

**OUR COMMITMENT TO CHICAGO STUDENTS: A ROADMAP FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**  
**TEXT FOR PUBLIC VERSION FOR CHICAGO EDUCATION COMMUNITY**  
**FINAL DRAFT – June 28, 2019**

**CHICAGO TODAY:**

Meet Silvia.<sup>i</sup> She graduated last spring from a public high school in Chicago and is now pursuing an associate’s degree in computer science at Wilbur Wright, one of the seven City Colleges of Chicago (CCC). Silvia told us she started thinking about what she wanted to do after high school “at the beginning of senior year,” with the help of her teachers and counselor. She’d considered the benefits of going to Wilbur Wright: She knew it was well-regarded in her chosen field, as CCC’s Center for Excellence in Information Technology; she can get there easily on the L; and her mother, who had attended the college herself years ago before leaving due to financial difficulties, endorsed the option. But once Silvia set her mind on enrolling, she remained “terrified” about the cost: “I had no idea about financial aid and how it can benefit me over time,” she explained. Starting college this past fall was definitely an adjustment—her classes are tough—but she has sought out tutoring and met with her assigned advisor a couple of times. She has also been pushing herself to participate more actively in class, with the support of one professor who is helping her “open up to other people socially” so she can engage in class discussions. As she tells it, “you’re entering a new environment that’s different from high school in its own way.” Ultimately, after her two years at Wilbur Wright, her goal is to transfer to a local four-year university to get her bachelor’s degree.

While Silvia’s path to college has not always been smooth, she is well on her way toward a credential that will set her up for success in the workplace. For students in Chicago and across the United States, earning such a postsecondary credential—these include associate’s and bachelor’s degrees, industry-recognized credentials, and other postsecondary certificates and licenses<sup>ii</sup>—has never been more important. Nearly two-thirds of jobs today require some kind of credential,<sup>iii</sup> and the adults who have them typically earn significantly more than their peers with only a high school diploma.<sup>iv</sup> Despite her challenges, Silvia is determined to finish her program and go on to a fulfilling career that allows her to support herself and her family. Chicago’s future—the well-being of its citizens, as well as its economic prosperity—depends on Silvia, and the thousands of other local students with similar aspirations, having the opportunities and support to successfully achieve their goals.

Silvia is a living example of the remarkable progress Chicago’s public education systems have made over the past decade. More Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students are graduating from high school than ever before.<sup>v</sup> Over three-quarters of graduates ultimately pursue postsecondary education.<sup>vi</sup> And each year, more and more CPS graduates are choosing to enroll at one of the City Colleges,<sup>vii</sup> where tuition ranges from free (for qualifying students) to affordable, and where graduation rates have more than doubled over the past eight years.<sup>viii</sup> Outside of CPS and CCC, a growing local network of nonprofits provides students with high-quality advising and support services throughout their educational journey.<sup>ix</sup> Several four-year colleges serving large numbers of Chicago students are offering innovative transition programming tailored to underserved students, including those transferring from CCC. These crucial steps forward represent significant progress for Chicago.

However, accomplishing her goal of college completion—whether at a two-year or four-year institution—will make Silvia the exception, not the rule. Even as the number of Chicago students graduating high school and enrolling in college has increased, four-year college graduation rates have stagnated for the past decade. While nearly seven in 10 CPS freshmen say they hope to earn a bachelor’s degree, just 19 percent go on to earn one within a decade of high school graduation.<sup>x</sup> Why? Too many Chicago students are graduating high school unprepared for postsecondary study: Over two-thirds require remedial courses in English, math or both once they arrive at CCC,<sup>xi</sup> making them much more likely to accrue debt in college—and much less likely to earn any kind of credential.<sup>xii</sup> Beyond academics, many students struggle with a variety of other unmet needs for support. Nearly half of CPS graduates who go on to CCC do not return for their second year.<sup>xiii</sup> And in both systems, opportunity and outcome gaps start early and persist based on students’ race, gender, geography and socioeconomic status.<sup>xiv</sup>

We at CPS and CCC are proud of our progress. We also know we have much more work to do, and that our institutions need to partner closely to achieve our goals on behalf of our shared students—the thousands of young people who graduate from Chicago’s district and charter schools each year and continue their education at CCC. Building on our work together to date, we commit to strengthening quality, support, alignment and coherence across our systems to enable more students—and particularly low-income students, students of color and diverse learners—to earn a postsecondary credential that will allow them to fulfill their aspirations and ultimately achieve economic mobility.

