



# Student Retention Steering Committee Report

2019



# SUMMARY

Twenty years in, Noble’s academic impact is well established across the city and the state. We provide a higher quality college prep education than has otherwise been available to the traditionally underserved neighborhoods and families we serve. Noble graduates are better prepared for success in college and in life, and through our results, we are showing what is possible for Chicago public school students.

Our success is grounded in a few core concepts, not the least of which is a belief in continual improvement. In virtually every academic metric, from standardized test scores to college enrollment and even college graduation, Noble has refined and improved its own approach over the years.

Yet this is not the complete picture of a what makes a great school.

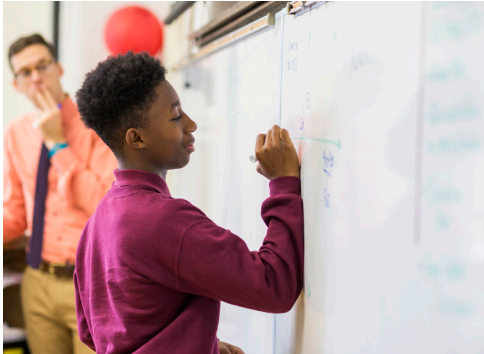
Great schools must both grow and keep their students, especially here in Chicago – because we know that when a student leaves Noble, they may end up at a school of lesser quality, according to SQR data. Improving our student retention, then, is no less than a significant moral imperative. And until we can keep every single student who stays in CPS and starts with us freshman year, our work on student retention will not be complete.

Why the emphasis now?

First is that as our organization matures, we must deliberately examine every piece of our operations to ensure that we remain nimble, creative, and forward-thinking. After two decades, it’s easy to become complacent. We cannot let that mentality creep into our work – so we must reinvigorate our approach with fresh perspectives and open minds.

Second is that an intentional examination of student retention data reveals immediate gaps in the fulfillment of our commitment to our students and our obligation to families. While some students leave us under perfectly understandable circumstances, many are simply leaving Noble for another CPS school nearby. In doing so, they are often enrolling at schools with lower graduation rates and almost certainly lower college acceptance rates.

Accordingly, I directed the formation of a student retention steering committee comprised of fifteen individuals with diverse positions, skill-sets, and experiences from across the network. The committee convened at extensive meetings held over two months to analyze this issue, where they







deeply examined our entrenched policies and practices. Nothing was off the table other than we must improve student retention while maintaining student performance. We will not sacrifice one for the other.

The committee issued eleven recommendations, with three immediate suggestions for policy changes and eight additional recommendations for best practices and data systems. Informed by these recommendations and in collaboration with school leaders, support team members, and our head of schools, Ellen Metz, I accepted all of the committee's results at a high level. With their first recommendation, which concerns our policy of automatic non-promotion when a student reaches 37 detentions, I accepted the policy change to eliminate this barrier to promotion, but have not immediately accepted the committee's means to get there. Instead, I am directing a more robust and holistic examination of our approach to our discipline practices that may or may not include the committee's recommended path to implementation. You can read more about this change on pages 8 & 9. All other recommendations will be accepted and implemented as they were delivered from the committee.

I want to sincerely thank the student retention committee for their incredibly thoughtful and detailed work. In this document, I am sharing the full results of the committee's deliberations so that all of Noble can see the care and consideration that produced these recommendations. I am proud that as our student retention improves every year, we will be able to point back to this extraordinary collection of staff members who enabled this change to happen.

I recognize that any institutional change can be confusing if not implemented with care. Therefore, all staff members, no matter your role, must take the time to contemplate, understand, and internalize the context and motivations behind the change.

I believe that Noble is more than a school. We are, through our very existence, the illustration of a foundational, urgent, and morally vital mission. Now, more students than ever will go out into the world as Noble graduates. That is a truly wonderful thing.

Constance Jones  
Chief Executive Officer

## OBJECTIVES

### **The Student Retention Steering Committee was tasked with the following:**

- ✓ Identifying and recommending current best practices around student retention at our campuses
- ✓ Identifying policies currently impeding student retention and recommending policy changes accordingly
- ✓ Discussing and recommending an implementation timeline, including moves to make immediately, moves to phase in over time, and the launching of possible pilots to learn more around identified impactful yet complex issues.
- ✓ Identifying and recommending baseline data, goal setting and assessment of student retention, ensuring the elevated prioritization and continued improvement of this core dimension for the next five years.

