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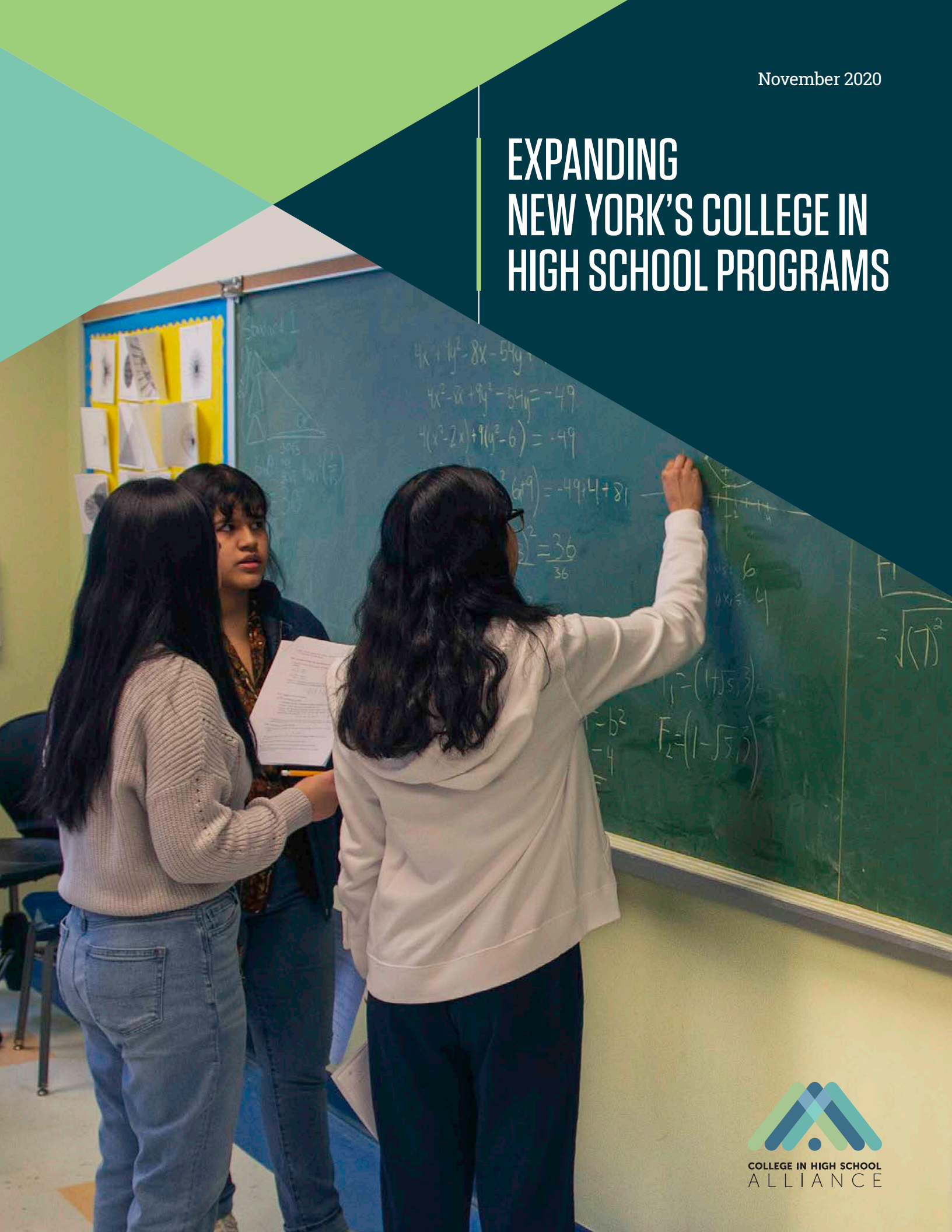
EXPANDING NEW YORK'S COLLEGE IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS



COLLEGE IN HIGH SCHOOL ALLIANCE

THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS PARTNERED in workshop sessions that helped to define the policy priorities outlined here and contributed ideas to this paper: Bard Early College (Alysa Campbell Hutson and Clara Haskell Botstein), The City University of New York (CUNY), IBM Corporation, Middle College National Consortium (MCNC), National Education Equity Lab, and Cohoes City School District.

PHOTOS: BRUCE SCHWARZ

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INTRODUCTION

COLLEGE IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The academic intensity and rigor of a student's high school curriculum is among the most important aspects of their K-12 educational experience in providing momentum toward completing a college degree.[1]

College in high school programs provide students the opportunity to take rigorous college courses and earn college credit during high school. These programs offer an on-ramp to college and the workforce and are proven to significantly increase rates of high school graduation and postsecondary success, particularly for students from low-income and historically underrepresented backgrounds. Indeed, the significant, positive impacts of college in high school programs on college enrollment and college degree attainment are consistent across numerous rigorous research studies.[2]

Despite the wealth of evidence indicating that college in high school programs confer enormous value to young people, these programs remain underutilized and under resourced. The challenges brought on by COVID-19 present a clear opportunity, if not necessity, for New York to fully embrace these models as tools to advance low-income and underrepresented students' academic and professional success.

This paper explores the history and current landscape of college in high school programs in New York and identifies key areas of need for increasing equitable access to and impact of these programs, and makes policy recommendation in response to these areas of need.

Given the wealth of supportive data, the challenges brought on by COVID-19 present a clear opportunity for New York to fully embrace college in high school models as tools to advance low income and underrepresented students academic success.

