Notes – Early College Task Force meeting – 12/19/13 – 8:00-9:45 am – BOR - 39 Woodland St

Present: Carmen Cid, Robin Golden, Robert Trefry, Judy Resnick; Eliot Ginsberg; Gillian Thorne; Bob Henderson; Kate Carter, Sally Biggs, Lola Garcia-Blocker, Gail Stevens (the last 3 joining us in a conference call).

Discussion of the definition of “early college programs” – why is this task force focusing on this issue? First, we are here to make sure that all students have access to a college education and to a good way to enter the workforce effectively.

What is the problem we are trying to solve? Solutions vary dependent on the students we serve – we need multiple pathways to create the seamless connection from the high school to the workforce – currently, we have the “access” and the “acceleration” pathways – this report is about connecting the dots – for all students in high school to have access, knowledge, support and effective opportunities for enhancing their college readiness and preparation for the workforce.

The “why we are doing this” is the “economic issue” – as well as the “exposure aspect for access” – it also is about “accelerating the learning process for the high school student and giving them a competitive edge” – the economics discussion is from the high school student’s point of view – exposure of high school students to a college experience through the early college program, giving them confidence in themselves after achieving college credit - we are also creating the curriculum structure to allow for all the pathways to be effective – we are not spending as much time on AP students because they have already an edge in perhaps their family support or exposure to the college level education.

NEASC is now going to start to evaluate each college’s Dual Enrollment programs. NEASC is going to be evaluating dual enrollment programs using the NACEP standards – i.e. treating the high school sites as satellite campuses (off site instruction) if high school teachers are teaching college courses that the college grants credit for. This is one more reason for this Task Force to assemble recommendations for the community college Early College programs.

Another purpose for this report to consider is to make sure that high school students are exposed to all the possible career options that are related to their interests at an early point in their education.

Discussion of Alignment Components from High school to College to Workforce
There are many components to consider in facilitating the “alignment of high school and college experiences” for the high school student involved in an early college program. The alignment needs to involve career guidance, curriculum alignment, teacher-faculty professional development, and workforce involved as partners in providing the guidance to what curriculum is needed. The alignment is responding to several problems – low level of college and career readiness in our high school students and inequitable access to the provision of college and career readiness skills. Although these problems start at grades much lower than high school, we are here dealing with filling in the gaps starting with 9th grade high school students, since the existing workforce partnerships are starting as low as 9th grade.

We also need to consider alignment of accountability. The alignment components of this Task Force report are crucial. Need to include the high school guidance staff since they may not have the knowledge of what is newly available in career pathways -- so they also need professional development.
We need to define the “concurrent enrollment partnerships” – currently, “concurrent enrollment” refers to college courses offered in the high school – it is a subset of dual enrollment programs. Need to have a footnote in the report that we are following NACEP standards regardless of the label of the program – so we need to define in the report the use of “dual enrollment” as a generic way of referring to all the possible programs. For “early college experience” programs use “UCONN ECE” – use the terminology “early college program” rather than “early college experience”. Make sure that we define the HSP assessment data to refer to students who are referred by guidance counselors to take college courses at the college campus, and often these are individual students but there is a whole class of juniors at Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy who will be attending as a cohort to Capital Community College.

A recommendation for the next phase of our task force report in January is to indicate the relative amount of resources that are being put into these various types of dual enrollment programs at each college. Perhaps then we can indicate a few more details for the MCC – high school partnership model (Great Path Academy).

The membership of the Task Force as we move on to the next phase should also include Laurie Mathias – manager of the College Career Pathway programs for CDSE and Arthur Poole from the BOR. Also, officially include Gillian Thorne from UCONN-ECE programs as we move to the next phase.

We also need to consider the need for remediation in creating better alignment between high schools and colleges. Currently, improvement of math/writing preparation is being built in for some of the more structured partnership models involving workforce partners. The Task Force report does address this issue. We need to make sure that we have agreement on the standards used by the high schools and the colleges to measure college level preparation in math and writing. We need to provide the access to math and writing “boot camps” for all students.

During today’s meeting we reviewed the first draft of the Executive Summary, introduction and description of data collected for this report, while clarifying our Task Force’s purpose and program definitions.

Next meeting of the Task Force is set for Monday, December 23, 2013, at 1 pm – BOR- 39 Woodland St, – room 209. We will review the first full draft of the Task Force Phase I report at that meeting.