## CORE BELIEFS

### **The Student Retention Steering Committee tackled this work holding the following as true:**

- Great schools are simultaneously excellent at both student retention AND student growth.
- For the past twenty years, Noble has significantly improved its impact on student skills development and growth. At the same time, however, it has stayed relatively stagnant as an overall network on student retention. In general, over the past few decades, over one third of freshman students that start with Noble do not graduate from Noble. Many continue on to other CPS schools, but they do not become Noble graduates. It is a moral imperative that we change this narrative.
- Throughout our history, Noble has seen individual campuses excel in both student retention and growth. In addition, Noble has seen campuses who initially struggle in retention eventually improve their results through intentional focus and deliberate practices within our current model. In short, history has shown us that much can be done to move the needle on student retention without hurting academic growth by simply elevating student retention as a priority.
- Identifying and replicating best practices is not going to be enough. Noble's student population and programming continues to grow and evolve. It is critical that we continuously question and discuss our policies to ensure they are having the intentional and unintentional outcomes we desire. Improving student retention at Noble will require a deep questioning of current policy in addition to priority and practice adjustments.

# STUDENT RETENTION STEERING COMMITTEE 2019



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## THE IDENTIFIED PROBLEM

The Student Retention Steering Committee spent two months together reviewing qualitative data from campus leaders (via surveys and interviews), examining comprehensive quantitative data produced by the Support Team's data department, and debating the intentional and unintentional impact of Noble's current policies and practices. In the end, our discussions and data revealed two key questions that dominated our attention and ultimately guided the limited recommendations of this report:

*How can we help students avoid repeating a grade level without lowering expectations?*

Our research revealed that when a student does not promote to the next grade level, we are almost certain to then lose them at some point along their Noble journey. Foundationally, then, the most important thing our committee could accomplish was to figure out how to enable more students to promote without sacrificing the high expectations that shape our students' eventual success.

*How can we increase the opportunities for Noble to be a solution for students and families when faced with difficult challenges?*

Too often, a student leaves Noble because of family circumstances outside of our organization's control. But we have a hard and fast rule - once a student starts at a specific Noble campus, they cannot leave for another Noble school. Historically, this policy was designed to foster the commitment and bond between a family and their campus that we as an organization believe best positions each student for a successful Noble journey. In practice, however, this sometimes meant that families faced with external challenges needed to leave their current Noble school, but had no option to transfer to another campus even when they wanted to stay in the Noble system. In this way, we were not a part of their solution.

## A STARTING POINT

This report is only a start to the conversation around how Noble can improve its efforts around student retention. In our work, it became clear to the committee that this is going to require an ongoing commitment to, reflection on, and conversation around our practices and policies. It will require a deep scrub of our day-to-day practices/policies and how they impact the student experience (e.g. question what earns demerits, how our staff is trained in the issuing of those demerits and restorative practices, etc). We've aimed to provide some key recommendations that can serve as a catalyst to this work. In short, we hope to start a dialogue and a movement. Noble is known for its dedication to excellence, so it can and needs to keep evolving to maximize its impact on the students, families, and city we serve.

# RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE SUMMARY

<b>Policy</b>				
#	Recommendation	Spring19	SY19-20	SY20-21
1	<b>Eliminate the Mandatory Repeat Policy for 37+ Detentions*</b> <i>(includes introducing a Summer Restorative Program for the Summer of 2019, and later, for SY19-20 implementation, requiring Freshmen/Transfer Reset Policy and limiting Character Development to a single 20-hour class starting at 18 detentions)</i>			*Note that the removal of the 37 detention barrier was accepted by the CEO but not the methodology. There will be additional study to further shape and refine our overall approach to this recommendation, which is detailed on pages 8 & 9.
2	<b>Introduce an Open Campus-to-Campus Transfer Policy (&amp; hardship appeal process)</b>		X	
3	<b>Combine Enrichment and Community Service into a Single Promotion Criteria</b>		X	