BACKGROUND

COLLEGE IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

From the start, New York has played a pivotal role in developing and advancing college in high school programs.

Yet, these programs are not meaningfully incorporated into the fabric of the state's education system, and lack of awareness and clarity about them remains. This section sets forth working definitions of the various program models and provides a brief history of the programs' evolution.

DEFINITIONS

The umbrella term "college in high school programs" refers to postsecondary learning opportunities that allow students to earn college credit from an institution of higher education (IHE) during high school. This term was coined by the College in High School Alliance (CHSA), a national coalition formed in 2016 to advocate for public policies supportive of these programs. As defined by CHSA, college in high school programs involve partnerships between school systems and accredited institutions of higher education that offer high school-age students an intentionally-designed, authentic postsecondary experience leading to officially transcripted and transferable college credit towards a recognized postsecondary degree or credential.[3] The most widely referenced college in high school programs are dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high schools, though these terms vary in definition across states, school districts, and even individual programs. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law on December 10, 2015, provides the first federal definitions for these programs, provided below.

Dual and Concurrent Enrollment

ESSA defines "dual or concurrent enrollment program" as a program 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 with a regular high school diploma is able to enroll in one or more postsecondary courses and earn postsecondary credit that—

(A) is transferable to the institutions of higher education in the partnership; and

(B) applies toward completion of a degree or recognized educational credential as described in the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq).

Though the federal and state governments often use *dual* and *concurrent enrollment* interchangeably, practitioners commonly refer to dual enrollment as a program in which high school students are enrolled in a college course taught by a professor from the institution of higher education. Concurrent enrollment, on the other hand, commonly refers to the subset of dual enrollment courses taught by college-approved high school teachers, typically on the high school campus.[4] In either model, at the end of the course, students earn college course credit that can be applied toward a college degree.

The state of New York does not statutorily define dual or concurrent enrollment.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law on December 10, 2015, provides the first federal definitions for dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school.

Early College High School

ESSA defines "early college high school" as 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.

There is no statutory definition of early college high school in New York. However, in Request for Proposals (RFPs) released by the Office of Postsecondary Access, Support, and Success, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) defines the "Smart Scholars Early College High School Program" or "NYS ECHS Program" as "an active partnership between a school district and an institution of higher education (IHE) that provides an integrated high school and college curriculum and the academic and social supports the target student population needs to graduate high school on time with a Regents diploma and at least 24 and up to 60 transferable college credits, at no cost to students or their families."[5,6] The RFPs add that "successful ECHS students graduate prepared to complete a postsecondary degree on time or early, with no need for remedial courses."[7] Though this description specifically applies to the State's "Smart Scholars" grant program (described on Page 7), the definition helps to frame all early college high school programs in the state.

In practice, while early college programs are often categorized under the broader umbrella of dual enrollment, they have several defining features, including a "whole school" approach in which college course pathways are embedded within the curriculum, meaning that all students (or cohorts of students, if the ECHS is a program within a school or district) have the option to enroll in college courses. In addition, the college courses are provided at no cost to students or their families. In addition, the early college model typically targets students who are low-income and underrepresented in higher education and provides robust support services to help them succeed.

P-TECH

P-TECH stands for Pathways in Technology Early College High School. These programs are specific types of early college high schools that prepare students for high-demand jobs in technology, manufacturing, healthcare and finance through partnerships between a high school, college, and industry partner.[8] P-TECHs follow a grade 9–14 model, which blends high school, college, and work experience in an integrated six-year program and is targeted to academically and economically at-risk students. During the six years, students typically have the opportunity to earn 60 hours of college credit, an associate's degree, and, in some cases, an industry certification.[9] They are also supposed to receive priority consideration for jobs with the industry partner after graduation. The P-TECH model was started in New York and has been implemented in Louisiana, Texas, New Jersey, Maryland, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Colorado, and Illinois, and has also expanded globally.

College in High School Programs

DESCRIPTION	KEY FEATURES
Dual Enrollment High school students are enrolled in college courses and receive a final grade on a college transcript and course credit that can be applied toward a college degree.	• Tuition—ranges from student responsibility for tuition and fees to no cost to students. • Eligibility—ranges from few eligibility requirements to extensive requirements focused on GPA, placement exams, SAT/ACT, and state assessment tests. • Instructors—IHE-approved high school teachers and/or college professors. • Location—high school and/or college campus. • Student Population—high school students who meet academic eligibility criteria.
Concurrent Enrollment A subset of dual enrollment courses taught by college-approved high school teachers, typically at the high school campus.	
Early College High School Cohort and pathway approach to dual enrollment in which college course pathways are embedded within the curriculum, and the whole school or cohorts of students earn substantial college credits up to an Associate's Degree, at no cost to students or their families.	• Tuition—no cost to students. • Instructors—IHE-approved high school teachers and/or college professors. • Location—high school and/or college campus. • Student Population—high school students, with a focus on students with factors that put them at risk for college success. • Intensity—comprehensive, often degree-granting program.
Pathways in Technology Early College High School A 9–14 grade model, which blends high school, college, and work experience in an integrated six-year program culminating in an Associate's degree, at no cost to students or their families.	• Tuition—no cost to students. • Instructors—IHE-approved high school teachers and/or college professors. • Location—high school and/or college campus. • Student Population—high school students, with a focus on students with factors that put them at risk for college success. • Intensity—comprehensive, degree-granting program.

