

Feedback and Recommendations: Advancing Chicago's Post-Secondary Access and Success Landscape



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Background

The Donors Forum College and Career Access, Persistence and Success (CCAPS) group seeks to advance post-secondary success in Chicago. To better understand the interests and priorities of stakeholders, CCAPS conducted 30-60 minute interviews with experts in the field. Interviews focused on the following:

- ❖ Background and current efforts related to post-secondary access and success
- ❖ Reactions to the Chicago CCAPS Landscape scan
- ❖ Perception of current opportunities and challenges in Chicago's post-secondary access and success sector
- ❖ Vision for Chicago's post-secondary access and success sector over the next five years
- ❖ Suggested priorities and areas of focus
- ❖ Other suggestions or feedback

Chicago has a dynamic post-secondary access and success sector that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of students. There are many individuals and organizations that play an important role in helping students achieve their post-secondary goals. While we were able to interview a broad range of stakeholders, we know there are many others whose perspective would be valuable and should be sought, including counselors, principals, parents and students. We are grateful for the input we received from the following individuals. Their insights are summarized in this document.

Tiffany McQueen, America Needs You
Alli Henry, A Better Chicago
Tim Schwertfeger, Best Portion Foundation
Rebecca Ryan, Big Shoulders Fund
Chris Broughton, Bottom Line Chicago
Jim Parsons/Christy Uchida, Brinson Foundation
Scott Martyn, City Colleges of Chicago
Bette Bottoms, University of Illinois at Chicago
and Collaborative for Undergraduate Success
Aarti Dhupelia, Chicago Public Schools
Dominique Jordan-Turner, Chicago Scholars
Matt Bruce, Chicagoland Workforce Funders
Alliance
Mara Botman/Adam Levine, Circle of Service
Foundation
Brian Battle, Civic Consulting Alliance
Christina Herzog, Crown Family Philanthropies
Brian Spittle, DePaul University
Jeff McCarter, Free Spirit Media
Mark Duhon, HighSight
Sam Nelson, Illinois Student Assistance
Commission
Catherine Deutsch, INCS

Whitney Smith/Beth Swanson, Joyce Foundation
Dinaz Mansuri, Kaplan Family Foundation
Jia Lok Pratt, KIPP Chicago
Tina Gridiron, Lumina Foundation
Kelly Sparks, Maple Grove Objective
Peter Mich, McDougal Family Foundation
Nivine Megahed, National Louis University
Anne Birberick, Northern Illinois University
Robin Lavin, Osa Foundation
Gillian Darlow, Polk Bros. Foundation
Gudelia Lopez, The Chicago Community Trust
Jen Keeling/Lauren Shepherd, Thrive
Ted Christians, Umoja Corporation
Jenny Nagaoka, University of Chicago,
Consortium on Chicago School Research
Sara Ray Stoelinga, University of Chicago, Urban
Education Institute
Greg Darnieder, U.S. Department of Education
Kathleen Osta, consultant
Chicago Scholars C4 Meeting with Nonprofit
Partners
CCAPS Landscape Scan Advisory Group

Reactions to the Landscape Scan

Those interviewed felt that the scan was helpful. It confirmed assumptions about the post-secondary access and success landscape and offered some new insights. The interviews confirmed the following:

- The scan highlighted the need for coordination to support equitable access to strong programs.
- The scan confirmed that post-secondary success is perceived as a City responsibility and educational institutions, such as Chicago Public Schools (CPS), City Colleges of Chicago or the University of Illinois at Chicago, do not have the capacity to meet the diverse needs of all students on their own.
- The scan was helpful but did not provide actionable data to support program improvements.
- The scan was significant in that it included data from universities.
- There was concern that the scan did not include information from funders or high school practitioners, including counselors, both of which are significant to the sector.
- There was concern that nonprofits that are new to the Chicago market or whose primary mission is not post-secondary access and success may not have been included.
- The scan raised new questions and heightened the desire for more information about access, distribution and quality.

Current Opportunities and Challenges

When asked about current challenges and opportunities, several themes emerged. Comments tended to focus on Leadership, Coordination, Information, Capacity and Sustainability.

