

**HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND SUCCESS
INITIATIVE COUNCIL**

**Friday, February 15, 2008
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Room 1-104**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order** – Chairman Robert Scott, Commissioner of Education
- II. Introductions** - Chairman Scott
- III. Adoption of the Minutes from February 4, 2008 Council Meeting** – Chairman Scott
- IV. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Development of the Strategic Plan**
- V. Invited Testimony on College Readiness Efforts and High School Reform and Dropout Prevention Initiatives**
- VI. Lunch**
- VII. Invited Testimony on College Readiness Efforts and High School Reform and Dropout Prevention Initiatives (continued)**
- VIII. Public Testimony** – Members of the audience may sign-up at the meeting to speak for up to 3 minutes on agenda items.
- IX. Other Business**
- X. Adjourn**

High School Completion and Success Initiative Council

February 15, 2008

Minutes

The Council will meet in open session and after determining the presence of a quorum, deliberate and possibly take formal action, including emergency action, on the following agenda items.

I. Call to Order

The High School Completion and Success Initiative Council convened its meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, February 15, 2008 in Room 1-104 of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Austin, Texas

Present: Commissioner Robert Scott, Commissioner Raymund Paredes, Chris Patterson, Rosa Maria Vida, James Windham, and Cindy Ramos-Davidson.

II. Introductions

Commissioner Scott asked members if they have completed the 90-minute open meeting training and asked them to do so as soon as possible as the deadline is rapidly approaching.

III. Adoption of Minutes from February 4, 2008 Council Meeting

A motion was made and seconded to approve the February 4, 2008 minutes as written. The motion carried.

IV. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Development of the Strategic Plan.

Council members requested a draft of the staff responses to the six questions posed at the last meeting by Ms. Patterson. Commissioner Paredes suggested that the strategic plan be written in the context of embracing the College Readiness Standards (CRS) recently adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). These standards are currently being edited for transfer to Commissioner Scott. The strategic plan of the Council should be aligned with the CRS. The CRS will be transferred to Commissioner Scott without performance standards to avoid any appearance of being prescriptive to the State Board of Education (SBOE). Dr. Vida asked that the performance standards be provided to allow entities the advantage of the intent of the standards. Commissioner Paredes assured the Council that the performance standards would be provided but under separate cover.

Mr. Windham asked if there is a distinction made between college-readiness standards and high school completion standards. A discussion ensued regarding whether the skills needed for workforce readiness, high school graduation, and college readiness were synonymous. It was determined that they currently are not thought of as the being the same, however, there is well supported movement toward a common goal with alignment between expectations and accountability. The Council determined that the goal of the Council will be post secondary readiness, which includes education, work, the military, trade skills training, and any other option that is desired by the student.

Upon review of the draft responses to the strategic planning questions, the Council agreed upon the following items for the strategic plan:

- Need for development of an overall mission statement.
- Consider using the Mississippi plan as an example of format.
- Programs should be self-sustaining as state funding will not continue indefinitely.
- Change “highly qualified” to “highly effective” regarding teacher qualifications.
- Change all references to “post secondary readiness” in place of college and career readiness.
- Consideration of a P-16 data system.
- Expectation of annual results.
- Involvement of the Education Research Centers in evaluation of programs.
- Include a requirement for cost-effectiveness in addition to academic effectiveness.

Jan Lindsey provided a summary of HB 2237 regarding the role of the Council and the content of the strategic plan. She mentioned that Rider 53 provides \$27 million to support the priorities and programs recommended by the Council.

The Council asked that common definitions of terms and metrics be discussed at the next meeting. Commissioner Scott that the strategic plan content and format must be the consensus of the Council and that it is important that the absent members be given an opportunity to comment.

V. Invited Testimony on College Readiness Efforts and High School Reform and Dropout Prevention Initiatives

The first invited speaker was Dr. Eric Hanushek with the Hoover Institution, Stanford University and Chairman of the Executive Committee for the Texas Schools Project at the University of Texas at Dallas. Dr. Hanushek was asked to talk about success and how to get there. He provided the following list of “what matters” in being successful.

- Economic value of schooling / performance
- Where Texas stands
- Value of better information; large amount of uncertainty – time to resolve this with better information

He also provided the following conclusions of his study of Texas.

- Achievement matters a lot – higher cognitive skills – math, science, reading
- Texas doing well relative to U.S., but not compared to the world
- Uncertainty about what affects performance

- Value of information
 - Accurate assessment and targets
 - Engage scientific evaluation
 - Continuous improvement

Dr. Hanushek told the Council that there is no “gold standard” of indicators of success in higher education. Linking the SAT and the ACT to subsequent performance in school is a start in the right direction.

VI. Lunch

In deference to time limitations and the number of invited guests, the Council paused the meeting to obtain lunch and continued the meeting with a working lunch.

VII. Invited Testimony on College Readiness Efforts and High School Reform and Dropout Prevention Initiatives (continued)

The next invited speaker was Tom Torkelson, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of IDEA Public Schools. From his Teach for America experience, Mr. Torkelson realized that many smart, bright students were behind grade level. This is the background of the IDEA academy. At the IDEA academy, college prep is the only path, with support and follow-up with students continuing when they enter college. Students are in school 30% longer and AP and IB courses are the only ones offered. The Council requested Mr. Torkelson’s involvement as the Council develops priorities and the strategic plan.

The next speakers were Dr. Richard Rhodes, President, El Paso Community College and Dr. Dennis Brown, Vice President of Instruction, El Paso Community College. The presentation focused on Early College High Schools and scalability. Commissioner Paredes remarked on the profound policy implications of using the Accuplacer at the end of the junior year to determine dual credit readiness and the resultant decrease of the cost of developmental education.

Next was the Teacher Association Panel, consisting of Holly Eaton, Director of Professional Development & Advocacy for the Texas Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA); Patty Quinzi, Legislative Counsel for the Texas American Federation of Teachers (TAFT); Elena Rettiger-Lincoln, Governmental Relations, Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE); and Richard Kouri, Director, Organizing Center for Public Affairs, Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA). Panel members provided their testimony regarding the Council’s strategic priorities, strategies for programs and goals to measure success.

The next panel represented Administrator Associations and included: Charles Boyd, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools, Fort Worth ISD, representing the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA); Karen Ellis, TASB Board of Directors, Member of the Richardson ISD School Board, representing the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB); Dr. Nelson Coulter, Principal at Hendrickson High School in Pflugerville ISD, representing the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP); and Dr. Richard Middleton, Vice President TSA, Superintendent, North East ISD, representing the Texas School Alliance (TSA). Panel members provided

a brief summary of their local systems and successes and offered the following recommendations to the Council.

- Structure alone does not change schools, there needs to be a corresponding change in culture and climate.
- Funding to districts should be formula funding rather than competitive funding to ensure sustainability of programs.
- Encourage personal relationships between teachers and students.
- The 4X4 structure is too restrictive. Core curriculum could be embedded into Career and Technology Education.
- Because a student's primary drivers come from home, a school has to create a common value system as well as a culture of learning.
- At-risk students actually need nurturing teachers and administrators more than the average student.
- Fund outcomes rather than processes. Fund schools based on the number of graduates.
- Allow administrators to be innovative and flexible.
- Suggested new metrics:
 - Percent graduate with cohort
 - Percent students graduate in relation to entire student body on an annual basis.
 - Attainment of six credits per year.
 - Regain cohort status at the end of each year.
- Learning never stops.
- Relevance does not compromise rigor.
- Return to formula funding and eliminate the targeting system.
- The high school allotment is a great innovation that has added much value in local districts.
- Evaluate college instruction including: class size, testing comparisons and teacher certifications. Develop common expectations, teaching strategies and styles across the transition from high school to college.
- Review how things have changed over the past few years, regarding college readiness, development education, class size, graduation rates and student outcomes.
- Programs should see movement in one year and results in two to three years.

VIII. Public Testimony

There was no public testimony.

IX. Other Business

Commissioner Scott stated that the next meeting will be February 21 and will be held across the street in the Steven F. Austin Building.

