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All-time high college completion rate index reflects increases in high school graduation, college enrollment, and two-year college completion for Chicago Public Schools students.

If current rates hold, 30% of current Chicago ninth-graders would complete a college credential within 10 years

A new joint To&Through Project & UChicago Consortium on School Research study released today **provides an annual update on 3 educational milestones—high school graduation, college enrollment, and college completion—and tracks how rates on these milestones have changed across time in Chicago Public Schools (CPS).**

These rates are then used to calculate 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—researchers call this the Post-secondary Attainment Index (PAI). For the past 9 years, the Post-secondary Attainment Index has provided a consistent measure of the progress that the City of Chicago is making in supporting CPS students on their path to a college credential.

The 2022 PAI, at 30%, represents an increase of 7 percentage points from 2013. If 2022 attainment rates remained the same over the next decade, of 100 current CPS ninth-graders, 84 would graduate from high school within four years; 40 would enroll immediately in a 4-year college and 14 would enroll immediately in a 2-year college; and **30 would complete a college credential within 10 years of starting high school.**

The increases in attainment rates have resulted in nearly double the number of CPS graduates that received a degree or certificate within 6 years of high school graduation from the CPS graduating classes of 2005 and the class 2015 -- from 3,243 to 6,433 in the respective cohorts.

The 2022 PAI is calculated using the most recent available CPS data: 2022 high school graduation rates, immediate college enrollment rates for 2022 high school graduates, and rates of college completion within six years for 2015 high school graduates (graduating in 2021).

“While we are encouraged to see this projected measure of college success continue to grow, it's important to underscore that this is not a determinate measure of future CPS student outcomes,” said Jenny Nagaoka, UChicago Consortium researcher and author of the report. “And, importantly, continued efforts to improve rates of attainment at all points in a student’s journey can, and historically have, resulted in more CPS students completing high school and college.”

Researchers also found:

1. The **2022 CPS high school graduation rate** has surpassed pre-pandemic measures after a decline in 2021—reaching its highest rate ever.
 - Among first-time ninth-graders, the high school graduation rate was 84.0% in 2022 vs. 81.8% in 2021
2. **2022 college enrollment rates** are slightly higher than 2021 rates and continued to climb after declines seen in 2020.
 - Among the CPS graduating class of 2022, 60.8% of grads enrolled in a two-year or four-year college in the first summer or fall following high school graduation vs. 59.3% in 2021.
 - Nationally, [according to the National Student Clearinghouse](#), the 2022 college enrollment rate for high poverty high schools was 49.9%.
3. **College completion rates among 2-year college enrollees have reached a new high**

- 32.5% of 2015 CPS graduates who immediately enrolled in a community college earned a degree or credential by 2021, up 4.6 percentage points from 27.9% for the prior cohort.
 - i. Note: the high school graduating class of 2015 was the first class eligible for the STAR Scholarship to City Colleges of Chicago.
 - 55.8% of 2015 CPS graduates who enrolled in a 4-year college earned a degree or credential by 2021, holding relatively steady since last year's update.
4. While the overall PAI has reached an all-time high, there are still differences in the PAIs for different student groups, representing important opportunities for improvements to ensure equitable college access for all CPS students.
- There were three student groups who had PAIs that fell below the district rate of 30%: The 2022 PAI for Black young men is 13.6%, for Black young women is 23.3%, and for Latino young men is 24.4%

This year's educational attainment updates are shared via an interactive [webpage](#) that links to additional data on the [To&Through Project's data tool](#). Where possible, researchers disaggregated 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. Researchers hope that this annually updated data can help educators, leaders, and community members:

- **Understand** how rates of attainment for CPS students have changed over time and interrogate how disparities in attainment are due to issues of equity—particularly racial equity—within the district and higher education institutions.
- **Provide** an additional measure of systemic efforts to improve high school and college attainment for historically disadvantaged student groups in CPS.
- **Question** why disparities in student outcomes exist and what can be done to improve students' experiences in CPS and after graduation.
- **Recognize** that, while important, examining this data is only a part of the efforts necessary to determine what questions should be asked both within and outside of education to better understand and support student pathways through college.

Additional details about each of these key findings can be found in subsections of [The Educational Attainment of Chicago Public Schools Students: 2022 by Shelby Mahaffie, Alexandra Usher, and Jenny Nagaoka](#). (Note: Embargoed until 10/12/23 at 6am)

Related event

On Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 12pm CST, To&Through Project and UChicago Consortium researchers will share details from this 2022 educational attainment report, including disaggregated data that provides details for students of different race/ethnicity groups, students who began as English Learners, and students with disabilities. In addition to sharing some highlights about the 2022 Postsecondary Attainment Index (PAI), **we will be joined by CPS Chief Education Officer, Bogdana Chkoumbova and Chancellor of City Colleges of Chicago, Juan Salgado to hear their brief reflections the updated PAI.** [Click here for event details and RSVP.](#)

About the To&Through Project

In collaboration with educators, policymakers, and communities, the [To&Through Project](#) strives to create equitable education outcomes for Chicago Public Schools students by helping educators use data for inquiry and impact. 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.

About the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

With the goal of supporting stronger and more equitable educational outcomes for students, the [UChicago Consortium](#) conducts research of high technical quality that informs and assesses policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). We seek to expand communication among researchers, policymakers, practitioners, families, and communities as we support the search for solutions to the challenges of school

improvement. The UChicago Consortium encourages the use of research in policy action and practice but does not advocate for particular policies or programs. Rather, we help to build capacity for school improvement by identifying what matters most for student success, creating critical indicators to chart progress, and conducting theory-driven evaluation to identify how programs and policies are working.

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