Leadership

- *Thoughtful, Committed Leaders* – There are strong leaders in Chicago willing and wanting to help students achieve post-secondary success; people are very passionate about this issue.
- *Strong History* – Chicago has been at the forefront of developing new strategies to improve post-secondary access and success; the progress made in Chicago is notable, including FAFSA completion and 9th grade on-track rates.
- *Need for Strategic Leadership* – There is a broad range of stakeholders working on post-secondary access and success; many feel that greater strategic leadership is needed.

Coordination

- *Collaboration Fatigue* – Many feel there are too many meetings, confusion about the purpose of various collaboratives, no accountability for outcomes and a need to streamline conversations.
- *Need for Systemic Coordination* – Some infrastructure is in place, but there is a lack of sector-wide coordination and no clear agenda.
- *Changing Landscape* – The post-secondary access and success sector is changing; new players are emerging and organizations are shifting to address different needs; there is currently no systematic way to track who is doing what.
- *Higher Education Collaborations* – The higher education landscape is highly decentralized; recent initiatives have brought together universities to share information and develop strategies to improve student persistence through college; many feel the new initiatives are promising; some feel collaborations between higher education and K-12 systems need to improve.
- *Challenging Transitions* – The path to and through college is not always continuous or with the same institution; transitions are challenging for students and financial barriers are common; developing new ways to improve transitions should be prioritized.
- *Progressive College and Career Pathways* – Recognition needs to be given to the range of post-secondary pathways that exist; opportunities for partnership between education and workforce development should be explored.

Information

- *Research Hub* – The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research and other institutions have provided critical information to help stakeholders – locally and nationally – better understand the issues related to post-secondary access and success; the To&Through Project will substantially increase information available to schools.
- *Data Initiatives* – There are several data initiatives and research efforts underway; data efforts need to be better understood and coordinated.
- *Access to Actionable Data* – There is a desire for ongoing, real-time data that will improve decision-making, equitable resource distribution and coordination.
- *Tracking and Transition Strategies* – It is hard to track students once they leave one system and move to another; figuring out how to better track and support student transitions should be prioritized.
- *Information for Students and Families*– Students and families are not aware of graduation rates at universities/colleges; many do not understand what services and supports are available.
- *No Centralized Information Hub* – There is no centralized place to get information about post-secondary access and success research, best practices and programs.

Capacity

- *K-12 Systems* – While graduation rates are increasing, many students still have low GPAs and test scores and academics and instructional practices need to improve to ensure that students are “college ready,” have strong non-cognitive skills, and require less remediation upon entering college. Further, many students have limited understanding of viable post-secondary pathways. Within CPS, the Office of College and Career Success is seen as important.
 - *Counselor Roles and Responsibilities* – Counselor to student ratios need to improve; counselors need to be empowered and their time should focus specifically on college and career advising; current efforts to improve the quality of college advising is an important first step.
 - *Post-Secondary Leadership Teams (PLT)* - Having a PLT in every school is broadly supported; PLT’s need to be trained and supported; PLT’s should set clear goals and report progress.
- *Colleges and Universities* – As high school graduation rates and student qualifications increase for Chicago students, the leadership and commitment of the higher education community to develop strong models to ensure post-secondary success for the increasing number of qualified students is seen as critical. Some feel individual colleges/universities need to make a greater institutional commitment and beyond graduating students with a base of knowledge, administrators and faculty should focus on the outcome of career success; the reinvention efforts at City Colleges of Chicago is seen as an emerging example of improvement.
- *Nonprofit Partners* –Nonprofits are seen as important partners; nonprofits want ongoing professional development, better data to inform programmatic decisions and more opportunities to share information, network, collaborate and share expertise.

Sustainability

- *Increased Interest in Attainment* – Nationally and locally more attention is being paid to college success; forward-thinking strategies to boost college completion and close attainment gaps are emerging.
- *Focused, Ongoing Advocacy* – Policy opportunities specific to college access, persistence and success need to be identified and pursued; ongoing advocacy is needed.
- *Funding Constraints* – Current funding to support college access and success efforts is not sufficient, there are identifiable gaps; as more students persist, the cost of supporting undergraduate success will increase; new, and possibly national, funding is needed.
- *Resistance to Change* – Funders may not be willing to rethink how they fund post-secondary access and success; nonprofits might not be willing to rethink their programs; universities may not invest in better ways to support undergraduate success for all students.

Vision – in 5 Years...

The following summarizes the vision stakeholders have for Chicago’s post-secondary access and success sector in five years.

Chicago will be a national model for educational attainment. Across the city, Chicago students will be academically prepared, well supported and better informed about how to achieve their post-secondary goals.

