendix provides the Bachelor's Degree Attainment Index (BDAl), which was the focus of older PAI reports. Finally, breakdowns of the PAI and BDAl component rates by race/ethnicity and gender are also included here. In past versions of the annual PAI report, some of this information was included in the main body of the report; it is now included in the appendix in order to provide a concise and brief webpage for the main body of the report.

FIGURE A.1
Post-secondary Attainment Index



The 2021 PAI is calculated using 2021 high school graduation rates, college enrollment rates for 2021 high school graduates, and rates of college completion for 2014 high school graduates according to the calculation shown in Figure A.1.

For example, imagine a school district with the following rates:

High School Graduation in 2021:	80%
Immediate Four-Year Enrollment among 2021 Graduates:	50%
Rate of Completion among 2014 Graduates who Immediately Enrolled in a Four-Year College:	40%
Immediate Two-Year Enrollment among 2021 Graduates:	30%
Rate of Completion among 2014 Graduates who Immediately Enrolled in a Two-Year College:	20%
Rate of Completion among 2014 Graduates who did Not Immediately Enroll in College:	10%

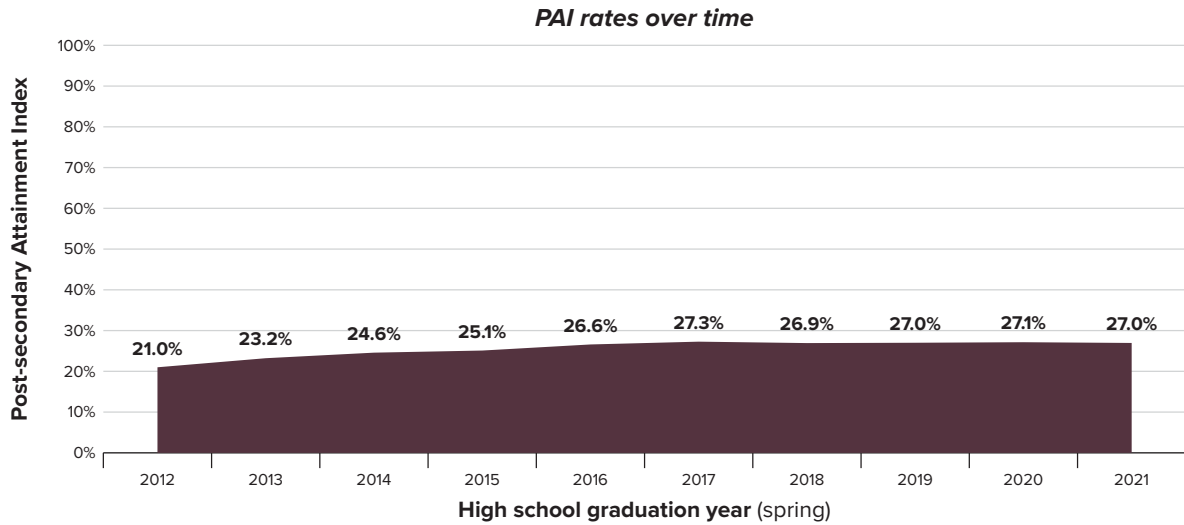
This school district's 2021 PAI would be calculated as:

$$80\% * [(50\% * 40\%) + (30\% * 20\%) + (20\% * 10\%)] = 80\% * (20\% + 6\% + 2\%) = 80\% * 28\% = 22\%$$

PAI Over Time

We track the PAI over time to assess year-over-year changes in the most recent available rates of high school and college attainment. Note that the PAI is not intended to predict attainment for any one cohort of students. It presents a starting place for thinking about why patterns of educational attainment exist and what can be done to improve these patterns.

FIGURE A.2
Historical PAI rates



Note: To calculate these historical rates, we applied the method that we used to calculate the 2021 PAI retroactively to all years of data, rather than using indices that were calculated in the past. For example, the 2021 PAI was calculated using the 2021 high school graduation rate, the 2021 college enrollment rates, and the college completion rates for 2014 high school graduates, so the 2011 PAI would be calculated using the 2011 high school graduation rate, the 2011 college enrollment rates, and the rates of completion for 2004 high school graduates. For rates of high school graduation, immediate college enrollment, and college completion used to calculate the PAI over time, see **Table A.1**.

Table A.1 shows the rates of high school graduation, immediate college enrollment, and college completion used to calculate comparable historical PAI rates over time.