X. Adjourn

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

MEETING HANDOUTS

Comparison of State Strategic Plans

Governor’s Business Council	
Source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>From Good to Great: The Next Phase in Improving Texas Public Schools</i>, November 2004
Findings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Too many students are trapped in poorly performing schools and excellent teaching is not universally available, particularly to students in lower income areas. 2. Students’ academic accomplishments in the early grades are not being sustained in high school, with more than half of Texas students lacking the skills to succeed in college-level coursework. 3. Too few of our students, particularly among our minority populations, are graduating from high school and college. Texas is a rapidly growing, diverse state with unique demographic challenges and we must close the gap with other competitor states in college participation and success. 4. Taxpayers are demanding increased disclosure and transparency in the expenditure of public funds. Yet the Texas public school system lacks any clear and consistent structure for financial accountability that tells the public how their money is being spent. Establishing fiscal accountability is essential to maintaining public confidence in education.
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Create a More Robust Accountability System that Raises Standards and Ensures Students are College and Workforce Ready. 6. Reward Student Success and Establish Clear Consequences for Failing Schools. 7. Make Texas the National Leader in Attracting Quality Charter Schools and Promoting Student and Parent Choice. 8. Give Principals Maximum Freedom and Flexibility to Manage Their Schools and Remove Barriers to Getting Quality Teachers in the Classroom. 9. Improve the Public Disclosure of the Costs of Education and Hold Schools Accountable for their Use of Taxpayer

	Dollars.
Texas Business and Education Coalition	
Source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Business Connection: Key to Educational Change and Economic Development</i>, November 3, 2006 • <i>Two Faces of the Texas Economy for CTE Support Network</i>, March 1, 2007
Findings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life Time Employment Versus Employability 2. We need to do what workers abroad cannot do equally well for less money...forging relationships, tackling novel challenges, and synthesizing the big picture. 3. Information technology, bio technology and nano technology are converging. 4. Retirement at age 55 is not an economically sustainable policy. 5. A recent US Department of Labor report concluded that 85% of future jobs in the US will require advanced training, an associate degree, or a four year college degree. 6. Keys to Success in the 21st Century 7. Functional literacy in English and another language for all students. 8. Substantial increase in the number of students completing advanced courses, and programs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, with an emphasis on practical application to real world and workplace situations.
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Prepare all students for lifelong learning, earning, and living. 10. Support and stimulate P-16 initiatives and public/private partnerships. 11. Build awareness of the importance of education to workforce development, economic development and social well-being.

Texas Industry Cluster Initiative	
Source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Texas Industry Cluster Initiative Webpage</i> • <i>Action Plan</i>
Findings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school system should be the most important economic development organization in the state. 2. We need an assessment of workforce requirements to match critical skills to training and education.
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Target secondary and higher education funding into subjects and curriculums with the most relevance to the target clusters. 4. Define the career pipeline options model to meet industry requirements of the educational delivery system. 5. Review current efforts that combine short-term industry requirements with the educational delivery system. 6. Relate efforts to curriculum development and approval processes and recommend changes as required for educators, training providers and certification programs.
Texas Competitiveness Council	
Source:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Charge to Council</i>, Initial meeting materials, December 6, 2007 • <i>Governor's Charge to Council</i>, January 30, 2008 meeting
Findings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need to focus on increasing rigor and relevance in Texas classrooms. 2. Need to bolster research and development in alternative energy sources. 3. To continue an upward growth rate, Texas must become even more competitive. 4. A college degree is a leading indicator of future professional success, and a qualified, well-educated workforce is the foundation of bolstering economic competitiveness.
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Focus on better alignment of school curricula and workforce demands. 6. Identify significant competitiveness issues and opportunities arising from the follow-

	<p>up research on the six targeted industry clusters.</p> <p>7. Establish an agenda for action for both the State of Texas, and state agencies, whereby opportunities for increasing Texas' competitiveness are leveraged and barriers or weaknesses are eliminated or minimized.</p>
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Texas Higher Education Plan	
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Source:	<i>Closing the Gaps and Closing the Gaps Revision</i>
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Findings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proportion of Texans enrolled in higher education is declining. 2. Too few higher education programs are noted for excellence. 3. Too few higher education research efforts have reached their full potential.
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Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Close the gaps in participation. 5. Close the gaps in success. 6. Close the gaps in excellence 7. Close the gaps in research
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P-16 College Readiness and Success Strategic Action Plan	
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Source:	<i>P-16 Implementation Report, College Readiness and Success Strategic Action Plan, December 2006</i>
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Findings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over 90% of new jobs that will be available to students in the 21st century require some postsecondary education.
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Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Define standards and expectations for college readiness. 3. Align public education exit assessments with higher education and workforce entry expectations. 4. Infuse appropriate rigor at all levels. 5. Establish sound accountability measures. 6. Create a college-going culture in every school in Texas. 7. Prepare education professionals to assist students in meeting college and workforce expectations. 8. Coordinate college readiness and success plan objectives with strategies for persistence and timely graduation. 9. Provide greater access to academic preparations programs.
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Texas Workforce Investment Council	
Source:	<i>Destination 2010: FY2004-FY2009 Strategic Plan for the Texas Workforce Development System and 2007 Update</i>
Findings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integration of agencies and programs in the workforce system is the key to success. 2. The system should anticipate emerging workforce requirements to ensure employer needs are met in a timely manner. 3. Education and training play a central role in preparing the workforce of Texas to meet current and emerging needs. 4. Texas needs a well educated workforce. 5. The population profile of Texas has dramatically shifted to younger and more diverse.
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Increase the percentage of adult education students completing the level enrolled. 7. Increase the percentage of adult education students receiving a high school diploma or Certificate of Equivalency (GED). 8. Increase academic and future workplace success of youth by increasing the High School graduation and/or certification (GED) rates. 9. Reduce the percentage of student dropouts from public schools between grades 7 and 12. 10. Increase the percentage of exiting secondary students pursuing academic and/or workforce education. 11. Increase the Texas higher education participation rate. 12. Increase the number of certificates, associate's and bachelor's degrees awarded annually.
High School Allotment Advisory Group	
Source:	<i>High School Advisory Group Recommendations, (unpublished report)</i>
Findings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need to develop standards to evaluate success and cost-effectiveness of Allotment programs. 2. Need to develop procedures and criteria to select and recognize exceptional uses of Allotment funds.
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Focus on district improvement from its

	<p>baseline performance not relative to a predetermined statewide benchmark.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Encourage districts to use additional performance measures to supplement the five mandatory measures. 5. Districts should customize their evaluations to reflect local use of the Allotment and unique local circumstances. 6. Districts may disaggregate data collected by student population groups as appropriate for optional performance measures. 7. Estimate cost-effectiveness by using a per pupil cost methodology. 8. Districts should be recognized for exceptional uses. 9. Both outcome and process criteria will be used for selecting districts for recognition.
Commission for a College-Ready Texas	
Source:	<i>The Report of the Commission for a College Ready Texas, November 2007</i>
Findings:	<p>Understanding and Redefining College Readiness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definitions of college readiness vary, but most concur that readiness is the attainment of the core knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the first year of education after high school without the need for remedial/developmental education. 2. Today’s knowledge - based, global economy requires all youth to acquire education after high school to be competitive, successful, and earn an adequate income. 3. Today the options for education after high school are vast and include technical training, the military, and 2 - year college and 4 - year university programs. 4. The essential knowledge and skills required for post - secondary readiness, no matter what option is chosen, are the same, although many students may want to consider even more rigorous coursework. 5. The K–12 public school curriculum must be made more challenging to ensure that all students graduate with the prerequisite

knowledge and skills to succeed after high school. Students, faculty, counselors, and administrators can no longer view the senior year in high school as a letdown or “marking - time” interval. Academic intensity must continue through the 12th grade if students are to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for college and workplace success.

6. Preparation for college readiness must begin in kindergarten and progress through 12th grade.
7. Texas high school graduates today are unprepared for the rigor of college courses, and there is a disconnect between the current exit - level Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) passing standards—the requirement for high school graduation—and the level of performance needed to be college ready.

Need for College and Career Readiness

8. Educational attainment, such as receiving a high school diploma or completing an associate’s or bachelor’s degree, significantly influences an individual’s expected earning potential.
9. The majority of high school graduates in the United States intend to complete some form of post - secondary education but do not complete their education after high school.
10. The vast majority of Texas public school graduates who intend to acquire post - secondary certification or a degree are less prepared to succeed than most of their peers throughout the nation.
11. The business community in Texas supports the development of more rigorous standards for high school graduation.
12. Lack of rigor in curriculum standards leads to poor educational attainment. This puts Texas and our students at a competitive disadvantage in the global economy in which they are required to compete. Although higher education enrollment is growing slowly toward achieving the goals established by THECB (2000) in *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, the state’s higher education plan, post - secondary

education completion in Texas is behind other states and other countries.

13. Standards alone cannot address the problems identified in this report. Rather they provide goals to be reached. Reaching these goals requires a substantial effort in K–12 education to support curriculum and teacher development, which are delineated in House Bill 1, 79th Legislature, 3rd Called Session.
14. In today's knowledge - based economy, an overwhelming majority of jobs require some form of post - secondary education.
15. Students in the public education system today must be prepared to solve problems and work in careers that do not yet exist in an increasingly competitive, global workplace.
16. The most frequent concern expressed by employers is the shortage of qualified and trainable workers who possess solid academic knowledge and workplace skills such as persistence, a strong work ethic, good attendance and punctuality, and the ability to work in teams. This difficulty results in remedial training and employee turnover.