- High school graduation rates and college enrollment rates will continue to increase.
- College graduation rates will dramatically improve.
- Various pathways to viable careers and career training will be more clearly defined and communicated.

CPS and schools will continue to focus on building academic knowledge and improving instructional practices, but will also ensure students have well-developed non-cognitive skills. There will be clear benchmarks articulated that provide a roadmap for schools and PLTs to improve their post-secondary advising programs.

College counselors and advisors will earn a college and career counseling credential, participate in ongoing training and have access to information that allows them to provide exceptional guidance to students when it comes to their college and career choices.

Universities and colleges will have a clear understanding of the factors that increase student persistence, prioritize time and resources to improve teaching, persistence and graduation rates, and be accountable for institutional outcomes. The higher education community will, individually and collectively, engage in meaningful partnerships with each other, nonprofits, foundations and K-12 systems to collaboratively improve undergraduate success for all students, especially those from Chicago.

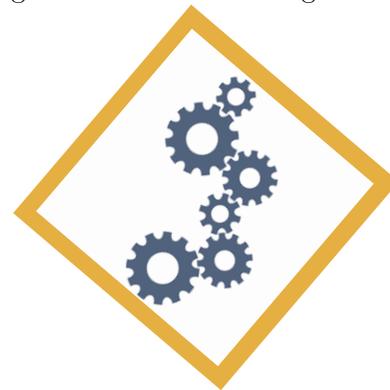
Nonprofits and post-secondary access and success service providers will offer high-quality programs and services based on best practices, will strategically deepen or expand services to meet identified gaps and will work collaboratively with other stakeholders to strengthen college/career pathways and pipelines.

Private Foundations will foster grantee capacity to meet the needs of all students, invest in infrastructure improvements, forge partnerships across stakeholders locally and nationally, and use their convening power to advance sector-wide goals.

Next Step Considerations for CCAPS

When asked about advancing Chicago’s post-secondary access and success landscape and the focus following the scan, there was consistent feedback that a lot of good work already happening in the sector. Recommendations focused heavily on *supporting efforts to accelerate change, improving sector-wide coordination and communication, and increasing accountability*. Specific recommendations were organized into three categories:

1. College Access and Success
2. Progressive Post-Secondary Pathways
3. Collaborative Investments



1. College Access and Success

Chicago has been at the forefront of the movement to help students achieve college access and success. As a result of current efforts, high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates are improving.

There are a number of initiatives underway that have the potential to improve student outcomes, including new data efforts and training requirements for college counselors. However, stakeholders believe that more needs to be done to ensure students, especially low-income students of color, go to and graduate from college. **It is important to note that those interviewed felt the term “college” includes 2-year institutions, most notably City Colleges of Chicago.** Based on consistent suggestions made by those interviewed, the following priorities emerged:

Priority 1:

Elevate the Role of Higher Education in the College Access and Success Conversation

Higher education institutions play a critical role in ensuring student success long term. Colleges and universities – both 2- and 4-year – need to be further engaged in post-secondary success conversations. Individual institutions, each with their own model, need deliberate, aggressive strategies that focus on increasing student retention, degree completion and employability for traditional and non-traditional students. “College graduation rates are not going to move unless universities make changes. Changes need to be significant.” Some suggestions related to elevating the role of higher education include:

- Leveraging, aligning and supporting the work of the Chicago Higher Education Compact and the Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success.
- Ensuring higher education institutions, including City Colleges, have a forum to share best practices and develop collaborative strategies.
- Improving coordination between K-12 systems and colleges/universities and coordination between city/community colleges and four-year institutions.
- Incentivizing and promoting colleges’ efforts to develop more comprehensive support systems for students traditionally underserved by higher education and to improve faculty development related to college completion for all students.
- Advocating for colleges and universities to improve undergraduate teaching and advising and to design undergraduate programs with the outcome of career success as a priority.
- Working with the colleges and universities to identify high-level champions for undergraduate success and set realistic targets for college graduation.
- Creating an annual public report that updates the public on the status of student-centered outcomes.
- Coordinating external pressure to ensure colleges/universities move quickly to make reforms and are held accountable.