*This roadmap will guide our collective efforts to prepare more Chicago students for postsecondary study; support them to be successful once they get to CCC and, if they choose, to transfer to a four-year university; and ensure they graduate equipped with the knowledge, skills and experiences to thrive in our city’s labor market.*

To get there, we must improve the student experience across Chicago, especially for students furthest from opportunity. In our conversations with these students over the past several months, they shared their experiences and desires:<sup>xv</sup>

Julia, a junior, told us she wished her high school had prepared her earlier for the **transition to postsecondary**: “I just wish [that in] my freshman year they talked about the importance of the SAT. They started talking more about it in my junior year. [The college access nonprofit I’m involved with] didn’t talk about it either. They were trying to make us comfortable in the high school setting.” Kai, a second-year student at CCC, shared similar reflections. “The one thing I would have liked is for them to introduce the idea of college earlier on,” she told us. “They don’t say much until late junior or senior year. By then, I felt I could have done more research, gotten myself more involved in things that I liked...like internships and other opportunities.”

Maya, a junior at CPS, has enjoyed **exploring careers** in her high school: “The [career and technical education] program really helped me think about what I want to do after high school. Just coming here helped me decide, because the program showed me what I was actually going to do when I start working.” Martha, in her second year at CCC, appreciated the chance to complete an **internship**: “[The staff at my college] helped me work on my resume and cover letter, and they also helped me get a sense of how, if I were to go into a job, the work would be scheduled.”

Terrence, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader, wants help learning **how to be a college student**. From his perspective, “The hardest thing [about college will be] adjusting and trying to manage my time.” Another CPS junior, Sofia, agrees: “College is very professional, a bigger thing. The environment of college will be much more sophisticated than we’re used to. Maybe in senior year [of high school], give us a college experience—change our routines and give us a college environment so we can practice and be prepared.”

For Gordon, a high school senior, **finances** are top of mind when he thinks about his career goals: “I worry about how I’m going to budget and make sure groceries stay in the house and that my credit will be good. I don’t ever want to be broke.” Likewise, Martin, a first-year CCC student, pointed to the role of **financial aid** in his journey to college: “When I talked to my mentor [at my high school], I was scared and terrified about financial aid. He broke it down. When I came to register, I was terrified. I didn’t want to mess up; I was worried that it could affect my mom. He told me to breathe.”

Teresa, a CPS senior, wants more **encouragement and support** to help her take action on her plans for her future: “Help students not give up so easily on themselves,” she suggested. “When students set action plans, they should push themselves to do what they set out to do. Some people should get a mentor to help push them to do more.” Carla, in her first year at CCC, talked about the helpful role tutors play in her education: “The tutors here will help you, and they make sure they understand the work that you need to do.”

These are just a few of the many perspectives we heard from high school and community college students—primarily low-income students of color who are or will be the first in their families to attend college—in Chicago this spring. With this roadmap, we aspire to create a different experience for these young people. Our vision is that our students will have greater access to early postsecondary experiences in high school to get a head start on earning college credits. They will receive high-quality, equitable advising and wraparound supports to complete high school, make the transition to CCC if they choose, and go on to earn a credential of value, whether at CCC or a four-year university. Along the way they will have meaningful opportunities to develop and apply career skills in real-world settings, starting as early as middle school and continuing into their time at CCC. And they will understand early on in their high school years the range of postsecondary options available to them, and enroll seamlessly should they choose to attend CCC. **This is our pledge to the students and families of Chicago.**

**OUR SHARED COMMITMENT TO EQUITY:** In all of our work, we strive to champion each student’s individual cultures, talents, abilities, languages and interests; meet their unique needs; and increase access to educational opportunities so all our students have the opportunities to reach their aspirations.<sup>xvi</sup> We disaggregate data to understand outcomes within and across student demographic groups. We are working in partnership to address the effects of structural racism that have limited opportunities for Black and Latinx students in the public education systems in Chicago and cities across the United States over many decades. We believe that the systemic, long-term efforts in this roadmap will further our shared goal of eliminating barriers and closing the equity gaps that persist for Chicago students.

**HOW WE DEVELOPED THIS ROADMAP:** During the 2018-19 academic year, a working group of leaders from across CPS and CCC worked closely together to analyze the current strengths and challenges in our systems and develop solutions to accelerate the success of our students, with a particular focus on closing equity gaps. Through this process, we looked at our own data to determine where we are doing well and where we need to do better. We listened to parents and students, counselors and advisors, teachers and faculty to deepen our understanding of their diverse experiences. We also gathered input and feedback from nearly 100 other local stakeholders: leaders and staff members across our two institutions; advisors at the Mayor’s Office; nonprofit, workforce, research and philanthropic partners; and leaders at local four-year universities that receive large numbers of Chicago students from CPS and CCC. We drew on this combination of rich insights along with best practices from national research to create this roadmap. For our two institutions, this roadmap is just the first step in strengthening our partnership to support Chicago students on their path to success. As we proceed with implementation, we will continue to invite different voices to the table to ensure the work of our partnership is deeply informed by the experiences and expertise of Chicago’s communities.

**HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS:** We aim for the work described in this roadmap to have a transformational impact on the lives of our students. In addition to strategy-specific measures, we will gauge the impact of our partnership by tracking three overarching metrics:

- **Postsecondary enrollment:** The percentage of CPS students who enroll directly in a certificate, two-year or four-year degree program after high school
- **Postsecondary completion:** The percentage of CPS students who go on to earn a certificate, two-year degree or four-year degree within 150% time
- **Employment and economic mobility:** We are currently working on developing this metric

**OUR CALL TO ACTION:** This roadmap represents an ambitious set of collaborative efforts, and we cannot do it alone: It will require significant partnership and investment to accomplish our goals. But we believe that the work described in this document represents what is needed to achieve the transformational student outcomes we believe are possible. We invite the broader Chicago community to partner with us in helping our city’s youth pursue a path to future success.

## ROADMAP OVERVIEW:

Our top-priority strategies—what we call our “game-changers for equity”—are designated in **bolded red font** below. We believe these strategies present the greatest opportunity to “change the game” and close equity gaps for students in Chicago. We selected these particular strategies because they address the needs of a significant share of our students, deeply support underserved student groups, and/or are supported by research demonstrating their effectiveness.

Academic Readiness & Success	Access to High-quality Programs	Student Advising & Supports	Career Exploration & Preparedness
<b>Our Goals: <i>With our support, more students will...</i></b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experience high-quality, well-aligned instructional practice across CPS and CCC</li> <li>▪ Complete “gateway”<sup>xvii</sup> math and English courses in their first year at CCC</li> <li>▪ Earn at least 30 college credits within 15 months of graduating high school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Earn early college credits while in high school; earn more early college credits (on average)</li> <li>▪ Access dual credit/enrollment and the Star Scholarship, particularly among underserved populations</li> <li>▪ Earn postsecondary credentials with strong labor market value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Earn a postsecondary credential within 150% time and at a reasonable cost, based on their individual financial circumstances</li> <li>▪ Persist at CCC to graduation or successfully transfer to a four-year institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build competencies for success in the workforce</li> <li>▪ Learn about careers of interest in high school, and engage in work-based learning at CPS and CCC</li> <li>▪ Succeed in the labor market, defined by gaining employment, earning a living wage and achieving economic mobility</li> </ul>
<b>Our Strategies: <i>Working together, we will...</i></b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Expand opportunities for students to graduate high school ready for college and to succeed in their chosen pathway, starting with Transitional Math</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Convene CPS and CCC faculty to build a shared understanding and collaborate around instructional practice</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Implement strategic dual credit pathways aligned to credentials with strong labor market value</b></li> <li>▪ Advance equity and impact of the Star Scholarship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support students to make sound financial decisions about their postsecondary choices</li> <li>▪ <b>Connect diverse learners to disability supports at CCC</b></li> <li>▪ Connect young men of color to social supports</li> <li>▪ Enhance equity of academic supports</li> <li>▪ <b>Expand and enhance academic advising and wraparound supports for all students at CCC</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase CPS counselors’ career advising capacity</li> <li>▪ Strengthen coordination to support student development of workforce competencies</li> <li>▪ <b>Establish career and postsecondary exploration starting in middle school</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Strategically increase supply of high-quality work-based learning across Chicago</b></li> </ul>

### Strong Partnership between CPS & CCC

<b>Our Goals: <i>To support our shared students, this partnership aims to...</i></b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase trust and alignment between CPS and CCC</li> <li>▪ Improve the college and career success rates of our shared students</li> <li>▪ Enhance public confidence in both of our institutions to deliver on our promises to the young people of Chicago</li> </ul>			
<b>Our Strategies: <i>We will...</i></b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Streamline the student enrollment experience at CCC</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Build a sustainable long-term infrastructure for the collaboration between CPS and CCC</b></li> </ul>			

## DOMAIN 1. ACADEMIC READINESS & SUCCESS

**OUR VISION FOR STUDENTS:** Our students possess the academic content knowledge, skills and mindsets necessary to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing college courses and complete a postsecondary credential program.

**THE NEED:** Students who succeed at earning a credential spend their first year in college completing the classes required to enter upper-level coursework in their chosen program of study.<sup>xviii</sup> They begin these courses directly—not wasting time and money on remedial courses that review skills from high school—and even complete some classes early while they are in high school so they do not fall off track when work or life gets in the way. But today, most of our students are not finishing these crucial “gateway” courses in their first year at CCC. For example, our data shows that more than two-thirds of our students are not completing gateway math—and these numbers are even higher for African American students.<sup>xix</sup> Instead, far too many get stalled in remediation. Given the rapidly rising cost—and importance—of a postsecondary credential, we must give our students the opportunity to hit the ground running when they get there.

