

From dreams to reality...



the catalyst
schools



ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013

A bright blue sky with white clouds on the left side and sun rays. The text is written in a white, elegant cursive font.

...where futures begin

The answer is in our

outcomes

When Catalyst was founded in 2006, our goal was to prepare our graduates to succeed in high school and become ready for college and career. Catalyst is doing something that statistically defies the less than 50% high school graduation rate in the neighborhoods we serve: thus far, 90% of students who graduate from Catalyst also graduate from high school. Not only that, but 15% of our alumni currently attend CPS select enrollment schools - despite a poverty rate exceeding 95%, and nearly 20% of the students in one of our schools facing homelessness or serious transition.

The University of Chicago's Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics, James Heckman, has calculated that if just one year's high school dropouts could be converted to high school graduates, Illinois households would have an additional \$11 billion in accumulated wealth over the lifetime of the students from that one graduating class. Further, Heckman determined that a 5% increase in male high school graduation rates is estimated to save Illinois \$263 million in annual incarceration costs and crime-related expenditures.

Attacking the persistent problems of poverty and drop-out rates is extremely challenging. Yet, we've learned the pathway to the outcome we're all after is really quite simple: establish the relationships, support system, and academic foundation for a young person to navigate into and out of a good high school that grants them additional opportunity, and their lives will radically improve for the better - and thus follows, the quality of life in our great city.

Catalyst was founded on a simple belief: that positive adult relationships, a disciplined, structured environment, a spirit of reverence and respect for the dignity of each person, and an educational model that focuses on growth - is one solution. That is the gift we bring to public education. Does it work? The answer is in our outcomes.

- Gordon Hannon, CEO



THE Problem

Of 100 Chicago public high school freshmen, only eight earn a bachelor's degree by their mid-20's.

A dropout costs the nation more than \$300,000.00 in his or her working years compared with a high school graduate, in lost tax revenues; dropouts pay less in taxes because they earn less." – Chicago Tribune, Oct. 13, 2013

In the neighborhoods in which Catalyst Schools are located, the percent of neighborhood population with high school degrees: 39% North Lawndale, 47% Austin, and 50% Chicago Lawn. - 2010 U.S. Census

The Catalyst Way



PHILOSOPHY

REVERENCE and RESPECT for each student as a unique person is critical to Catalyst's success. We foster respectful relationships as a key to building a mutually supportive community that sets high expectations and demands mutual responsibility.

The GOLDEN RULE is the foundation at the Catalyst Schools. By internalizing the demand of the Golden Rule, that we treat one another as we would like to be treated, we join together to promote justice and peace.

MISSION

We believe every child possesses inherent value and potential regardless of background, educational level, or life circumstances. We create agents of change in society by showing profound respect for students, and by joining with their families and communities to foster each scholar's growth.

THE VISION FOR A CATALYST GRADUATE

Catalyst graduates will be young men and women of character and class who recognize their own value, who are academically, socially, and emotionally prepared to succeed in private, charter, or selective enrollment high schools and who envision college graduation as part of their development in life.



A Solution

Every year that a child stays in school reduces his or her statistical risk of being involved in violent crime.

90% of Catalyst graduates have graduated from high school.

99% of Catalyst graduates in the last four years are in high school.

REVERENCE AND RESPECT

THE CATALYST IDENTITY

We serve children living in communities challenged by the effects of discrimination and economic poverty. We understand that each of the communities in which we serve is blessed with incredible gifts and whose assets, culture, and heritage hold the promise of a great future. Catalyst helps unlock the gift that is within each child by addressing the whole child: academic, social, emotional, and psychological realities that make each person real.

Catalyst is rooted in the educational philosophy of the 330 year old tradition of the De La Salle Christian Brothers.

We value family because home is the context in which each child grows and develops. Parental involvement in the school is welcome, encouraged, and needed for a child to achieve full potential.

At Catalyst, the relationship between a teacher and a student is the key to building trust, love, and the creation of a sacred space where teaching and learning can happen.

CORE VALUES

Four core values guide the Catalyst Schools: RIGOR, RESULTS, RELATIONSHIP, HOPE. These values form the cornerstone on which our values-based culture is built.



A Teacher's Passion

An Interview with Jessica Knight, 5th Grade Teacher at Catalyst Circle Rock

How would you articulate the mission of Catalyst?