BRIEF HISTORY OF COLLEGE IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

In the past, up to the turn of the 20th century, it was not uncommon for high school students to start college before the age of 18. Since then, there have been waves of interest in the concept of an earlier start to college.

In 1937, Robert Maynard Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago, pioneered an innovative program at the University, admitting students beginning in the sophomore year of high school. The program was designed to incorporate a college curriculum into the last two years of high school and to accelerate the educational process. The program ended in 1950 when funding ran out.

Beginning in 1951, Hutchins led the Ford Foundation, where he would continue to challenge conventional ideas about education and advocate for earlier entrance to college. During Hutchins' nearly decade-long tenure, the Ford Foundation created the Fund for the Advancement of Education. In two studies supported by the Fund, educators recommended that secondary schools and colleges work together to avoid repetition in coursework at the high school and college levels and to allow motivated students to maximize their intellectual capacity and accelerate their learning. One study, conducted by educators from three elite prep schools—Andover, Exeter, and Lawrenceville—and three of the country's most prestigious colleges—Harvard, Princeton, and Yale—urged high schools and colleges to see themselves as "two halves of a common enterprise."[10] This study, and others, launched a pilot program in 1952 that introduced advanced courses in 11 initial subjects. Three years later, the program would become known as The College Board Advanced Placement Program.

The nation's first residential early college, Simon's Rock, opened in Massachusetts in the fall of 1966, based on the belief that many bright, motivated young people are ready for serious intellectual work at the age of 16 or 17. Beginning as a women's school, the school offered its students a four-year program that combined the last two years of high school and the first two years of college—concluding with an associate of arts degree. Four years later, Simon's Rock graduated its inaugural class and the school became a coeducational campus. By 1974, the high school component was eliminated. Bard College assumed leadership of Simon's Rock in 1979, inspiring the launch, decades later, of Bard's national network of tuition-free early college high schools, including two in New York City.[11]

In New York, in 1974, the concept of middle colleges was born at LaGuardia Community College. Similar to Simon's Rock, the middle college model combined the last two years of high school with the first two years of college. Designed for students who would not otherwise succeed in a traditional high school setting, the middle college model provided students with intensive counseling, small classes, interdisciplinary curricula, and career guidance. The architects of this new educational concept believed that 16-year-olds had more in common with 20-year-olds than with younger adolescents, and they developed a curriculum of interdisciplinary studies synthesizing academics with apprenticeships, internships, and other work experiences connected to specific programs of study. Their vision was to "provide a closed loop between the job and the classroom," but without becoming a "narrow vocational school."[12] The target population for the middle college was potential high school dropouts who were not benefiting from their current high school environment.

Early College Data (OCTOBER 2019)

93% *of early and middle college students graduate high school compared to 75% nationally*

77% *of early and middle college students are low-income*

57% *of early and middle college students are students of color*

SOURCE: *Early and Middle Colleges Offer High School Alternative.* Marilyn Villalobos. NCSL. https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/early-and-middle-colleges-offer-high-school-alternative.aspx

A decade later, dual enrollment programs began to take shape and expand. Beginning in 1985 in Minnesota, states began looking at dual enrollment as a way to prepare students for college and to move them into career and technical education. The stated intent of the Minnesota dual enrollment program was "to promote rigorous academic pursuits and provide a variety of options for juniors and seniors in high school by giving them the opportunity to take college courses at state expenses."[13] Other states followed Minnesota's lead, until nearly every state had implemented some form of a dual enrollment program. Many dual enrollment programs have academic entrance criteria.

In 2002, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, along with the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, founded the Early College High School Initiative (ECHSI).[14] The explicit goal of the initiative was to increase the opportunity for students who are disadvantaged to earn a postsecondary degree or credential. Although college-level coursework in high school had traditionally been available only to students in the academic middle and top, the ECHSI model sought to operate under the principle that more rigorous high school instruction and curriculum tied to the incentive of earning college credits will motivate and effective serve disadvantaged and academically at risk students, thereby increasing their interest in, access to, and success in postsecondary education.[15] Like its middle college forerunner, early college high schools were differentiated from other college in high school models by placing an intentional focus on enrolling traditionally underserved student populations, regardless of prior academic performance. Picking up from this philanthropy-led initiative, in 2009, the State of New York launched the "Smart Scholars" grant program, discussed later in this paper, to support and expand early college high schools.

In September 2011, IBM, the New York City Department of Education, and The City University of New York (CUNY) designed and launched the first P-TECH school in Brooklyn, New York. The P-TECH program is designed specifically to provide Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-focused education, based on a partnership with a school district, an IHE, and a business, and aims to provide a holistic approach to education and workforce development. Unlike other early college high school models, P-TECH is a six-year program, so students spend up to an extra two years enrolled in high school while taking college courses and have the opportunity to earn an associate's degree in applied science along with a high school diploma. Students also are paired with corporate mentors.[16] As discussed later in this paper, the P-TECH model has expanded across New York City and State, with nearly 40 P-TECHs funded through a state grant program. In New York City, the CUNY Early College Initiative, which includes 19 schools, has 9 P-TECH campuses.

UNLIKE OTHER EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL MODELS. P-TECH IS A SIX-YEAR PROGRAM, SO STUDENTS SPEND UP TO AN EXTRA TWO YEARS ENROLLED IN HIGH SCHOOL WHILE TAKING COLLEGE COURSES AND HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EARN AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE IN APPLIED SCIENCE ALONG WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.

