



EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL WEEK MAY 4-10, 2009

CORE PRINCIPLES

We, the founding intermediary organizations of the Early College High School Initiative, believe that an early college school is one innovation that provides traditionally underrepresented youth with a path to and through college.

All early college schools adhere to five interrelated Core Principles, which constitute the fundamental beliefs of the initiative. Although all early college high schools embrace these essential characteristics, they use a wide range of strategies for attaining them and for meeting the specific needs of their students, communities, and institutional partners.

The Core Principles were developed collaboratively to provide a framework to guide others interested in planning and implementing early college high schools. The document also offers strategies that are essential to attaining each principle.

CORE PRINCIPLE 1

Early college high schools are committed to serving students underrepresented in higher education.

- Early college high schools recruit low-income students, racial and ethnic minorities, first-generation college goers, and English language learners.
- Early college high schools recruit students at risk of dropping out of high school, not matriculating to college, and not completing a degree, (i.e., students with poor attendance, struggling learners, students who are over-age and under-credited).
- Student admission is not based solely on prior academic performance.

CORE PRINCIPLE 2

Early college high schools are created and sustained by a local education agency, a higher education institution, and the community, all of whom are jointly accountable for student success.

- A formal, written agreement provides for full access to college courses, facilities, and support services.
- Dedicated representatives from all partner organizations meet regularly to review data, provide guidance, and make key decisions regarding planning, implementation, and sustaining the early college school.
- Faculty, staff, and community partners develop deep collaborations and participate, according to their role, in data-driven activities that advance instructional practice, curriculum development, staff development, and student support in order to build a college-going culture.
- All partners are actively engaged in developing sustainable funding for the early college school.

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CORE PRINCIPLE 3

Early college high schools and their higher education partners and community jointly develop an integrated academic program so all students earn one to two years of transferable college credit leading to college completion.

- Secondary and higher education partners have aligned high school and college requirements and curricula, and they co-develop an academic plan that incorporates opportunities for dual credit.
- The academic plan ensures that students strive for two years and complete a minimum of one year of college credit in the core disciplines.
- There are strategies and structures in place that provide students with the opportunity to complete four-year degrees, (e.g., a graduation plan, transfer or articulation agreements).

CORE PRINCIPLE 4

Early college high schools engage all students in a comprehensive support system that develops academic and social skills as well as the behaviors and conditions necessary for college completion.

- Early college high schools develop and implement a proactive support plan that includes multiple academic and social supports to ensure students' progression through college, articulates how and where services are delivered, and clearly describes the roles and responsibilities of staff and partners in their implementation.
- Early college high schools address barriers to students' learning and academic achievement inside and outside of school.

CORE PRINCIPLE 5

Early college high schools and their higher education and community partners work with intermediaries to create conditions and advocate for supportive policies that advance the early college movement.

- Early college high schools collect and share data with initiative partners to help demonstrate effectiveness at the local, state, and national levels.
- Early college high schools work with their intermediaries to develop communications plans that further the objectives of the movement.
- Early college high schools and their intermediaries work collectively to influence state and national policy, including legislation, regulations, and the allocation of funds.
- Early college high schools, with their partners, are involved in preparing teachers and leaders to effectively meet the unique mission of the early college movement.