



HOW TO SCALE COLLEGE IN HIGH SCHOOL



COLLEGE IN HIGH SCHOOL
ALLIANCE

**A State Policy Guide for Implementing
Dual Enrollment and Early College Designs
Under the Every Student Succeeds Act**

February 2017



About the College in High School Alliance

The College in High School Alliance, founded in September 2016, is a coalition of leading national organizations committed to policies that support high-quality dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high schools. The CHSA believes that greater support for these models at the federal, state, and local levels will significantly improve the secondary and postsecondary outcomes of students, particularly those from low-income and middle-class backgrounds.

The work of the CHSA is coordinated by a steering committee comprised of Jobs for the Future, Bard College, KnowledgeWorks, the Middle College National Consortium, and the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships.

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INTRODUCTION

The Every Student Succeeds Act presents a unique opportunity for states and districts to help more young people enter and complete college by implementing school designs that improve the transition between high school and higher education. Early college and dual enrollment opportunities, which introduce high school students to college coursework, offer the potential to accelerate progression into—and success in—postsecondary education for students of all backgrounds. ESSA explicitly encourages states to use these approaches.

It has become well known that the percentage of jobs requiring postsecondary education and training is expected to reach a new high of 65 percent in 2020.¹ Yet our nation remains ill-prepared. U.S. companies are projected to face shortages of 3 million workers with associate’s degrees or higher and 5 million workers with technical certificates and credentials by 2020. States and school districts can use ESSA to expand proven programs that increase college completion rates and the proportion of workers with high-value postsecondary degrees or credentials.

Students who attend schools with high-quality dual enrollment (including concurrent enrollment) or early college designs are more likely to graduate high school, immediately enroll in college, and persist to completion than their peers. At the same time, these models provide students with significant flexibility in how to tailor their academic programs to their specific needs. They also meet a top priority of many families: reducing the time and cost for students to earn degrees and enter the workforce.

All three designs—dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college—involve high school students taking college courses for college credit. There is a wide range in terminology used to describe these programs across the country, but ESSA provides the first official federal definitions (see *Key Terms in ESSA*).² As used in this guide, *dual enrollment* is a broad term that includes all programs where high school students enroll in college or university courses. The college credits students earn are recorded on a transcript at the postsecondary institution and can be applied toward a degree there or transferred to other colleges or universities. The courses are typically provided at a discounted rate and are sometimes available at no cost to students, where state or local funding is available. *Concurrent enrollment* is used to describe a common type of dual enrollment in which students take college-level classes taught by qualified high school teachers.³ *Early college* is a whole-school design that uses dual enrollment as part of a comprehensive model providing intensive supports and the opportunity to earn one to two years of college credit—up to an associate’s degree—for free. Early college high schools have proven particularly effective for young people from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education.

The earliest dual and concurrent enrollment programs date back to the 1950s, but have experienced considerable growth in recent years. Early college schools, which have achieved impressive results in more than a decade of implementation, are ripe for scaling. As states redesign accountability systems under ESSA and districts rethink strategies for supporting struggling schools, dual enrollment and early college high schools should be considered key evidence-based strategies for moving students successfully to high school graduation and onto postsecondary education. These models offer states and districts the following benefits:

- ▶ **Strong evidence base.** Numerous rigorous, multi-institution and statewide quantitative research studies in more than a dozen states have shown that dual enrollment and early college high schools increase high school graduation rates, improve college readiness, and provide gains in college access, persistence, and completion for a diverse group of students (see *Evidence of Success*).⁴

- ▶ **Increase in college and career readiness.** Dual enrollment and early college schools help students successfully transition to higher education by building the academic skills, experiences, and behaviors necessary to succeed in college. At the same time, when aligned to career pathways, these designs provide students with the skills and credentials needed to attain a good job immediately after graduating high school and to rapidly complete postsecondary career training (see *Integrating Early College Designs & Career Pathways*).

- ▶ **Focus on underserved populations.** The majority of students served in schools with early college designs are from minority backgrounds, low-income families, and/or are first-generation college students. Early college enables these young people to accumulate substantial college credits toward—and, in many cases, including—a degree free of cost. Students from these historically underrepresented groups who attend early college schools are more likely to graduate high school, enroll in college, and persist to completion than their peers at other schools.⁵

- ▶ **Economic payoff and return on investment.**

Investments in early college and dual enrollment increase the productivity of public investment in education, as more students receive postsecondary credentials and degrees more quickly and at higher rates, and the need for and costs of remedial coursework decrease.⁶

Despite their advantages, schools with dual enrollment and early college designs frequently encounter inefficiencies between the secondary and postsecondary systems they aim to connect. For example, they are excluded from traditional funding streams available to each sector, which has hampered their ability to grow. ESSA, which requires evidence-based school improvement designs and explicit plans to improve student transitions between high school and higher education, enables these programs to expand to meet the demand for better college and career outcomes.