TABLE A.1
Component rates used to calculate the PAI over time

	4-year HS grad rate	Immediate 4-year college enrollment rate	Immediate 2-year college enrollment rate	Delayed/ non-enrollment rate	Degree completion for immediate 4-year enrollees	Degree completion for immediate 2-year enrollees	Degree completion for delayed enrollees	Post-secondary Attainment Index
2012 PAI	72.5%	40.3%	20.7%	39.1%	52.0%	23.3%	8.2%	21.0%
2013 PAI	75.4%	41.7%	21.3%	37.0%	53.2%	25.3%	8.7%	23.2%
2014 PAI	78.0%	42.7%	20.4%	37.0%	53.5%	25.7%	9.3%	24.6%
2015 PAI	78.7%	43.7%	18.4%	37.9%	54.5%	26.3%	8.6%	25.1%
2016 PAI	79.7%	45.3%	18.5%	36.2%	54.2%	26.6%	10.7%	26.6%
2017 PAI	80.3%	46.7%	21.6%	31.6%	53.6%	26.5%	10.1%	27.3%
2018 PAI	81.0%	44.8%	21.9%	33.3%	54.2%	27.3%	9.0%	26.9%
2019 PAI	82.2%	45.4%	20.6%	34.0%	54.0%	27.1%	8.1%	27.0%
2020 PAI	83.2%	43.8%	17.0%	39.2%	56.3%	29.1%	7.7%	27.1%
2021 PAI	81.8%	45.4%	15.9%	38.7%	56.3%	27.7%	7.8%	27.0%

PAI Disaggregated Component Rates

TABLE A.2

Component rates of the 2021 PAI by race/ethnicity and gender

	2021 CPS Graduates				2014 CPS Graduates			Post-secondary Attainment Index
	4-Year HS grad rate	Immediate 4-year college enrollment rate	Immediate 2-year college enrollment rate	Delayed/ non-enrollment rate	Immediate 4-year college enrollment rate	Immediate 2-year college enrollment rate	Delayed/ non-enrollment rate	
All students	81.8%	45.4%	15.9%	38.7%	56.3%	27.7%	7.8%	27.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander young women	94.7%	68.2%	12.3%	19.5%	86.7%	52.5%	28.3%	67.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander young men	89.2%	62.1%	17.7%	20.2%	80.3%	32.9%	24.0%	54.0%
Black young women	82.5%	49.7%	9.6%	40.6%	48.7%	18.4%	4.5%	23.0%
Black young men	72.8%	37.2%	9.3%	53.5%	34.4%	14.5%	3.5%	11.6%
Latina young women	86.8%	46.0%	21.2%	32.8%	62.2%	36.6%	12.5%	35.1%
Latino young men	78.1%	33.3%	21.4%	45.3%	52.1%	29.0%	6.1%	20.5%
White young women	91.4%	69.7%	10.6%	19.7%	81.4%	48.3%	22.0%	60.5%
White young men	85.2%	60.7%	13.8%	25.4%	71.4%	39.5%	12.9%	44.4%

Note: We include completion rates for 2014 high school graduates because this is the most recent cohort for which we have six years of available college data.

Bachelor's Degree Attainment Index

For the past several years, in addition to calculating the annual PAI, the To&Through Project and the UChicago Consortium have calculated two bachelor's degree attainment indices, which project the proportion of current CPS ninth-graders who will complete a bachelor's degree within 10 years, if the district's current rates of high school graduation, college enrollment, and bachelor's degree completion do not change.

The first of these two attainment indices, the Direct Bachelor's Degree Attainment Index (DBDAI), projects the proportion of current CPS ninth-graders that will go on to complete a bachelor's degree through a direct pathway by graduating high school within four years, *enrolling immediately in a four-year college in the fall after graduation*, and then completing a bachelor's degree within six years.

The second, the Bachelor's Degree Attainment Index (BDAI), accounts for students who do not take a direct path, projecting the proportion of the current CPS ninth-graders that will go on to complete a bachelor's degree within 10 years of their ninth-grade year of high school through any post-graduation pathway, including immediate enrollment in a two-year college or delayed entry into college.

Table A.3 shows the rates of bachelor's degree completion for immediate four-year enrollees, immediate two-year enrollees, and delayed/non-enrollees that are used to calculate the BDAI for different race/ethnicity and gender groups. Only the rates for immediate four-year enrollees in **Table A.3** are used to calculate the DBDAI.