STATE OF THE FIELD IN NEW YORK

From the start, New York has played a pivotal role in developing and advancing college in high school programs.

Yet, these programs are not meaningfully incorporated into the fabric of the state's education system, and lack of awareness and clarity about them remains. This section sets forth working definitions of the various program models and provides a brief history of the programs' evolution.

EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS

Smart Scholars Early College High School Program

In 2009, the New York State Education Department launched the Smart Scholars Early College High School Program as a strategy to close the high school and college achievement gaps in New York State. This program serves to increase high school graduation and college completion rates while reducing tuition costs as a result of the free college program and compressed time needed to complete a college degree. Institutions of higher education partner with public school districts to create early college high schools that provide students with the opportunity and preparation to accelerate the completion of their high school and college studies. The program currently has around 45 active grant projects. Smart Scholars targets students who are low-income and traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education. Essential components of the Smart Scholars ECHS Program include:

- an active partnership between a school district and an institution of higher education to provide an integrated high school and college curriculum; and
- academic and social supports that students need to graduate high school on time with a Regents diploma and earn a minimum of 24 and up to 60 transferable college credits at the same time, at no cost to students or their families; and
- A focus on students academically at risk of not completing high school or not enrolling in or completing postsecondary education.

Smart Transfer Early College High School Program

The Smart Transfer ECHS Program is a recent extension of the Smart Scholars Program but differs in the number of credits required. Participating students have the opportunity and support to complete 60 transferable college credits and/or an associate degree by the time they graduate from high school, and the opportunity to transfer to a partner four-year IHE where they will continue to receive academic and social support to complete a bachelor's degree within two years of matriculating at the IHE. There are currently four Smart Transfer partnerships, including Cohoes Future-Ready Pathway ECHS, Greece Smart Transfer ECHS, Bard High School Early College Queens, and Schenectady Smart Scholars ECHS.[17]

CUNY Early College Initiative

The City University of New York's Early College Initiative (CUNY ECI) was established in 2003 to develop and support Early College High Schools in New York City. ECI is responsible for 17 early college high schools that serve over 8,000 students. Designed for low-income youth, first-generation college-goers, English language learners, and other groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education, these schools offer an integrated curriculum that enables students to graduate from high school having earned up to two years of college credit and an associate's degree, tuition free. The program is designed to scaffold the transition from high school to college with additional supports and make sure students are ready to jump into courses rather than needing remedial education when they

arrive on campus. Students typically start the transition by enrolling in one college course—often in the tenth grade—and gradually increase college course enrollments over time.

ECI schools are categorized into four models: the 6–12 model, 9–12 model, 9–13 model, and the 9–14 model.

- The 6–12 schools offer integrated academic experiences and supports beginning in middle school that allow students to begin taking college courses as early as the 9th grade. Students may earn up to 60 college credits and/or an associate's degree in liberal arts.
- The 9–12 schools provide accelerated academic programs, including four years of rigorous math and science credit. Students receive a substantial head start when applying to college, by spending their last years of high school on the partner college campus and earning college credits.
- The 9–13 schools offer programming available in the Grades 9–12 model, with an optional fifth year for increased college exploration and the opportunity to earn an associate's degree within liberal arts.
- The 9–14 schools are known as P-TECH. (See Page 15 for details on this model.)

CUNY Early College Students (2017)

Graduated from high school on time at a modestly higher rate than similar students, even though their high school course load included college-level classes.

Were more likely to be considered college ready (i.e. reached or exceeded CUNY college readiness thresholds) and were less likely to require remedial coursework by high school graduation.

Were better positioned for college degree completion than similar students, as they graduated from high school with more college credits. Their gains increased in college, on average putting them one semester closer to graduation by the end of their second year.

Were more likely to enroll in a CUNY college after high school, to remain enrolled after two years, and to have enrolled in a four-year college.

SOURCE: CUNY Office of Research, Evaluation, and Program Support (RFPS) quasi-experimental, longitudinal analysis, https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/evaluation/areas of focus_1/college_readiness/early-college-initiative-eci/.

Bard High School Early College

Bard College is an independent, nonprofit college of the liberal arts and sciences based in Annandale, NY, with a strong public interest mission to increase access to high-quality liberal arts education for populations with limited opportunity.

Through a collaboration between Bard College and host public school systems, the Bard High School Early College (BHSEC) schools offer their students two years of a college preparatory high school program that segues directly into a two year college course of study. The BHSEC academic program culminates in a state high school diploma as well as 60 transferable Bard College credits and an Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree from Bard College. Uniquely, the BHSEC schools serve as both public high schools and accredited campuses of Bard College.

The BHSEC schools, which embed a two-year, college degree-granting liberal arts and sciences program within a four-year, tuition-free public high school, are among the few early college high schools in which an independent college is the academic partner.

EdTrust New York Findings (OCTOBER 2017)

Of all public high schools in New York State, Bard High School Early College (BHSEC) Manhattan and Queens had the highest rates of on-time Bachelor's degree completion for low-income students.

3,493 *Associate in Arts degrees awarded to BHSEC students since 2003*

SOURCE: EdTrust NY's From High School to College Success, October 2019. https://newyork.edtrust.org/to-and-through-3/.