### WHAT WE HEARD:

“General math was challenging for me. I had to take that class twice. The second time I took it, the professor supported me. She asked if I had questions, and I stayed after class or recorded the class to help [me understand the content].” –CCC Student

“The environment of college will be much more sophisticated than we’re used to. Maybe in senior year, give us a college experience. [The school] could change our routines, give us a college environment so we could practice and be prepared.” –CPS Student

“Some students don’t make it at college when they’re taking basic classes. [With transitional courses] there would be an opportunity to do it in high school so they can get help.” –CPS Student

### GOALS: WITH OUR SUPPORT, MORE STUDENTS WILL...

- Experience high-quality, well-aligned instructional practice across CPS and CCC
- Complete “gateway” math and English courses in their first year at CCC
- Earn at least 30 college credits within 15 months of graduating high school

### STRATEGIES: WE WILL...

- **Expand opportunities for students to graduate high school ready for college and to succeed in their chosen pathway**

Far too many CPS students do not take rigorous classes during their senior year of high school, and then discover they must take remedial courses when they get to college.<sup>xx</sup> With support from CCC, CPS is piloting two transitional courses<sup>xxi</sup> modeled on CCC’s pre-college math courses, which students can take as seniors to secure placement into college-level math when they get to campus. As a first step, we plan to broaden this pilot; we will ultimately explore a similar approach for supporting students to enter college ready for credit-bearing coursework in English. We will also create more opportunities for seniors to engage in preparatory courses and co-curricular experiences, above and beyond their senior seminar, so they are well-prepared for postsecondary study.

- **Convene CPS and CCC faculty to build a shared understanding and collaborate around instructional practice**

Right now, there are few venues for collaboration between CPS and CCC faculty. Building on lessons from other partnerships between a K-12 school district and a community college system, including work led by the City University of New York and the New York City Department of Education, we will first develop strategies to bring our faculty together to share effective instructional practices and learn from each other. By seeding and expanding faculty collaboration, we can improve instruction and deepen student academic experiences across the board.

## DOMAIN 2. ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS

**OUR VISION FOR STUDENTS:** Our students are aware of dual credit/enrollment opportunities and the Star Scholarship, including their eligibility guidelines and requirements. Over time, the quality and impact of these programs will improve as they serve more students, with a special focus on underserved students.

**THE NEED:** Nearly half of CPS graduates now leave high school with an Early College and Career Credential, thanks in part to expanded access to early college courses; almost one in five students earns at least one early college credit in high school.<sup>xxii</sup> The benefits of these early college opportunities are many: Students get an early taste of college-level coursework, learn important competencies for postsecondary success (such as study skills and time management) and begin to envision themselves as college students. Also, they're more likely to complete a postsecondary credential, often at a lower overall cost.<sup>xxiii</sup> However, these opportunities are not accessible to all students, particularly underserved students such as those in small neighborhood high schools and Options schools. Similarly, while the Star Scholarship is a key financial lifeline for many students, not enough students are aware of the scholarship early enough to take steps toward qualifying for it. For example, African American students are underrepresented among Star recipients (18%) compared to their share of CCC's overall student body (28%).<sup>xxiv</sup>

### WHAT WE HEARD:

"I think CCC should have some policy that would allow high school students who show some proficiency to take some basic class. I just want [my son] to get the experience of taking a college-level course." –CPS Parent

"Right now, [a nonprofit program] helps us to take college classes. I'm glad we have that opportunity, but not all students know about that." –CPS Student

"The Star [Scholarship] honestly saved my life, because financial aid wasn't doing much for me." –CCC Student

### GOALS: WITH OUR SUPPORT, MORE STUDENTS WILL...

- Earn early college credits while in high school and earn more early college credits on average
- Access dual credit/enrollment and the Star Scholarship, particularly among underserved populations
- Earn postsecondary credentials with strong labor market value

### STRATEGIES: WE WILL...

- **Implement strategic dual credit pathways aligned to credentials with strong labor market value**

Currently, CPS students' access to CTE and dual credit courses in their career of interest depends largely on having a teacher at their school qualified to teach these courses. Many CPS students are also not aware of these and other early college opportunities, such as dual enrollment courses at CCC. We will begin a groundbreaking new effort to design 15-credit "model pathways" to guide students through key pre-requisites and other requirements associated with a credential in three or four high-priority careers, giving them a jump start on college at no cost to them. To make sure as many students as possible have access to these model pathways, we will develop a new strategy to recruit qualified teachers to teach these courses in CPS schools, especially in schools on the South and West sides, as well as in Options and charter/contract schools.

