

GATEWAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE MIDDLE COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS

By Wendy Samberg, Director of Instructional Design and Development, Gateway Community College, New Haven, CT

In New Haven, Connecticut, the city-wide drop-out rate for high school students exceeds 27%. We've known for too long that there's a massive achievement gap in our state, but the elephant in our local community's room has been the communication gap and lackluster strategies between the high schools and the college. Students who graduate from high school and enter Gateway or one of our state universities should feel confident that they're ready and able to begin work toward higher educational goals. However, for more than 85% of those incoming freshmen, this has not been the case.

The Gateway Community College Middle Colleges

For high school graduates to succeed as college freshmen, we would need to forge a committed relationship between Gateway Community College and the New Haven Public Schools. We would need flexibility within the education policies and procedures to offer a variety of secondary school options. Our immediate goal was to increase high school and college graduation rates, without the need for remediation. To begin, we had to acknowledge some disheartening facts: Connecticut has the largest achievement gap in elementary and middle school in the nation. New Haven students fall behind in literacy and mathematics early in their academic careers, setting the stage for low performance. If students were going to be successful, we would have to actively help them "catch up."

For successful projects, leadership is mandatory. Gateway's President and the Superintendent of New Haven's schools, agreed to a memorandum of understanding to support the partnership. We joined the Middle College National Consortium. We are consistently updated on national and local initiatives that involve best practices in dual credit programming. We chose three principals from very different high schools who showed interest in having their schools participate in a dual credit partnership with the college. All the agreed to a set of standard procedures including regularly scheduled meetings, testing students for baseline data using the College Board Accuplacer placement test and diagnostic test for more specific information conveying mastery or deficiencies in math and English.



Co-Op students as freshmen

We agreed to a series of professional development sessions for both college faculty and high school teachers to be aware of each others' perceptions and pedagogy. Together we attend the MCNC professional development conferences to stay current in our field. We hired professional liaisons to ensure daily communication between the college and high school classes and tutors to reinforce teacher lessons. We offer summer programming at the college so that students have a continuous educational experience, while earning up to nine college credits over six weeks.

Funding has been secured through grants and foundations and the College has waived the cost of fees. Ultimately, legislation at the federal and state level is needed to ensure long-term success.

All partners believe strongly what research has confirmed – that students who participate in academically challenging high school curricula are more likely to be successful in college. More often than not,

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CONSORTIUM MATTERS

By Cecilia Cunningham, Executive Director, Middle College National Consortium



Cecilia Cunningham
Director, MCNC

Last Spring the Middle College National Consortium (MCNC) held a JAM (an online asynchronous conversation) on the role of **Peer Review** in teacher evaluation. Consensus was that **leadership** is needed to create a viable Peer Review Process. While we are in a society that wants results immediately, **time** is needed for a full implementation of the process while teachers learn to give and receive feedback from peers. The Peer Review Process is most effective when the **entire staff** works to implement an instructional practice to improve student outcomes. Lastly, Peer Review and **evaluation** can mix when multiple indicators are used for teacher evaluation and there is role clarity and professional development for implementation.

In September of this year the Chicago Teachers Union held a strike. The central issue was that a proposed evaluation system that places a high level of the evaluation on the test scores of the students, is unfair not just to teachers but also to the students. The Chicago Teachers Union eventually settled for a contract that based the evaluation on multiple measures with test scores counting for 30% of a teacher's rating. This was the first test of the proposals that are currently underway in many states and districts to measure teacher effectiveness with student test scores. If this compromise sets a national agenda, then it is important for teachers to work to define the other measures that will be used for their evaluation.

The central question is, "what is the purpose of these evaluations?" Is it to hold teachers accountable for teaching or to fire teachers? Is it possible to do both?

Isn't improvement in teaching the most important agenda item that the nation faces to raise the level of education and thereby provide a family living wage for all? MCNC has ample evidence that improvement in instruction comes from "just in time" feedback from respected educators, administrators, coaches, or other teachers.

Using a Peer Review process, that is valued and supported by the school leader and provides regular feedback from other teachers in the school, pays benefits way beyond test scores. Traditionally, teaching has been an isolated profession with professional development done by attendance at scheduled workshops. But like anyone learning a new skill, the role of practice and feedback is critical for improvement. A peer feedback support system that intentionally uses teacher time to visit other classrooms and provide feedback on instructional practice is an effective and cost efficient way to improve academic achievement. Most importantly it relies on the existing resources and expertise that our teachers bring to the work.

