



Part I: Cover Page – Organization Information

Organization Information		
Organization Name:	Network for College Success at the University of Chicago	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New or <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation Submission
Primary Contact:	Meghan Baer, Director of Development	
Email Address:	mbaer@uchicago.edu	
Phone Number:	773-702-3094	
Mailing Address:	969 East 60 th Street, Chicago, IL 60637	
Organization Category (select all that apply)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Network, Charter Management Organization or Charter School <input type="checkbox"/> Turnaround Leader Development Provider <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Management Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement Specialist		
Preferred Geographical Region(s) in Colorado to Work In (select all that apply)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metro Denver <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Front Range (Colorado Springs, Ft. Collins) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural / Mountain / Western Slope		

Indicate the school district(s) or BOCES your organization is willing and able to engage with:

District name	City	County name
ANY SCHOOL DISTRICT or BOCES	ALL	ALL

Part II: Management Partner Narrative Responses

a. Identify which of the following roles your organization can serve (list all that apply):

- Partial management: Instructional transformation
- Partial management: Talent development
- Partial management: Culture shift

b. Is your organization's primary interest and area of expertise in school-level management, district-level management, or both?

The Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS) has experience and interest in both school-level and district-level management. NCS provides professional learning, coaching, and data analysis that guide high school improvement efforts. We specialize in supporting both schools and districts to translate research into improved practice. Our work is steeped in capacity building, which means that the work is sustainable and persists after engagement with our services. We work ourselves out of a job.

NCS fills a distinct niche: designing and providing high-quality services that focus on adult professional development within and across high schools. We support leaders, beyond preparation, to implement effective practices and whole school change in their unique school contexts. NCS's comprehensive whole school model concentrates on developing adult leadership, high-functioning school teams, and school-wide systems that schools can use to solve any problem that they encounter. Our work is rooted in the research findings and reports of the [UChicago Consortium on School Research](#) and other national research, which identify the key factors in schools that lead to improved student outcomes. Our model engages district leaders, principals, teacher leaders, and counselors as professionals who—with ongoing professional development grounded in research and in data—can grow in their will, skill, and capacity to create and sustain thriving learning environments for adults and students.

NCS services are led by successful former school leaders and researchers who have been at the cutting edge of school improvement for more than a decade and have content area knowledge in science, social sciences, and English language arts. All services will be thoughtfully designed based on the salient factors that improve adult capacity in education, and purposefully aligned with the key principles of adult learning and change management.

District-Level Management

NCS can help district leaders develop and implement comprehensive plans that are focused on developing adult leadership, high-functioning teams, and systems, structures, and practices that significantly impact key student levers for high school success. Before we engage in strategic planning and management, NCS works with

district leaders to understand their particular context and current practice in order to meet their specific goals and needs. The NCS approach then helps districts map out a plan to build the capacity of leaders so they are steeped in research and using data for continuous improvement. This process will inform the content, resource allocation, and delivery of supports and activities. The end result will be a clear plan with goals, benchmarks, and outcomes that promotes adult learning and leads to system-level transformation.

School-Level Management

The NCS Whole School Improvement Model builds the capacity of school leaders to transform schools into focused, supportive, and data-driven learning environments that prepare all students for high school graduation and college success. Our model comprises professional development services, in addition to supports and resources, which can be applied school-wide and with targeted school teams.

Potential Focus Areas:

- Leadership development and change management
- Instructional improvement and teacher development
- On-track to graduation
- Postsecondary access and enrollment
- Data analysis, strategy, and use

Potential Formats:

- Professional development workshops (that incorporate adult learning principles)
- Job-embedded coaching
- Professional learning communities that meet over a school year

Our existing services—ranging from professional learning communities, quarterly sessions, and job-embedded coaching-- provide safe space and opportunity for leaders to engage with each other to identify an area of improvement, develop effective plans with relevant research and data, implement new practices, monitor progress, and make necessary adjustments along the way. This process creates the mechanism for lasting change and continuous improvement to occur. A key strategy in our work is to provide leaders with opportunities for open and honest reflection, shared learning, and collaborative problem solving. Moreover, NCS programming enables school leaders to develop a common vision and language around change management and school or system transformation.

