



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

To: Colorado Stakeholder Committee: Increasing the High School and College Success of Underrepresented Youth Through Early College Designs
From: Jobs for the Future (JFF)
Date: June 18, 2012
Re: Notes from June 15, 2012 Meeting

Overview of Benchmarking Process

JFF provided the stakeholder committee with a quick overview of the baseline and goal setting process. One question that was raised is whether baselines will be established for each program (e.g., ECHS, ASCENT).

Early College Designation Process

The committee was asked to provide CDE with recommendations for an application and approval process for “Early College.”

While the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act includes a definition of “Early College” and provides the State Board of Education with the authority to designate a secondary school that provides only a curriculum that is designed in a manner that ensures that a student who successfully completes the curriculum will have completed either an Associate’s Degree or sixty credits toward the completion of a postsecondary credential as an early college, an approval process was not established in statute or code. Anecdotal evidence suggests high schools and partnering institutions lack clarity about the key components of the model and the requirements for establishing schools.

The group agreed Colorado’s Early Colleges should target and enroll traditionally underserved students and provide a coordinated course of study and academic supports that will prepare all students to successfully complete college courses in high school. It was noted that some but not all of the six early colleges identified in statute are currently serving this population.

Concerns were raised that any changes to the current definition of early college would overstep statutory authority. As a stopgap measure, the group suggested CDE seek Board of Education approval for emergency rules that would establish a protocol that could be put in place for the next school year.

The group recommended the application process include:

- A signed cooperative agreement or MOU that defines the partnership between an school/district and their college partner.

- A plan for how the school will recruit and serve the target population, including students who are not on track for graduation.
- Establishment of an EC advisory board and its membership
- A plan for sustainability

Angela will share the group's recommendations with the Associate Commissioner and report back to the committee at our July meeting.

Identification of Policy Priorities

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a rich discussion of the policies needed to create and sustain Colorado's early colleges and other college in high school intensive pathways. The committee was split into two smaller workgroups, which reviewed the strengths and challenges of seven key policy levers across each of the programs (e.g., Concurrent Enrollment, Back on Track, Early College and ASCENT).

The committee developed consensus around the following policy and programmatic recommendations:

Finance

What incentives or recognition could be provided to schools and colleges to encourage them to use concurrent enrollment as a tool?

- How would AP and IB fit into incentive/recognition (similar weight?)
- Could incentives be incorporated into a performance-based funding model for colleges that partner with high schools?
- Could pay-for-performance metrics for high school teachers be linked to concurrent enrollment?
- Could incentives/rewards consist of equipment for schools
- Per pupil funding was identified as strength at the district level. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of concurrent enrollment and early college designs so districts and the public gain awareness about the economics of student success.

ASCENT

- Funding needs to be more predictable. Districts recruit students, but lack certainty over the number of students who will be able to enroll for the 5th year program because the legislative appropriation for the program comes late in the school year.

Governance

- A budget request has been made to fund a full-time person at CDE to oversee concurrent enrollment, ASCENT and other acceleration programs. Committee members indicated a point-person is needed to

oversee implementation, management and expansion of early college designs.

- Best practices, resources and model programs need to be developed and disseminated.

Student Supports

Question: Is there room for setting parameters around student support services?

--Needs to be very broad to recognize demographic issues in the state.

- Guidelines for MOU should be created.
- District and college responsibilities for student supports for concurrent enrollment, ASCENT, BOT and Early College programs should be articulated in an MOU. District and college partner should each be required to designate a liaison.
- All high school students should be required to take the ACT. (Some students refuse because they don't think they are going to college.)

Student Eligibility

- Provide districts with the flexibility to offer Basic Skills courses as early as 9th grade. (Earlier accessibility to remedial coursework will help more students to become college ready and enroll in ASCENT program)
- Establish uniform eligibility requirements at community colleges for entry level English and math courses

Data & Accountability

- Incorporate student participation and completion of concurrent enrollment, AP and IB courses into district performance framework
- Provide incentives to schools that increase the success rates of at-risk students
- Establish a policy, which specifies the preferred grade for Accuplacer administration. Test should be used primarily for diagnostic purposes

Other

- Ensure that concurrent enrollment and early college concepts are incorporated into endorsed diploma and Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) credentials.
- Explore the possibility of utilizing College in Colorado to provide outreach for concurrent enrollment and other acceleration programs.
- Build awareness of the benefits of acceleration programs to school districts and colleges, which participate in CE. Such awareness should include:
 1. Data which illustrates completion success
 2. Financial benefits of CE programs