

Early College High School Model Proposal
 Alexandria City Public Schools and
 Northern Virginia Community College

Steering Committee

ACPS Staff	NOVA Staff
Mr. Peter Balas	Dr. Ivy Beringer
Mrs. Sherri Chapman	Dr. Annette Haggray
Dr. Marcia Jackson	Ms. Susie Mathiesen
Dr. Gerald R. Mann, Jr.	Ms. Amy Nearman
Dr. Terri H. Mozingo	
Ms. Jodie Peters	

Program Overview and Rationale

In 2016, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) and Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) proposed a collaborative partnership to provide students in ACPS an opportunity to participate in an Early College (EC) High School Program on the NOVA Alexandria Campus. Through this partnership, students will have an opportunity to earn a high school diploma while achieving credit towards an associate’s degree, four-year college credit, or an industry certification credential. This program will facilitate a seamless transition from high school to college-level coursework and expectations. Ultimately, the goal is to engage and motivate students, and increase their readiness, success, and completion for postsecondary education and training.

The EC framework will address the newly established Virginia Standards of Accreditation through the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* (VDOE, April 2019), aimed to ensure that graduates have the knowledge, skills, experiences, and attributes critical to attain success in college and/or the work force, and to be “life ready.” Programming will expand career exposure, exploration, and planning, and will embed internships and work-based learning experiences where possible. Students will acquire the knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences to make them life and career ready.

Research

Since 2002, the *National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching (NCREST)* at Teachers College, Columbia University has been engaged in research and development projects related to ECs. The *Middle College National Consortium* and *Jobs for the Future (Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges: Design Options based on Research, December 2013)* supported the development of smaller schools as a response to the need to redesign and improve the American High School. The *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation* (Early College High School Initiative, 2003-2005 Evaluation Report) provided funding to research and support ECs as an innovative program to help more high school students reach their potential—academically, socially, and as successful college students. What's more, ECs provide a supportive culture for teachers and staff, and greater shared leadership in decision-making and personalization. The policy research supports "increasing the proportion of Americans with higher-quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025" (*Capitalizing on*

Potential: Scaling Early College High Schools: A State Policy Brief, March 2015). Currently, ECs are a national movement including more than 280 schools and enrolling over 80,000 students. In *Smoothing the Transition to Postsecondary Education: The Impact of the Early College Model* (2015), Julie A. Edmunds reports that: "students in a longitudinal study attained more college credits while in high school, and graduated from high school, enrolled in postsecondary education, and received postsecondary credentials at higher rates than those not in the EC".

Indicators of Success

- Graduation rates of EC students compared to other students;
- Number of underrepresented students participating;
- Growth on assessments;
- Increased attendance;
- Completion of high school and college coursework;
- Absence of remedial coursework needed upon fully entering college after high school;
- Persistence in college immediately following high school graduation; and
- Degree completion of students.

Source: The *Middle College National Consortium and Jobs for the Future (Ten Key Decisions in Creating Early Colleges: Design Options based on Research*, December 2013)

Mission

The mission of the collaborative ACPS/NOVA Early College (EC) High School Program is to offer students an innovative, challenging, and meaningful learning experience on the college campus. This experience will undoubtedly strengthen their success in a college/university environment and in the 21st century workplace.

Vision

- To support students in achieving high school completion in four years;
- To prepare students for college readiness and success in a range of career opportunities;
- To support underrepresented students in accessing rigorous and challenging college course work;
- To provide opportunities for students to earn transferable college credits while completing a high school diploma in four years;
- To provide opportunities for students to complete a certificate or an associate's degree program; and
- To embrace a successful partnership with a community college that fosters a student-centered approach to teaching and learning and has agreements with colleges and universities to accept transferable college credit for specific courses.

Statement of Need

T.C. Williams High School serves a highly diverse student population, including 1,118 Black students, 1,615 Hispanic students, 954 White students, 941 English Learners, 397 Students with Disabilities, and 2,289 recipients of Free and Reduced Meals (FARM). As of January 2019, there are 3,959 students enrolled at T.C. Williams.

