North Shore Community College

Early College and Dual Enrollment
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2014
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Early College High School: JFF and Gates Foundation

Nationally, the Early College High School Initiative was sponsored by Jobs for the Future (JFF) with primary funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (more than $30 million, according to McCauley, 2013, p. 8). McCauley (2013) reports that there are now more than 250 early college schools in 28 states and the District of Columbia, with a graduation rate of more than 90% (p. 2). With the right supports, these economically disadvantaged, often English Language Learners, students are succeeding in college and beyond at unprecedented rates.

There have been several attempts to provide college courses to high school students in past years. Webb & Gerwin (2014. P. 9) describe the first early college models that targeted high achievers, led by Simon’s Rock in Great Barrington in 1966. In 2004, JFF partnered with Clark University in Worcester to establish University Park Campus School. Hoffman and Robins (2005) reported on a variety of dual enrollment programs in Massachusetts (p. 23-29) that served from four to 30 students per year. These schools included Berklee College of Music, Berkshire Community College, Bunker Hill Community College, Clark University, Elms College, Emerson College, Greenfield Community College, Lowell High School, and University of Massachusetts Boston. For the most part, students took college classes at the college campus or online.

JFF advocated establishment of Early College targeted for those less likely to attend college, rather than the high achievers who were probably already preparing for college. The JFF model, supported by the Gates Foundation, addresses the students who are most in need of exposure to college and least likely to see themselves as “college material.” In order to address the needs of low income youth with many challenges, the immersion in early college high schools was seen as the intensive experience most likely to provide the college experience and the desire to continue toward four year degrees. JFF developed a Common Instructional Framework (2013) that includes active learning strategies similar to the college experience, as well as specific Support Strategies for early college schools (Webb & Gerwin, 2014, p. 6, 7). The importance of support strategies cannot be overemphasized. Support strategies in Early College schools include formal tutoring programs, college readiness system, advisories/houses, college skills center, mentoring, summer bridge courses, college readiness/skills/success classes, cohorts receiving common supports together, parallel courses at the high school for college courses being taken by students, and test prep (graduation, SAT, PSAT, ACT, college placement tests) (Webb & Gerwin, p. 7).

The intention of early college high schools is to “enable all students to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and one to two years of transferable college credit, tuition free. Early college schools predominantly help low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English language learners, students of color, and other young people from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education (Webb & Gerwin, p. ii).” The model advocates the
establishment of specific schools which offer high school and college in rigorous yet supportive environments. 44% of early college high schools are on partner college campuses (p. 4); students are immersed in the college experience through participation in college events, use of the library and other resources, and the general college environment. When the schools are not on a college campus, 75% of these high schools have their students take their college courses on campus rather than at their high school. As of 2013-2014, there were 280 such schools in 32 states, serving 80,000 students (Webb & Gerwin, p. 2). The early college high school graduation rate of 90% is significantly higher than the national average of 78% (p. 10). In addition, 71% of early college graduates enroll in college, vs 54% of low-income graduates nationally (p. 13), with 66% of middle income early college students enrolling in college. American Institutes for Research (AIR), (2013. P. 15) reported that 86% of early college students graduated from high school, compared to 81% of comparison students; 81% of early college students enrolled in college, compared to 72% of comparison students.

While these statistics are impressive, this writer wonders why those who did not enroll in college made that choice, and whether the cost of establishing a separate high school for early college is a cost effective way to promote college attendance by low and middle income students. Students are expected to graduate from high school college-ready, but apparently are not required to take college courses during high school. As a reader of the literature rather than one immersed in an early college high school, this writer interprets these early college high schools as college preparatory high schools enhanced by the opportunity to take college courses.

