

EPIC

ACADEMY

DARE TO
IMAGINE
PREPARE
TO SUCCEED



EPIC ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL
2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT



EPIC Academy is in “Excellent Standing” after Receiving Level 1+ Rating from Chicago Public Schools

In our community, 96% of our students are low income, 23% have special education needs, and 15% are actively learning English as a second language. We, at EPIC, see these challenges as opportunities to build belief and catapult our students to their success.



96%

Low Income Students



23%

Special Education Needs



15%

Actively Learning English

AT EPIC, WE INSPIRE AND EQUIP EVERY STUDENT TO BUILD A PATH TO COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS.

Four years ago, EPIC Academy was at a crossroads. We were on the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) warning-to-close list and our students were not making the academic progress that we knew possible. We created a 5-year strategic plan with ambitious goals, strategies, and concrete action steps. Today EPIC Academy has improved in every facet of CPS' evaluation system.

The student success measures that drove our dramatic increase in performance over the past 4 years include:



Students earning college credits while still enrolled at EPIC increased from 0% to 33%



9th graders on-track for graduation (1 semester F or less) increased from 76% to 92%



Dropout rate decreased from 6.7% to 2.1%



ACT scores increased from 16.1 to 17.6

73%

College enrollment increased from 51% to 73%

TOP 25% among CPS

51%



1.9 ACT

ACT growth

Our students scored 1.9 ACT points higher than CPS expected our students to achieve based on each of their 7th grade test scores. EPIC ranked 14th out of 132 Chicago high schools in this area, outperforming many well-known selective enrollment high schools.

TOP 10% among CPS



Career Intensives

Chrisford's journey as a Legend started out as a rocky one. In his first couple of months as a high school freshman he did not take academics very seriously. In fact, he was not thrilled about the idea of even attending EPIC and the lack of dedication showed. Over time, however, Chrisford began taking a vested interest in his classes and his future. His whole mindset began to change. "I remember my first career intensive was interesting for me because I experienced an actual workplace at such a young age. It really opened my eyes and I thought 'This could be me in five or six years.'" EPIC's Career Intensives are only week-long exploratory courses, but to Chrisford, they have truly made a life-long impact. He now appreciates having been thrown into new environments and exposed to career professionals from backgrounds different than his. "These career intensives have been so good for me, not just for searching for a new career, but I feel like before them my vision was so narrow. But now, starting my senior year, I know that I am going to college so I'm really thinking about what careers are out there for me." Chrisford is eager to begin the next chapter of his academic career as he applies to selective universities such as Harvard and Northwestern.



I REMEMBER MY FIRST CAREER INTENSIVE WAS INTERESTING BECAUSE I THOUGHT 'THIS COULD BE ME IN FIVE OR SIX YEARS.'



BECAUSE OF EPIC, I KNOW IF I WANT TO BE SOMEONE IN LIFE, I NEED TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL, THEN FROM COLLEGE.

College Enrollment

Having followed in her sister's footsteps, **Stefanie** was ready to start her freshman year at EPIC. She was eager to see, for herself, how she would like the school's environment, her classmates and the curriculum. She also felt added pressure, however, because, like many students entering EPIC, her native language was not English. Despite having to actively learn the English language that first year at EPIC, Stefanie adjusted to and excelled in academics. Most importantly, however, she soon discovered just how much her teachers expected from her and believed in her capabilities. "At first I didn't have any goals for myself... At all. I didn't even know if I wanted to go to college. Since starting my College & Career Skills class, it has taught me that if I don't go to college I may not be able to financially support myself and my family the way that I would like to, which is everything for me. So I started looking into careers and setting goals for myself." CCS helps students, from freshman through junior year, identify and prepare for college applications and best-fit college selection. Stefanie really attributes a lot of these goals and her current aspirations to her CCS course. The knowledge she gained was irreplaceable and put her hopes and dreams into perspective. "I know if I want to be someone in life, I need to first graduate from high school, then from college, and get my degree. If it weren't for EPIC, I wouldn't know about all of the careers I know about and gained all of that experience in my three years of CCS class." With the knowledge and, most importantly, confidence Stefanie gained during her time as an EPIC legend she will study to become a forensic scientist and continue striving to achieve her dreams. Stefanie has already been accepted to top notch universities such as the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Michigan State. She is also awaiting decisions from selective schools such as Northwestern University and the University of Chicago.

Summer Dual Enrollment

Now an EPIC senior, **Jesica** recalls her participation with the summer dual enrollment program with the City Colleges of Chicago as a surprising, yet positive experience. At the outset, English 101 at Harold Washington College did not pique Jesica's interest but soon, she found herself excited to not only attend, but participate in class. "I knew that taking this class could help bring down college expenses so I decided to take advantage of the opportunity but, honestly, I didn't expect to enjoy it all as much as I did." Each day of class, she embarked on a new academic journey. Jesica was challenged in ways she never thought possible, built connections with her college classmates and gained a new mentor in her English professor. With a college course under her belt, Jesica realized just how well EPIC had prepared her for the next step. "By taking this class, I have gotten a taste of what it'll be like in college. I'm looking forward to my freshman year once I graduate from EPIC." The summer course certainly saved Jesica hundreds of dollars towards school expenses, but the confidence gained through her time in the summer dual enrollment program is priceless.