- One of ACPS' goals is to increase student enrollment in postsecondary degree-granting institutions. In 2016, 58% of the graduating class enrolled in a college or university.
- Consistent data reinforces major gaps in higher education enrollment among identified subgroups, including postsecondary enrollment among Black, Hispanic, and FARM students.
- Evidence supports the need for a more personalized and creative approach to addressing the needs of T.C. Williams' students. A rigorous, relevant, and engaging high school curriculum combined with early experiences in career pathways and college preparedness can significantly benefit these under-enrolled groups.
- ACPS works to educate our students in regional, state, and national workforce readiness skills and competencies, providing efficient and systematic preparation of students for the demands of the emerging workforce (especially our change-dominated, technology-driven, and globally interconnected world and economy).

Program Focus

Students who attend the EC Program will have an opportunity to pursue a rigorously focused high school course of study in grades 9-12. ACPS courses required to meet high school graduation requirements will be taught on the NOVA Alexandria Campus. These courses will be combined with Dual Enrollment (DE) college courses for credit, as appropriate, through specific course sequencing designed by the college to meet the certification or degree programs.

Program Goals

The goals of the ACPS/NOVA partnership are to:

- **Promote** academic excellence and equity for a diverse group of students who represent the demographic breakdown of ACPS;
- **Ensure** that students are on-schedule for college and can access established articulated agreements;
- **Promote** the transition of high school students to college and/or completion of industry certification;
- **Prepare** students for college and career opportunities, ensuring that all graduates have gained proficiency in the 21 Workplace Skills for the Commonwealth of Virginia and the larger society;
- **Provide** students multiple supports to make sure that they succeed academically and socially; and
- **Prepare** students for global citizenship.

Program Model

The Early College High School is an innovative model that enables students to earn a diploma while earning college credits. The proposed model will integrate regular high school classes with Dual Enrollment classes that meet both high school and college credit requirements. In the proposed model, student cohorts will complete their high school requirements during the 9th and 10th grades along one-two introductory college classes. Students in 11th and 12th grade will enroll in mostly college classes. This approach will allow students to experience a rigorous high school curriculum with students who have similar academic or career interests. Students will be able to meet their high school requirements, earn college credits, and pursue a pathway to a bachelor's degree at a four-year college. For example, NOVA's new ADVANCE program with George Mason University (GMU) will enable students in good academic

standing who have earned less than 30 degree credits, and plan to transfer to Mason to pursue a bachelor's degree in any of the degree pathways offered.

Curriculum Pathway Focus

NOVA has established a number of program pathways that are intended to help students reach their educational goals more quickly and affordably. Pathways map out the courses that are necessary to complete a degree program or qualify for transfer, how long it will take to earn a degree, and what opportunities for employment or further education may be available at the end of the program.

Degree pathways under consideration for the proposed Early College High School that hold a strong relevance to local and national workforce needs, current student interest via the *Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) Survey*, and high transferability rates include:

1. IT- Information Technology, Associate of Science, (A.S.)
(Possible Certificate Options Available - Cyber Security, Network Plus, Security Plus)
2. Social Science, Associate of Science, (A.S.)

Transfer information: Transfer pathways include the general education courses and introductory major courses that students typically take during the first two years at a four-year college or university when they are majoring in a social science. NOVA offers transfer programs that lead to the associate of arts (A.A.) degree or the associate of science (A.S.) degree. These programs are designed for students who plan to complete the freshman and sophomore years of college work at the community college, and then transfer to a four-year college or university to complete the junior and senior years of a bachelor's degree. Some four-year colleges will accept certain associate of applied science (A.A.S.) and associate of applied arts (A.A.A.) programs. While the responsibility for proper course selection rests with the student, NOVA counselors and advisors provide guidance in selecting a pathway for transfer to a four-year college, as well as career options that lead to employment.

The Social Science (A.S.) is a flexible degree program and is designed for individuals who plan to transfer to a four-year college or university to complete a bachelor of science (B.S.) in one of the social sciences. It also prepares students for some teacher certification programs. Students in the Social Science program enroll in a wide variety of fields, including anthropology, economics, government/political science, history, mass communications, pre-law, psychology, public administration, social work, and sociology.

