
Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Career and College Promise

SL 2017-57 (SB 257, Budget Bill), sec. 7.22 (f)
GS 115D-5(x)

Evaluation of Cooperative Innovative High School Programs

SL 2012-142 (HB 950, Budget Bill), sec. 7.11(g)
GS 115C-238.50-.55

Date Due: March 15, 2021

Submitted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, in conjunction with the North Carolina Community College System, the University of North Carolina System, the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, and the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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**Report to the North Carolina General Assembly:
§ NCGS 115D-5(x) ~ Career and College Promise (CCP)
§ NCGS 115C-238.55 ~ Cooperative Innovative High Schools (CIHS)**

This report responds to the requirements of the legislation enacted in G.S. §115C-238.55, which establishes that “the State Board of Education and the governing Boards shall evaluate the success of students in cooperative innovative high schools approved under this Part. Success shall be measured by high school retention rates, high school completion rates, high school dropout rates, certification and associate degree completion, admission to four-year institutions, post-graduation employment in career or study-related fields, and employer satisfaction of employees who participated in and graduated from the schools.”

This report also responds to the requirements of the legislation enacted in G.S. § 115D-5 (x), which establishes that “In addition to the evaluation of cooperative innovative high schools by the State Board of Education pursuant to G.S. §115C-238.55, the State Board of Community Colleges, in conjunction with the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall evaluate the success of students participating in the Career and College Promise Program, including the College Transfer pathway and the Career and Technical Education pathway. Success shall be measured by high school retention rates, high school completion rates, high school dropout rates, certification and associate degree completion, admission to four-year institutions, post-graduation employment in career or study-related fields, and employer satisfaction of employees who participated in the programs. The Boards shall jointly report by March 15 of each year to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee. The report shall be combined with the evaluation of cooperative innovative high schools required by G.S. §115C-238.55, and the Community Colleges System Office shall be responsible for submitting the combined report to the Committee.”

North Carolina’s Career and College Promise program has been recognized as a model dual enrollment program and as a model state for dual enrollment policy by the Education Commission of the States. Additionally, NC is a leader in the nation in the number of

established Cooperative Innovative High Schools. The strength of collaborative partnerships between high schools and colleges, statewide articulation agreements, the requirement for structured pathways, student eligibility criteria, state-level agency collaboration and state-wide policy and funding are what make NC's Career and College Promise Program a model for other states.

The State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) fulfills some report requirements, while others are fulfilled by accompanying data from the NC Community Colleges System (NCCCS), the University of North Carolina System (UNCS) and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU). Complete data and additional information follow for CCP and CIHS, from all agencies involved, including data from the NCCCS, the current list of CIHS, and accountability data, as well as data from the UNCS, and NCICU, Success Stories from CIHS across North Carolina, and special recognitions for CIHS.

The following table reviews the report requirements and indicates which agency or source addresses the required information:

| Report Requirement | Agency/Source | Page |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| History of Dual Enrollment in NC | NCDPI | Pages 6 - 7 |
| Overview and Data Highlights of CCP | NCDPI and NCCCS | Pages 8 - 12 |
| Overview and Data Highlights of CIHS | NCDPI and NCCCS | Pages 14 - 16 & 22 - 24 |
| List of Current CIHS by Public School Unit (PSU) | NCDPI | Pages 17 - 21 |
| High School Retention Rates* | NCDPI, CIHS Annual Reports | Pages 25 - 29 |
| High School Completion Rates* | NCDPI, CIHS Annual Reports | Pages 25 - 29 |
| High School Drop-out Rates* | NCDPI | Pages 25 - 29 |
| CIHS Enrollment Data | NCDPI and NCCCS | Pages 30 - 34 |
| Admission to Four-Year Institutions | UNCS and NCICU | Pages 13 & 41 - 43 |
| Certification and Associate Degree Completion | NCDPI and NCCCS | Pages 23, 35 & 37 |
| CTE and College Transfer Pathways | NCCCS | Pages 35 - 40 |
| Post-graduation employment | NCCCS | Pages 35 & 38 |
| CIHS Success Stories | NCDPI, CIHS Annual Reports | Pages 44 - 74 |
| Employer satisfaction of CIHS graduates | Data not available | N/A |
| Summary of Findings for Why Students Participate in CCP Pathways | SERVE Center at UNCG | Pages 75 - 78 |
| The Impact of Early Colleges on Postsecondary Performance and Completion | SERVE Center at UNCG | Pages 79 - 85 |

*NCDPI has not extracted a specific subset of data, but presents state-wide data in response to the legislative requirements. Because CCP students reside across the state and represent such a large portion of the student population, the causal relationship cannot be clearly determined.

History of Dual Enrollment and Career and College Promise (CCP)

North Carolina has a long history of support for dual enrollment programs. The statutes authorizing high school student enrollment in community college courses have evolved over a period of more than 30 years. Previous statutes established concurrent enrollment, Huskins, Learn and Earn, Learn and Earn Online, and CIHS, all of which provided high school students the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school.

In an effort to increase effectiveness, the General Assembly established Career and College Promise in 2011. All previous dual enrollment programs were consolidated and replaced by CCP. The purpose of CCP is to offer structured opportunities for qualified high school students to dually enroll in community college courses that provide pathways that lead to a certificate, diploma, degree, or industry-recognized credentials, as well as provide entry-level job skills.

The creation of CCP caused a drop in dual enrollment in the following year as colleges and Public School Units (PSUs) adjusted to the new program requirements for student eligibility and structured pathways. Upon implementation of the CCP program for a full academic year (2012-13), enrollment in joint high school programs rebounded and has been climbing each academic year with the addition of new pathway options, increasing student interest, and the establishment of new Cooperative Innovative High Schools. **In 2019-2020, 31% of all graduates enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course, primarily through CCP, during their high school years. This represents a 4% growth from the previous graduating class.** While data from the 2019-2020 school year continues to show an increase in CCP participation and enrollment, preliminary data indicates that COVID-19 has impacted program participation for the 2020-2021 school year. This will be reported on more fully in March 2022.

In order to facilitate the effective implementation and to support growth and progress of CCP in the state of North Carolina, the NC Community College System and the NC Department of Public Instruction collaborate closely together - sometimes on a daily basis. Most communications, professional development, and technical assistance are facilitated jointly. The UNC System and the NC Independent Colleges and Universities also

collaborate with these two lead agencies regarding the Cooperative Innovative High School pathway through the legislated Joint Advisory Committee.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina Community College System are partners in a five-year, 5-million-dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education that started in July of 2019. This project, along with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the University of North Carolina System, the North Carolina Department of Commerce and RAND Corporation, has the goal of conducting a formal and rigorous evaluation of the implementation, impact, and cost of the three different CCP pathways. Over the past year, members of the CCP Evaluation Partnership Team have completed a variety of activities including:

- Created interactive dashboards housed at the NCCCS under the [Programs and Instruction](#) section provide descriptive information about participation and outcomes for CCP students. The results from these dashboards are presented throughout this report.
- Established data sharing agreements and created a dataset that links NCDPI, NCCCS and UNC System data. These data will be used to analyze the impacts of the project on high school and postsecondary outcomes. Findings from these analyses will be included in the 2022 report.
- Explored reasons why students participate and do not participate in CCP. A summary of these findings is included in Appendix A.
- Updated findings around postsecondary degree attainment from a randomized controlled trial of 19 CIHS. A brief summarizing these findings is also included in Appendix B.

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NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (NCDPI) Career and College Promise (CCP)

Session Law 2011-145, the Appropriations Act of 2011, authorized the State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges to establish the Career and College Promise program, effective January 1, 2012. The purpose of Career and College Promise is to offer structured opportunities for qualified high school students to enroll dually in community college courses that provide pathways that lead to a certificate, diploma, degree, or industry-recognized credential as well as provide entry-level jobs skills.

Every eligible North Carolina high school student has the opportunity to take advantage of the Career and College Promise (CCP) program and enroll in dual enrollment through the College Transfer or Career and Technical Education Pathway. CCP is available to every public high school in the state.

- In 2019-2020, **31%** of all graduates enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course, primarily through CCP, during their high school years. This represents 33,636 students. This is an **increase** of 4,030 students (4% growth) from the previous 2018-2019 graduating class.
- Graduates enrolled in an average of six college courses in their high school years. These graduates enrolled in a total of **225,002** college courses over the course of their high school years.
- In 2019-2020, **29%** (3% increase) of all graduates earned high school credit through dual enrollment opportunities in their high school years. This represents **31,738** students. Ninety-four percent (1% decrease) of graduates who enrolled in a dual enrollment college course earned credit towards high school graduation.
- In 2019-2020, there were **61,036*** public high school students enrolled in college courses while in high school. This is an **increase** of 4,762 students from the previous year.

*DPI data includes public and charter school students who are dually enrolled in 2-year or 4-year colleges and universities.

See Table 1 below for further data regarding dual enrollment for 2019-2020 graduates disaggregated by race/ethnicity. Based on the enrollment data below, while there remains continued work, NCDPI is encouraged that PSUs are creating environments for access and opportunity among all race/ethnicity groups for dual enrollment.

Table 1: Number and percent of 2019-2020 graduates who enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course while in high school by race/ethnicity

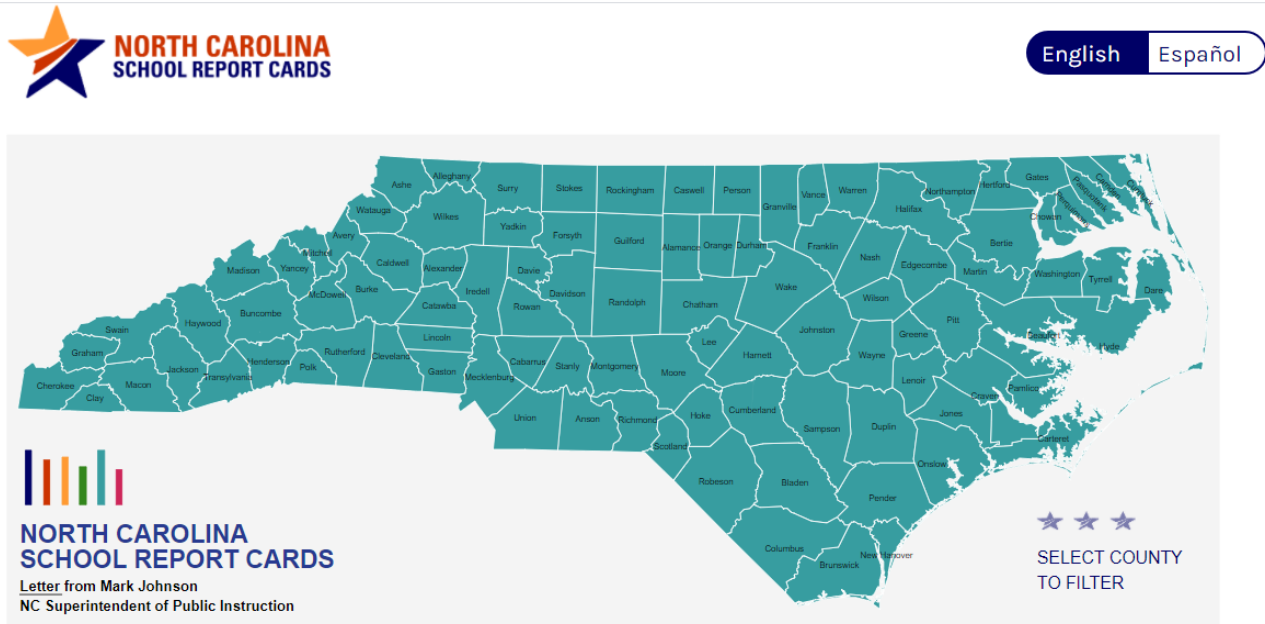
| Race/Ethnicity | Number of graduates who enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course while in high school | Total Number of graduates | Percent of the total subgroup population of students participating in at least one dual enrollment course |
|--|--|---------------------------|---|
| Total | 33,636 | 109,171 | 31% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 363 | 1,216 | 30% |
| Asian | 1,100 | 3,557 | 31% |
| Black or African American | 5,515 | 27,053 | 20% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 4,696 | 17,508 | 27% |
| Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 31 | 138 | 22% |
| Two or More | 1,148 | 4,448 | 26% |
| White | 20,783 | 55,251 | 38% |

Last year, the statewide four-year graduation cohort rate was 87.60%. For more information, find the NCDPI Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Report under the [Accountability Data Sets and Reports](#) section.

The dropout rate for 2019-2020 is not available at this time. It will be reported to the NC State Board of Education in March 2021. In 2018-2019, the state dropout rate was 2.01%. For more information regarding dropout rates see the [Discipline, ALP and Dropout Annual Reports](#) section.

For detailed data regarding NC school districts and high schools, see the [North Carolina School Report Cards](#). Due to COVID-19, school performance data was not able to be collected for the 2019-2020 school year. On March 23, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education approved North Carolina's request to waive spring statewide assessments, accountability ratings, and certain reporting requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the 2019-2020 school year due to widespread school closures related to the novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Figure 1: 2019-2020 North Carolina School Report Cards



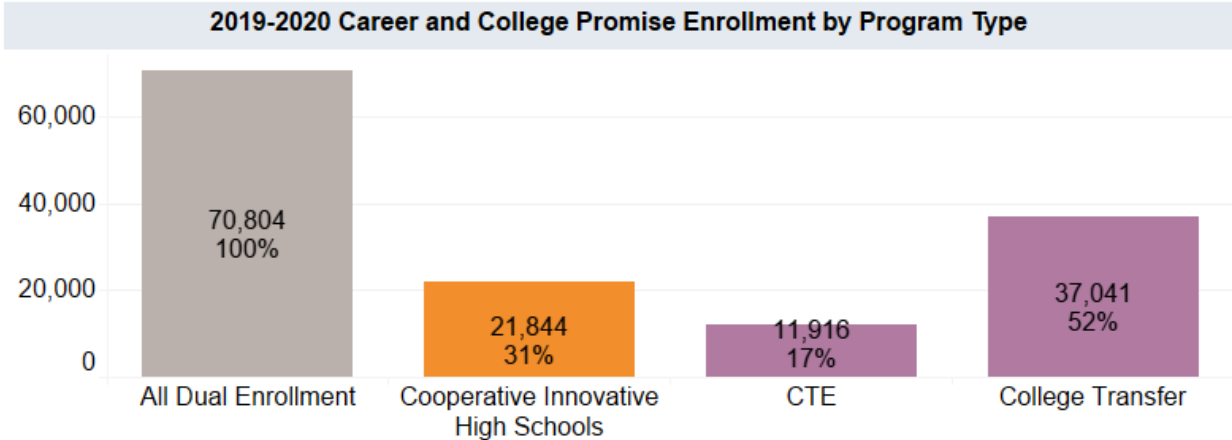
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NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (NCCCS) Career and College Promise (CCP)

Enrollment and Demographics

During the 2019-2020 academic year, **70,801*** high school students participated in Career and College Promise (CCP) through the NC Community College System. Of those, 21,844 (31%) participated in Cooperative Innovative High School Programs (Early College, Middle College, or Other Innovative High School), and 48,957 (69%) participated in Pathways programs (Career and Technical Education or College Transfer). There was a large increase in the number of students participating in the College Transfer pathway, likely due to a change in eligibility implemented in Fall 2019. Participants were primarily female (60%) and white (59%). Career and Technical Education had the highest percentage of male students (53%), and Cooperative Innovative High Schools had the highest percentage of non-white students (50%).

Figure 2: 2019-2020 Career and College Promise enrollment by program type



*NCCCS data includes public, charter, private, and homeschooled students who are dually enrolled.