<b>Best Practice</b>				
#	Recommendation	Spring19	SY19-20	SY20-21
4	<b>Build and Support a Culture of Accountability around Promotion and Transfer Data</b> <i>(Begin intentional conversations and building tools in Spring 2019, and aim for full implementation in SY19-20)</i>	X	X	
5	<b>Establish and Support Minimum Requirements for Parent Involvement (Related to Discipline)</b> <i>(Includes a Hold-Harmless Policy/Philosophy for when Minimums are Missed. Minimums designed in Spring of 2019 and implemented in practice by SY19-20.)</i>	X	X	
6	<b>Build and Support an Optional Baseline Curriculum for Advisory</b>		X	
7	<b>Build and Support an Optional Baseline MTSS/Student of Concern Meeting Process</b> <i>(Begin building the resource in Spring 2019 and provide rigorous implementation support throughout SY19-20)</i>	X	X	

<b>Data Systems</b>				
#	Recommendation	Spring19	SY19-20	SY20-21
8	<b>Institute &amp; Support a "Chicago Transfer Rate"</b>	X		
9	<b>Institute &amp; Support a "Campus Graduation Rate"</b>	X		
10	<b>Institute &amp; Support a "Noble On-Track Rate"</b>		X	
11	<b>Create and Require a Standardized Student Exit Survey</b>		X	

# RECOMMENDATION 1

## Eliminate the Mandatory Repeat Policy for 37+ Detentions

*(includes introducing a Summer Restorative Program for the Summer of 2019, and later, for SY19-20 implementation, requiring Freshmen/Transfer Reset Policy and limiting Character Development to a single 20-hour class starting at 18 detentions)*

### Current Policy

Discipline: Students must demonstrate self-discipline and maturity to be promoted or to graduate. The following are requirements for promotion or graduation. If a student earns:

- a. 0-12 detentions in one school year, students may be promoted or graduate as long as they serve all detentions.
- b. 13-24 detentions in one school year, students may only be promoted or graduate if they take a character development class. All detentions must still be served.
- c. 25-36 detentions in one school year, students may only be promoted or graduate if they take two character development classes. All detentions must still be served.
- d. 37 or more detentions or 21 or more days suspension in one school year, students will not be promoted or graduate and must repeat the grade.
- e. Please note, for freshmen and new transfers, campuses may choose to practice a 'reset' policy. If so, the detention count toward promotion doesn't begin until the start of Quarter 2. However, freshmen/new transfers under this policy earning 37 or more detentions between Quarter 2 and the end of the school year will not be promoted and must repeat the grade. Any detentions earned during first quarter by freshmen/new transfers must still be served and will count toward earning character development classes.

### Please note:

Noble will eliminate the 37 detention threshold as an automatic barrier to promotion, but we are not immediately accepting the committee's means to get there, which is centered on a recommendation for a summer restorative course. That original recommendation language, as first submitted by the committee, is below (see *Recommended Policy*).

Instead of directly implementing this summer course, the CEO has directed a more in-depth study of our holistic approach to the discipline program such that a comprehensive solution:

- ensures a safe and supportive learning environment;
- supports positive behavior change;
- facilitates the development of the behavioral skills that lead to college and life success.

A subcommittee coordinated by Mark Hamstra, Noble's Director of Student Culture & Support, will guide further recommendations to be submitted for CEO review and approval by June 2019, and more information will follow prior to the start of next school year.

### Recommended Policy

Discipline: Students must demonstrate self-discipline and maturity to be promoted or to graduate. The following are requirements for promotion or graduation. If a student earns:

- a. 0-17 detentions in one school year, students may be promoted or graduate as long as they serve all detentions.
- b. 18-36 detentions in one school year, students may only be promoted or graduate if they take a campus character development class (20 hours). All detentions must still be served.
- c. 37 or more detentions or 21 or more days suspension in one school year, students may only be promoted or graduate if they take a character development class (20 hours), serve all detentions, and successfully complete Noble's summer restorative program.
- d. Please note, for freshmen and new transfers, campuses practice a 'reset' policy. Under this policy, the detention count toward promotion doesn't begin until the start of Quarter 2. However, freshmen/new transfers under this policy earning 37 or more detentions between Quarter 2 and the end of the school year will need to complete Noble's summer restorative program to be promoted. In addition, any detentions earned during first quarter by freshmen/new transfers must still be served and will count toward earning a character development class.