- **Advance equity and impact of the Star Scholarship**

The Star Scholarship<sup>xxv</sup>, which covers tuition and books for eligible CPS graduates, is a promising vehicle for increasing access to CCC. However, male students and African American students are underrepresented in the pool of scholarship recipients; many of these students do not meet the Star GPA requirement or meet application deadlines. We will continue to promote the Star Scholarship and begin to study its impact on student outcomes to inform future enhancements. Additionally, drawing on lessons from Georgia State, National Louis and other forward-looking universities, we will explore different avenues to reach students with timely information about the scholarship so they can plan ahead.

## DOMAIN 3: ADVISING & SUPPORTS

**OUR VISION FOR STUDENTS:** Our students have access to a comprehensive set of academic, social-emotional and logistical supports to successfully navigate the path to and through a postsecondary credential program, beginning in middle school at CPS and continuing into CCC.

**THE NEED:** To succeed in postsecondary programs, students need more than just academic knowledge: They need the skills and relationships to navigate the new college environment; information and advising to make appropriate decisions about their education; and access to help when they encounter challenges. We also know that some of our students face greater obstacles, ranging from basic needs to mental health issues, and that significant equity gaps exist among student subgroups. For example, at CPS, just 45% of diverse learners and 46% of students who have GPAs below 2.0 enroll directly in a postsecondary program after high school.<sup>xxvi</sup> African American CPS graduates are least likely to persist at CCC beyond their first semester compared to all CCC students (61% vs. 71%, respectively).<sup>xxvii</sup> Struggling students need targeted academic interventions to stay on track toward their chosen postsecondary goals, and wraparound supports to help them overcome difficulties along the way. High-quality wraparound support programs such as One Million Degrees, a nonprofit providing comprehensive supports for high-performing, low-income students at CCC,<sup>xxviii</sup> offer proven models we can learn from to serve students who are currently not being reached.

### WHAT WE HEARD:

“Everyone needs support. I need some assistance on how to manage [the transition to college] and budget it out.” –CPS Student

“At first, it was hard for me to turn in work. But advisors helped. You can talk to your advisor any time and she helps you operate a little bit faster.” –CCC Student

“When I talked to my mentor [in high school], I was scared and terrified, like about financial aid. I didn’t want to mess up; I was worried that it could affect my mom. My mentor told me to breathe. Ever since then, he showed me things that I should do and not do. He used to go here, and he broke it down for me. It’s comfortable because you know that person. You’re getting advice from family.” –CCC Student

### GOALS: WITH OUR SUPPORT, MORE STUDENTS WILL...

- Earn a postsecondary credential within 150% time and at a reasonable cost, based on their individual financial circumstances
- Persist at CCC to graduation or transfer to a four-year institution

### STRATEGIES: WE WILL...

- **Support students to make sound financial decisions about their postsecondary choices**

CPS students need information and guidance to make good decisions about postsecondary study consistent with their financial circumstances. Right now, many students do not fully understand the financial implications of these choices, which can significantly affect their student debt load—and even their ability to graduate at all. Building on CPS’ existing efforts in this area, we will increase access to easy-to-use tools and informational resources to help high school students evaluate the costs and potential returns of different postsecondary options.

- **Connect diverse learners to disability supports at CCC**

CPS ensures diverse learners receive appropriate supports. Once these students graduate from the K12 system and transition to CCC, they are required to self-report their disability to access supports at the postsecondary level. However, many diverse learners at CCC do not self-report—and thus do not get access to needed supports. In the coming years, we will enhance our existing work in this area—for example, all seven CCC colleges have Disability Access Centers, which serve as hubs of services for diverse learners—to develop new ways to encourage CPS graduates to self-report at CCC and match them to the services they need to succeed.

- **Connect young men of color to social supports**

Male students of color experience unique challenges.<sup>xxix</sup> National research shows that they are less likely to seek out help when they need it and more likely to experience a poor sense of belonging on a college campus.<sup>xxx</sup> Our outcome data at CPS and CCC show that these students are among the least likely to earn a postsecondary credential. We will expand our existing efforts to develop research-based strategies and tools geared toward these students' needs. We will also look carefully at recent initiatives to support the postsecondary success of young men of color in Chicago, such as efforts to expand mentoring, to explore whether and how we might build on key lessons to provide additional support for these students.

- **Enhance the equity of academic supports**

Access to supports designed to help students build academic and social-emotional competencies, such as time management and study skills, is not equitably distributed across our two institutions. We will develop tools and guidance for CPS and CCC faculty and staff to help them create opportunities for their students to develop these skills in and out of the classroom. We will also revamp CCC's early alert system to enable more seamless faculty referrals of students for targeted academic interventions. Additionally, drawing on recent research by the University of Chicago Poverty Labs,<sup>xxxi</sup> we will partner with college access nonprofits in Chicago that develop these success skills to plan how to reach those students whom the research shows are currently not being served.