I think our mission is to craft responsible, loving, intellectual citizens who are able to push past difficulties they are facing in life. We need to provide our children the strength and nurturing it takes to do that. It is a dream of mine to watch our scholars develop into people who can then nourish others.

What drew you to Catalyst?

I taught on the West Side for two years before I found Catalyst. I love the West Side of Chicago; there is a vibrant culture. The families that I have met are wholesome, and they strive for excellence, especially for their scholars. It is also a place where some students are really struggling, and I find that teaching is social work, it's nursing, and it's also mission work. I feel a calling for all of these components when I am here and I try to fulfill these roles.

Why do you stay at Catalyst?

My scholars are number one. I now have three generations of classes that I have taught and loved. Also, our team is strong, and we are a united front. We have incredible leadership that draws us together and everyone in their position is so dedicated; it feels like we are flying.

Where would you like to see Catalyst in five years?

I'd love to see the same incredible teachers empowering our children and making our school a career path. I'd like to see scholars going to high school, graduating and coming back with success stories of how they're impacting the world. I'd love our leadership to stay consistent and continue to watch our impact on scholar's lives.





The potential is endless. I had a scholar come to our school last year reading at a kindergarten level. He struggled to feel safe at school because for so many years he just got pushed from grade to grade. With the appropriate accommodations, he is the most joyful, loving scholar, and he has a hunger to learn. To watch this young man soar now that he is getting the services he needs is incredibly inspiring and humbling. Honestly, I think the potential is endless for our scholars if they put their minds to greatness and have the right support at home and school.

What potential do you see in our Catalyst students?

It's been an incredible year for the staff. Every classroom is on. We have a wonderfully positive dynamic in the hallways, and teachers are actively complimenting one another's classes. We have 8th graders who are standing up to become leaders of our school. This year, I've seen a change in our school community. We have an "all hands on deck" mentality; it is powerful.

How is this school year going?

This is my school - I found it and it found me - that's how I feel. I taught in another place, and it was a wonderful building. When you find a place where you feel called to be and you realize you have the potential to change lives, it is immense and wonderful.

Anything else?

This is my school -

*I found it
and it found me.*



A Parent's Desire

An Interview with Marvel Davis, Parent of Catalyst Howland Scholar

My name is Marvel Davis. I have two children, a 6th grader and an 8th grader here. My wife found Catalyst after doing her research when our last school closed. I was actually against bringing my children here initially because change is difficult. I came here looking to say “this is bad” or “that is bad”. However, when I met the principal and the staff I could see that the staff genuinely love the kids and my guard went down.

How has the experience been so far for your children?

It was rocky at first because the system they came from was lackadaisical, however they have really adapted to Catalyst and they like the rules and discipline. There are high expectations here, and a real sense of sincerity. That is a great thing for the neighborhood.

Do you feel welcome here as a parent?

It takes both parties to get your kids through: you educate them but we have to teach our kids things too because parents are the first teachers. What they learn at home, they learn in school; what they learn at school, they bring home. It's a joint effort between both parties. If one party is lacking, then that means challenges will follow. My wife and I are hands on with our children. If she can't be here, I'm going to be here; if I can't be here, she'll be here.

Is your child already beginning to think about high school?

Yes, he wants to go to Lane Tech.

Anything else?

Keep up the good job. I'm going to support as much as I can. We love Catalyst in the community.



The Largest
African
American

Symphony Orchestra

In America

A strong partnership between Catalyst-Circle Rock and the **Ravinia Festival** (the oldest outdoor music venue in the country) has introduced 90 Catalyst scholars to the world of classical music.

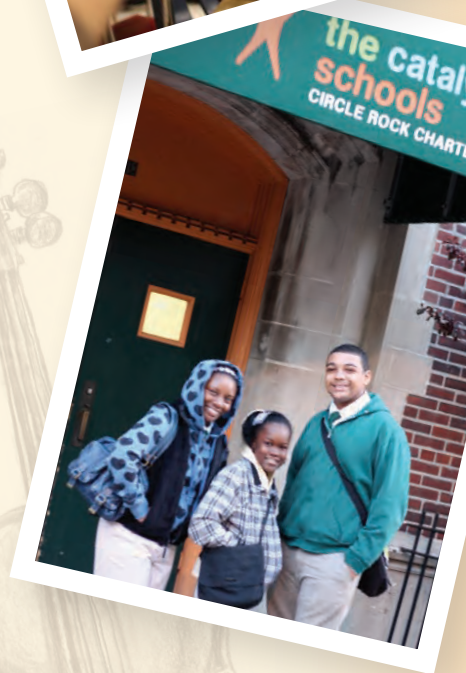
Ravinia's Christine Taylor stated, "we are the largest African American based orchestra program in the country". That is something to be shouted from the rooftops, but most importantly, to constantly remind our scholars that they are "history makers" and how proud we are of their successes.