Leadership Development

NCS will offer coaching to individual school leaders, including principals, assistant principals, and other administrators. Depending on the participant, his/her role, and a needs assessment, coaching may address instructional leadership, team leadership, communication, change management, teambuilding, time management, ethical leadership, talent development, resource management, and political mapping within the context of the specified service area. NCS utilizes the Blended Coaching model to engage

leaders in instructional and facilitative conversations that will help them identify and develop strategies and solutions for the problems they face in practice.

Instructional Improvement and Teacher Development

NCS provides customized, research-based professional development services focused on instructional improvement by helping districts and schools develop and sustain effective Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs). Comprising principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders, ILTs are charged with leading schools in implementing school-wide targeted instructional areas. ILTs also support teacher collaboration teams to improve classroom instruction by increasing rigor, student engagement, and learning. On the district and school levels, NCS services will help education leaders to develop the technical skills to support school-based ILTs. In schools, NCS will help ILTs facilitate professional learning cycles. In a professional learning cycle, these ILT members: 1) identify a targeted area of instruction across content areas to improve learning for all students; 2) examine student work and data to guide instruction and professional learning; 3) build capacity to use effective, research-based instructional practices; and 4) align resources toward efforts that most improve learning for all students. ILTs will also utilize learning cycles to develop, implement, adapt, and evaluate practices within teacher collaboration teams (TCTs). Professional development services in the form of cross-school networks or job-embedded coaching raise the capacity of ILTs leads to deepen proficiency in implementing professional learning cycles, engaging team members in collaborative problem solving, exploring change and leadership principles, and using data to inform practice.

On Track to Graduation

NCS is known nationally for developing and implementing professional services and supports on freshman success. NCS helps districts and schools to develop effective practices to increase ninth grade students' on-track to graduation rates. Freshman OnTrack¹ is important because there is a direct correlation between the number of core courses failed in freshman year and an increased rate of dropping out of high school. NCS professional development services will support district and school leaders to develop Freshman Success Teams with the goal of increasing freshman core course pass rates. Professional development sessions will include strategies for building school teams; identify methods for schools to track students at risk of not graduating, using data to monitor and support student progress, and developing academic and social interventions for struggling students. The success of the Freshman Success Teams has resulted in the development of Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Success Teams in NCS partner schools. NCS can provide professional development services to districts to scaffold the work of Freshman Success Teams into other high school grade levels to further increase graduation rates.

¹ Chicago Freshman OnTrack Definition: A student is considered "on-track to graduate" in Chicago Public Schools if he or she earns at least five full-year course credits (10 semester credits) and no more than one semester F in a core course (English, math, science, or social science) in the first year of high school. Students who are on-track at the end of 9th grade are three times more likely to graduate from high school than their off-track peers.

Postsecondary Access and Enrollment

NCS can support the district and/or schools to increase students' access, enrollment, and success in postsecondary education. Our goal is to embed a system in high schools that ensures all students, those traditionally targeted for college and those who might be otherwise overlooked, receive the necessary supports to access the best possible postsecondary options according to their qualifications, interests, and needs. On the school level, this service is geared toward counselors, helping them develop the systems, structures, and practices that will build a school-wide college-going culture. NCS professional development services will utilize the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model to orient counselors around: strengthening the foundation for their work; developing their management skills; building systems of accountability among themselves and their colleagues; and ensuring their delivery of the appropriate academic, social and emotional services to tiered groups of students.

Professional development services for the district and school may focus on: collective learning around accessing resources; learning and sharing strategies for engaging students; and effectively using data to track student progress through the college search, application, and enrollment processes.

Data Analysis, Strategy, and Use

NCS designs and delivers high-quality professional development services to education professionals in the use of data to inform decisions. We support leaders to engage in cycles of inquiry—to interrogate the multiple forms of data available to them, decide on a course of action, and to monitor and adjust that course of action in response to ongoing data. NCS utilizes a particular approach to data that underpins all of our efforts to build educator capacity at all levels to improve student learning and success. At the heart of this work is the understanding that education leaders are awash in data but have limited time, resources, and expertise to effectively harness that data to make strategic decisions about school policies and programs. In addition, schools often receive a wide range of directives (from Central Office, from researchers, from outside partners) about which data is important to monitor, what indicators are important to move, and what benchmarks are important to hit. NCS can provide analytic support to Colorado leaders to help them:

- Focus on indicators and outcomes that research indicates are important;
- Identify what data is important to collect and monitor in order to track progress on these indicators or outcomes over time; and
- Make plans for school improvement on these indicators, paying careful attention to differentiated strategies and/or benchmarks for different groups of students within the school.

c. How will you differentiate your services to meet the unique needs of schools and districts in Colorado, especially those with historically underserved students?