During the high school years, AIR (2013) reports that Early College had a statistically significant positive impact on student ELA achievement, but no impact on mathematics achievement or on GPA (p. 29). They report that being admitted to an Early College had a significant positive impact on college enrollment: 79.9% of Early College students had at least one record of college enrollment, compared to 70.5% of comparison students (p. 33). Upon graduation, 77.8% of Early College graduates enroll in college, while 67.9% of the comparison group do so. A more impressive statistic is the finding that “22.2% of Early College students earned postsecondary degrees, compared with 1.9% of the comparison students (p. 38).” The relative impact of Early College was greatest on low-income graduates, who were 25 times more likely to obtain a college degree than their peers, 19.7% vs 0.8% (p.40). Ironically, “the impact of Early College on college degree attainment was significantly stronger for students who entered high school with better mathematics and ELA scores (p. 40).” The greatest impact of Early College seems to be that a significantly higher percentage of graduates do earn a college degree than their peers who did not attend Early College high school.
Another Gates funded effort is the North Carolina New Schools Project, established in 2003 to create 102 new or redesigned high schools in North Carolina by 2008. The goal was to increase the number of high school graduates well prepared for college, careers and life for the economy of the 21st century (NC Overview, p. 1). The schools follow four Design Principles: Ready for College; Require Powerful Teaching and Learning; Personalization; Redefine Professionalism; Purposeful Design. There are two types of schools: 1) those that are redesigned high schools that were identified for “turnaround” work based on poor academic results, plus a few high schools which would address specific career field; 2) Learn and Earn Early College High Schools, which would be located on a college campus. The aim was to have an Early College high school in every school district in the state. The new schools reduced the dropout rate during 2007-2008 and had better overall performance. The New Schools website (ncnewschools.org) reported in September 2014 that 81% of the graduates of the new schools were college ready; 88% had graduation rates above the state average; and 82% of the schools met or exceeded goals for academic progress. Founding separate high schools in each district is a radical approach, but it seems that the students who attend these schools do benefit.

**North Shore Community College: Early College in Lynn Public Schools**

North Shore Community College is committed to the mission of education for all. City schools have many challenges to overcome in their attempt to meet the educational needs of the students they serve, many of whom fit the target demographic addressed by the JFF/Gates model. Lynn is the largest city in NSCC’s service area and is a city of immigrants, with higher unemployment rates than other area communities, and the many problems that characterize formerly manufacturing-based city economies. Establishing a separate new high school in Lynn was not an option. However, there was interest by Lynn Public School officials in offering the college experience to their middle-achieving students. Because data shows that the top academic performers from underserved populations are the most likely to attend college, it was decided by the school system and college that the program would focus on the second and third quartiles of academic performers, students were capable of going to college but needed both academic as well as other types of support to pursue higher education.

Lynn obtained federal Race to the Top funding, which allowed the system to invest in some of the resources needed to start an early college experience for their students. The college used Vision Project Performance Incentive Funds to establish a pilot Early College program at Lynn Classical High School in 2012. In 2014, Lynn English High School began offering early college on its campus as well. With the end of the college’s PIF funding, the Lynn Public Schools pledged $50,000, most of which has supported the part-time Achievement Coaches. They also have provided the textbooks each year, the teacher’s salary during the school year, and laptop computers for each of the Early College students.
The Lynn Early College Program initiative is designed for “first generation to bachelor degree” students. According to a HERI report released in 2014, First Generation to college students have one of the lowest 4 year degree completion rates of any group (27.4% compared with 42.1% of general college population (http://heri.ucla.edu/pr-display.php?prQry=80). Often these students also fall under other categories of underserved students including low-income young people, English language learners, and students of color, all of whom are statistically underrepresented in higher education. Students are first screened by the schools for first generation status. Then they are invited to an information session and to take Accuplacer. Students who fall within an acceptable range on Accuplacer are then invited to a family information night where the program is explained carefully, particularly in regard to the college transcript that will be generated and the fact that the program is a 3 year commitment. Engaging these students is entirely congruent with the college mission of access and inclusivity.

For the most part, these are not AP students, but rather students in the middle of the class whose teachers believe they have real potential to achieve in college. Parents and guardians have agreed to support their student in this program, but often times are lacking the “college knowledge” to assist students in the process of applying, accepting and attending a higher education institution. Therefore, outreach to these students involves welcoming sessions for families in which the benefits of taking college courses is explained to parents. Parents are also informed about the time commitment required for academic success. Over the course of their time in Early College, staff explain the college admissions process, college and scholarship applications a, and expectations concerning college life. Early College works in tandem with the Talent Search program to provide access to college visits and expert financial aid assistance, which is so important to many first generation to college families.

The Early College program has a STEM focus, since college readiness in the STEM fields is so necessary for degree completion and so much of the job growth in Massachusetts will be in these fields. In addition to taking courses in math and science, students are also invited to an Engineering Day at Northeastern University and they are provided with technology support and training through the Academic Technology department at NSCC.

