

Civitas Schools seeks to operate urban schools that produce student achievement and prompt civic responsibility. At the heart of our work is the Civitas Schools Eight Curricular Principles. These principles define the academic programming taking place at our schools.

Please take a moment to “study” our Eight Curricular Principles flashcards and learn more about our curriculum, academic programming, and recent accomplishments.



CIVITAS SCHOOLS | EIGHT CURRICULAR PRINCIPLES

Civitas Schools operates these charter schools:

CICS Basil Campus

1816 West Garfield Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60609
www.cicsbasil.org

CICS Northtown Academy Campus

3900 West Peterson Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60659
www.cicsnorthtown.org

CICS Ralph Ellison Campus

8130 South California Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60652
www.cicsellison.org

CICS Wrightwood Campus

8130 South California Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60652
www.cicswrightwood.org

Civitas Schools

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1.)

rigor

1.) rigor

All students take a rigorous college preparatory course of studies.

Students enrolled in a Civitas Schools program participate in longer school days and a longer school year. A typical school day runs from 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Students attend classes 195 days per school year, and they need 27 credits to graduate high school.

Civitas Schools

Graduation Requirements (high school):

Course	Credits
English	5.0
Foreign Language	2.0
Math	4.0
Physical Education	1.5
Science	3.0
Social Science	5.0
Writing	4.0
Electives	2.5
Total	27.0

To compare, traditional public schools in Chicago require 24 credits to graduate, have an average 178-day school year, and the school day runs from approximately 8:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.





2.)

achievement

2.) achievement

The student is at the center of all academic programming, surrounded by an environment that fosters his or her upward academic mobility.

The skills referred to in the curriculum at CICS Northtown Academy are the academic skills outlined in the ACT College Readiness Standards.[®] Each semester, students take an ACT style test to measure their mastery of basic skills.

Performance on these assessments contributes towards a student's semester grade. Since opening in 2003, students at CICS Northtown have demonstrated admirable achievement on the ACT college entrance exam.

Average Composite ACT Score	CICS Northtown	CPS	Illinois
Class of 2005	18.6	16.9	20.3
Class of 2006	19.4	17.4	20.5
Class of 2007	19.1	N/A	N/A



3.)

curriculum

3.) curriculum

A consistent content-based curriculum is implemented across three major academic disciplines: Humanities, Math & Science, and Arts & Wellness. The curriculum focuses on themes both contemporary and historical in scope.

During 2005-2006, Civitas Schools began the development of an elementary school curriculum that reflects a scaled back version of its high school curriculum. Leadership and faculty members at CICS Basil made important contributions to the project. Similar to the high school curriculum, the elementary curriculum emphasizes combining basic skills development with meaningful course content. As a result of the curriculum development, the following components were implemented at the elementary schools:

- > Creation of Civitas Checkpoints. Checkpoints are mini-assessments designed to examine whether or not students are mastering skills. The Checkpoints are aligned with the ISAT and administered quarterly.
- > Implementation of the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessment. This computer-based assessment provides nearly immediate feedback regarding student achievement.
- > To better prepare students for the rigor of high school, a new middle school framework and schedule was created and an Advisory program was implemented.



4.)

literacy

4.) literacy

The development of a student's basic literacy skills is emphasized across all disciplines of the curriculum. The accountability measures used to verify this development are the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessment for elementary students and the ACT college entrance exam for high school students.

All CICS elementary programs adopted the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). MAP assessments are administered three times annually and assess student skills in Reading, Math, Language Usage, and Science. The computer based assessment is unique in that it adapts to a student's ability, accurately measuring what a child

knows and needs to learn. In addition, MAP will measure academic growth over time, independent of grade level or age. Most importantly, the results educators receive have practical application to teaching and learning. MAP test results provide educators with timely access to information they can use for instructional planning and school improvement.



5.) debate

5.) debate

The critical thinking skills of all students are developed through an emphasis on teaching conflicting interpretations and an orientation to controversy.

Each academic year, high school students explore and study opposing viewpoints related to a central topic.

Grade 9 **Current Controversial Issues**

Grade 10 **World History: Humanities & Inhumanities**

Grade 11 **Conflicting Interpretations of American Civilization**

Grade 12 **Ideas and the Evolution of Western Civilization**

Within these topics, the curriculum addresses a different thematic unit each quarter. Courses are designed to complement one another and

constantly relate back to the quarterly theme. A sample quarterly unit for the freshman curriculum is as follows:

Race, Gender & Identity

Course	Content
Social Science	Wealth, Equality, Political Identity, and Voting
English	<i>Color of Water</i> by James McBride Non-fiction Identity Readings
Writing	<i>Nickled & Dimed</i> by Barbara Ehrenreich Personal Narratives Compare/Contrast Essays
Biology	Genetics
Health	Self-Health

In addition, students write a minimum of 24 essays each school year.



6.) citizenship

6.) citizenship

The curriculum focuses on the civic purposes of education: educating citizens for economic and personal success.

Graduates from CICS Northtown Academy have been accepted at many highly regarded colleges and universities. A partial listing includes:

The top 3 CPS high schools, by percentage of 2005 graduates going to college: (In parentheses: percentage of those college-bound students going to a 4 year college.)

Bradley University
Carleton College
Denison University
DePaul University
Dominican University
Illinois State University
Illinois Wesleyan University
Kalamazoo College
Lewis University
Loyola University Chicago
Marquette University
Michigan State University
Millikin University
Northern Illinois University
Northern Michigan University
Pomona College
Purdue University
Rochester Institute of Technology
Southern Illinois University
University of Iowa
University of Illinois Champaign Urbana
University of Illinois Chicago
University of Michigan
University of Rochester (NY)
University of Wisconsin Madison

1. Northside College Prep 89.2 (97.7)
2. Whitney Young 83.1 (93.1)
3. CICS Northtown Academy 82.5 (61.7)



7.) collaboration

7.) collaboration

The program is operated by a collaborative staff, purposefully focused on student achievement. Data and qualitative measurements inform daily instructional practices.

Civitas Schools prides itself on recruiting and maintaining a highly qualified faculty dedicated to the organization's mission and not afraid of lots of hard work!

	Certified	Highly Qualified	Master's Degree	Master's in Process
CICS Basil	93%	100%	37%	16%
CICS Ellison	100%	100%	64%	18%
CICS Northtown	96%	98%	38%	18%
CICS Wrightwood	90%	90%	33%	22%





8.)

community



CIVITAS SCHOOLS | EIGHT CURRICULAR PRINCIPLES

8.) community

Civitas Schools is a learning community—one in which students learn as a community and learn about community.

During 2005-2006, students at CICS Basil, Northtown, and Wrightwood collectively completed over 6,000 hours of community service. Service activities included: canned food drives, winter coat drives, landscaping at a shelter for immigrant families from Central and South America, and organizing food and supplies for HIV positive citizens and the homeless.

In the spirit of building community among the CICS campuses operated by Civitas Schools, seniors at Northtown also conducted tutoring and service activities with elementary students at Basil and Wrightwood. High school students are required to complete 40 hours of community service prior to graduation.