Prior to leading professional development or implementing services, the Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS) will work with the district and/or school to determine clear goals and objectives stemming from a needs assessment and identified project scope. NCS has an explicit and intentional focus on educational equity and so all services will incorporate an equity lens to better serve Colorado's historically underserved students. Professional development service objectives, outcomes, and materials are designed well in advance of the sessions and incorporate topics and needs observed in the field or explicitly articulated by the district or school leaders we serve. Both the content and processes of NCS's professional development service delivery are aligned with the research-based practices and principles that inform the state and district's intentional professional development standards. NCS will provide a copy of the professional development service plan and/or Facilitator's Guide to ensure activities align with district-wide priorities. Participants will receive explicit objectives and expected outcomes at the beginning of each session and will be asked to submit feedback at the end of each session.

NCS services will be designed and implemented in ways that:

- Utilize the latest research to promote knowledge and research-based practices;
- Incorporate actionable data analysis of trend and/or in-time data;
- Utilize visual supports—particularly PowerPoint presentations, worksheets, practice tools/protocols, and research articles—that promote learning, increase engagement, and improve the responsiveness of professional development service to participant needs;
- Incorporates adult learning principles: Ensure participants are engaged and active, discussing, critiquing, and applying what they learn through purposeful and carefully chosen activities that allow them to practice the professional behaviors they will adopt and apply back in their school settings. In the safe space of NCS professional development, participants are able to get immediate consultation and feedback from experts and their peers on their ideas, plans, strategies and personal efforts to apply new learning of improvement work;
- Provide opportunities for sustained learning with a plan that builds across sessions and addresses key topics, and contributes to the long-term professional development plans of the state, district, and/or school;
- Leverage the common features of various teams to provide opportunities for collaborative learning, sharing, and creation;
- Account for different learning styles of the participants and respect participants' prior experience, knowledge, and skills by making professional development service differentiated to their needs, being responsive to their questions and concerns, and offering appropriate leadership roles;

- Surface barriers to student success by closely examining their work and addressing the technical and adaptive challenges of radically shifting teaching and learning in this era of Colorado Core State Standards implementation;
- Promote access to and support for the effective use of relevant research and data: student work samples, student performance data reports, rubrics, research, and analysis to identify areas of need and measure progress; and
- Allow for open and honest reflection and communication.

All professional development sessions will be evaluated by the participants for quality implementation, alignment with district priorities, knowledge and practices learned, and the need for post-training support. NCS will review feedback to inform future professional development services and activities and make adjustments as needed. NCS can also offer post-training or follow-up supports to participants in the form of individualized or team coaching, educational resources, and technical assistance when needed.

d. When considering partnering with a school or district that you have not partnered with before, what would be the key aspects or conditions of an agreement you would need to have in place with the district (or authorizer) to make your school successful?

The Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS) works with school leaders who are interested in transforming their schools through professional learning, real-time and historical data, and relevant research. Prior to working with any district or school, NCS staff meets with principals and administrators to understand their particular school context and current practices to determine if the partnership is a good fit (NCS supports match the district or school's priorities and goals). We have learned from experience that NCS is most successful with schools and districts that:

- Are committed to the partnership at the unit-of-change level
- Understand the need for both technical and adaptive change

As the partner, NCS will develop a clear communications plan in collaboration with the school, district, and/or other key stakeholders to ensure the successful development and implementation of services. This plan may include, but is not limited to: planning meetings, service delivery dates, check-in meetings, assessment meetings, and virtual or printed communications (written scope of work with timeline, written professional development services plan, electronic mail, Zoom or Google Hangout, etc.), communications plans for families and community.