What Research Says About College and Career Readiness Standards

17. Standards for college and career readiness have been established by organizations and are being used increasingly throughout the United States.
18. Research suggests that these standards are associated with college and career success and therefore more prosperous citizens.
19. When compared, nationally recognized standards describe the knowledge and skills necessary for college and career readiness.
20. Sets of nationally recognized standards offer different levels of specificity. Specificity increases the likelihood that a standard is clearly understood by educators, parents, students, test - makers, and textbook publishers.
21. ACT college readiness standards in mathematics, English, reading, and science are empirically derived. They have been mapped

	<p>to specific ACT score ranges and test questions, and they indicate a certain probability of performance in first - year college classes. The relationship between test questions, test scores, and academic standards provides invaluable information about the level of proficiency that students need to demonstrate to be successful after high school.</p> <p>22. The College Board Standards for College Success are grade - specific, 6–12 curriculum standards based on extensive surveys of college and high school faculties and analysis of course content from exemplary college preparatory courses. The College Board standards provide specific guidelines for how the state may develop a sequence of courses and end of - course assessments building to research - based definitions of college readiness.</p> <p>23. Individually, none of the nationally recognized college readiness standards examined includes everything that business and higher education faculty believe are essential for college readiness. When the standards are combined, however, all of the essential standards are present.</p> <p>24. There are few, if any, distinctions made in nationally recognized and exemplary state standards between college readiness and workforce readiness. This is supported by testimony from the business community and general public.</p> <p>25. Both research and feedback from the business and higher education communities indicate that the high school courses required for students to succeed after high school are much the same across the nationally recognized standards. They include, but are not limited to, Algebra II, Physics, and Statistics.</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p>	<p>Policies to Support New College Readiness Standards</p> <p>26. As policymakers and educators implement college readiness strategies and curriculum, they should also address issues of high school dropouts and stress the importance of obtaining</p>

	<p>a high school diploma. Engaging and rigorous course options should be provided to all students, with additional attention paid to students at - risk of dropping out of school.</p> <p>27. For all Texas students to be successful after high school, the TEA, THECB, and SBOE should better align their infrastructures to ensure consistency in policies and programs essential to every student’s academic success. This includes aligning data systems and coordinating the expenditure of applicable state and federal funds. This also includes determining standards of performance on the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) and the Higher Education Readiness Certification (HERC). It is also imperative that consensus is reached in determining the standards associated with postsecondary readiness and passing scores for end - of course exams and any other high school assessments that the SBOE may approve for use in Texas public schools, such as the ACT, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and THEA.</p> <p>28. A statewide strategic plan for introducing college readiness standards should be developed. The plan should specify the processes to be followed, systems to be created, and steps to be taken with consideration of the responsibility that the State Board of Education has to adopt college readiness standards and include them in the K-12 curriculum. It should include, but not be limited to: instructional materials that align to the new curriculum and college readiness standards; an assessment system that aligns to the new curriculum standards with high school end - of - course exams that reflect the college readiness standards; and a new information system that provides data about a student’s school career from kindergarten through post - secondary education. It also should include clear metrics that define the terms <i>college readiness</i> and/or <i>on - track to be college ready</i> so that student progress toward college readiness can be identified at the district level starting as early as sixth grade;</p>
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	<p>meaningful professional development and teacher preparation programs to ensure teachers are adequately prepared and supported to increase college readiness among Texas students; and new teacher certification tests that align to the more rigorous curriculum standards.</p> <p>29. The K–12 public school curriculum must be designed and implemented to expand and improve students’ abilities to gather, analyze, evaluate, and use information in real situations to ensure that all students graduate with the prerequisite knowledge and skills to succeed after high school. Thinking and reasoning skills, based in appropriate content - specific knowledge, are of primary importance.</p> <p>30. Policies regarding the selection of instructional materials, test development, determinations of proficiency and other levels of achievement, professional development for educators, and general accountability should be made or aligned with the goal of students progressing each year toward college readiness upon graduation from high school. Preparation for college readiness must begin in kindergarten and continue through grade 12.</p> <p>31. The new classroom expectations should focus first on the systematic acquisition of broad factual knowledge associated with core academic subjects and on developing a rigorous level of abstract thinking and applied knowledge and skills. This approach to teaching and learning should be reflected in every aspect of public education, including but not limited to instructional practices, textbooks, assessments, teacher preparation, professional development, teacher certification, information systems, and accountability.</p> <p>32. As standards for college readiness are introduced into Texas public schools, vigorous steps must be taken to ensure high expectations for all students. Additionally, education leaders should identify mechanisms and strategies to help students bridge the gap between current standards and standards for college readiness, including better utilization of the High School</p>
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	<p>Allotment and other state grants and programs.</p> <p>33. Career and technical education provides students with engaging course options. This curriculum must constantly challenge and guide students to improve and expand their thinking and reasoning skills, to make use of content information in rigorous ways, and to recognize real - world applications of these skills. The standards must reflect expectations for college readiness, including the ability to succeed academically in postsecondary education.</p> <p>34. All institutions of higher education should use the standards for college readiness adopted by the THECB and the SBOE to determine entry - level credit - bearing courses.</p> <p>35. All institutions of higher education that are responsible for aspects of teacher preparation, including alternative certification, should incorporate these standards into their preparation practices.</p> <p>36. Institutions of higher education should be rewarded for increasing the number of students who successfully complete degree programs. Additionally, systems of accountability should be put in place to assess student learning in each institution's general academic program to ensure that institutional standards remain high while completion rates increase. Such measures of accountability should align closely with standards and expectations established by nationally recognized professional organizations, licensing boards, and other independent standard - setting agencies.</p> <p>37. All Texans should be informed about the importance of education after high school and its impact on individual success. P-16 reform should remain the top priority for state and local policymakers to better serve the needs of the communities, schools, and families they represent.</p> <p>38. Policymakers, teachers, and high school guidance counselors should help parents and students become better informed of the value of education after high school as well as the</p>
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knowledge, skills, and specific courses required to be successful after high school. College readiness standards should be accessible and understandable to parents and students.

39. Academic learning must be the priority for classroom instruction. Skills such as punctuality, reliability, persistence, strong work ethic, effective study habits, time management, and the ability to work in teams are sometimes dismissed as “soft skills” but they are critical to college and workplace success. Effective instruction can foster these habits, but development of these skills should not be the focus of classroom instruction.

Requirements for New College Readiness Standards

40. College readiness standards should be written with specificity and articulate a clear understanding of the complexity level expected within each standard.
41. K–12 standards must offer a pathway to graduating college - ready Texans. They must be specific, giving teachers a clear indication of the level at which they need to teach and at which they should expect their students to perform to be prepared for college and/or a meaningful career.
42. Texas college readiness standards should be consistent with the knowledge and skills identified from the comparison of nationally recognized college readiness standards.
43. K–12 curriculum standards, including standards for college readiness, should include core skills for each grade level. These standards should call for steady and sustained increases in content knowledge, reasoning skills, communication skills (oral and written), and ability to use these skills effectively in real settings through each grade until graduation. They should be focused, specific, and measurable.
44. Expectations in the classroom should align with expectations in college and the workforce. This effort should include a focus on

	<p>progressively more challenging and academically intensive levels of abstract, conceptual, analytical, and applied knowledge and skills. These increasingly intense challenges must extend through the senior year of high school so that students do not experience a let - down or falling - off of knowledge and skills just before beginning their college or workplace careers.</p> <p>45. Expectations for all graduates of Texas public schools should reflect a composite of available college readiness standards, including ACT, American Diploma Project, Standards 4 Success, and The College Board.</p> <p>46. Requirements for acquiring a high school diploma from Texas public schools should include successful completion of courses that indicate college readiness. These include, but are not limited to, Algebra II, Physics, and Statistics.</p>
Texas Education Agency	
Source:	<i>Texas Education Agency Strategic Plan for the Fiscal Years 2007 – 2011 Period</i>
Findings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A postsecondary degree is extremely important if students are to succeed and prosper in our modern economy. 2. The global economy has increased the demand for higher education and underscored the need for achievement and excellence in science and mathematics. 3. The demographic composition of the state and student population is changing such that demographic groups that are traditionally least represented in educational attainment comprise increasingly larger proportions of the total student population. 4. Success in the first three areas depends on the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers to prepare Texas’ schoolchildren for the future.
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. TEA will provide leadership to create a public education system that continuously improves student performance and supports public schools as the first choice of parents,

	<p>grandparents, and families.</p> <p>6. The TEA will create a system of accountability for student performance that is supported by challenging assessments, high-quality data, supportive school environments, highly qualified teachers, and high standards of student, campus, district and agency performance.</p>
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Strategic Plan Outline

- I. **Introduction and Background Information**
- II. **Mission** - The Mission is a succinct, comprehensive statement of the organization's purpose.
- III. **Goals** - Goals are statements which describe the desired position, results, or major outcomes the system intends to achieve.
- IV. **Objectives** - Objectives are concrete steps toward achieving goals.
- V. **Action Plan** – The Action Plan provides a management tool that organizes the activities to transform the vision into outcomes.
- VI. **Performance Measures** - The Performance Measures are characteristics of products, services, processes, and operations that can be used to track and improve performance.
- VII. **Appendix** – A description of major high school completion and success initiatives/programs.