Priority 2:

Build Capacity within Schools and the District

While most acknowledge the important role of out-of-school-time support services, it is widely recognized that schools play the most critical role in ensuring all students are holistically prepared for college and careers, with a focus on academic skills, non-cognitive skills and college knowledge. Schools must provide high-quality instruction and support and motivate students to pursue a post-secondary credential. Solid post-secondary advising is seen as a priority. “Good college advising needs to be embedded into the everyday of schools - not just counselors, but teachers and principals.” Furthermore, a college-going mindset needs to be embraced by all school personnel. Some specific suggestions include:

- Securing the commitment of K-12 systems to improve instructional practices and expand college and career counseling (strong schools, strong post-secondary advising).
- Cultivating a “college-going” mindset within schools.
- Ensuring every school has a PLT and that counselors, coaches and advisors are well trained and empowered to implement strategies that guide, motivate and prepare students for a successful transition to college.
- Developing academic and non-academic skill simultaneously.
- Developing better systems for matching students and helping them transition to college.
- Establishing a forum for counselors, advisors and PLTs to network, share best practices and receive training.

Priority 3:

Develop the Roadmap: Benchmarks and Quality Indicators

Many who were interviewed expressed a desire to have a roadmap for expanding and improving post-secondary access and success services in schools. There is broad support for a PLT in every school. Many indicated that senior seminars and college suites are also important. “If we want more robust post-secondary supports for all students, we have to decide what we would like to see happening in every school and set guidelines.” Beyond the types and amount of services students receive, stakeholders also want to better understand indicators of quality for programs and services. Some specific suggestions related to developing benchmarks and quality indicators include:

- Describing an efficient and effective model of post-secondary services that should be available within all high schools; setting benchmarks based on best practices and existing research and providing supports.
- Incentivizing schools and nonprofits to work together to meet the benchmarks.
- Collecting and analyzing data to determine the effectiveness of programs.
- Developing a strategy to measure and track whether schools are meeting the benchmarks; prioritizing support for schools that are struggling.
- Once benchmarks are established, having serious conversations about quality; developing quality indicators for different types of programs.

To do this in the arts, the Creative Schools Certification was created. The Creative Schools Certification identifies the level of arts instruction in each school in five categories ranging from Emerging to Excelling. It creates a clear picture for principals, teachers and parents on arts instruction in their school and is a roadmap for expanding quality and access. The Certification appears on the school progress report along with other indicators of academic performance and helps schools develop plans and partnerships to address gaps.

**Priority 4:
Establish a Stronger Advocacy Presence**

Advocacy strategies for college access and success have typically been embedded into broader education advocacy. While many are advocating for increased college enrollment and graduation rates, no organization is spearheading advocacy or building public support specifically and exclusively for post-secondary access and success in Chicago. The current commitment of CPS and the recent efforts of higher education institutions are important, but ongoing advocacy is needed. Some specific suggestions include:

- Evaluating what policy changes impact post-secondary access and success and advocate.
- Increasing the accountability of schools and higher education institutions to focus on long-term success, including college graduation.
- Identifying and advocating for federal and state resources to support college access and success.
- Engaging media to raise awareness and build greater public support.
- Monitoring policy changes locally and statewide on an ongoing basis.

**Priority 5:
Develop a College Access and Success Data Strategy**

Overwhelmingly, stakeholders report wanting more and better data – both knowledge and action data – to inform decision-making. While data has a use and value for all stakeholders, some caution that before more data is collected, clarification is needed about what data is needed and how it will be used. Some of the suggested uses include:

- Mapping post-secondary access and success services available across the city (identify gaps)
- Improving coordination/distribution/matching of resources
- Tracking progress towards benchmarks and goals
- Tracking district and school-level outcomes
- Challenging assumptions
- Accumulating evidence and building awareness

Estimated expenses for Ingenuity’s Arts Look Map, which includes a nonprofit partner portal and a school portal and also brings in data from CPS and funders, were almost a half-million dollars over three years (including staffing, programming, analyzing and reporting).

Given the resources required to design, create and manage data systems, many stressed the importance of better understanding what data already exist and how current data systems might be leveraged or expanded. *See Appendix B: Overview of Some of the Current Data Efforts.*

**Priority 6:
Develop a Centralized Information Hub**

While a lot of data are already being collected, analyzed and reported, one potential gap is in the ongoing collection of information about nonprofit partners. Nonprofits want an easier and better way to communicate with each other, with schools and with students and parents. There is a desire among many nonprofits to better understand each other’s programs, share information and increase referrals.

