

## **Early College Task Force 1/27/14 Meeting Minutes**

Present: Judy Resnick, Steve Minkler, Gail Stevens, Robert Henderson, Arthur Poole, Lori Matyjas, Elliott Ginsberg, Robin Golden, Gillian Thorne, Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Dolores Garcia-Blocker (the last two on conference call).

Robin Golden indicated that we needed to take a good look at two documents (policy briefs) put together by the Education Commission of the States (Early College Program components and Dual Enrollment Program descriptions) – Carmen Cid will email those documents Robin provided to the full Task Force.

**The Finance subcommittee** met Wed, 1/22/14 at the BOR. The subcommittee's purpose is to help determine how to sustainably fund excellent early college programs. The work includes exploring best practices in terms of sustainable funding mechanisms from other states, determining how current funding works (both on the community college side and on the K-12 side) and to see what recommendations the Task Force can make regarding how to fund programs going forward. The sub-committee looked at these issues from both the perspective of regular dual enrollment programs and the cohort early college models.

In terms of the cohort early college model: Robin shared information regarding best practices from other states. The states that are the most successful in sustaining early college efforts have policies and regulations that hold harmless both the high schools and the post-secondary institutions regarding funding for individual students. For example, students participating in early college experiences still count as K-12 students for purposes of state funding, BUT, the post-secondary institutions are also compensated on a FTE basis for the time that that student spends taking college courses. After hearing a presentation from Alessandra Lundberg from the Finance office of the BOR, we learned that community colleges are NOT compensated on a per student basis in terms of their state support. This will make it difficult, if not impossible, to try and implement the hold harmless best practices. Robin agreed to collect information on the K-12 side in terms of funding and then prepare a report for the sub-committee so that it can decide on next steps for their work on funding mechanisms for cohort programs. Dianna reminded the Task Force that state funding is only part of the story on the K-12 side, much of K-12 funding comes from the municipality's property taxes.

In terms of the regular dual enrollment programs, the sub-committee collected information on Carl Perkins funding and how one school (Manchester Community College) supports its College Career Pathway (CCP) program. In 2012-13 MCC awarded a record 3,879 credits to regional high school students for courses they attended at their high schools and for which they earned MCC credit). This is the largest such program among the 12 community colleges. There is a wide range of support provided by the community colleges above the Perkins money (which has been diminishing over the years). The other significant existing program that deals with non-cohort dual enrollment is the High School Partnership Program (HHP). The community colleges do not charge for these courses, which are offered to high school students at the colleges on a space available basis. The BOR does track the cost of this program centrally and is handled as a waiver program.

One point that became clear in discussing these funding issues, in order to support existing early college programs and expand those programs, there must be a dedicated staff person at each college whose job it is to facilitate these programs, including the collaboration with high school

partners. The Task Force also perceived a great need for such a dedicated person in the school district administration, with close connections to the superintendent's office staff. It is important to keep in mind that each school district independently controls partnership initiatives. Nothing will be able to be dictated centrally from the State Dept. of Education.

A great concern for community colleges is that if we can't meet the NEASC standards for dual enrollment program costs then community colleges would have to close the CCP type of program. We need a minimum of \$145,000 per school (see budget prepared by Bob Henderson attached) for the dedicated, coordinating staff line mentioned earlier. The data for some CCP dual enrollment programs suggests the value of the program in high school student success in college (MCC and UCONN data mentioned). Need to create a subcommittee to define the job description of this type of coordinating person- volunteers for this subgroup- included Lola Garcia-Blocker, Bob Henderson, Steve Minkler, Gillian Thorne and Gail Stevens. Some community colleges already have an identified coordinator, but few if any are dedicated to this work and most are grant funded. Very few school districts have this kind of point person at their central office. Although high schools that currently have students involved in dual enrollment usually have someone to help keep track of the students involved. The task force needs to identify the responsibilities of a liaison on each side - the district person needs to sit at the superintendent's cabinet level. The Task Force will make this recommendation for a dedicated liaison at each college known Dr. Gray. The Finance subgroup does not have another meeting scheduled - just need to write up a report of what they have learned, once Robin gets the information on the K-12 side.

**The Attributes subgroup** (which also met on 1/22/14) discussed the December 2013 Early College Task Force report issues in great detail and realized they needed another meeting on Friday February 7th at 3pm, at the BOR to continue the discussion. The subcommittee felt it was premature to try to come up with a "check list" regarding desired attributes. One issue that the subcommittee focused on was how to ensure that students who take a dual enrollment course actually master the material sufficiently to earn college credit. One thought that the members wanted to explore was the idea of having AP-like tests at the end of each course. The subcommittee also talked about the remediation needs of many students and how to address those needs so that more students can participate in early college experiences while still in high school. The members also suggested that we add to the current draft of Attributes something that talks about the need to ensure early identification of students who are not on track to be college ready. Instead of using Accuplacer for this process, we discussed using SAT scores.

Robin also reported that she and Bob Trefry had visited the PTECH program in Brooklyn, NY since our last Task Force meeting. It was interesting to note how they dealt with the remediation issue since many of their 9<sup>th</sup> graders were not on grade level in English or math. The program was providing double periods of English and math in the 9th grade and had additional assessment of performance through the NY Regents exam—more of this to consider in standardizing evaluation of students involved in dual enrollment programs in CT.

We began discussing the issues to outline in the BOR Task Force's response to NEASC on the dual enrollment policy change. Gillian T., Bob Henderson, Arthur Poole and Lori M. have info to use in the NEASC response and will be working on a draft for review by all of us.

Issues discussed included that currently some institutions can easily meet the new NEASC standards and some need a lot of extra funding or organization to get qualified, we need a 3-5 year phase-in to coincide with NACEP guidelines for program approval. Several Task Force members participated in the NEASC conference call. There were concerns of quality control in the way college credit is being given for college courses taught at the high schools by high school teachers. It was important to include Mike Breen in the group to do the response. We should recommend to NEASC to consider local gatekeeping at the high school level to let students into the college level course rather than using Accuplacer test results for granting college level readiness. The colleges need to do the evaluation of the high school teachers in the courses they vet for college credit. There is a lack of alignment between the local school district and the college in terms of what is recognized as being qualified for college credit. Lastly, NEASC is narrowing the definition of dual enrollment- do we want to accept that?

We don't see the NEASC policy change as influencing so much the cohort model, since it relates only to high school teachers who are teaching courses that provide college credit. There is no grandfathering phase allowed by new NEASC policy. The ad hoc group listed above will create a draft of the comments by Friday and we will send it out to the entire Task Force for additional comments. The final comments are due to NEASC on February 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Due to identified schedule conflict, we will switch the March 31st meeting of the full Task Force to March 24th at 10 am.**

Bob Henderson will also be coordinating staging a NACEP-related Professional Development program on 8:30 am to 11:30 am on May 9, 2014 at MCC to deal with NACEP and Task Force issues related to professional development of teachers.

**SEE YOU ALL AT OUR NEXT MEETING WHICH IS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2014 at 10 am, BOR, 39 Woodland St.**