

CPS Commitment to Postsecondary Success

For the past decade, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students have outpaced the postsecondary growth of its national and state peers and reached historic college enrollment rates. Through a combination of research-based policies and partnerships that expand postsecondary opportunities, CPS has emerged as a national leader in preparing students for postsecondary success.

By the numbers

- ***Graduation Rate.*** The high school graduation rate has risen from 56.9 percent in 2011 to a record high 78.2 percent in 2018 – a 37 percent increase. CPS' graduation rate improved four times faster than the national rate between 2013 and 2017 - with graduation rates among African American and Hispanic students at CPS improving at more than twice the rate as their national peers between 2013 and 2017.
- ***Freshman OnTrack.*** In 2018, a record 89.4 percent of CPS students were reported on-track to graduate, the highest measure on record and up nearly 30 percent since 2011. The Freshman OnTrack rate is a research-based measurement from the University of Chicago's Consortium on School Research and is the single best indicator of whether or not a student will graduate.
- ***Early College and Career Credentials.*** A record 46.6 percent of 2018 graduates earned early college and career credentials, an increase of 50 percent since 2014. CPS has a goal of ensuring at least 50 percent of all graduates finish high school with early college and career credentials by 2019. Students can earn credits through programs such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, STEM and Career and Technical Education courses.
- ***College Scholarships.*** The 2018 graduating class received a record-high \$1.33 billion in scholarship offers, nearly five times more than 2012, when CPS students earned \$266 million in scholarship dollars.
- ***College Enrollment.*** CPS graduates who enrolled in either a 2-or 4-year college immediately after high school rose dramatically, from 50 percent in 2006 to 64.6 percent in 2017. Chicago's rate of enrollment in 4-year college, 47 percent, is higher than the national average and exceeds that of New York City, Los Angeles and Dallas.

Key Policy Initiatives for Continued Growth and Opportunities

- ***Dual Credit and Dual Enrollment.*** The dual credit and dual enrollment program allows CPS students to earn City Colleges of Chicago credits free of charge either at their high school or by commuting to a nearby CCC college. More than 5,000 students at 72 high schools participate, making college more affordable and accessible for our students.
- ***Advanced Placement.*** In 2018, the percentage of CPS students earning a 3 or higher on an AP exam reached and exceeded 50 percent for the first time — an increase of nearly 17 points since 2011 when the pass rate was 34 percent. CPS has made a dedicated effort to expand AP access and in 2018 was named the College Board Advanced Placement District of the Year for leading the nation in expanding access to AP exams while improving performance among every demographic subgroup.
- ***International Baccalaureate.*** Due to significant investments in recent years to expand access to IB schools, CPS now offers the largest network of IB schools in the country, serving more than 19,000 students at 62 schools. IB access is making college success more likely for our students due in part to a state law that requires Illinois public universities to provide college credit for a score of 4 or higher on an IB exam.
- ***STEM Programming.*** For the upcoming school year, there will be 10 Early College STEM Schools (ECSS) high schools where students can earn college credit and work toward an associate degree while still in high school. The ECSS program began in 2012 to provide students with an education focused on technology skills and college and career readiness, and allows for students to graduate with enough college credits to be immediately awarded an associates degree.
- ***Career and Technical Education Opportunities:*** CPS has 41 different Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways and has CTE programs at 72 high schools. In 2018, more than 1,500 students graduated with a CTE industry certification that promotes access to career opportunities immediately after high school.

- ***School Accountability:*** The district sees its mission as not just getting students through high school, but ensuring their success beyond CPS, which is why we are one of the few -- and possibly only large urban district -- to include college persistence in our school quality measurement ratings, SQRP.

Post-Secondary Support & Opportunities

- ***Learn.Plan.Succeed:*** In 2017, the district announced a [new graduation initiative](#) designed to guide postsecondary success for students of all levels by ensuring that all high school graduates -- beginning with the class of 2020 -- leave school with their own concrete plan for life after graduation. Plans are developed by students with support from school staff and include a variety of pathways, including: enrolling in college; enrolling in a trade, internship, apprenticeship or job program; participating in a gap year program; signing up for the military; or working full-time.
- ***Partnership with City Colleges of Chicago (CCC):*** In 2015, CPS partnered with City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) to launch The [Star Scholarship](#), which allows CPS graduates who have maintained a GPA of 3.0 or higher to earn a degree at any of CCC's campuses at no cost. In the past four years, the Star Scholarship program has helped more than 6,400 CPS graduates enroll in college at no cost. CPS also partnered with CCC to launch the Jumpstart to Jobs initiative, where 11th and 12th grade students can earn a certificate in one of nine career areas by completing a free short-term career program through CCC.
- ***Non-Profit Partnerships:*** By investing in partnerships with non-profit organizations, the district is able to offer a broader spectrum of supports to help students graduate from high school and meet their postsecondary goals. CPS has partnered with organizations such as OneGoal, which supports more than 4,000 CPS students at over 70 high schools during their junior and senior years of high school and through their freshman year of college, and GearUp, which provides workshops and guidance to more than 14,000 students at over 30 high schools.
- ***Partnership with the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research:*** Founded in 1990, the [UChicago Consortium](#) is a unique research-practice partnership with Chicago Public Schools that has been a model for similar research partnerships in more than 25 other cities and states. CPS has an extensive data sharing agreement with the Consortium to ensure their research is as thorough and impactful as possible. This partnership has led had a

major policy impact, such as the adoption of Freshman OnTrack and the strengthening SEL practices across the district.