

Strategic Plan 2025-2028





Noble Schools was founded on a clear belief: every student in Chicago deserves access to a high-quality, college-preparatory education and the opportunity to lead a choice-filled life. At the heart of that belief is our unwavering commitment to college readiness—our north star and the most powerful lever we have to unlock equity, opportunity, and long-term success for our students.

Our three-year Strategic Plan underscores this belief and charts our path forward through three priorities—**Grow**, **Keep**, and **Renew**—which focus our work on academic progress, student connection, and educator strength.

We meet students at pivotal points, mostly in sixth or ninth grade. While we cannot control their starting point, we are responsible for what comes next. We fulfill that responsibility by not only building the academic skills and confidence students need to succeed in college, but also by helping them discover a sense of purpose that fuels their progress.

College remains the most reliable engine for upward mobility. A degree increases earnings, opens doors to better jobs and healthcare, and helps families build intergenerational stability. For the students we serve, it is one of the strongest levers for equity and long-term opportunity.

Yet today, too many of our students are not performing at or above grade level. That number reflects broader systemic challenges, but it does not define what is possible for our students. And Noble’s 26-year history proves we have the people, systems, and resolve to drive extraordinary academic growth.

That is why this Strategic Plan is both urgent and essential. It is rooted in our deep commitment to excellence and innovation, and it calls for greater focus and alignment than ever before. By clarifying and simplifying what we do—and

uniting every resource, every adult, and every strategy—we aim to disrupt cycles of inequity and create a brighter future for all our students.

And so our plan begins with a bold vision for our future:

Through our shared work across the three core priorities of **Grow**, **Keep**, and **Renew**, we will ensure that every student who walks through our doors is prepared for college and a future filled with choice, impact, and meaning.



OUR NOBLE VISION AND MISSION

This plan is grounded in Noble's enduring purpose: to ensure all students, regardless of background, are equipped to complete college and lead lives of choice, impact, and meaning. To align our daily actions with that vision, we continue to sharpen our answers to three essential questions:

- **Why do we exist?**
- **How do we work with one another?**
- **What do we do, and how do we measure success?**

These answers are captured in the Noble Identity Framework—a guide that defines who we are, what we believe, how we work together, and what excellence means across our schools. It serves as both an anchor and launchpad, creating shared clarity across our organization and aligning our actions from the classroom to our support team.



Vision & Mission | Our Why

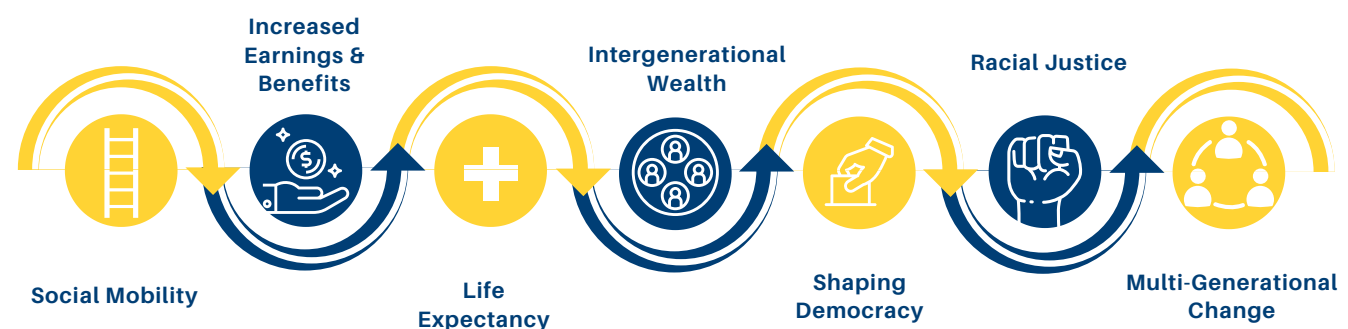
In the spring of 2021, we revisited the question of our core purpose by asking and answering these questions: Why do we exist? What do our families and students want from us at Noble?

The answers became unambiguously clear through a robust, inclusive information-gathering and decision-making process. Over 5,000 students and families shared their perspectives, and their voices made clear how central college is to our core purpose, rooted in the aspiration that all students have lives filled with choice.

At Noble, college is more than a goal—it is our core strategy for achieving equity and justice. We believe a degree can transform lives, disrupt systemic racism, and empower our alumni to drive lasting change in their communities and beyond. Our role is to turn big dreams into real opportunities by preparing students for college, supporting them through graduation, and staying alongside them beyond their degree, because college is our collective intervention in a world that too often falls short for the students we serve.