Prior to leading services, NCS will work with the district and/or school to determine clear goals and objectives stemming from a needs assessment and identified project scope. Professional development objectives, outcomes, and materials are designed in advance of the sessions and will incorporate topics and needs observed in the field or explicitly articulated by the district or school leaders being served. This process will

require frequent communication with the district or school leaders prior to providing NCS services. NCS will identify one or more contact persons from the school and establish a frequency for communication.

In addition, NCS will provide a copy of the professional development plan and/or Facilitator's Guide to key stakeholders to ensure services align with district-wide and/or priorities. Participants will receive explicit objectives and expected outcomes at the beginning of each session and will be asked to submit feedback at the end of each session. Participant feedback is a critical part of communication. NCS will utilize feedback to make adjustments to upcoming professional development services to ensure educators receive timely, relevant, and engaging content. Tools that will be used to evaluate the utility and quality of professional development include:

- Feedback forms completed after each professional development session
- Leadership and team performance rubrics to address the growth and progress
- Student achievement data (current and historical)

From time to time, NCS will collaborate with key stakeholders to co-facilitate professional development sessions to build educator capacity and sustainability to lead improvement work. This will require additional communication, in person and virtually.

In addition, NCS staff will work closely with the district and/or school to communicate to key stakeholders what improvements are happening and how those changes are facilitated and supported. NCS has experience and capacity to work closely in a collaborative way with stakeholders and ensure continuous and effective communication.

e. Describe your experience working with other third party providers to support coherent school and district improvement.

The Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS) is a trusted professional development provider, designing and implementing services for educators, schools, and districts locally and nationally. Almost every school and district with which we work has additional partners. We work towards clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and the alignment of all partners toward school/district goals.

NCS is prepared to support local collaborators to support our work in partner schools. The following highlights NCS's work history with outside agencies that reflect similar work requested in the RFI.

Out of State Networks of Schools

For over two years, NCS has provided professional learning, coaching, consultation, and data analysis to districts and networks of schools working with Stand for Children (in Oregon, Washington, Indiana, and Tennessee), the RISE Network (in Connecticut) and the CORE District (in California).

Stand for Children is a non-profit education advocacy organization focused on “ensuring all students receive a high quality, relevant education, especially those whose boundless potential is overlooked and under-tapped because of their skin color, zip code, first language, or disability” (from organization website). In partnership with Stand for Children, NCS provides school-based educators, coaches, and data strategists with school improvement training and on-site coaching and data services. NCS provides services for over 15 high schools with Stand for Children. All services are customized to meet the needs of educators and the students they serve.

The RISE Network’s mission is to “empower educators to achieve breakthrough results, helping all students realize and achieve their full potential” (from organization website). In partnership with RISE, NCS provides on-site services for five Connecticut high schools in four districts as well as support to RISE staff. Services primarily focused on building educator capacity to develop freshman success programs in schools.

CORE Districts comprises eight large school districts throughout California serving almost one million students. “Powered by data, innovation, research and continuous learning, CORE Districts are collaborating to solve inequities in our education systems to ensure that every student has what they need to thrive” (from organizational website). NCS services support CORE Districts to develop a freshman success program incorporating research and data.

NCS is also providing professional development, coaching, and addition supports to North Chicago Community Unified School District 187 (D187) for SY20. NCS Coaches are partnering with school leaders on-site for coaching and consultation on freshman success strategies. North Chicago educators are receiving seven days of professional development through the NCS [National Freshman Success Institute](#).

NCS is currently in conversation to provide professional development services to Newark, New Jersey and Omaha, Nebraska school districts.

Local Education Non-Profit Organizations

NCS also has strong working relationships with local and national non-profit organizations similarly working to improve school and student outcomes, including: Youth Guidance, iMentor, OneGoal, Umoja, One Million Degrees, and the Surge Institute. NCS collaborates with these non-profit organizations to align work so that results are optimized.

f. Describe your experience, if any, working with Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) or alternative high schools.

This is not a specialized competence of the Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS). However, the skills we support, e.g. interrogating data to determine root causes and designing interventions, can be applied to any school context.

g. Describe your experience, if any, working with online schools.

The Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS) has no experience working with online schools.