MCNC has documented that schools with Peer Review Programs that include a **peer hiring system, regular inter visitation, formal feedback from peers and students in end of year teacher evaluations**, have higher graduation rates than other schools in the cities in which they are located and have high rates of college credit accumulation for all graduates. For more information visit our website www.mcnc.us.

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Professor Linda Darling-Hammond To Give Keynote Address

Middle College National Consortium is pleased to announce that Professor Linda Darling-Hammond, the renowned Stanford University educator, will give the keynote address at **MCNC's 21st annual Winter Principals' Leadership Conference**. She will be available for a question and answer session subsequent to her keynote address. Professor Darling-Hammond is renowned for her work on school restructuring, teacher quality, and educational equity. In 2006 Professor Darling-Hammond was named one of the nation's ten most influential people affecting educational policy for her work, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, that led to sweeping changes in teaching and teacher education. She created the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute and the School Redesign Network.

The MCNC Winter Principals' Leadership Conference will be held from February 14-16, 2013 at the Newport Beach Hyatt Regency. This conference is open to, and appropriate for, all Middle and Early College High School leaders (both official and unofficial), non-Middle College small school leaders, school district staff, personnel from educational organizations, and college personnel involved in education.

The MCNC Winter Principals' Leadership Conference is a perfect match with Professor Darling-Hammond's experience. Her policy work has been a game changer. For those people desiring to learn more about the conference, or register, please visit the MCNC website site at: <http://www.mcnc.us>.

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GATEWAY *(Continued from page 1)*

rigorous courses are geared to an “elite” tier of high school students, leaving students with inadequate academic and social skill levels at a distinct disadvantage. The Gateway Middle Colleges promote an environment where students can learn the skills to be engaged, academically challenged, and to feel socially and emotionally secure.

Gateway Middle College Partnerships Common Components

- Gateway seeks out students who might otherwise not have considered themselves “college material” to participate in a rigorous academic program beginning in 9th grade.
- Students have the opportunity to accrue anywhere from 30 credits to a certificate or an associate’s degree. Programs are developed that complement the “theme” of the school.
- Parent participation is an integral part of the program. There are two parent-student gatherings each semester and one before the summer. Parents are introduced to the faculty and given syllabi. Parents are part of a list serve that’s set up to keep information flowing back and forth.
- Summer programs offer students a full day of programming for six weeks. Students can earn up to 9 college credits at the same time they are meeting new peers, professors and staff, and finding their way around the college campus.

Gateway Middle College at Co-op

The Cooperative High School for the Arts and Humanities (Co-Op) was Gateway’s first Middle College partnership. The students were selected as second semester freshmen on the basis of attendance and an interview. Students, with the support of Middle College, were able to successfully complete college courses at Gateway in the morning and during the summer and finish their high school requirements at Co-op. Four years later, they are graduating with upwards of 30 credits, entering college as sophomores

Our students have been offered admission and scholarships to many colleges and universities including: Gateway CC, Manhattan College, Morehouse College, Penn State, Quinnipiac University, Smith, St. John’s University, Tuskegee University, and UCONN.

Gateway Middle College at Hillhouse

The after school partnership staff consists of two English teachers and two math teachers and a student teacher for each as an aide/tutor. The Parent Coordinator has been very successful in meeting with parents one-on-



Hillhouse students at the Museum of Natural History, NYC

one, phoning families for all absences, and collaborating with other members of the team. The program meets 4 days per week (2 days of math and 2 of English) from 2:30 to 4 pm. Several students have sacrificed sports or other after school aspirations to focus on their academic growth. In addition, two computer classes are being taught for college credit.

All Hillhouse freshmen were given an assessment in December to determine strengths and weaknesses in areas of mathematics considered necessary prerequisites for college level math courses. The results of these assessments were used to develop focus areas for instruction in our two groups of after-school math classes. In March, after two months of the program, assessments indicate that one group advanced by an average of 14% and the other by an average of 28%. Both the group and individual progress is substantial for only two months.