While we change and evolve our collective thinking and practice, one thing remains constant: Noble is committed to equipping students to successfully complete college. We refined our vision and mission to reflect this purpose and bring unity to our work. Altogether, it represents our theory of change, from social mobility to multi-generational change. This is the mission that anchors all we do:

Noble will ensure all students have equitable and positive school experiences that equip them to complete college and lead choice-filled lives.



OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE: GROW, KEEP, AND RENEW

GROW

Goals

- 40% of students meeting grade level college readiness thresholds on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) and ACT
- 3.1, 2.2, and 2.7 are the average points of annual ACT growth for 9th, 10th, and 11th grades, respectively
- Average three-year cohort growth is 8 points for the class of 2029



Noble's model is intentionally different. We meet a small number of students in 6th grade at our Gary Comer College Prep campus, and the majority of our students at the start of high school, often during vulnerable transitions. This means we do not control the starting line, however, we do have the responsibility to change their trajectory from the first day they arrive at Noble. Growth is a lifeline; it honors their potential and transforms the promise of college from a dream into a tangible reality.

We know that not nearly enough of our students enter Noble Schools performing at or above grade level, and this is far from good enough for their dreams and the futures they deserve. That is why we set a goal to have 40% of students meet grade-level benchmarks by the end of our Strategic Plan. Achieving this will require more than a single good year, it demands a movement: three years of relentless, intentional growth. This work will be challenging, but it is essential. Every point of growth brings a student closer to their purpose, their power, and the life they were always meant to lead.

We will build that growth by focusing on the following key strategies.

Developing Excellent Instructional Staff

At Noble, we view excellent teaching as a form of justice. Every day, teachers have the power to close gaps, unlock potential, and instill confidence in our students, transforming the trajectory of their lives. That is why we are fully committed to developing our educators. We have established a clear vision of great instruction, grounded in The Noble Classroom (TNC) tenets—high-impact practices that embody our belief that every student deserves a teacher who recognizes their brilliance and knows how to cultivate it.

To realize this vision, we are designing professional learning that enhances skills throughout the instructional cycle—from unpacking standards and crafting strong objectives to designing scaffolds, anticipating misconceptions, and leading with academic precision. Teachers will not undertake this journey alone; we will develop instructional leaders with the same urgency through ongoing coaching, network training, and peer collaboration. Strong leadership is the foundation of strong teaching. By relentlessly investing in our leaders, we are also investing in our students' futures. Behind every moment of growth is an entire district of dedicated educators prepared to make it happen.



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Refining and Expanding Curriculum Supports

Great teaching begins with great tools. To engage students in rigorous, meaningful learning every day, we must equip every teacher with strong, accessible curriculum materials that meet their needs. We are refining and expanding our curriculum supports to ensure clarity, alignment, and purpose in every classroom, across all grades. Our goal is to design daily materials that not only meet graduation requirements but are also rooted in the belief that all students, regardless of their starting point, deserve access to challenging and affirming content.

We are intensifying our support for diverse learners by building a curriculum tailored for co-teaching settings, addressing the needs of Multilingual learners and those receiving specialized services. Our curriculum will primarily follow ACT-based pacing plans to keep students on track for college readiness.

Additionally, students still learning to read or qualifying for alternate assessments will have access to high-quality, developmentally appropriate resources. Clear exemplars of student work and teacher planning will be integrated across subjects, serving as powerful models of excellence and a key anchor in classrooms where collaboration is essential. We firmly believe that when we equip teachers effectively, we empower students to excel, and that is at the core of our mission.

Refining and Expanding Assessment Systems

Growth is not a matter of luck; it requires intentional design. That is why we are refining and expanding our assessment systems to provide teachers with the insights and tools needed for precise, purposeful instruction. We are developing multi-year pacing plans aligned with assessments, giving every educator a clear roadmap from day one. This foundation allows us to build a system that helps students master content, stay on track, and believe in their potential.

From Quarterly Interims and Skill Checks to Lexile assessments and the ACT, we are coordinating a comprehensive suite of network and state assessments to create an accurate picture of student performance. ACT-aligned Skill Checks will now extend through 12th grade, focusing on reading and math. Every baseline curriculum course will include end-of-course exams that support mastery and drive targeted re-teaching. These tools enable us to track progress and respond in real-time, ensuring every student has what they need to move forward with confidence. This is how we cultivate growth: with clarity, intention, and love.



OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE: GROW, KEEP, AND RENEW

KEEP

Goals

- 75% of students are promotable
- 15% decrease in tier 3/4 behaviors



Every Noble student deserves to be deeply known, fiercely protected, and consistently supported. We are not merely filling classrooms; we are committed to nurturing who students are becoming. In a world plagued by violence, poverty, and racism, our role is to ensure that school is a place where their brilliance is celebrated. That is why we create schools grounded in clarity, consistency, and connection, where safety encompasses not only physical security but also emotional and mental well-being. This work is sacred, urgent, and it requires every hallway, classroom, and adult to be part of a community that views our students not as problems to fix, but as purpose-filled individuals we are privileged to serve.

We will keep our students by building a community centered around the following strategies.

Providing Welcoming Learning Environments Through Clear, Consistent, Connected Spaces and Interactions



When students walk into school each morning, they should immediately feel safe, valued, and supported. Achieving this requires intentional, ongoing effort. At Noble, we embrace accountability. That is why every Noble campus will conduct 18 culture

audits each year, roughly one every two weeks, providing a thorough and consistent assessment of our classrooms, hallways, and common areas to identify where students are experiencing the support they deserve and where improvements are needed.

Campus Culture Leads and Instructional Leadership Coaches will collaborate with staff to transform audit insights into purposeful action. For campuses requiring more intensive support, our network team will engage closely to identify root causes and provide additional training and resources through our Culture Cohort model, a data-driven approach aimed at improving school culture and climate at the

grassroots level. This is how we create schools where every detail—every greeting, classroom setup, and moment—conveys the message: “You belong here.”

Promoting a safer environment by targeting the root causes of safety-based Tier 3 and Tier 4 behaviors (gang activity, drugs, fights, weapons)

Every day, many of our students face pressures that most adults would struggle to carry—violence in their neighborhoods, the lure of gangs, trauma, and the numbing escape of drugs. What may appear as discipline issues are often signs of deeper needs—for connection, belonging, and healing. If we respond with consequences alone, we risk pushing students further into harm. That is why we are establishing systems to identify early warning signs, act swiftly when concern arises, and provide genuine support in its place, all while upholding accountability.

From creating safer entry points with Evolv scanners to offering timely, compassionate responses after a crisis, we aim to ensure no student slips through the cracks. True safety comes not just from weapons detection systems, but from relationships—trusted mentors from partnerships with organizations like Peace Warriors and CHAMPS, substance misuse counselors who ask, “What is hurting?” instead of “What is wrong with you?,” and SEL Wellness Teams that regularly check in, offer care, and ensure students have what they need to thrive. By combining proactive safety measures with deep relationships and wraparound support, we do not just prevent harm, we also create pathways for healing. This is how we build schools where students not only navigate their realities but also discover the strength, peace, and purpose to shape their own futures.

Relentlessly Focusing On Promotion As A Key Lever For Student Retention

Grade-level promotion is more than a policy; it is a promise. When students are promoted on time, it signals they are on track, their efforts matter, and someone is paying attention. However, when a student begins to slip—academically,

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emotionally, or in attendance—we cannot wait for failure before we intervene. We must act early, with care and urgency. At Noble, we refuse to lower expectations. Instead, we increase support to help students meet the high bar.

That is why we are enhancing our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to quickly identify red flags, improve coordination across teams, and provide support that keeps students connected and moving forward. Advisory will play a key role, fostering relationships with trusted adults who track growth and facilitate honest conversations. Attendance will remain a priority, as each late arrival or missed day represents lost learning and often signals deeper issues. Campuses track attendance daily, follow up promptly, and partner with programs like RANG, which rewards students for attending school, to recognize progress. By relentlessly focusing on promotion, we instill belief in our students, their futures, and our collective responsibility to help them succeed.

Strengthening Our Student Retention Fluency and Systems

Keeping students is built on trust. When a student leaves Noble, it often signals that they no longer feel seen, supported, or hopeful about their future. Therefore, retention must be everyone's responsibility. From leaders to teachers to counselors to front office staff, every interaction is an opportunity to remind students: you matter, and we want you here.

We start by raising awareness. When a student decides to leave, exit surveys will help us understand why students leave, while “stay conversations” with at-risk students will allow us to intervene before it is too late. Each campus will have a trained Retention Lead focused on keeping students connected, engaging with families, tracking trends, and coaching staff. Together, we will cultivate a culture where students stay because they feel seen, supported, and rooted in a school that works with them, not just around them.