Part III: Capacity

Does your organization currently have the capacity to serve additional schools and districts in Colorado? If yes, indicate how many new schools or districts your current capacity would allow for. If no, explain what additional capacity you would need to put in place, and any other constraints such as timelines or minimum participating schools or districts.

Yes, the Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS) has the capacity to serve additional schools and districts in Colorado. Currently, NCS can expand to serve six to eight more districts and/or schools. NCS employs experts in professional learning and education as facilitators of professional development and as Coaches. NCS Coaches have been successful in the classroom and/or as school leaders and are given the professional learning necessary to translate that success into capacity building.

NCS is committed to building staff capacity so that our organization can effectively provide professional development services to districts and schools. The professional development services provided to schools will always be grounded in the most up-to-date and relevant research on school improvement. As a professional learning organization, we ensure that our staff is trained in the most relevant and effective methods available. NCS invests heavily in the learning of our team.

All NCS staff are trained in the National School Reform Initiative's Facilitative Leadership Institute (formerly called Critical Friends Group). This training provides useful tools that support collaborative problem-solving and productive methods for looking at data and student work to improve teaching and learning. As a result, NCS now designs and facilitates the national Leading Professional Learning Communities workshop for district and school leaders annually in Chicago. This training provides extremely useful tools that support collaborative problem solving and productive methods for looking at data and student work to improve teaching and learning.

Each year, NCS also facilitates the seven-day [National Freshman Success Institute](#) for over 100 educators from across the country. Participants learn the latest research and data on the importance of freshman year and develop action plans to proactively support students. This is a powerful and experiential learning experience and is considered the hallmark of NCS professional services to schools and districts nationally.

NCS Coaches also receive extensive training in executive leadership coaching using the Blended Coaching model, which is supplemented by the Adaptive Leadership model and training by Elena Aguilar (author of *The Art of Coaching Teams* and *Onward*). NCS staff participates in equity-based trainings to increase our capacity to bring equitable practices into schools and districts, promoting success for our least-reached students. To date, ten NCS team members have attended the weeklong San Francisco Coalition for Essential Small Schools' Equity-Based iGroup Facilitator training.

The head NCS Literacy Coach participated in the Leadership Institute in Reading Apprenticeship (LIRA) and other NCS instructional staff participated in WestEd's Reading Apprenticeship training to improve adolescent literacy in schools.

NCS staff are in a continuous process of professional development and thoughtful study. As a result, our staff members are able to contribute to the growing field of research through published papers and conference presentations. In 2018, Eliza Moeller, NCS Director of Research and Continuous Improvement, co-authored the [Practice-Driven Data Paper](#) with researchers at the UChicago Consortium. This year, two NCS staff members presented at separate panel sessions during the 2019 Carnegie Foundation Summit on Improvement in Education. The panel topics were, "Turning postsecondary transitions and aspirations into success using data systems and routines," and "Practice-driven data in Chicago." As we look to the future, NCS will continue to prioritize the learning and development of our staff to ensure that we can demonstrate the best methods to build the capacity of every school leader who partners with us.

District-Level Capacity

Since 2011, NCS has provided performance management and professional learning to Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Central Office and Networks (sub-district management units) leaders to transform high schools across the city: to improve instruction, increase graduation rates, and support high levels of college enrollment and success for all students.

Part IV: Evidence of Track Record of Improved Student and School Outcomes

- a. Describe your organization's track record in dramatically improving schools or districts and radically increasing outcomes for targeted groups of students. Include a description of the criteria and the data that you use to determine the impact of your work. Highlight the context and location of where this work has occurred.**

Established in 2006, the Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS) has grown at a pace and scale that enables our staff to comprehensively serve District 299, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) district, and schools with substantive and quality professional development services. NCS now has the capacity to provide services to district and schools nationwide. NCS currently collaborates with CPS leaders to transform high schools across the city to improve instruction, increase graduation rates, and support high levels of postsecondary enrollment and success for all students. NCS's track record of working on the ground in schools, as well as the extensive relationships, experience, and expertise of NCS staff, give the organization a deep and real-time understanding of state and district priorities, structures, complexities, strengths, and needs. This knowledge has developed NCS's credibility, respect, and trust throughout Chicago and nationally, and distinguishes us as a premier organization in the country to provide quality professional development services and supports to districts, schools, and educators.