\* The summer restorative program design would be tackled this spring by our Director of Student Culture & Support and a dedicated taskforce (membership open to principals, deans, social workers, teachers, and NST staff). While it may eventually be a campus-run program, we envision the first program likely to be implemented centrally at 1-2 sites serving all campuses (allowing for tight programming and oversight).



# RECOMMENDATION 1 (cont.)

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## *The Why?*

A strong student culture is core to Noble's identity, and, it is a major reason for Noble's success growing students and serving families for the past two decades. As such, we believe discipline/culture should continue to be a component of Noble's promotion criteria. That said, there needs to be adjustments to the policy to allow for redemption (and hope) to take place. Rather than look at 37+ as an automatic fail/repeat, we recommend that students who reach this threshold (after clean weeks are calculated) be asked to successfully complete a restorative summer program. This program's focus would be on helping students understand their issues/triggers, the impact their actions have had on the school community, and learn to repair relationships and prepare them to ask for the ability to reenter the community at the next grade level (if the rest of the promotion criteria are also met). Noble's restorative program would be rigorous and focus heavily on SEL work (likely including dedicated time with licensed professionals or, at the very least, programming influenced by licensed professionals) With this policy change, we aren't de-emphasizing discipline and culture, but rather treating it like other promotion criteria. If you fail to hit the threshold, we are asking that you simply put in more time toward developing in that particular area before being promoted to the next grade level or graduating.

## *Important to Note*

While significant, this recommendation is only a starting point. Culture and discipline are complex and impactful components of the Noble experience. Conversations should be ongoing around what earns demerits and how staff are trained to issue those demerits. We need to pay close attention to the current pilots around resets, clean weeks, and detention cycles — aiming to learn best practices and align on practices by SY20-21. In addition, perhaps as soon as the summer of 2019, we need to drive toward consistency as a Network around character development class and summer school scheduling.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

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### Introduce an Open Campus-to-Campus Transfer Policy (& Hardship Appeal Process)

#### Current Policy

Enrollment: Once a student has attended classes at a campus, the student may not transfer to another Noble campus or remain on a waiting list for another Noble campus. Students who transfer from the Noble Network, who have attended classes, may only return to the campus they were originally enrolled. After the Noble Lock Day, enrolled students who never attended classes, may only enroll at another Noble campus if the originally enrolled campus is no longer accepting students in their grade level.

#### Recommended Policy

Enrollment: Students in good standing who have attended classes at a Noble campus, may only transfer to another Noble campus with available seats during specified transfer windows. To be in good standing, students must have no pending disciplinary action (i.e. suspension or expulsion). The student's current promotion status and outstanding fees at the sending Noble campus will carry over to the receiving Noble campus.

In addition, please note that a Hardship Appeal Process does exist for families to request an expedited (faster) school transfer due to harm caused by their child's current school placement. Hardship transfers can only be granted to campuses accepting seats and are designed for extreme cases when it is shown that the transfer is necessary for the physical and emotional safety of the student. A hardship transfer will not be granted for parent/guardian or student convenience or if the appeal is an attempt to gain admission to a specific school. Parents/guardians that can show their child's school placement is a hardship must submit an application to Noble's Department of Student Enrollment & Recruitment.\*

*\*Dept. of Student Enrollment & Recruitment will create the application, a list of acceptable documentation, and the process for a fair and fast decision.*

#### The Why?

When looking at all students that exited from Noble from SY14 to SY18, 57% of them choose to stay in Chicago and pursue their education at another non-Noble school — 52% opted to enter the Chicago Public School system. Students and their families choose to transfer out of their original Noble campus for a number of reasons — some leave because of struggles with Noble's rigorous culture and academics, but others choose to look elsewhere because of new living situations, transportation burdens, etc. Under the current policy, if a family and student have decided they need to make a change from their current situation, Noble is not able to be a part of the solution. This new policy, however, allows for alternative Noble campuses to be a part of the family's conversation and deliberations. It is a moral imperative that if a student is staying in Chicago, they have an opportunity to stay part of the Noble family (and experience the life-altering opportunities associated with being Noble). Similarly, the hardship policy provides an official policy for Noble to respond quickly with an in-house solution to extreme issues concerning student safety.