Middle College National Consortium Early Colleges

Established in 1993, the Middle College National Consortium (MCNC) is a nationwide network of 40 small Early Middle College high schools that provide early access to college courses for traditionally underserved student groups (82% were racial minorities and 67% were eligible for free/reduced lunch in the 2019–20 school year). As an outgrowth of the Middle College High School model that was created in 1974 at LaGuardia Community College in NY and later redesigning schools for the Early College Initiative in 2002, MCNC schools support students to graduate from high school with a significant number of transferrable college credits or an associate degree at no cost to students or their families. The four MCNC-affiliated schools in New York—Middle College HS, International HS, Brooklyn College Academy, Buffalo Middle Early College HS—partner with CUNY and SUNY, and some offer an extra fifth-year option so that students who may need extra time (i.e., English Language Learners, those scoring below 50% on state exams) can complete a high school degree and an associate degree and be successfully prepared for college and beyond. MCNC schools are guided by a set of core Early College design principles—a college-focused academic program, comprehensive student support, dynamic school-college partnerships, a culture of continuous improvement—that ensure high-quality program implementation and achievement of positive student outcomes.

DUAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

CUNY College Now

CUNY College Now is a nationally recognized, tuition-free dual enrollment partnership between the City University of New York (CUNY) and the New York City Department of Education. Founded in 1984 at Kingsborough Community College, the program has since expanded to 470 New York City public high schools serving over 22,000 students annually. College Now provides college credit-bearing courses aligned with first year study at CUNY and pre-college courses with the goal of helping students meet high school graduation requirements and prepare for academic and social success in college. Program activities are also designed to enhance performance on New York State Regents and CUNY placement examinations so that students are able to enroll in college without needing remediation.

College Now courses are offered before and after high school and on Saturdays, both on college campuses and in high schools, and College Now also provides college and career awareness courses and activities, full day summer programs, a STEM Research Academy, and access for participating students to CUNY campus facilities and events.

SUNY Dual Enrollment Programs

Although SUNY does not operate a centralized dual enrollment program, many SUNY campuses offer dual enrollment courses for college credit to students enrolled in area high schools. The structure of these programs varies across sites. Duchess Community College, for example, runs the College Connection program, offering over 20 college-level courses taught in high schools throughout Dutchess and Putnam counties during the regular school day. Participating students earn high school and college credit concurrently, with no tuition costs to the school or the student. College credit is transferable to most SUNY two- and four-year colleges and universities.

PATHWAYS IN TECHNOLOGY EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS

Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH) are innovative six-year combined high school and college programs that prepare students for college and careers in a competitive, STEM-related industry. Each P-TECH school has an industry and a college partner and, depending on the partner, the school offers different career pathways and associate's degrees. New York State established a grant program in 2013 for P-TECHs, with a focus on preparation for high-skill jobs in technology, manufacturing, healthcare, and finance.[18] The program includes workplace learning that includes ongoing mentoring by professionals in the chosen career sector, worksite visits, speakers and internships; individualized academic support by K-12 and college faculty within an

extended academic year or school day that enables students to progress through the program at their own pace; an Associate of Applied Science degree in a high-tech field; and the commitment to be first in line for a job with the participating business partner(s) following completion of the program.[19] The state grant program supports over 40 P-TECH schools and programs.[20] In New York City, the NYC P-TECH initiative includes seven schools that partner with CUNY campuses.

P-TECH Data (MAY 2017)

After three years, P-TECH 9–14 students earned two more credits than student in other schools, driven by credit from CTE and other courses outside of the typical high school or Regents curriculum, including engineering, technology, and human services. These additional credits did not appear to come at the expense of students earning credits in core academic courses.

42% *At the end of two years of high school, 42 percent of P-TECH 9–14 students had passed the ELA Regents exam with a score qualifying them for enrollment in CUNY courses, compared to 25 percent of comparison group students.*

SOURCE: Findings from a 2020 interim external study on New York City's P-TECH schools *Bridging the School-to-Work Divide: Interim Implementation and Impact Findings from New York City's P-TECH 9–14 Schools.* Rachel Rosen, D. Crystal Byndloss, Leigh Parise, Emma Alterman, and Michelle Dixon. MDRC. May 2020.

UNLOCKING KEY CHALLENGES

The field of college in high school programs in New York shares common challenges, identified through numerous meetings and discussions among practitioners over the past few years.

In June 2019, a group of college in high school practitioners came together to identify the top areas of common policy challenge based on the six policy areas outlined in the state policy framework, Unlocking Potential, developed by the College in High School Alliance (CHSA). As mentioned above, CHSA is a coalition of leading national and state organizations committed to policies that support high-quality dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high schools.

The key policy areas in Unlocking Potential include: Equity Goal and Public Reporting, Program Integrity and Credit Transfer, Finance, Course Access and Availability, Instructor Capacity, and Navigational Supports. Of these areas, the New York practitioner group honed in on funding, data, and instructor capacity as the three top areas of need, although the participants found relevant items in the other categories as well.

The group reconvened in May 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to reassess the common challenges. Many of the same issues from 2019 remained, and the group also raised concerns around credit transfer and graduation requirements. This section sets forth challenges raised in both working group sessions and in smaller group discussions among practitioners over the years, including at grantee convenings hosted by NYSED.

LACK OF STATUTORY DEFINITION OF PROGRAMS

To start, New York statute lacks definitions of college in high school programs. Without regulatory or statutory definitions, there is no information or framework to categorize the state's diverse program offerings, resulting in lack of awareness and confusion about programs among policymakers as well as the general public, and hindering the development of a robust state policy framework to fund programs and ensure a baseline of quality and effectiveness for students.

