



Office of Accountability Fact Sheet on the CPS Freshmen On-Track Rate

What is the difference between the 2015 method and the prior method?

Under both the 2015 method and the prior method, verified out-of-district transfers (e.g., students who move to another school district) are removed from the calculation. However, starting in 2015, CPS increased the rigor of reviewing transfer verification information to ensure accuracy. When transfer documentation was found to be invalid (e.g., improper code) or incomplete, the student was not counted as a verified transfer but was added back into the calculation. As a result, cohorts in years 2011-2015 are larger using the 2015 method.

What is a student's on-track status and why measure it?

The measurement of the on-track indicator is consistent across schools and looks at course grades and credits in the first year of high school. Freshmen who are designated as on-track are three and a half times more likely to graduate from high school in four years than students who are off-track¹. It can be calculated early in a student's high school career, yet it has been found to be highly correlated with future high school outcomes, including graduation.

Who is counted as on-track?

First-time freshman students are considered on-track at the end of their freshman year if they accumulated at least five course credits and failed no more than one semester course in a core subject (English, math, social science, or science) during the school year.

Who is a first-time ninth grader?

First-time 9th graders are students enrolled in 9th grade at the end of the school year that were not registered as 9th graders in Chicago Public Schools the previous school year.

Who is excluded from this calculation?

- Students attending charter schools
- CPS students attending non-CPS schools for which CPS pays
- Students attending correctional facility schools
- Students attending Options schools
- Students attending special education schools
- Students attending units that did not have ninth graders
- Verified student transfers out of CPS

How is the rate calculated?

The freshmen on-track rate is calculated by dividing the total number of first-time 9th graders who are on-track by the total number of first time 9th graders with a freshman on-track status.

¹ The freshman on-track indicator was originally developed by the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago. The Consortium report entitled "The On-Track Indicator as a Predictor of High School Graduation" (2005) provides more detailed information on this indicator. For more information on trends in this indicator in CPS please see the "CPS Freshman On-Track Rate Analysis: 1998-2007" (2008) report.



Office of Accountability Fact Sheet on the CPS Freshmen On-Track Rate

Example Calculation

School A had 672 ninth grade students enrolled during the 2006-07 school year. Twenty-seven of these were repeating the ninth grade. The number of first-time freshmen that would be included in the on-track calculation for school A would be:

$$\# \text{ of first-time freshmen} = 672 - 27 = 645$$

At the end of the 2006-07 school year at school A, 349 of these freshmen students have earned five credits and have failed no more than one semester course in a core subject. Seven students transferred out of CPS and were verified in a new school during their 2006-07 freshmen year. The on-track rate for school A would be:

$$\text{Freshmen On-Track Rate} = 349 / (645 - 7) = 349 / 638 = 54.7\%$$