Gateway Middle College at New Haven Academy

All NHA students participate in a four-year sequence of **Facing History and Ourselves** seminars, civics, and social justice courses. The Middle College at NHA works with the co-principals to find courses, for dual credit, that fit in with their curricula. This semester, students were enrolled in a Criminal Justice class taught by the former head of up the Correction Department’s academic programming. In addition to traditional coursework, students attended a court session with the presiding judge where they were able to view a voir dire session of potential witnesses.

The most exciting part of our student success plan is that it’s a continuum. It took years for the college community and our high school partners to realize that we are not going to win the achievement gap war with a single battle or strategy. It’s going to take all of us, armed with good will, a passion for our jobs, love for our students, respect for each other, motivation and a powerful resolution that, together, we’ll do what it takes to ensure our young people succeed in higher education.

UNDERUTILIZED COLLEGE RESOURCES AND HIGH SCHOOL-COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS

By Sabine Zander, *The National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST)*

It's all about relationships. This was the consensus reached among participants of the NCREST workshop, "Taking Advantage of Underused College Resources and Support Services," at the Middle College National Consortium Summer Professional Development Institute 2012. The four-person panel consisting of Deb Shanley, Dean of School of Education, Brooklyn College; Mary Abbott, High School Counselor, Career Education Center, Denver MCHS; Maria Estrada, College Counselor, Santa Ana College; Joyce Mitchell, Academic Director, Memphis City Schools; shared strategies and obstacles encountered in developing school-college partnerships at their sites.

Partnerships with institutions of higher education are a key feature distinguishing middle college high schools from typical traditional high schools. Partnerships can take on many different forms, but typically stakeholders from the high schools, colleges, and sometimes other external organizations, work together to make key organizational, financial, and academic decisions that will determine the shape of the collaboration—and the school. In addition to being able to take college classes, middle college high school students typically have access to a range of college resources, such as college libraries, computer labs, and tutoring services. However, NCREST's survey research has found that in many cases, early college high school students are underutilizing these college resources.

According to participants in the NCREST workshop, access to and use of college resources can be increased in two ways: 1) high schools can make students more aware of available college resources and help them to make fuller use of them (e.g. through informal visits to the college facilities or counseling sessions organized in collaboration with college staff) 2) stakeholders can improve the partnership by working together to create new agreements about partners' responsibilities.

What factors influence the development of productive partnerships?

Multiple factors can influence the development of productive partnerships. Reports by Hughes, Mechur Karp, Fermin and Bailey (2005) and the New Schools Venture Fund (2007) emphasize that a perceived power balance among all partners is fundamental to any healthy partnership. In order to reach such a balance, there must be a clear understanding of the purpose of the partnership, roles, and a sense of commitment to the

school's success and sustainability. All the panelists participating in the NCREST workshop underlined the importance of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other agreements in formalizing the school-college partnership from the start. MOUs can help to outline important issues, such as financing, credit award, access to college resources and facilities, and other related issues (e.g. benefits for all partners involved) and provide a basis for smooth transitions when leadership changes at any of the partner institutions. Panelists also mentioned a college liaison as a key resource when it comes to managing these aspects of the partnership, and facilitating communication between the middle college high school and higher education institution (e.g. by resolving problems related to use of facilities, registrations etc. and working with high school students on education plans).

What are potential challenges associated with the partnerships and how can they be dealt with?

As in any other partnership, relationships between middle college high schools and colleges may experience difficulties that can have a negative impact on students. Vogt and Venezia (2009) outline certain issues that must be addressed in order to develop a healthy relationship between partners:

- Potential resentment by college faculty toward teaching high school students
- Understanding both college and K-12 standards and assessments
- Avoiding teaching a "college lite" version of dual enrollment courses
- Overextending faculty commitment and time
- Clarifying relevant logistics (calendar, schedule, transportation)
- Identifying appropriate faculty and providing support and/or professional development.

