

SUPPORTING MIDDLE-EARLY COLLEGE STUDENTS IN COLLEGE CLASSES

Adapted from National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST), Teachers College, Columbia University forthcoming publication entitled *Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges: Design Options*, based on research by Barnett, E., Bucceri, K., Hindo, C., and Kim, J.

All around the country, new middle and early colleges are opening their doors. Many of them are brand new schools; others involve existing schools that are adopting all or portions of the early college model. To help them to make decisions about how to structure their schools, NCREST drew on the existing research literature. Each of the following sections summarizes available research on a key question pertaining to student success in college courses.

WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL “STARTER” COLLEGE COURSES FOR EARLY COLLEGE STUDENTS?

The type of starter course students take depends on the academic plan of the Early College. It is common for students to start with “College 101” or a similar class that teaches skills needed for college. Other common options are computer or arts classes. Table 1 shows the enrollments of the 1,729 9th graders in 20 Early Colleges associated with the Middle College National Consortium in 2009-10. This provides a good idea of the “starter” college courses used in these schools.

SUBJECT AREA	PERCENT OF ALL 9 TH GRADE ENROLLMENTS
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	25%
COMPUTERS	16%
COLLEGE SKILLS	13%
FINE/ PERFORMING ARTS	13%
HEALTH	10%
COMMUNICATIONS/ DESIGN	8%
LANGUAGES	7%
SOCIAL SCIENCE	5%
MATH	2%
EDUCATION	<1%
ENGLISH	<1%
SCIENCE	<1%
BUSINESS	<1%
PROTECTIVE SERVICE	<1%

Table 1: 9th enrollments in MCNC schools (2009-10)

SHOULD EARLY COLLEGE STUDENTS TAKE COLLEGE COURSES SINGLY OR IN GROUPS?

Across the country, Early College students most commonly start out taking their college courses in groups with other Early College students, and then become integrated into a regular college classes later on. Much depends on students’ maturity levels as well as on the policies of the college that influence what courses are open to Early College students and who pays for the courses. The following chart shows the distribution of Early College students in college courses in 2007-08.

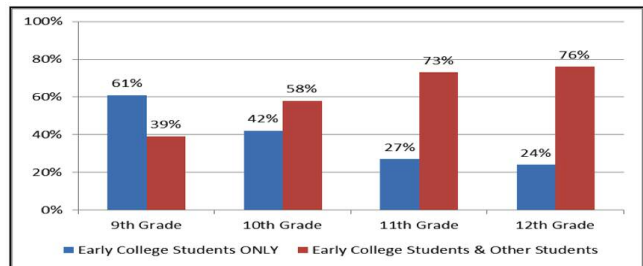


Figure 1: Early College Student Enrollment in College Courses

WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORT ARE COMMON IN EARLY COLLEGES?

Common academic supports include extra help from teachers, tutoring, and studying with peers. Graduating seniors who participated in an MCNC end-of-year survey indicated that they had received the following kinds of academic support at least once a week during the 2009-10 academic year.

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CONSORTIUM MATTERS

By Cecilia Cunningham, Executive Director, Middle College National Consortium



Cecilia Cunningham
Director, MCNC

New York State, like many other states, is looking for ways to fund tuition for early college students. Statistics from the New York state MCNC early colleges demonstrate that they are serving 78% of students that are eligible for free and reduced lunch and 90% children of color. If the state provides support by using existing Tuition Assistance Program funds for students in early colleges, all of our schools would be eligible for these resources. Since our early college students are not matriculated, the resources would be available to the schools directly. Currently the MCNC early colleges use a variety of funding sources including the per-pupil allotment, CUNY waivers, and college and high school resources. This funding stream is very important to the long-term sustainability of early colleges.

Some states are using monies designed for scholarships for underserved students such as the Hope Scholarship in Georgia. Like New York, the Georgia Hope Scholarship was in existence before the opening of early colleges and the funding was extended to early

colleges. While these attempts to expand access to existing pools of money are very important, there is a high probability that these pools of money will not be given significant additional resources to fund all eligible students.

With 38% of MCNC early college students in New York State graduating with 20 or more college credits and 61% graduating with 12 or more credits, students are demonstrating both the capacity and the desire to work hard and be college ready. If the demand increases for dual enrollment for all students, it might be time that we look at the way we are currently funding high school. Should the money follow the students to either internships sites or college? What kind of support must the schools provide for the students to make good use of the opportunities beyond the high school walls? In Middle Colleges, we have defined both the level and kind of support needed but not attached a cost to it. We are sure that students are hungry for challenging opportunities outside of the high school classroom.