Dissenting View (Keep current policy and only add a hardship appeal): The general rule against transfers is important and needs to be protected and promoted in spirit as its grounded in the belief that families and schools need to commit to each other — in the life of a teenager there will undoubtedly be difficult moments (with a teacher, with peers, etc.), and it's important that we have a system in place that will encourage collaboratively working through these difficult times, rather than avoiding them. At the same time, for a rare number of students, there will be life altering hardships that may surface (e.g. family relocation due to divorce, safety issues, etc.) that require a student to change their school location. If the student is faced with such hardship and wants to stay with Noble, there should be a policy in place to allow the conversation and decision to take place.

#### Important to Note

As highlighted in the spirit of the dissenting view, the group strongly believes that campuses should obsess about campus retention. While a student leaving one Noble campus and going to another Noble campus is better than them leaving the Noble family altogether, it is still very much seen as a loss. Every campus' goal should be to hold onto as many students as possible that walk through their doors.

In addition, it is important to note the cascading impact this move could have on many other Noble policies and practices. Outside of introducing some interesting challenges to our data systems/reporting, the movement from campus-to-campus will be easier for families and students with increased consistency in campus practices (benchmarks, expectations, and interpretations/implementation).

# RECOMMENDATION 3

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## Combine Enrichment and Community Service into a Single Promotion Criteria

### *Current Policy*

Community Service: Students must pass the community service required benchmarks, as specified at their campus, which must total a minimum of 40 hours over the four years of high school. Any student who fails to meet campus community service benchmarks will be required to complete a campus specific make-up program.

Enrichment Credit: Students must earn the number of enrichment credits required at their campus, which can be at minimum the requirements listed below. Enrichment credits are classes taken outside the regular school schedule. A minimum of 25 hours of class time or study time is needed for each (0.25) credit. Campuses will pre-approve what qualifies as an enrichment credit.

1. *To be promoted to a junior: 0.25 total enrichment credit*
2. *To be promoted to a senior: 0.5 total enrichment credit*
3. *To graduate: 1.0 total enrichment credit*

### *Recommended Policy*

Enrichment Credit: Students are encouraged to pursue their unique interests and must complete a minimum of 100 hours (i.e. 1.0 enrichment credits) over their four years of high school. A minimum of 25 hours of class time, study time, practice time or community service is needed for each (0.25) credit. Enrichment credits are classes/activities taken outside the regular school schedule and driven by a student's interest. Campuses will pre-approve what qualifies as an enrichment credit.

1. *To be promoted to a junior: 0.25 total enrichment credit*
2. *To be promoted to a senior: 0.5 total enrichment credit*
3. *To graduate: 1.0 total enrichment credit*

### *The Why?*

Enrichment and Community Service can be important ingredients to a strong college application and provide rich development opportunities. As such, we feel they should continue to be represented in the promotion criteria. At the same time, we believe Noble should encourage students to bring their authentic selves to school and to pursue their passions. If they want to grow through participating in a rich athletic experience, we believe that should be an option. If they are passionate about community service focused on the environment, they can choose to put their attention and hours to that cause via a community service-based enrichment. Moving the promotion criteria from an "and" to an "and/or" criteria says to our students that we believe in and want them to continue to develop themselves outside of the classroom, but it gives them a choice in how they want to tackle that development over their high school career. It also reduces the number of promotion requirements which gives more flexibility at the critical 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, without significantly devaluing these two criteria.

### *Important to Note*

The spirit of this policy is student choice. The Steering Committee ultimately refrained from restricting campus benchmarks in this recommendation, but much attention needs to be paid to campus benchmarks. We believe that setting restrictions on hours (e.g. 50 hours community service and 50 hours other enrichment) goes against the spirit of this policy recommendation. In addition, we feel that increasing the required hours (e.g. 200 hours) at the campus-level goes against the spirit of this policy.



# RECOMMENDATIONS 4, 5, 6, 7

(REQUIRED BEST PRACTICE/INPUT IMPLEMENTATION)

## Sub-Committee Working Group for Retention “Best Practices”

Sub-Committee Approach: Through survey feedback and interviews with leaders from across the network, our subcommittee sought to gain perspective into the practices at our schools that directly impact student retention. We’ve identified several key themes that if normed across our network, will positively impact student retention in a significant way.