Answers to Six Strategic Questions Staff and Council Input

1. What strategic priorities should the council establish for high school completion and post-secondary (Windham) readiness efforts?

The High School Council should give priority to strategies that are:

- Aggressive, comprehensive and transformative as opposed to marginal adjustments to the status quo (Paige)
- Focused on economically disadvantaged students who are at-risk of dropping out and are underrepresented in the college-going population
- Based on best available research, which currently suggests that strategies with the greatest potential for reducing dropouts and increasing college readiness among students traditionally underrepresented in higher education include:
 - Rigorous academic core curriculum
 - Personalized learning environments
 - Academic and social support
 - Relevant teaching and learning
 - Effective educators and leaders (Patterson)
- Designed to address all five of the preceding research elements (Patterson)
- Designed to produce ensure that all students should graduate from high school ready for post-secondary success (Patterson)
- Designed to leverage and align with other sources of funds including local, federal and private
- Carefully monitored and evaluated (Patterson)
- Implemented by quality administrators and teachers experienced in successful high school reform (Barbic)
- Primarily aimed at being self-sustaining beyond the funding period (This could be more of a goal than a requirement)
- P-16 focused (Patterson)
- Demonstrating, at a minimum, interim results annually (Patterson)

2. What strategies should the state employ to identify, support, and expand programs to improve high school completion rates and post-secondary readiness (Windham)?

(Actual language in HB 2237: The council shall adopt a strategic plan to specify strategies to identify, support, and expand programs to improve high school completion rates and college and workforce readiness.)

Strategies to identify programs:

- Use the best available research on what works in reducing dropouts and increasing high school completion and success to guide funding decisions
- Monitor promising programs being implemented at the federal level, locally and in other states to learn from others' successes and failures
- Consider setting aside a percentage of funds as R&D to pilot promising practices (Barbic)

Strategies to support programs:

- Use quality technical assistance to support the implementation of programs
- Employ administrators and teachers with experience implementing successful high school reform, if available, or provide rigorous professional development
- Monitor all programs carefully to ensure fidelity to the program model and progress toward achieving performance goals (Patterson)

Strategies to expand (or discontinue) programs:

- Commit to funding for a period of time sufficient to determine whether program is a success or not (research suggests this period is 3-5 years)
- Subject program to rigorous monitoring and evaluation
- Identify the key elements for a program's success before replication
- Subject all TEA programs to independent evaluations by the Education Research Centers or other external evaluators, if appropriate and funding is available (Patterson)
- Consider cost-effectiveness (Patterson)

3. What specific goals should the state establish to measure the success of strategies to improve high school completion and post-secondary readiness (Windham)?

Measure success by improvement in high school graduation rates, specifically:

Long-term

- Reduce longitudinal grade 9-12 dropout rate
- Increase longitudinal grade 9-12 Completion Rate

Interim

- Increase exit-level TAKS passing rate
- Reduce the percentage of 9th grade students retained in grade.

- Increase the percentage of students on track to graduate (Patterson)
- Decrease the number of discipline referrals (Patterson)

Measure success by improvement in post-secondary readiness rates, specifically (Windham):

Long-term

- Reduce the percentage of entering college students unprepared for college work as evidenced by their failure to meet one or more parts of the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) standards

Interim

- Increase the percentage of students who meet or exceed college-ready criteria in both English Language Arts and mathematics on the TAKS, SAT, or ACT test
- Increase the percentage of students who attain the commended performance level on the English Language Arts section of the Grade 11 exit-level TAKS or its equivalent
- Increase the percentage of students who attain the commended performance level on the Mathematics section of the Grade 11 exit-level TAKS or its equivalent
- Increase the percentage of students taking and scoring at or above criterion on Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate examinations
- Increase the percentage of students taking and earning college credit through dual credit courses
- Increase the percentage of students who graduate on the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement High School Programs.

Measure success by closing the gaps in achievement among student socio-economic, racial, and ethnic groups specifically by:

- Reducing the disparity in graduation rates among student population groups.
- Disaggregating performance data by student groups

4. How can we enhance the effectiveness and alignment of high school completion and post-secondary readiness (Windham) efforts?

(Actual language in HB 2237: The council is established to make recommendations to improve the effectiveness, coordination, and alignment of high school completion and college and workforce readiness efforts.)

- Ensure that all high school completion and success and post-secondary readiness (Windham) efforts are research-based and focus

on the same key strategies that reduce dropouts and improve high school completion and success

- Focus programs on similar student populations
- Establish consistent criteria for awarding grants and the same interim and long-term measurable goals for all programs
- Incorporate key elements into all grant programs, such as planning periods, teacher buy-in, district support, when appropriate and allowable
- Monitor programs closely and provide adequate technical assistance to ensure fidelity to the model
- Where appropriate, subject programs to rigorous evaluation based on the same measurable evaluation criteria

5. What strategies should the state employ to align and coordinate federal and other funding sources for high school reform, dropout prevention, and preparation of students for postsecondary success (Windham)?

(Actual language in HB 2237: The council shall adopt a strategic plan to identify strategies for alignment and coordination of federal and other funding sources that may be pursued for high school reform, dropout prevention, and preparation for students for postsecondary coursework or employment.)

- Articulate clear and focused priorities and objectives for state funding
- Identify available federal, private and other funding sources and determine whether the constraints and conditions attached to those funds will allow the state to use those funds in a manner that reinforces, complements, and supports state priorities and objectives
- Create opportunities for dialogue among federal and other funding sources to determine how best to coordinate, align integrate, or leverage these external funds, if appropriate, to support state funding priorities and objectives

6. What objectives should the state set for research and program evaluation?

(Actual language in HB 2237: The Council shall adopt a strategic plan to identify key objectives for appropriate research and program evaluation conducted as provided by this subchapter.)

- Provides internal and external stakeholders with the following:
 - Documentation of the process and outcomes of program about facilitators and barriers to program implementation

- Formative data and information to track grant progress and allow for modification of programs that are in place
- Summative information regarding
 - Overall effectiveness in meeting program goals
 - If data is available, cost effectiveness of interventions
 - Potential of programs or key program elements for statewide replication
- Utilizes both qualitative and quantitative analyses, as appropriate, to evaluate programs against a set of measurable performance goals
- Establishes multi-year longitudinal evaluations, in addition to more short-term evaluations, to ensure that sufficient data is available to determine the effectiveness of programs
- Summarizes lessons learned and promising practices

Presentations

Strategic Plan Template and Definitions

Barbara Knaggs, Associate Commissioner, State Initiatives, TEA

Mission (Why)

Example:

All Texas students will graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary success.

Goals (What)

Example:

To reduce high school dropout rates

To improve college and workforce readiness

To close gaps in achievement among student socio-economic, racial, and ethnic groups

Objectives (How)

Example:

Support for Programs

Maintain support systems to ensure effective implementation of programs.

Monitor all programs carefully to ensure fidelity to the program model and progress toward achieving performance goals.

Implementation Action Plans

Example:

Support for Programs

Fund technical assistance and coaching to guide and assist districts in effective implementation of programs.

Provide rigorous professional development so that programs are implemented by effective educators and leaders.

Monitor programs to ensure fidelity to the program model.

Track and report progress toward performance goals.

Performance Measures

(How many, How much in measurable terms, By when)

Example:

Reduce High School Dropout Rates

Long Term Indicators

Reduce longitudinal grade 9-12 dropout rate

Increase longitudinal grade 9-12 graduation rate

Interim Indicators

Reduce the percentage of 9th grade students retained in grade

Increase exit-level TAKS passing rate

Increase the percentage of students on track to graduate

Decrease the number of disciplinary referrals

Twin Goals: Graduation and Readiness

Improve High School Completion Rates and College and Workforce Readiness

Gene Bottoms
Senior Vice President
Southern Regional Education Board
gene.bottoms@sreb.org

Materials Provided to Council

- Enhanced *High Schools That Work* Design Brochure
- Students Can't Wait: High Schools Must Turn Knowledge into Action
- Lost in Transition: Building a Better Path from School to College and Careers

Materials Provided to Council

- *A New Vision: How States Can Use Career/Technical Studies to Improve High Schools*
- *Redesigning the Ninth-Grade Experience: Reduce Failures, Improve Achievement and Increase High School Graduation Rates*
- *Schools Need Good Leaders Now: State Progress in Creating a Learning-Centered School Leadership System*

Summary of Work in Texas

- SREB is presently working with 47 high schools in collaboration with the Texas High School Project and the Texas Education Agency
 - 10 Texas High School Project schools
 - 25 Enhanced *HSTW* design schools
 - 12 other schools adopted *HSTW* design