Over the past thirteen years, NCS has purposefully expanded our Whole School Improvement Model to tackle new layers of work with districts and schools receiving professional development services. Our strategy balances the push toward necessary change while scaffolding the readiness and resources that enable educators to fully engage in change processes. This has allowed reforms to take hold and yield dramatic results. This deepening of NCS supports, from school-based work to district-level professional development, was systematic and organic, providing just-in-time tools and learning for educators as they deepened their understanding of new priorities and policies, the potential obstacles to implementation, and the skills, resources, and supports necessary to address them.

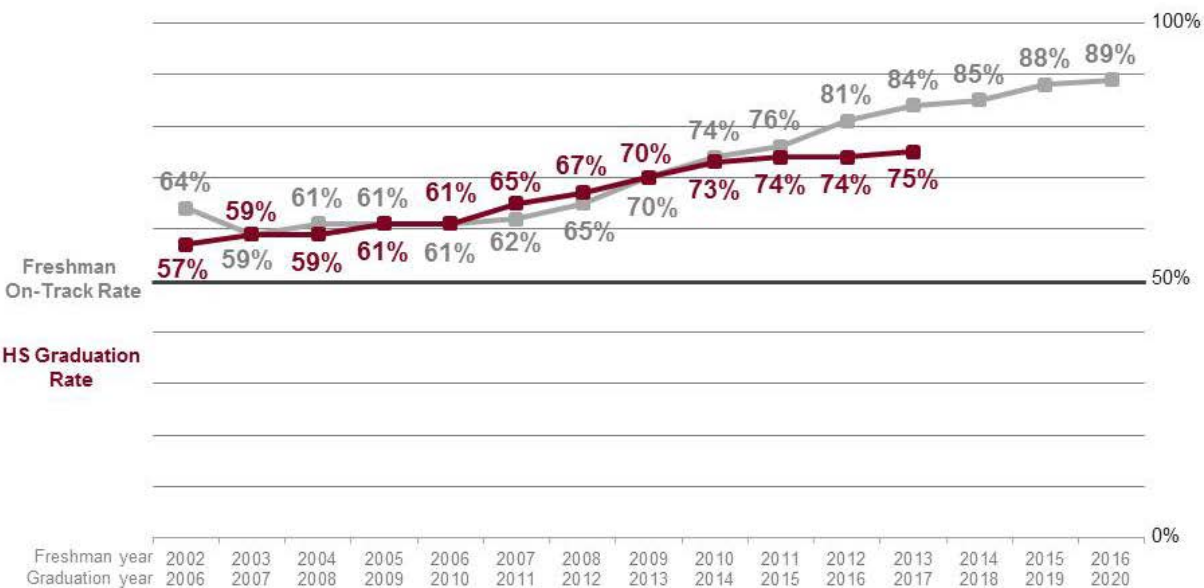
Results

Chicago Public Schools (CPS), with the support of NCS, has made impressive and unprecedented gains in Freshman On-Track and subsequently high school graduation rates over the last decade. High school graduation is the key achievement of late adolescence and predicts everything from health outcomes to incarceration and lifetime earnings. The first, critical step in the process of increasing graduation numbers was to successfully transition freshmen into high school by monitoring their On-Track rates. A student is on track in freshman year if he or she earns at least five credits and no more than one "F" per semester in any core course. The UChicago Consortium has found that

students who are on track at the end of 9th grade are three and a half times more likely to graduate from high school than their peers who are off track.

The freshman success work solved what was once considered an intractable problem in Chicago: the high-school dropout crisis. In 2007, the city’s average On-Track rate was 61 percent. In 2018, the rate reached 85 percent. As more students succeeded in freshman year, they continued their trajectory through high school. In 2007, the city’s high school graduation rate was 57 percent. In 2018, the rate reached 76 percent. These remarkable increases are not the result of a new program or curriculum, nor an influx of funds or personnel. In fact, these increases happened during one of the most unstable and tumultuous times in Chicago Public Schools’ history.