The Early College program with the Lynn Public Schools is in the process of voluntarily meeting the accreditation standards of NACEP, the National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Practices. NEASC urges colleges which offer courses at high schools to follow the standards of the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) but few programs in Massachusetts have received this official recognition. The coordinator of the program attends NACEP conferences.

The Early College courses are chosen in agreement by the college, district personnel, and school administrators based on their role as general education requirements that have high rates of
transferability among colleges. Summer courses are conducted in the usual condensed summer schedule. The courses taken during the academic year are designed as stretch courses to allow for additional academic support to be provided to the students. This may be adapted as NACEP is encouraging a model where the courses offered at the high school exactly mimic those offered at the college. This will prove a bit challenging in terms of staffing semester long courses, but the college is considering ways in which this can be supported. In addition, it is hoped that developmental coursework and academic preparation may be able to be addressed as early as 9th grade to prepare students for a fuller Early College experience.

Selected students cohorts (20 per cohort) take college classes both in the high school and on the college campus. They also have a variety of supports throughout their studies, including Achievement Coaches, tutoring, and parent programming. Rising juniors take College Success Seminar at the Lynn campus during the summer, and Composition 1 as a stretch course during junior year; seniors take Environmental Science in summer, and a college math course (most likely statistics) during the year. Summer programming includes enrichment activities such as programs at the Museum of Science in Boston and presentations by area scientists. Summer classes are taught by North Shore Community College faculty, while school year courses are taught by high school faculty selected, screened and approved by NSCC in conjunction with NSCC college partners. The Early College summer program also includes preparation labs in math, technology, and writing. In addition to academic field trips, there are speakers brought in and programming planned to continue to develop students’ college success skills. The summer program runs 7 weeks, 3 days a week and has over a 90% overall attendance rate.

It has become very clear over the three years the college has run Early College in Lynn that the students are in need of intensive support, academic as well as social. Not only do they benefit greatly from the intrusive advising of the Achievement Coaches, who work closely with the Guidance counselors, but many also require tutoring in the subject matter. Students in Lynn deal with a host of obstacles which may prevent them from reaching their academic goals and the achievement coaches work hard with the students to overcome these. The pilot program at Lynn Classical has also demonstrated that the students’ needs do not end when they graduate high school. Despite extensive advising about the college application process and how to obtain their transcript in order to transfer credits into their chosen college, the Bridge Achievement coach found several cases of Early College students who enrolled at colleges, including NSCC, without identifying themselves as NSCC students with earned credits. The Bridge Coordinator caught this in time and prevented these students from repeating courses they successfully completed while in Early College. Due to her efforts, students were able to receive a majority of the transfer credits earned.
The Early College staff and Lynn Public Schools administrators fully expected the students’ college credits to transfer into the colleges chosen by the graduates. As of September 2014 the Bridge Coordinator confirmed that already 129 of a possible 234 credits were granted transfer credit. Although it is the hope of the program staff that this number increases for future cohorts, this is still remarkable given the strong push back coming from private colleges not to accept concurrent courses. The project coordinator continues to work with NACEP to address this bias, but Early College students reported not being displeased when some of their credits didn’t count as they believe it still served them well in terms of academic preparation, college acceptance, and scholarship awards. A record five Posse Foundation scholarships were awarded at Lynn Classical and four out of those five were Early College participants. Founded in 1989, the Posse Foundation “identifies public high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential who may be overlooked by traditional college selection processes. Posse extends to these students the opportunity to pursue personal and academic excellence by placing them in supportive, multicultural teams—Posses—of 10 students. Posse partner colleges and universities award Posse Scholars four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships.” (http://www.possefoundation.org/about-posse). 52 colleges participate in Posse. The foundation did let the Early College students know that it was unlikely that they would receive transfer credit if selected as most of the colleges felt strongly that that it was best for these cohorts to experience college fully, including all freshman year experiences and freshman classes, even if the students have already taken those courses.

For students who are attending public colleges, the percentage of accepted transfer credits rises to 97%. Eight students attend public institutions; we are still waiting to hear from two of these students that Salem State University accepted their transfer credits, but SSC said the students were eligible to receive credit. The program staff would like to continue to strengthen college partnerships with the public colleges, as well as with particular colleges that have been supportive of the Early College program such as Lesley University and Suffolk University, both of which awarded large scholarship opportunities to Early College graduates.