Nancy Hoffman, Keynote Speaker 2012 Summer Institute

Renowned educator Nancy Hoffman from Jobs For the Future (JFF) will be the keynote speaker at MCNC's annual Summer Professional Development Institute. Ms. Hoffman works with JFF's Early College High School initiative, a network of over 270 schools in 28 states, to expand opportunities for high school students to take college level courses and receive an Associate's degree.

Dr. Hoffman's book, *Minding the Gap: Why Integrating High School With College Makes Sense and How to Do It* (Harvard Education Press) is considered a classic in the field. Ms. Hoffman has held teaching and administrative posts at Brown, Temple, Harvard, FIPSE, MIT and elsewhere. She holds a B.A. and PhD in comparative literature from the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Hoffman's most recent book, *Schooling in the Work Place*, makes the case for the necessity of work experience tied to college readiness for all high school students.

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Henry Ford Early College First Commencement

Henry Ford Early College (HFEC)--a collaboration between Henry Ford Community College (HFCC), Dearborn Public Schools and the Henry Ford Health System (HFHS)--held its first commencement on May 10, 2012. According to Cindi Scheuer, Henry Ford Community College instructor and HFEC liaison, 24 students are graduating, 14 of whom will receive an associate's degree in addition to a high school diploma. Ten other students have completed more than 40 college credits, thus providing them with a head start on their college careers. Many graduating students have been accepted at major four-year colleges and universities.

Dr. Gail Mee, president of HFCC, said that the achievement of these students 'represents an important step toward a lifetime of success. It also shows that through strong alliances between business and educational partners, we can make a significant difference

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NCREST *(Continued from page 1)*

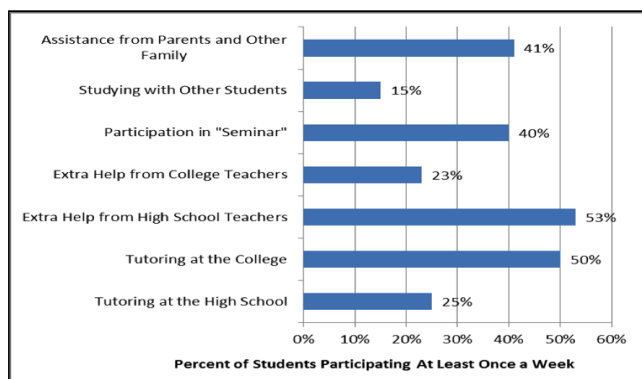


Figure 2: Sources of Academic Support for Early College Students

Some of these were rated by students as more helpful than others as shown in Figure 3 (note that students who did not participate are not included in the percentages).

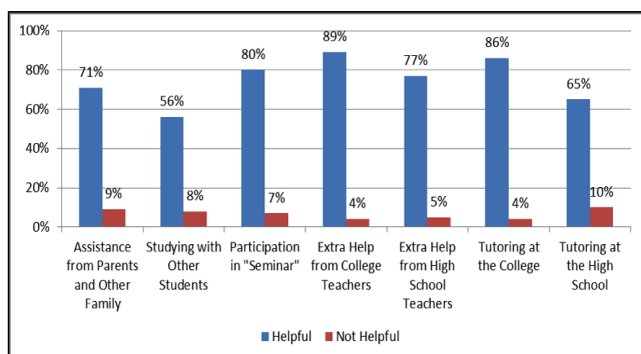


Figure 3: College Course-taking Students' Perceptions of Helpfulness of Academic Supports

To assist students undertaking college courses, many Early Colleges offer seminar, designed to help students “unpack” college-level coursework, navigate college systems, and receive academic, personal and social support. In one study, students reported that seminar provided step by step support in “doing” college. The support that they received was not limited to academic issues, though. Students explained that seminar was a place to obtain personal support or to solve other types of problems, including those that might occur within their families.

Another study looked at the most common features of seminar in MCNC Early Colleges. These included:

Targeted students- Seminar was specifically designed to support college course-taking students. In all but one school, which required all students (college course-taking and non-college course-taking) to participate in a seminar designed around the AVID curriculum, this was the case.