Figure 3: 2019-2020 Career and College Promise enrollment by sex

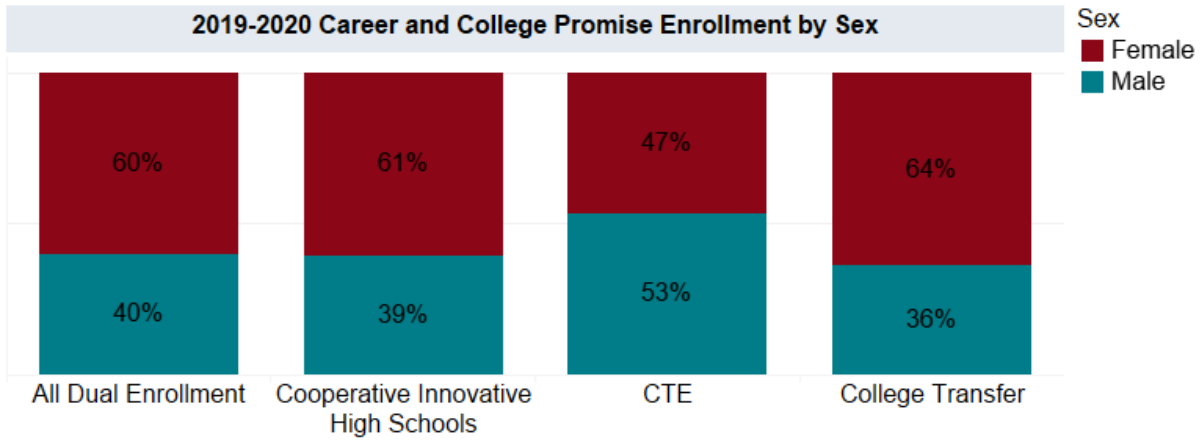
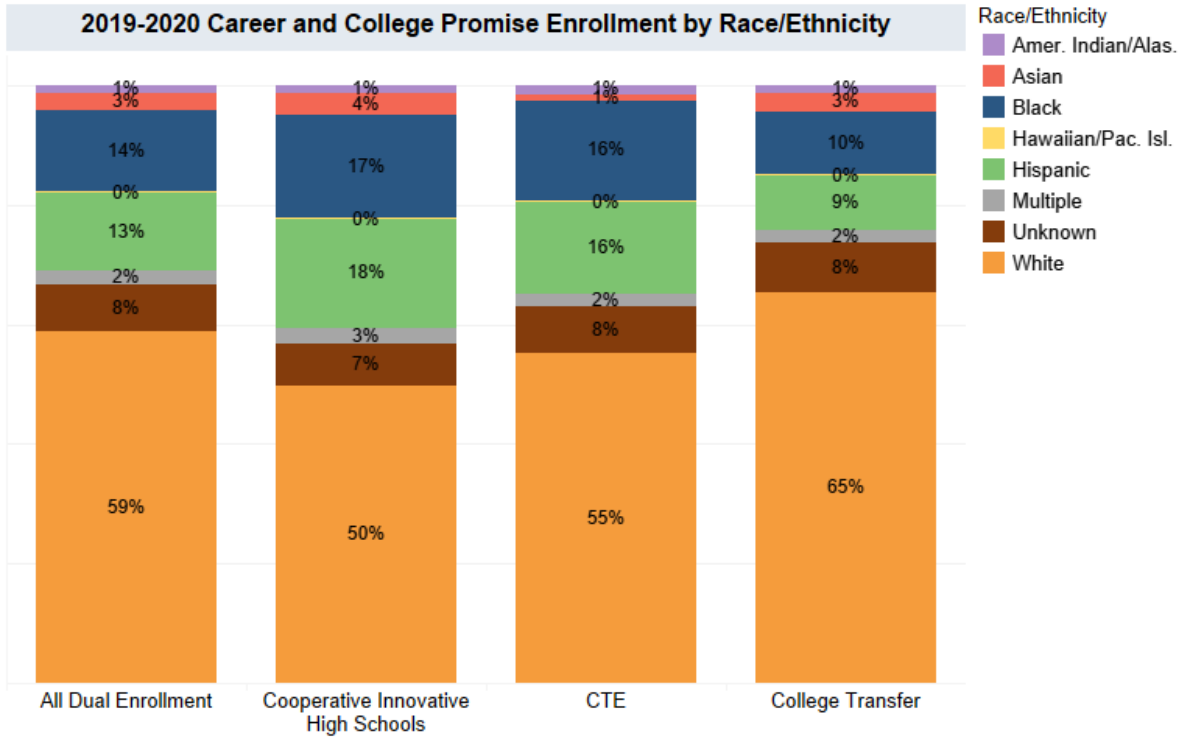


Figure 4: 2019-2020 Career and College Promise enrollment by race/ethnicity



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UNC GENERAL ADMINISTRATION NC Public High Schools

Institutions within the University of North Carolina (UNC) system admitted **75,109 students from NC Public High Schools, including Charters, for Fall 2019**. Based on preliminary results, UNC system admissions of NC Public High School students increased by 4,148 students for Fall 2020. Refer to table 6 for admissions of Cooperative Innovative High School students.

Table 2: NC Public High School student admissions to UNC system schools, Fall 2019 and 2020

| UNC Institution | Number of NC public high school students admitted to UNC institutions, Fall 2019* | Number of NC public high school students admitted to UNC institutions, Fall 2020*, (As of 1/13/2021**) |
|---|---|--|
| Appalachian State University | 8,749 | 9,698 |
| East Carolina University | 9,996 | 11,696 |
| Elizabeth City State University | 1,215 | 1,302 |
| Fayetteville State University | 2,487 | 2,516 |
| North Carolina A&T State University | 4,119 | 4,323 |
| North Carolina Central University | 3,410 | 3,779 |
| North Carolina State University | 6,683 | 7,190 |
| University of North Carolina – Asheville | 1,849 | 1,243 |
| University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill | 4,145 | 4,591 |
| University of North Carolina – Charlotte | 9,723 | 10,620 |
| University of North Carolina – Greensboro | 5,930 | 5,920 |
| University of North Carolina – Pembroke | 3,791 | 3,254 |
| University of North Carolina – Wilmington | 5,313 | 5,569 |
| University of North Carolina – School of the Arts | 31 | 88 |
| Western Carolina University | 5,233 | 4,813 |
| Winston-Salem State University | 2,435 | 2,655 |
| UNC Total | 75,109 | 79,257 |

*Cooperative Innovative High School students are excluded from this table.

**Neither IPEDS Admissions nor the Freshmen Admissions and Performance dashboard have been finalized for the current year (as of 1/13/2021), so this data should be considered preliminary. Refer to the UNC System [Stats, Data, & Reports](#) page for official results.

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (NCDPI) Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS) Programs

In response to N.C.G.S. §115C-238.50, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) initially established Cooperative Innovative High Schools (CIHS) in 2004 with the NC Community Colleges System (NCCCS) and the University of North Carolina General Administration (UNCGA). G.S. §115C-238.50 authorizes “local boards of education to jointly establish with one or more boards of trustees cooperative innovative programs in high schools and colleges or universities that will expand students' opportunities for educational success through high quality instructional programming. These cooperative innovative high school programs shall target any of the following groups: (1) High school students who are at risk of dropping out of school before attaining a high school diploma. (1a) High school students with parents who did not continue education beyond high school. (2) High school students who would benefit from accelerated academic instruction.”

In the seventeen years since the General Assembly authorized the establishment of Cooperative Innovative High School Programs, students, including many at-risk of dropping out and historically underserved, continue to see increased academic outcomes that surpass those of students across the state. CIHS programs continue to open in North Carolina school districts, though with fewer CIHS opening in North Carolina in recent years. As these CIHS programs grow and expand enrollment, an increasing number of students are benefitting from new opportunities, leading to stronger outcomes, with higher rates of academic achievement, graduation and postsecondary enrollment and completion.

North Carolina has made significant progress in opening and sustaining innovative secondary schools that share the critical goal of graduating every student for success in college, careers and life. **For 2019-2020, CIHS programs extended across 85 of the state's 116 school districts plus NERSBA, with 130 individual schools operating for the 2019-2020 school year.**

NOTE: NC Session Law 2020-64 (SL 2020-64) approved three new CIHS to operate as CIHS: Halifax Early College and Stanly STEM Early College are open and operating as CIHS. SL 2020-64 also approved the Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences to open and operate as a CIHS. The Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences plans to open in the fall of 2021. SL 2020-64 also approved non-recurring supplemental funding for the 2020-2021 school year for these CIHS, as well as for five CIHS that opened in 2018: The Center for Industry, Technology, and Innovation (CITI) High School (Nash County Public Schools), Innovation Early College High School (Pitt County Schools), Marine Science and Technology (MaST) Early College High School (Carteret County Schools), Roanoke Rapids Early College High School (Roanoke Rapids Graded School District), Southeast Area Technical (SEA-Tech) High School (New Hanover Schools).

SL 2020-64 placed a moratorium on any new CIHS applications to open for the 2020-2021 school year and established that the State Board of Education may only conditionally approve up to three applications for CIHS that request additional funds to open in a school year.

CIHS programs include a variety of models focused on transfer degrees and/or career and technical education. Programs define themselves as early colleges, middle colleges, and other innovative CIHS models, including STEM schools and career academies. **Currently in operation for the 2020-2021 school year, there are 132 CIHS programs in 85 of the state's 116 school districts plus NERSBA. For Fall 2021, NCDPI anticipates there to be 133 CIHS programs in North Carolina.**

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Figure 6: NC Cooperative Innovative High Schools, August 2020

NC Cooperative Innovative High Schools

AS OF AUGUST 2020

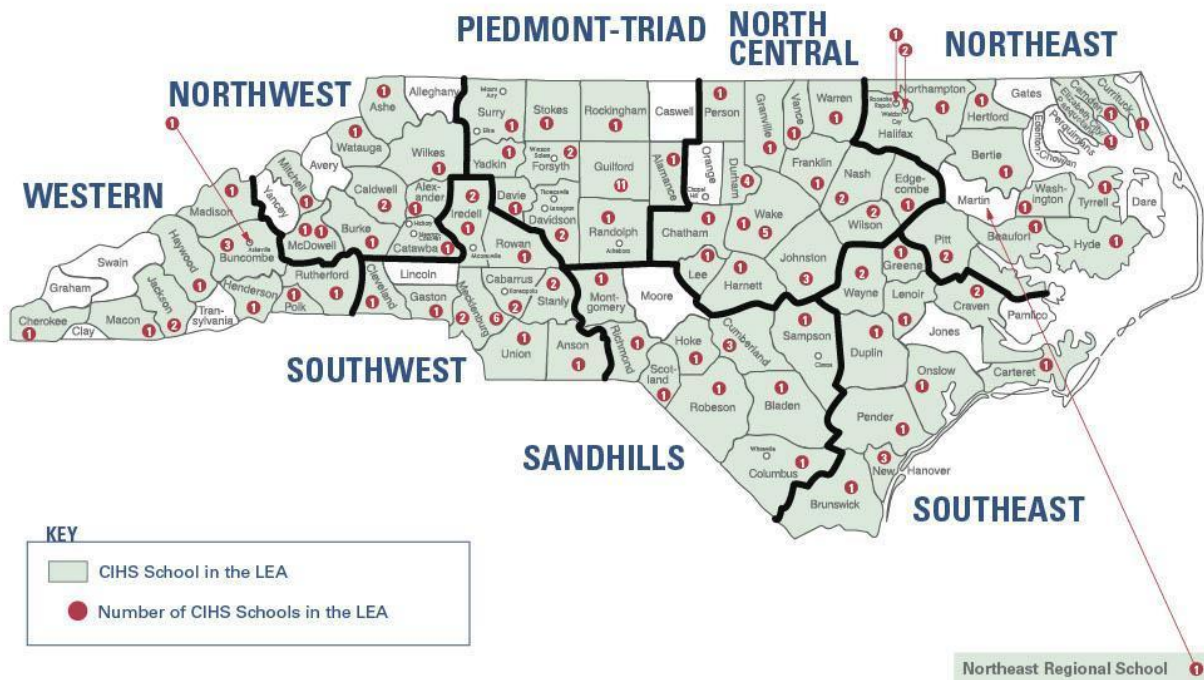


Table 3: List of Approved Cooperative Innovative High Schools by School District and Institution of Higher Education (IHE) partner, Fall 2020

| # | PSU Name | School Name | IHE Name |
|----|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Alamance-Burlington Schools | Alamance-Burlington Early College High School | Alamance Community College |
| 2 | Alexander County Schools | Alexander Early College High School | Catawba Valley Community College |
| 3 | Anson County Schools | Anson County Early College High School | South Piedmont Community College |
| 4 | Ashe County Schools | Ashe County Early College High School | Wilkes Community College |
| 5 | Asheville City Schools | School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville | A-B Technical Community College |
| 6 | Beaufort County Schools | Beaufort County Early College High School | Beaufort Community College |
| 7 | Bertie County Schools | Bertie County Early College High School | Martin Community College |
| 8 | Bladen County Schools | Bladen County Early College High School | Bladen Community College |
| 9 | Brunswick County Schools | Brunswick County Early College High School | Brunswick Community College |
| 10 | Buncombe County Schools | Buncombe County Early College High School | A-B Tech Community College |
| 11 | Buncombe County Schools | Buncombe County Middle College High School | A-B Tech Community College |
| 12 | Buncombe County Schools | Martin L. Nesbitt Jr. Discovery Academy | A-B Technical Community College |
| 13 | Burke County Schools | Burke Middle College High School | Western Piedmont Community College |
| 14 | Cabarrus County Schools | Cabarrus Early College of Technology | Rowan-Cabarrus Community College |
| 15 | Cabarrus County Schools | Cabarrus-Kannapolis Early College High School | Rowan-Cabarrus Community College |
| 16 | Caldwell County Schools | Caldwell Applied Sciences Academy | Caldwell Community College |
| 17 | Caldwell County Schools | Caldwell Early College High School | Caldwell Community College |
| 18 | Camden County Schools | Camden Early College High School | College of the Albemarle |
| 19 | Carteret County Public Schools | Marine Science and Technology Early College High School | Carteret Community College |
| 20 | Catawba County Schools | Challenger Early College High School | Catawba Valley Community College |
| 21 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Cato Middle College High School | Central Piedmont Community College |
| 22 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Charlotte Engineering Early College | UNC Charlotte |
| 23 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Charlotte Teacher Early College High School | UNC Charlotte |
| 24 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Harper Middle College High School | Central Piedmont Community College |
| 25 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Hawthorne Academy of Health Sciences | Central Piedmont Community College |

| | | | |
|----|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| 26 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Levine Middle College High School | Central Piedmont Community College |
| 27 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Merancas Middle College-CPCC | Central Piedmont Community College |
| 28 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Performance Learning Center | Central Piedmont Community College |
| 29 | Chatham County Schools | Chatham County School of Science and Engineering | Central Carolina Community College |
| 30 | Cherokee County Schools | Tri-County Early College High School | Tri-County Community College |
| 31 | Cleveland County Schools | Cleveland Early College High School | Cleveland Community College |
| 32 | Columbus County Schools | Columbus Career and College Academy | Southeastern Community College |
| 33 | Craven County Schools | Craven Early College High School | Craven Community College |
| 34 | Craven County Schools | Early College EAST High School | Craven Community College |
| 35 | Cumberland County Schools | Cross Creek Early College High School | Fayetteville State University |
| 36 | Cumberland County Schools | Cumberland International Early College High School | Fayetteville State University |
| 37 | Cumberland County Schools | Cumberland Polytechnic High School | Fayetteville Tech Community College |
| 38 | Currituck County Schools | J.P. Knapp Early College High School | College of the Albemarle |
| 39 | Davidson County Schools | Davidson Early College High School | Davidson Community College |
| 40 | Davidson County Schools | Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy | Davidson Community College |
| 41 | Davie County Schools | Davie County Early College High School | Davidson Community College |
| 42 | Duplin County Schools | Duplin Early College High School | James Sprunt Community College |
| 43 | Durham Public Schools | City of Medicine Academy | Durham Tech Community College |
| 44 | Durham Public Schools | Hillside New Tech High School | Durham Tech Community College |
| 45 | Durham Public Schools | Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School | North Carolina Central University |
| 46 | Durham Public Schools | Middle College High School at DTCC | Durham Tech Community College |
| 47 | Edgecombe County Public School | Edgecombe Early College High School | Edgecombe Community College |
| 48 | Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools | Elizabeth City Pasquotank Early College | College of the Albemarle |
| 49 | Forsyth County Schools | Early College of Forsyth County | Forsyth Tech Community College |
| 50 | Forsyth County Schools | Middle College of Forsyth County | Forsyth Tech Community College |
| 51 | Franklin County Schools | Franklin County Early College High School | Vance-Granville Community College |
| 52 | Gaston County Schools | Gaston Early College High School | Gaston College |
| 53 | Granville County Schools | Granville Early College High School | Vance-Granville Community College |
| 54 | Greene County Schools | Greene Early College High School | Lenoir Community College |