North Shore has found that the Bridge Achievement Coach performs an essential role. She follows up with the graduates and colleges to ensure enrollment and transfer credits. She is housed at the college and also has office hours in high schools to work with seniors on applications to college as well as running parent workshops. The experience of finding out that many students did not follow up on their transfer credit once on a college campus served as evidence that coming from families that are not familiar with the college process and curriculum places them at a distinct disadvantage. They may hear the information they need, but fail to understand the steps they need to take to advocate for themselves. The Early College program is taking steps to address this, but it remains a reality that will need monitoring.
The Lynn Early College programs have several measures in place to create, maintain, and assess the academic rigor of the concurrent enrollment courses offered through NSCC at both Lynn Classical and Lynn English High Schools. These measures are modeled in part after best practices of other Early College programs across the country, as well as by the accreditation standards put forth by the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Practices (NACEP) and NEASC credit award standards. Courses are created and maintained through the registrar’s office using the same requirements and descriptions of courses with the same departmental designations; official course registration of Early College students through the college enrollment process, including a review of students’ prior academic performance; faculty site visits; approval of instructors by academic departments and deans with confirmation that instructors meet necessary teaching credentials set forth by NSCC; professional development for the chosen high school instructors and discipline specific training related to concurrent courses being taught; and ongoing collegial interaction through college teaching partner to address course content, pedagogy, and assessment and course evaluations. Course syllabi are examined by the college deans under the same process and with the same requirements as other courses at the college. In addition, college faculty members are assigned to each high school teacher to support and monitor the courses meet regularly with the high school faculty teaching the course on a daily basis. They monitor the assignments, the teaching methods, and student outcomes. Summer classes are taught on the college campus by college instructors in a more usual college schedule. There are several ways in which the effectiveness of the pilot program has been measured; graduation and college attendance are the most central. 100% of the first cohort (20 students) persisted in and completed the two year Early College program. 100% were able to receive a passing grade for college courses completed and 100% graduated from Lynn Classical High School on time. 100% of the cohort applied to a college and 90% enrolled in this first semester. The cumulative GPA of this cohort at NSCC was 3.34.

**Concurrent Enrollment in College Courses**

Many high schools in North Shore Community College’s service area are eager to have college courses offered on their high school campus, but there is confusion about who this program should serve. While offering college courses to high achievers would be a logical fit, with potentially less need for intensive support for the students, two factors argue against this target audience. The maturity of the AP model in high schools plus the need to address middle achievers who might otherwise not attend college suggests that making college classes available to middle achievers would better address the college readiness agenda.

School districts have invested energy and money in Advanced Placement courses, which are administered by The College Board. In the first year of AP courses, 1,229 students around the country took them. By 2010-2011, 2 million students – about a third of all high-school students
-- took them (Wertheimer, L. 2012, p. 22). There has been a proliferation of AP courses due to the demand by parents that they be open to most of the student body, rather than only to high achievers. Some high schools now limit the number of AP courses a student can take, since some students are taking eight or more classes and there is concern among high school teachers and administrators about the stress level students are experiencing (Wertheimer, L. 2012, p. 22). Some high school AP teachers complain that AP courses cannot be as intense as they were when enrollment was restricted to high achievers.

In the early years, AP courses were a strong advantage for those applying to elite colleges, where they provided an admissions advantage and their credits applied toward graduation. However, with so many students taking multiple AP courses, this is no longer a distinction that would mark a student as more highly qualified for college than students who did not take AP courses. In addition, many colleges are no longer accepting AP credit for college courses, finding that students did not receive the preparation for college level work that had characterized these courses in years past (Wertheimer, L. 2012, p. 22).

Some high school administrators believe the better solution would be for students to take actual college courses as part of their regular schedule while on the high school campus, earning transferable credit. The assumption is that high school teachers would teach a college course and the students would satisfy a high school requirement through that course, and that the college course credits would be accepted by the colleges even if they no longer accept AP credit. In 2013-2014 several area school districts expressed interest this year to the college President and the Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs in conducting college courses at their high schools taught by their instructors. Among these are Essex Technical High School, Manchester Regional High School, and Swampscott High School.

