

Middle and Early College Resources Prepared for Dexter Community Schools

History

Middle College Originally Launched to Increase Access to Postsecondary Education

First piloted in New York City in 1974,¹ Middle College is an alternative high school program in which students complete high school requirements on a college campus.² Middle College primarily operates on a board of education budget, employs high school teachers, and shares the college's facilities (e.g., library, computer labs, cafeteria).

The Middle College model features structural components designed to help traditionally underserved students with academic and social challenges succeed and build college readiness. According to data from 1990-2000, students who attended Middle College were significantly more likely to stay in school compared to their peers in New York City (97 percent versus 70 percent retention).



90%

The percentage of graduates of the first Middle College that enrolled in postsecondary education, in 1990-2000.³

Common Features of the Middle College Model⁴



Small School

Students receive more individualized attention in a small school environment (i.e., typical enrollment cap of 450 students).



Intensive Guidance

Students receive intensive guidance. Middle College encourages a ratio of three guidance counselors to 450 students. Students participate in regular peer and group counseling.



College Behavior Encouraged

By attending school on a college campus, where there are no hall monitors, bells, and metal detectors, students practice exercising their personal freedom. In a shared campus space, college students serve as a role model of mature behavior for high school students.

1) "Our History." Middle College National Consortium. Accessed April 29, 2019. <http://mnc.us/about/our-history/>.

2) "The Early College High School Concept: Requisites for Success." Jobs for the Future. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://jfforg-prod-prime.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/ECHSConcept.pdf>.

3) Ibid.

4) Ibid.



In-Depth Learning

Because students take high school classes built into a college schedule, classes are longer in length. Students subsequently engage in more in-depth and project-based learning.



Experiential Learning

Middle College may offer students internship opportunities in the community, which extends learning beyond the classroom.

Early College Expands on Middle College Framework to Offer an Accelerated Academic Pathway

As the Middle College model demonstrated early success, both the founder and first Middle College principal noted that some high school students did not need four years to complete their secondary school requirements, and some were already enrolled in college classes.⁵ In the 1999-2000 school year, Middle College students who took college courses passed at a higher rate than that of the typical college first-year cohort. Thus, these students demonstrated readiness to attend actual college courses.

Early College, which is also referred to as Early College High School or Early College School, retains most of the core structural features of Middle College and incorporates additional interventions to offer an accelerated, more integrated academic pathway. Typically, students start their studies in high school courses, and begin college coursework as soon as ninth grade.⁶ Some college courses may count towards both high school and college credit. Students graduate with a high school diploma and an Associate's degree (or two years of college credit), at no cost.⁷ Students can complete the program in five years or less. Similarly to Middle Colleges, most Early Colleges are located on college campuses.⁸

In addition, Early College deepens the collaboration between high school and college. For example, the high school receives support from college divisions, such as in finance, admissions, and counseling. To ensure an active partnership between high school and college administration, Jobs for the Future emphasizes that the college president should be involved in communicating and advocating for the program to faculty, community stakeholders, and higher education forums.

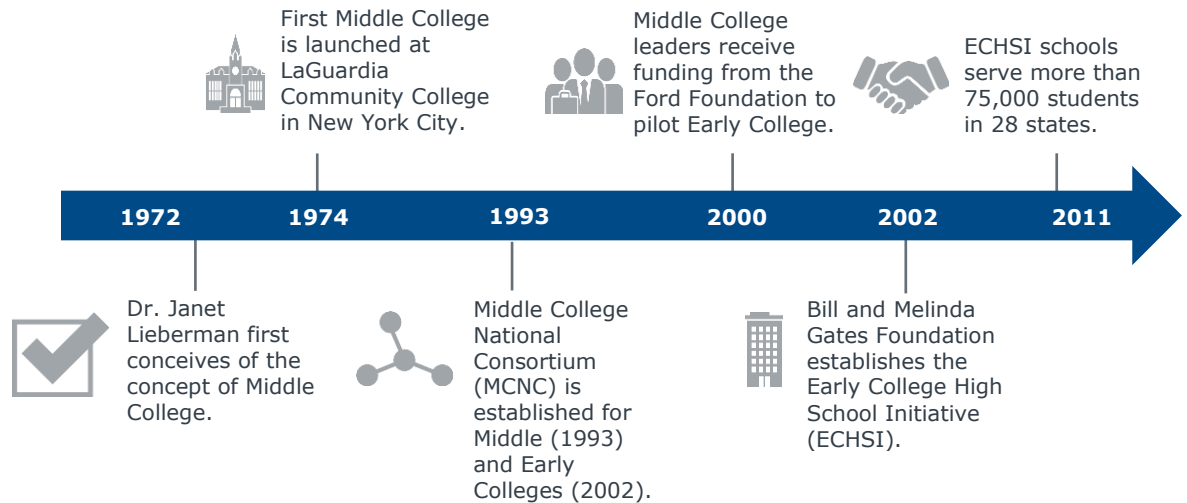
5) "The Early College High School Concept: Requisites for Success." Jobs For the Future. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://jfforg-prod-prime.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/ECHSConcept.pdf>.