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 55 | Guilford County Schools | The Academy at Ben L. Smith High School | Guilford Tech Community College |
| 56 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at GTCC - High Point | Guilford Tech Community College |
| 57 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at Bennett | Bennett College |
| 58 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at GTCC - Greensboro | Guilford Tech Community College |
| 59 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at NC A&T | North Carolina A&T State University |
| 60 | Guilford County Schools | Greensboro College Middle College | Greensboro College |
| 61 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at GTCC - Jamestown | Guilford Tech Community College |
| 62 | Guilford County Schools | Middle College at UNCG | UNC Greensboro |
| 63 | Guilford County Schools | STEM Early College at NC A&T | North Carolina A&T State University |
| 64 | Guilford County Schools | The Early College at Guilford College | Guilford College |
| 65 | Guilford County Schools | The Kearns Academy at Central | Guilford Tech Community College |
| 66 | Halifax County Schools | Halifax County Early College High School | Halifax Community College |
| 67 | Harnett County Schools | Harnett County Early College High School | Central Carolina Community College |
| 68 | Haywood County Schools | Haywood Early College High School | Haywood Community College |
| 69 | Henderson County Schools | Henderson County Early College High School | Blue Ridge Community College |
| 70 | Hertford County Schools | Hertford County Early College High School | Roanoke-Chowan Community College |
| 71 | Hoke County Schools | SandHoke Early College High School | Sandhills Community College |
| 72 | Hyde County Schools | Mattamuskeet Early College High School | Beaufort Community College |
| 73 | Iredell-Statesville Schools | Agriculture and Science Early College High School | Mitchell Community College |
| 74 | Iredell-Statesville Schools | Collaborative College for Technology and Leadership | Mitchell Community College |
| 75 | Iredell-Statesville Schools | Crossroads Arts and Sciences Early College High School | Mitchell Community College |
| 76 | Jackson County Schools | Blue Ridge Early College High School | Southwestern Community College |
| 77 | Jackson County Schools | Jackson County Early College High School | Southwestern Community College |
| 78 | Johnston County Schools | Johnston County Early College Academy | Johnston Community College |
| 79 | Johnston County Schools | Johnston County Schools Career Technical Leadership Academy | Johnston Community College |
| 80 | Lee County Schools | Lee County Early College High School | Central Carolina Community College |
| 81 | Lenoir County Public Schools | Lenoir County Early College High School | Lenoir Community College |
| 82 | Macon County Schools | Macon County Early College High School | Southwestern Community College |

| | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 83 | Madison County Schools | Madison Early College High School | A-B Tech Community College |
| 84 | McDowell County Schools | McDowell Academy for Innovation | McDowell Community College |
| 85 | McDowell County Schools | McDowell Early College High School | McDowell Community College |
| 86 | Mitchell County Schools | Mayland Early College High School | Mayland Community College |
| 87 | Montgomery County Schools | Montgomery County Early College High School | Montgomery Community College |
| 88 | Nash County Public Schools | Center for Industry, Technology and Innovation High School | Nash Community College |
| 89 | Nash County Public Schools | Nash-Rocky Mount Early College High School | Nash Community College |
| 90 | New Hanover County Schools | Isaac M. Bear Early College High School | UNC Wilmington |
| 91 | New Hanover County Schools | Southeast Area Technical High School | Cape Fear Community College |
| 92 | New Hanover County Schools | Wilmington Early College High School | Cape Fear Community College |
| 93 | Northampton County Schools | Northampton County Early College High School | Halifax Community College |
| 94 | Onslow County Schools | Onslow Early College High School | Coastal Carolina Community College |
| 95 | Pender County Schools | Pender Early College High School | Cape Fear Community College |
| 96 | Person County Schools | Person Early College for Innovation and Leadership | Piedmont Community College |
| 97 | Pitt County Schools | Innovation Early College High School | East Carolina University |
| 98 | Pitt County Schools | Pitt County Early College High School | Pitt Community College |
| 99 | Polk County Schools | Polk County Early College High School | Isothermal Community College |
| 100 | Randolph County Schools | Randolph Early College High School | Randolph Community College |
| 101 | Regional School | Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience (NERSBA) | Martin Community College |
| 102 | Richmond County Schools | Richmond County Early College High School | Richmond Community College |
| 103 | Roanoke Rapids City Schools | Roanoke Rapids Early College High School | Halifax Community College |
| 104 | Public Schools of Robeson County | Public Schools of Robeson County Early College High School | Robeson Community College |
| 105 | Rockingham County Schools | Rockingham County Early College High School | Rockingham Community College |
| 106 | Rowan-Salisbury Schools | Rowan County Early College High School | Rowan-Cabarrus Community College |
| 107 | Rutherford County Schools | Rutherford Early College High School | Isothermal Community College |
| 108 | Sampson County Schools | Sampson Early College High School | Sampson Community College |
| 109 | Scotland County Schools | Scotland Early College High School | Richmond Community College |
| 110 | Stanly County Schools | Stanly Early College High School | Stanly Community College |
| 111 | Stanly County Schools | Stanly STEM Early College High School | Stanly Community College |

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|--|---|
| 112 | Stokes County Schools | Stokes County Early College High School | Forsyth Tech Community College |
| 113 | Surry County Schools | Surry Early College High School of Design | Surry Community College |
| 114 | Tyrrell County Schools | Columbia Early College High School | Beaufort Community College |
| 115 | Union County Public Schools | Union County Early College High School | South Piedmont Community College |
| 116 | Vance County Schools | Vance County Early College High School | Vance-Granville Community College |
| 117 | Wake County Schools | North Wake College and Career Academy | Wake Tech Community College |
| 118 | Wake County Schools | Vernon Malone College and Career Academy | Wake Tech Community College |
| 119 | Wake County Schools | Wake Early College of Health and Science | Wake Tech Community College |
| 120 | Wake County Schools | Wake STEM Early College High School | North Carolina State University |
| 121 | Wake County Schools | Wake Young Men's Leadership Academy | Saint Augustine's University |
| 122 | Wake County Schools | Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy | Saint Augustine's University |
| 123 | Warren County Schools | Warren Early College High School | Vance-Granville Community College |
| 124 | Washington County Schools | Washington County Early College High School | Beaufort Community College |
| 125 | Watauga County Schools | Watauga Innovation Academy | Caldwell Community College and Tech Institute |
| 126 | Wayne County Public Schools | Wayne Early/Middle College High School | Wayne Community College |
| 127 | Wayne County Public Schools | Wayne School of Engineering at Goldsboro High School | Wayne Community College |
| 128 | Weldon City Schools | Roanoke Valley Early College High School | Halifax Community College |
| 129 | Wilkes County Schools | Wilkes Early College High School | Wilkes Community College |
| 130 | Wilson County Schools | Wilson Academy of Applied Technology | Wilson Community College |
| 131 | Wilson County Schools | Wilson Early College Academy | Wilson Community college |
| 132 | Yadkin County Schools | Yadkin Early College High School | Surry Community College |

CIHS programs are supported by a partnership between NCDPI, NCCCS, the UNCS, and the NCICU. The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), per legislation, comprises staff from each agency, who meet regularly and collaborate to support CIHS throughout the year and to provide oversight and guidance to the program, including technical support, resource development, policy implementation and data collection and

analysis. The JAC also provides application development support, leads the application review of new CIHS applicants, and provides recommendations to agency governing boards.

Partner agencies also lend specialized support for CIHS programs based on the needs of the schools. As the lead agency, NCDPI works closely with the CIHS to support implementation. NCDPI hosts regular regional meetings in each State Board of Education region with school leadership (these face-to-face regional meetings have shifted to virtual meetings during the COVID pandemic), networking webinars for principals, counselors and college liaisons, and site visits with technical assistance to each new CIHS (site visits have been suspended during the pandemic). NCDPI and the JAC also develop various resources to support development and implementation of the CIHS, shared via the [NCDPI CIHS website](#).

Together, these schools are transforming teaching and learning for their students, while also helping to prompt the growth of innovative practices in many other districts and schools. A growing number of districts are now embracing similar innovations for all their schools, as more CIHS demonstrate sustained success.

The state's most recent data from NCDPI, the NCCCS, UNCS, and NCICU continue to show gains in areas of high school retention rates, high school completion rates, certification and associate degree completion, admission to four-year institutions, and a reduction in drop-out rates.

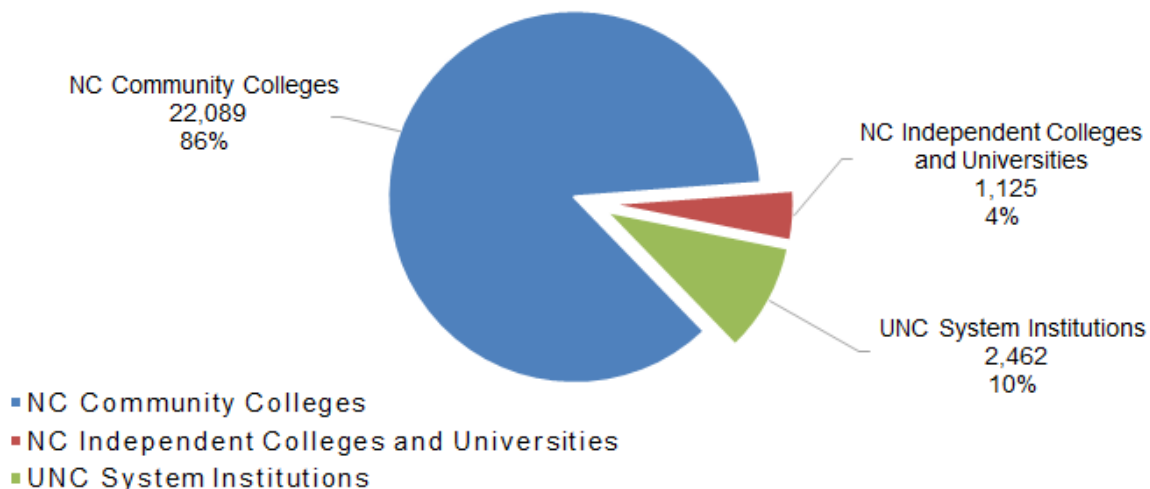
Highlights of the Cooperative Innovative High Schools in 2019-2020 include:

- Enrollment in CIHS in 2019-2020 was **29,084** students, an increase of 1,179 students from the previous school year. In total, **6,016** students graduated from Cooperative Innovative High Schools in 2019-2020, an increase in 467 students from the previous year.
- High school retention and completion rates for CIHS was **above** the state average, with the average CIHS rate above 95%.
- The average high school drop-out rate of CIHS programs was **below** the state average.
- CIHS students at community colleges received better grades, on average, than the general population of students with **85 percent** averaging a passing grade of a C or better. This is 12 percent higher than the general population.
- **1,397** CIHS students earned at least one CTE credential in 2019-2020, based on NCDPI data. CIHS students also earned a total of **625** diploma and certificate credentials, based on NCCCS data. This represents a total of **2,022** individual credentials earned from both agencies, a decrease of 275 credentials from the previous school year.
- **2,706** CIHS students graduated with an associate degree. This is a decrease of 44 students from the previous school year.
- **7,409** applications from CIHS students were accepted by UNC System four-year institutions, based on UNC System Data. This is an increase of 1,228 students from the previous school year. **2,328** applications from CIHS students were accepted by North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, based on NCICU data. This is an increase of 656 students from the previous school year.

Continued on next page

Figure 5: 2019-2020 Cooperative Innovative High School student enrollment with by Institution of Higher Education (IHE)

2019-2020 CIHS Student Enrollment at IHEs



Following the complete data captured below in response to legislative requirements, this report includes success stories from across North Carolina’s network of CIHS. These stories of student and of school transformations richly illustrate the powerful impact CIHS programs are having in our communities. These stories also show abundantly how CIHS are improving outcomes of the CIHS target populations: first-generation college goers, students at risk of dropping out, and students who benefit from accelerated academic instruction. Several CIHS programs are expanding pathways for students to include more career-ready opportunities, often leading to living wage careers in their local communities upon graduation. This continued success is a result of hard work by NC’s teachers, principals, counselors, college liaisons, and districts.

With investment of state funds, support from the local and state-level policy makers, sustained efforts of professional development and technical assistance from NCDPI, NCCCS, the UNC System, and NCICU, the State Board of Education and NCDPI expect continued progress to increase access and successful participation in Cooperative Innovative High Schools across North Carolina to further meet the intent of the legislation.

Table 4: Retention rate and cohort graduation rate of Cooperative and Innovative High Schools for the 2019-2020 school year; number of dropouts from the 2018-2019 school year

| # | PSU Name | School Name | Retention Rate* | Number of Dropouts** | Cohort Graduation Rate*** |
|----|--------------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Alamance-Burlington Schools | Alamance-Burlington Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 2 | Alexander County Schools | Alexander Early College High School | 93% | <10 | 91% |
| 3 | Anson County Schools | Anson County Early College High School | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 4 | Ashe County Schools | Ashe County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 5 | Asheville City Schools | School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville | 91% | <10 | >95% |
| 6 | Beaufort County Schools | Beaufort County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 7 | Bertie County Schools | Bertie County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 8 | Bladen County Schools | Bladen County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 9 | Brunswick County Schools | Brunswick County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 10 | Buncombe County Schools | Buncombe County Early College High School | 94% | <10 | 94% |
| 11 | Buncombe County Schools | Buncombe County Middle College High School | 93% | <10 | 88% |
| 12 | Buncombe County Schools | Martin L. Nesbitt Jr. Discovery Academy | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 13 | Burke County Schools | Burke Middle College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 14 | Cabarrus County Schools | Cabarrus-Kannapolis Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 15 | Cabarrus County Schools | Cabarrus Early College of Technology | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 16 | Caldwell County Schools | Caldwell Applied Sciences Academy | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 17 | Caldwell County Schools | Caldwell Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 18 | Camden County Schools | Camden Early College High School | 94% | <10 | 86% |
| 19 | Carteret County Public Schools | Marine Science and Technology Early College High School | 83% | N/A | N/A |
| 20 | Catawba County Schools | Challenger Early College High School | 94% | N/A | >95% |
| 21 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Cato Middle College High School | 95% | N/A | >95% |
| 22 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Hawthorne Academy of Health Sciences | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 23 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Harper Middle College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 24 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Levine Middle College High School | 94% | N/A | >95% |
| 25 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Performance Learning Center | 79% | <10 | 84% |
| 26 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Charlotte Engineering Early College High School | 92% | <10 | >95% |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|---|------|-----|------|
| 27 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Charlotte Teacher Early College High School | 92% | N/A | N/A |
| 28 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Merancas Middle College High School at CPCC | 94% | N/A | >95% |
| 29 | Chatham County Schools | Chatham County School of Science and Engineering | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 30 | Cherokee County Schools | Tri-County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | 90% |
| 31 | Cleveland County Schools | Cleveland Early College High School | 95% | N/A | >95% |
| 32 | Columbus County Schools | Columbus Career and College Academy | 95% | <10 | 85% |
| 33 | Craven County Schools | Craven Early College High School | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 34 | Craven County Schools | Early College EAST High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 35 | Cumberland County Schools | Cumberland International Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 36 | Cumberland County Schools | Cross Creek Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 37 | Cumberland County Schools | Cumberland Polytechnic High School | 94% | N/A | >95% |
| 38 | Currituck County Schools | J.P. Knapp Early College High School | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 39 | Davidson County Schools | Davidson Early College High School | >95% | N/A | 92% |
| 40 | Davidson County Schools | Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy | 92% | <10 | >95% |
| 41 | Davie County Schools | Davie County Early College High School | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 42 | Duplin County Schools | Duplin Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 43 | Durham Public Schools | Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 44 | Durham Public Schools | City of Medicine Academy | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 45 | Durham Public Schools | Middle College High School at DTCC | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 46 | Durham Public Schools | Hillside New Tech High School | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 47 | Edgecombe County Public School | Edgecombe Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 48 | Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools | Elizabeth City Pasquotank Early College High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 49 | Forsyth County Schools | Early College of Forsyth County | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 50 | Forsyth County Schools | Middle College of Forsyth County | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 51 | Franklin County Schools | Franklin County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 52 | Gaston County Schools | Gaston Early College High School | 95% | N/A | >95% |
| 53 | Granville County Schools | Granville Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 54 | Greene County Schools | Greene Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 55 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at Bennett | 89% | N/A | >95% |
| 56 | Guilford County Schools | Greensboro College Middle College | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 57 | Guilford County Schools | Early College at Guilford College | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 58 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at GTCC - Greensboro | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 59 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at GTCC - Jamestown | >95% | N/A | >95% |

| | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|------|-----|------|
| 60 | Guilford County Schools | The Kearns Academy at Central | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 61 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at GTCC - High Point | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 62 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at NC A&T | 94% | N/A | >95% |
| 63 | Guilford County Schools | STEM Early College at NC A&T | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 64 | Guilford County Schools | Middle College at UNCG | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 65 | Guilford County Schools | The Academy at Ben L. Smith High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 66 | Harnett County Schools | Harnett County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 67 | Haywood County Schools | Haywood Early College High School | 93% | <10 | 89% |
| 68 | Henderson County Schools | Henderson County Early College High School | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 69 | Hertford County Schools | Hertford County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 70 | Hoke County Schools | SandHoke Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 71 | Hyde County Schools | Mattamuskeet Early College High School | >95% | <10 | 91% |
| 72 | Iredell-Statesville Schools | Collaborative College for Technology and Leadership | 95% | N/A | >95% |
| 73 | Iredell-Statesville Schools | Crossroads Arts and Sciences Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 74 | Iredell-Statesville Schools | Agriculture and Science Early College High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 75 | Jackson County Schools | Blue Ridge Early College High School | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 76 | Jackson County Schools | Jackson County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 77 | Johnston County Schools | Johnston County Schools Career Technical Leadership Academy | 93% | N/A | N/A |
| 78 | Johnston County Schools | Johnston County Early College Academy | 94% | N/A | >95% |
| 79 | Lee County Schools | Lee County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 80 | Lenoir County Public Schools | Lenoir County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 81 | Macon County Schools | Macon County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 82 | Madison County Schools | Madison Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 83 | McDowell County Schools | McDowell Early College High School | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 84 | McDowell County Schools | McDowell Academy for Innovation | 92% | N/A | N/A |
| 85 | Mitchell County Schools | Mayland Early College High School | 92% | <10 | 92% |
| 86 | Montgomery County Schools | Montgomery County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 87 | Nash County Public Schools | Center for Industry, Technology and Innovation High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 88 | Nash County Public Schools | Nash-Rocky Mount Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 89 | New Hanover County Schools | Isaac M. Bear Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 90 | New Hanover County Schools | Wilmington Early College High School | 93% | N/A | >95% |
| 91 | New Hanover County Schools | Southeast Area Technical High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |

| | | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|------|-----|------|
| 92 | Northampton County Schools | Northampton County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 93 | Onslow County Schools | Onslow Early College High School | 94% | N/A | N/A |
| 94 | Pender County Schools | Pender Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 95 | Person County Schools | Person Early College for Innovation and Leadership | 93% | N/A | N/A |
| 96 | Pitt County Schools | Pitt County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 97 | Pitt County Schools | Innovation Early College High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 98 | Polk County Schools | Polk County Early College High School | 50% | <10 | 93% |
| 99 | Randolph County Schools | Randolph Early College High School | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 100 | Regional School | Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience (NERSBA) | 93% | N/A | 93% |
| 101 | Richmond County Schools | Richmond County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 102 | Roanoke Rapids City Schools | Roanoke Rapids Early College High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 103 | Public Schools of Robeson County | Public Schools of Robeson County Early College High School | 94% | N/A | 95% |
| 104 | Rockingham County Schools | Rockingham County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 105 | Rowan-Salisbury Schools | Rowan County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 106 | Rutherford County Schools | Rutherford Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 107 | Sampson County Schools | Sampson Early College High School | >95% | N/A | 95% |
| 108 | Scotland County Schools | Scotland Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 109 | Stanly County Schools | Stanly Early College High School | 94% | N/A | >95% |
| 110 | Stokes County Schools | Stokes County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 111 | Surry County Schools | Surry Early College High School of Design | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 112 | Tyrrell County Schools | Columbia Early College High School | >95% | <10 | 92% |
| 113 | Union County Public Schools | Union County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 114 | Vance County Schools | Vance County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | 95% |
| 115 | Wake County Schools | North Wake College and Career Academy | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 116 | Wake County Schools | Vernon Malone College and Career Academy | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 117 | Wake County Schools | Wake STEM Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 118 | Wake County Schools | Wake Early College of Health and Science | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 119 | Wake County Schools | Wake Young Men's Leadership Academy | 94% | <10 | >95% |
| 120 | Wake County Schools | Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 121 | Warren County Schools | Warren Early College High School | >95% | <10 | 87% |
| 122 | Washington County Schools | Washington County Early College High School | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 123 | Watauga County Schools | Watauga Innovation Academy | >95% | <10 | 94% |

| | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|--|------|-----|------|
| 124 | Wayne County Public Schools | Wayne Early/Middle College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 125 | Wayne County Public Schools | Wayne School of Engineering at Goldsboro High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 126 | Weldon City Schools | Roanoke Valley Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 127 | Wilkes County Schools | Wilkes Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |
| 128 | Wilson County Schools | Wilson Early College Academy | >95% | <10 | >95% |
| 129 | Wilson County Schools | Wilson Academy of Applied Technology | >95% | N/A | N/A |
| 130 | Yadkin County Schools | Yadkin Early College High School | >95% | N/A | >95% |

*Self-reported data collected from 2019 CIHS Annual Reports. Retention rate indicates number of students who remained in the program.

**One year lag data from the 2018-2019 school year. Cohort size too small to calculate data through the system.

***Cohort size too small to calculate data through the system.

Continued on next page

Table 5: Average Daily Membership (ADM) of Cooperative Innovative High Schools for the 2019-2020 school year

| # | PSU Name | School Name | Total |
|----|--------------------------------|---|-------|
| 1 | Alamance-Burlington Schools | Alamance-Burlington Early College High School | 231 |
| 2 | Alexander County Schools | Alexander Early College High School | 231 |
| 3 | Anson County Schools | Anson County Early College High School | 254 |
| 4 | Ashe County Schools | Ashe County Early College High School | 101 |
| 5 | Asheville City Schools | School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville | 328 |
| 6 | Beaufort County Schools | Beaufort County Early College High School | 265 |
| 7 | Bertie County Schools | Bertie County Early College High School | 182 |
| 8 | Bladen County Schools | Bladen County Early College High School | 93 |
| 9 | Brunswick County Schools | Brunswick County Early College High School | 377 |
| 10 | Buncombe County Schools | Buncombe County Early College High School | 264 |
| 11 | Buncombe County Schools | Buncombe County Middle College High School | 55 |
| 12 | Buncombe County Schools | Martin L. Nesbitt Jr. Discovery Academy | 380 |
| 13 | Burke County Schools | Burke Middle College High School | 146 |
| 14 | Cabarrus County Schools | Cabarrus Early College of Technology | 236 |
| 15 | Cabarrus County Schools | Cabarrus-Kannapolis Early College High School | 233 |
| 16 | Caldwell County Schools | Caldwell Applied Sciences Academy | 217 |
| 17 | Caldwell County Schools | Caldwell Early College High School | 398 |
| 18 | Camden County Schools | Camden Early College High School | 178 |
| 19 | Carteret County Public Schools | Marine Science and Technology Early College High School | 99 |
| 20 | Catawba County Schools | Challenger Early College High School | 395 |
| 21 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Cato Middle College High School | 224 |
| 22 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Hawthorne Academy of Health Sciences | 280 |
| 23 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Harper Middle College High School | 197 |
| 24 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Levine Middle College High School | 232 |
| 25 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Performance Learning Center | 125 |
| 26 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Charlotte Engineering Early College High School | 311 |
| 27 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Charlotte Teacher Early College High School | 148 |
| 28 | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools | Merancas Middle College High School at CPCC | 180 |
| 29 | Chatham County Schools | Chatham County School of Science and Engineering | 88 |
| 30 | Cherokee County Schools | Tri-County Early College High School | 148 |
| 31 | Cleveland County Schools | Cleveland Early College High School | 217 |
| 32 | Columbus County Schools | Columbus Career and College Academy | 303 |
| 33 | Craven County Schools | Craven Early College High School | 218 |
| 34 | Craven County Schools | Early College EAST High School | 201 |

| | | | |
|----|--|---|-----|
| 35 | Cumberland County Schools | Cumberland International Early College High School | 272 |
| 36 | Cumberland County Schools | Cross Creek Early College High School | 281 |
| 37 | Cumberland County Schools | Cumberland Polytechnic High School | 283 |
| 38 | Currituck County Schools | J.P. Knapp Early College High School | 265 |
| 39 | Davidson County Schools | Davidson Early College High School | 123 |
| 40 | Davidson County Schools | Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy | 187 |
| 41 | Davie County Schools | Davie County Early College High School | 169 |
| 42 | Duplin County Schools | Duplin Early College High School | 208 |
| 43 | Durham Public Schools | Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School | 397 |
| 44 | Durham Public Schools | City of Medicine Academy | 341 |
| 45 | Durham Public Schools | Middle College High School at DTCC | 186 |
| 46 | Durham Public Schools | Hillside New Tech High School | 327 |
| 47 | Edgecombe County Public School | Edgecombe Early College High School | 198 |
| 48 | Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools | Elizabeth City Pasquotank Early College High School | 115 |
| 49 | Forsyth County Schools | Early College of Forsyth County | 262 |
| 50 | Forsyth County Schools | Middle College of Forsyth County | 77 |
| 51 | Franklin County Schools | Franklin County Early College High School | 192 |
| 52 | Gaston County Schools | Gaston Early College High School | 244 |
| 53 | Granville County Schools | Granville Early College High School | 229 |
| 54 | Greene County Schools | Greene Early College High School | 152 |
| 55 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at Bennett | 132 |
| 56 | Guilford County Schools | Greensboro College Middle College | 134 |
| 57 | Guilford County Schools | Early College at Guilford College | 209 |
| 58 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at GTCC - Greensboro | 155 |
| 59 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at GTCC - Jamestown | 251 |
| 60 | Guilford County Schools | The Kearns Academy at Central | 130 |
| 61 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at GTCC - High Point | 167 |
| 62 | Guilford County Schools | Early/Middle College at NC A&T | 145 |
| 63 | Guilford County Schools | The Academy at Ben L. Smith High School | 196 |
| 64 | Guilford County Schools | STEM Early College at NC A&T | 187 |
| 65 | Guilford County Schools | Middle College at UNCG | 208 |
| 66 | Harnett County Schools | Harnett County Early College High School | 119 |
| 67 | Haywood County Schools | Haywood Early College High School | 182 |
| 68 | Henderson County Schools | Henderson County Early College High School | 207 |
| 69 | Hertford County Schools | Hertford County Early College High School | 190 |
| 70 | Hoke County Schools | SandHoke Early College High School | 428 |
| 71 | Hyde County Schools | Mattamuskeet Early College High School | 191 |
| 72 | Iredell-Statesville Schools | Agriculture and Science Early College High School | 202 |

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|-----|----------------------------------|---|-----|
| 73 | Iredell-Statesville Schools | Collaborative College for Technology and Leadership | 229 |
| 74 | Iredell-Statesville Schools | Crossroads Arts and Sciences Early College High School | 270 |
| 75 | Jackson County Schools | Blue Ridge Early College High School | 160 |
| 76 | Jackson County Schools | Jackson County Early College High School | 120 |
| 77 | Johnston County Schools | Johnston County Schools Career Technical Leadership Academy | 200 |
| 78 | Johnston County Schools | Johnston County Early College Academy | 231 |
| 79 | Lee County Schools | Lee County Early College High School | 298 |
| 80 | Lenoir County Public Schools | Lenoir County Early College High School | 187 |
| 81 | Macon County Schools | Macon County Early College High School | 141 |
| 82 | Madison County Schools | Madison Early College High School | 261 |
| 83 | McDowell County Schools | McDowell Academy for Innovation | 103 |
| 84 | McDowell County Schools | McDowell Early College High School | 265 |
| 85 | Mitchell County Schools | Mayland Early College High School | 148 |
| 86 | Montgomery County Schools | Montgomery County Early College High School | 241 |
| 87 | Nash County Public Schools | Center for Industry, Technology and Innovation High School | 77 |
| 88 | Nash County Public Schools | Nash-Rocky Mount Early College High School | 356 |
| 89 | New Hanover County Schools | Isaac M. Bear Early College High School | 237 |
| 90 | New Hanover County Schools | Wilmington Early College High School | 263 |
| 91 | New Hanover County Schools | Southeast Area Technical High School | 140 |
| 92 | Northampton County Schools | Northampton County Early College High School | 150 |
| 93 | Onslow County Schools | Onslow Early College High School | 159 |
| 94 | Pender County Schools | Pender Early College High School | 245 |
| 95 | Person County Schools | Person Early College for Innovation and Leadership | 172 |
| 96 | Pitt County Schools | Pitt County Early College High School | 311 |
| 97 | Pitt County Schools | Innovation Early College High School | 106 |
| 98 | Polk County Schools | Polk County Early College High School | 71 |
| 99 | Randolph County Schools | Randolph Early College High School | 369 |
| 100 | Regional School | Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience (NERSBA) | 192 |
| 101 | Richmond County Schools | Richmond County Early College High School | 282 |
| 102 | Roanoke Rapids City Schools | Roanoke Rapids Early College High School | 104 |
| 103 | Public Schools of Robeson County | Public Schools of Robeson County Early College High School | 237 |
| 104 | Rockingham County Schools | Rockingham County Early College High School | 342 |
| 105 | Rowan-Salisbury Schools | Rowan County Early College High School | 242 |
| 106 | Rutherford County Schools | Rutherford Early College High School | 208 |
| 107 | Sampson County Schools | Sampson Early College High School | 256 |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------|
| 108 | Scotland County Schools | Scotland Early College High School | 210 |
| 109 | Stanly County Schools | Stanly Early College High School | 199 |
| 110 | Stokes County Schools | Stokes County Early College High School | 183 |
| 111 | Surry County Schools | Surry Early College High School of Design | 324 |
| 112 | Tyrrell County Schools | Columbia Early College High School | 190 |
| 113 | Union County Public Schools | Union County Early College High School | 376 |
| 114 | Vance County Schools | Vance County Early College High School | 219 |
| 115 | Wake County Schools | North Wake College and Career Academy | 313 |
| 116 | Wake County Schools | Vernon Malone College and Career Academy | 395 |
| 117 | Wake County Schools | Wake STEM Early College High School | 253 |
| 118 | Wake County Schools | Wake Early College of Health and Science | 339 |
| 119 | Wake County Schools | Wake Young Men's Leadership Academy | 265 |
| 120 | Wake County Schools | Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy | 334 |
| 121 | Warren County Schools | Warren Early College High School | 105 |
| 122 | Washington County Schools | Washington County Early College High School | 66 |
| 123 | Watauga County Schools | Watauga Innovation Academy | 285 |
| 124 | Wayne County Public Schools | Wayne Early/Middle College High School | 236 |
| 125 | Wayne County Public Schools | Wayne School of Engineering at Goldsboro High School | 456 |
| 126 | Weldon City Schools | Roanoke Valley Early College High School | 128 |
| 127 | Wilkes County Schools | Wilkes Early College High School | 244 |
| 128 | Wilson County Schools | Wilson Academy of Applied Technology | 162 |
| 129 | Wilson County Schools | Wilson Early College Academy | 264 |
| 130 | Yadkin County Schools | Yadkin Early College High School | 220 |
| Total ADM of Cooperative Innovative High Schools | | | 28,615 |
| Average CIHS Membership | | | 220 |
| Median CIHS Membership | | | 217 |

Continued on next page

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (NCCCS) Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS) Programs

Course Enrollment and Degree Completion

During the 2019-2020 academic year, Cooperative Innovative High School Students enrolled in **112,635 credit-level college courses, an average of 5.2 per term**. In Fall 2019, Cooperative Innovative High School students completed **85% of their credit-level courses with a C or better**, compared to 73% of the general student population. **The average Fall 2019 GPA for Cooperative Innovative High School students was 3.02.**

Figure 7: Fall 2019 Cooperative Innovative High School credit-level course success rates and grade average by pathway