Conductor Jessie Connor sees the Catalyst students as spirited, creative, and incredibly determined. "They are beyond excited and are happy. They want to play music all the time. They are musicians seeking a way to let the music out."

Catalyst musicians practice after school for 10 hours each week. They are also required to have 100% attendance at school, to be disciplined in their behavior, and to exercise high levels of respect for their colleagues, teachers, their instruments, and for themselves.

As one young Catalyst musician acknowledges, "We are beginning to understand that life isn't 'all about me' but it is about us. Sometimes the sound we make together is better than the sound I make alone. And sometimes it is important to let someone else shine."

Thank you, Ravinia Women's Board!



*Come hear
us play!*

Success!

An Interview with Catalyst Graduate William Wolfe, a First Generation Scholar at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

What do you most appreciate from your education at Catalyst?

What I appreciate the most from my education at Catalyst would have to be the safe environment provided and the availability of well trained teachers to help prepare me for my next steps in my academic career.

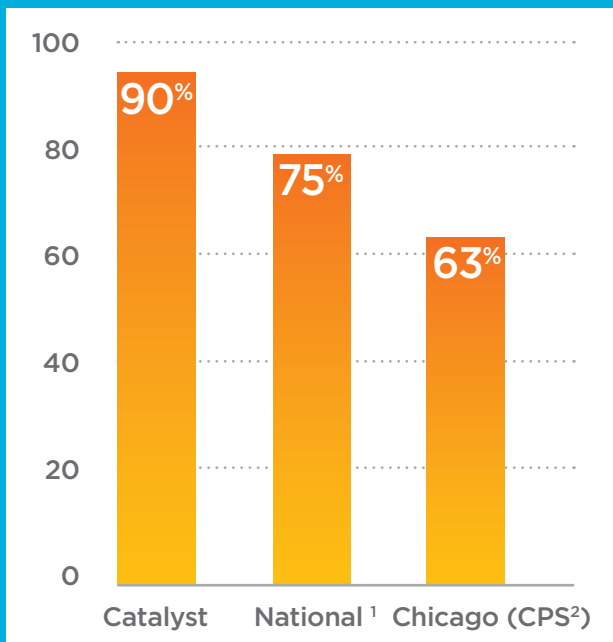
Where are you now, and how is it going?

Now I am a Sophomore at Saint Mary's University of MN double majoring in Political Science and Criminal Justice. I currently have a GPA of 3.3 with the aspirations of achieving a 4.0 this year. I work as a part-time intern for Ulmer & Berne LLP which is a Business Litigation and IP Law Firm where I do paralegal tasks. My official title is "Business Litigation Assistant"

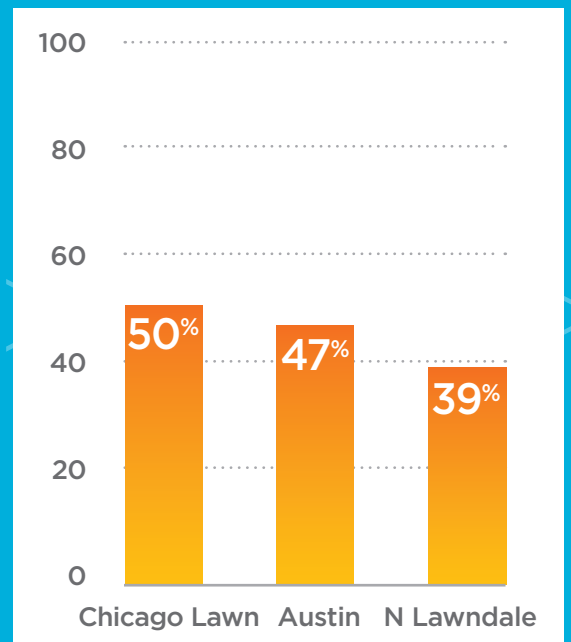
What is the dream for your future?