Frequency and duration- In the majority of schools, seminar occurred 1- 4 times per week. Many schools scheduled seminar on alternating days with college course(s) meeting times. In these cases, scheduling depends on how often the college course met and for how long. However, since not all students take college courses, nor are all students enrolled in the same college courses, some schools must schedule seminar wherever students have schedule openings.

Credit and assessment- Just over half of schools offered seminars for high school credit, ranging from 0.5 - 3.0 credits.

Curriculum and materials- Aside from one school's use of AVID, few utilized a specific curriculum. In most schools, seminar used teacher- and/or counselor-developed lessons addressing particular topics (i.e. “college knowledge” such as using a syllabus, time management, when to ask for help, reading a college textbook). Other seminars were directly tied to specific college courses and reinforced what was being taught in the course. Still other seminars incorporate supplemental materials such as test preparation books and college readiness or “College 101” publications.

Nodine, T. (2009). Innovations in college readiness: How early colleges are preparing students underrepresented in higher education for college success. Washington, D.C.: Jobs for the Future.

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Spence, K., & Barnett, E. (2006). Supporting high school students in the transition to college. New York, NY: Teachers College

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THINK BIG, START SMALL

By Annie Seifullah, Principal, Robert F Wagner, Jr. Secondary School for Arts and Technology, Queens, New York

Becoming a principal was a difficult choice for me. In my years of teaching English in Lower Manhattan, I found so much joy in my daily interactions with students. I was excited by their learning, and in discovering new ways to positively impact their ability to read and write and think. When something went well I could easily take credit for the success.

And when something went wrong... I could easily blame the principal.

In March of 2010, I was invited to participate as the only teacher to be a panel member at a certain highly-acclaimed education conference. It was a powerful event, aimed at school leaders, with well-funded educational organizations and hundreds of participants from public schools and charter schools across the country. Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, was the keynote speaker and the entire crowd was buzzing about "Race to the Top."

Excited to be part of such a prestigious event, I came ready to soak it all in, to learn about new movements and find ways to become part of the national conversation around school reform.

As I sat through the days' workshops and discussions, however, I concluded that no one wanted to talk about reform. People wanted to talk about terrible teachers. It was as if, suddenly, teachers had become public enemy number one. Teachers were described as corrupt and lazy, inept and ill-trained, padding their pensions at the expense of America's children and threatening our nation's future. I grew sick as I heard school leaders and school network executives boast about methods for "getting rid" of teachers. They sounded like pest control professionals bragging about ridding houses of roaches.

When my panel came, towards the end of the day, I could barely contain myself. I pointed out the number of times I heard teachers take the blame for things that are far beyond their control. I talked about the gains my school was making, even in one of the highest-poverty districts in the entire city of New York. I pointed my finger at the group gathered in front of me and I said, "I have heard you say plenty today about getting rid of bad teachers, but I've heard little said about getting rid of bad principals." It was silent for about three seconds. Then they cheered and applauded.

I sat there, smugly, feeling pretty smart. And then, suddenly, I realized that I had become one of them. I had side-stepped an opportunity to have an intelligent and meaningful conversation about the complexity of what is ailing schools. Instead, I gave into the rhetoric. I had unfairly blamed school leaders the way that others were unfairly blaming teachers.

The next week, I applied for the New York City Leadership Academy. Now I'm in my tenth month as a principal of Robert F Wagner Jr. Secondary School for Arts & Technology (or "Wagner" as we affectionately call it). I am new to the job, new to the school, and like most rookies - idealistic and out of touch with my own shortcomings.

But even ten months has taught me something. So laugh if you want, learn something if you can -- these are five things I have learned in my short tenure as principal of Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Secondary School for Arts & Technology.



Principal and Teacher confer on schedule

Think big, start small.

When I become principal, people were excited and ready for change. Like-minded teachers began to imagine how we could reshape and rewrite our school's program offerings, our annual curriculum map, our discipline code, our grading policy, even our mission and vision statements. People started talking about new clubs and academic programs, new after-school offerings, and new community partnerships. It was exciting. And it was overwhelming.

When an organization is at a crossroads, it is important to maintain big thinking. You can't edit people's dreams and you shouldn't limit your organization's potential. Imagine what you want long term and then make public the small progress that is accomplished along the way. If people don't see evidence of some progress quickly, then the excitement will die out and you'll be back to square one.

Never forget why students come to school.