TABLE A.3

Component rates of the 2021 BDAI by race/ethnicity and gender

	Bachelor's degree completion rate for immediate four-year enrollees (2014 graduates)	Bachelor's degree completion rate for immediate two-year enrollees (2014 graduates)	Bachelor's degree completion rate for delayed/non-enrollees (2014 graduates)	Direct Bachelor's Degree Attainment Index	Bachelor's Degree Attainment Index
All students	50.8%	7.2%	2.3%	17.8%	19.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander young women	79.5%	16.4%	15.1%	50.4%	55.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander young men	71.2%	10.3%	12.2%	38.1%	42.1%
Black young women	43.5%	4.1%	1.2%	16.8%	17.6%
Black young men	31.0%	4.6%	1.2%	7.7%	8.5%
Latina young women	55.0%	9.5%	2.6%	20.9%	23.4%
Latino young men	46.2%	5.6%	1.2%	11.3%	12.7%
White young women	78.2%	18.1%	13.6%	48.3%	52.8%
White young men	67.8%	16.3%	7.3%	33.2%	36.9%

Appendix B: Data Sources

Information on student demographics and high school graduation is from Chicago Public Schools (CPS) administrative records, which are shared with the UChicago Consortium through its Master Research Services agreement with the district. All data are available for charter school students. Data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) are used for all college enrollment and completion rates. NSC data has many limitations, including incomplete coverage at the student and institutional levels, but is the best available source of student-level data on college enrollment and completion data for CPS graduates.¹⁷ The NSC houses records on enrollment and post-secondary credentials for colleges throughout the United States, and covers 98 percent of all post-secondary enrollments nationally.

Data Definitions

Throughout this report, the year refers to the spring of the school year (e.g., 2020 refers to the 2019–20 school year). We have suppressed rates for groups of fewer than 100 students to avoid reporting fluctuations in rates that do not reflect consistent trends in student outcomes.

Ninth-Grade Cohorts

Students were considered first-time ninth-graders and included in the ninth-grade cohort if they had never before been enrolled in a CPS high school and if they either 1) were actively enrolled as a ninth-grader on the 20th day of the school year or 2) enrolled as ninth-grader after the 20th day of the school year and remained enrolled long enough to receive course grades. Students who enrolled in a charter school after the 20th day were included in the first-time ninth-grade cohort, even though we do not know if they remained enrolled long enough to receive grades. For the calculation of high school graduation rates, students who transferred into CPS after ninth grade were retroactively included in the cohort in which they would have been a ninth-grader and were assigned to the first CPS high school they enrolled in.

High School Graduation

The four-year high school graduation rate is the proportion of students in an adjusted, first-time ninth-grade cohort who earned either a regular high school diploma or a diploma from an Options high school within four years, including the summer after their fourth year. For the calculation of high school graduation rates, students who transferred into CPS after ninth grade were retroactively included in the cohort in which they would have been a ninth-grader and were assigned to the first CPS high school they enrolled in. We calculate a six-year high school graduation rate for students who were ever enrolled in an Options school and students with disabilities.

College Enrollment

College enrollment refers to the proportion of graduates who enrolled directly in college in the fall following spring or summer high school graduation. Data on college enrollment come from the NSC, which houses enrollment and graduation records for colleges throughout the United States. This does not include students who delayed college entry. Enrollments from North Park University are missing from 2020 and 2021 rates. In 2019, North Park University enrollees comprised around 1% of all immediate enrollees from CPS.

Two-year enrollee

Students who enroll in a two-year college the fall after graduating from high school.

Four-year enrollee

Students who enroll in a four-year college the fall after graduating from high school.

Delayed/non-enrollee

Students did not enroll in college the fall after graduating from high school. Delayed enrollees include students who delayed entry into college, but did enroll at some point within six years of high school graduation. Non-enrollees include students who did not enroll in college within six years of high school graduation.

College Completion

College completion refers to the proportion of two-year and four-year college enrollees who completed a degree or certificate within six years of high school graduation. Data on college completion comes from the NSC. Students who enrolled in a college that does not provide graduation records to the NSC, or whose records are suppressed due to FERPA or other reasons, were not included in these rates.

¹⁷ See technical paper "[Tracking Two-Year College Outcomes: National Student Clearinghouse and Illinois Community College Board as Sources of Two-Year College Data](#)" for more information.