6) "Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges." National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST). Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.tc.columbia.edu/ncrest/publications--resources/BarnettElisabeth_BucceriKristen_etc_TenKeyDecisionsinCreatingEarlyColleges_2013.pdf.

7) "The Early College High School Concept: Requisites for Success." Jobs For the Future. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://jfforg-prod-prime.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/ECHSConcept.pdf>.

8) Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges." National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST). Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.tc.columbia.edu/ncrest/publications--resources/BarnettElisabeth_BucceriKristen_etc_TenKeyDecisionsinCreatingEarlyColleges_2013.pdf.

Timeline of Middle and Early College^{9,10,11}



Design

Existing Early College Programs Vary in Model Structure and Course Sequence

Early Colleges vary in the flexibility of academic plans, including course sequence.¹² In general, the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST) recommends designing a course continuum that increases in difficulty. Some Early Colleges mandate that students follow a specific course sequence, some let students choose the order of their courses, and others blend these two approaches.

For example, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District in Texas offers four different Early College models:

- A comprehensive course sequence that allows students to earn a maximum of 60 college credits or an Associate's degree;
- A more specialized model targeting students who are at risk of not graduating from high school;
- High schools with redesigned 11th and 12th grades that offer dual enrollment courses;
- "School within a school early college high school" that offers dual enrollment courses to students enrolled in the school.¹³

At the California Academy of Liberal Studies, students take a set combination of high school and college classes, one summer elective, and then can opt to take all college courses in their fifth year.¹⁴ The College in High School Alliance features additional profiles of early college design, such as from Akron Early College High School in Ohio and Bard High School Early College in New Jersey.¹⁵

9) "The Early College High School Concept: Requisites for Success." Jobs For the Future. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://jfforg-prod-prime.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/ECHSConcept.pdf>.

10) "Our History." Middle College National Consortium. Accessed April 29, 2019. <http://mcnc.us/about/our-history/>.

11) "About Us." Middle College High School. Accessed April 29, 2019. <https://www.mchslic.org/>.

12) "Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges." National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST). Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.tc.columbia.edu/ncrest/publications--resources/BarnettElisabeth_Buccerikristen_etc_TenKeyDecisionsinCreatingEarlyColleges_2013.pdf.

13) "How to Scale College in High School." College in High School Alliance. Accessed April 25, 2019. http://www.nacep.org/collegeinhighschool/How%20to%20Scale%20College%20in%20High%20School_CHSA.pdf.

14) "Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges." National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST). Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.tc.columbia.edu/ncrest/publications--resources/BarnettElisabeth_Buccerikristen_etc_TenKeyDecisionsinCreatingEarlyColleges_2013.pdf.

15) "How to Scale College in High School." College in High School Alliance. Accessed April 25, 2019. http://www.nacep.org/collegeinhighschool/How%20to%20Scale%20College%20in%20High%20School_CHSA.pdf.

Early College administrators use various metrics to determine when students are ready to begin college coursework.¹⁶ For example, teachers can gauge college readiness based on college entrance exam scores, student progression through a specific course sequence, and/or faculty approval on a student-by-student basis. At Wallis Annenberg High School in California, high school teachers, the building principal, and a college liaison collaboratively assess students on a set of criteria (e.g., no behavior problems in ninth and 10th grade) in order to determine timing of enrollment in college courses.



How to Establish and Maintain College-Level Quality in Early College Coursework¹⁷

Jobs for the Future recommends that high school teachers who teach college courses should use the same syllabus, assignments, and assessments utilized in the equivalent course taught on campus. Consider requiring college professors to provide constructive feedback on student work through high school classroom visits.