When I reflect back to high school, I recall very few meaningful experiences that directly related to classroom instruction. World History? Chemistry? It's embarrassing to admit, but everything comes up blank. I remember student government and football games and Model UN. I remember not making the basketball team and running a holiday fundraiser and the hilarious school announcements that our favorite teacher used to make every afternoon. I remember clubs and I remember friends and I remember enemies.

Now I spend my days talking about test scores, new learning standards, and teaching interventions. But this is rarely what gets kids to school. I try to never forget that giving adolescents a place to feel belonging and acceptance is the first step to getting them in the door of school, where they can engage in a solid and meaningful education.

Let teachers teach.

Small schools are marvelous organizations and Wagner, particularly, is a marvelous small school. One of the shortcomings of a small school, however, is a smaller staff. We don't have a dean, we don't have a business manager, and we don't have instructional coaches.

As a result, energetic staff members often become champions of initiatives that are beyond their job duty. All of these initiatives are helpful; however, people have finite amounts of time and energy. I've seen capable and energetic teachers on the brink of burn out because they've taken on too much.

I've learned to ask "do we really need to do this now?" I've learned that a manager has to occasionally and gracefully say "no" when teachers, even ones they LOVE, want to implement something new. Every minute you free a teacher from a side project is a minute they can put towards improving student learning.



Meetings should be work.

Too often, when a principal has the opportunity to hold a staff meeting, they turn into what I call "administrivia", a long list of announcements, deadlines, and a calendar of upcoming events.

All people HATE these types of meetings, and they are avoidable. There is a weekly bulletin that is useful and people actually read it. Then we use our time together as a staff to work on something meaningful, to share best practices, or to reflect upon work well done. People want to work hard and people want to be inspired. Never pass up an opportunity to do both.

Celebrate.

In my first months of being a school leader, I noticed a tendency (in myself and others) to talk about the students who need "help." We talk on and on about the students who are behaving poorly, not turning in homework, cutting class after lunch, and the list goes on. When I stood back to look at the larger perspective, I realized that we were spending 90% of our time talking about, maybe, 10% of the students.

The conversations you hold publicly about students shouldn't be aimed only at what needs fixing. In every community, there is a great deal worth celebrating. So find those things and start to celebrate them publicly, and with gusto.

Annie Seifullah is the principal of Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Secondary School in Queens, New York. Originally from Utah, Annie came to New York City nearly 10 years ago to start a new and exciting life as an English teacher. Since that time, Annie has taught in middle and high school, worked as a literacy consultant, authored curriculum, and taught as an adjunct professor. She is married to hip-hop freestyle artist, Yahya Seifullah, and has a one year old son, Khalil, who is the apple of her eye.

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ACCELERATING COLLEGE READINESS

By Dr. Chery Wagonlander, Principal, and Amy Cox, English Teacher and GAPS Coordinator,
Mott Middle Early College High School, at Mott Community College, Flint MI.

Since transitioning to an early college, reflective practice has surfaced a greater need to accelerate the development of student college readiness. Where is the tipping point at which students lack college readiness? When do students really need to be college ready? In order to address these questions MMEC has re-envisioned the way in which it delivers core content and has pushed Dr. David Conley's concepts into higher gear with the development of a new English II curriculum that was piloted two years ago and refined last year. The new course, co-created by Amy Cox and Katie Carr, MMEC English Teachers, seamlessly integrates Conley's Key Cognitive Strategies into the ELA core content standards both transparently and deliberately.

It was important to introduce Conley to second year students in a relevant, transparent and meaningful way, rather than just plopping in isolated bits. One example is an assignment called *Querencia*. Students read a text called "Querencia" from the book *Writing Toward Home* in which a writer discusses her place of power. *Querencia* comes from the Spanish verb "querer," which means, "to want". This is both an academic exercise in descriptive writing, but also one that translates into college readiness. Students write two paragraphs. One paragraph describes a place where they feel a sense of power, a place where they can go to regain strength, to recover. The second paragraph describes their ideal place to write, to think, to be a scholar. One underlying objective of this assignment is to provide students with an opportunity for reflection, for meta-cognition. At the beginning of the year, their place of power is described in concrete terms, with sensory detail (in part because that is the nature of the assignment, but also in part because developmentally students are very concrete thinkers). Yet, by the end of the year, students realize that with the possession of knowledge comes power and that they now have become empowered. The place of power now resides within the self. Knowledge is power; *Querencia* is inside them.