The appeal of this model is clear. Students know the instructors, the schedule is not disrupted, and high schools can promote this opportunity to parents. However, school districts seldom recognize the intensive support that high school students must receive in order to be successful in college courses. Since the courses are taught at the high school, students experience it as a high school course. North Shore’s Early College staff have observed that students act like college students during the summer while taking college courses on the college campus, but revert to high school behavior once the year began in September. Holding class at the high school as part of the regular schedule has another challenge: the frequent disruption of the learning experience at the high school campus. For many legitimate reasons, students may be called out of class, attend assemblies, experience substitute teachers, and sometimes have attendance patterns more like high school students than college students. The actual “time on task” is far less intense than it would be with a course held on the college campus. All of this detracts from experiencing a college level course.
NEASC (2014) cites the 2013 study by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association which acknowledges the many benefits of dual enrollment programs, specifically concurrent college courses offered at high schools and taught by high school instructors. These benefits include “enhancing and diversifying high school curricula; increasing access to higher education; improving high school and college relationships; and shortening time to degree and lowering the cost of college.” That report identified potential drawbacks as well: “inadequate maintenance of academic rigor; inadequate instructor qualifications; failure to provide an authentic college experience; and uncertainty of course transferability.” These drawbacks do not apply when the courses are taught by college faculty.

Having high school faculty teach college courses is more complicated than it may initially seem. It is fairly easy to be sure that the instructor holds the appropriate graduate degree. However, having high school teachers teach college courses requires high school and college faculty to collaboratively work together to strengthen expectations of what constitutes college level instructional methodologies and expectations. NSCC’s experience with Lynn Classical High School during the first year of Early College was illustrative. The grant supported training in June prior to fall classes, including meetings with NSCC college instructors and department chairs from the Lynn high schools. The joint team reviewed the core standards/learning outcomes and discussed the necessary syllabus for Composition 1. This initial professional development laid the foundation for the high school English instructor to be supported by a college instructor/ mentor to fully meet the college curriculum expectations. Similarly, high school math instructors teaching concurrent enrollment have also collaboratively worked with college faculty in order to maintain the rigor of the college experience for the students.

A practical issue to be considered when high school faculty teach college courses as part of their workload as high school instructors is that they are not paid by the college, and therefore are not paying union dues to the MCCC. The union favors hiring all adjunct faculty on the MCCC contract, with all instructors belonging to the MCCC.

The intense effort it takes for colleges to run Early College experiences is evidenced by area community colleges who had engaged in Early College at high schools but have found it difficult to continue the programs. Both Northern Essex and Middlesex have stopped their programs or are planning to stop them, primarily due to faculty issues and the cost of running the programs.

High school administrators may not be eager to offer college courses after school hours, as the students are involved in sports and other extracurricular activities. However, it is reasonable to continue to explore this possibility, including Saturday classes. It is also possible that offering specific high demand courses at the college at time convenient for multiple high schools would be a workable solution.
Dual Enrollment (CDEP) at North Shore Community College

Dual Enrollment programs have many benefits for high school students, as cited by NEASC above. During 2008-2009, 3,091 students enrolled in the Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Program (CDEP). CDEP is the only state-funded source for dual enrollment in Massachusetts, allowing eligible high school students to take college-level courses free of charge at public higher education institutions while earning high school credit simultaneously (Tinkham, 2011, p. 3). Some students are eager to begin their college studies at a college campus because they are seeking a more challenging curriculum, have particular career interests best served by college curricula, are home-schooled, or are ready to combine college with high school to gain some transfer credits while completing high school.

North Shore Community College has participated in Dual Enrollment through the Department of Higher Education for many years. The funding available for students allows students to take one college course without cost. Priority is given to students who indicate interest in STEM fields. An Academic Counselor is designated as the college CDEP Coordinator with responsibility for enrollment and monitoring of the CDEP students.

CDEP has specific standards and expectations which are reflected in the College’s application for participation in CDEP. There are expectations that the guidance counselor is informed and recommends the student, that there is an advisor at the college, that there is an orientation held by the college, and that the student is academically qualified to take the college courses. Typically the college enrolls approximately 20 CDEP students per semester. Of the 19 enrolled in Spring 2014, 13 successfully completed their course; 2 earned W; 4 earned F’s. Of the 13, 7 had enrolled in fall courses as of Mid-August (Duff, 2014). While CDEP has potential, the limited funding poses a challenge when considering scaling up.

All Dual Enrollment students, including those who enroll and pay their own tuition and fees, are considered college students, with full privileges and responsibilities of college students. There are times when this is awkward, as FERPA rule apply; the parents sometimes have difficulty understanding why they have less access to information about their children regarding the child’s college courses. However, communication between college officials and the parents usually resolves this quickly. In Fall 2013, there were 114 Dual Enrollment students not supported by CDEP; in Spring 2014, there were 76; and in Fall 2014, there were 128.