- **Expand and enhance academic advising and wraparound supports for all students**

During their first year at CCC, only half of students meet with an academic advisor after registration, and just 11% receive transfer advising.<sup>xxxii</sup> Today, CCC is taking steps to develop a standard coaching-based advising model with input from the seven colleges. With additional capacity at CCC, we can work to ensure that every student meets with an academic advisor at least once per semester and receives high-quality guidance to design course loads that will maximize their likelihood of earning a postsecondary credential from CCC within 150% time. At the same time, since low-performing students do not have the same access to nonprofit-delivered wraparound supports as their higher-performing peers do,<sup>xxxiii</sup> CCC will focus on building internal capacity to provide these supports equitably.



## DOMAIN 4: CAREER EXPLORATION & PREPAREDNESS

**OUR VISION FOR STUDENTS:** Our students cultivate an initial career vision and develop a postsecondary plan to achieve it; build the competencies they will need to be successful in the workplace; and engage in a coherent progression of career exploration experiences, beginning in middle school at CPS and continuing through CCC, culminating in an internship and/or apprenticeship.

**THE NEED:** Students who enter a postsecondary program with a clear goal in mind—a major and a career path they want to pursue—are more likely to earn a credential.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Career exploration activities that begin in middle school and continue into postsecondary can help students achieve this clarity by enabling them to try on different careers and explore possibilities for their future. Today, CPS counselors have limited capacity and experience advising their students on careers, and only half of CPS students in grades 6-10 complete career exploration tasks in the district’s technology platform, Naviance. At the same time, more intensive work-based learning, such as internships and apprenticeships with Chicago employers, is available to just a small fraction of CPS and CCC students. Most students still do not have consistent opportunities to learn and practice the workforce competencies—such as communication in a professional setting and collaboration in teams—that Chicago employers are looking for in their employees.

### WHAT WE HEARD:

“I think [work-based learning] would be better for high school students. All high school students should get an internship. Even in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, high school should be pushing jobs.” –CPS Student

“After high school, I want to go into the trades and become a carpenter. That’s partially why I’m here. Being in this program, I’m good with using my hands. Since I’m taking the carpentry class, it confirms what I want to do.” –CPS Student

“If you expose students [to careers] early, they will have more plans for what they want to do. Give them opportunities and choices.” –CPS Student

### GOALS: WITH OUR SUPPORT, MORE STUDENTS WILL...

- Build competencies for success in the workforce
- Learn about careers of interest in high school, and engage in work-based learning at CPS and CCC
- Succeed in the labor market, defined by gaining employment, earning a living wage and achieving economic mobility

### STRATEGIES: WE WILL...

- **Increase CPS counselors’ career advising capacity**

CPS counselors receive limited training on career advising. For example, the Chicago College and Career Advising Credential (CCCAC), which is one of the district’s primary tools to develop counselor practice, has historically focused on college advising. Over the years of this roadmap, CPS will build on our existing partnership with the Chicagoland Workforce Funders Alliance to continue augmenting the CCCAC with career advising elements and create mechanisms to recognize counselors who deepen their practice in this area.<sup>xxxv</sup>

- **Strengthen coordination to support student development of workforce competencies**

CPS, CCC and our nonprofit and workforce partners currently do not have a coordinated strategy for engaging students in experiences that will cultivate and strengthen their professional skills. We will collaborate with our partners to achieve alignment around common skills for workforce success. Later on, we will explore how to work together with these partners to create mutually-reinforcing experiences that offer our students, as early as middle school, venues to build these skills with the hope of preparing students over time for success in the workplace.

- **Establish career and postsecondary exploration starting in middle school**

Not enough CPS students in grades 6-10 are completing the required career exploration activities in Naviance.<sup>xxxvi</sup> We will work to better understand why this is and enact improvements to increase completion of these activities. We will also have conversations with our workforce partners to develop a continuum of work-based learning experiences—from grade 7 until completion of a credential at CCC—which can be easily incorporated into the school year and day. These experiences may include career fairs, guest speakers, job shadows and other venues to learn about careers. With this continuum in place, our students will have access to a clear progression of opportunities, across CPS and CCC, to deepen their career exploration over time.

- **Strategically increase supply of high-quality work-based learning across Chicago**

Apprenticeships and internships give students the chance to experience a career to better understand whether it is a good fit for them. These are often deep, meaningful opportunities for students to practice the skills that are critical in any workplace and to envision themselves as a professional in a particular industry. As we pursue our efforts in this domain of career exploration and preparedness, we plan to collaborate with our workforce partners in Chicago to increase the number and quality of these apprenticeships and internships, including for those students at CPS and CCC who historically have had limited access to them.

