



the To&Through project

of **100** Chicago Public Schools freshmen...

73 will graduate high school in four years

29 will enroll in a four-year college

... and **14** will earn a degree within six years

58

17

8

The To&Through Project: A three part release of research-based tools and data reports to focus Chicago and the nation on **what really matters for college success.**

In 2006, the Urban Education Institute's Consortium on Chicago School Research estimated that of 100 Chicago Public Schools freshmen, just 8 would earn a four-year college degree within 10 years of starting high school.

Now in 2014, the latest data show that this number has almost doubled to 14 of 100 freshmen earning a four-year college degree within 10 years of starting high school. An additional 3 of 100 freshmen earn their degrees through a longer, less straightforward path.

In 2014, the numbers are...
In 2006, those numbers were...

To&Through Middle School

5th, 6th, 7th, 8th Grade

Grades and Attendance: Course grades and attendance in the middle school years are more predictive of how students do in high school than test scores or background characteristics like race or income (2014 Middle Grades Report)

Students on pace for college get all As and Bs and have attendance rates of 97% or better in the middle grades (2014 Middle Grades Report)

To&Through High School

9th Grade

Freshman On-Track: Students on-track at the end of 9th grade—who fail no more than one core course and have enough credits to move on to sophomore year—are five times more likely to graduate high school (2005 On-Track Report)

Grades: More than 95% of students with a B average or better their freshman year graduate (2007 On-Track Report)

Attendance: Nearly 90% of freshmen who miss less than a week of school per semester graduate, regardless of their 8th grade test scores (2007 On-Track Report)

10th - 12th Grade

Grades: College preparedness is more than just a test score. Students' high school GPA is a better predictor of earning a bachelor's degree than their ACT score (2014 District Overview)

Students must graduate high school with at least a 3.0 GPA to have at least a 50% chance of earning a four-year college degree within six years (2014 Middle Grades)

Test Scores: ACT scores impact which colleges are within reach. The strongest predictor of test score improvement is the grade a student receives in the corresponding subject course (2008 ACT Prep Report)

College Application Process (11th - 12th Grade)

FAFSA: Students accepted into a four-year college were 50% more likely to enroll if they completed their FAFSA (2008 Potholes Report)

College Choice: Students with the same qualifications upon leaving high school are much more likely to graduate if they attend a college with a high institutional graduation rate (2006 From High School to the Future Report)

To&Through College

We know students with the same qualifications are much more likely to graduate if they attend a college with a high institutional graduation rate. What we still don't know is what specific factors make some schools more successful than others in seeing their students through to college completion.

This is the next frontier of research on the civic agenda to get more students to and through college.

For more resources and updates, visit toandthrough.uchicago.edu

What matters for students and families?

What matters for schools?

5th, 6th, 7th, 8th Grade

Focusing on:

Grades and Attendance: Grades and attendance in 8th grade are strongly associated with how students perform in high school—working to improve students' GPAs and attendance during the middle grades has great potential for improving their high school outcomes (2014 Middle Grades Report)

Additionally, schools with robust parental involvement and strong safety and order are much more likely than other schools to improve attendance (2010 Organizing Schools for Improvement Book)

9th Grade

Focusing on:

Monitoring and Support: Students are more likely to be on track in schools with strong teacher-student relationships and where students see high school as relevant for their future (2007 What Matters)

Grades: Students' grades are stronger with teachers who monitor their performance and give support right away when grades or attendance fall (2014 Free to Fail or On-Track to College)

Grades decline significantly when students transition to high school, in large part because students feel disengaged from school; many students with high potential coming into high school—high test scores and strong grades in 8th grade—fall off the path to college in the 9th grade year (2014 Free to Fail or On-Track to College Report)

Freshman On-Track: Ninth grade sets the stage for students' performance for the rest of high school; students who end high school with strong GPAs started high school with strong 9th grade GPAs (2007 On-Track Report)

10th - 12th Grade

Focusing on:

Engaging Instruction for Strong Grades and Test Scores: Engaging instruction that brings out high-quality work from students is necessary to improve ACT scores. Schools that are successful at getting students to work hard in their regular course work are the schools that show the largest improvements in test scores during 11th grade (2008 ACT Prep Report)

Test prep is not an effective strategy for improving ACT scores. The kind of day-to-day work that students do in their classrooms has a much stronger relationship to their ACT scores than focusing on the tests themselves (2008 ACT Prep Report)

College Application Process (11th - 12th Grade)

College-Going Culture: A strong college-going culture—whether teachers agree that their school and colleagues push students to go to college, work to ensure students are prepared, and are involved in supporting students in completing their applications—is the single most consistent predictor of whether students take steps toward college enrollment (2008 Potholes Report)

College Match: Students are more likely to enroll in colleges that match their qualifications when they attend high schools with a strong college-going culture (2008 Potholes Report)

College Choice: A good strategy for students is to apply to multiple colleges—generally three or more—and attend the colleges with the best institutional graduation rates for their level of qualifications. Students of all qualification levels are more likely to graduate from college if they attend a postsecondary institution with high graduation rates (2006 From High School to the Future Report)