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BY TAKING THIS CLASS, I HAVE GOTTEN A TASTE OF WHAT IT'LL BE LIKE IN COLLEGE AFTER I GRADUATE FROM EPIC AND I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.



Test Score Improvement

Despite **Trayvion's** profound observations and insightful mind, early on in his journey at EPIC Academy, he did not believe in himself or his potential to be great. He recalls the important lessons he learned after overcoming the behavioral difficulties he often had during that first year of high school. "My freshman year was filled with ups and downs. I always asked myself 'Who do I want to be?' and 'How will I meet my goals?' because I struggled with the belief that I could achieve success." With the help of his supportive teachers & classmates, Trayvion's whole mindset soon changed for the better and the improvements showed. Judging from standardized test scores received while in elementary school, Trayvion was projected to score only a 13 on his ACT. He was determined to beat that projection, however. "I decided early on that I wouldn't take my education at EPIC for granted, so I worked hard in school and scored a 20 on the ACT. When I earned that high test score, it changed me. I stepped up to the plate and showed myself that I am ready for college." Against all odds, Trayvion pushed himself to be his best self and that hard work paid off. In the fall, he will attend Northeastern Illinois University and hopes to someday work in politics.

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I DECIDED EARLY ON THAT I WOULDN'T TAKE MY EDUCATION AT EPIC FOR GRANTED, SO I WORKED HARD IN SCHOOL AND SCORED A 20 ON THE ACT.



Message from Executive Director & Board President



Dear Friends,

We are so happy to share with you the excitement of our EPIC 1+ Rating! This achievement was not an overnight success. Four years ago, our Leadership and Board created a 5-year strategic plan with ambitious goals, strategies, and concrete action steps. We adjusted strategies that were not working and worked to better those that showed promise.

Over the past few years, our students have continually made academic gains that have put themselves, and EPIC Academy, on the map. With students gaining more and more confidence that college success is possible, last year, of our seniors were accepted to colleges at or above their academic profiles and earned a record \$9.3 million dollars in scholarships. College enrollment increased from 51% to 73% last year which ranked us 27th out of 130 schools in Chicago and, in overall academic achievement, EPIC ranked 14th out of 130 schools. This rising tide of achievement continues to increase the number of EPIC seniors attending and persisting through college.

While we enthusiastically celebrate these results, we know that we must continue to guide our students to even greater levels of achievement. Thanks to your investment in our programs, we look forward to continuing our partnership that dares our students to imagine and prepares them to succeed.

To all our supporters who believe in the possibility for our young people to grow, improve and lead, we thank you.

With gratitude,
Matthew King

Executive Director, Principal, & Co-founder

Message from Board President



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank you for taking the time to learn more about EPIC Academy. We are proud of our students, staff and families for their hard work and dedication to creating and sustaining a school that provides a great education to every student that walks through our doors. We believe, and continue to prove, that every student has the potential to change the world- to be EPIC.

Our school has achieved so much since opening our doors years ago and we know that much of what we have accomplished would not have been possible without the continued support of people like you. Through monetary donations (which we always appreciate), but also through getting involved in education opportunities like Career Intensives or joining us for our annual Dare to Imagine Dinner, you have been advocates for our students and the South Chicago community.

It is an honor and a privilege watching our students thrive in challenging environments and defy the odds each and every day. We are witnesses to the very special impact EPIC Academy has had on so many young people in Chicago. I encourage you to join us on campus, and see for yourself!

All the best,
Joshua Milberg

President, EPIC Academy Board of Trustees

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Executive Director

Financial Statements

EPIC Academy Statement of Financial Position

Assets		Liabilities and Net Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$2,270,803	Current Liabilities	\$762,369
Other Current Assets	340,512	Long Term Liabilities	\$ -
Total Current Assets	2,611,315	Net Assets	
Property and Equipment	1,310,558	Unrestricted Net Assets	\$2,059,651
Accumulated Depreciation: Less	(1,089,562)	Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	10,291
Total Fixed Assets: Net	220,996	Total Net Assets	2,069,942
Total Assets	\$2,832,311	Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,832,311

EPIC Academy Statement of Activities

Sources	2016	2015	Uses	2016	2015
CPS	\$5,142,720	\$5,056,750	Instructional Services	\$5,028,716	\$4,979,813
Private Funding	173,313	200,408	Administration	1,043,537	948,586
Student Fees	52,683	48,452	Development	95,276	114,931
In-Kind Contributions	747,587	735,396	Total Uses	\$6,043,330	\$6,167,529
Misc Revenues	11,517	14,763			
Total Sources	\$6,076,366	\$6,122,137			

Change in Net Assets	2016	2015
Net Assets Beginning of Year	\$1,991,135	\$2,082,298
Net Assets End of Year	2,069,942	1,991,135

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING EPIC ACADEMY

\$5,000-\$25,000

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