

Focusing on Transitions to Improve Postsecondary Outcomes

WITH NAVIANCE BY POWERSCHOOL



Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is the third largest school district in the United States, serving more than 361,000 students.

The district has a large population of underserved students, with 76% of students qualifying as economically disadvantaged. CPS is focused on ensuring that all students, regardless of their economic background, receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success in college, career, and civic life.

Through the use of Naviance by PowerSchool and by focusing on transitions, **the district has achieved a college enrollment rate of 68%, a 13% increase in just two years, and a 36% increase since 2006.** Transition Skills is one of the six key competencies identified in the research-backed Naviance College, Career, and Life Readiness Framework.®

Challenges

Around 30% of CPS students who intend to go to college do not enroll in the fall after graduation. That adds up to 5,000 students each year who experience "**summer melt**", a phenomenon where college intending students fail to matriculate.

CPS quickly realized that a driving factor behind their summer melt challenge was that students were not prepared for the transition from high school to a higher education institution. In addition, many students were struggling with transitions earlier as well. Their data showed that transitioning from 8th to 9th grade was a crucial time for students to stay on track.

Solution

CPS began using Naviance by PowerSchool to help students develop the skill sets and mindsets needed to achieve postsecondary success. **The platform is used to support Learn.Plan.Succeed**, a CPS high school graduation requirement intended to help guide students in reaching postsecondary success.

AT A GLANCE



Challenges

- 30% of students who intend to go to college do not enroll in the fall after graduation ("summer melt")
- Students unprepared for the transition from high school to college
- Struggles with straying on track beginning with the transition from 8th to 9th grade



Solution

- Naviance by PowerSchool



Results

- 13% increase in college enrollment in two years
- 20% reduction in summer melt
- 1,000 students overcame obstacles to enroll in college

Transitioning from:

MIDDLE TO HIGH SCHOOL

To support students through the transitions they experience throughout their education journey, **CPS developed a district-wide strategy.** The first transition many students struggle with is from middle school to high school. "We lose many of our students during the transition from 8th to 9th grade for a variety of reasons," says **Patrick Milton, Executive Director of the Office of School Counseling and Postsecondary Advising.** "Much of it has to do with the anxieties specific to the high school experience." To support rising 9th graders, CPS established the "Freshman Connection 8th-9th Transition Program" as an option for students to get academic counseling support during the summer months. It's also an opportunity for students to get answers to questions about the high school experience.

HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

Most CPS students indicate their intent to enroll in college after graduation, but many factors can derail them from their plans. "Students encounter a range of barriers, including financial aid, housing, or finding transportation to actually get to their college campus," says Milton. To provide support to students during

critical summer months, CPS brings on summer transition counselors and college and career coaches.

Through Naviance by PowerSchool, **the counselors can identify students at risk for summer melt**, and then reach out to the students and their families to offer extended transition support.

HIGH SCHOOL TO CAREER

The district has also put in place supports for students transitioning directly to a career. **"We want to make sure if they're going into the workforce or a job training program that they are going to get the same level of support that our students who are applying to college are getting,"** says Milton.

"To support students moving on to career after high school, we have built partnerships with organizations that have a strong sense of the necessary competencies to transition into the workforce," says Milton. "We see workforce development through these partnerships as the equivalent to our summer transition counselors for students going on to college or university."

Results

Since establishing greater support for students over the summer months, CPS has made great strides in increasing student success beyond high school graduation.



Since 2017, CPS' college enrollment rate has risen by 6%, from 64% to 68% of graduates, a 36% increase from their 2006 enrollment rate of 50%.



Within the first year that CPS began focusing on summer melt, their summer melt rate decreased by 20% and 1,000 additional students overcame obstacles to enroll in college the next fall.

"Our summer melt rate has continued to decrease as a result of the crucial support we put in place, including the strategic use of Naviance [by PowerSchool], school-based postsecondary teams and partners," says Milton.

“Naviance [by PowerSchool] has allowed us to conduct detailed monitoring to 1) See if students are on track to a concrete postsecondary plan, 2) Identify at-risk students, and 3) Flag specific concerns and determine outreach.”

PATRICK MILTON

Executive Director of the Office of School Counseling and Postsecondary Advising

Visit www.PowerSchool.com or call 1-877-873-1550 to learn more.