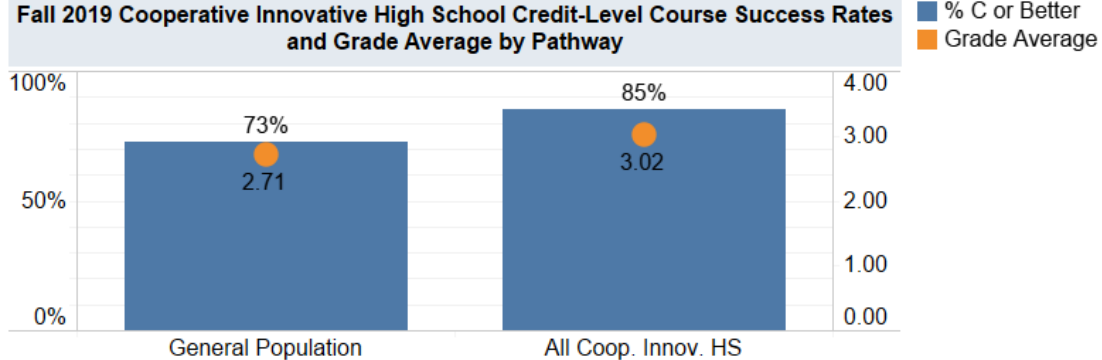
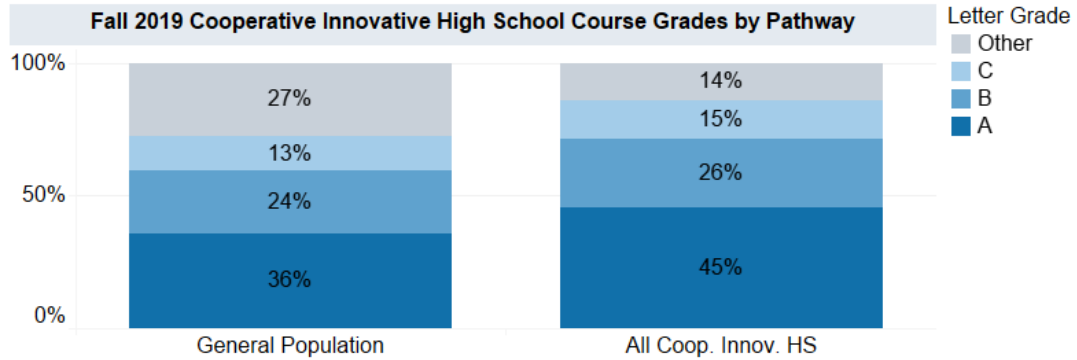
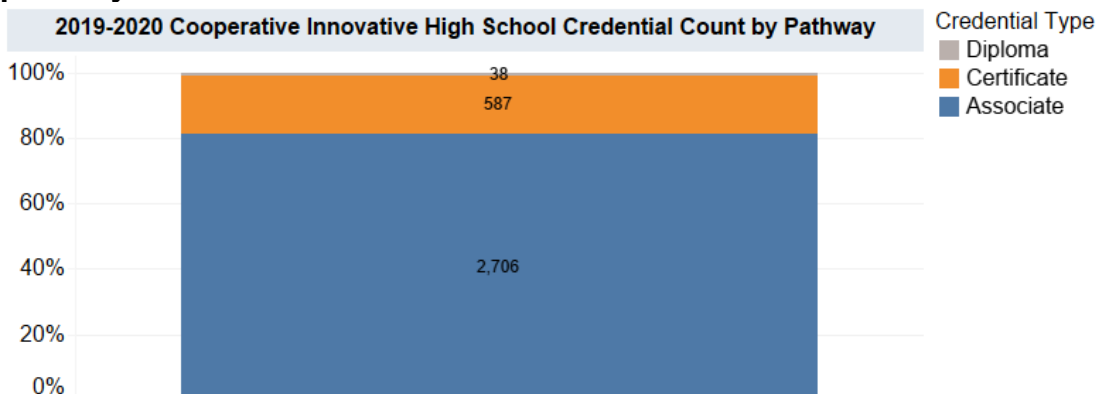


Figure 8: Fall 2019 Cooperative Innovative High School course grades by pathway



During the 2019-2020 academic year, Cooperative Innovative High School students earned a total of 3,331 credentials.

Figure 9: 2019-2020 Cooperative Innovative High School credential count by pathway



Post-Graduation Employment

The North Carolina Community College System, with the Department of Commerce, reviewed employment status and wage outcomes of Career and College Promise students who graduated high school in 2017. These students were not enrolled in any postsecondary institution in 2018-2019 and had a full-time or part-time employment record in Quarter 1 of 2019. This sample is limited to those students whose social security numbers matched with Department of Commerce records. Students with missing social security numbers or whose employment is not tracked by the NC Department of Commerce (e.g., self-employed, federal employees, or those employed out of state) were not included. **Wage records for 1,287 CIHS 2017 graduates were found for the 1st quarter of 2019. The median Quarter 1 wage for this sample was \$4,166.**

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (NCCCS) Career and Technical Education (CTE) and College Transfer Pathways

Course Enrollment and Degree Completion

During the 2019-2020 academic year, CCP Pathways students **enrolled in 162,313 credit-level college courses**. Of those, 127,678 (79%) were taken by College Transfer students. On average, College Transfer students took 3.4 courses per term and CTE students took 2.9 courses per term.

Figure 10: 2019-2020 CTE and college transfer pathways credit-level enrollment by pathway

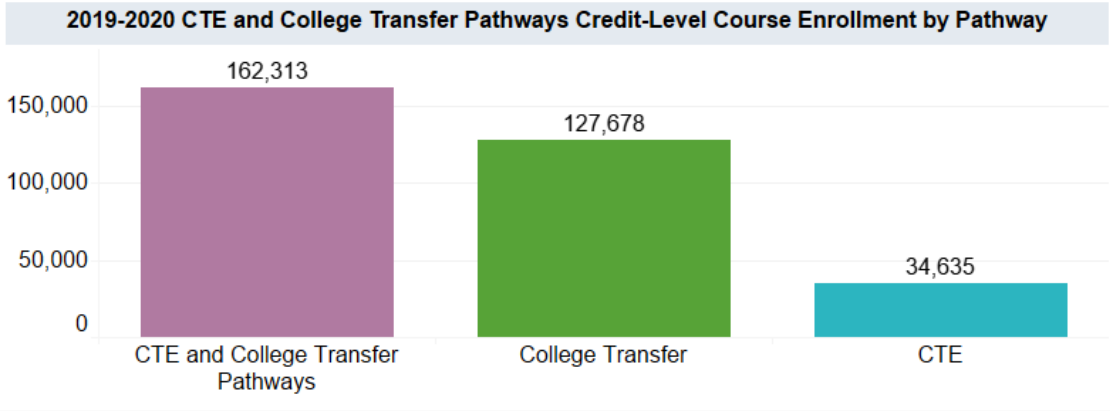
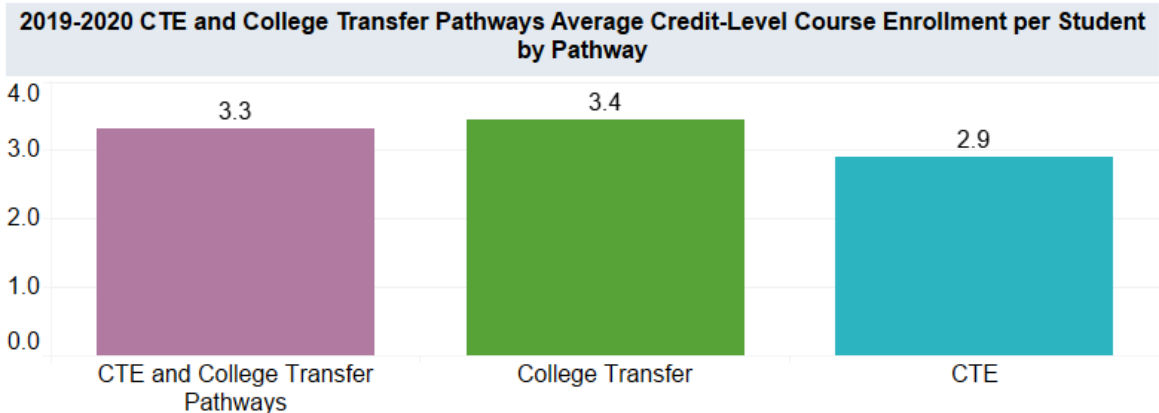


Figure 11: 2019-2020 CTE and college transfer pathways average credit-level course enrollment per student by pathway



In Fall 2019, **CCP Pathways students completed 85% of their credit-level courses with a C or better**, compared to 73% of the general student population. **The average Fall 2019 GPA for CCP Pathways students was 3.12.**

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Figure 12: Fall 2019 CTE and college transfer pathways credit-level course success rates and grade average by pathway

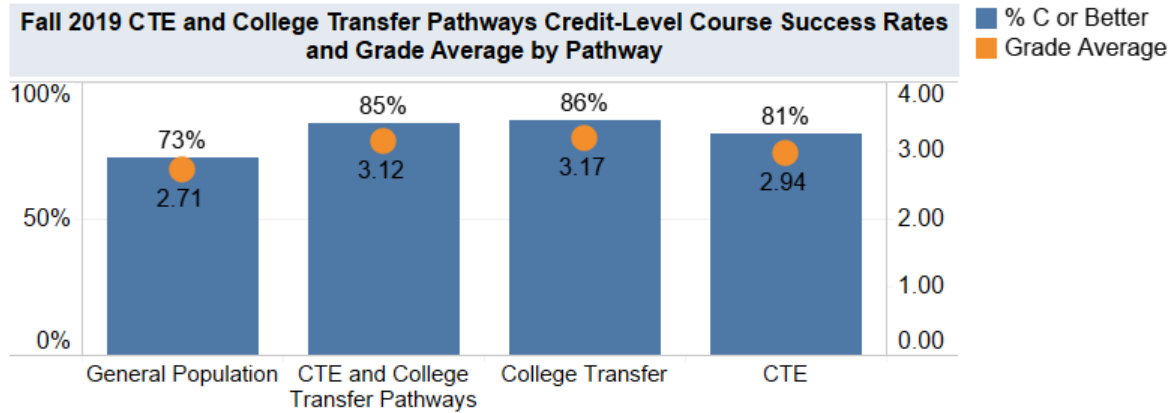
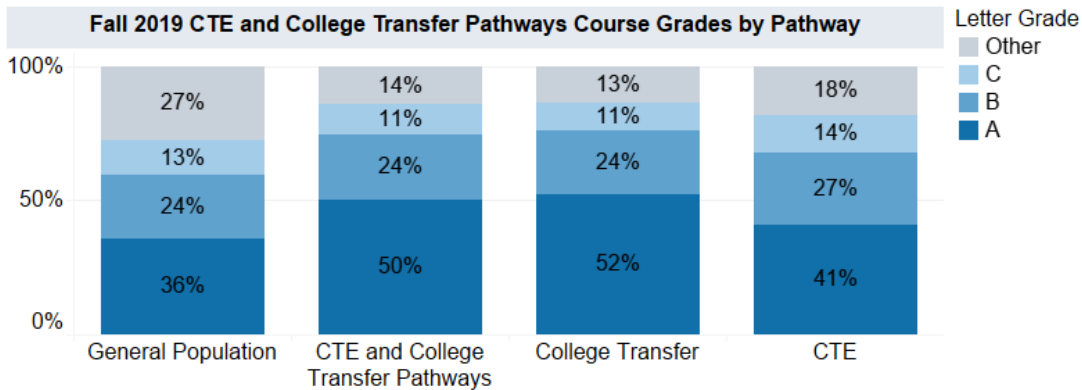
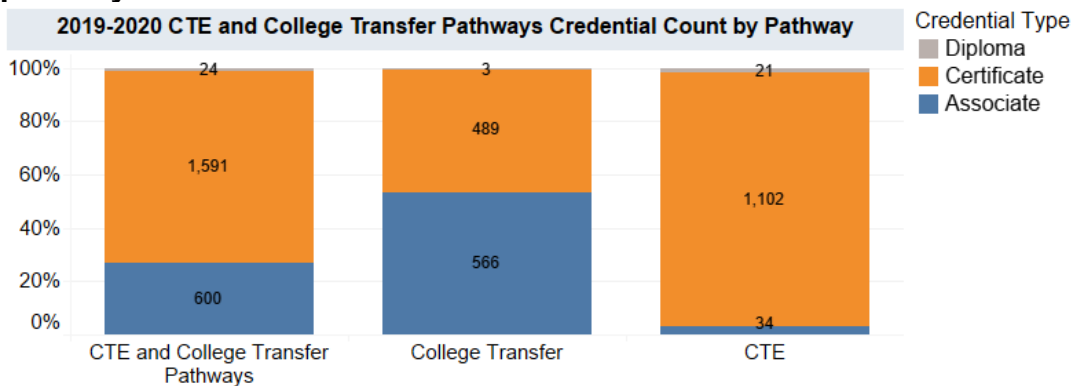


Figure 13: Fall 2019 CTE and college transfer pathways course grades by pathway



During the 2019-2020 academic year, CCP Pathways students earned a total of 2,215 credentials.

Figure 14: 2019-2020 CTE and college transfer pathways credential count by pathway



Post-Graduation Employment

The North Carolina Community College System, with the Department of Commerce, reviewed employment status and wage outcomes of Career and College Promise students who graduated high school in 2017. These students were not enrolled in any postsecondary institution in 2018-2019 and had a full-time or part-time employment record in Quarter 1 of 2019. This sample is limited to those students whose social security numbers matched with Department of Commerce records. Students with missing social security numbers or whose employment is not tracked by the NC Department of Commerce (e.g., self-employed, federal employees, or those employed out of state) were not included. Wage records for 999 Transfer and 3,112 CTE pathway 2017 high school graduates were found for 1st quarter of 2019. **The Quarter 1 median wage for transfer students was \$3,938 and the median wage for CTE students was \$4,333.**

Workforce Continuing Education Pathway

Legislative action in November 2017 provided tuition waivers for high school students to participate in Workforce CE courses through the CCP program. During the 2019-2020 academic year, **218 students were enrolled in the Workforce CE pathway, up from 98 in 2018-2019.** The System office approved applications from 17 colleges in 2019-2020, and **125 Workforce CE pathways were offered in 59 high schools across the state.**

COVID-19 Impacts on Student Success

To assess the impacts of COVID-19 on student success, we compared course success rates, GPAs, and course grades for Spring 2020 courses to Spring 2019 courses. Overall, there were relatively small declines in course success rates for Cooperative Innovative High School (85% to 83%) and College Transfer (88% to 84%) students, and a larger decline in success for CTE students (79% to 66%). However, GPAs increased from 2019 to 2020, indicating that this decline in success is mostly due to an increase in withdrawals. As many CTE courses could not be conducted fully online due to required experiential components, a larger withdrawal rate would be expected for those courses. As can be seen in the graphs below, the withdrawal rate increased for all students, but increased

most for those in the CTE pathway. Students withdrew from 7% of CTE courses in Spring 2019, which increased to 18% of CTE courses in Spring 2020.

Figure 15: Spring 2019 and Spring 2020 Cooperative Innovative High School credit-level course success rates and grade average by pathway

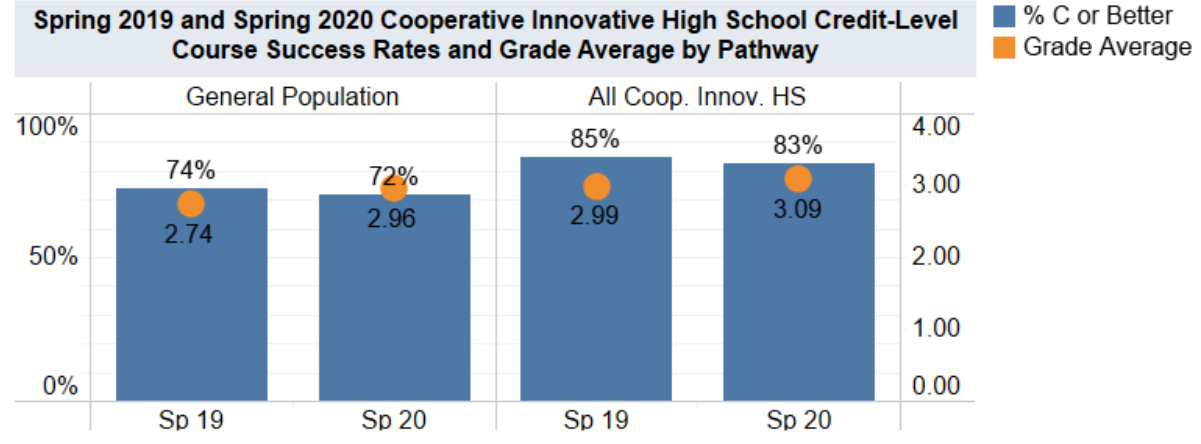
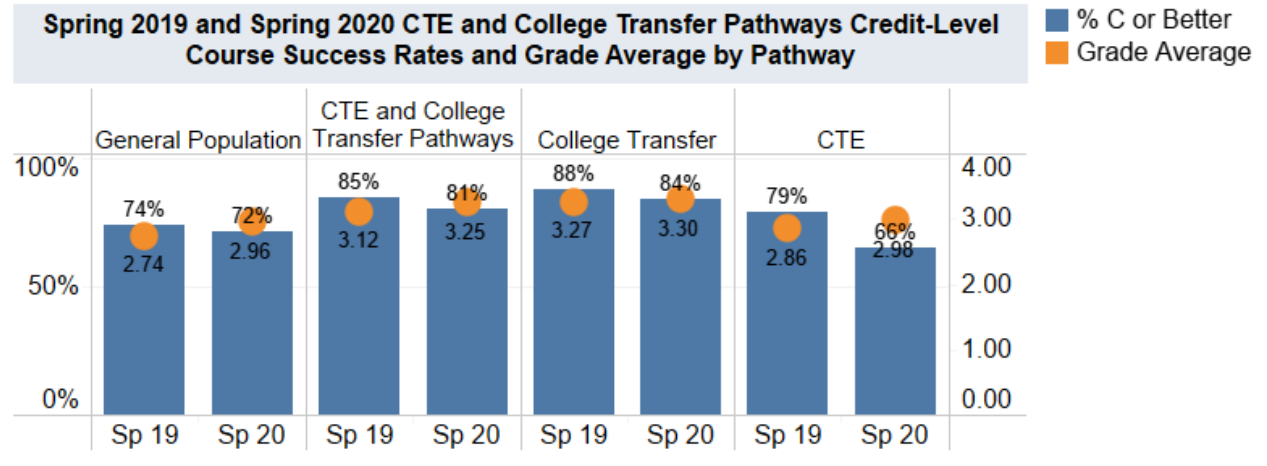


