

The Early College Steering Committee

A Joint Effort by the Connecticut Board of Regents and the State Department of Education

ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED FOR EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Introduction:

The premise of the early college model is that all students can and should pursue some form of post-secondary education, recognizing that there are many possible pathways that will result in life success.

The Steering Committee has generated the following list of attributes that we believe should be evident in any effective early college program. In addition to any relevant NEASC standards that must be met, this list should be used to assess existing programs and to assist the community colleges and their high school partners in developing new programs. The following attributes are relevant to all early college programs (both individual student/course based and cohort/high school wide). There is one section that is relevant only to the cohort/high school wide programs and it is so noted.

This list was developed with community college/high school partnerships in mind. But, the Steering Committee encourages early college programs with the state universities as well. This list should be vetted by representatives from the state universities to determine if it is appropriate to them without additional changes.

Using This Document:

The success of early college programs is predicated on the development of a conscientious, continuously self-reflecting coalition of high school and college teaching and administrative staff, whose common goal is to empower high school students to develop a clear college career pathway.

For any effective early college program partnership, the college and high school must establish a functional collaborative relationship with a process to address the list of attributes in each area of concern listed below. As resources allow, all aspects of the early college program must be considered and addressed for continual improvement.

The order in which a particular early college partnership will address these attributes depends upon a strategic assessment of current resources, historic strengths and weaknesses. Some colleges and schools may already have worked on curriculum alignment but not be far along in providing adequate support for student transition into college. Others may not have the resources to provide appropriate professional development to staff involved. All areas of concern for which attributes are listed are important for the ultimate overall success of the early college program partnerships but cannot all be addressed at once due to lack of current resources and time. However, the partnerships should plan for future resources and time commitments to address the entire list in a timely manner.

The Board of Regents and the Early College Steering Committee will support the regional partnerships as they collect and assess data and as they seek out necessary resources to build effective early college programs, system-wide.

I. Academic Program

1. APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC RIGOR FOR COURSES PROVIDING COLLEGE CREDIT:

- a. The early college program ensures its students meet the course prerequisites of the college/university.
- b. The early college program uses a variety of criteria to measure the likelihood of a student's success in a particular college course.
- c. High School instructors teaching college credit courses must be approved by the respective college academic department and meet the academic department's requirements for teaching the college/university courses.
- d. Course alignment with college curriculum, appropriate academic rigor, and congruence with stated learning objectives as demonstrated through evidence such as that evidence recommended by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP).
- e. Use of mid and end of course summative assessments that represent evidence of mastery recognized by both colleges system wide and the K-12 system.

2. ALIGN SYSTEMS TO THE BENEFIT OF STUDENTS

- a. College courses taken on college campuses should be scheduled as: a substitution for a high school course that replaces the high school's regular offering; an enrichment course chosen to fill an elective requirement; and/or, a certificate course chosen to fulfill a requirement for a certificate.
- b. Articulation agreements should ensure that students have the ability to transfer all college credits earned toward a four-year degree program.

THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL ATTRIBUTES ARE RELEVANT FOR COHORT/HIGH SCHOOL WIDE PROGRAMS:

3. COHERENT CURRICULUM PATHWAY TO ENSURE SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS:

- a. Engage middle school students from feeder schools to develop interest and awareness of high school early college opportunities.
- b. Systematically assess all students (using an appropriate measure) early and ensure mastery of foundational skills in math and English no later than the end of 10th grade.
- c. Incorporate a rigorous core curriculum (including math, science, and communications) that is integrated with applied skills and a variety of authentic experiences.

- d. Students should be able to earn significant college credits, an Associate's Degree or an industry sanctioned certificate at the end of 4, 5, or 6 years.¹

II. Student Support

1. TREAT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LIKE COLLEGE STUDENTS

- a. The college/university officially registers or admits students as degree-seeking, non-degree seeking, or non-matriculated students of the college/university and records courses on official college/university transcripts.
- b. Students should have access to college services as needed such as tutoring programs, career counseling, labs, etc.

2. PROVIDE APPROPRIATE GUIDANCE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

- a. College and high school partners collaborate on providing guidance for students toward pathways leading to appropriate future postsecondary experiences.

3. PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPPORT

- a. College and high school partners collaborate to identify and address student skill levels at an early state.
- b. College and high school staff provides support to ensure that students will succeed in college
- c. Students are monitored closely to identify and remediate possible academic problems.

¹ Various options mentioned by Steering Committee members included: earn 30 or more credits by end of 12th grade and an associate's degree by the end of an additional 5th year. Confer a certificate in a specialized content area at the end of 12th grade.

III. Collaborative Relationships

1. COLLABORATION BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION:

- a. Early college program shows evidence of faculty to faculty collaborative relationships between a specific postsecondary institution and its partner secondary institutions.
- b. Early college program shows evidence of regular collaboration between appropriate administrators from high schools and post-secondary institutions.
- c. Specific access to postsecondary resources is made available to secondary instructors and students.
- d. Evidence of use of Student Success Plan process to inform engagement of students in early college programs.
- e. The early college program shows evidence that the educational success of each student in both the college level and high school courses is the joint responsibility of the high school and college partners.

2. EXTENDED COLLABORATION WITH BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND OTHERS:

- a. Evidence of partnerships with community members and businesses that leverage resources such as internship/externship opportunities which contribute to student achievement.
- b. Evidence of collaboration on alignment of curriculum to meet industry requirements for current and future employment growth sectors.

3. FORMAL STRUCTURE:

- a. Existence of advisory committee that includes both college and high school personnel to collaborate on both programming and operations.
- b. Existence of written agreements outlining the roles of each partner including specific services, opportunities, costs, etc.
- c. Evidence of regular stakeholder meetings and local employer involvement.

IV. Professional Development

1. HIGH SCHOOLS AND POST-SECONDARY PARTNERS COLLABORATE ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO DEVELOP A COMMON BASE OF UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE:

- a. The college provides high school teachers teaching college courses with discipline-specific training and orientation regarding, but not limited to, course curriculum, assessment criteria, pedagogy, course philosophy and administrative responsibilities and procedures prior to the instructor teaching the course.
- b. The early college program provides annual discipline-specific professional development activities and ongoing collegial interaction to address course content, course delivery, assessment, evaluation and/or research and development in the field.

- c. Evidence of joint professional development and curriculum alignment which incorporates common core requirements.

2. COLLABORATION BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOLS AND PARTNERS GOES BEYOND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS:

- a. Professional Development for counselors and guidance staff at both High Schools and Post-Secondary partners.
- b. Evidence that college and high school faculty, counselors, and administrators meet and communicate on a regular basis.
- c. Vertical planning between the college professors and 6-12 grade teachers.
- d. Peer visits between the college professors and high school teachers.

V. Accountability and Sustainability

1. DISPLAY BEST PRACTICES IN TERMS OF DATA COLLECTION, ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT:

- a. Evidence of program evaluation based on defined metrics, data collection and analysis in a program improvement recursive loop.

3. INCLUDE IDENTIFICATION OF CURRENT ADEQUATE RESOURCES AND PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY:

- a. Contains mechanisms for adequate and sustained financial support for the implementation and management of the program, and for supporting the costs of course alignment.
- b. Receives institutional support from the administration and faculty at all partner schools.