About this Guide

This guide was developed by Jobs for the Future and the CHSA. The CHSA is a coalition of leading national organizations dedicated to promoting policies in support of high-quality dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college schools. The work of the CHSA is coordinated by a steering committee comprised of Jobs for the Future, Bard College, KnowledgeWorks, the Middle College National Consortium, and the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). The guide, which has three parts, is designed to provide state and local policymakers with a clear roadmap for leveraging ESSA to support the implementation of early college and dual enrollment in their states and communities. The first section outlines core principles of each design. The second section explains how to incorporate dual enrollment and early college into ESSA's required state plans and describes new funding opportunities. The final section recommends best practices for state policymakers embarking on this work. Implementation tips, terms, and snapshots of successful programs appear in boxes throughout the guide.

Evidence of Success

Early College Designs

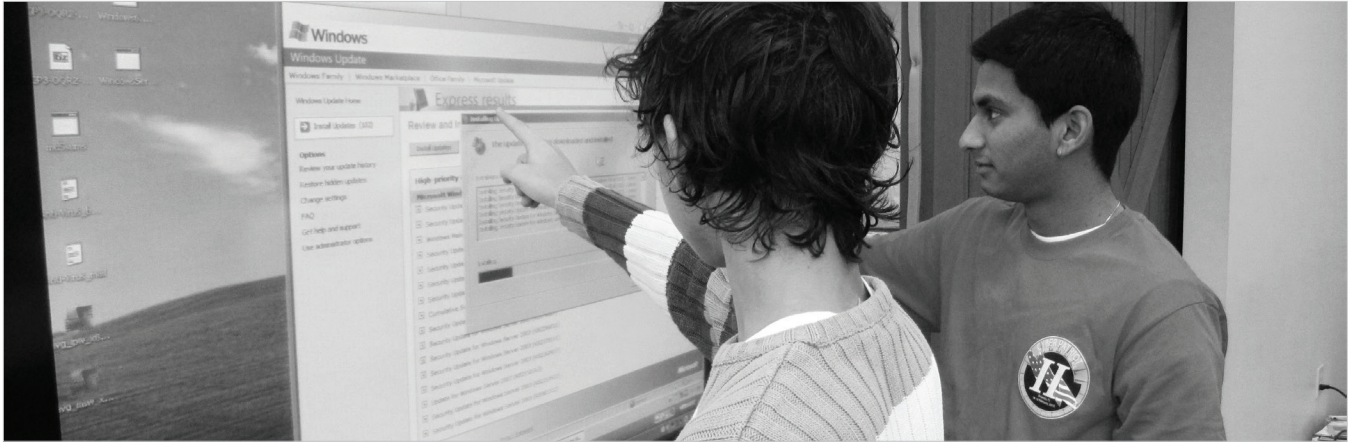
Early college is an evidence-based strategy for increasing college readiness and success for a wide range of students, particularly those traditionally underrepresented in higher education. The most comprehensive data on the outcomes of early college students come from the national Early College High School Initiative, which the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched in 2002 and Jobs for the Future coordinated. The most recent data available, based on outcomes for thousands of students who attended about 100 representative early college high schools, show the model's success:⁷

- 90% of early college students receive a high school diploma compared to 78% of students nationally.
- 30% of early college students earn an associate's degree or certificate with their high school diploma compared to very few nationally.
- 94% of early college students earn transferable college credits in high school, compared to 10% of students nationally.
- 86% of early college graduates who enroll in college after high school graduation persist to their second year, compared to 72% of college students nationally.
- One year past high school, 21% of early college students had earned a college degree, compared to 1% of comparison students. Two years past high school, 25% of early college students had earned a degree, compared to 5% of comparison students.⁸

Dual Enrollment

There is strong evidence that dual enrollment (including concurrent enrollment) improves college transitions, persistence, and completion, especially for students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. The data come from peer-reviewed studies using quasi-experimental research designs, as well as multi-institution and statewide regression correlation studies from a dozen states. Collectively, these studies show positive, statistically significant effects when high school students complete college courses, even after controlling for prior academic achievement and demographic variables. Most of these studies aggregate analysis across all forms of dual enrollment, regardless of the location, delivery method, or instructor type. Examples include:

- Students entering four Texas public universities with dual credit were 30% more likely to earn bachelor's degrees within six years than students who had not earned college credit in high school. Dual-credit students also were 42% more likely to complete bachelor's degrees within four years, the traditional undergraduate time period.⁹
- A study that used a nationally representative sample of students who began postsecondary education in 2003 showed that students who took dual enrollment courses were 10% more likely to complete a bachelor's degree than the comparison group. The benefits were even greater for students whose parents had not attended college; they were 12% more likely to complete a bachelor's degree than the comparison group.¹⁰
- A study that followed all 2010, 2011, and 2012 Colorado high school graduates found that students who took dual and concurrent enrollment courses were 23% more likely to enroll in college immediately following high school graduation and 9% less likely to enroll in remedial classes. Dual enrollment students also were more likely to earn higher grades in their first year of college and accumulate more credit hours by the end of their first year.¹¹



CORE PRINCIPLES

With decades of experience designing, implementing, and supporting dual enrollment and early college schools, the organizations in the CHSA have identified core principles that are most likely to lead to successful outcomes.

Core Principles of Dual & Concurrent Enrollment Programs

The following key principles distinguish high-quality dual and concurrent enrollment programs. These principles build on NACEP's Standards for Program Quality, but extend those standards to multiple models of dual enrollment course delivery and to address issues of access and affordability.¹² NACEP's vision is a future where all high school students will be prepared for, have access to, and succeed in quality college courses.

1. Preparation

There is a growing recognition that it is fundamental to the mission of high schools to prepare all students for postsecondary education, whether in specific career areas leading to occupational credentials or in general education pathways leading to associate's and bachelor's degrees.

Dual and concurrent enrollment programs with meaningful ongoing collaboration between high school and postsecondary partners can create college-going cultures and effective integration of college curriculum into secondary schools. These factors can help ensure that every high school student is prepared to take at least one college course prior to graduating.

2. Access

Students who demonstrate the ability to benefit from college courses should be able to access dual and concurrent enrollment courses regardless of where they live, the high school they are enrolled in, ability to pay, or unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.

To scale up student access to high-quality dual and concurrent enrollment programs, college courses should be delivered in a variety of ways, including at local high schools, in career centers, at college campuses, or through distance education technology. Student eligibility should be based on demonstrated performance in the subject area. The cost of participation should be free or significantly reduced for low- and middle-income students. Unnecessary gatekeeping measures, such as signatures from counselors and principals, which can serve as bureaucratic barriers to entry, should be eliminated or minimized.

3. Success

As their first experience with college courses, dual and concurrent enrollment students gain exposure to the academic challenges of college. In order to succeed, they need appropriate college learning resources, support services, and advising.

Poor performance in a college course can be not just discouraging for high school students, but also potentially damaging due to the information being recorded on a college transcript. Students should demonstrate readiness for the course they intend to take and have access to adequate learning resources such as libraries, laboratories, performance spaces, and equipment. High-quality academic advising, to help students choose appropriate courses, and support services, to help students balance school and other obligations, are essential.

4. Quality college courses

Institutions must commit appropriate resources, particularly faculty time and effort, to ensuring appropriate levels of academic oversight.

To ensure that college courses offered to high school students are of the same quality and rigor as the courses offered on campus to matriculated college students, all institutions should follow NACEP's national standards of quality for concurrent enrollment courses and uphold high standards for other models of dual enrollment. Students should be held to consistent college-level expectations, including being assessed on campus-established course learning outcomes. Instructors teaching college courses must meet the academic requirements for faculty and be provided course training and discipline-specific professional development. Dual and concurrent enrollment programs should provide meaningful opportunities for faculty across the K-12 and higher education sectors to collaborate with peers from their academic disciplines to raise the rigor of the high school experience.

Core Principles of Early College Designs

The following key principles encourage the creation of schools with effective early college designs. These principles build on the success of early college high schools around the country, while highlighting scaling practices that can provide students from all backgrounds—especially those historically underrepresented in higher education—with the opportunity to earn college credit in high school.

1. Substantial, transferable college credit

Early college high schools offer an integrated academic program and planned sequence of courses so that all students earn one semester to two years of transferable college credit leading to completion of a college degree or credential while in high school.

Early college designs do not provide just dual enrollment opportunities; they provide students with a coherent, aligned program of study toward a degree or certificate. This instructional framework leads to increased completion rates of postsecondary credentials.

2. High standards of quality

College courses offered by early college schools are rigorous, academically equivalent to those in traditional postsecondary settings, and delivered through high-quality practices by instructors who meet college qualifications.

College-level courses offered by early college schools are true college courses, with expectations and standards equal to all other college courses at the partnering institution of higher education. Quality control mechanisms are incorporated into state law or regulations and/or put in place by high schools and their postsecondary partners.