Figure 16: Spring 2019 and Spring 2020 CTE and college transfer pathways credit-level course success rates and grade average by pathway



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Figure 17: Spring 2019 and Spring 2020 Cooperative Innovative High School course success rates and grade average by pathway

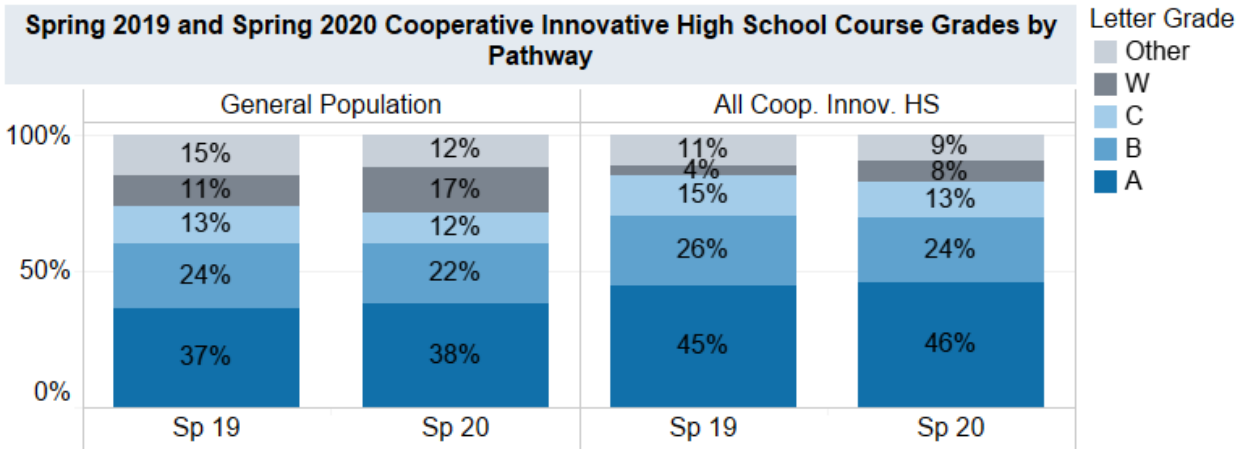
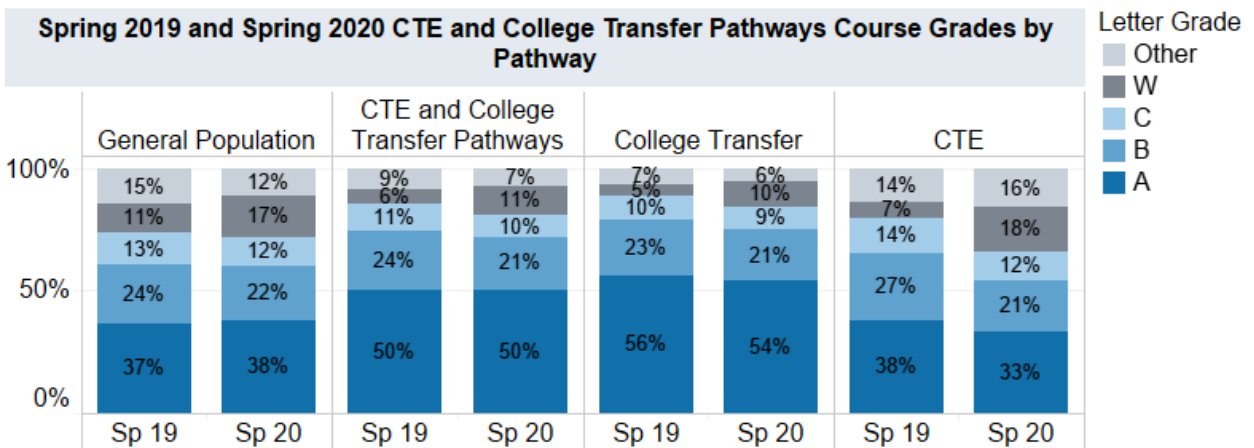


Figure 18: Spring 2019 and Spring 2020 CTE and college transfer pathways course grades by pathway



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UNC GENERAL ADMINISTRATION Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS) Programs

Institutions within the University of North Carolina (UNC) system admitted **7,409** Cooperative and Innovative High School students for Fall 2019. Based on preliminary results, UNC system admissions of CIHS students increased by 1,789 students for Fall 2020. Refer to table 6 for admissions of Cooperative Innovative High School students. A breakdown by campus is indicated in the following table.

Table 6: CHIS student admissions to UNC system schools, Fall 2019 and Fall 2020

| UNC Institution | Number of CIHS students admitted to UNC Institutions, Fall 2019 | Number of CIHS students admitted to UNC Institutions, Fall 2020 (As of 1/13/2021*) |
|---|---|--|
| Appalachian State University | 766 | 952 |
| East Carolina University | 835 | 1,251 |
| Elizabeth City State University | 131 | 171 |
| Fayetteville State University | 286 | 408 |
| North Carolina A&T State University | 512 | 616 |
| North Carolina Central University | 408 | 493 |
| North Carolina State University | 488 | 583 |
| University of North Carolina - Asheville | 241 | 193 |
| University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill | 449 | 502 |
| University of North Carolina – Charlotte | 1,074 | 1,344 |
| University of North Carolina – Greensboro | 726 | 892 |
| University of North Carolina – Pembroke | 383 | 414 |
| University of North Carolina – Wilmington | 392 | 526 |
| University of North Carolina – School of the Arts | <10 | 11 |
| Western Carolina University | 526 | 574 |
| Winston-Salem State University | 192 | 268 |
| UNC Total | 7,409 | 9,198 |

*Neither IPEDS Admissions nor the Freshmen Admissions and Performance dashboard have been finalized for the current year (as of 1/13/2021), so this data should be considered preliminary. Refer to the UNC System [Stats, Data, & Reports](#) page for official results.

NC INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS) Programs

Institutions within the NC Independent Colleges and Universities system admitted **2,788** Cooperative and Innovative High School students for Fall 2020. This was an increase of 460 students from Fall 2019. A breakdown by campus is indicated in the following table.

Table 7: CHIS student admissions to NCICU schools, Fall 2019 and Fall 2020

| NCICU Institution | Number of CIHS students admitted to NCICU Institutions, Fall 2019 | Number of CIHS students admitted to NCICU Institutions, Fall 2020 |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Barton College | 108 | 146 |
| Belmont Abbey College | 43 | 48 |
| Bennett College | * | * |
| Brevard College | * | * |
| Cabarrus College of Health Sciences | 16 | 16 |
| Campbell University | 295 | 311 |
| Catawba College | 95 | 141 |
| Chowan University | 55 | <10 |
| Davidson College | * | * |
| Duke University | <10 | 14 |
| Elon University | 53 | 114 |
| Gardner-Webb University | 16 | 17 |
| Greensboro College | 59 | 38 |
| Guilford College | 115 | 22 |
| High Point University | 48 | 130 |
| Johnson C. Smith University | <10 | <10 |
| Lees-McRae College | 52 | 87 |
| Lenoir-Rhyne University | 273 | 446 |
| Livingstone College | * | * |
| Louisburg College | * | * |
| Mars Hill University | <10 | <10 |
| Meredith College | 79 | 82 |
| Methodist University | 94 | 126 |
| Montreat College | * | * |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| N.C. Wesleyan College | 19 | 28 |
| Pfeiffer University | 64 | 15 |
| Queens University of Charlotte | 137 | 176 |
| St. Andrews University | * | 39 |
| Saint Augustine's University | * | * |
| Salem College | 13 | 15 |
| Shaw University | 46 | 65 |
| University of Mount Olive | 19 | 11 |
| Wake Forest University | 12 | 27 |
| Warren Wilson College | * | * |
| William Peace University | 54 | 45 |
| Wingate University | 544 | 613 |
| NCICU Total | 2,328 | 2,788 |

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COOPERATIVE INNOVATIVE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Success Stories from across North Carolina

Based on CIHS 2019-2020 Annual Reports submitted by Schools

Bladen Early College High School, Bladen County Schools

Bladen Early College High School is truly a unique place where we focus on serving our students like no other school does. Yes, we address academic and social needs that we notice, but it's the extended, special touches that make us "Nighthawk Nation". For example, when schools closed abruptly in March 2020, we as a faculty and staff felt like we lost our most important tool to maintaining relationships with our students: proximity. Amongst other issues, we had no idea how we would distribute our inaugural yearbook that students pre-purchased and anticipated. With the collaboration of one teacher who volunteered to drive the bus, our principal who mapped our stops, the yearbook faculty advisor wrapping and labeling each yearbook, and two other staff members who cheered and took pictures at every stop, we delivered the yearbooks to each student's home. Parents and students were thrilled to see us, and we felt the same way. We returned to the school after a long day of traveling around our vast county to find emails and voicemails thanking us for dropping off yearbooks and for bringing a token of normalcy to their day. Though we know our parents and student members of Nighthawk Nation appreciated the delivery, we as a staff embraced the opportunity to spend a few moments with our students just to let them know how much we care and love them.

Similar to this event, during this school year, we grappled with the idea that our parents and students needed progress reports in their hands, but we did not want to just send them in the mail. A staff member and the principal developed what has now been called "The Nighthawk Bus Tour," where we deliver several items at stops centrally located within the county. At each stop, we passed out progress reports, encouraged students who needed an extra push from us, and conducted brief parent conferences. We also delivered our Nighthawk planners, a key tool to their success and organization, and essential information for our upperclassmen. What made this event so great is that, next to our socially distant open house, this was the first time we interacted with our freshman class. The Nighthawk Bus Tour gave us a chance to establish a tight relationship with our freshmen and to solidify the relationship we have with our sophomores and juniors. Again,

since we have lost our proximal powers with our students, an event like this rekindled the fire within our students and reminded them that there's a staff at our school who cannot wait to see them.

Brunswick Early College High School, Brunswick County Schools

Each year at Brunswick County Early College High School (ECHS) we have the awesome opportunity to impact the lives of learners in a nontraditional way through courses that focus not only on scholastics but on the entire child- emotionally, academically, and socially. Students receive more than they could ever receive from a book, a PowerPoint, or a lecture. This is about connecting the students with the relevancy of the course material while supporting who they are as individuals. This methodology of teaching holds teachers and students accountable for their part of the learning process that is infused with rigor, relevancy, respect, and support. The foundations provided by this type of learning environment transformed the life of one of our students.

This student did not have positive self-esteem and did not believe in his ability to achieve within the classroom; getting by was enough for him. At Brunswick Early College there is nowhere to hide as we have less than four hundred students and the teachers get to know each one of their students individually. In each of his classes, his needs were met academically, emotionally, and socially. If he did not do well, he was supported with tutoring. If he expressed negative self-talk that was countered with positive affirmation of his individuality. Over time it created a discernible change within him. He began to believe in himself.

As soon as he could he began working, he took a job at a local grocery store. Within a short period of time he became a manager. He worked nearly a full-time schedule to help support his family all while in high school. To complicate things, his father had a stroke that incapacitated him for a period of time. The father moved into the small family space and the student took on more responsibility. He worked full-time, helped take care of his father, continued to achieve academically, in addition to serving as the vice president and then president of a school club.

When talking with this student, he credits the nontraditional influence of his teachers and the learning environment for helping him believe in himself. He is currently attending UNC-Charlotte, doing well academically, while still working for the same grocery store as a manager. He continues to support his parents who traveled to Charlotte with him. He is one of the most memorable of my students because of the extreme development and metamorphosis he experienced at Brunswick Early College. This is why Cooperative Innovative High Schools are important, we changed his life.

Buncombe Early College High School, Buncombe County Schools

We are very proud of all of our graduates, and so many of them have overcome significant academic or personal challenges to make it to graduation with a diploma and degree or credential in hand. This year, one graduate stands out as a success story because of his determination to persist in spite of obstacles outside of school and because of the heart and creativity of our school community. This student learned self-advocacy early, through a series of sad circumstances that led him to run away from home.

He did not let his academics fall behind through all the turmoil, though. He stayed focused on his long-term goals, even when his short-term outlook might have defeated even the most stable of adults. He took the lessons he learned from these challenges and relied on them again when COVID hit this past Spring when he was forced to leave his home again to find work to make ends meet. Essentially homeless, he worked full time to provide for himself financially.

At the same time, we made sure his college course schedule could accommodate his new situation, and our counselor stayed connected with him remotely through it all. It was a good day when we handed him his high school diploma and his associate degree. He persevered and we are proud to have been on the journey to success with him.

Burke Middle College High School, Burke County Schools

A recent success story at Burke Middle College was with a very motivated student who worked hard to qualify for acceptance at BMC Her native language was Spanish, and she still struggled with advanced reading and writing skills in English. Despite these challenges, this student took advantage of the small high school class size and often

sought individual help between classes to understand and complete assignments correctly. She also utilized the free tutoring services offered by the community college and was able to greatly improve her reading comprehension and writing skills over the course of her enrollment. She was brokenhearted when she received her ACT scores, as she felt that her lower than desired scores would preclude her acceptance at a traditional college or university. Fortunately, her teachers were able to correspond directly with admittance advocates to explain how her hard work and determination would allow her to achieve success, despite the challenges she experienced with standardized testing. We were delighted to learn that this student was accepted at a respected private college and is continuing to fulfill her dreams due to the instruction, support, and relationships developed in the Middle College setting.

Caldwell Early College High School, Caldwell County Schools

Caldwell Early College High School, like every school, felt the havoc brought on by COVID-19. We adapted our end of the year events, including our annual College Decision Day ceremony, and created three different plans for our 2020 Graduation Ceremony. One student messaged that his family had already moved out of state not long after the initial stay-at-home order. This student remained here in NC alone to finish his school year and college classes while holding out hope to attend his graduation ceremony and attend college at UNC-G. Sadly, at the beginning of August, his plan could no longer work; he needed to leave immediately to join his family. He messaged to ask if he could pick up his high school diploma and associate degree from Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute on his way out of town. He would arrive at school with his car fully packed ready for a solo drive to rejoin his family. His college dreams would have to be put on hold. Although devastated on the inside, he was strong in his resolve. We asked him to bring his cap and gown for a photo-op, but then, our school came together to surprise him with an impromptu graduation ceremony. Our simple, little ceremony is what CECHS is all about - personalization and relationships!

Challenger Early College High School, Catawba County Schools

This is the story of a student who overcame a great deal of personal conflict and trauma in order to be accepted at Challenger Early College High School, and to graduate as well. She was a quiet student who lost her way and direction in life. In high school, she made some bad choices which put her future in jeopardy. She went before the Matriculation Review Board (MRB) her freshman year and was put on academic probation, where she stayed for most of her time at Challenger. Not only does Challenger have the MRB where students can state their case and plans to improve academically, but it also has many other support systems established. One is the Personal Adult Advocate (PAA) program; this is comparable to a traditional high school's homeroom, but on steroids. The students are assigned to a staff member (like a homeroom teacher) and stay with that PAA for the four years at Challenger. The PAA is responsible for contacting parents at least once a month to provide grade reports as well as if there is a problem or issue going on, whether academic or personal. The PAA builds relationships with not only the student but also with the parents. Challenger has built-in study hall times both in the morning and in the afternoon where students can work independently or collaboratively. Student Academic Support is another support system; teachers provide remediation to struggling students and counselors and a social worker are also provided. Even with all these support mechanisms available, this student was still not being successful. In the fall of her junior year, another tragedy occurred. The student was hospitalized, then went to a live-in facility where she learned different coping skills and received counseling. When she returned to Challenger several weeks later, she wasn't asking for help, showing up in the academic probation room, or attending her college classes.