Offering Robust Noble League & Other Enrichment Offerings

When students feel connected beyond the classroom—on a field, a stage, or in a club—they see school as a place to discover their identity and potential. That is why enrichment is essential, not extra. These experiences in athletics, the arts, leadership, or travel help students find their purpose, build confidence, and stay engaged. Our mission is to ensure every student has access to opportunities that ignite their passion.

To bring this vision to life, we are expanding and enhancing enrichment across the board. Campuses will have access to high-impact developmental opportunities, tools to track participation and progress, and professional development for staff to create meaningful

experiences for students. The Noble League will grow stronger through enhanced coaching, more meaningful athlete feedback, and elevated championship events. We will also increase participation in Summer of a Lifetime, allowing more students to experience college early, inspiring them with a vision for what is possible. We believe that when students are deeply engaged in what matters to them, they do not just show up—they thrive, with purpose as their compass.



Promoting Positive School Experiences and Milestones

Every student deserves to look back on their school years with pride, not just in their achievements, but in how they were treated and celebrated along the way. From daily classroom experiences to milestones like graduation, these moments shape students' self-perception and connection to their school community. Promoting positive school experiences goes beyond fun events; it is about intentionally fostering belonging, confidence, and joy throughout every student's journey.



To make this a reality, we are equipping campuses with better tools to measure and respond to student experiences, ensuring feedback is collected and acted upon. We will provide clear guidelines and support for key moments like Report Card Pick-Up, promotion ceremonies, and graduation, so every milestone reflects the excellence and care our students deserve. When we do this well, students feel not only seen but celebrated, and that celebration fuels their purpose, reminding them they are part of a community that believes in them.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE: GROW, KEEP, AND RENEW

RENEW

Goals

- 75% of teachers licensed



Investing deeply in our educators strengthens the future of every Noble student. That is why we have set a bold goal: to have 75% of our teachers licensed by August 2027. Achieving this goal is not just about meeting our charter requirements; it is a commitment to our students that they will have skilled teachers equipped with the latest research-based strategies. By earning a Professional Educator License (PEL), our teachers will enhance their skills, benefiting every student through proven experience and innovative methods.

We will meet one of our charter renewal requirements by investing in our teachers with a few key strategies.

Partner with Licensure Programs

We are building strong partnerships with Noble-vetted licensure programs to provide teachers with clear, mission-aligned, affordable pathways to earn or renew their PELs. By expanding our collaborations with alternative-certification providers and universities, we aim to identify additional licensure pathways that are affordable, mission-aligned, and integrated into educators' daily work, minimizing time away from the classroom while maximizing impact.

Communicate Consistently to Leaders and Staff

Effective communication is essential for achieving our licensure goal. Our credentials team will provide campus leaders with regularly updated dashboards to track teachers pursuing certification, ensuring no one is missed. This visibility allows leaders to celebrate milestones and offer personalized touchpoints where needed. The Noble Support Team will continue to have a consistent in-person presence on campus to communicate directly with staff who are in programs and considering additional certification.

Improving Personnel Practices

To achieve our goal, we will continue to refine our approach to attracting, placing, and retaining teachers. We will prioritize licensed educators through targeted recruitment efforts, including alumni outreach, professional networks, and partnerships with educator preparation programs.

We will also support our active educators by providing additional compensation for earning their licenses and reimbursing expenses for on-time renewals.

Beginning in April 2025, all newly hired, unlicensed instructors are expected to enroll in a PEL program within their first year at Noble. To ensure ongoing progress, our Human Resources and Credentials teams will conduct semi-annual re-verifications to maintain real-time awareness of licensure status.

Measure and Enhance Support for Compliance

We will implement rigorous support systems to ensure that every Multilingual and Special Education learner receives timely services. Our Student Services team will conduct monthly audits to review IEPs and intervention logs, sharing reports with principals and network coaches to identify gaps and mobilize network support. Each Student Service Support Lead from the Noble Support Team will partner with five to six schools throughout the year, conducting on-site visits to observe and provide high-impact support related to compliance and instructional practices for Multilingual learners, students with IEPs, and those in co-teaching intervention blocks. They will also lead targeted professional learning on differentiated instruction and progress monitoring. By embedding these experts alongside campus teams, we aim to create a culture of continuous improvement and support that delivers the high-impact, student-centered instruction our students deserve.



OUR COMMITMENT TO INNOVATION

Nationally, students from the highest income quartile earn bachelor's degrees at a rate of 62%, while those from the lowest quartile do so at just 13%¹. In Chicago, only 24% of 9th graders will eventually earn a Bachelor's degree², a sobering statistic that includes Noble's elevated outcomes. At Noble, 35% of students earn a bachelor's degree, exceeding the citywide average and more than doubling the national rate for low-income students. While this progress is meaningful, it is not enough.