College Types

Two-year College

Institutions classified in the IPEDs data as having only programs that are less than four years.

Four-year College

Institutions classified in the IPEDs data as having programs that are four years or higher.

English Learners

While reporting data on active English Learners calls attention to students in need of the most support, excluding former English Learners obscures the success of students who reach English proficiency. Assessing the performance of the district in supporting English Learners across their educational trajectories requires understanding the average high school and college attainment for students who began as English Learners. Therefore, we disaggregate four-year high school graduation rates and immediate college enrollment rates by whether students began as English Learners or were never classified as English Learners.

We identify students as English Learners based on whether they took the ACCESS test of English proficiency and whether they reached proficiency on the test—not whether they were actually receiving services. Because ACCESS is required by the state for all English Learners, this allows us to include both English Learners who received services and those who did not.

This method of classification draws from the method of classification originally used by [de la Torre, Blanchard, Allensworth, & Freire \(2019\)](#). However, their analysis only includes students who were continuously enrolled in CPS from kindergarten through eighth grade, and defines “students who began as English Learners” as students who were designated as English Learners based on the ACCESS test when they entered CPS as kindergarteners. The method of classification used in our analysis differs insofar as we include students who entered CPS during or after kindergarten, and we define “students who began as English Learners” as those who took the ACCESS test at any point after their entry into CPS.

In the future, we hope to report on college completion outcomes for students who began as English Learners and track their high school and college attainment over time. We cannot currently report on rates of college completion for students who began as English Learners because the earliest CPS ninth-grade cohort for which kindergarten ACCESS test scores are available is the 2016 ninth-grade cohort, and we use a six-year time frame after high school graduation to track students’ college outcomes.

ACCESS test

ACCESS assesses social and academic English proficiency and is administered to students as early as kindergarten. Students who are English Learners take the test once annually until they reach a score that meets the proficiency benchmark. The ACCESS test is different from the screener test used to determine if students are eligible for English Learner services. For more details, see: isbe.net/Pages/ACCESS-for-ELLs.aspx.

In the 2015–16 school year, ACCESS 2.0 replaced the existing ACCESS test. This new test was more aligned to standards of college and career readiness and therefore more rigorous. Further, the cut score used to determine proficiency also changed over the years. This means that ACCESS test scores prior to the 2015–16 school year should not be compared to scores on the ACCESS 2.0 test. These changes to the test may also result in trend lines that show a spike in the number of students identified as English Learners in the 2015–16 school year.

Students who began as English Learners

Students who took the ACCESS test of English proficiency at any point during their time in CPS. This category includes students who later became former English Learners by demonstrating English proficiency (scoring above the cut score) on the ACCESS test as well as students who remained as active English Learners throughout high school.

Students who were never classified as English Learners

Students who were never eligible to receive EL services, either because their native language was English or because they scored high enough on the English proficiency screener test—which is different from the ACCESS test—when they entered CPS to be considered proficient in English.

Gender

Historically, data has been collected in a way that groups students into one of two categories: male and female. Starting in 2020–21 the gender categories in the CPS demographic questionnaire were: Male, Female, and Non-binary; however, we are not currently reporting data on non-binary students due to small group sizes. We hope in the future to be able to report data that more fully and accurately describes the identities of CPS students.

Options Students

CPS describes Options schools as “designed to offer a unique learning model for students who are not engaged in a traditional high school and seek an alternative pathway to graduation that leads to college and career success.” Options schools may be known as “alternative schools” in other districts. For more information about Options schools and students, see the report *Seizing the opportunity to advance education equity: Data insights from Chicago’s Options school students*: <https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/projects/data-insights-from-chicago-s-options-schools> published by the University of Chicago Urban Labs in 2017.

Post-secondary Attainment Index

The Post-secondary Attainment Index (PAI) provides an estimate of the proportion of ninth-graders who will earn any college degree or certificate within 10 years of starting high school. The PAI accounts for students who delay college entry or enroll in a two-year college; in addition, it accounts for students who do not earn a bachelor’s degree, but do earn an associate degree or certificate. The PAI uses current rates of high school graduation, any college enrollment, and any college completion.