At this point it was decided, with her input, that when she is on campus but not in a class she would spend her time in an office with a staff member; this continued until she graduated. She had to go before the MRB again at the end of her junior year. A staff member spoke up and said she would take 100% responsibility for this student; the board agreed and she got to stay at Challenger. She had to work while attending school and this added stress to her, but she started opening up about what she was going through and some of the trauma she had experienced at a young age. She shared she has a hard time saying no to people, how she felt that she is not worthy of love, and that she was

responsible for her four-year-old sister. Through the relationship being built with the staff member who advocated for her, she learned how to advocate for herself with her college instructors and how to ask for help, whether for academic or personal reasons. She stopped missing classes, worked diligently in the staff member's office, and started to smile more.

At the end of her senior fall semester, this student earned nothing lower than a "C" in any of her classes, high school or college. She was so excited when declaring that the spring semester would be her first semester of not being on probation since her freshman year! Although released from probation, she continued to do her schoolwork in the adult's office and finished her senior year with her high school diploma and most of the credits needed for an associate degree. She has applied to the local community college and is planning on finishing her classes needed to earn that degree. She stays in touch with the staff member by reaching out to her several times a week to share what is going on in her life, how work is going, etc.

This student is a perfect example of someone who was able to overcome many obstacles in order to achieve her goals. Through many ups and downs, she has come to realize she has to experience some bad times in order to appreciate the good times. She is a true example of a Challenger success story.

Chatham School of Science and Engineering, Chatham County Schools

The 2019-2020 school year was our first graduating class. After four years of guiding our students through high school and community college, nine of our 11 students walked across the stage with a high school diploma and an associate degree from Central Carolina Community College (CCCC). Two of our seniors returned in the 2020-2021 school year as super seniors. We continue to grow our program each year. Our students continue to excel and perform well in bringing positive recognition to our program. Our partnership with CCCC has been outstanding. They are great to work with and have been very supportive in our efforts to grow our program. COVID-19 brought an interesting end to the 2019-2020 school year. Most of our students did well, while some struggled with the remote learning they were thrust into from March through May.

Our successes in the four years of operation have elevated the interest in our program and the numbers of annual applications from students. Here is what some of our parents and students are saying about our program:

"Being in an early college program has made me not only engage further with learning, but it has also better prepared me for higher education in a wonderful environment of teachers and peers!"

"CSSE is an amazing school, with a staff that seems to care about the well-being of the students above anything else. Whenever I have questions about classes or really anything, they quickly responded to me and never left me standing alone. I have never seen a school that cares about every single one of its students on such a personal level, and for that reason I always speak highly of CSSE when given the opportunity."

"When my oldest came home from middle school 3 years ago and told me that she wanted to go to CSSE, I was worried that she would miss out on all of the regular high school experiences. After experiencing the family atmosphere, the small class size, the creative approach to learning, the modified schedule, and the excellent faculty and staff, I truly believe that both my children are having a better high school experience at CSSE than they would have had at a traditional high school. They are also gaining a gentler launch into their college life while still being supported by the whole CSSE family."

Cleveland Early College High School, Cleveland County Schools

It is no surprise that COVID-19 disrupted our seniors' last few months of their high school career. In addition to that, one of our seniors lost her mother unexpectedly in the midst of the quarantine. Our students and staff rallied around her, and she continued to push through this tragedy. She ended up graduating in 4 years with an Associate of Arts Degree and a Criminal Justice Technology Certificate. She graduated summa cum laude and was also a NC Academic Scholar. She won the CECHS Perseverance Award and was also the recipient of four substantial scholarships. She is currently a freshman at NC Central University and is thriving and making her mark. We are extremely proud of what she continues to do!

Collaborative College for Technology and Leadership, Iredell-Statesville Schools

In our graduating class of 2020, we had many success stories! We had two student athletes who signed and have gone on to be athletes at the university level, Our athletes must have excellent time management skills because they must balance their rigorous early college program and their sports commitment at their home district attendance-zone school. Both graduated with their associate degree!

The family of one of our graduates took in another one of our students during the summer of 2019 and for the entire 2019-2020 school year after the student's father passed away. This student's mom had previously passed away when he was younger. This spring he graduated with his associate degree!

Our graduation ceremonies were unique and special! We mailed graduation signs to each graduate's house and they loved them! For those who signed up for a graduation ceremony at their mailbox, we took a big yellow bus to their house for an individual graduation ceremony with our school banner, a balloon, and staff members with noise makers! For those who signed up for a "drive-thru" graduation, we hosted each drive-up family at an outside graduation stage on campus and the graduate "walked" across the stage and received a rose. Each graduate and the principal were in full cap and gown regalia with multiple photo-opportunities receiving their diploma from the principal and their family members. One graduate had zero family to come to the "drive-thru" graduation ceremony with him; so, our entire staff posed with him for pictures and honored him with many happy screams and positive reinforcement! That graduate is at Winston Salem State now.

We also had "drive thru" Awards days for our 9th-12th graders at the end of the school year! Those included photo-ops, a balloon arch for them to walk under, and an announcer announcing the student and his or her awards. Students really seemed to enjoy this event!

Columbia Early College High School, Tyrrell County Schools

Despite being the smallest district in the state, we are doing great things at Columbia High Early College School. We maintain the highest percentage of dually enrolled students in

the state, which definitely improves student achievement and outcomes as well as helps our families realize that college isn't just a dream, it's a reality!

Crossroads Arts and Science Early College High School, Iredell-Statesville Schools

Crossroads has continued to uphold our 100% graduation rate for the 5th consecutive year! Our students were able to overcome hardships during COVID with ten campus shutdowns. Our higher education partner issued grades as normal for the spring 2020 semester, and most of our students stayed on track during an unstable, unprecedented time. We are proud that only three of 207 college students ended up needing to withdraw from a college course during spring 2020 semester.

Cumberland International Early College High School, Cumberland County Schools

This year we had a young man, African American male, first-generation college student, and low-socioeconomic status graduate after many struggles. I have known this student through both his middle school years and his high school years. During middle school, he was quite often suspended for disciplinary reasons, and had low grades. He did not have the confidence to trust teachers, administration and staff because of his home life.

Honestly, we thought he was going to be a drop-out. Many times he wanted to give up, but we continued to support him and build his confidence and he made it through 8th grade. When it came time to accept our applicants for our 9th grade cohort 4 years ago, his name came across my list and I knew that this would be the perfect opportunity for him. He was being raised by a single parent, who during the summer of his Senior year, July 2019, put him out of the house. He was trying to make it on his own and had to come to us to help him get through his Senior year instead of dropping out. We were able to help him and with the grace of support from our entire staff, he was able to make it through and graduate on time with his cohort. He graduated with good grades. We were so proud of him on graduation day and felt he would continue on with his studies at the University.

Another success story, the 2020-2021 NC Teacher of the Year, came from our school. Mrs. Maureen Stover, is a Science teacher here at the school. She is a phenomenal teacher, truly dedicated to her students and education, and her heartfelt passion for teaching supersedes it all. Great person to represent the state.

Edgecombe Early College High School, Edgecombe County Schools

When Governor Cooper announced on March 14 that NC schools would be closed immediately due to the pandemic, our Dream Team of educators at Edgecombe Early College High School pivoted immediately toward remote learning. We lost just a single day of instruction as we scaled up a remote learning platform, deployed devices to scholars, established food delivery systems for those in need, and began remote learning on Tuesday, March 17. Our ability to pivot quickly to changing conditions was directly attributable to the vibrant culture, high expectations, healthy relationships, ubiquitous support, and effective operations of the CIHS model. We were the only school in our LEA that was able to meet NCDPI's "Critical Factors for Remote Learning" during Spring 2020. Most importantly, we remained true to our commitments to supporting "each and every" scholar.

Franklin County Early College High School, Franklin County Schools

The success story I chose is that of a student who suffers from a rare disease and throughout her high school experience has been in and out of the hospital. During her last year she was faced with the unbelievable. Her mother was hospitalized and she did not see it coming. Her mother was in the hospital from October through June. This student had to increase her work hours to pay the bills, maintain good grades, and finish the school year strong independently. There were times when she was also hospitalized. Despite all she managed to finish and graduate with honors and with her associate degree. This student is a perfect example of resilience and grit. I am honored to share her story as a Franklin County Early College High School success story.

Gaston Early College High School, Gaston County Schools

Last year's graduating class represented two big successes for our overall program: eight students graduated from our program in four years and two graduated with their Associate Degree in Engineering. The eight students graduating in four years is a success because they were the first cohort to have the opportunity to do so, and aside from completing our five-year program in four years, six of the eight also graduated with their associate degree (the remaining two finished one class short of completing their degree). This was no easy

task, and there were multiple aspects of the journey that were unfamiliar and unexpected for us all. They remained committed to the program and set a wonderful example to the underclassmen that focused hard work towards a goal truly pays off.

The two students graduating from our program with their Associate Degree in Engineering are a success because their cohort was the first to be offered that degree pathway from Gaston College. This pathway is very challenging, with many upper-level math and science courses, and these two students persevered to blaze a trail for future students to follow!

Greene Early College High School, Greene County Schools

This was definitely an unprecedented year for Greene Early College. As with all schools in the state, we had to cope with a shortened school year that ended face to face instruction abruptly in March. I was extremely proud of how our district, school, and student body worked together to make the transition as smooth as possible. The communication on all fronts was tremendous. Lenoir Community College even provided hot spots for our high school students who had indicated that they did not have reliable internet access at home. For students to finish this year with a 77% pass rate with a C or better was a feat that we are proud of. We actually had fewer courses dropped in the spring than we did in the fall. Also this year, we had two teachers receive their National Board Teacher Certification. Two teachers gave birth this year as well. Although our data isn't where we usually are, I feel so proud of the job that our students, staff, and stakeholders did during this unforgettable year.

Greensboro College Middle College, Guilford County Schools

Our profile this year is of a hardworking young African American student who made mistakes that impacted his early years of high school. He first learned about Greensboro College Middle College when a group of students visited his previous school (Pruette SCALE Academy) for recruitment purposes. The SCALE schools are for those students who have been removed from their traditional schools due to behavioral challenges; they typically are able to return to their home schools after a period of time in one of the SCALE schools. That year was the first time our students visited the SCALE schools to spread the

word about the great opportunities available at Greensboro College Middle College. This student knew that if he returned to his old school, he would not be able to continue the changes he made while at SCALE. When he heard about our school, a smaller site with a welcoming student body and teachers who would give him the time and attention he needed, he thought that he just might be able to fulfill his dream of going to college.

At GCMC, this young man worked diligently to bring up his grades and he successfully completed college courses as well. He also served as a junior ambassador and volunteered in his community. As an older brother, he helped take care of his two younger siblings all while working a part-time job and playing football at his home school. At the end of his senior year, he learned that he was to become a father. His primary goal now is to be a positive role model for his own son. This student will be attending Saint Augustine's University in the Fall of 2020, with plans to transfer to NC A&T State University. He hopes to be the first person in his family to graduate from college. He says that attending GCMC saved him, because he was going down the wrong pathway in life.

Harper Middle College High School, Guilford County Schools

During our 2020 commencement ceremony, one of our Grade 13 students told a story of how Harper impacted her life. She had never shared this story with any of the faculty members at Harper, which made it all the more surprising when she shared it during her speech. During her 10th grade year, at a previous high school, she was on the verge of dropping out of school. School had become a place of hopelessness and angst for her. She found herself in tears almost every day because of the school environment. Her mom found out about Harper and the middle college program. Determined not to let her child give up, her mom insisted on her getting a fresh start at Harper. Unbeknownst to us (faculty members) at the time, the student felt welcomed from the first day of classes. She realized that we cared and that there was so much more for her than what the comprehensive high school could offer her. Harper instantly became her home. It became a place for her to learn, connect, and thrive. The student went on to complete an Associate in Science degree, graduate as Co-Salutatorian, and was accepted into the Nursing program at UNC Charlotte. She said in her commencement speech that she never imagined she would graduate from high school and especially not as second in her class.

Her speech brought me back to why we do this work. We are here for the students on the verge of dropping out, the students that have maximized their academic skills at the comprehensive high school, and all of the students in between that need this setting. Her story reminds me of how one decision can change the trajectory of a person's life.

Jackson County Early College High School, Jackson County Schools

We have a student from a large family who worked nearly full time during the four years she attended Jackson County Early College to provide support for her family. With unwavering determination and the supportive environment of the early college, she persevered and graduated from Jackson County Early College this Spring. She was admitted to our local university with a scholarship and will be majoring in business to pursue her dream of starting her own business working with horses.

The Academy at Ben L. Smith, Guilford County Schools

This story is about a student who thrived at the Academy at Smith. He overcame several obstacles to reach his goal of going to college. When he entered the Academy as a freshman, he had very little self-confidence. Being an overweight child, he had been teased and bullied in elementary and middle school. He knew that he did not want to continue his education at the traditional high school because it would not be a good fit. He said that he came to the academy because he did not want to continue to be teased and bullied by his peers in high school. He felt that he would benefit from a smaller school. Also, he was very excited about attending a high school that focused on his medical career goals.

When he came to the academy, he quickly learned that he no longer had to use the coping mechanisms that he developed to survive at his other school. He no longer had to try to blend in as not to be noticed and teased by others. At the Academy, every student feels welcome. The students accept each other and encourage each other to be their best self. The academy promotes diversity. This student said that it was the first time he felt normal. He had begun to love coming to school. His grades improved along with his attendance.

Every year this student became more confident. He excelled in academics and he learned to interact effectively with his classmates. He looked forward to contributing to class

discussions. By the time this student entered his junior year, he was involved in several school and community clubs and organizations, including HOSA, National Honors Society, and the Anima Club. The most rewarding accomplishment he achieved while in school was the fact that he was chosen to represent Guilford County Schools at NC Governor's School. He was the only Hispanic student selected from GCS that year. Governor's School served to enhance his desire to give back to his school. Upon returning to school, he became involved in the GSA Club and the Men of Invictus male mentoring group. He earned the respect of faculty and peers. He was elected by his peers to serve as the president of HOSA and to serve on the Student Government Association. Also, he was selected to represent the student body on the Superintendent Advisory Council. He inspired and motivated others to want to get involved.

He is a strong advocate and positive role model. He is the first person in his family to finish high school and go to college. He was accepted into several colleges, but he elected to attend Guilford College to show his support for his undocumented peers who were unable to attend public colleges. While at Guilford College, this student plans to get involved in the Hispanic/Mexican Society, The International Club, and LGBTQ Club. He plans to also get involved in various organizations that focus on social injustice. He is determined to make a difference in this world. We have no doubt that he will achieve this goal.

Lenoir County Early College High School, Lenoir County Schools

Our school has many student success stories. There is one student who really persevered through many challenges. She was a transfer student from another Early College High School in a different LEA at the beginning of her junior year. She and her family faced many challenges, including paying their electric bill, having enough to eat, transportation issues, and many other day-to-day concerns. There was never a day this student didn't smile no matter what was going on at home. Her work habits were phenomenal. While checking in with students who are spread out on our campus, I could always find this student studying in the library when she was not in class, and she had no clue that I was even around. She became very good at advocating for herself with her instructors, especially when she needed additional support with understanding the work. This student was a very conscientious scholar and always strived to do her very best. She was always faithful in getting her assignments completed and turned in on time. No matter what

concerns or challenges she faced each day, she embraced each day with a smile and pushed herself to not only get her work completed but to do it well. She earned the distinction of Magna Cum Laude and is attending Fayetteville State University. With her tenacity and drive to complete her education, she will succeed.

Levine Middle College High School, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Our English III teacher was selected in the spring of 2019 as the CMS teacher of the year. In the fall of 2019, she was one of the two finalists for Regional Teacher of the Year. Volkswagen came to our school to film a series of commercials featuring her and she formed a partnership between Belk and our school where they planned to sponsor our prom. The prom was canceled due to COVID-19, but Belk still provided all of our students with a gift bag, including a generous Belk gift card. Having a teacher receive this honor brought a lot of positive publicity to our district's middle college programs.

Madison Early College High School, Madison County Schools

A student who struggled and was basically homeless due to family dysfunction worked hard and attained his Associate of Arts degree. This student has graduated and is now enlisted in the US Air Force. We have so many stories of success and students who beat the odds and used CIHS to better their lives and break the cycle.

