

Attachment C

Early College High School

Early college high school is a bold approach, based on the principle that academic rigor, combined with the opportunity to save time and money, is a powerful motivator for students to work hard and meet serious intellectual challenges. Early college high schools blend high school and college in a rigorous yet supportive program, compressing the time it takes to complete a high school diploma and the first two years of college. The schools are designed so that low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English Language learners, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education can simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or up to two years of credit toward a Bachelor's degree- tuition free (*from The Early College High School Initiative*).

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) has been working with Austin Community College (ACC) for the past year to develop an early college high school as one of the new instructional models to open at one of the new repurposed high schools in August 2009.

A college preparatory learning program

- Juniors and seniors are prepared to take college-level courses in high school.
- Economics will not be a barrier to obtaining college credit or certification as the students will be able to receive dual credit for these upper level courses.
- Instruction will be based on high-school, best-practice models with students in relatively small classes, so students will receive ongoing academic support and will not have to contend with the difficulties many students face in transition to traditional, large college classes.

A powerful partnership

- A wing of the campus will be designated as an ACC satellite campus. The college-level, dual credit courses will be taught in that wing.
- ACC will use those classrooms at night for parents and other community members taking ACC courses, an arrangement that also provides flexibility for the high school students to schedule courses in the evening if other activities, including work, occur during the school day.
- ACC's Eastview campus, located less than one mile away, has an extensive program focusing on medical careers and could hold the most appropriate medical career courses on the high school campus.
- Students wanting or needing to take additional, more specialized courses offered at the Eastview campus, AISD would use a district bus to shuttle students back and forth to the college campus.

- ACC will establish a college center on the campus designed to provide an additional layer of ongoing college counseling and support to students, including working with students on their college and career plans as part of the dual-credit program, working with students on matriculation from the high school to finish their associate's degree or certification or to attend a four-year institution, and helping students receive financial aid and scholarship support.
- For the 2008-09 school year, ACC will provide preparatory courses in the spring semester on the high school campus so that students will be able to pass the TASP test or show proficiency on the TAKS test in order to be eligible for dual-credit courses the following year.

Results

Nationally, early college high schools have data showing higher achievement rates, attendance, and promotion rates than similar student populations in their districts. For example:

- Attendance rates for early college high school students average over 90%
- Grade-to-grade promotion rates exceed 90%
- Early college student outperform students in their districts on state-mandated math and English Language Arts exams.

(from Early College High School Initiative)

The Challenge Early College High School in Houston is an example of a successful early college high school that serves many high poverty, at-risk students. Student performance at Challenge exceeds district averages on many critical measures. For example:

- 85% of students passed all tests on the 2007 TAKS versus 62% for the district
- 99% passed ELA TAKS and 92% passed Math TAKS in 2007
- 28% score commended on ELA TAKS and 19% on Math TAKS in 2007
- 77% of the class of 2006 graduated college ready versus the district average of 25%