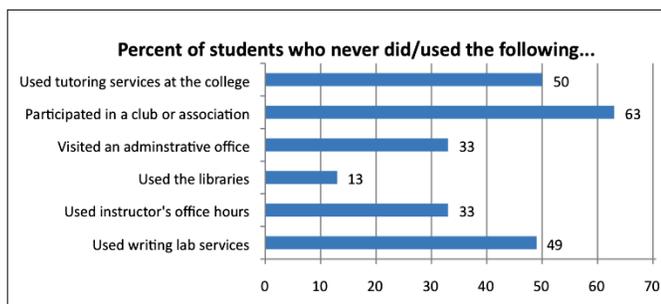
A participant of the NCREST workshop at the MCNC 2012 summer conference pointed out that, at her institution, the most problems arise when faculty at the college feel that the middle college high school is putting a strain on resources (space, money, etc.). Another participant expressed the concern that at his partner institution there is a lack of understanding among the faculty of what the early college program is about. Another workshop participant underlined the importance of gaining the college's acceptance and understanding of

the high school students' potential. It is important to communicate high school students' success to the college (e.g. high rates of students who graduate with an Associate's Degree etc.) and to cultivate a sense of pride in the high school. Two participants shared that they spend considerable amount of time doing just this.

Many participants of the NCREST workshop expressed that communication must occur in the context of understanding the culture and context of each type of institution – K12, college, or business. Face-to-face meetings were mentioned as one of the most effective ways to have all partners express goals, needs and shortfalls in the current partnership to improve the high school students' college experience. One participant shared how they organize monthly meetings at their school to which they invite everyone involved in the partnership. This forum serves to lead open discussions and resolve issues together.

How much do MCNC schools' students use College Support Services?

Participants of the NCREST workshop at the MCNC 2012 summer conference shared that their students often do not take advantage of the college resources provided to them. Data from the MCNC Graduating Student Survey 2012 illustrates how underutilized some college resources are.



The chart above shows, that half of the students never took advantage of tutoring and writing lab services at the college and a third of the students never visited an administrative office at the college or used instructors' office hours in the past school year. It is also alarming to see that 13% of students have never used the college libraries and 63% of students have never participated in a club or association at the partner institution in the past school year.

During the workshop panel discussion and the follow-up activities working with the MCNC Graduating Student Survey 2012, workshop participants discussed ways to improve student use of college resources. They suggested that school staff first look into the reasons for students' underutilization of available college resources, and offered

possible reasons for this, including: lack of awareness, shyness and intimidation of the college environment, and/or possibly a belief that college resources have no value for them.

Which improvement would MCNC Early College staff like to see from their HS-College partners?

Participants of the NCREST workshop at the MCNC 2012 summer conference were asked to respond to the following question: "What is the one thing you would love to see put in place or have access to (in terms of resources, support, and access) for your organization, staff, students, programs from your partnering school/college?" Responses mentioned the most were the following:

- Increased student access to college resources (e.g. facilities, labs, etc.) and academic and career counseling services (e.g. tutoring services).
- Improvements in the communication between high schools and colleges, especially among high school and college instructors.
- More public support and acknowledgment.
- Sharing of information databases.
- Working together to align curricula (including bridge courses).
- Informal visits to the college campus for students who have never taken college level classes.
- Middle college staff would also like to find ways to improve students' knowledge of career fields and access to different kinds of community service, such as "real life exposure."
- More staff (counselors, tutors, academic advisors, security guards) in order to accomplish these goals.

Final thoughts

What can your school do to improve student use of college resources? You could start by assessing what kinds of college resources are available to high school students and which of these are underutilized. This may involve communication with students, faculty, and staff at your own school to learn about what resources they currently use and which they would like to use.

References, documents, and additional information from the NCREST workshop are available by contacting NCREST.

References

- Hughes, K.L., Mecher Karp, M., Fermin, B.J. & Bailey, T.R. (2005); New Schools Venture Fund (2007). PUC schools: The design and implementation of an Early College High School Program. San Francisco, CA: New Schools Venture Fund
- Vogt, K. and Venezia, A. (2009). College faculty engagement in early college. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

GOOD, BETTER, BEST

By Cleo Crank, Teacher, Greenville Technical Charter High Schools, Greenville, SC

*"You haven't made a fire till it has burned.
You haven't made a dollar till it's earned,
And no teaching has transpired,
If the child has not acquired,
You haven't taught a child till he has learned."*

Swen Nater, NBA star player
Inspired by John Wooden

High school seniors often excel in factual knowledge, but fall short in key academic behaviors. How can we better prepare our students for the "real world" of college and work? Greenville TCHS's career internship program promotes a college career culture and helps make the senior year one that is challenging and meaningful.