## DOMAIN 5: STRONG PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CPS & CCC

**OUR VISION FOR STUDENTS:** Our students understand the policies and procedures of our two institutions, regardless of which CPS school or City College they attend, and can navigate our respective systems easily. A strong infrastructure for our partnership enables us to create the conditions for student success.

**THE NEED:** For many CPS students, the process of enrolling in a CCC college is a challenge. They are faced with multiple different administrative deadlines, admissions requirements and enrollment systems that hinder their ability to make postsecondary choices that are right for them at the right time. Anecdotally, CPS counselors and nonprofit partners also report having difficulty guiding their students through this process. Currently, much of the work of coordinating falls to individual staff in CPS schools and network offices, and CCC colleges; and when these staff leave, they must start building relationships all over again. To address this need and sustain the other areas in this roadmap, CPS and CCC will need to develop new, strong and sustainable partnership structures. We need to communicate consistently, work together efficiently and hold each other accountable to outcomes to make sure our students do not fall through the cracks.

### WHAT WE HEARD:

"This [work] is about having a bridge—us handholding, and CCC reaching their hand out." –CPS Counselor

"I didn't do the [FAFSA] for 2019. It was hard. I do go to an adult, but they ask me something about how much my mom gets paid, but she doesn't work. It was just too much." –CCC Student

"Both Star and early college [are examples] of collective impact, without the collective impact backbone. ...They've just come about because of leadership in Chicago from the Mayor's Office, and the heads of CPS and CCC understanding the value of working toward shared goals, shared metrics and shared data." –CCC Staff

### GOALS: WITH OUR SUPPORT, MORE STUDENTS WILL...

- Increase trust and alignment between CPS and CCC
- Improve the college and career success rates of our shared students
- Enhance public confidence in both of our institutions to deliver on our promises to the young people of Chicago

### STRATEGIES: WE WILL...

- **Streamline the student enrollment experience at CCC**

Currently, CPS students have to overcome many process hurdles to enroll at one of the City Colleges. To create a seamless enrollment experience, we will begin by reviewing and revising CCC's enrollment procedures and policies with an eye toward improving clarity, transparency and ease-of-use. Once we have updated these procedures, we plan to educate CPS and CCC staff as well as our nonprofit partners so they are well-equipped to work with students. Concurrently, we will explore new models to guide and support students through the enrollment process, such as Daley College's partnership with feeder high schools.

- **Build a sustainable long-term infrastructure for the collaboration between CPS and CCC**

The work described in this roadmap is only possible with a strong partnership between our two institutions grounded in mutual trust and accountability. While we have collaborated on discrete initiatives and programs in the past, we are now committed to creating new and lasting mechanisms for working together to build one connected, coherent public education system to achieve our shared vision for Chicago students.