Highest Percentage of Students Meeting Reading College-Readiness Standards Experienced:

- An emphasis on reading and writing across the curriculum (14%)
- Quality CT courses (21%)
- Classrooms with high expectations (13%)
- Timely and useful extra help (34%)

Source: 2006 HSTW Assessment – Texas Schools

Highest Percentage of Students Meeting Mathematics College-Readiness Standards Experienced:

- Quality work-site learning (50%)
- Classrooms with high expectations (13%)
- Timely and useful extra help (34%)

- Intensive guidance and advisement (38%)
- High school being important to their future (35%)

Highest Percentage of Students Meeting Mathematics College-Readiness Standards Experienced:

- Four years of math – Algebra I and above (41%)
- Reading and writing across the curriculum (14%)
- Real-world problems in math classes (24%)
- Quality CT instruction (21%)

Ninth-Grade Bulge in Selected States

State	2001-2002	2005-2006
Alabama	107%	110%
Arkansas	103	104
Florida	134	117
Georgia	118	119
Louisiana	92	88
North Carolina	115	117
Oklahoma	106	106
Texas	121	120
Virginia	115	114

Source: NCES Common Core of Data

Achievement in the Middle Grades

NAEP Eighth-Grade Reading Results 2007

Basic and Above—US: 73 percent, SREB: 71 percent, Texas: 73 percent

Proficient and Above—US: 29 percent, SREB: 26 percent, Texas: 28 percent

Source: NCES

Achievement in the Middle Grades

NAEP Eighth-Grade Mathematics Results 2007

Basic and Above—US: 70 percent, SREB: 67 percent, Texas: 78 percent

Proficient and Above—US: 31 percent, SREB: 26 percent, Texas: 35 percent

Source: NCES

Practices at 20 High Schools with High-Graduation Rates Compared to 20 Low-Graduation Schools

Source: SREB Special Analysis

Practices at High-Graduation Schools

- Strong ninth-grade initiative, with multiple emphases including:
 - Career and education exploration
 - Choosing a focus goal for high school studies
 - Catch-up strategies to help more students reach grade level in reading and mathematics

Source: SREB Special Analysis

Practices at High-Graduation Schools

- More students take six or more career/technical credits and nearly twice the rate of at-risk students take six or more career/technical credits compared to low-graduation schools

IV.

- Greater emphasis by career/technical teachers to teach academics embedded in assigned projects

Percentages of Students Taking Six or More CT Credits at High- and Low-Graduation Schools

All Students—38 percent High-Graduation Schools
32 percent Low-Graduation Schools

At-Risk Students—61 percent High-Graduation Schools
38 percent Low-Graduation Schools

Source: SREB Special Analysis

Practices at High-Graduation Schools

- More students complete the college-preparatory academic core
- Fewer faculty believe it is important to sort students by perceived ability level

Source: SREB Special Analysis

Practices at High-Graduation Schools

- Provide support and assistance to grades and credit recovery

- Emphasis is on getting students to standards, not failing

V.

Practices at High-Graduation Schools

- Students are connected to adults through a teacher-adviser, mentor or small learning communities
- Effective school leadership focuses on specific goals and engages the faculty in continuous school improvement using a variety of data and strategies

Gains in SAT Composite Scores 1997-2007

	All	Black	Hispanic	White
Florida	- 5	+ 5	- 25	- 3
Georgia	+ 22	+ 22	- 7	+ 27
North Carolina	+ 26	+ 17	- 20	+ 32
South Carolina	+ 31	+ 24	- 11	+ 24
Texas	+ 4	+ 20	+ 24	+ 16
Virginia	+ 11	+ 18	- 21	+ 23
U.S.	+ 1	+ 5	+ 12	+ 9

Source: The College Board, Verbal/mathematics composite

Conditions for School Reform

Conditions for Making School Reform Grants to Low-Performing and Low-Graduation High Schools

1. Obtain district buy-in and support

“A recent National Academy of Science study concludes that district support of low-performing high school reform is even more critical than that of elementary- or middle-level school reform.”

Engaging Schools: Fostering High School Students' Motivation to Learn, Committee on Increasing High School Students' Motivation to Learn, National Academy of Science, 2004

Challenges for Districts to Implement Successful High School Reform

- District offices must move beyond announcing initiatives to assisting high schools to implement initiatives
- Agree among district, school and teacher leaders and providers about the improvement framework and goals

- Assign a key person from the district to work with schools and with external provider

Teacher Working Conditions or Student Learning Conditions

VI.

VII. A recent study of teachers' working conditions found high-quality leadership was the single greatest predictor of whether high schools made Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by *NCLB* – a more powerful factor than either school size or teacher retention.

Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2004

Challenges for Districts to Implement Successful High School Reform

- Create a succession and preparation plan to build a pool of qualified school leaders for low-performing schools
- Appoint school leaders who understand curriculum and instruction, how to lead the faculty in change and how to get needed support from the district

Challenges for Districts to Implement Successful High School Reform

- Within the context of a broad improvement framework, school and teacher leaders take ownership of the problem and solution
- Orient the entire faculty to the reform design and engage them in generating implementation plans

2. Select high schools to receive priority focus

- 184 Texas high schools designated as dropout factories – fewer than 60 percent of ninth-graders make it to October of senior year – plus other low-performing and graduation schools

Element of a Reform Framework for Low-Performing and Low-Graduation Schools

3. Focus on Seventh- and Eighth-Grade Students

- Provide extended-day, extended-week and summer instruction for students in grades seven and eight to:
 - ensure they are ready for high school reading and mathematics.
 - reduce failure rates in ninth grade and prepare more students to meet grade-level standards in reading and mathematics.

Element of a Reform Framework for Low-Performing and Low-Graduation Schools

4. Redesign the Ninth Grade

- Identify students poorly prepared for ninth grade and at risk for dropping out of school.

- Strengthen retention of ninth-grade students in school and reduce high failure rates.
- Improve students' performance to grade-level standards in reading and mathematics by the end of grade nine.

Redesign the Ninth Grade

- Maintain a student-to-teacher ratio in grade nine that is not higher than any other grade level ratio.
- Utilize experienced and effective teachers as leaders for teacher teams in ninth grade
- Assign students to a teacher mentor who meets with them frequently to help students become independent learners.
- Design ninth-grade CT course that incorporate a series of mini projects throughout the school year for students to apply grade-level reading, mathematics and science skills.

Redesign the Ninth Grade

- Provide flexible schedule that increases students' time in core language/reading and mathematics courses to eliminate academic deficiencies.
- Assist students and their parents or guardians in setting an outcome career and educational goal and identify a focused program of study to achieve that goal.
- Assist students in learning and applying study skills, coping skills and other habits that produce successful students and adults.
- Assist overage students in earning a high school diploma and a recognized credential that has value in the workplace.

Redesign Framework for Low-Performing and Low-Graduation Schools

5. Recommended Academic Core for All Students

- Four credits in college-prep/honors English
 - Students read 8-10 books each year, write short papers weekly and complete at least one major research paper
- Four mathematics credits – Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II and one additional credit
 - Students completing Algebra I in grade 8 complete four additional math courses
 - Students take math during their senior year
- Three college-prep science credits
- Three college-prep social studies credits

6. All Students Choose a Focus

- Mathematics and science concentration – four or more college-prep credits in each field, with at least one at the AP level
- Humanities concentration – four or more credits in college-prep/honors English, social studies, foreign language, fine arts or literature with at least one credit at the AP or college level
- Career/technical concentration – four or more credits in an approved CT field or blended CT/ academic concentration

Completing Academic Core and College-Readiness Goals: Drafting, Technology, Engineering, Electricity and IT Pathway Students

	All Students in Pathway	Percentage Meeting College-Readiness Goals		
		Reading	Math	Science
2 to 3 Parts Core	55%	70%	83%	70%
0 to 1 Part Core	45	45	55	45

Source: HSTW 2006 Assessment and Student Survey.

7. Challenges Facing Low-Performing and Low-Graduation Texas High Schools

- Teaching for understanding versus coverage of material and test prep
- Broadening the teaching of mathematics beyond just procedural skills to include understanding and reasoning
- Providing students opportunities to apply mathematics across the curriculum

8. Support an Improvement Framework That Pays Attention to Relationships, Relevance, Support of Students, Quality Teaching, etc.

- Set high classroom expectations
- Support extended time to reteach and for students to redo work until expectations are met

- Make greater use of project- and problem-based instruction embedded with strong academics to improve relevancy in learning
- Foster collaboration among academic and career/technical teachers
- Implement nontraditional scheduling in ninth grade for students behind in grade level
- Promote parental involvement
- Train teachers as mentors to work with low-performing students and their parents or guardians
- Assign each student to an adviser to assist the student and parent or guardian in setting goals, designing and personalizing graduation plans to achieve goals

Support an Improvement Framework That Pays attention to Relationships, Relevance, Support of Students, Quality Teaching, etc.