Traditional vocabulary lessons are a vital part of the curriculum. The lessons are geared toward transparently and deliberately teaching college readiness vocabulary. What is the difference between a learning community, peer learning, and mastery learning? What do the words rigor, grit, resilient, collaborate, critical, analyze, assess, confer, bias, media, literacy, and dialogue really mean? This new

curriculum values excellence and quality as its standard of learning, but uses mastery learning as a guiding principle. So, students who "bomb" a vocabulary test are allowed to re-take it on the following Tuesday after school to demonstrate mastery, replacing their old score with the new one.

Reflection or meta-cognition is a key cognitive strategy that is deliberately taught in the English II curriculum. From the very beginning of the year, students are constantly asked to reflect on their academic behavior and on their thinking strategies. Students write formal academic reflection essays at the beginning of the year, sometime mid year and at the end of the year. In addition, students are graded for their jottings in their daily planners. The weekly grading of students' daily planners reinforces many positive academic behaviors that are inherent in successful scholars. The goal is to provide students with the opportunity to create positive habits involving deliberate reflection and planning. Students even write a poem about meta-cognition. Eventually, students learn that meta-cognition is not only for improving academic performance or making changes, but that meta-cognition can be used proactively as well to make wise, thoughtful decisions. The deliberate teaching of such a skill is an empowering tool for any scholar.

The English II curriculum balances the best of mastery learning and the middle college philosophies with the rigor of college readiness and the core content standards. As students take notes on ELA concepts, they do so using MLA outline formatting. As students copy definitions from their college readiness vocabulary lists, they do so using the hanging indent format for each entry as they would in an MLA Works Cited page. Rather than fearing the writing process of their first major research project, students work collaboratively to brainstorm ideas on a topic, organize ideas, develop questions, answer questions through research, sort evidence, develop theses, outlines and rough drafts. In other words, students collaborate on their first major research project from pre-writing to publishing in order to first gain confidence in using the process. The philosophy is that mastery follows confidence.

A culminating project of English II is the **Introductory Portfolio** in which students demonstrate their ability to be precise and accurate, as well as demonstrate the four major indicators of college readiness: contextual

awareness, academic skills and behaviors, key cognitive strategies, and key content knowledge.

Tenth Grade Portfolio Requirements

- A cover letter to the Principal introducing your portfolio and reflecting on your college readiness in terms of the 4 indicators
- Where I Come From Essay (nurture vs. nature)
- One Research Essay from English II
- Artifacts (evidence or work) from three other disciplines, two of which must be core content areas
- A one-paragraph reflection attached to each artifact that addresses how the artifact demonstrates your college readiness and what you learned or how you grew from the work

Dealing with what is considered an “at risk” population, the burden is on the teacher to make transparent the need to the student to become one with college readiness. Students want to learn, to improve. Students do care. Students have amazing dreams. As reflective practitioners, we can not worry about the lack of skill sets or progress a student has made prior to coming to us, we have only to greet the passion of the students in front of us and use that existing internal motivator as a guide to unlock the scholar within. Fish really can learn to ride bicycles.

Much of this college ready work began with our college counterparts. The early college English department teachers worked with the college English department faculty to discuss where MMEC students needed to be academically to succeed in English 101, the first level

composition course, as well as other three-credit college courses. We have called this somewhat collaborative work Partners in Learning. In English II, we have organized panel discussions for our students and their parents, bringing in faculty from the college to discuss what it means to be college ready. Likewise, our Math department has developed its curriculum with the college end in mind. They have worked for a few years now with the college Math faculty. One part of the GAPS experience is to take a Math Module Test that was developed with the college. The idea is that our students need to seamlessly integrate into college Math and we have to know where we need them to be in order to do that. So, we work together so that when our students reach the second semester of Algebra II, they can take the college Math placement test and qualify to be placed into the next level college Math course.

With this re-design effort, MMEC has not lost the intense focus on creating and maintaining a culture of care and scholarship. The care is the affective component of every middle college and the scholarship is the Core Curriculum/David Conley-infused, college readiness piece that guides early colleges toward their mission.

Over the last five years, MMEC has worked purposefully to develop a college readiness curriculum that is vertically aligned with higher education expectations and requirements and developmental in nature. As a result, MMEC has written curricula for three levels of early college seminars that are required of all MMEC high school students. In addition, every MMEC employee is challenged to reflect on and verbalize how his or her “work” is different because MMEC has embedded MMEC college readiness practices and goals across the curriculum.

