The Early College High School Initiative

Mark Szymanski
Pacific University

Follow this and additional works at: http://commons.pacificu.edu/inter05

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Interface: The Journal of Education, Community and Values at CommonKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Volume 5 (2005) by an authorized administrator of CommonKnowledge. For more information, please contact CommonKnowledge@pacificu.edu.
The Early College High School Initiative

**Rights**

Terms of use for work posted in CommonKnowledge.

This article is available at CommonKnowledge: http://commons.pacificu.edu/inter05/11
The Early College High School Initiative

Posted on March 1, 2005 by Editor

By Mark Szymanski <marks@pacificu.edu>

The Early College High School Initiative might sound like another attempt to reform schools by reorganizing words and old ideas, but it’s not. The Early College High School Initiative is designed to create and support small independent high schools that combine the goals and standards of high school and the first two years of college. Specifically, the initiative targets students who are underrepresented in college: students of color, English language learners, and students for whom the cost of college is prohibitive.

The initiative is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Historically, these foundations have provided support for innovative and thoughtful institutional change in systems where internal support for change and innovation has been scarce.

The Internet and other technologies have changed the workplace as well as our economic and social infrastructure. We live in an age in which knowing how to find and use knowledge has trumped being able to remember information. As a result, more corporations and leaders are supporting and funding school restructuring that prepares students for a future workplace that will look very different from the work place of today.

In addition to workplace change, the demographics of our schools has been rapidly changing. An increasing number of students of color populate our public schools. Traditionally, schools have not been able to adequately prepare these students for success in college.

“Only 18 percent of African Americans and 10 percent of Hispanics complete a four-year college degree by age 29, compared with 34 percent of whites. The numbers are even lower for Native-American students: only three in five will graduate from high school, and of those less than 3 percent will go on to earn a Bachelor’s degree. In contrast, upper-income students are seven times more likely than low income students to earn a Bachelor’s degree by age 24.” (1).

To respond to this rapid change, educators have been experimenting with ways to adjust and
modify their pedagogy, curriculum, and high schools. Despite these best efforts at adjusting, high school student achievement has not improved significantly. Educators refer to this as the achievement gap. This is especially evident in populations who have traditionally not had access to the classes or support to prepare them to transition into college. The Early College High School Initiative is designed to close this gap by supporting students and educators who might be successful if the structure of schools changed.

The Goal of the Early College High School Initiative is to open 170 schools by the year 2008. Currently 47 schools are operating. The Early College High School Initiative is focused on designing schools based on data gathered from a wide range of areas including: model high school and college combination schools, small schools, and, studies of time wasted in the senior year.

The schools are designed based on the following principles:

- All students can achieve two years of college credit at the same time as they are earning a high school diploma (within four to five years of entering 9th grade).
- Students start college work based on their performance.
- All students prepare to complete a Bachelor's degree.
- Reaching out to middle schools and providing extensive support, ensures that all students are ready for college-level courses in high school. (1).

The partnerships between high schools and higher education are at the core of the initiative. The initiative has thoughtfully partnered high schools with institutions of higher education that have traditionally served the populations targeted by the initiative. Some of the partnerships include: public schools with tribal affiliations and community colleges, city public schools and community colleges, charter schools and historically black colleges, and magnet schools and private liberal arts colleges. The outcome of these relationships should facilitate more students successfully transitioning into college and successfully completing college.

Historically, high schools and colleges have been two distinctly different institutions. To bridge some of the gaps, high schools and colleges have focused on aligning their curriculum. As a result, high schools began offering Advanced Placement courses as an attempt to help students earn college credit before they enter college. But this represented and effort at aligning curriculum, not restructuring the institutions based on the changing workplace.

Furthermore, Advanced Placement classes are offered more often at high schools where the faculty hold more advanced degrees and the socioeconomic status of the student population is higher. Hence, students from demographic groups who have traditionally not attended college and dropped out of high school at higher rates do not receive any added benefit. Recently, the
number of Advanced Placement classes offered at these traditionally underserved schools has increased, but this increase has done little to increase the college readiness of students who have not considered preparing themselves for college at an earlier age.