- Personalize the learning environment
- Make reading and writing for learning a priority for all teachers
- Train teachers on fostering student motivation to learn through using engaging instructional strategies

Actions States Can Take Get Serious About High School Graduation

- Give equal emphasis to improving academic achievement and raising high school graduation rates.
- Set ambitious high school graduation targets for all groups of students and make them a part of the state accountability system.

Actions States Can Take

- Create optional program of study pathways for college and careers.
- Embed the most essential college- and career-readiness standards into CT curriculum.

Embed Reading Readiness Standards into CT Assignments

- Summarizing
- Paraphrasing
- Categorizing
- Inferring
- Predicting
- Vocabulary
- Research
- Writing

Actions States Can Take

- Establish conditions for awarding one or two academic credits through CT courses.
- Allow students completing a CT concentration the option to meet graduation requirements in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics (required for all students) by passing state-approved employer certification exams or meeting standards on college placement exams.

Actions States Can Take

- Set accountability targets from percentage of graduates from CT concentrations that would pass a state-approved employer certification exam OR meet standards on a college placement exam for postsecondary studies.
- Design senior transitional courses in English/reading and mathematics for students failing readiness exams.

**All Students College Ready:
The new mission for high performing districts & states
February 21, 2008**

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Our Goal

Every student gets the opportunity to live a healthy, productive life.

How We Do It

- Focus on a limited set of problems
- Promote innovative solutions
- Create partnerships with governments, businesses, and non-profits
- Share results and adjust our strategies as we learn

US PROGRAM EDUCATION GOAL

All students graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college, career, and life. All students, all schools, everywhere.

EDUCATION: THE PROBLEM

- **Every year, 1.1 million students drop out of school. In total, only 32 percent of American high school students will graduate from high school with skills they need to succeed in college or work.**
- Illustration reads out of 3.9 million high school students (2001-2002), 1.2 million will drop out of school, 1.5 million will graduate unprepared for college or work. Only 1.2 million will graduate college ready.

According to a 2003 Public Agenda poll, most employers say high school graduates lack basic skills. More than 60 percent rate graduates' skills in spelling, writing, and basic math as "fair" or "poor".

More than half of all students who enter college take remedial courses. Every year, 1.1 million students drop out of school.

THE COST

Not addressing this problem has social, economic and moral implications.

Social

It is becoming much harder for those without some level of post-secondary education to reach their potential as productive members of society.

Economic

For most, a high school degree will no longer be sufficient to earn a family wage.

Moral

This is the biggest social justice/civil rights issue of our time – ensuring that all students have access to and support through a high quality education.

Sources: Williams, Adriane, and Swail, Watson Scott (2005). *Is More Better? The Impact of Postsecondary Education on the Economic and Social Well-Being of American Society*. Washington, DC: Educational Policy Institute, Inc.

WHY COLLEGE READY AS THE STANDARD?

There are significant economic consequences for students who lack required skills for college/work/civic life.

56 percent of jobs today require some college.

80 percent of the fastest-growing jobs over the next decade will require some college.

Of the 50 best-paying occupations, only 2 do not require a college degree.

STUDENTS DISENGAGE IF NOT CHALLENGED

Research has shown us that students often drop out because they become bored in environments with low expectations.

By raising our expectations and providing supports to help students reach those higher standards, we have a better chance of ensuring that students not only graduate from high school, but graduate prepared for success in the 21st Century.

FOUNDATION SCHOOL INVESTMENTS

160 early college high schools

365 charter schools

224 alternative high schools

832 schools in partnership with school districts

284 schools in partnership with states

Illustration of the United States color-coded by the number of schools funded by Foundation

Red – More than 150 schools funded (Texas, California, Washington, New York and Illinois, Massachusetts and Rhode Island).

Olive Green—between 50 and 100 schools funded (Alaska, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Maine, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Wisconsin).

Tan—Less than 50 schools funded (Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut)

White—No schools funded by Foundation (Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho, Vermont, West Virginia, Hawaii and New Hampshire).

OUR APPROACH

We invest to improve our nation's schools and school systems so that all students graduate ready for life.

Policy and Public Will--Advance adoption of and build public and political support for college-ready policies.

Schools and Curriculum--Demonstrate what is possible through new schools and improved schools that emphasize teaching and learning.

Data and Accountability -- Make progress towards common data standards and well-defined state and district accountability policies and data systems.

Early Investment: New York City Schools

Since Fall 2002, over 200 new schools have opened in New York City
Most have replaced large failing high schools with graduation rates below 40%

Average graduation rate across first cohort of schools was 79%

More than 80% of the students expect to attend college

New York City's overall graduation rate is the highest it has been in two decades

EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Profile

What is the ECHS Initiative?

The Early College High School (ECHS) Initiative represents a counter-intuitive approach that provides rigorous high school and college coursework for traditionally under-performing students

Over 150 ECHS as of Sept 2007

Models vary, but many are:

Co-located with community colleges and other higher ed

Provide personalized support for course work and applying to college

Graduate students with both a high school diploma and an associate's degree

Outcomes

Schools show students what is possible—serving as a “power tool”

Over 95% of entering 9th graders in the first early college class graduated with a high school diploma, with more than 57% also earning an associate's degree. 80% of the students were accepted into a four-year college. Most recent evaluation shows ECHS have 94% attendance, are creating college-going cultures, and the majority have higher average percentages of students proficient in reading and math than their districts.

TEXAS - A LEADER IN REFORMING HIGH SCHOOLS

Strong state level policies supporting college ready standards (recommended high diploma as the default graduation requirement, goal of college-ready 4 x 4 graduation plan, high school allotment, dual credit, significant commitment of funds and planning efforts focused on dropout prevention).

State leadership, demonstrated commitment and courage to put high standards into law and break down barriers that inhibit education reform and improvement.

Alignment among knowledge/skill standards (TEKS), state assessments, and state accountability system at the K-12 level.

FAR TOO FEW STUDENTS GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE-LEVEL LEARNING

Percent of Students Meeting THECB Standard for Higher Education Readiness (Spring 2007)

All Students are passing English/Language Arts at 39 percent, Math at 49 percent and both E/LA and Math at 28 percent.

African American Students are passing E/LA at 27 percent, Math at 27 percent and both at 13 percent.

Hispanic Students are passing E/LA at 31 percent, Math at 38 percent and both at 19 percent.

White Students are passing E/LA at 48 percent, Math at 63 percent and both at 37 percent.

THE TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

We are very fortunate to have important Texas institutions working along side us as we tackle these challenges: Michael and Susan Dell Foundation,

Communities Foundation of Texas, Great Texas Foundation, Texas state leadership.

By sharing information and coordinating investments, we maximize our collective impact. The Communities Foundation contributes to this impact in an additional way by serving as the intermediary for a large portion of our Texas investments.

The THSP has strengthened our work by providing regular opportunities to share information and learn from others who are deeply engaged in improving high schools across Texas.

BMGF INVESTMENTS IN TEXAS-\$107M

The Texas High School Project

\$35M-THSP for ECHS, Redesign, Replication of Charter Schools

\$20M-TSTEM

\$1.8M-Principal leadership

Region One ESC/IRRE-First Things First

\$13M-High School Redesign Project in the Rio Grande Valley

Austin ISD

\$14M-Planning & implementation grant to redesign the district's entire secondary education program

Houston ISD

\$4.5M to transform teaching & learning across the district

Other investments

TEA, United Ways of Texas, AAMA, UPLIFT Education, national intermediaries, etc.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Focus on goal – all students college-ready. The whole system – states, districts and schools – must have this shared vision.
2. To improve existing schools the focus must be on teaching and learning. Structure and culture are key components but teaching and learning are fundamental.
3. Robust data systems are critical to achieving college readiness expectations and driving continuous improvement.
4. Creating new schools is one of the most high-impact ways to change the system, but replication of promising schools requires fidelity to well-honed models.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aligned instructional system-align K-12 standards with *college readiness*.

Align student supports to mitigate unintended consequences resulting from quick shift to higher standards-(look at role of counselors, opportunities for accelerated instruction for high school, investing in student support programs like CIS).

Align state, regional, and local capacity and resources with the new, higher expectations.

QUESTIONS??

“We, too, must dream. Just imagine what we could accomplish if we truly educated all young people well. If all students—regardless of their race or income—attended a great high school. A school that challenged them. A school that excited them...

Think about the citizens we would have. Think about the democracy we could become. ”

Melinda Gates, July 2003

Dropout Prevention Everyone's Problem

Presented by
Dr. Jay Smink, Executive Director
National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
Clemson University

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network

Overview

Understanding the Problem

Analyzing Data & Predicting Values

Strategies That Work

Using a School & Community Approach to School Improvement

TOP 10 REASONS 10TH GRADERS DROPPED OUT: 2002-04

Missed too many school days.....	44%
Thought it easier to get a GED.....	41%
Poor grades/failing school.....	38%
Did not like school	37%
Could not keep up with schoolwork.....	32%
Got a job.....	28%
Pregnancy*	28%
Felt unable to complete course requirements....	26%
Could not get along with teachers.....	25%
Could not hold a job at same time.....	22%

*females only
(Rotermund, California Dropout Research Project, Statistical Brief Number 2, May 2007)

Why Students Go to School?

