



EARLY COLLEGE
HIGH SCHOOL
INITIATIVE



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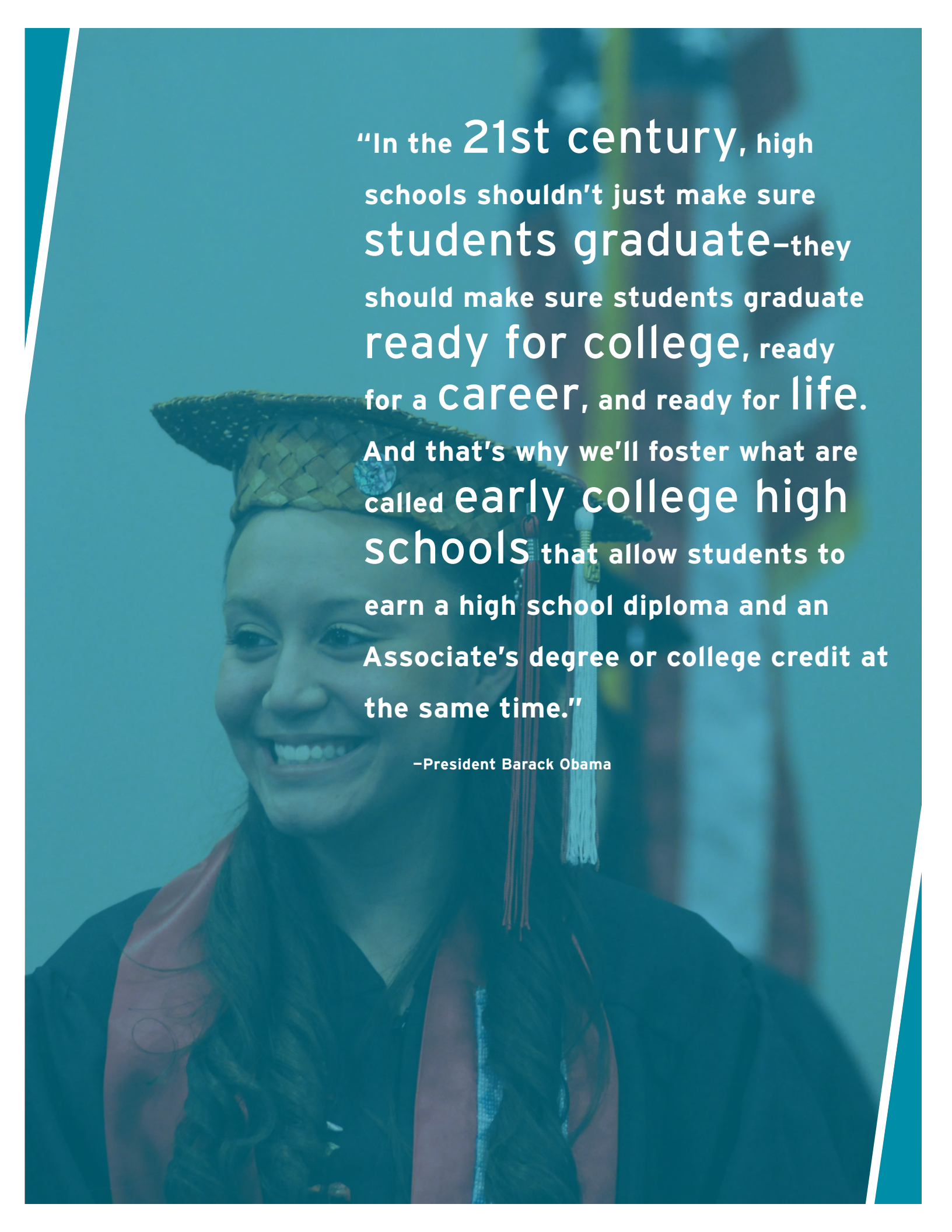
EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL WEEK **PLANNING GUIDE**

Tips on bringing together students, parents, administrators, community leaders, and public officials to celebrate early college high schools

MARCH 20-26, 2011

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“In the 21st century, high schools shouldn’t just make sure students graduate—they should make sure students graduate ready for college, ready for a career, and ready for life. And that’s why we’ll foster what are called early college high schools that allow students to earn a high school diploma and an Associate’s degree or college credit at the same time.”

