

UCHICAGO Consortium

ON SCHOOL RESEARCH



Discovering
what **matters** most.

For **25 years**, the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research has informed solutions to the most difficult problems facing urban schools.



UChicago Consortium

Investigates

the progress and challenges of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS)

Identifies

how programs and policies are working

Illuminates

what really matters for school and student success

History

Launched in 1990, the Consortium has provided insight and guidance to CPS through many changes in administration, including **11 superintendents and CEOs**. The Consortium is based at the UChicago Urban Education Institute (UEI), which brings research and practice together, creating knowledge that strengthens urban schools nationwide.

The UChicago Consortium is an honest broker in a world where few trust the data.

The Consortium...

- provides **rigorous**, objective assessments of school progress and determines what drives student achievement
- develops new ways of measuring key constructs, building an extensive **data archive**
- **works closely with CPS** educators and policymakers to identify problems and illuminate solutions
- catalyzes school improvement by providing **actionable data** to schools, the district, and the broader educational community
- focuses its research on Chicago, answering questions that are relevant nationwide

REPLICATION NATIONWIDE

Over the last 10 years, at least **13 cities** have replicated the Consortium's model for place-based research partnerships.

- Boston • New York City • Newark • Philadelphia • Baltimore
- Washington, D.C. • New Orleans • Houston • Kansas City
- San Diego • Los Angeles • Oakland • San Francisco

Signature Insights

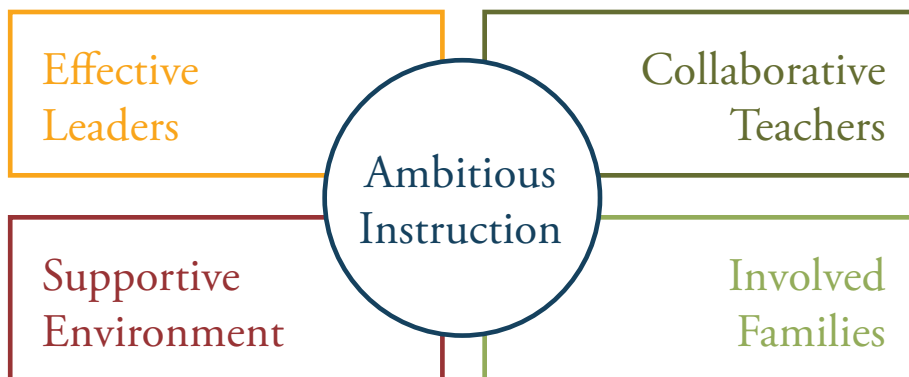
The 5Essentials are key to organizing schools for improvement.

Consortium researchers and Chicago educators together developed a framework for school improvement.

Using 15 years of survey responses and student achievement data, Consortium researchers made a stunning finding:

Schools **strong** in at least **three of five** essential components are **ten times** more likely to improve than schools **weak** in at least **three** of them.

Spurred by this knowledge, the Consortium, in collaboration with **UChicago Impact** (another unit at UEI), provides an **online data tool** for every school in Chicago to help gauge performance on the 5Essentials and guide school improvement planning. In 2014-15, the tool was used in **12 states** and **4,200 schools**.



5ESSENTIALS

The 5Essentials are detailed in Consortium researchers' acclaimed book, *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*, published in 2010.

The Degree Attainment Index charts progress from ninth grade through college graduation.

A landmark 2006 report included one of the Consortium's most disheartening findings to date: Only **8 out of 100 high school freshmen in Chicago earned a four-year college degree within 10 years of starting high school**.

A subsequent Consortium study identified barriers to enrolling in college, such as poor advising and failure to complete financial aid forms. In response, CPS hired more counselors and instituted innovative systems for tracking financial aid applications.

As of 2014, Chicago's Degree Attainment Index had **risen to 14%** and shows signs of continued growth.

Freshman On Track promotes stronger high school graduation.