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## SOURCES

- <sup>i</sup> A pseudonym for a student we met while conducting the research that informed this roadmap.
- <sup>ii</sup> Education Strategy Group, AdvanceCTE and Council of Chief State School Officers, *Credential Currency: How States Can Identify and Promote Credentials of Value* (2018), [https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Credential\\_Currency\\_report.pdf](https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Credential_Currency_report.pdf).
- <sup>iii</sup> Carnevale, Anthony, Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl, *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*, <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/recovery-job-growth-and-education-requirements-through-2020/>.
- <sup>iv</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Measuring the value of education,” <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2018/data-on-display/education-pays.htm>.
- <sup>v</sup> CPS, “Mayor Emanuel and CPS Announce Record High Graduation Rate of 78.2 Percent,” [https://cps.edu/News/Press\\_releases/Pages/PR1\\_9\\_3\\_2018.aspx](https://cps.edu/News/Press_releases/Pages/PR1_9_3_2018.aspx).
- <sup>vi</sup> For the graduating class of 2009, 76 percent of students enrolled in a two- and/or four-year institution within six years of their high school graduation. UChicago Consortium on School Research, *Patterns of Two-Year and Four-Year College Enrollment Among Chicago Public Schools Graduates* (2017), <https://consortium-pub.uchicago.edu/publications/patterns-two-year-and-four-year-college-enrollment-among-chicago-public-schools>.
- <sup>vii</sup> 80% of CPS’ graduating class of 2015 who continued at a two-year postsecondary institution enrolled at CCC. UChicago Consortium on School Research (2017).
- <sup>viii</sup> CCC, “Mayor Emanuel and City Colleges of Chicago Announce Record High 22.9 Percent Graduation Rate,” <http://www.ccc.edu/news/Pages/Mayor-Emanuel-and-City-Colleges-of-Chicago-Announce-Record-High-22-9-Percent-Graduation-Rate.aspx>.
- <sup>ix</sup> University of Chicago Urban Labs, *Chicago College Success Landscape Scan Findings* (2019).
- <sup>x</sup> UChicago Consortium on School Research, *The Educational Attainment of Chicago Public Schools Students* (2017), <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/educational-attainment-chicago-public-schools-students-2017>.
- <sup>xi</sup> Remediation rate is based on SAT and placement exam scores for the 2016 incoming class of “traditional age” (18- and 19-year-old) credit students at CCC.
- <sup>xii</sup> Adelman, Clifford, *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion From High School Through College*, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED490195>.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Persistence rate for the 2016 incoming class of “traditional age” (18- and 19-year-old) credit students at CCC.
- <sup>xiv</sup> For example, African American and Latinx students in Chicago are still less likely than their peers to graduate from high school, enroll in a four-year college, and earn a bachelor's degree. See University of Chicago’s To & Through Project, <https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/research>.
- <sup>xv</sup> These are actual students we met while conducting the research that informed this roadmap. We have changed their names and removed any identifying information to preserve their anonymity.
- <sup>xvi</sup> CPS Five-year Vision: [https://cps.edu/About\\_CPS/vision/Documents/Vision19\\_Booklet\\_English.pdf](https://cps.edu/About_CPS/vision/Documents/Vision19_Booklet_English.pdf) (2019).
- <sup>xvii</sup> “Gateway” refers to the first credit-bearing courses required to enter into a postsecondary program of study.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University, *Early Momentum Metrics: Why They Matter for College Improvement* (2017), <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/early-momentum-metrics-college-improvement.html>.
- <sup>xix</sup> Analysis of CCC 2016 incoming class of “traditional age” (18 to 19 years old) students.
- <sup>xx</sup> According to a 2013 analysis, less than half of all CPS seniors—and just one third of African American and Latinx seniors—took a 4<sup>th</sup> year of math. UChicago Consortium on School Research, *The Challenge of Senior Year in Chicago Public Schools* (2013), <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/high-school-future-challenge-senior-year-chicago-public-schools>.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Transition courses are designed to help students who do not meet college readiness benchmarks in eleventh grade (e.g., on the SAT) to become college-ready in their senior year so they can avoid placement into pre-college (remedial) courses in college.
- <sup>xxii</sup> CPS, “More CPS Graduates Earn College and Career Credentials Than Ever Before,” [https://cps.edu/News/Press\\_releases/Pages/PR1\\_08\\_31\\_2018.aspx](https://cps.edu/News/Press_releases/Pages/PR1_08_31_2018.aspx).
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Adelman, Clifford, *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion From High School Through College*, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED490195>.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Analysis of CCC Star Scholarship application data.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Chicago Star Scholarship, <http://pages.ccc.edu/apply/star/>
- <sup>xxvi</sup> CPS, *College Enrollment Summaries*, <https://chooseyourfuture.cps.edu/research-and-reports/district-summary-reports/college-enrollment-summaries/>.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Analysis of CCC 2016 incoming class of “traditional age” (18 to 19 years old) degree-seeking students.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> University of Chicago Poverty Lab, “The University of Chicago Poverty Lab Finds Community College Program Significantly Improves Enrollment and Persistence,” [https://onemilliondegrees.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1\\_OMD-Press-Release\\_FINAL.pdf](https://onemilliondegrees.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1_OMD-Press-Release_FINAL.pdf).
- <sup>xxix</sup> MDRC, *Boosting College Success Among Men of Color* (2016), <https://www.mdrc.org/publication/boosting-college-success-among-men-color>; Institute for Higher Education Policy, *Supporting Men of Color Along the Educational Pipeline: Research and Practice* (2013), [http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/pcn\\_supportingmenofcolor.pdf](http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/pcn_supportingmenofcolor.pdf); and College Board, *The Educational Experience of Young Men of Color: A Review of Research, Pathways and Progress* (2011), <https://ciscentraltexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/EEYMC-ResearchReport.pdf>.
- <sup>xxx</sup> College Board (2011).

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> University of Chicago Urban Labs (2019).

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Analysis of CCC 2016 incoming class of “traditional age” (18-19 year-old) degree-seeking students.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> According to the *Chicago College Success Landscape Scan Findings* (2019), students with GPAs below 2.0 comprise roughly 25 percent of all CPS high schoolers, yet no college access providers offer supports of any kind to these students.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Jobs for the Future, *Building Student Momentum from High School into College* (2016), <https://www.iff.org/resources/building-student-momentum-high-school-college/>.

<sup>xl</sup> See The Chicagoland Workforce Funders Alliance Post-Secondary Counseling Working Group’s *Counselor Skills and Competencies Recommendations* (February 2019).

<sup>xli</sup> Analysis of CPS Naviance data.