Early Colleges: Creating Pathways for Access to Higher Education

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Today’s Panel

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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

High school and college experiences happen at the same time

Rigorous academic expectations coupled with support

Students get high school diploma and associate degree or two years of college credit - simultaneously
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>ECHS provide college courses free of charge, help students get access to financial aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>ECHS provide rigorous instruction and access to college courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>ECHS provide explicit instruction and experiences preparing for college culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logistical</td>
<td>ECHS provide support in applying to college</td>
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## Differences Between Early College and Dual Credit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early College</th>
<th>Dual Credit</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Targets students underrepresented in college</td>
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<td>- Gives sense of college belonging</td>
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<td>- College-going culture for whole school –</td>
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<td>- All students participate</td>
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<td>- Clear pathway to associate/two years of credit</td>
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<td>- Takes a comprehensive approach: reduces cultural and logistical barriers as well as academic and financial barriers</td>
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<td>- Students within school choose to participate</td>
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<tr>
<td>- College ready and advantaged students have higher rates of participating</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Frequently individual courses (can be &quot;random acts of college credit&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Some assistance with academic preparation and financial barriers</td>
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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

MAP: 1,100 places worked

RTI International | Early Colleges: Creating Pathways for Access to Higher Education
What Do We Know About the Impacts of Early Colleges?

**High School**  

- 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.

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