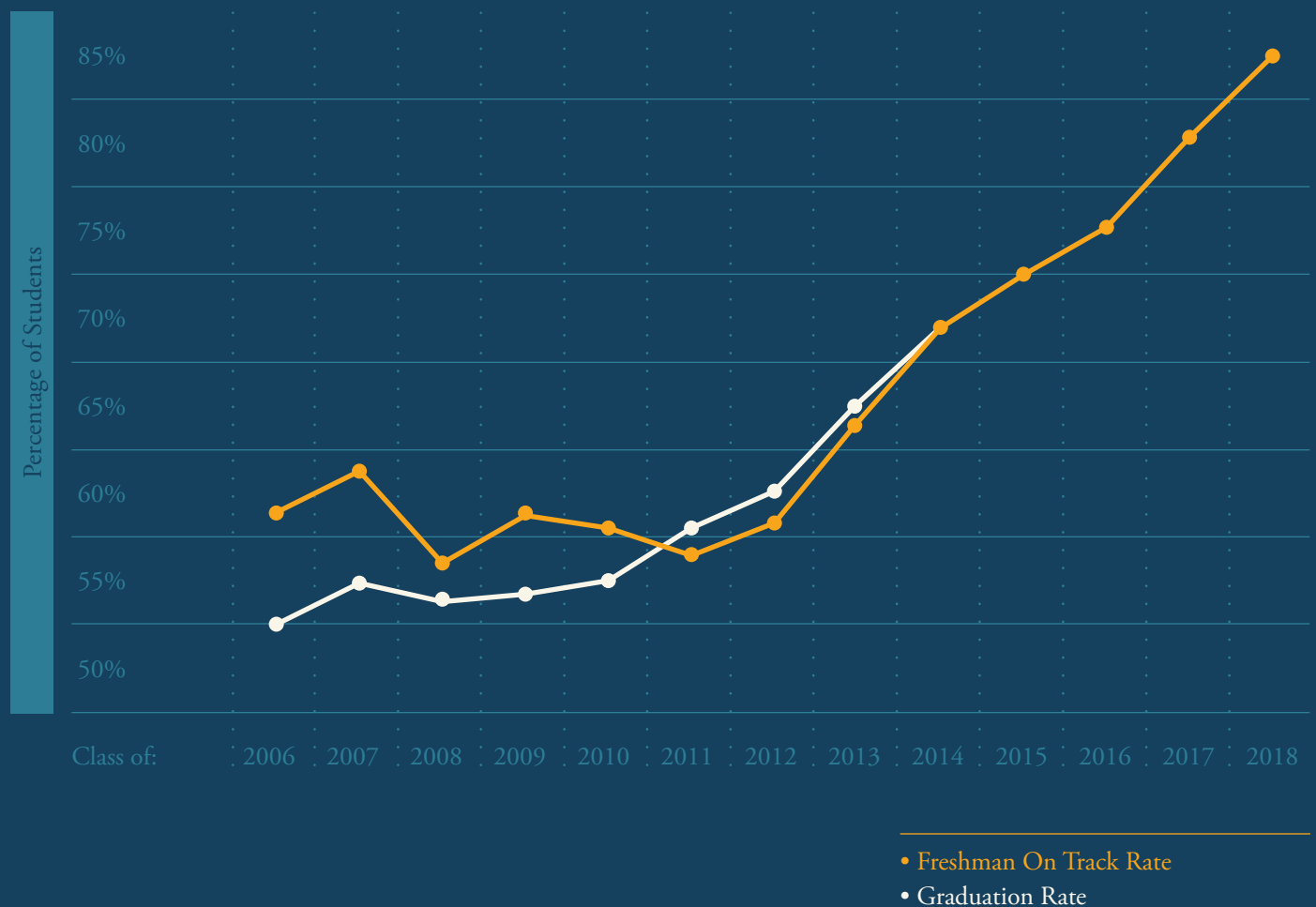
In 2005, Consortium researchers made a simple but powerful finding: Graduation is largely determined by freshman-year attendance and grades.

