Increasing 9th Grade Success and High School Graduation in Chicago

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Using research, data, and professional experience to organize high schools for improvement and improve student outcomes

Our Community:

- 15-20 Chicago public high schools in an NSI
- Chicago Public Schools
- Regional and national clients

Key Focus: 9th Grade Success
Understanding the Problem

Graduation rate for students entering Chicago high schools in 1999:

47%

The conversation about dropping out in 2005...

- Student background and prior performance
- At any time, for any reason

The Indicator: Ninth Grade On-Track

What is it?
A 9th grader is on-track to graduate if they have:

- At least 5 credits by the end of the year
- No more than one semester failure in a core class

Why is it important?

- 4 times more likely to graduate
- Lots of variation across schools

Source: UChicago Consortium on School Research The On-Track Indicator as a Predictor of High School Graduation (2005)
The Early Adopter: Hancock High School

- Neighborhood high school on the Southwest Side of Chicago

- Began work with a ~60% on-track rate
  - Research and data
  - Home visits
  - Grading policy adjustments
  - Highlighting bright spots
  - On-track coordinator

- Lasting structure: 9th Grade Success Team
The Strategy: 9th Grade Success Teams

- Dedicated 9th grade teachers
- Collaboration across departments
- Focused on the whole 9th grade cohort
- Collective efficacy
On-Track Rates at Hancock High School

Data Source: Chicago Public Schools: https://www.cps.edu/about/district-data/
On-Track and Graduation Rates at Hancock High School

Data Source: Chicago Public Schools: https://www.cps.edu/about/district-data/
On-Track and Graduation Rates at NCS Schools

Data Source: Chicago Public Schools: https://www.cps.edu/about/district-data/
The Results: A Strong Theory of Change

**Aim**

- By 2021
  - 57% Bs or Better for our least reached students

**Primary Drivers**

- High Functioning Success Teams
- Developmental Relationships
- Culturally Responsive Instruction
- Student Agency, Integrated Identity, and Competency
- Anti-Racist Educator Development

**Secondary Drivers**

**Change Ideas**
Going Deep: 9th Grade Success Teams

**Aim**

By 2021

57% Bs or Better for our least reached students

**Primary Drivers**

High Functioning Success Teams

- Analyze
- Adjust
- Act
Going Deep: 9th Grade Success Teams
Lessons Learned

Values & Beliefs

Systems & Structures

School Culture

Tools, Practices, & Interventions