Build College Readiness Skills into the Curriculum to Promote Student Success in College Coursework

Consider integrating skills-focused workshops or courses to boost students' college readiness.¹⁸ Successful Early College students (i.e., highest college GPAs, most number of college credits) more readily demonstrate ease with the following skills: using library resources, taking notes, planning homework, meeting deadlines, and creating a good study environment.

Skills Checklist for Teachers to Assess Students' College Readiness¹⁹

- Cognitive skills: problem-solving, interpretation, analysis of claims
- Content knowledge and skills: writing skills, algebraic concepts, essential foundational concepts from core subjects
- Academic behaviors: time management, persistence, study group use
- Contextual skills and awareness: how to ask for help, how to build relationships with professors, college admissions process

At STAR Early College in New York state, ninth grade students participate in weekly "College 101" workshops to learn about different departments and meet professors.²⁰ In the spring, the students conduct a six-week, in-depth study of an academic discipline. Ninth and 10th grade students work on group research papers that reflect college-level work. In 11th grade, students begin to take college courses.

16) "Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges." National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST). Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.tc.columbia.edu/ncrest/publications--resources/BarnettElisabeth_BucceriKristen_etc_TenKeyDecisionsinCreatingEarlyColleges_2013.pdf.

17) "A Policymaker's Guide to Early College Designs." Jobs For the Future. Accessed April 26, 2019. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520109.pdf>.

18) "Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges." National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST). Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.tc.columbia.edu/ncrest/publications--resources/BarnettElisabeth_BucceriKristen_etc_TenKeyDecisionsinCreatingEarlyColleges_2013.pdf.

19) Ibid.

20) Ibid.

Support Services for Students

Provide Academic and Social Support Services for Students to Promote Program Completion

The Middle College National Consortium (MCNC) discusses how Early Colleges offer research-based comprehensive support to students.²¹ For example, administrators should initially mandate academic support and ensure that support is specific to a subject area.

NCREST reports feedback from graduating seniors in Early Colleges from MCNC on received academic support and their perceptions of helpfulness of these supports.²² Students most often received academic support in the form of extra assistance from high school teachers (53 percent) and tutoring at the college (50 percent). 89 percent of students found extra assistance from college teachers helpful, and 86 percent of students found tutoring at the college helpful. As another form of academic support, consider offering a seminar (scheduled one to four times a week) to teach students how to navigate college-level coursework, such as how to read a college textbook, seek help with assignments, and use a syllabus.

Common Blended Academic and Social Supports Offered by Early Colleges to Boost Student Outcomes²³



Advisory Group

Students, in a small group, meet consistently with a knowledgeable adult to discuss personal and academic needs.



Extended Learning Time

Students participate in first-year orientation, academic bootcamps, and/or summer bridge programs.



Mentoring Program

Students meet with older peers or teachers, either 1:1 or in small groups.



College Liaison

Students work with a college liaison on the transition to college coursework and expectations.

Consider establishing “advisories,” in which students regularly meet with a knowledgeable adult in a group setting to check in on personal and academic needs and growth.²⁴ For example, advisors can offer strategies on how to study in a distracting household, monitor students’ academic progress, and help facilitate college and career readiness (e.g., coordinate college visits, assist students in learning about different college majors and career areas). Consider building advisories into the school day to embed regular and proactive student support into students’ schedules.

21) “Comprehensive Academic Support.” Middle College National Consortium. Accessed April 25, 2019. <http://mcnc.us/our-design/comprehensive-academic-support/>.

22) “Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges.” National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST). Accessed April 24, 2019. https://www.tc.columbia.edu/ncrest/publications--resources/BarnettElisabeth_BuccheriKristen_etc_TenKeyDecisionsinCreatingEarlyColleges_2013.pdf.

23) Ibid.

24) “A Policymaker’s Guide to Early College Designs.” Jobs For the Future. Accessed April 26, 2019. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520109.pdf>.

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"A Policymaker's Guide to Early College Designs." Jobs For the Future. Accessed April 26, 2019. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520109.pdf>.

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"The Early College High School Initiative: An Overview of Five Evaluation Years." Peabody Journal of Education. Accessed April 25, 2019.

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