Student Transfer Profiles: Generally, there are two buckets of students who leave Noble: 1. Students who struggle to meet promotion requirements tend to leave; 2. Anecdotally, campus leaders also state that we lose a significant amount of students for more qualitative reasons, primarily a general disinvestment in our schools. Students in this bucket are promotable but are not invested in our school communities. Campus leaders point back to a desire for more academic programming (electives, AP, etc.) and strong extra-curricular activities as the primary reasons for losing these students.

**High Level Themes:** The following themes emerged as the most impactful practices for student retention at our highest performing “retention” campuses.

- **Advisory:** *Put simply, great advisors hold on to students.*
- **Clarity of expectations and consistent implementation of the SCC:** *Surprises lead to discontentment with students and families. A lot of work goes into communicating this with families and norming as a staff on the SCC.*
- **Data & Accountability:** *Student of concern & MTSS data is tracked with fidelity & consistency.*
- **Consistent iteration for intervention planning:** *MTSS has a point person and multiple “functions” have a seat at the table (DoS, DoC, CM, & SW).*
- **Core Values & Relationships:** *Campus specific core values are built into the DNA of the school. These increase student / parent engagement and support staff alignment when implementing the SCC.*
- **Programs & Extra-Curricular Options:** *Quality programming, both academic (IB, AP, STEM, electives) and non-academic (athletics, student leadership, CHAMPS) build pride in the school community and significantly impact student investment.*
- **Summer:** *Summer is used strategically to prepare incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents.*
- **Restorative Conversations:** *Implementation of restorative conversations as a norm within our SCC has increased student investment.*
- **Parent Engagement & Communication:** *Decisions to leave Noble are family decisions. Parent engagement is incredibly important.*

### **Network “Norming” & Highly Encouraged Best Practices that should be shared & replicated across campuses:**

- **Summer should be used strategically to on-board students and families.** *There are multiple programs across our network that could be replicated (Bulls’ Summer Bridge and Butler’s approach to integrating new parents are two examples).*
- **Restorative conversation training and implementation should be a norm for all Noble staff:** *Restorative practices provide a healthy lens through which to view the implementation of our SCC. Training should remain campus based.*
- **Campus extra-curricular and non-academic programs are important and often serve as the public face of the school for families and communities:** *Extra-curricular programs should be supported and incentivized through a holistic Noble League competition (in development) that awards excellence in after-school programming (athletics, debate, math teams, chess, etc.)*

# REQUIRED/MANDATED BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS:

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## **Recommendation #4: Build a culture of accountability around promotion and transfer data**

*In short, student retention performance conversations need to be as robust and regular as student growth conversations. Every quarter, teachers should be speaking about their classroom academic growth and their advisory/grade level student retention performance (results, reflections, and, responses). Every Head of School and Principal PMP-based meeting should ask about 1.) student growth (who is growing, who isn't, and how are we responding), and 2.) students we have we lost or are at risk of losing (students name, background, and how are we responding). The Network Support Team should work toward developing dashboard/reporting tools around new student retention metrics (Chicago Transfer Rate, Noble On Track Rate, & Campus Graduation Rate) and campuses should build these tools/metrics into their day, week, quarter, semester, and annual accountability conversations.*

## **Recommendation #5: Establish minimum requirements for parent involvement as it relates to Discipline promotion (e.g. parent notification at 6 detentions, conference at 12, etc.) & a "hold-harmless" policy/philosophy for students when minimums are missed.**

*In short, we believe that students can develop behaviorally if they and their families are aware of their standing and given an opportunity to reflect and respond. As such, if we fail to properly make students and families aware, depriving them of the opportunity to reflect and respond, it is not fair to hold them accountable. Student records would be reviewed as part of the application for the Noble Restorative Summer Program. Any miss in these minimum requirements around family involvement/notification and the student would not have to attend the program and would be promoted to the next grade level.*

## **Recommendation #6: Build an optional baseline curriculum for advisory, aimed at developing rich relationships and maximizing student retention**

*Next year, the Network would identify and engage highly effective advisors and ask them to create a baseline curriculum resource — outlining minimum, high-leverage beliefs, content and structures for a highly impactful program/class. In addition, Network-level trainings would be arranged for (at minimum) new advisors during the August Noble Support Team Training Week (and optional supplementary trainings at quarterly PDs) to support those struggling with this (often new) experience.*