—President Barack Obama

OVERVIEW OF ECHS WEEK

This weeklong celebration brings together students, educators, administrators, parents, community leaders and legislators to honor the success of early college high schools in helping students who have been underrepresented in higher education beat the odds.

Now in its ninth year, the ECHS Initiative has grown to more than 230 schools across 28 states. They serve more than 50,000 students who can earn up to two years of college credit or an Associate's degree tuition free.

National media outlets have shined a brighter spotlight on the initiative and its successes. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Education Week*, and countless local papers acknowledge the difference that these schools make in the lives of America's underrepresented students—and their families.

During **Early College High School Week 2011** (March 20-26), intermediaries in the ECHS Initiative will assist their schools in coordinating activities that will help raise community awareness of early college high school. Jobs for the Future will support intermediary partners as they develop, execute, and publicize local and regional events, and will also promote the Week to national media.

THE GOALS OF THE WEEK

- **Build local support** for the Early College High School Initiative through local and national media visibility;
- **Promote partners' roles** in building a national network that achieves results for students;
- **Elevate the successes** of early college high schools in the eyes of local and national funders; and
- **Promote the expansion of early college designs across schools and districts** to local and national stakeholders and decision makers as an innovative model that works.

THE EARLY COLLEGE SUCCESS STORY

Early college high schools are designed to dramatically increase the number of low-income and minority youth who not only get a high school diploma, but earn a postsecondary credential as well.

Over the past nine years, the ECHS Initiative has transformed the high school experience for tens of thousands of students. Academic acceleration—not remediation—coupled with carefully designed courses and student supports have powered college-level learning for students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

The **results** speak for themselves:

- **92%** graduate from ECHS¹
- **78%** earn free college credit
- **22%** earn 2 years of college credit or an Associate's degree²

¹Four-year cohort graduation rate, based on U.S. Department of Education definition.

²percentage based on schools open 4+ years



RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

JFF will support the initiative's national partners as they plan and promote their events and those of their schools, reach out to national journalists and assist with local media activities, and produce print and electronic resources that can help intermediaries and their schools support ECHS Week.

JFF has updated all electronic resources (e.g., fact sheets, news releases, invitation templates) and posted them for downloading on www.earlycolleges.org/echs_week_resources.html

- **News release template** for schools and partners to publicize activities to local media.
- **Local ECHS Week Proclamation request** to be adapted for sending to school boards, city councils, mayors, legislatures, governors.
- **Fact sheet:** "Early College High Schools Get Results."
- **30-second PSA** script for distribution to local radio, TV, or print media.
- **Promotional flyer** template about ECHS Week events for schools to send to parents and community members.
- **Frequently Asked Questions** about early college high schools and ECHS Week.
- **Invitation letter to local officials and others:** Schools and partners can adapt this template for local use.
- **Videos:** "Opportunity for All" by the ECHS Initiative; and "Building College Readiness" by San Diego High School.
- **Logos** you can use on event flyers and news releases.



PROGRAMMING IDEAS

Please feel free to customize these ideas or develop new concepts for your local communities.

MEDIA/SCHOOL-CENTERED ACTIVITIES

- **Holding a news conference** to celebrate students who are graduating with an Associate's degree or at least one year of college credit. The conference will applaud students' achievements and tout the financial savings to them and their families.
- **Connecting media** with an early college graduate who is marching with fellow Associate's degree graduates at the local community college for a feature story.
- **Releasing data** on student achievement at the early college high school.
- **Inviting media** to a school event to profile a student planning to graduate with an Associate's degree.
- **Approaching local radio stations** with a PSA request.
- **Submitting an op-ed** by the district superintendent, a school or community leader, a parent, or a student to a local newspaper.
- **Arranging for a school leader to be interviewed** about the merits of early college on a local radio or TV station.
- **Arranging for a local or state official to proclaim ECHS Week** in honor of an early college in your area.
- **Timing another newsworthy announcement** for release during ECHS Week.