Rather, by working with public school professionals and helping them implement effective practice and form high functioning teams, NCS leveraged the public funds in the school budgets and created sustainable improvements. Equipped with the right research, data, resources, and training, schools effectively developed systems and structures to support student success. At the district level, NCS designed and facilitated citywide trainings for educators to improve student academic performance, and our experienced coaches partnered with CPS to help leaders focus on the research on what matters for high school improvement and facilitated reflection on what structures and supports would best reinforce the city’s schools. Now, most schools in the city have on-track rates in the 90s, which will result in thousands of more high school graduates in the coming years. NCS is a nationally-recognized leading provider of Freshman OnTrack professional learning and data analysis.



Sources: Nagaoka, J., & Healey, K. (2016). *The educational attainment of Chicago Public Schools students, 2015: A focus on four-year degrees*. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. Updated with data from the To&Through Online Tool: toandthrough.uchicago.edu/tool
Please note that students who attend charter schools are not included in the on-track rate but are included in the graduation rate.

Changed Educator Behaviors

Surveys and rubrics that measure the impact of NCS on the behaviors, practices and capacity of principals and school leaders also indicate that: principals are supporting and distributing leadership to teachers and teams working to improve student outcomes; Instructional Leadership Teams are proficient or high functioning; and college counselors and freshman teams are increasingly capable of using data to guide their practice. These changes are the prerequisites for sustained improvements in student outcomes.

Client Satisfaction

In 2017-18, 100% of NCS partner school educators agreed or strongly agreed that NCS professional learning helped them work toward an honest and open reflection of practice. Ninety-nine percent of educators agreed or strongly agreed that NCS professional learning challenged them to learn from other colleagues' and/or schools' practice. Additionally, 98% of educators agreed or strongly agreed that NCS professional learning challenged them to continuously improve their individual and/or school practice over time.

On average, over 78% of participants rated NCS professional development as the best or among the best they have attended. The data suggest that our professional development is impacting school and educator practice. In addition, coaches observe behavioral changes in educators, such as: increased and consistent use of in-time data; improved ability and willingness to reflect on their practice; increased opportunities to leverage student voice; improved facilitation, problem-solving, and leadership skills; and increased sense of responsibility and self-efficacy regarding improving student outcomes.

The overwhelming majority of NCS partner school educators believe that our 2017-18 professional development service was useful and relevant to their improvement work in leading school change. The following quotes from principals, teachers, and counselors and College & Career Coaches indicate the value of our professional development services:

"I used to think that teachers were the catalyst in driving change, now I know more than ever, that they are. I want a school full of coaches because coaches develop talent."

"My NCS Coach is amazing! She has always been so warm and welcoming with the counseling department at our school. She provides valuable resources that we can use during our department meetings and Postsecondary Leadership Team meetings to promote reflective conversations. She has helped us evaluate our department, our work, and plan for areas that need improvement."

“During our coaching sessions, my NCS Coach challenges my thinking, listens to me, and empowers me. She encourages and supports me in my practice. In addition, she provides constructive criticism that helps me to be a better facilitator. She motivates me to not give up when I feel overwhelmed by all of my job responsibilities.”

b. Self-assess the evidence base for the interventions your organization provides using the following Evidence-Based Intervention (EBI) tiers as outlined in ESSA. Which EBI tier best describes your work, and why?

The Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS) is best described by the Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale) Evidence-Based Intervention. We have a well-defined logic model that is supported by the research of the UChicago Consortium and we are currently in progress towards an external evaluation. Our logic model is steeped in:

- Research on what matters most for student success from the UChicago Consortium on School Research and other prominent education research
- In-time data to guide decision-making
- Thirteen years of organizational experience in supporting school improvement across many contexts
- Adult learning principles and research-based professional development frameworks

Please see the attached NCS Logic Model to examine our inputs, outputs, and educator and student outcomes. The NCS Logic Model has proven effective: our professional services and supports have resulted in sustained school improvement, increased educator capacity, and improved student outcomes for over a decade. Please see the Results section above for more details.

The logic model stems from the NCS Guiding Principles, which frame all of our professional services:

- Challenging leaders to create the conditions to interrupt inequities in schools and districts is vital to transforming schools.
- Students become independent learners when teachers challenge and develop their intellectual capacity, explicitly grow their academic mindsets and non-cognitive skills, and engage them in building knowledge and competencies.
- School-based leaders drive transformation in schools. Leveraging and building their capacity as leaders is an essential lever for school improvement.
- Educators have the capacity to solve their own problems when they have actionable data, research-based strategies, collaborative teams, and professional trust.