LACK OF CONSISTENT, SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

The biggest challenge facing college in high school programs in New York is the lack of a consistent, sustainable funding source for programs. State funding for early college high schools and P-TECH programs exists through grants from NYSED. While this funding has increased in recent years, grants for early college high school are not based on enrollment, tuition and fees, or the number of credits offered, and do not take into account the true cost of the free college programs. Moreover, new funding is typically only for new programs or new forms of early college (e.g. Smart Transfer), rather than funds to sustain effective existing programs.

While ECHS is a very cost-effective model for providing postsecondary education, early colleges have costs above traditional high schools. These costs include the college tuition and fees (waived for students), professor salaries, student support services, college textbooks and STEM course materials, and program coordination and implementation costs, including transportation in some cases. Lack of consistent, predictable funding at levels sufficient to cover these costs makes it hard for programs to be sustainable and grow.

The unpredictable nature of grant funding (versus formula funding) and lack of consistency and clarity on the renewal process, especially for new programs like Smart Transfer, also makes it hard for programs to engage in multi-year planning, as they cannot rely on the funding stream that allows them to exist.

P-TECH grants from NYSED are more consistent, ranging in size from $500–650,000 per year and lasting for longer periods (typically six-year cycles), but also are not based on enrollment or tuition costs, and also face the issue of long-term sustainability. If the State decided to discontinue grants or focus on new programs, the sustainability and ongoing operations of existing P-TECHs would be in jeopardy.

Finally, and significantly, not all ECHS and P-TECH programs receive state funding. NYSED has a group of programs in its portfolio, but these programs do not include all of the schools in the state (e.g. many CUNY ECI schools), and it is almost impossible for existing programs to apply for funding if they do not receive it already. There is also no statewide support for dual enrollment programs that are offered at no cost to students.

The issues above are directly related to the fact that there is no statewide definition of early college high school or P-TECH and no policy framework governing the programs. A regulatory or statutory definition is the first step in creating a statewide approval process for funding to allow for new entrants. A statewide definition would also help address the critical lack of public information about program performance that could and should guide funding decisions, as well as efforts to build programs, described below.

A REGULATORY OR STATUTORY DEFINITION
IS THE FIRST STEP IN CREATING A
STATEWIDE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR
FUNDING TO ALLOW FOR NEW ENTRANTS

LIMITED STATEWIDE DATA

Early college high school is an evidenced-based field nationally, and these programs are shown to significantly increase students' enrollment in and completion of postsecondary education. While there is a long history of early college education in New York, data on the statewide network of grant-funded programs is limited. Although NYSED grantees submit data reports on a regular basis, NYSED has limited staff capacity to analyze and publicize the data. This means that policymakers and legislators do not have access to information about which programs and models are most effective, in what ways, and for which students, and advocates are not equipped with success stories and outcome data beyond their own programs.

TO MAKE BETTER, MORE EVIDENCE-BASED, DECISIONS ABOUT INVESTMENT
IN EARLY COLLEGE EDUCATIONS,
POLICYMAKERS ACROSS THE STATE
NEED ACCESS TO KEY DATA POINTS,
SUCH AS PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND
RETENTION, CREDIT ATTAINMENT,
AND SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY
PERFORMANCE, BY SUBGROUP.

To make better, more evidence-based decisions about investment in early college education, policymakers across the state need access to key data points, such as program participation and retention, credit attainment, and secondary and postsecondary performance, by subgroup. This information would also help education advocates and the public understand the impact of early college programs.

LIMITED INSTRUCTOR PIPELINES

Finding qualified instructors to teach in college in high school programs is another common challenge for programs in New York. Some programs rely on high school teachers who have the credentials to teach college courses, and others rely on college partners to provide the instructors. In the former case, it can be challenging to find high school instructors with the requisite higher education credentials across subject areas, especially in more remote or rural areas of the state and in STEM fields. In the latter case, not all instructors coming from higher education receive training on effective strategies for teaching adolescents, and not all of them choose to teach high school-age students. At scale, building a larger pipeline of qualified instructors with appropriate credentials and training would help programs scale and reach more students across a broader range of subject areas and geographic locations.

ISSUES WITH TRANSFER OF CREDITS

High school students who take college courses in high school can face challenges transferring their earned college credits to IHEs after high school graduation. This can happen for a number of reasons, among them, that IHEs can cap the number of credits earned during high school, limit transferability of dual credit courses (those in Regents-tested subject areas) that also appear on the high school transcript, or apply the transfer credits as elective courses rather than courses that can be applied to a major. Such issues with credit transfer are faced by any student seeking to transfer credit; however, they can be more severe with early college or dual enrollment students, as college registrars sometimes have issues understanding and processing these students' transcripts. Some of this is due to lack of awareness about program structure and quality and the value and meaning of dual enrollment coursework.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1 RECOMMENDATION

Define dual enrollment, early college high school, and pathways in technology early college high school in New York State.

With a view toward creating more precise and consistent programming, we propose that New York State include a statutory or regulatory definition of college in high school programs that provide students with authentic postsecondary pathways, namely *Dual Enrollment (DE), Early College High School (ECHS), and Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH).* These definitions could be adopted by the legislature or included by the Regents/New York State Education Department (NYSED) in regulation.