We know that real, lasting, generational progress requires more than strong systems—it demands bold, creative, and transformative thinking and efforts. As we look to the future, we are committed to delivering on the next frontier of equity-driven solutions that push beyond the limits of what schools have traditionally been, particularly for our most vulnerable students. In this spirit and as a critical part of our strategic vision, we will launch a Noble-wide innovation initiative focused on solving the most persistent barriers facing our students. The work will begin with structured research, listening sessions with students, families, staff, alumni, and external experts to help guide us, as well as a deep analysis of existing gaps. We will pilot promising ideas, evaluate their impact, and refine them in real-time—with the goal of identifying groundbreaking, scalable solutions.

This innovation strategy, culminating in a wide-scale launch in SY28, will begin with deep research and design in SY26, followed by targeted pilots in SY27. It will reflect the best of Noble: grounded in evidence, shaped by the voices of our community, and driven by the belief that every student deserves access to great opportunities—and the tools to realize them.

OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT TO ANTI-RACISM AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Noble's work is civil rights work. It is anti-racist by nature, rooted in the belief that every student, regardless of background or circumstance, deserves access to an excellent education; the opportunity to attend and complete college; and the power to lead a choice-filled life. We do this work in the face of systemic racism, historic disinvestment, and structural inequity because we believe deeply in our students' brilliance and potential. The tenets of anti-racism and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are not adjacent to our work; they are a core part of how we Grow students, Keep students, and Renew our charter to serve generations to come. These principles inform our decisions, guide our systems and structures, and shape the experiences we strive to create for students and staff. This is not new to us—it is core to who we are.

As we move forward with this new Strategic Plan, we reaffirm that anti-racism and DEI are not standalone priorities or parallel efforts. They are embedded in every part of Grow, Keep, and Renew. Each priority will be actively interrogated through a lens of equity and anti-racism, and we will course-correct whenever our systems or outcomes fall short. We will continue to confront inequities with honesty and integrity and hold ourselves accountable to the promises we make to our students, families, and staff. Our pursuit of excellence is inseparable from our pursuit of equity, and this plan, like the one before it, carries that commitment forward with clarity, urgency, and resolve.

THE CALL TO ACTION

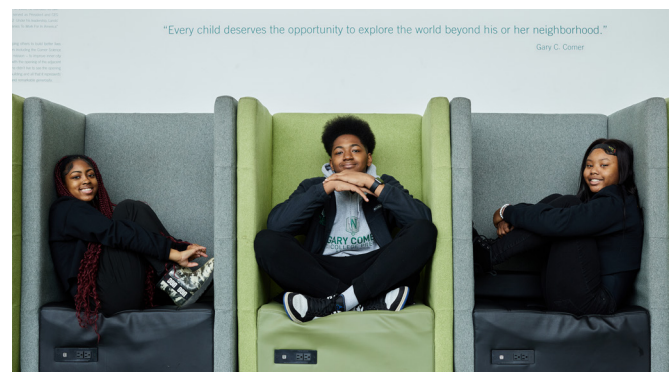
Thank you to the thousands who contributed to this plan: 3,664 family survey responses, 1,517 staff responses (including 295 alumni), 1,200 responses across 36 NST functions, a CEO listening session with 100 participants, 31 meetings with senior leaders, and four board listening sessions. Your honest feedback has shaped our collective direction.

To our Noble community—teachers, staff, families, board members, and partners—this plan requires our unwavering commitment. We will measure our progress, adapt as needed, and celebrate every milestone. Each college degree represents not only academic achievement but also a step toward dismantling systemic inequities and unleashing the brilliance of our students.

Through **Grow**, we will cultivate transformative academic and personal growth. Through **Keep**, we will create schools where every student feels safe, known, and deeply connected. And through **Renew**, we will protect and strengthen Noble's excellence for generations to come.

Together, we will write the next chapter of Noble Schools, one where every student discovers their purpose and secures the college degree that unlocks a life of choice, impact, and multi-generational change.

Noble Efforts Change Lives. Be Noble.



¹ Richard Whitmire.

The B.A. Breakthrough: How Ending Diploma Disparities Can Change the Face of America. October 2024

² The Educational Attainment of Chicago Public Schools Students: 2023
Shelby Mahaffie, Alexandra Usher, Jenny Nagaoka, and Dominique McKoy