Projected Enrollment

The Early College High School is cohort based. This means that the same group of students will matriculate through the program together. (Cohorts are established in Early College Models to improve student retention and completion.) Student admission will occur during the rising 9th grade year based on established criteria. There will be no rolling admissions after grade nine mainly because the students are grouped as a cohort. Enrollment in the Early College High School will not exceed 100 students for the 9th grade cohort during the first year. Each subsequent year will afford admissions for 100 additional students, with projected enrollment and capacity reaching 400 9th-12th grade students over four years. Student admission occurs solely during the rising 9th grade year. Each entering 9th grade cohort will begin Dual Enrollment courses immediately during their freshman year. As such, no rolling admissions may occur past the initial 9th grade program admission. Multiple data points will be used to determine readiness for students who apply. Areas for consideration include Algebra 1/Geometry success in 8th

grade, overall grades or GPA, application submission, interview results, teacher recommendations, and successful pass rate on the NOVA placement test. Other qualitative indicators include student maturity, personal commitment, and evidence of persistence and drive when confronted with rigor.

Student Target Population

The Early College High School student population will come from T.C. Williams High School. Students entering 9th grade will begin taking classes at the Early College during the first year of its operation. During this time, they will participate in required high school courses and take part in Dual Enrollment courses, based on assigned classes mapped for each grade-level or specific pathway.

Specifically, students who demonstrate the following characteristics will be encouraged to apply for the Early College Program:

1. In the "academic middle" (i.e., demonstrating potential for college success but could benefit from extra support, personalization, and preparation), similar to the AVID elective enrollment criteria;
2. Reflective of the diversity present in ACPS and on the NOVA campus;
3. Capable of benefiting from a "compressed pathway" to college, including a strong motivation to participate in a program that will result in the achievement of an associate's degree upon completion of their high school graduation;
4. Strong sense of self-regulation, self-direction, self-monitoring, and self-advocacy skills;
5. Potential first generation in their family to attend a postsecondary institution, second language learner, or student of special circumstance;
6. Could benefit from the financial incentive of completing a simultaneous high school and associate's degree program, which may lead to a four-year college enrollment;
7. Demonstrated commitment to continuing their postsecondary education in a college or university within Virginia (in alignment with the existing articulation agreements through NOVA); and
8. Commitment to a potential possible career pathway involving technology or related IT field.

Program Infrastructure

- Serves as a T.C. Williams connected high school network program functioning on the NOVA college schedule and includes semester coursework focus for motivated or highly interested learners;
- Embeds Virginia high school requirements, Dual Enrollment opportunities, workforce experiences, and possible internships or job-shadow experiences;
- Includes the AVID secondary partnership as an extension of the T.C Williams High School 9th-12th program, thus, offering the AVID elective to ALL students in each cohort;
- Offers career counseling and mentoring from both the high school and college counseling offices; and
- Provides targeted academic programming while still affording opportunities for participation in T.C. Williams' afterschool clubs, sports, resources, and NOVA's on campus activities when possible.

Benefits to Students

- Unique educational opportunities for high school students who are excited about starting college and are ready for rigorous and challenging course work;
- Varied pathways for students to earn transferable college credits while completing a high school diploma;
- Opportunities for students to complete a certificate or an associate's degree program;
- Options for students to enter the workforce and/or transfer to a four-year college or university;
- Access to college facilities, resources, and academic supports;
- Opportunities to develop skills/certifications in career pathways through embedded partnership internships established through NOVA;
- Smooth transition into college environment;
- College textbooks and college credit bearing classes provided at little to no cost to the student by ACPS;
- Ongoing interactions with professors and other college students;
- Early College graduation or reduction of semester credit loads at higher education site; and
- Access to college staff as role models, tutors, and mentors.

Benefits to ACPS, NOVA, and Virginia Four-Year Universities

- Higher graduation rates;
- Students less likely to drop out;
- Improvement in attendance rates;
- Increase in grades and test scores;
- Positive attitudes, behavior, and personal investment in learning; and
- Increased enrollment in postsecondary education and two-year degree completion leading to four-year enrollment and completion.