"You can be anything you want to be!" Parents and teachers promote this idea every day. It is the American dream..... Right? The problem is, wanting something is not the same as achieving it, anymore than talent is the same as accomplishment. I will never be the next Monet. No matter how many watercolor classes I take or pictures I paint, it is not going to happen. My talent does not match my desire. Unless my dreams match my strengths, I will fail. We have all had students who want to be doctors, lawyers, astronauts, yet they can not write a good paragraph or complete simple math equations. What about the students who have little aspiration but tons of talent and ability? Are we doing these students a service by encouraging them to be "ANYTHING YOU WANT"? Not really. How can teachers help students maintain their aspirations within a viable, realistic doable frame? Creating the Internship Program at GTCHS gave me the perfect venue to do just that.

Five years ago, I approached our principal about the possibility of starting an Internship program as an alternative to our required senior project. He suggested I do some research to see what other schools around the country were doing. I went to several conferences, talked to local businessmen, and read several articles and books on college/career readiness. Across the board, everything was positive but limited in practical application.

I was left to my own devices to create a program to meet our needs. I spent a summer putting together the current program that is designed for motivated high

school seniors interested in a structured, on-the-job learning activity. In providing experiences in workplace settings, students develop workplace competencies, work amicably and productively with others, and acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will need to be successful citizens in the 21st century. Students gain hands-on experience by working with professionals in their select career cluster. At the work site, students are supported by a company employee (community mentor) who directs their work and learning. To connect the work experience to school, each student sets college readiness goals.

Students undertake this internship program for a variety of reasons. As a form of independent study, students enjoy the opportunity to engage in a learning experience that augments classroom learning and extends beyond the traditional classroom walls. An internship is an excellent tool for testing out a career interest, giving students first-hand knowledge of a particular professional field. Most important, youth gain real work experience while learning how to conduct themselves in a professional workplace environment. They observe first-hand how skills relating to decision-making, problem-solving, teamwork and technology are employed on the job.

Greenville's internship program is two semesters long. Most students come to the Internship program with some idea about a career. However, they spend the first three weeks doing on-line personality and career interest inventories. They reflect on the suggestions given by the inventories and how these suggestions influence their career choices. In addition, students do research on their top three college choices. They learn about required SAT scores, other admission requirements, degrees offered, tuition and fees, and availability of student aid. They chart their research and decide on colleges to visit.



Interns Working in Groups

During their internship time, students set both college and career goals each quarter and reflect on their progress at the end of each quarter. They also keep daily logs of their work experiences. In all of these reflections, one sees an upward curve of engagement. Students go from generalized ideas about their career and colleges to attend, to very specific career pathways and decisions on the college to attend. One sees the increased engagement in the internship as students go from being primarily observers to full-scale involvement in their work, complete with questions and suggestions for/from their mentors. In their writings you can just see their goals becoming much more specific and targeted and the upward curve of their own involvement in the internship.

In the relatively short time that the program has been in existence, the pool of mentors has greatly increased. In some cases, students or parents seek out mentors. In other cases, previous mentors are more than willing to work with new students. Mentors have had overwhelming positive experiences with students who are excited about their industry and the pleasure of learning about those careers.

I have some incredible success stories. Zach never had any intention of earning a bachelor's degree. He wanted to work for the sheriff's department and investigate crime scenes. After interviewing several professionals, he visited the Coroner's office and did his placement there. Because of his success, he now wants to go to



Zach learning "hands on"

med school and become a pathologist. Devin knew he wanted to become a civil engineer. His mentor was not only a professional engineer but also taught upper level engineering classes at a Clemson University. Devin was able to participate in the University Engineer's day along with the graduate students. Rebecca did her placement at a high-end restaurant, was offered a

summer job there and is headed to culinary school next semester. Kevin had his heart set on attending the Air Force Academy and completing Combat Rescue Officer School. Through the Internship program, he completed more than 200 hours with the Emergency Medical Services and participated in all the emergency calls while with his mentor.



Kevin working with local ambulance company

Although Kevin did not get accepted into the Academy, he went to Clemson through the ROTC program and plans to attend Officer Candidate School upon graduation. He is right on target.