- School improvement happens when adults make their practice public and critically examine their work collaboratively. Trust is essential to adults' willingness to engage in this process.
- Data is a compelling tool when it empowers practitioners to surface inequities, trace causes, seek solutions, and guide change. Data can be destructive when it is only used to judge and punish.

Program Evaluation

The two NCS Directors of Continuous Improvement (Quinton Keith and Eliza Moeller) are currently working with an external evaluation consultant, Outlier Research and Evaluation, to formulate new evaluation methods and measures to better determine the impact of our work for SY20 and SY21. This will result in an official evaluation of NCS services and provide qualitative evidence of NCS's ability to increase educator capacity. Additionally, as part of the Networks for School Improvement initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we are administering a Network Health Survey to our partner schools to provide more clarity on the overall effect of our coaching on educator practice. The survey was piloted last year, with plans for broader implementation this year.

Current Evaluation Methods

NCS Coaches and the Directors of Continuous Improvement use internally-developed tools identify each school's progress and areas in need of improvement, and the impact our programs have on participants. The tools include: 1) feedback surveys administered to participants after each professional learning to determine quality of implementation, knowledge and practices learned, and the need for post-training support, 2) research-based assessment tools monitoring development of the individual/team/school, and 3) an annual survey to determine the effectiveness of NCS's supports to improve the systems, structures, and leadership skills that enable schools to successfully manage improvement efforts.

The indicators NCS uses to measure program success are validated by research as the key levers for improving supportive conditions in high schools and student outcomes. For instance, NCS aligns our professional learning goals for principals to the CPS Principal Competencies to create clear, intentional, and relevant indicators of success. The How Close Are We? Assessment used to rate the effectiveness Instructional Leadership Teams was developed based on the well-researched and evidence-based Targeted Leadership Consulting Framework. For over two decades, Targeted Leadership Consulting has supported dramatic improvements in student learning across several schools and school districts across the country. The Postsecondary Success Framework was developed by NCS staff based on research from the UChicago Consortium, the National Association of College Admissions, and the American School Counselors Association. The research-based assessment tools are for school teams to assess their progress and determine areas in need of improvement; they are not intended to be used as part of an accountability or ratings evaluation.



The ultimate measure of our success is the success of the young people in our schools, although we do not work directly with them. NCS works with schools to capture real-time student data, including: On-Track to Graduation, Grade Point Averages, College Application and Enrollment rates, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion, and attendance. These data are reviewed and discussed during professional learning and/ coaching sessions to set goals and next steps, and to provide additional supports to students when needed. NCS tracks student outcomes that the UChicago Consortium and other prominent education researchers have identified as critical indicators for student success in high school and college.

Part V: References

For management partners, turnaround leader development providers and stakeholder engagement specialists, submit the name and contact information for the last three schools or districts your organization contracted with.

1. Toya Fick

Executive Director
Stand for Children – Oregon
2121 SW Broadway #111, Portland, OR 97201
800-663-4032
tfick@stand.org

2. Emily Pallin

Director
Connecticut RISE Network, Inc.
700 State Street, Suite 301, New Haven, CT 06511
203-535-0320
epallin@ctrise.org

3. Dr. Kevin Gallick

Principal
George Washington High School, Chicago Public Schools (District 299)
3535 East 114th Street, Chicago, IL 606017
773-535-5725
kjgallick@cps.edu

Network for College Success at the University of Chicago: Logic Model

The Network for College Success at the University of Chicago (NCS) fills a distinct niche: designing and providing high-quality services that focus on adult professional development within and across high schools and districts. We support leaders, beyond preparation, to implement effective practices and whole school change in their unique school or district contexts. Our work is rooted in the research findings and reports of the UChicago Consortium on School Research and other national research, which identify the key factors in schools that lead to improved student outcomes. Our model engages district leaders, principals, teacher leaders, and counselors as professionals who—with ongoing professional development grounded in research and in data—can grow in their will, skill, and capacity to create and sustain thriving learning environments for adults and students.