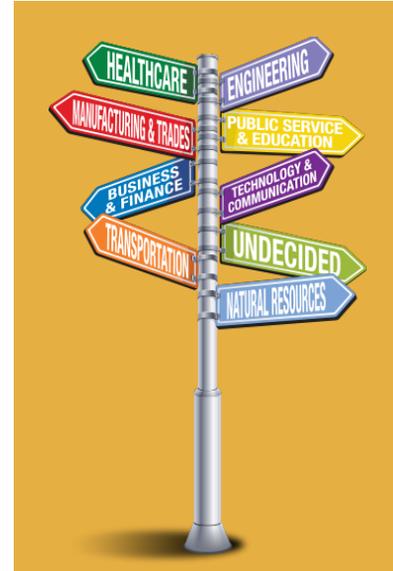
The following suggestions were made related to improving communication and information sharing:

- Creating a centralized place where tools, research and resources can be accessed – make it easier for counselors, parents and students to find information.
- Mapping the availability of programs by neighborhood, school, etc.
- Measuring and reporting the individual and collective impact of nonprofit partners.
- Developing a “College/Career Guidebook” for students, parents and counselors that outlines various options for students and guides students based on their post-secondary interests.
- Documenting and sharing Chicago’s efforts related to college access and success.

2. Progressive Post-Secondary Pathways

Locally and nationally a great deal of energy and resources have been directed toward advancing the college access and success conversation. It is important to note that there are some inconsistencies in this conversation, including the inclusion of 2-year institutions, such as City Colleges of Chicago, and the recognition of non-traditional paths to college success. In addition, it is not always clear where high quality certificates or sub-associate-level credentials fit into the college success conversation.

Given the current number of Chicago high school seniors who do not immediately pursue a 2- or 4-year college degree and the number of students who move in, out and between systems over time, greater recognition needs to be given to the range of college and career pathways that exist. In addition, better communication, coordination and strategic leadership is needed to support student's ongoing progression towards credentials of economic value. While the work in this area is not as clear, many stakeholders are interested. Below are the priorities that emerged.



Priority 1:

Build Understanding and Awareness about Post-Secondary Options

Students have many post-secondary options, but those options are not clearly articulated or well understood. Even among those interviewed, there was a lack of clarity about what is meant by “post-secondary pathways” outside of associate’s and bachelor’s degrees. Where there seems to be agreement is that most viable career opportunities require a high quality, post-secondary degree, credential or certificate. There is also agreement that educational pathways help determine career pathways. To help students understand their options after high school, as a starting place, there needs to be a better way to talk about the range of viable, progressive college pathways for students. Some specific recommendations include:

- Documenting the breadth and depth of (a) credentials of economic value, in addition to BA’s and AA’s, that are available within the traditional college system and (b) quality non-college setting, post-secondary credential or certificate options available in the Chicago area.
- Building stakeholder support for the notion that there are multiple economically viable pathways to a college education for all students.
- Expanding existing curriculum and training for PLT’s that focuses on these pathways to include content about the credential or degree expectations as the entry points of various careers of interest.
- Studying how and why students choose various post-secondary pathways.
- Developing a way to track certificates and credentials earned by CPS students, including those offered in City Colleges of Chicago and elsewhere.

Priority 2:

Develop a Coordinated Pathways Strategy

Leaders in K-12 systems, higher education, employment and workforce development are beginning to come together both informally and formally to discuss and develop strategies that will strengthen post-secondary pathways for students. Assuming there is a better understanding of the range of viable pathways for students, consideration needs to be given to what individual institutions and systems can do collectively and individually to position students for long-term career success. Stakeholders emphasize

the need for strategic leadership and improved coordination. Specific suggestions include:

- Building acceptance for the multiple pathways students may take from high school graduation to college graduation.
- Discussing what it means to be “career ready” and identifying the skills students will need for jobs today and in the future.
- Ensuring strong supports are available and transitions are smooth as students move from system to system, including between the labor market and education.
- Advocating for aligned policies and programs across systems.
- Improving collection and use of workforce and education data to strengthen current program and investment decisions.
- Positioning high school students for workplace success by:
 - Increasing opportunities for high school students to develop and gain workplace skills.
 - Increasing opportunities for students to learn about various careers.
 - Expanding the role of college counselors to include career counseling.
 - Improving how students are counseled about post-secondary credentials.
 - Promoting and further strengthening the Career and Technical Education System in all schools, including selective enrollment.