3. Comprehensive student supports

Early college schools engage all students in a comprehensive support system that proactively develops academic and social skills, as well as the behaviors and knowledge necessary for high school and college completion.

Early college schools provide students with a comprehensive structure of supports, such as specialized instructional practices, a formal system of tutoring, and focused guidance and counseling to enable diverse learners to achieve college-ready standards and gain “college knowledge.”

4. Partnerships

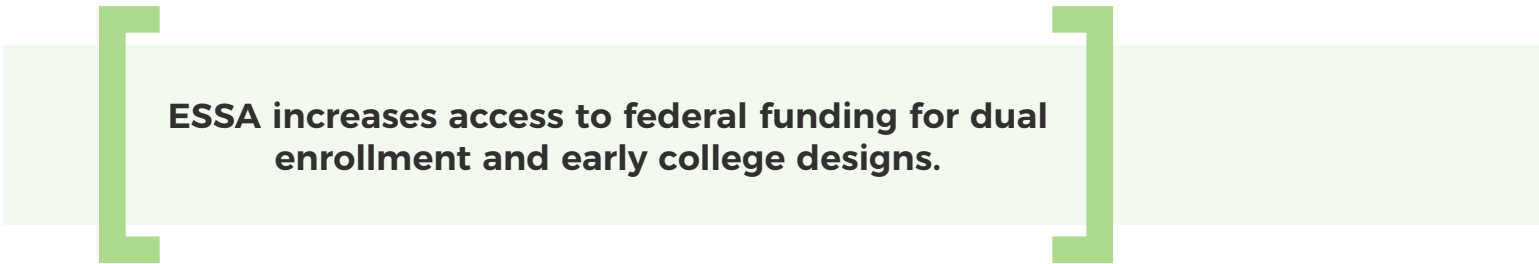
Early college schools are created and sustained by a close, formal partnership between a local education agency and at least one higher education institution, who are jointly accountable for student success.

Strong, formal partnerships are necessary to ensure maintenance of responsibilities, rigor of coursework, individualized supports for students, and clear pathways into further postsecondary education.

5. Population served

Early college schools are committed to serving students from low-income families and other backgrounds underrepresented in higher education.

Early college schools are designed to serve students with the most to gain from accelerated learning opportunities: low-income youth, first-generation college goers, students of color, English language learners, and other groups that have been underserved historically.



ESSA increases access to federal funding for dual enrollment and early college designs.



USING ESSA TO EXPAND DUAL ENROLLMENT & EARLY COLLEGE DESIGNS

The passage of ESSA in December 2015 kicked off a new era in education reform. Instead of the top-down approach to federal education policy embodied by No Child Left Behind, ESSA gives states the flexibility to design new systems of school accountability, educator support, and continuous improvement.

ESSA empowers states and local decision makers to implement the strategies they choose for improving teaching and learning, provided that they are grounded in evidence of success. The law also asks states to develop plans for how they will effectively transition students from secondary to postsecondary education. States can meet the expectations for both use of evidence-based approaches and improving postsecondary transitions by expanding student access to high-quality dual enrollment programs and early college schools.

Incorporating Dual Enrollment, Concurrent Enrollment, & Early College Designs into ESSA State Plans

ESSA encourages states and school districts to consider dual enrollment and early college as key strategies for successfully preparing students for college in three ways: enabling them to use federal funds to support college coursework, encouraging greater accountability and data transparency, and requiring written plans to improve achievement in the lowest-performing schools. In addition, ESSA provides the first federal definitions for “dual or concurrent enrollment” and “early college high school.”

ACCOUNTABILITY & DATA

Under ESSA, high schools must report annual data on students taking accelerated coursework to earn postsecondary credit. These include students in dual and concurrent enrollment programs as well as those taking Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and examinations. School report cards must include the number and percentage of students enrolled in all accelerated coursework. For maximum effectiveness, states should consider disaggregating data by course type. Accelerated coursework enrollment must be disaggregated by the ESSA-identified student subgroups, though states might do further disaggregation, as well.¹³

The data will help states, districts, and other stakeholders identify the impact of each model as well as areas throughout the state where students would benefit from additional access to these opportunities. States might also consider reporting additional metrics, such as students who earn associate’s degrees, those earning a significant number of credit hours (e.g., those earning at least 12), and/or those taking college courses in STEM and/or career and technical education areas.

Tips for Including Dual Enrollment & Early College High Schools in State Accountability Systems

1. Focus on completion of college courses, not just access to them.
2. Ensure each measure of college coursework is weighted meaningfully in the accountability system, with a meaningful denominator (such as the ninth-grade cohort).
3. Increase points awarded for greater numbers of college credit accumulated, including completion of a degree or credential.
4. Allow a range of models for participating in advanced coursework and earning college credit (e.g., dual enrollment, early college, AP, and IB).
5. Disaggregate various advanced coursework models and weight them equally.
6. Use consistent definitions of early college and dual and concurrent enrollment programs.
7. Build the necessary system and financial capacity to ensure widespread student access and success in quality college courses.