Here is how students responded to the question
from most common response to least common:

Because I want to get a degree and go to college...	73%
Because of my peers/friends.....	68%
Because it's the law.....	58%
Because I want to acquire skills for the workplace..	47%
Because of what I learn in classes.....	39%
Because I enjoy being in school.....	34%

To stay out of trouble.....24%
Because of my teacher(s).....22%
Because there's nothing else to do.....22%

(Yazzie-Mintz, "Voices of Students on Engagement: A Report on the 2006 High School Survey of Student Engagement")

Literature Review/Risk Factors

Domains

Individual

Family

School

Community

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Risk Factors by School Levels

Individual Factors	Elem.	Middle	High
Has a disability		✓	✓
High number of work hours		✓	✓ *
Parenthood			✓ *
High-risk peer group		✓ *	✓
High-risk social behavior		✓ *	✓
Highly socially active outside of school			✓
Low achievement	✓ *	✓ *	✓ *
Retention/over age for grade	✓ *	✓ *	✓ *
Poor attendance	✓ *	✓ *	✓ *
Low educational expectations		✓ *	✓ *
Lack of effort		✓	✓
Low commitment to school		✓	✓ *
No extracurricular participation		✓	✓ *
Misbehavior	✓	✓	✓ *
Early aggression	✓	✓	

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Risk Factors by School Levels

Family Factors	Elem.	Middle	High
Low socioeconomic status	✓ *	✓ *	✓ *
High family mobility		✓ *	
Parents have low level of education	✓	✓	✓ *
Large number of siblings	✓		✓
Not living with both natural parents	✓	✓	✓ *
Family disruption	✓		

Low educational expectations		✓*	
Sibling(s) dropped out		✓	✓
Low contact with school		✓*	
Lack of conversations about school		✓*	✓

Key: ✓ One (1) research study

✓ * Two (2) or more research studies

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Risk Factors Supported Across All School Levels

- Low achievement
- Retention/over age for grade
- Poor attendance
- Low family socioeconomic status

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Research: Observations About Risk Factors

- School dropout has multiple causes
- Multiple risk factors better predictor
- Life course model, where dropout is not an event but a process with factors building and compounding over time

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Predictive Characteristics

Predictive Variables Accuracy

Absences.....	66%
Achievement tests (Grade 3).....	70%
Failing grades (Grades 1-8).....	85%
Grade point average (Grade 9).....	90%
Teacher comments (Grades 1-8).....	63%

(Barrington & Hendricks, 2001)

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Sixth Grade Predictors of “Falling Off Track”

Attending school 80% or less of the time

Receiving a poor, final behavior mark

Failing math

Failing English

(Balfanz and Herzog, 2006)

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Research: Dropout Pathway

Dropping out of school is the result of a long process of disengagement that may begin before a child enters school.

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Choices are Never This Obvious

*There is a picture of a fork in the road, with a road sign pointing to one option reads, “Drop out of School”. The road sign pointing the other direction reads, “Stay in School”.

Silver Bullet Approach

		Exemplary Programs							
Risk Factors									Individual
									Family

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Exemplary Programs	ES	MS	HS
Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)	X	X	X
Big Brothers Big Sisters	X	X	X
Check & Connect	X	X	X
Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program		X	X
Keepin' it R.E.A.L (Refuse, Explain, Avoid, Leave)		X	X
Project Graduation Really Achieves Dreams	X	X	X
Project Toward No Drug Abuse (Project TND)	X	X	X
Quantum Opportunities Program			X
School Transitional Environment Program (STEP)		X	X
Teen Outreach Program (TOP)		X	
Too Good for Violence	X	X	X

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Exemplary Programs

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

AVID is an in-school academic support program for middle and high schools.

Focus: Places underachieving high risk students in a college preparatory program

Strategies: Active Learning, After-School Opportunities, Individualized Instruction, Family Engagement, Mentoring/Tutoring

Magic Bullet Approach

Exemplary Programs

There is a new chart based on the earlier magic bullet chart with an added effective strategies section. They are marked with X's in several squares of the grid.

15 Strategies That Help Prevent Students From Dropping Out Dropout Prevention Everyone's Problem

There is an illustration of a circle with several connecting themes inside. The center of the circle is a yellow triangle that reads, "School-Community Collaboration". The triangle is flanked by 3 red squares, each reads something different. One square reads, "early interventions", another reads, "basic core strategies" and the last one reads, "Instructional Practices". A green band circles the squares and triangle that reads, "safe learning environments". Finally, all of this is encapsulated in a blue circle that reads, "Systemic Renewal".

A School and Community Perspective

Systemic renewal
School and community collaboration
Safe learning environments

Systemic Renewal

Policies
Populations
Personnel
Programs
Practices
Partners
Pennies

School-Community Collaboration

Schools can no longer be islands in communities with no bridges to the mainland. Bridges must be built to connect schools, homes, and communities.

(Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2001)

Creating Safe Learning Environments

A Safe Learning Environment
Provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere that fosters a spirit of acceptance and caring for every child
Is free of intimidation, violence, and fear
Clearly communicates behavior expectations that are consistently enforced and fairly applied
Builds positive, responsible character

Dropout Prevention: Everyone's Problem

There is an illustration of a circle with several connecting themes inside. The center of the circle is a yellow triangle that reads, "School-Community

Collaboration”. The triangle is flanked by 1 red square, The square reads, “early interventions. A green band circles the square and triangle and it reads, “ safe learning environments”. Finally, all of this is encapsulated in a blue circle that reads, “Systemic Renewal”.

Early Interventions

Family Engagement
Early Childhood Education
Early Literacy Development

Economic Development Begins in Early Childhood

More at Four—a community-based voluntary pre-kindergarten initiative to prepare at-risk four-year-olds for success in school

“This is the first step to building a high-quality workforce that attracts high-quality jobs throughout North Carolina, . . .

We simply have to start earlier to build the kind of workforce that it takes to be successful in the new economy.”

Governor Mike Easley, North Carolina

There is an illustration of a circle with several connecting themes inside. The center of the circle is a yellow triangle that reads, “School-Community Collaboration”. The triangle is flanked by 2 red squares, each reads something different. One square reads, “early interventions”, the other reads, “ basic core strategies”. A green band circles the squares and triangle that reads, “ safe learning environments”. Finally, all of this is encapsulated in a blue circle that reads, “Systemic Renewal”.

Basic Core Strategies

Mentoring
Service-Learning
Alternative Schooling
After-School Program Experiences

The earlier complete illustration is shown again on this slide. The Illustration again shows a circle with several connecting themes inside. The center of the circle is a yellow triangle that reads, “School-Community Collaboration”.

The triangle is flanked by 3 red squares, each reads something different.

One square reads, “early interventions”, another reads, “ basic core strategies” and the last one reads, “Instructional Practices”. A green band circles the squares and triangle that reads, “ safe learning environments”.

Finally, all of this is encapsulated in a blue circle that reads, “Systemic Renewal”.

Making the Most of Instruction

Professional development
Active learning
Educational technology
Individualized instruction
Career and technical education

Using a School and Community Approach to Improvement

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Historical Approaches to “Fix” the Problem

Educational Response
Fix-it programs – Directed at students, teachers, curricula, principals, families
Project-based – Short-lived with limited funding, time-based, key-person driven

Historical Approaches to “Fix” the Problem

Political Response
Quick fix – To gain “Instant Results,” written for wrong reason (alternative schools)
Blame legislation – Targeted to school dropouts (driver’s license) or poor schools, limited funding, restricted years

Reasons Why Dropout Prevention

“Fixes” *DO NOT SUCCEED!*

Sustainability of Effort

Project life of 1-3 years
Expect “instant results”

Commitment of Effort

Limited investment of time and resources
Too many other priorities

Most Critical Reasons for Failure of Old Approaches

Leadership is not built into schools to plan, implement, and monitor new strategies and continuous efforts
Empowerment or ownership is not built at local level
Stakeholders — schools, community, businesses, and families—are not actively involved in the process
Local capacity is not built for continuous improvement and change

NDPC Program Assessment and Review (PAR)

Phases of PAR

Preparation—Establish Local Action Team (LAT)

Data Review & Analysis–Complete School Climate Survey
School Site Visit–Host visiting PAR team
Review & Analysis of School Visit Data–Prepare report
Report & Discussion–Review & analyze report
Action Planning–Explore options & set priorities
Implementing Action Plan–Initiate policies & programs
Continuous Monitoring, Evaluation, & Program Improvements

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**Dropout Prevention is Not
Rocket Science,
but it is
Brain Surgery**

This slide is illustrated with three building blocks. The red block reads, “behavior modification, the yellow block reads, “Academic Achievement”, and the blue block reads, “Civic Responsibility”.