We recommend adopting the following definitions for Early College High School (ECHS) and Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH), drawn from the most recent NYSED program bill regarding early college programs (Bill No. A07501 and S06537), in statute:

- **Early College High School (ECHS) Program** is a formal partnership between a school district or a board of cooperative educational services and at least one institution of higher education, which provides eligible students enrolled in such program with high school courses leading to the granting of a high school diploma, and college-level courses leading to the granting of at least twenty-four college credits and up to a post-secondary degree or diploma from such partner institution or institutions of higher education at no cost to the student or the student's family.

- **Pathways in Technology Early High School (P-TECH)** means a program consisting of a partnership between a school district or board of cooperative educational services, a New York State higher education institution, and a regional New York State employer (or consortium of employers from related sectors) and/or industry/entity/association, which provides enrolled students with high school courses leading to the granting of a high school diploma, college-level courses leading to the granting of a post-secondary degree at a partnering institution of higher education, and career training with an eligible partnering employer at no cost to the student or the student's family.

We also recommend that the State adopt a definition for Dual Enrollment Programs that focuses on postsecondary pathway programs leading to a degree or credential, with a minimum of 12 credits (one semester of college), at no cost to students. Including this credit threshold and providing the programs at no cost to students accords with our recommendation to identify a set of state-approved programs eligible for funding, as described in Recommendation 2. We propose the following definition for Dual Enrollment (DE):

- **Dual Enrollment (DE) Program (also called Concurrent Enrollment)** is a partnership between at least one institution of higher education and at least one school district or board of cooperative educational services through which a secondary school student who has not graduated from high school is able to enroll in postsecondary courses and earn at least 12 postsecondary credits that are transferable, at a minimum, to the institutions of higher education in the partnership and applicable toward completion of a degree at no cost to the student or the student's family.

2 RECOMMENDATION

Create a recurring, sustainable state funding stream for college in high school programs linked to an oversight process.

A sustainable funding model for state designated DE, ECHSs, and PTECHs is critical to maintaining and expanding these programs and removing access and cost barriers for students, particularly low-income students, who benefit greatly from earlier access to high-quality, free college opportunities. From P-TECHs to middle college high schools, New York State is home to a variety of effective college in high school models that vary in terms of structure. This variety benefits the diverse needs of the state's students, districts, higher education partners, and economy. Thus, the state funding stream to support these programs should provide flexibility to accommodate the various models, as long as they fulfill the requirements and standards of the designation process.

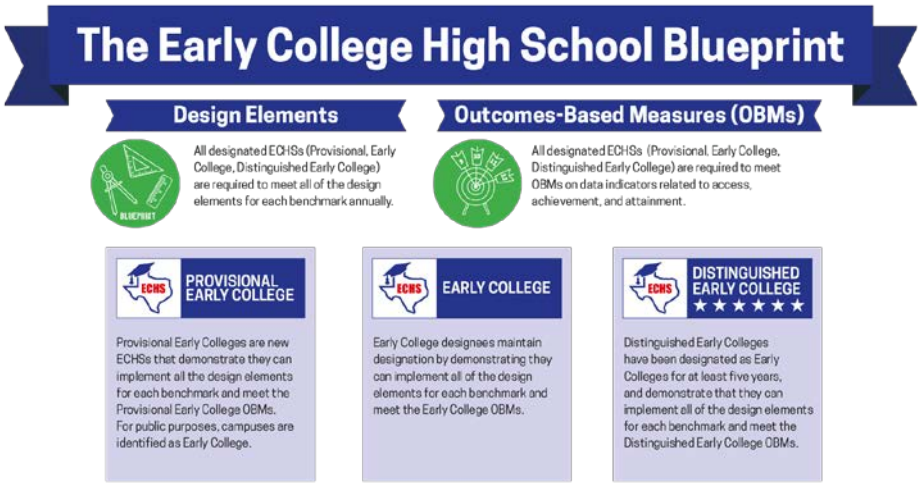
Initial Designation

NYSED, in consultation with existing IHEs and school district partners, should establish and publish a set of design elements and outcome-based measures that would be required for DE programs, ECHS programs, and P-TECHs to obtain and maintain a "state designation." Texas, for example, has been able to successfully scale its early college high school model by setting clear expectations for programs and providing sustainable funding tied to comprehensive oversight to ensure that the programs are serving students well.

NYSED should develop certain benchmarks, including meeting the programmatic definitions set forth in regulation or statute (see Recommendation 1); demonstrating willingness and capacity to serve students who have been identified as economically disadvantaged and/or academically at-risk for not successfully completing high school or not enrolling in or succeeding in college; providing programs free of charge to students; meeting performance standards

ECHS DESIGNATION PROCESS (TEXAS)

Texas developed a designation process for ECHSs which ensures the campuses maintain the integrity of the ECHS model.



SOURCE: https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/ECHS_Blueprint.pdf.

determined by NYSED; and complying with other evidence-based design elements and performance standards for programs as determined by NYSED to achieve a DE, ECHS, or P-TECH designation. The designation process would be optional for all programs. However, programs that obtain a state designation would then be eligible for state funding, and state policies involving the programs would apply to them. In order for new programs to have the benefit of a start-up period before evaluation, programs that have been operational for less than four years could receive an initial designation but not be held to outcome measures until their fifth operational year. NYSED could consider grandfathering in existing ECHS programs to the state designation for the first cycle (see below).

Continuing Oversight

As part of the continual oversight process, NYSED should examine the approved DE, ECHS, and P-TECH programs periodically, for example through a four-year review and recertification process, to monitor and ensure compliance with state standards and to provide feedback to the programs.