STEM Starter Academy
In spring 2014 the College was awarded state funding for a STEM Starter Academy. The purpose of the grant is to increase the number of high school students who enter college interested in STEM fields well prepared for college level work. Led by the Assistant Dean for Math and Sciences, the college designed the program and hired a part time coordinator for the program.

During the spring semester, the college held three Early Acceptance Dinners where the STEM Starter Academy was promoted and scholarship applications were provided to potential incoming STEM students. This reached approximately 250 students. In addition, there were four Outreach Events which reached 1220 students, including 50 students contacted by mentors, 57 for Dual Enrollment, 1092 for a Math Bootcamp, and 21 for orientation.

During the summer of 2014, the college offered EGS 101 Introduction to Engineering and a Math Bootcamp. Of the thirty one (31) students in Introduction to Engineering, 29 passed the course. The Math Bootcamp addressed students who had taken the Accuplacer but scored lower than required for college math courses. Twenty seven (27) students took the bootcamp, and 24 passed, based on attendance. The Bootcamp was not limited to the STEM students, but was open to all students who had tested low on Accuplacer. Eight late-starting STEM related courses will be offered starting in late September, split between the two major campuses: Composition 1 for students interested in STEM fields; GEO 108 Environmental Science; BIO 103 Anatomy and Physiology 1; CPS 100 Information Technology and Its Applications; CPS 107 Programming Logic & Design; BIO 105 Biology 1. This program is promising, and the college hopes to build interest and enrollment in the program as the year progresses.

The need for support for these students is addressed through the part time coordinator and through dedicated peer mentors. During the summer, a peer mentor took Introduction to Engineering with the students, and worked with them to enhance their student skills and to help them with content. During the fall semester, STEM Peer Mentors have been identified; students were nominated by faculty or applied for the program. During the summer, Admissions personnel and Math/Science faculty coached the mentors. During the fall, the Math/Science faculty will work closely with the mentors.

**Directions for the Future**

There are four different approaches to early college experiences that offer promise as North Shore Community College addresses partnerships with area high school districts. With growing demand for early college experiences from area school districts, the college will have to plan carefully to partner with more school systems in a manner that is both meaningful and sustainable.

1. Early College with Lynn Public Schools
2. Concurrent Enrollment at area high schools
3. Expansion of Dual Enrollment opportunities on campus beyond the funded CDEP program, including STEM focused programming
4. Career-oriented programming at Essex Tech and area schools

1. Early College

The current Early College program serves the exact target population recommended by JFF and the Gates foundation. The families who participated have been very grateful for the possibilities now open to their sons and daughters. Colleges chosen by the graduates include selective private colleges as well as public four year colleges and community colleges. To maintain the momentum of this program, funding will have to be secured to continue to serve this population. As the program grows, it will be advisable to revisit the “stretch course” model; if a more intense exposure to college courses could be accomplished within the strictures of the high school system, it would be desirable. The waterfall schedule at the high school and the many disruptions to the learning process inherent in the daily high school experience detract from the intensive learning experience that is the goal of college level courses. Finding times for college courses outside of the usual schedule will certainly be a challenge, but holding courses at the college itself would more accurately reflect the authentic college experience.

The college must recognize that this is a staff-intensive effort. The program needs a full time coordinator to work closely with school district personnel and college staff, Achievement Coaches for each cohort, tutors, and the Bridge Coordinator who guides the college application process and follows up to assure that credits have transferred and that students have enrolled in the appropriate college courses. College personnel participate in placement testing (Accuplacer), registration of students, processing of grades, production of transcripts, and coordination of Early College activities with other college related programs such as Upward Bound and Tech Prep.

2. Concurrent Enrollment

As the college pursues other opportunities to engage other high schools in college courses at the high schools, NACEP standards and the selection of appropriate faculty and the costs of providing adequate oversight by the college regarding the content, instructional methodologies, and learning outcomes will need to be addressed. The Early College Program in Lynn has shown that Achievement Coaches have a central role to play; students need extensive advising to make the transition from high school to college, not only in their courses but in their understanding of what it means to be in college and how colleges operate. Particularly if the decision is made to offer early college experiences to middle achievers who would not otherwise be planning to attend college (and who might otherwise not be ready for college), extensive support in the form of tutoring and advising must be provided. With area school
systems experiencing tight budgets, it may be necessary to pursue grant funding through the college, with area school systems becoming a consortium of sorts.