Key Terms in ESSA

Dual or Concurrent Enrollment

“A dual- or concurrent-enrollment program is offered by a partnership between at least one institution of higher education and at least one local educational agency through which a secondary school student who has not graduated from high school is able to enroll in one or more postsecondary courses and earn postsecondary credit that:

- Is transferable to the institutions of higher education in the partnership
- Applies toward completion of a degree or recognized educational credential as described in the Higher Education Act of 1965.”

Early College High School

“The term ‘early college high school’ means a partnership between at least one local educational agency and at least one institution of higher education that allows participants to simultaneously complete requirements toward earning a regular high school diploma and earn not less than 12 credits that are transferable to the institutions of higher education in the partnership as part of an organized course of study toward a postsecondary degree or credential at no cost to the participant or participant’s family.”

Evidence-Based

“[A]n activity, strategy, or intervention that—

- (I) Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on—
 - (i) Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study;
 - (ii) Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or
 - (iii) Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or
- (II) Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes; and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.”

Source: House of Representatives, Every Student Succeeds Act: Conference Report to Accompany S. 1177

Each state also is required to design an accountability system composed of multiple measures of school performance, including at least one indicator of school quality or student success. This provides states with the opportunity to incorporate measures that directly relate to student readiness for postsecondary education. Indeed, ESSA specifically identifies access to and completion of advanced coursework as a measure of school quality or student success for high schools.

As of the 2016-17 school year, 13 states already include dual and concurrent enrollment courses as an indicator of college readiness in their state accountability systems. If a state chooses to incorporate advanced coursework as a new indicator, the state can measure the percentage of

students earning college credits while in high school and include that data in formulas used to differentiate and classify schools.¹⁴ By doing so, part of a school's success will be determined by student participation in college coursework and, preferably, the success of students in those courses. This can encourage the expansion of dual enrollment models. As noted above, research shows that students who complete college courses in high school are more likely to attend and be successful in college. Some of that research shows increased benefits when students complete at least 12 credit hours, and states might consider providing bonus points in the accountability system for students who succeed in more than one course.

EXAMPLE STATE A

State A is designing a new statewide accountability system under ESSA. Due to a strong commitment to providing college course-taking opportunities to all high school students, State A selects attainment of college credit as its indicator of school quality or student success. State A tracks data on participation of high school students in dual and concurrent enrollment courses and student success at earning college credit through those programs as well as exam-based programs. State A combines both enrollment and success in advanced coursework into its new accountability index, and includes extra points for students succeeding in more than one college course. On school report cards, State A provides detailed information on each of these metrics, disaggregated by ESSA subgroups.

SCHOOL SUPPORT & IMPROVEMENT

ESSA asks states to identify their lowest-performing schools and schools where subgroups of students persistently underperform. School districts must develop plans to accelerate student achievement in those schools. For the most struggling schools, ESSA includes dedicated funding to support interventions based on a needs assessment. In all cases, school improvement strategies must be evidence-based (*see Key Terms in ESSA box*).

As states and districts consider evidence-based strategies to effectively transition students from high school to college, they should consider implementing dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, or early college designs. As noted above, these programs have an established evidence base showing that they increase high school graduation, college readiness, and college access, persistence, and completion—especially for low-income students, first-generation college goers, and other students from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

EXAMPLE STATE B

As part of its consolidated state plan, State B focuses on early college designs as a strategy for improving its low-performing high schools. State B identifies or creates an intermediary organization to provide the school district with strong technical assistance in the design and development of the early college high school, with ongoing implementation support. As required by ESSA, State B collects and reports data on student enrollment and success in dual and concurrent enrollment courses. School districts in State B use this reported data as part of the needs assessment for each school identified for comprehensive support and improvement. Through that process, a school district in State B sees that an identified high school has low access to dual and concurrent coursework, especially for underperforming subgroups of students. Working closely with the state-identified intermediary, the school district develops a plan to accelerate student learning by transforming the identified high school into an early college school with the assistance of one or more higher education providers. To support the development and implementation of this program, the school uses Title I funding provided by the state through the Direct Student Services program.

New ESSA Funding Opportunities to Develop Dual Enrollment & Early College Designs

ESSA supports states and districts interested in dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college school designs by increasing access to federal funding for the development and implementation of these programs. The examples below identify some of the ways in which states and school districts may use funds made available under ESSA to support these high-impact models.