Race/Ethnicity

Reported data are grouped into four race/ethnicity categories: Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Latinx, and White. The “Latinx” category is composed of people who self-identified as Hispanic or Latino, regardless of which race they selected. All other race/ethnicity categories are composed of people who identified as not Hispanic or Latino, and the category is based on the race they selected. CPS changed its race/ethnicity categories in 2010–11 to include a Multiracial option, and the Asian/Pacific Islander category was split into two categories: Pacific Islander/Hawaiian and Asian. Our groupings by race/ethnicity include Pacific Islander/Hawaiian students in one Asian/Pacific Islander category, due to the small number of CPS students who are Pacific Islander/Hawaiian. Native American/Alaskan Native and Multiracial students are not shown because fewer than 100 students identified their race/ethnicity in this category, making it difficult to reliably interpret rates. The racial categories available in our data are limited and therefore do not accurately reflect the full spectrum of races and ethnicities embodied by CPS students.

Appendix C: CPS Disability Categories

Definitions

Thousands of students in each ninth-grade cohort have one or more documented disabilities. Students with disabilities are often treated as a single group, however, students' disabilities vary widely in type and extent. As a result, their experiences in school and attainment rates are also far from homogeneous.

In this analysis, we disaggregate rates of six-year high school graduation based on whether students have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) related to a disability.¹⁸ We report rates for three groups of students: students with IEPs related to a specific learning disability, students with other IEPs, and students without IEPs. After conversations with CPS's Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services, we decided to report rates with these categories because students with learning disabilities represent a plurality of students with IEPs and because finer categorizations of IEPs have changed over time. The "students with other IEPs" category includes students with a wide range of disabilities, including physical, cognitive, and behavioral disabilities.

The definitions of the 16 categories of disability present in CPS administrative data are below. These definitions can be found in the CPS Procedural Manual: Guidance on Providing Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities Pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) published in August 2021.¹⁹ Students with IEPs related to any disability other than Specific Learning Disability (SLD) are included in the Other IEP category.

Autism

A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disability.

Deaf/Blindness

The student exhibits concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication, developmental, and educational needs that cannot be accommodated by special education services designed solely for students with either deafness or children with blindness.

Deafness

A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Emotional Disability

(This includes schizophrenia but does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disability.)

A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- Inappropriate behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Hearing Impairment

An impairment in hearing, permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness.

¹⁸ If a student is identified by the district as having one or more disabilities, we categorize the student into only one of these four groups based on the primary disability type designated by CPS. A student's primary disability is designated by CPS during the services eligibility determination process, during which an IEP team determines whether a student is eligible for services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

¹⁹ <https://cps.edu/globalassets/cps-pages/about-cps/department-directory/office-of-diverse-learner-support-and-services-odlss/draft-2021-22-idea-procedural-manual.pdf>

Intellectual Disability

(Mild, Moderate, Severe/Profound)

Cognitive development significantly below that of their typically developing peers, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Multiple Disabilities

Concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness or intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes severe educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. *(Does not include deaf-blindness.)*

Other Health Impairment

Limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), leukemia, diabetes, rheumatic fever, or Tourette syndrome, and adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Physical (Orthopedic) Impairment

A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, disease or other cause (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputation, fractures, or burns).

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia.

Speech or Language Impairment

A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Traumatic Brain Injury

An acquired injury to the brain, caused by an external force. This injury results in total or partial functional disability, or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. This term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital, degenerative or induced by birth trauma.

Visual Impairment

An impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance *(includes both partial sight and blindness).*

About

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UChicago Consortium)

The UChicago Consortium: <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/> 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 To&Through Project

In collaboration with educators, policymakers, and communities, the [To&Through Project](https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/): <https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/> aims to significantly increase high school and post-secondary completion for under-resourced students of color in Chicago and around the country by providing education stakeholders with research-based data on students' educational experiences and facilitating dialogue on its implications for adult practice. At the To&Through Project, we:

- Conduct research and publish data on what matters for the attainment of Chicago Public Schools students (in collaboration with the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research).
- Design data tools and resources for education stakeholders that make data meaningful and actionable, including the publicly available To&Through Online Tool.
- Foster conversations about what matters most for students' high school and post-secondary success.
- Facilitate a network of middle grades educators committed to building more equitable and supportive educational environments that promote the success of middle grades students in high school and beyond.

The To&Through Project is located at the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute in the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice.

This report reflects the interpretation of the authors. Although the UChicago Consortium's Steering Committee provided technical advice, no formal endorsement by these individuals, organizations, the full Consortium, or the To&Through Project, should be assumed.