Contact Information

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Jobs for the Future
Overview of Early College High School
The High School Graduation Mystique
**Presentation to the High School Completion
and Success Initiative Council
February 21, 2008**

The High School Graduation Mystique

For low-income students, dysfunctional to sell high school graduation as the end point..

Everyone needs a postsecondary credential

Country is dividing rapidly into “haves” and “have-nots” based on educational attainment

The AA degree is the “pivotal” point

Goal & Challenge for States

Difference Between Current Annual Degree Production and Annual Degree Production Needed in 2025 to Compete with Best Performing Nations (55% A&B)

Graph represents that:

Texas needs 140,533. California is ahead of Texas, it needs 131,749 degrees to compete with best performing nations. This is the most of any state in the United States. Massachusetts is -18,389 to give a comparison on the state doing the best.

Goal & Challenge for States

Rapidly increase postsecondary degree production

Target resources where they will yield most benefit in enhanced labor market outcomes & avoidance of social costs

Create arguments “on the ground” to build public will that success is possible

Demonstrate cost efficiency and return on investment

One Approach: College-level Work in High School

Time to degree shortened

Families and state save money

College “try out” for those not already college bound

Students motivated to work hard to earn free college credit

Improved alignment between high schools and postsecondary

Options for College-level Work in High School

A continuum of choices:

Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB)

Early college high schools*

Pathways linking high school and postsecondary

Dual or concurrent enrollment options

Early College: Intensive Investment in Degree Production

Early College High Schools are:

Small schools encompassing grades 6,7-14 or 9-14 created through formal partnerships between secondary and postsecondary institutions.

Designed so students underrepresented in postsecondary can earn an Associate's degree or two years of college credit while still in high school

6-12 schools= 7 years to AA (-2 years)

9-12 schools= 4-5 years to AA (-1 or 2 years)

Early College High School Initiative: Theory of Change

By integrating grades 9-14, compressing the years to a credential, and removing financial and other barriers to college, we can:
increase the number of young people completing high school and attaining a postsecondary degree or credential.
promote dual enrollment for wide range of young people.
address disconnects between secondary & postsecondary **systems**.

Where Are Early College High Schools?

This slide is illustrated with a map on the United States. The dark green states are states with more than 10 Early College High Schools. These states are: California, Texas, North Carolina and New York.

The medium green states are states that have 5-9 early college high schools, these states are: Washington, Utah, Ohio and Georgia.

The light green states are states that have 1-4 early college high schools, these states are: Oregon, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Missouri, Wisconsin, Michigan, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Maine, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

As of 2/08.

Who Is Establishing Schools?

The ECHSI partners and their open schools (to date):

Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (6 schools)
Center for Native Education (10 schools)
City University of New York (6 schools)
Foundation for California Community Colleges (19 schools)
Gateway to College (17 schools)
KnowledgeWorks Foundation Ohio (8 schools)
Middle College National Consortium (12 schools)
National Council of La Raza (10 schools)
North Carolina New Schools Project (42 schools)
Texas High School Project (21 schools)
Utah Partnership for Education (6 schools)
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (11 schools)

State of Texas-- Early College High Schools

1 Challenge ECHS
Houston ISD
Houston Community College
Houston, TX (2003)

2 Collegiate ECHS
Corpus Christi ISD
Del Mar College
Corpus Christi, TX (2006)

3 East ECHS
Houston ISD
Houston Community College –
Southeast
Houston, TX (2006)

4 Mission ECHS
Socorro ISD
El Paso Community College at
Mission
El Paso, TX (2006)

5 Mountainview ECHS
Dallas ISD
Mountain View College
Dallas, TX (2006)

6 Brookhaven ECHS
Carrollton-Farmer's Branch ISD
Brookhaven College at Farmer's
Branch
Farmer's Branch, TX (2006)

7 University Preparatory
Flour Bluff ISD
Texas A&M University Corpus
Christi
Corpus Christi, TX (2006)

8 Laredo ECHS at TAMU
Laredo ISD
Texas A&M International
University
Laredo, TX (2006)

9 Southside ECHS
Southside ISD
University of Texas San Antonio
San Antonio, TX (2004)

10 Southwest ECHS
Southwest ISD
University of Texas San Antonio
San Antonio, TX (2004)

11 East Central ECHS
East Central ISD
University of Texas San Antonio

San Antonio, TX (2004)

12 Hidalgo ECHS
Hidalgo ISD
University of Texas Pan American
Edinburg, TX (2006)

13 Legacy ECHS
Taylor ISD/Hutto ISD
Temple College
Taylor, TX (2007)

14 Panola ECHS
Panola Charter School
Texas State Technical College
Marshall
Marshall, TX (2007)

15 Bryan Collegiate
Bryan ISD
Blinn College/Texas A&M
University
Bryan, TX (2007)

16 Harlingen ECHS
Harlingen ISD
Texas State Technical College
Harlingen
Harlingen, TX (2007)

17 Early College for Higher
Opportunity
Santa Rosa ISD
University of Texas Brownsville
Santa Rosa, TX (2007)

18 Progreso ECHS Academy
Progreso ISD
South Texas College
Progreso, TX (2007)

19 Valle Verde ECHS
Ysleta ISD
El Paso Community College at
Valle Verde
El Paso, TX (2007)

20 Victory ECHS
Aldine ISD
North Harris Community College
Aldine, TX (2007)

21 Clear Horizons ECHS
Clear Creek ISD
San Jacinto Community College
Clearlake, TX (2007)

ECHS is Represented in a Variety of Postsecondary Sectors

Private liberal arts colleges and universities (Univ. of Hartford, Univ. of Dayton, Stanford)

Major university systems (City University of New York, Univ. of California)

Public Universities (Univ. of Utah, California State Univ. Los Angeles, Youngstown State Univ.)

Community colleges (North Carolina Community College System 75 “Learn and Earn” early colleges, California Community College system)

Research and Evaluation Underway

Longitudinal Data	Student Information System (SIS) tracking most students, comparisons with district data
Evaluations	Gates Foundation external evaluation (AIR/SRI) Experimental Research on NC Learn & Earn by SERVE
Finance	Return-on-Investment and Cost-to-Degree Completion modeling by by Augenblick, Palaich, and Associates
Case Studies	In depth study of “academic identity” in two schools by Harvard Education School researchers Documentation of school and classroom practices and results--especially focused on secondary-postsecondary partnerships Documentation of early college-related state policies

Data on Students and Schools

Impact as of Fall 2007:

Students served: 20,000 moving to 100,000+ by 2012

Populations served:

3/4 students of color

22 schools serve especially at risk populations--

Native Americans, dropouts

Most students are first generation to attend college

60% report eligibility for free and reduced lunch

Schools open: 159 in 24 states; 90+schools in pipeline

Race of Students in 121 Early College High Schools (2006-7)

Latino – 36 percent

White – 28 percent

Black – 26 percent

Asian American – 5 percent

Native American – 3 percent

Mixed – 2 percent

ECHSI 2007 Student Achievement

IMPACT:

in 2007, 900 students graduated in 4 years from 17 schools

85%+ graduated with substantial college credit

Many completing AA degree in 5th year

250+ graduates earned merit scholarships (4 Gates Millennium Scholars)

ECHS students outperformed students in their districts in math and ELA

ECHSI Wins and Influence

ECHS established in research and policy literature, featured in media

ECHS being replicated with state dollars in GA, ME, MI, NC, TX;

75 schools on the way in NC

Some states have incorporated ECHS in rules and statutes (TX, OH, NC, GA)

States expanding free college courses as “on ramp” to college through dual enrolment (FL, GA, ME, OH, RI, TX, UT)

Early financial modeling suggests early college will yield significant state return on investment and decreased cost of degree completion

Implementation Challenges: THIS IS NOT EASY

ECHS requires:

Formal agreement between secondary/postsecondary partners
Financing plan that combines funding sources: school & college
Recruitment of and commitment to target population
Leader with credibility in postsecondary environment
Aligned and integrated 9-14 grades curriculum
Instructional and leadership coaching to create school-wide culture of high achievement
Data driven decision-making & accountability

In Their Own Words

“It’s kind of like, wow; I can do this for myself now. I can sign up for my classes, and I can pass them, and I can take good notes, college-level notes. I can pass college exams.”

Jessica Davis, '07 graduate of Harbor Teacher Prep Academy, now enrolled at UCLA

JFF: A Mission-driven Organization

Accelerate the educational and career advancement of youth and adults struggling in today’s economy.

For youth

Double the number of underrepresented youth who attain postsecondary credentials by age 26

For adults

Increase the number of low-income urban adults who obtain jobs that pay family-sustaining wages