My dream for the future is to become an attorney. Possibly becoming a Federal Prosecutor with the goal of one day becoming a federal judge. From there I would like to possibly become the Attorney General of the United States.

High School Graduation



Percent of Neighborhood Population with High School Degrees

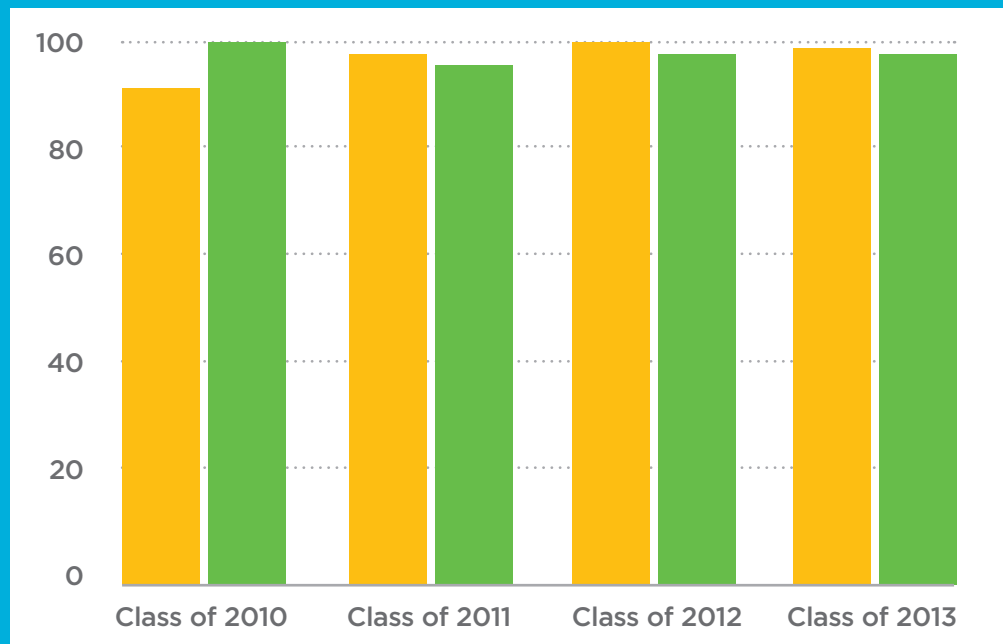


Sources: 1) WBEZ, Sept. 27, 2013
2) Huffinton Post Chicago, May 28, 2013

Source: U.S. 2010 Census



Percent of Catalyst Alumni in High School



■ Circle Rock
■ Howland



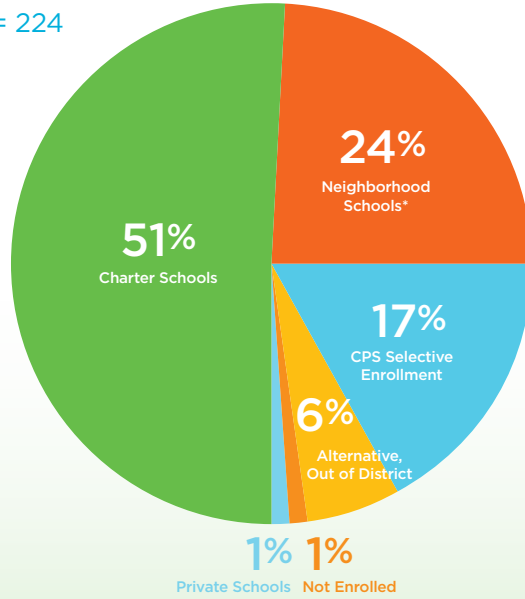
Catalyst Howland

K - 8th grade
Current Enrollment:
472 students

- 99% African American
- 99% Free and Reduced Lunch
- 16% Scholars in Special Education
- 17% Scholars in Temporary Living Situations
- 17% Graduates in Selective Enrollment High Schools

Catalyst Howland Graduates 2010-2013

n = 224



* = College & Career Academies, small, contract, neighborhood & general

RESULTS: Over 99% of Howland Alumni are enrolled in high school; 18% are in Selective Enrollment or Private high schools.