Title I: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Education Agencies

- *Section 1003A*. Direct Student Services (Local Use of Funds)—Allows a state education authority to provide grants to local education agencies (LEAs) that have identified many schools as needing comprehensive support and improvement, or are implementing targeted support and improvement plans in order to pay for student service activities. These include advanced courses and postsecondary-level instruction.
- *Section 1114*. Schoolwide Programs—Allows secondary schools operating schoolwide programs, as allowed under ESSA, to use their funds to run dual or concurrent enrollment programs, which may include early college high schools.

- *Section 1115*. Targeted Assistance Schools—Allows secondary schools operating a targeted assistance program to use their funds to run dual or concurrent enrollment programs. Targeted assistance programs provide additional services to individual students who have been identified as low achieving or at risk of becoming low achieving.

Title II: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, and Other School Leaders

- *Section 2101*. Formula Grants to States—Includes an allowable use of state formula grant funds to provide assistance to LEAs for professional development and to support teachers in obtaining skills and credentials in order to teach as part of a dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, or early college high school program.
- *Section 2103*. Local Use of Funds—Includes an allowable use of LEA funds for professional development for identifying gifted and talented students and providing them with dual or concurrent enrollment programs.

Title III: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students

- *Section 3115. Subgrants to Eligible Entities*—Allows recipients of grants issued to improve English language learning to use funds to offer dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school programs to English language learners.

Title IV: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants

- *Section 4104. Formula Grants to States (State Use of Funds)*—Under Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment formula grant program allocation, dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school programs are allowable uses of state funds.
- *Section 4107. Activities to Support Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities*—Under Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment formula grant program allocation, dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school programs are allowable uses of LEA funds.

EXAMPLE STATE C

State C encourages school districts throughout the state to consider implementing dual enrollment or early college models as a strategy to support successful transitions into postsecondary education and the workforce. State C works with higher education partners to develop funding policies that allow high school students to take college courses free of tuition and fees. To support development of the design, schools use multiple funding sources provided by ESSA. A school developing a comprehensive dual enrollment or early college initiative in a Title I schoolwide program uses the following: Title I funds to design a program of study for the school, Title II funds to support professional development for teachers to prepare them to educate students in college coursework, Title III funds to provide access to advanced coursework specifically for English language learners, and Title IV funds to support planning and design of student support services and counseling.

EXAMPLE DISTRICT D

District D has several high schools currently implementing early college and concurrent enrollment programs. District D uses funds through Title II to support improved professional development for high school teachers to increase the number of educators prepared to teach college coursework. District D also uses part of its Title IV allocation to improve college counseling and transition supports for students enrolled in dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities across the district.



STATE POLICY BEST PRACTICES

The following state policy best practices were developed by the CHSA to design and implement high-quality early college high schools and dual enrollment programs. While not all of the policies must be in place to proceed with implementing these strategies, the following practices allow high-quality early college and dual enrollment models to expand and thrive in a sustainable way.

Ensure all of the state's public high schools offer equitable access to high-quality dual enrollment opportunities in general education and technical courses.

- Incentivize and prioritize early college and dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities at all high schools.
- Require high schools to award credit toward graduation for college courses.
- Align dual and concurrent enrollment offerings with postsecondary requirements in rigorous technical programs of study aligned to regional labor markets and/or transferrable general education pathways toward bachelor's degrees.
- Base eligibility for college courses on multiple measures of readiness, rather than only age, grade level, or a single standardized assessment.

- Allow for a wide range of higher education partners to offer dual and concurrent enrollment courses. Encourage institutions of higher education to engage in partnerships with districts that are substantially below average in rates of college-going graduates.

Ensure quality implementation of dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college designs.

- Adopt high standards for academic quality into state law or regulations, or mandate that high schools and their postsecondary partners have such mechanisms in place. Incentivize programs to pursue nongovernmental peer review mechanisms to demonstrate quality, such as the program accreditation offered by NACEP. Incorporate quality control mechanisms to ensure that college courses offered to high school students are equivalent to sections taught to traditional college students. These should include professional development, course observations, use of postsecondary syllabi and curricula, alignment

of assessment methods and grading, prerequisite requirements, performance metrics, and student support services.

- Specify key roles and commit human and financial resources to coordinating and monitoring dual and concurrent enrollment programs at the state education agency, state higher education agency, and postsecondary system offices.
- In the case of an early college high school initiative, designate a state-level entity to “own” the initiative and take primary responsibility for conceptualizing, guiding, and giving assistance to the schools, districts, and college partners during the startup period and beyond. This entity could exist within the state government (e.g., the state education agency, a higher education agency, or a state board) or through an intermediary organization. This should be done in close collaboration with state higher education agencies and systems.
- Specify and document the key roles and responsibilities of the LEAs and postsecondary institutions through memoranda of understanding or cooperative agreements, including student advisement and support services.

