

# Early Colleges: Creating Pathways for Access to Higher Education

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# Today's Panel



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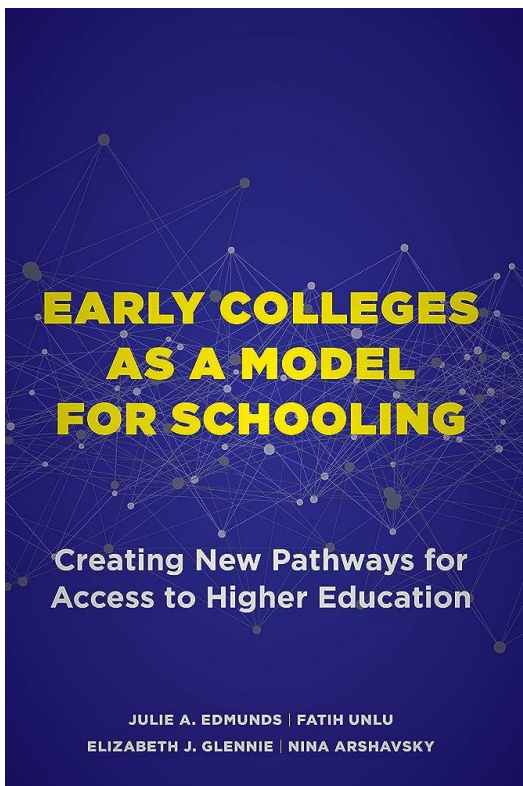
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## Early Colleges as a Model for Schooling: Creating New Pathways for Access to Higher Education

By Julie Edmunds, Elizabeth Glennie, Nina Arshavsky, and Faith Unlu

Published by Harvard Education Press

[Learn more about the book](#)

# Early Colleges Blend High School and College Experiences



In North Carolina, they are

- Small schools of choice
- Mostly located on college campuses
- Serving students in grades 9-12/13

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High school and college experiences happen at the same time

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Rigorous academic expectations coupled with support

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Students get high school diploma and associate degree or two years of college credit - simultaneously

# Early College Address Barriers to Postsecondary Education

## Financial

ECHS provide college courses free of charge, help students get access to financial aid

## Academic

ECHS provide rigorous instruction and access to college courses

## Cultural

ECHS provide explicit instruction and experiences preparing for college culture

## Logistical

ECHS provide support in applying to college

# Differences Between Early College and Dual Credit

## Early College

- Targets students underrepresented in college
  - Gives sense of college belonging
- College-going culture for whole school –
  - All students participate
- Clear pathway to associate/two years of credit
- Takes a comprehensive approach: reduces cultural and logistical barriers as well as academic and financial barriers

## Dual Credit

- Students within school choose to participate
- College ready and advantaged students have higher rates of participating
- Frequently individual courses (can be "random acts of college credit")
- Some assistance with academic preparation and financial barriers

# A History of Early Colleges

Early attempts to merge high school and college

**1900's-1930's**

LaGuardia Middle College

**1974**

Widespread adoption nationally

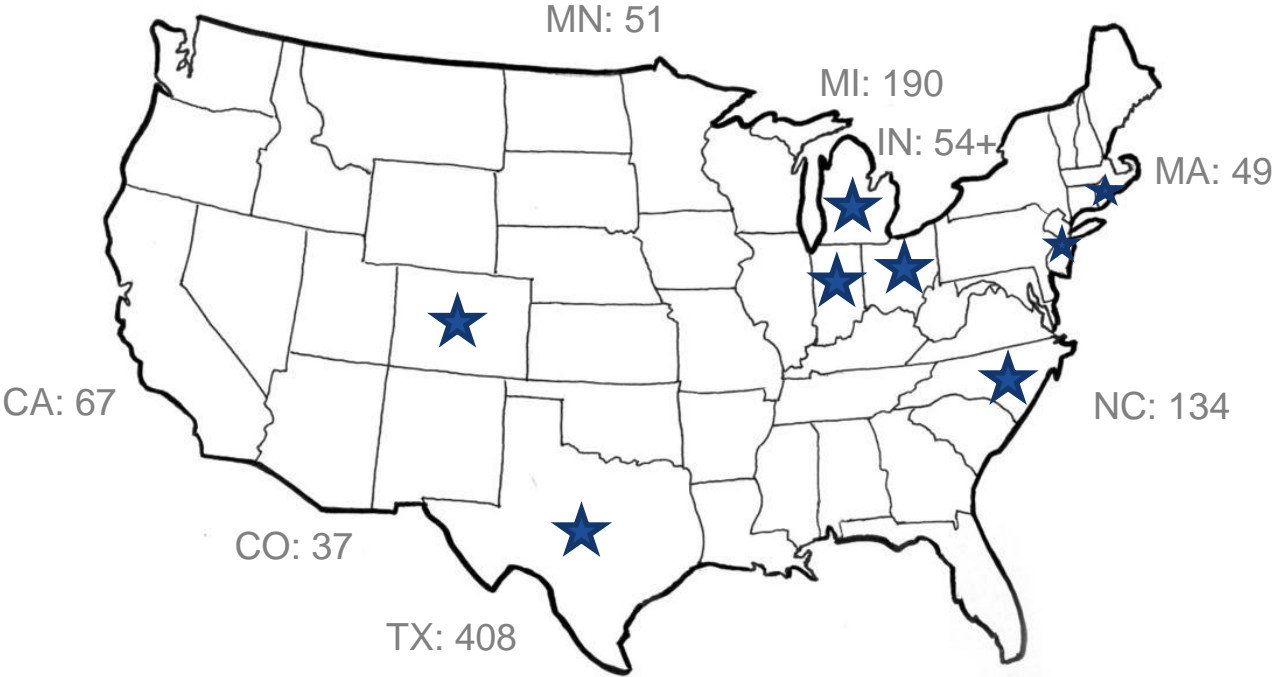
**1964**

Simon's Rock  
(Bard Early College)

**2001-09**

Gates Early College  
High School Initiative

# Early College High Schools and Programs: Selected States



Total is close to  
**1,100**

★ = Places We Have Worked



# What Do We Know About the Impacts of Early Colleges?

## High School

*(Edmunds et al, 2012, 2013, 2017)*

- Better attendance, lower suspensions
- Higher graduation rates, much higher number of college credits earned in high school\*

## College

*(Edmunds et al. 2017, 2020, 2022; Song & Zeiser, 2021)*

- More likely to enroll in college
- More likely to earn a degree  
*(3 times as likely to earn an associate degree)*
- Complete a higher number of advanced courses
- Shorter time to degree  
*(associate is two years more quickly, bachelor's is half a year more quickly)*
- Graduating with less debt.

\*These results apply to small, stand-alone early colleges.



## **The Early College Network**

is a network of early college high schools that convenes principals, counselors, college liaisons, and teachers to share best practices, learn from one another, and advocate together to support student access and success in high school and beyond.

**2024  
EARLY COLLEGE  
SUMMIT**



JUNE 4-5, 2024

**The Early College Summit** is a two-day event where school teams, early college advocates, and other supporters gather to share best practices, learn about current research, and network with peers to inform continuous improvement of early college schools and programs.

# Learn More

- [Early Colleges as a Model for Schooling: Creating Pathways for Access to Higher Education](#)
- [Early College Research Center](#)
- [Early College Network](#)
- [2024 Early College Summit](#)