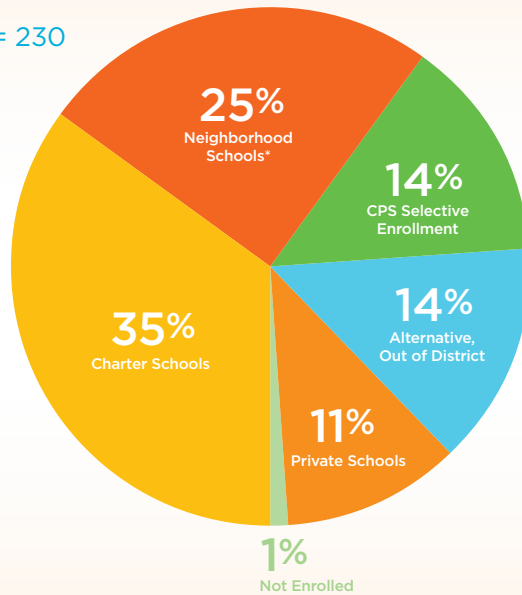
Catalyst Circle Rock

K - 8th grade
Current Enrollment:
520 students

- 100% African American
- 95% Free and Reduced Lunch
- 10% Scholars in Special Education
- 7% Scholars in Temporary Living Situations
- 14% Graduates in Selective Enrollment High Schools

Catalyst Circle Rock Graduates 2010-2013

n = 230



* = College & Career Academies, small, contract, neighborhood & general

RESULTS: Over 99% of Circle Rock Alumni are enrolled in high school; 28% are in Selective Enrollment or Private high schools.

Catalyst Maria High School 2012-2013 Summary Data

Catalyst opened its newest school, Catalyst Maria, in the Fall of 2012, a K-12 school with 549 students. Over the next two years, Catalyst Maria will grow to over 1,100 students.

HIGH SCHOOL (9th Grade Inaugural Class)

3.21 Average increase in EXPLORE composite exam results from August 2012 to May 2013 for 9th grade general education scholars. Average national growth is 1.0.

2.10 Average increase in EXPLORE composite exam results from August 2012 to May 2013 for 9th grade special education scholars.

30% Percent of 9th grade Advanced Placement Human Geography scholars who earned a rating of 3 or higher on the Advanced Placement Exam - meaning they are qualified to receive "college credit".

99% Percent of scholars on track to graduate on time.

95% Average daily scholar attendance rate.

98% Average daily teacher attendance rate.

98% Average parent attendance rate at scholar-led conferences.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (K-5 Inaugural Classes)

72% Percent of 3rd - 5th grade scholars meeting/exceeding individual fall to spring math goal on the NWEA (2012-2013 academic year). Typical growth is 40%-60%. Above 60% is high growth. The national average is 61%

60% Percent of 3rd - 5th grade scholars meeting/exceeding individual fall to spring reading goal on the NWEA (2012-2013 academic year). Typical growth is 40%-60%. Above 60% is high growth. The national average is 57%.

96% Average daily scholar attendance rate.

98% Average daily teacher attendance rate.

91% Average parent attendance rate at parent-teacher conferences.

K - 12th grade
Current Enrollment:
832 students

50% African American

50% Latino

95% Free and reduced
lunch

16% Scholars in Special
Education

4% Scholars in Temporary
Living Situations

Financials



Audited Financial Statement

July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

REVENUE

Local	\$ 12,544,993
Federal	1,688,890
State	1,126,707
Individual	68,336
Foundation	563,035
Scholar Fees/Other	6,726
Event/Corporate	271,730
Organizations	2,444,670*
Total Revenue	\$ 18,715,087

* Includes \$1.6 million from Sisters of St. Casimir to address capital improvement needs in purchase of Maria High School

EXPENSES

<i>School Programs:</i>	
Circle Rock	\$ 4,118,156
Howland	3,698,985
Maria	6,343,552
<i>Support:</i>	
Development/Marketing	65,573
Administration	779,297
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 15,005,563
Less Depreciation (Non-Cash Expense)	(1,191,356)
Major Cash Outlays for Capital Improvements	3,963,733
Total Cash-Related Expenses	\$ 17,777,940



THE CATALYST SCHOOLS

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