Freshmen who are “on track” are four times more likely to graduate than their “off track” peers. Thus, addressing the dropout problem is not primarily about the host of factors over which educators have little control—families,

neighborhoods, poverty, gangs, violence, or prior academic deficiencies. These realizations inspired CPS to refocus its efforts around the **Freshman On Track** indicator, implementing real-time student monitoring and stronger supports for at-risk students.

Districts across the country, including **New York City, Dallas, Albuquerque, Omaha, and Philadelphia**, now use a Freshman On Track indicator as part of their accountability and intervention strategies.

CPS FRESHMAN ON TRACK AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES



Emerging Insights

To&Through: Getting students to and through college.

Even as college readiness and enrollment rates climb in Chicago, college graduation rates have not moved at the same pace. The Consortium has partnered with the district, higher education, UChicago Impact, and the Network for College Success to support schools in using data to identify and meet the challenges that students face as they move from high school through college.

To&Through

5 MILESTONES, 1 DESTINATION



Consortium research shaped UChicago Impact's development of **To&Through**, a tool that supports schools in helping students make better college choices.

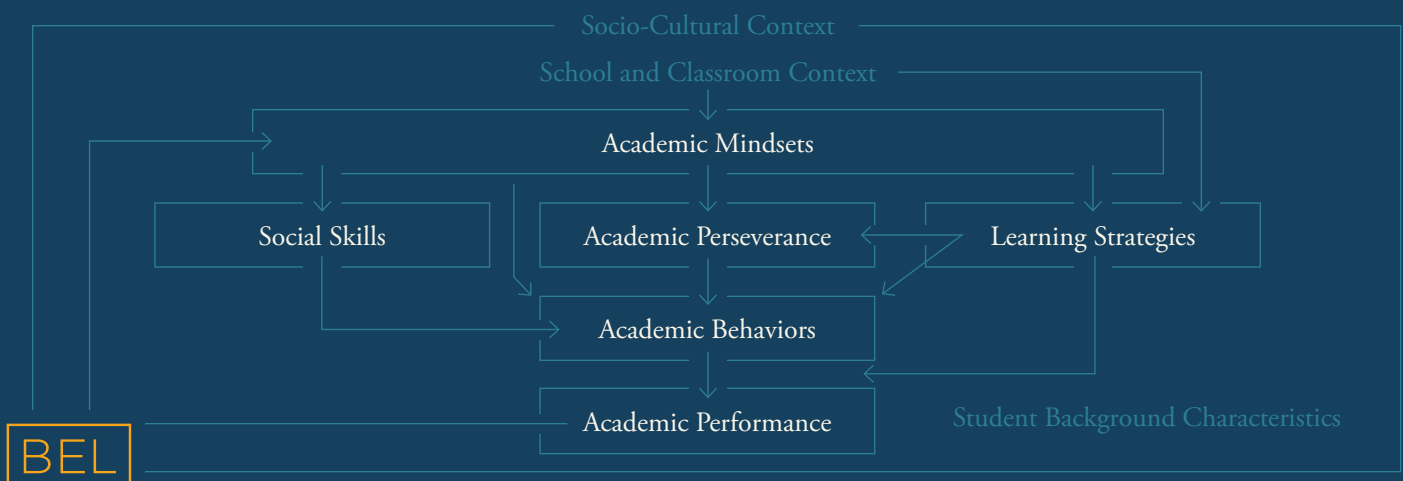
Becoming Effective Learners: Focusing on noncognitive factors.

Understanding that test scores and grades only tell part of the story, the Consortium is investigating how factors **beyond academic knowledge** affect student learning and long-term outcomes.

Researchers are looking inside classrooms to gauge how learning environments and instruction influence students' **noncognitive** behaviors.

The Consortium plans to help schools use newly developed measurement tools and data to improve the classroom experience for middle and high school students.

HOW NONCOGNITIVE FACTORS AFFECT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



The Consortium
is **fundamentally
changing** the way
educational
research is done.



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ON SCHOOL RESEARCH



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