3. **Dual Enrollment**

If Dual Enrollment opportunities on campus are expanded, interest in specific courses among area high schools could be determined and classes could be scheduled to accommodate clusters of students from area high schools. (This would be in addition to the CDEP dual enrollment program that funds particular students to take one regularly scheduled classes on campus or online.) It is reasonable to assume that students from area schools could be combined into specific course sections that would be scheduled in late afternoons, evenings, or Saturdays. MassTransfer block courses and STEM offerings would be very practical choices. The need for tutoring and advising for these students would still need to be addressed in a targeted manner, preferably with a designated advisor with expertise in Early College programming. If funding continues, the STEM Starter Academy could become an excellent pathway for students into fields with excellent prospects for the future. One drawback in this model is the lack of diversity of experience and preparation in the student cohort. Research into the Accelerated Learning Plan (ALP) by the Community College of Baltimore County indicates that the blend of highly prepared students with those who may not be as well prepared has academic benefit. College faculty regularly report the advantage of classes that combine adult and traditional age students, as each bring different perspectives and experiences, and both groups benefit. Having class sections of only current high school students would lose this advantage; with extensive support systems mentioned above, this can be overcome.

4. **Career oriented programming at area high schools**

Additional career oriented programming at the high schools, particularly in CTE areas, is another avenue for growth. With the opening of Essex Regional Technical High School, there is potential for programming in areas such as manufacturing, in which the college could offer college courses at the high school (preferably taught by college faculty) with hands-on education using the equipment present at the high school. Another potential growth area is alignment of curriculum in other career areas, perhaps leading to stackable credentials leading to enrollment at NSCC. In the past, the roadblock for the high schools was the lack of alignment and learning outcomes in Math and in Language Arts. Superintendent O’Connell of Essex Tech believes that the academic standards at the new high school will include college readiness as well as career preparation. If partnerships are formed with area school districts, college faculty and the high school faculty could work on common academic outcomes, graduates of the high schools may well earn stackable credentials and perhaps transferable college courses while at the high school.
Support for dual enrollment:

With the expansion of partnerships with area school districts, leadership and effective management will be essential. The coordination of the activities inherent in each of these options is complicated and time consuming. If several options are pursued, the need for effective planning and management is even more crucial for the success of the programs. As cited earlier, students will need intensive advising, tutoring, and orientation to the new world of college and the skills to navigate this system. A Bridge Coordinator may be necessary in addition to the leader/manager to assure the transition from high school to college occurs in the most effective manner to ensure that students do not repeat courses they passed successfully while in high school. Expansion of dual enrollment without such support services is unlikely to result in college persistence and success.

Academic Division Deans will be central to planning and oversight at the program, course and faculty level. College faculty who participate in dual enrollment will need professional development, particularly with regard to the Common Instructional Strategies recommended by JFF; these strategies will be particularly helpful for college faculty who are not used to dealing with students still attending high school, as their developmental needs and learning strategies may be quite different from traditional age college students.

Student and Enrollment Services will be involved in all aspects of admission, registration, orientation, and tracking of student success. As Dual Enrollment expands, the college will need to consider reconfiguration of the support structures provided for these students. Advising, tutoring, and participation in the life of the college will need to be integrated into the experience of the Dual Enrollment students in a deliberate and strategic manner.

The school systems will need to commit resources in order to ensure success as well. Each cohort of students will need intensive advising and follow up, which will require having individuals at the high schools and at the college with specific responsibility for early college students. While college faculty are learning how to be most effective with younger learners, high school faculty and staff will be learning the expectations of instruction and learning outcomes in college courses and programs. Expanding the vision of higher education to all students, rather than only those at the top of the class, is necessary both for successful futures of current students, but also for the current and future economy which demands the kinds of thinking and problem solving skills that people learn in college.

With effective planning, North Shore Community College could become a leader in early college/dual enrollment, ensuring that students who otherwise might not have thought of themselves as college students are college ready at graduation and also ready to transfer credits into the college of their choice when they graduate from high school.
Works Cited:


Duff, J. (July 31, 2014). Application for Dual Enrollment (CDEP), North Shore Community College.