3. Collaborative Investments

The CCAPS group membership is made up of more than just foundation representatives; however, it is largely seen as “the funder group.” Some of the suggestions regarding next steps focus on investment strategies. There is a clear desire across stakeholder groups for some “quick wins” and targeted investments would potentially allow for that. Some of the specific suggestions related to funding include:

Priority 1: Build the Infrastructure – Many feel that the infrastructure and staff to support the post-secondary access and success sector are not fully in place. Better coordination of current efforts and improved strategic thinking about what happens next are needed. Many described the need for stronger leadership that has the power to influence driving forces and change the trajectory. Several commented that current efforts are not sustainable without proper staffing.

Priority 2: Address Gaps – People interviewed stressed that funding to address gaps and help schools with low college enrollment rates should be prioritized. According to the Landscape Scan, one out of three schools have no nonprofit partner focused on post-secondary success. Many schools don’t have counselors. Working with school leaders and nonprofit partners, intervention strategies should be creatively developed. The effectiveness and scalability of current and new programs should be evaluated.

Priority 3: Support Promising Practices – Some suggested that there is an opportunity to learn about and potentially invest in promising practices or innovative approaches that contribute valuable examples, information or knowledge to the sector. Examples included the work that is currently happening to bring higher education institutions together to reshape how universities, in partnership with CPS, nonprofits and foundations, support student persistence through and graduation from college. Other examples related to the alignment of nonprofit services.

Conclusion

Chicago is an opportunity-rich city. High school graduation rates and college enrollment rates are increasing and there are a number of thoughtful efforts underway to accelerate change. In addition, Chicago is rich with institutions that have great potential to significantly boost college completion and close attainment gaps. K-12 systems are committed to increasing college readiness. Funders are increasingly focused not only on college access but also on college success. Nonprofit providers continue to scale their operations to meet student needs. The higher education community recognizes its important role in increasing post-secondary student success and is beginning to individually and collectively think about issues of equity and student success.

But Chicago is also a complicated city. It has a very high population of students who require extra services and supports – not just in the K-12 system but also throughout college. While there are promising efforts underway, transitions between high school and college can be challenging. Many students are not college ready and therefore require remediation. There are also students who do not immediately pursue college; the pathways to guide these students towards economically viable careers are not currently well articulated to nor understood by a wide range of stakeholders.

Stakeholders believe there is an opportunity for Chicago to become a national model for educational attainment. To expand opportunities and overcome the challenges will require greater cross-sector leadership, coordination, alignment, communication and advocacy. Chicago needs a strong voice for post-secondary educational attainment for all students - especially low-income students of color. It needs ongoing, strategic leadership to:

- set an agenda and chart the course to ensure Chicago students achieve college access and success
- effectively coordinate and align existing and new work
- strategically respond to opportunities and challenges
- increase access to data, information and resources
- improve communications between and for all stakeholders
- increase external pressure and accountability by advocating across systems – government, K-12, higher education – for improved access and attainment for all Chicago students.

As a next step, stakeholders should consider how to accelerate and sustain the good work that is already happening and figure out how to advance the following two equally important work streams:

- Based on the interviews, there is sufficient clarity on the general scope of work related to College Access and Success. Given this clarity, stakeholders should come to agreement on sector-wide priorities and explore the infrastructure needed to implement targeted priorities and increase strategic leadership in the sector. As part of the process, the feasibility of existing infrastructure should be considered and, if necessary, a case should be made for creating new infrastructure.
- The interviews suggest that to further the conversation about how to support students who take a progressive pathway to college, stakeholders in the education, workforce development and employment fields should share information and brainstorm how to accelerate change in this area. Key leaders should work together to develop strategies that will strengthen viable college and career pathways for students.

Appendix A: Overview of Some of the Current Collaborative Efforts

The following provides a high-level overview of collaboratives mentioned during the interviews:

Chicago College Career Collaborative (C4) – C4 is a new effort organized by Chicago Scholars to improve coordination, communication and collaboration among nonprofits working on post-secondary access and success.

Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success (CCUS) – The CCUS is a network of Chicago-area, nonprofit institutions of higher education whose mission is to create a Chicago where all young people live up to their educational potential by raising college graduation rates. The Collaborative was formed in 2013, and brings together the major institutions of higher education in Chicago to focus their collective resources, expertise and data on solving the problem of undergraduate college persistence and graduation, with a particular focus on low-income students and students from CPS. Member institutions work together to share data and develop evidence-driven initiatives to increase post-secondary student success and degree completion.