Students are assessed in a variety of ways. As part of the requirements, students research their particular career, set monthly goals, keep a daily log, and complete the required number of hours on site. At the end of the year, they meet for "conversation" with their advisor, another faculty member, the mentor and a colleague of the mentor. These four adults have the privilege of hearing about the student's learning experience and conclusion about the career.

Feedback over the last three years has been very positive. In 2010 when the program began, I started with 20 students. The next year I had 22, and this year there are 31. The program is working. It is a win-win for all involved. The students begin to see a clear path, parents recognize a new sense of maturity and responsibility, the mentor is most impressed with our students, and I have the pleasure of watching all this unfold each year. On the last day for seniors each year, I have a seminar in which the students give me feedback about the experience. Most of the adjustments that have been made come directly from student suggestions. I even have mentors call me now to see if there is a student for this year. WOW!

THE MIDDLE COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL CONSORTIUM

was founded in 1993 to foster cooperation among member schools, disseminate information about the MCHS concept, create a forum for professional growth and promote dialogue about effective education. **The Consortium** gratefully acknowledges the support and funding of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the DeWitt Wallace Readers' Digest Fund and the Pew Charitable Trust.



THE CONSORTIUM SCHOOLS

The Academy of the Canyons at College of the Canyons, Santa Clarita CA
 Academy of Health Sciences at Prince George's Community College, Largo MD
 Brashier Middle College Charter High School at Greenville Technical College, Greenville SC*
 Brooklyn College Academy at Brooklyn College, Brooklyn NY*
 Career Education Center Middle College, Denver CO
 Challenge Early College High School at Houston Community College SW, Houston TX*
 The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University, Columbus, OH*
 East Early College at Houston Community College SE, Houston TX
 Edgemont Early College High School at Edgemont Community College, Tarboro NC
 Franklin D. Roosevelt High School, Dallas TX
 Gateway Community College affiliated MCHS's, New Haven, CT
 Genesee Early College High School at University of Michigan, Flint, MI
 Great Path Academy at Manchester Community College, Manchester, CT*
 Greenville Technical Charter High School at Greenville Technical College, Greenville SC*
 Greer Middle College Charter High School at Greenville Technical College, Greenville SC
 Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy at Los Angeles Harbor College, Wilmington CA*
 Henry Ford Early College at Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn Heights, MI*
 Hollis F. Price Early College High School at LeMoyné-Owen College, Memphis TN*

International High School at LaGuardia Community College, Queens NY*
 Lake Area New Tech ECHS at University of New Orleans, New Orleans LA
 Middle College High School at Christian Brothers University, Memphis TN*
 Middle College High School at Contra Costa College, San Pablo CA*
 Middle College High School at El Centro Community College, Dallas TX*
 Middle College High School at LaGuardia Community College, Queens NY*
 Middle College High School at Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles CA*
 Middle College High School at Olive-Harvey City College, Chicago IL
 Middle College High School at Ozarks Technical Community College, Springfield MO
 Middle College High School at San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton CA*
 Middle College High School at Santa Ana College, Santa Ana CA*
 Middle Early College High School at Buffalo NY*
 Mott Middle College High School at Mott Community College, Flint MI*
 North Houston Early College High School at Houston Community College, Houston TX
 Olive Crest Academy NOVA ECHS at Santa Ana College, Santa Ana CA
 Opportunity High School at Bluegrass Community & Technical College, Lexington, KY
 Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Secondary School for Arts and Technology at LaGuardia Community College, Queens NY
 San Mateo Middle College High School at College of San Mateo, San Mateo CA
 Southwest Early College High School at Denver Community College, Denver CO*
 Truckee Meadows Community College High School, Reno NV
 Truman Middle College High School at Truman City College, Chicago IL
 Williamson County Middle College High School at Nashville State Technical Institute, Nashville TN

* Early College grantee

Conferences

Technical Assistance Conference
 February 13, 2013 Newport Beach, CA

Winter Principals' Leadership Conference
 February 14 – 16, 2013 Newport Beach, CA

Student Leadership Initiative
 April 13 – 17, 2013 Columbus, OH

Summer Professional Development Conference
 June 28 – July 1, 2013 Jersey City, NJ

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