COMMUNITY-BASED EVENTS

The following ideas are more elaborate and are designed to engage a wider audience. Accordingly, these activities require more planning time and organizing capacity than the school-based events.

DVD Screenings

Screen the early college high school DVD, "Opportunity for All," or clips from other videos to offer a provocative look at the successes and challenges of our country's educational system. Schools can follow the screening with speakers or a panel discussion.

Panel Discussions/Presentations

Schools can expand local awareness of education-related issues by inviting educators, scholars, advocates, and policymakers to discuss topics that affect local education and student achievement, including dual enrollment policies within states.

Workshops

Similar topics could be addressed in educator-led workshops for students, families, or teachers. These workshops can offer creative, hands-on opportunities for audiences to learn about education and college-readiness issues.

School Receptions/Tours

Offer community members opportunities to meet students and school staff at a reception. The reception can include a photo exhibit (or other type of display) featuring a day in the life of an early college student, an activity the school has undertaken to improve the community, or some other school-driven event. Schools could honor a student, teacher, parent, or local leader at the reception.

Exhibits

Partners can work with schools to increase local awareness and appreciation of the early college design with an exhibition featuring the work of local students.

Contests

An Early College High School Week story-writing, poetry, or art contest for students and community members can raise awareness and interest. Showcase entries at an exhibit or event and invite community leaders to judge entries and award prizes. The writing contest could be part of a reception or exhibit, with prizes donated by local businesses.

OTHER WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

- **Become a fan of ECHS Week 2011** on facebook and share what your school is doing to celebrate. <http://bit.ly/ECHSWk2011fb>
- **Post event photos** on the school walls, the school website, or partners' websites.
- **Post materials** about your school and ECHS Week on websites.
- **Suggest follow-up actions**, such as asking state leaders to support early college high schools in public policy. Contact JFF for specific ideas on public policies that support and promote early college high schools.
- **Send a report** on your activities to your national partner and JFF.
- **Report to your school**—and more broadly to your community—on the activities that took place during ECHS Week nationally.
- **Send thank you letters** to all who helped and were honored.
- **Use ideas and materials from ECHS Week throughout the year** to convey the following core message: early college high schools help our communities and the nation increase the number of students who are academically prepared to enter college and earn a postsecondary credential.



ABOUT JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Jobs for the Future identifies, develops, and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states, and the nation compete in a global economy. In 200 communities in 41 states, JFF improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers.

ABOUT THE EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Early college is a bold approach to high school reform, based on the principle that academic rigor, combined with the opportunity to save time and money, is a powerful motivator for students to work hard and meet serious intellectual challenges. Early college schools blend high school and college in a rigorous, yet supportive program, compressing the time it takes to complete a high school diploma and the first two years of college.

The schools are designed so that low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English language learners, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education can simultaneously earn a high school diploma and one to two years of transferable college credit—tuition free.

Today, the Early College High School Initiative includes more than 230 schools serving more than 50,000 students across 28 states.



EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

The partner organizations in the Early College High School Initiative have received grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other funders to plan and open early college schools. While catalytic, these start-up grants are small in comparison to the operating budgets of schools, which are funded primarily by states and local districts.

The initiative's 14 partners work directly with early college schools, school districts, and postsecondary institutions. They provide startup and ongoing technical support, guidance, and professional development for their networks of schools.

The partners are:

Jobs for the Future (National Coordinator)

Center for Native Education

City University of New York

Communities Foundation of Texas

Foundation for California Community Colleges

Gateway to College National Network

Georgia Board of Regents

KnowledgeWorks Foundation

Middle College National Consortium

National Council of La Raza

North Carolina New Schools Project

SECME, Inc.

Utah Partnership for Education

Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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