Educators who are interested in proposing an initiative should visit the Early College High Schools web site. The site supports initiatives in a number of ways. The most effective part of the site is the library (6). The library includes a range of carefully chosen articles and publications designed to create a foundation for making the case for this kind of structural change. It’s important to understand that making such a case for change is difficult. Student achievement in high school is effected by a number of social and individual factors-some of which are outside the control of the school. But, considering this, the Early College High School Initiative takes the important step of creating an educational environment that gives students the best opportunity to succeed.

Early College High Schools have the potential to improve high school graduation rates and better prepare students for family-supporting careers by: changing the structure of the high school years; compressing the number of years to a college degree; and removing financial and other barriers to college (1).

References:

(1) http://www.earlycolleges.org
(2) www.gatesfoundation.org
(3) www.carnegie.org
(4) www.fordfound.org
(5) www.wkkf.org
(6) http://www.earlycolleges.org/

This entry was posted in Uncategorized by Editor. Bookmark the permalink [http://bcis.pacificu.edu/interface/?p=3095].

11 THOUGHTS ON “THE EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE”

portable ice maker reviews
on February 1, 2014 at 5:56 AM said:

Hi, I do think this is a great blog. I stumbledupon it 😊 I am going to
return once again since I bookmarked it. Money and freedom is the greatest way to change, may you be rich and continue to help others.

**best jig saw**
on **February 3, 2014 at 8:11 PM** said:

I’m not sure where you are getting your information, but great topic. I needs to spend some time learning much more or understanding more. Thanks for excellent information I was looking for this information for my mission.

**best electric tea kettle**
on **February 4, 2014 at 12:17 AM** said:

Remarkable! Its truly remarkable article, I have got much clear idea about from this paragraph.

**best humidifier**
on **February 4, 2014 at 12:38 AM** said:

What’s Going down i’m new to this, I stumbled upon this I’ve found It positively helpful and it has helped me out loads. I’m hoping to contribute & assist different customers like its helped me.

Good job.

**best clothes steamer**
on **February 4, 2014 at 12:56 AM** said:

This piece of writing is actually a good one it assists new the web people, who are wishing in favor of blogging.
**best robotic pool cleaner**  
on **February 4, 2014 at 4:04 AM** said:

Good day! I know this is kinda off topic but I’d figured I’d ask. Would you be interested in exchanging links or maybe guest authoring a blog post or vice-versa? My blog covers a lot of the same topics as yours and I feel we could greatly benefit from each other. If you’re interested feel free to send me an e-mail. I look forward to hearing from you! Wonderful blog by the way!

---

**best shoes for crossfit**  
on **February 4, 2014 at 4:30 AM** said:

I like the valuable information you provide in your articles. I’ll bookmark your blog and check again here frequently.

I’m quite sure I’ll learn a lot of new stuff right here! Best of luck for the next!

---

**garbage disposal reviews**  
on **February 4, 2014 at 5:55 PM** said:

I like the valuable information you provide in your articles. I’ll bookmark your weblog and check again here regularly. I’m quite sure I’ll learn a lot of new stuff right here! Good luck for the next!

---

**infrared grill reviews**  
on **February 4, 2014 at 9:54 PM** said:
You’re so interesting! I do not believe I’ve read through something like this before. So wonderful to discover somebody with genuine thoughts on this subject. Seriously.. thanks for starting this up. This website is one thing that is needed on the internet, someone with a little originality!

developer comments

**table saw reviews**  
on **February 5, 2014 at 12:23 AM** said:

Hi there! Someone in my Myspace group shared this site with us so I came to look it over. I’m definitely loving the information. I’m bookmarking and will be tweeting this to my followers!

Great blog and excellent design.

**best folding bike**  
on **February 5, 2014 at 2:01 AM** said:

Hi friends, good post and good arguments commented here, I am actually enjoying by these.