Chicago Higher Education Compact - CPS is partnering with leaders of colleges and universities to develop solutions and ensure students receive supports to keep them on track to graduate college once they enroll. Members of the Higher Education Compact convene quarterly to share goals, progress and best practices. The collective goal is to elevate CPS as a national leader in college graduation rates and to increase the college graduation rate for CPS students to 60% by 2025.

City Colleges Pathways Project - City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) is partnering with Community College Research Center and the Civic Consulting Alliance to improve completion and transfer rates. A central component of this initiative is a "guided pathways" curricular model for the system's more than 115,000 students. With this initiative, CCC places itself at the forefront of a national movement aimed at improving student learning and success by building more clearly defined, educationally coherent program pathways.

College 2 Careers (C2C) - The C2C program forges partnerships between City Colleges and industry leaders to better align City Colleges' curricula with the demand in growing fields, including Healthcare; Transportation, Distribution & Logistics; Business, Professional Services & Entrepreneurship; Information Technology; Advanced Manufacturing; Culinary and Hospitality; and Education, Human and Natural Sciences. Through partnerships, City College students have access to real-world experience via teacher-practitioners, internships and facilities and offer City Colleges' students and graduates a first pass at job opportunities.

Thrive – Thrive aims to bring together organizations across multiple sectors to align and coordinate efforts spanning from cradle to career. Thrive has organized five change networks, one of which is the College Completion Network. By 2025, the College Completion Network seeks to double the number of CPS freshman who go on to and graduate from a 2-or 4-year institution within 10 years. Much of the Network's focus has been on the development of a credential for college counselors and expanding senior seminar course offerings. In addition to the College Completion Network, Thrive convenes an Employment at Living Wages Network, which aims to help more Chicago young adults secure employment at living wages. It is also developing a citywide data warehouse to connect program data from partner organizations to student characteristic and outcome data.

University of Chicago Network for College Success (NCS) – NCS aims to transform Chicago’s high schools into learning organizations that promote academic excellence and post-secondary success. NCS supports student achievement in 17 high schools by building the school’s capacity to foster academic growth and promote a college-going culture. Much of the focus is on principal development and research.

- *Principals Collaborative* – A professional learning community that provides professional development and structured opportunities for principals to problem solve, exchange ideas and share resources. Principals also receive individual coaching to help them translate learning and strategies into their own unique school contexts.
- *College Counselors Collaborative* – A collaborative of 40 counselors from 20 schools that meet monthly to share with best practices. Through this collaborative, NCS aims to build the leadership skills of counselors, social workers and other school administrators.
- *The Pipeline Project* - A partnership between Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) and the Network for College Success at the University of Chicago, which aims to develop a "pipeline" through which talented first-generation-to-college, primarily minority students from CPS enroll – and graduate from – ACM colleges.

Appendix B: Overview of Some of the Current Data Efforts/Systems

The following provides a high-level overview data efforts mentioned during the interviews:

- *Career Connect* – a unified data system being developed by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership for the purpose of improving access to services for job seekers.
- *Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success* – working with colleges/universities to track undergraduate persistence and graduation data. To date the Collaborative has succeeded in getting most of Chicago’s colleges to share data on CPS students (college grades, % needing remediation, retention, etc.).
- *City Colleges Pathways Data Project* – working on collecting data to a) chart and analyze student progression into and through program pathways, b) better understand student program pathway decisions, and c) measure program labor market returns and net benefits.
- *ISAC Student Portal* – collects data and information about colleges and universities to help students make decisions about college, navigate financial aid and learn about careers and jobs.
- *Naviance implementation in CPS* – Naviance is a college and career readiness tool that helps align student strengths and interests to post-secondary goals and improve student outcomes. CPS plans to implement the Naviance system throughout the district starting in 2016.
- *Thrive’s tcLink* – developing a citywide data warehouse to connect program data from partner organizations to student characteristic and outcome data.
- *University of Chicago’s To&Through Data and Tools* – shows trends in educational attainment, academic performance, college enrollment and college completion patterns in CPS high schools; provides CPS schools with data on key metrics designed to focus attention on crucial levers for student success; and will give stakeholders an online tool to interrogate school-level data.