- Clearly define the characteristics and components of early college designs in state statutes or regulations.

Build and support a corps of instructors who are qualified to teach college courses to concurrently enrolled high school students.

- Enable high school teachers to qualify as college faculty by providing incentives to districts that support high school teachers to earn relevant graduate courses or degrees/credentials required for teaching college courses as adjunct faculty.
- Enable and encourage the use of college instructors to teach college courses in high schools, removing barriers (e.g., related to secondary school certification), and providing incentives for college faculty to participate in partnerships with high schools.
- Provide high-quality, continuous professional development to all instructors of college courses for high school students.

Integrating Early College Designs & Career Pathways

Across the country, states and districts are developing career pathways in K-12 schools. Career pathways integrate rigorous academics with sequenced, high-quality career and technical education courses designed to lead to career opportunities in high-demand industries. Dual and concurrent enrollment and early college designs offer significant benefits when combined with this kind of career-focused programming, allowing students interested in career-focused programming to make progress toward an industry-recognized credential or degree while still in high school. More than 30 percent of enrollment by high school students in dual and concurrent enrollment courses is in career and technical subjects. Leading states such as Illinois, Iowa, Oregon, and Utah have 40 to 50 percent of their dual and concurrent enrollments in career and technical subjects, such as health care, engineering and technology, business, transportation/logistics, and computer and information science.¹⁵

Base funding mechanisms on the principle of no cost to students and no financial harm to secondary and postsecondary partners.

- Provide flexible authority for school districts and colleges to pay for college courses to be delivered in a variety of ways that substitute for high school graduation requirements.
- Identify public funding from complementary college readiness, access, and success programs and/or develop a separate funding stream to support startup and ongoing costs. Focus this funding on students who are low-income and/or underrepresented in higher education.
- Ensure sustainable funding to allow programs to offer college courses at a dramatically reduced cost for all students, with a priority on keeping college courses for low-income students free of charge if full funding is not available for all students.

Ensure college credits earned in high school are transferable across the state higher education system.

- Create policies that require public institutions of higher education, and encourage private institutions, to accept dual and concurrent enrollment credits with no additional requirements than any other credit accepted by the issuing institution.
- Establish formal transfer systems within and across state higher education systems, including two-year and four-year public and private institutions, to maximize the transferability of college courses.

- Encourage institutions of higher education to make prerequisites for transfer into general education and major requirements for degree programs more transparent, and to make all transfer agreements widely accessible.

Ensure state reporting and accountability systems fully incorporate and incentivize/prioritize dual enrollment and early college designs.

- Collect the data necessary to analyze course-taking patterns of high school students, disaggregated by subject area and demographic group, to determine access to and success in college courses.
- Accountability systems should reward successful completion of (not just enrollment in) dual and concurrent enrollment courses that results in transferable college credit along with AP and IB exam performance. States should consider increased points for greater amounts of transferable college credit accumulated, including completion of a credential or degree.
- All indicators of advanced coursework, including dual and concurrent enrollment, AP, and IB should be separated and valued equally in reporting and accountability systems.



PROFILES OF DUAL ENROLLMENT & EARLY COLLEGE DESIGNS

STATEWIDE EFFORT

The State of North Carolina

To increase the number of students who graduate high school prepared to succeed in college, North Carolina embarked upon a statewide effort to expand access to early college high schools. North Carolina has created over 75 early college high schools serving 15,000 students. The initiative includes partnerships with the North Carolina Community College System, the University of North Carolina, and the North Carolina State Board of Education.

Results

A study from the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro compared students who attended an early college high school in North Carolina to those who entered the admissions lottery for early college programs but did not win a spot.¹⁶ The study found:

- 92% of early college students were “on track” to college in ninth grade, compared to 85% of students in the control group.
- Early college students earned an average of 22 college credits while in high school, compared to an average of less than 3 college credits earned in the control group.
- Early college students enrolled in college at a rate that was 15% higher than the control group.

Investments in early college and dual enrollment increase the productivity of public investment in education.

Middle College National Consortium

The Middle College National Consortium is a successful group of middle and early colleges located in 15 states, with concentrations in California, Michigan, and New York. The oldest, Middle College High School at LaGuardia, has been in operation since 1974. These schools are located on two- and four-year college campuses, and offer tuition-free courses to all enrolled students and access to college services and facilities to faculty and students alike. About 84 percent of students attending Middle College National Consortium high schools are nonwhite, and 74 percent are eligible for free and reduced price lunch.