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HENRY FORD *(Continued from page 2)*

in the lives of all students. We are thrilled to celebrate the first graduation of Henry Ford Early College.'

One of six 'middle/early college' high schools announced in 2006 and initially funded by state grants, HFEC was successfully launched in 2007. Its purpose is to prepare students for employment opportunities in the healthcare field. Students can earn an associate's degree or certificate in any of the following areas: Pharmacy Technology, Physical Therapy Assistant, Radiographer, Respiratory Therapist, Surgical Technologist, Paramedic, Nursing, Ophthalmic Technician, Medical Practice, Biotechnology, or Science. Students begin this five-year program in the 9th grade and

complete it after five years. Upon graduation, qualified students are eligible for employment within the Henry Ford Health System.

In 2009, HFEC was the recipient of the Innovation of the Year Award at HFCC. The Innovation of the Year is a national initiative of the League for Innovation in the Community College, an international organization dedicated to catalyzing the community college movement with creative ideas and initiatives.

To learn more about Henry Ford Early College, please visit <http://earlycollege.dearbornschools.org/>.

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THE MIDDLE COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL CONSORTIUM

was founded in 1993 to foster cooperation among member schools, disseminate information about the MCHS concept, create a forum for professional growth and promote dialogue about effective education. **The Consortium** gratefully acknowledges the support and funding of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the DeWitt Wallace Readers' Digest Fund and the Pew Charitable Trust.



THE CONSORTIUM SCHOOLS

The Academy of the Canyons at College of the Canyons, Santa Clarita CA
 Academy of Health Sciences at Prince George's Community College, Largo MD
 Brashier Middle College Charter High School at Greenville Technical College, Greenville SC*
 Brooklyn College Academy at Brooklyn College, Brooklyn NY*
 Career Education Center Middle College, Denver CO
 Challenge Early College High School at Houston Community College SW, Houston TX*
 The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University, Columbus, OH*
 East Early College at Houston Community College SE, Houston TX
 Edgemcombe Early College High School at Edgemcombe Community College, Tarboro NC
 Franklin D. Roosevelt High School, Dallas TX
 Gateway Community College affiliated MCHS's, New Haven, CT
 Genesee Early College High School at University of Michigan, Flint, MI
 Great Path Academy at Manchester Community College, Manchester, CT*
 Greenville Technical Charter High School at Greenville Technical College, Greenville SC*
 Greer Middle College Charter High School at Greenville Technical College, Greenville SC
 Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy at Los Angeles Harbor College, Wilmington CA*
 Henry Ford Early College at Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn Heights, MI*

Hollis F. Price Early College High School at LeMoyne-Owen College, Memphis TN*
 International High School at LaGuardia Community College, Queens NY*
 Lake Area New Tech ECHS at University of New Orleans, New Orleans LA
 Middle College High School at Christian Brothers University, Memphis TN*
 Middle College High School at Contra Costa College, San Pablo CA*
 Middle College High School at El Centro Community College, Dallas TX*
 Middle College High School at LaGuardia Community College, Queens NY*
 Middle College High School at Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles CA*
 Middle College High School at Olive-Harvey City College, Chicago IL
 Middle College High School at Ozarks Technical Community College, Springfield MO
 Middle College High School at San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton CA*
 Middle College High School at Santa Ana College, Santa Ana CA*
 Middle Early College High School at Buffalo NY*
 Mott Middle College High School at Mott Community College, Flint MI*
 Olive Crest Academy NOVA ECHS at Santa Ana College, Santa Ana CA
 Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Secondary School for Arts and Technology at LaGuardia Community College, Queens NY
 San Mateo Middle College High School at College of San Mateo, San Mateo CA
 Southwest Early College High School at Denver Community College, Denver CO*
 Truckee Meadows Community College High School, Reno NV
 Truman Middle College High School at Truman City College, Chicago IL
 Williamson County Middle College High School at Nashville State Technical Institute, Nashville TN

* Early College grantee

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Conferences

Summer Professional Development Institute
 June 29 - July 2, 2012 Jersey City, NJ

Technical Assistance Conference
 February 13, 2013 Newport Beach, CA

Winter Principals' Leadership Conference
 February 14 - 16, 2013 Newport Beach, CA

Student Leadership Initiative
 Spring 2013 Columbus, OH

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