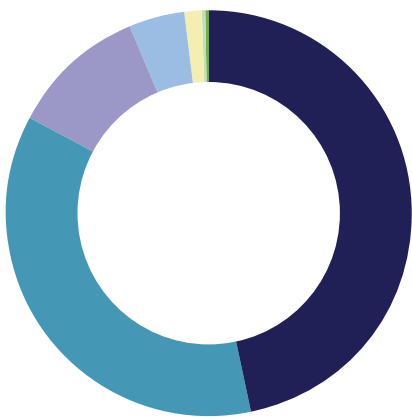




CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS



- HISPANIC: 46.7%
- BLACK: 35.8%
- WHITE: 10.9%
- ASIAN: 4.3%
- MULTI-RACIAL: 1.3%
- NATIVE AMERICAN/
ALASKAN: 0.3%
- HAWAIIAN/PACIFIC
ISLANDER: 0.16%



340,658
STUDENTS



63.8%
FREE AND
REDUCED
LUNCH

ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ADDRESS INEQUALITY AND CREATE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.

Investments in strong postsecondary pathways—the meaningful connections between K-12 education and college and career—are vital to ensuring a better future for our young people.



In today's professional world, an **associate's** or **bachelor's degree** is more important than ever. As states and districts work to recover from the pandemic, Illinois has developed one of the strongest examples of a comprehensive state-level plan, including clear prioritization of postsecondary readiness. **Chicago Public Schools (CPS)**, led by Chiefs for Change board chair Pedro Martinez, has adopted similar core priorities for recovery, leveraging federal stimulus money from the **American Rescue Plan** to strengthen existing—and build new—pathways to postsecondary success for CPS students.



ALUMNI SUCCESS

Every year, **between 10 and 40 percent** of high school graduates who plan to go

to college do not end up enrolling in the fall—a phenomenon known as **summer melt**. CPS, the largest district in the state of Illinois and third largest in the United States, used **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)** funds to expand their longstanding work to prevent summer melt by creating the **Alumni Success Initiative**. Due to costs associated with staffing summer melt programming, the efforts were previously limited to eight weeks each summer. The Alumni Success Initiative will now be year round and multi-dimensional, providing a **comprehensive tracking tool, near-peer mentors, and tiered supports** for students. The infusion of federal emergency COVID relief aid will allow CPS to offer additional hours for full-time teachers, counselors, and other qualified advisors to serve as alumni coordinators, and will also allow the district to hire 30 near-peer mentors to provide transition and campus support to CPS graduates.



CHICAGO ROADMAP

Nearly 20 percent of CPS graduates go on to attend City Colleges of Chicago (CCC).

However, **approximately half** of CPS graduates who go on to CCC do not return for their second year; and in both systems, opportunity and outcome gaps start early and persist based on students' race, gender, geography, and socioeconomic status. Beyond academics, many students have a variety of other needs for support. Students also struggle to prioritize and finance postsecondary study while balancing work, family, and other responsibilities. CPS' ultimate goal is to **improve the high-school-to-college transition**, launching every student on a smooth path.

Leveraging stimulus funds, CPS and CCC have come together to launch the **Chicago Roadmap**. This initiative will allow students not just to enroll in college, but to have the resources they need to thrive and continue to grow once they get there. Ultimately students will earn a credential that will set them up to succeed in the workplace. Moving from collaboration to convergence, the Chicago Roadmap is a formal, comprehensive partnership that:

- **Builds on existing programs**, such as the Star Scholarship and dual credit/dual enrollment, maximizing college credits and financial benefits; and
- **Establishes new resources** to ensure all CPS students, regardless of their background or ZIP code, have access to the support they need to graduate with a degree or other credential of value, increasing their opportunity for economic success after college.

The initiative will align current CPS and CCC efforts and create new pathways for CPS students—particularly Black and Latinx students from underserved communities and diverse learners—to help them finish college and earn postsecondary credentials that lead to good careers.



“Our society’s future leaders are in our classrooms right now, so it’s essential that we provide them with the resources and support necessary to succeed beyond graduating from high school. By investing in multiple postsecondary pathways, we can ensure that students gain the skills needed to pursue fulfilling careers that reflect their interests and passions.”

— PEDRO MARTINEZ
CEO, Chicago Public Schools, and
chairman, Chiefs for Change



**LOOKING
AHEAD:
GROWTH AND
EQUITY**

ESSER funds have allowed CPS to address the gaps in opportunities and achievement in an accelerated way. The CPS Equity Framework and many other equity-driven efforts at CPS over the last five to ten years laid the foundation for the work that needs to be done; ESSER funds allow that work to be established at a much quicker pace and to a greater extent. All ESSER-funded projects, including those specific to postsecondary pathways, were **designed with equity at the center**. These projects serve to benefit all students, but also focus on the student populations most impacted by systemic barriers and the effects of the pandemic.

CPS recognizes that the ESSER funding window can serve as a pilot to try out and track the success of new initiatives in order to measure effectiveness and use those results to prioritize which programs are sustained over time. The district plans to work during the next two years to secure additional funding to continue—and scale—those initiatives that lead to greater student achievement and success.



Invest Forward is an initiative that encourages districts and states to prioritize investing a significant portion of their American Rescue Plan resources in helping students successfully access postsecondary education and succeed in future career pathways. As part of the effort to equip district and state leaders with high-impact strategies to guide their investments, Invest Forward will continue to highlight the work of **innovative local and state leaders** who are using the once-in-a-lifetime stimulus funding to give students a better tomorrow by investing in postsecondary pathways today.