As part of the recertification process, all state-designated programs should annually report to NYSED on key metrics, such as:

- Student enrollment
- Student demographic information
- College credit attainment
- College GPA
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary enrollment within 18 months of high school graduation
- Postsecondary persistence
- Postsecondary completion

Reporting responsibilities should be shared between the IHE and school district partners.

Consistent, Sustainable Funding

Best practice in college in high school program funding nationally includes a consistent, standardized funding level for programs based on student enrollment and actual costs.

New York's funding model should be:

- Based on enrollment and costs of the tuition-free college program
- Evidence-based
- Available to all programs that meet the state designation requirements

Data Collection & Reporting (WASHINGTON STATE)

Washington has an online data dashboard of participation in accelerated learning by school/district. Data on participation in college in high school programs is disaggregated in a number of ways, including by:

- *type of advanced coursework*
- *gender*
- *race*
- *income status*
- *English language learners*
- *students with disabilities*

SOURCE: *Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity and Quality in College in High School Programs.* College in High School Alliance. https:www.collegeinhighschool.org/roadmap.

ECHS Funding Model (NORTH CAROLINA)

North Carolina has an exemplar funding model that includes:

- *Standing funding based on student attendance*
- *Automatic supplemental funding based on regional economic designation*
- *Automatic reimbursement of tuition and other expenses to IHEs that partner with ECHS programs*

SOURCE: *Attainment for All: Postsecondary Pathways. The Hunt Institute.* September 2019. http://www.hunt-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HI-HE-IB-1.pdf.

- Targeted towards a set of allowable uses (e.g. tuition and fees (waived for students), support services, professional development, transportation, textbooks and course materials, transportation, and program coordination)
- Annually renewed as long as programs pass the recertification process
- Allocated to either the Institution of Higher Education or school system partner (either of which can be the lead fiscal agent) to allow for programmatic flexibility, respond to local needs, and promote buy-in from both partners

3 RECOMMENDATION

Report on state-designated DE, ECHS, and P-TECH programs.

New York State should analyze and publish data on DE, ECHSs, and PTECHs in a user-friendly manner to policymakers and key stakeholders, including students and families. Specifically, NYSED should submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature on college in high school programs, including information about the participating students; the effect that college in high school programs have on increasing graduation rates and postsecondary outcomes, including by ESSA subgroup; program performance; and recommendations for any suggested changes to the programs. This report should include summary data on the measures reported to NYSED by participating programs, as outlined above. Data points should include:

- Student participation
- Student demographic information
- College credit attainment
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary enrollment within 18 months of high school graduation
- Postsecondary persistence
- Postsecondary completion

To make this report possible, we recommend that the NYSED budget include funding for at least one full-time data manager to support DE, ECHS, and P-TECH data collection and analysis work.

4 RECOMMENDATION

Allow postsecondary achievement during high school to count towards New York state graduation requirements.

Many college in high school programs are dually tasked with creating curriculum to fulfill Regents high school graduation requirements and associate's degree requirements. Instances where the diploma and degree requirements do not neatly overlap present challenges for ECHS students who seek to attain both. Allowing performance in college courses to count towards high school graduation requirements will address this issue, help encourage access to and participation in postsecondary pathway programs, increase alignment between the State's high school and higher education systems, and recognize the value of postsecondary achievement during high school.

One clear way to achieve this aim is to provide the option for passage of college courses with a grade of "C" or above from state-designated DE, ECHS, and P-TECH programs to count as Department-Approved Alternative Examinations in the corresponding subject and content areas, in lieu of the Regents exams. There is precedent for having performance in an accelerated learning program (the Advanced Placement) count as Department-Approved Alternative Examinations. Beyond a test-based assessment, passing a college course is the ultimate indicator of college readiness. Furthermore, college courses in Regents-tested subject areas that are taken for high school and college credit ("dual credit") are already approved by school district partners to meet state standards for

the high school diploma. Providing an alternative to the Regents exams through performance in dual credit courses from designated programs will facilitate completion of high school graduation requirements through meaningful assessments of college readiness (and therefore high school proficiency) and will encourage more students and schools to take advantage of college in high school opportunities. We recommend using a "C" or above as the benchmark for satisfactory performance, given that the "C" GPA threshold typically ensures transferability to IHEs.

5 RECOMMENDATION

Facilitate effective transfer of credits earned in college in high school programs between public colleges and universities.

To improve students' matriculation and persistence in IHEs, New York State should require its public colleges and universities, and encourage its private institutions, to accept credit earned through a college in high school program just as they would any other transferable credit. For example, sometimes IHEs will not accept credit that also appears on the high school transcript (dual credit), thereby limiting students' ability to transfer the credits they earned and accelerate their education. We also recommend a policy that requires articulation agreements among all public IHEs in the state, and that includes dual enrollment and early college high school students in those agreements. This policy would benefit all students at public IHEs who seeks to transfer between institutions in New York State.

CONCLUSION

As the birthplace of the early college movement and the P-TECH model, New York has long been at the forefront of implementing innovative college in high school programs. Now, especially given the challenges brought on by COVID-19, the State has the opportunity to demonstrate its forward-thinking leadership by promoting programs that offer an on-ramp to college and the workforce. These programs have a proven record of success, and are particularly beneficial for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Implementing the recommendations presented in this paper will significantly expand access to quality- and equity-focused college in high school opportunities for New York State students, propelling the next generation towards college and career success and advancing the social and economic health of New York State.

ENDNOTES

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