## **Recommendation #7: Build an Optional Baseline MTSS/Student of Concern Meeting Program**

*A strong MTSS/Student of Concern structure is imperative to attain high retention rates. Over the Spring and Summer, the Network would identify and engage highly effective administrators at our campuses and ask them to create and provide support for an optional baseline program for MTSS & Student of Concern Meetings at a campus. The baseline program would highlight how to use data with fidelity at regular iterations (weekly recommended) and demonstrate how to build a system that is multi-functional and include culture, specialized services, social work and advisor input.*

# RECOMMENDATIONS 8, 9, 10, 11

(DATA GATHERING, REPORTING, AND GOAL SETTING)

## Sub-Committee Working Group for Retention “Data Gathering, Reporting & Goal Setting”

Noble’s current metrics and goals surrounding student retention simply fall short. Our Network Dashboard metric on “Student Retention” only measures student loss during the academic year (Oct. Census to the last day of school), which is relatively minimal (as most of our student loss happens in the summer) and, thus, gives a false positive around this topic. Similarly, published graduation metrics, are misleading. Whether you are using an ISBE or a CPS rate, this number shows the percentage of students that started at Noble and ultimately graduated — the issue is that it counts students that leave Noble but still graduate from CPS. Again, this tends to give a false positive around Noble’s true ability to retain students. In short, we need something more accurate, something simple, something that aligns to our beliefs, and something that can drive our day-to-day conversations.

Given this information, we are proposing, in addition to the re-enrollment numbers we’ve been following over the years, the following data metrics be introduced to push our awareness and effectiveness around Noble’s Student Retention:

### **Recommendation #8: Institute and Support a “Chicago Transfer Rate”**

*Measures the % of students transferring out of Noble but staying in Chicago. We recommend looking at this rate annually (Oct-Oct) and goal set by Network and campus (Whole School & Grade Level). We know that ~57% of students that leave Noble, stayed in Chicago — the vast majority selecting a lower quality education option (according to SQRP) and significantly impacting their life trajectory. This metric would push us toward a core belief and obsession — if you are staying in Chicago, it’s a moral imperative you stay with us. In 5 years, our goal should be to reduce the Overall Chicago Transfer Rate to 7% annually. Currently, we sit at a 10% Chicago Transfer Rate (CTR).*

### **Recommendation #9: Institute and Support a “Campus Graduation Rate”**

*A new metric to measure high school graduation rate. Measures the % of freshmen (from Oct. census) who graduate or are still enrolled with Noble after four years, only removing deaths and transfers out of state/district from the denominator (as these are about the only exit codes out of our immediate control). CPS - and as far as we can tell, school districts across the state - does not produce this metric, and may not be interested in doing so for district-operated schools. However, this is how most educators, parents, and the general public think about graduation rate — of the students that started at a school, how many actually walk across the stage at graduation, not counting transfers and other school population changes throughout a four-year cohort. Similar to the CTR above, we picture this as being a campus, grade level, and Network-wide metric. Currently, we sit at a Network Campus Graduation Rate of 63%. In 5 years, our goal should be to see a 12% increase, increasing our Network-wide Campus Graduation Rate to 75%. For twenty years, according to this metric, we’ve regularly retained ~2 of 3 students that join the Noble community. Despite the difficult realities of the transient city we live in, we need to change that narrative to 3 out of 4 students.*

### **Recommendation #10: Institute and Support a “Noble On-Track Rate”**

*Measures the % of the student body that are currently on track to be promoted to the next grade or graduate. When looking at our SY14 & SY15 cohorts, we see a ~3% success rate of those students required to repeat a grade level (~30 of 1,000 students who repeated a grade successfully navigated Noble and graduated). In short, repeating a grade level at Noble significantly decreases the likelihood of one staying at and graduating from Noble. As such, it is imperative that we have a simple, single formative tool that can serve as a daily tool to help highlight promotion rates — a tool that can be live, predictive in nature, comparative across grade levels and campuses. Goals: TBD*

In addition to improved metrics and goal setting, we need to improve data gathering in the area of Student Retention. Specifically:

### **Recommendation #11: Create and Require a Standardized Student Exit Survey**

*It is imperative that we begin implementing student exit surveys at every campus. The survey should capture 1.) when a student leaves our community, 2.) why they ultimately made the decisions, and 3.) the steps Noble made to prevent their exit.*