Results

College course-taking students graduating from Middle College National Consortium high schools in 2006-2014 earned an average of 31.5 college credits and an average GPA of B-. The 2014 graduating class of college course-taking students earned the most college credits in social science, followed by English, math, and science, and 86 percent enrolled in STEM-related courses.¹⁸

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District, TX

In 2007, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District in South Texas launched a plan to implement early college districtwide in collaboration with South Texas College. Most PSJA students are first-generation college goers and 89 percent are from low-income families. Today, PSJA has 8 high schools with an early college design, enabling students to graduate with at least 12 college credits.

PSJA offers four distinct designs which incorporate meaningful tuition-free college courses toward a postsecondary degree or credential:

1. *Standalone early college high school*: A comprehensive early college model that offers every student the support and sequence of courses to earn up to 60 college credits or an associate's degree with their diploma.
2. *Back on track to college*: A specialized early college model to serve students who have been identified as off track for high school graduation or who have left school.
3. *Dual degree pathways*: High schools with redesigned grades 11 and 12 that provide dual enrollment opportunities for all students.
4. *School within a school early college high school*: Small early college "learning communities" that offer dual enrollment.

Results

Between 2007 and 2012, PSJA raised the four-year graduation rate from 62 to 87 percent and cut dropout rates by 75 percent. PSJA also doubled the number of students enrolling in college after graduation in two years.¹⁷

Akron Early College High School, OH

Akron Early College High School began in 2007 as part of KnowledgeWorks' network of nine early college high schools in Ohio.¹⁹ AECHS is a grades 9–12 school on the campus of the University of Akron. It serves first-generation college goers and low-income students in a comprehensive model, with full immersion in college courses to earn both high school and college credits. Students receive academic and personal support services to ensure a smooth transition from high school to college.

Results

AECHS has earned distinctions from: the Ohio Department of Education as one of four “High Performing Schools of Honor,” and *Newsweek* magazine’s “Top 500 Public High Schools in the Nation” and “Top 500 Public High Schools Beating the Odds.” The school projects that 93 percent of its 2017 graduates will earn an associate’s degree.²⁰

Bard High School Early College Newark, NJ

Bard High School Early College Newark, established in 2011, is a partnership between Bard College, a private, nonprofit college of the liberal arts and sciences, and Newark Public Schools. Students have the opportunity to earn up to 60 transferable college credits and an associate’s degree from Bard, tuition free, alongside a New Jersey high school diploma. The vast majority of BHSEC Newark students come from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education. In the 2016-17 school year, 68 percent of students were considered low-income because they qualified for federal free or reduced-price lunch and 97 percent were students of color.²¹ BHSEC Newark is part of a national network of tuition-free early colleges run by Bard that serves over 2,300 students.

Results

In the BHSEC Newark Class of 2016, 74 percent of students graduated with an associate’s degree, and 100 percent of students earned a high school diploma and some college credit.²² In the 2016-17 school year, BHSEC Newark was ranked number 16 in the state based on its students’ performance on the Common Core-aligned Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers English Language Arts assessment and number 25 in the state based on its students’ performance on the PARCC math assessment.²³

Marlborough STEM Early College High School, MA

Marlborough STEM Early College High School was founded in 2011 as part of the Pathways to Prosperity Network.²⁴ The program, which is part of Marlborough's public high school, provides integrated college-prep and career-focused curriculum in grades 9–10 and dual enrollment in college courses in grades 11–12 with wraparound support services. Partners include the regional Workforce Investment Board, the Partnership for a Skilled Workforce, and local industry partners. Employers help shape the curriculum and offer work-based learning opportunities, including job shadowing, mentoring, and internships.

Results

In 2015, the program had a 100 percent graduation rate and a 95 percent college placement rate. In addition, 52 percent of graduating students in 2015 reported continuing with STEM fields in college.²⁵

Toppenish High School, Yakama Indian Reservation, WA

Toppenish High School is a rural school located on the Yakama Nation tribal reservation in Washington State. Over 96 percent of the 716 students are classified as Hispanic or Native American and more than 99 percent of the students are eligible to receive federal free or reduced-price lunch based on low family incomes. The school entered into the partnership with UW in the High School, the concurrent enrollment program at University of Washington in Seattle, to provide students access to rigorous coursework and college credits. The partnership offers students the opportunity to earn college credits without leaving the high school campus.

Results

The school earned recognition from the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction as a STEM Lighthouse School and an Emerging Innovative School, and received four Washington Achievement Awards identifying it as one of the state's top-performing schools.²⁶

Dual enrollment and early college help high school students build the skills, experiences, and behaviors necessary to succeed in college.

ENDNOTES

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