Benefits: Parent and Community

- Greater parental confidence that students are prepared for college success;
- Substantial savings to help reduce the cost of college;
- Stronger parent and school relationships; and
- Increased level of community support and network development for internships and work experiences.

Benefits to the Local, State, and National Workforce

- Increase in students' 'people skills' (e.g., positive work ethic, diversity awareness, conflict resolution, integrity, creativity);
- Increase in students' professional knowledge and skills, including proficiency in Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth (e.g., speaking/listening, reading, writing, critical thinking and problem solving, health and safety, organization, systems and climate, mathematics, and customer service);
- Increase in students' technology knowledge and skills, including job-specific technologies, information technology, internet use and security, and telecommunications and industry-certified youth; and

- Increase retention of students in the workforce who learn about and invest in local business needs and services rendered.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Increased on-time high school graduation rates;
- Strengthened connection and identification with a community of learners through a ‘cohort effect’;
- Increased motivation and engagement in project-based learning ;
- Accumulated college credits and early preparation for college admission;
- Increased maturity and independence leading to highly developed self-advocacy skills;
- Enhanced work experience and exploration of career options; and
- Improved attendance and academic achievement.

Early College Model Findings

- Inclusive programming for grades 9-12 on the college campus that includes diverse, targeted enrollment through a strongly defined application process that includes multiple academic measures (tests, grades, placement scores, written portion, interview), behavioral indicators (attendance, discipline records), and significant student commitment to the EC model including Summer Bridge requirement.
- Informational recruitment meetings offered as early as October for the rising 9th grade cohort and include both sessions at middle schools and an onsite tour of the EC.
- Students have access to both high school and college resources, including counseling, technology, tutoring, and accompanying student learning platforms, and are accountable for both the school division’s and college’s Code of Conduct.
- Instructional programming includes a firm and distinctly mapped out course of study for years 1-4 for the intended pathway with a single agreed upon world language generally offered to all EC students.
- An AVID elective course and/or consistent homeroom advisory time supports students and allows staff to personalize and build relationships with students.
- All students experience their initial Dual Enrollment course during Year 1 (9th grade), which generally includes the Student Development College Success Skills (SVD). Note: typically Dual Enrollment courses are taught by college staff or qualified high school staff and typically take place in campus buildings. Year 1, two exceptions may permit that Dual Enrollment courses be taught at the EC site.
- Meals, busing, books, technology, and Dual Enrollment tuition is supported by the school division, whereas the college supports through in-kind use of space, utilities, etc., and access to college resources and staff when appropriate. The school system hires 9th-12th grade teaching staff and provides oversight, professional learning, and benefits, etc.
- All models include a yearly AVID class, advisory and/or a homeroom time designated to social-emotional support, soft-skills, community service, and team building.

Budget and Facilities

At this time, ACPS and NOVA have an informal agreement to use the Tyler Building located on the NOVA Alexandria Campus. Current collaboration is underway to address construction and renovation needs. A Letter of Intent (LOI) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will soon be established and will

outline the details of the partnership in the agreement. A proposed start-up budget will be forthcoming depending on the available opening of the facility.

Current Sub-Committee Formation

During the Spring and Fall of 2018, sub-committees will form to target work necessary for next steps in the EC planning and development. These initial sub-committees will be led by steering committee members either from ACPS or NOVA, and will include a diverse set of individuals from ACPS, NOVA, and the community.

The Sub-Committees include:

- Mission, Vision, Policy, and Process;
- Pathways and Curriculum Planning;
- Budget and Staffing;
- Partnerships and MOU Agreement;
- Communications and Marketing;
- Recruitment and Enrollment; and
- Operations, Facilities, and Technology.

Implementation Timeline: Fall 2021 Start Date

- Information meetings for rising 7th grade families and students - Fall 2019
- Summer Bridge Part 1 (interested rising 8th grade students) - Summer 2020
- Information and Recruitment meetings - Fall 2020
- Application process and student selection - Winter 2020-21
- Summer Bridge Part 2 (required for accepted students) - Summer 2021