Marine Sciences and Technology Early College High School, Carteret County Schools

Greetings from Marine Science and Technologies (MaST) Early College High School in Morehead City, NC. We are beginning year three of our program. Carteret Community College just announced our first student has completed a certificate in Marine Propulsion. This young man completed the required coursework for the certificate in two years that began in the 9th grade. This MaST student also excelled academically in his high school courses the past two years. Carteret Community College completed an interview with the student for an online magazine and shared the interview via social media. We are also about to announce the completion of Welding certificates for four other MaST students. We will share their accomplishments with the community to demonstrate the success of

our young program. We are operating without a 9th grade this year, but we should have a pipeline of students completing programs in the next year.

Mattamuskeet Early College High School, Hyde County Schools

Mattamuskeet Early College High School is located one hour and fifteen minutes, 62 miles from Beaufort County Community College, where our students travel several days a week to learn on the community college campus. Our success is that we had six students graduate with an associate degree. Our students have access to wifi on the bus that transports them so that they can study during travel time if they choose.

Another success for Mattamuskeet Early College High School is that we have CTE courses taught through Beaufort County Community College on our high school campus. In the Welding class, we had five senior students, two junior and two sophomore students completing the certificate program this school year. Our desire is to grow that certificate program into the diploma program so that our students are more prepared for the workforce.

Mattamuskeet Early College Campus is a growing campus, with more students interested in participating in the opportunities that the partnership with Beaufort County Community College brings to our rural campus.

McDowell Academy for Innovation, McDowell County Schools

Reflecting back on our 2nd year brought great memories. Here are a few highlights: Throughout the year, we had students job shadow at The Animal Hospital, McDowell Hospital, Head Start, ERA Realty, and McDowell County Teen Court.

All students spent a day digging deep into future career choices through the McDowell Technical Community College Expo, a hands-on exploration of careers. Students had an opportunity to weld, wire computers, take blood pressure, deliver babies (high fidelity mannequins), apply first aid techniques while riding in the back of an ambulance (simulation experience), and practice engineering principles.

Every Friday our students participated in clubs. McDowell Academy for Innovation combined with McDowell Early College to create a “super club”: McDowell Engineering

and Robotics Club (MERC). On a weekly basis, MERC students traveled to a central location (during the school day) to compete in engineering and robotics challenges. The Science Olympiad team competed at UNC-A. Engineering students developed cars for the NC Gravity Games. Seminar classes participated in STEM challenges. They created cardboard arcade games, “pumpkin chunkers”, and egg cushions. MAI students participated in a community Trunk or Treat and developed elaborate BeetleJuice themed decorations.

Student council hosted a fall festival, a shoe drive, and were instrumental in meeting and greeting future students. Our students created the yearbook. We do not use an outside vendor; our yearbook is 100% student created.

We have a large cohort of students who are interested in a career in health care. They were able to engage in many hands-on experiences through our partnership with MAHEC. For example, they dissected fetal pigs, delivered babies (high fidelity mannequins), participated in a blood typing workshop, attended nursing conferences, and participated in job shadowing.

Lastly, we have a student who enrolled with us in 11th grade. Until 11th grade, she was homeschooled. Due to family issues, she moved out of her home. She was homeless, penniless, and enrolled in school full time. She turned her life around! By the end of her senior year (19-20), she became a CNA and started working full time at Mission Hospital in the trauma unit. She rented her own apartment. She continues to pursue her associate degree. We are so proud of her hard work and determination!

McDowell Early College High School, McDowell County Schools

Our McDowell Early College 12th grade Valedictorian for 2020 is an amazing young woman. She left a very unhealthy home situation four days after her 18th birthday, in November of 2019. Against all odds she has persevered through this situation to receive a full academic scholarship to Appalachian State University. She also received \$4500 in outside scholarships. This young lady has no family support at this time. It was amazing to see her early college family rally around her for graduation and then also as she moved to ASU.

The Middle College at Bennett, Guilford County Schools

“A little more persistence, a little more effort and what seems hopeless may turn to glorious success”, a quote by Elbert Hubbard, speaks to the heart of a Middle College at Bennett senior. Throughout her tenure at the Middle College at Bennett, she has always maintained excellent grades and school attendance, and devoted over 200 hours of service to the community, assisting those in need. When she first began at the Middle College at Bennett she was extremely shy, and would become anxious at the mere request to speak in front of her peers. As the years have passed, she has blossomed into one of the most profound leaders to ever grace the halls of the Middle College at Bennett. She currently serves as the president of the Middle College at Bennett’s Girls Council (an organization that is synonymous with what traditional schools call the Student Government Association). She presides over Girls Council meetings like a true professional and has overcome her fear of speaking in front of large groups of people. This young lady is trusted, revered and respected by her peers, who are encouraged by her hard work and dedication in and out of school. Additionally, she has received over \$300, 000 in awards and scholarship offers from various colleges she has applied to. She will attend the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the fall and major in nursing.

The quote, “Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance”, speaks to the example set by another Middle College at Bennett senior. She is a model student whose dedication in service to others is unmatched. As the vice president of the Service Learning club, she always seeks opportunities that both serve and uplift our diverse community. For the past two years, she has worked diligently with the Model United Nations program, a global community program designed to inform, inspire and motivate participants to action in support of identified sustainable developmental goals with the mission to bring together diverse individuals from around the world. She has been accepted to over 40 colleges across the United States and has been offered more than \$900,000 in awards and scholarships. She will attend the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the fall majoring in Biology.

The Middle College at NC A&T, Guilford County Schools

The Middle College at NCA&T had its first graduate in the history of the school to study abroad for his four-year college experience. This student was an at-risk student who came from a single parent home, with low family income. The student is currently a Freshman at Parsons Paris in Paris, France and is a Strategic Design and Management major. He was awarded \$132,000 to attend the university. The student was highlighted by Guilford County Schools District Relations and local media outlets.

Middle College at GTCC High Point, Guilford County Schools

This story is about two brothers who reached an academic pinnacle their parents didn't reach: They now have two high school diplomas and two associate degrees. One even stayed a fifth year at the Middle College to obtain a diploma in construction management. This fall, they're headed to UNC-Charlotte.

Their parents didn't go very far in school. But they're hard workers, and they've instilled that work ethic within their sons. Their father works construction. He pours concrete and levels it out, using all sorts of different tools to make it glisten like still water.

His son sees his dad's occupation as art. That's what convinced him to stay an extra year to get a construction management degree and become skilled at carpentry.

During his last year, he and his other classmates built three porches on three houses in High Point's Washington Terrace Park. He spent the entire semester on the job site in boots, jeans, safety helmet and a tool belt.

Today, he'll drive by those three houses just to look. He sees that as the genesis of his budding construction career.

"The Middle College gave me a sense of preparedness, and I have an idea of what to do, I didn't have that before."

Their mom never got a chance to go to school. As her sons grew older, she encouraged them to make education a priority. She knew how important it would be in their lives.

Alvaro found out why firsthand during a study session at home. He was complaining about reading when his mom urged him to continue.

“That’s a really good skill that I wish I knew,” she told him. Their mom can’t read.

“I was like, ‘Wow,’ I never thought about it that way,” says one brother; “I realized not everyone has that opportunity, and I knew then that I had to try my best to get better at it.”

He liked the smaller classes at the Middle College, the close relationships with the teachers, and the chance to get tutored if he fell behind. “It opened a bunch of doors. I’ve got great friends, and I’m prepared for college.”

His brother also found direction.

“I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to study at the Middle College,” he says. But after I finished my first engineering class, I realized I enjoyed most of the class. That helped convince me to go into engineering.”

“My favorite subject is math, and building something is all about math,” he says. “You’re using math to make something yourself, and it gives you the satisfaction of building something that’ll be useful.”

So, at UNC-Charlotte, he is majoring in engineering; his brother is majoring in construction management. But their dreams are the same. They both want to own their own company one day. And when they think about the future, they think about their parents.

“They’re rooting for us,” one brother said. “Just to walk across the stage with a bachelor’s degree and start a good career. Honestly, this gives me motivation. They’ve always told me and my brother, ‘Always look for the good in everything.’”

At UNC-Charlotte, they will. This fall, they’ll become first-generation college students.

Early Middle College at GTCC Jamestown, Guilford County Schools

Senior Spotlight #1: One of our students is not your typical high school senior. He may struggle to adjust to a new schedule or course and feel lost at times, but when he gets in a math classroom where the rules are clear, he flourishes. In many ways he is like his

classmates at the Early Middle College at GTCC Jamestown. He is an excellent student, well on his way to earning a two-year Associate's degree. Despite a diagnosis of a an exceptional he never stopped trying to do his best. Doing well in school was always important to him and he worked hard. "This young man is the kind of student who makes me feel like I am doing a good job," said his EC Case Manager. "He seeks out advice and listens," she said. "His willingness to get up and try again, after a failure, inspires me to keep trying too."

Senior Spotlight #2: One of our special young ladies does not just participate in helping others, she organizes and coordinates projects. She founded her own nonprofit in 2015 called All Beautiful, focusing on improving the self-esteem of young women. This special young woman will attend North Carolina State University and major in Biological Sciences and Africana Studies. Eventually, she plans to go to medical school. "This young lady takes on many worthy causes," said our Career Counselor and School Ambassador Sponsor: "She volunteers purely to help others. She isn't seeking recognition. She just wants to help."

Montgomery Early College High School, Montgomery County Schools

Montgomery County Early College (MCEC) is committed to supporting students in cultivating and achieving their college and career goals. At MCEC, all students are provided the opportunity to explore career choices using Virtual Job Shadow, College Board resources and CFNC resources. College preparation activities are integrated into Senior Seminar, English IV, and ongoing counseling sessions. Seniors draft, revise and edit college admissions and scholarship essays in their English classes. They also receive support on how to complete the Residency Determination process, the FAFSA, and the Common Application. Our guidance counselor assists them in facilitating college days, admissions interviews, and campus visits. She also collaborates with our English teachers to assist students at every step in the college admissions process. Regardless of their initial plans, we insist that our students prepare back-up plans. Consequently, each senior is encouraged to complete at least one college application. We feel that it is valuable for them to understand the process, even if they intend to pursue military service or an immediate career option following high school graduation.

This commitment to supporting students is evident in the success of our recent graduates. One parent shared how career exploration helped her daughter solidify her future plans. When her child initially enrolled at MCEC, the parent was concerned that her daughter had no idea what she wanted to do after high school. After completing a career survey and meeting with the Career Development Coach, her daughter was amazed to see the results. She was well-suited for a career in Hospitality, a field that she barely knew existed. The student became excited about her prospects. She eagerly began researching opportunities in the field. She is now attending Western Carolina University and majoring in Hospitality and Business. Her mother expressed her gratitude to MCEC for helping her daughter find her passion and for assisting her with pursuing a career that harmonized with her dream.

Another parent shared how appreciative she was of the individualized academic counseling that her daughter received. She especially praised the careful and intentional scheduling of her daughter's classes and course sequence. Following her graduation in the spring of 2020, her daughter entered UNC-Greensboro as a 2nd semester junior. She has only 43 credit hours to finish her BS in speech pathology. Because of the opportunities she had at MCEC, she has saved both time and money. Consequently, she is planning to stay an extra semester and double major in American Sign Language. Her mother was grateful that college was made more accessible and affordable by the counseling that her daughter received on our campus.

Some of our success stories are not as apparent as the preceding accounts. We sometimes find that we succeed with students almost despite the student's seeming efforts to fail. One student who graduated in the spring is a more unusual example of success. He is a bright and amiable young man. In the classroom, he contributed meaningfully to class discussions. He has a pleasant personality and clear thinking ability. He is well-behaved and considerate. However, during every term of his enrollment at MCEC, he was in academic jeopardy in both his high school and his college classes. He was certainly competent enough to do the work. He just did not complete assignments. As a result, our challenge each grading period was providing him with the right combination of reminders, encouragement, support, and reprimand to move him to action. Our staff brought all our collective effort to bear in supporting him. We continually reminded him that

he was capable and that we could not, would not, accept his failure. It is with sincere pride that I report his success. He graduated on time last spring. Moreover, he gained admission to the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, an achievement that he did not believe possible just a semester before.

At MCEC, we certainly celebrate our major achievements. However, we also value, in the truest and humblest sense, the small accomplishments. We appreciate our students who strive to excel beyond their own last, best effort. We celebrate our students who may stumble, but who rise to continue their progress. We love our students who become the first members of their families to graduate high school or apply to college. Whether large or small, we celebrate every achievement within our Phoenix family.

Nash-Rocky Mount Early College High School, Nash County Public Schools

One of our recent graduates grew up in a home where her father was not present and her mom worked out of town, leaving her grandmother to raise her. She came to ECHS to fulfill its mission which allowed her to graduate with her high school diploma and associate's degree. Throughout her time at ECHS, she worked hard, never allowing her circumstances at home to deter her.

Many times, this young lady would stay after class with her AVID Teacher sharing how she was going to be someone that everyone was proud of. She currently attends North Carolina Central University as a business major. This past summer she contacted her former AVID Teacher to share her exciting news of being chosen as a 2020 HBCU Competitiveness Scholar by the White House Initiative on HBCUs. She was among 44 students selected due to her high achievement in academics, campus involvement, entrepreneurial ethics, and civic engagement. After graduation, she plans to work as a financial advisor. She would tell you that our school taught her the academic and soft skills she needed to be successful. She is a true model for all CIHS students and is why NC's CIHS network is strong and worthwhile for our students. The dividends on investment in students attending the early college, especially first-generation college students, extends well into the future, long after they have left our classrooms.

Last spring, little did we know that when we went home on Friday, March 13th, it would be our last day of school as we knew it for the 2019-2020 school year. Educators and students did a hard pivot very quickly and many lost their balance from the changes. Our upperclassmen struggled mightily. College instructors who had never used digital tools now had to shift all learning online. Students who did not have internet access at home were in danger of not being able to complete their college classes and tanking their GPA and college transcript. One of our first-generation college students was in that situation. She used every resource she could find, including sitting outside at a McDonald's, to get access to the internet to complete her assignments. She was alone, but also surrounded with support from her teachers, including those who did not teach her that semester, but were invested in her success. One of those teachers, a Math Teacher, logged in a Zoom session with the student and just sat there with her online while the student worked on college Math. Although it helped the student to have access to a Math Teacher to ask questions while she was working on her college math, what was more important was just that feeling of not being alone. This is the message we received from the student at the end of the semester:

“Greetings, I hope all is well. Just wanted to let you all know that the classes I struggled with most I conquered them all. I would truly like to give my final thanks to you all! For all your support and kindness and patience with me! - It was truly a hard journey, but y’all not giving up on me made me push even harder! Thank you!”

She "conquered them all"! There is no better testament to the importance of early colleges than student success.

Northampton Early College High School, Northampton County Schools

I believe there are no words that can express the 2019-2020 school year. Our students were driven for success, even after they left in March. Our juniors doubled our school score on the ACT. This was a special moment for them. They met the challenge and went beyond. Our school started in 2016 with only 71 students and today we are at 152. Last year was our second year on the campus of Halifax Community College. It has given our students the feeling of being on a true college campus. They grow in so many ways, with increased responsibilities and the true culture of family.

The number of students graduating with associate degrees and certifications continues to grow. We have students graduating with associates in science and arts. Our students also take advantage of the many programs on the campus of Halifax Community College, receiving certifications in welding, automotives, industrial systems, criminal justice, and medical sciences. Our goal is to create a sense of hope – to allow our students to believe that is not where you come from, it is where you go in life.

Pender Early College High School, Pender County Schools

This young girl's story is a success story because the early college not only allowed her to pursue her goals and dream, but also gave her the opportunity to get ahead in school. She has been through struggles, but always finds a way to prevail. When she came to PECHS, she was very smart, but also had an inner motivation and drive within her. She always knew that scholarships were needed for her to continue at a university when she graduated. She also knew that getting her associate degree before she entered college would be a benefit.

Hurricane Florence hit Pender County in September of 2018. Their roof caved in and they were forced to leave their home. The emotional turmoil that came after the storm really impacted her, but school helped her get through. When the storm passed, the family was displaced. She was going back and forth to multiple houses during the weeks and weekends. During this time, she was a junior at PECHS, and she poured all her energy into school. At times, the internet was an issue, so she found places outside of school to do her homework; she would stay after school until late to complete her work. The goal of gaining her associate degree helped her stay focused. Throughout the last year and a half, she was homeless. Her family did not move into a new home until Christmas of last year. Throughout her struggles, she prevailed. She earned her high school diploma from PECHS and Associate in Science degree from Cape Fear Community College. She also earned over \$700,000 in scholarships, from all the schools that she was accepted into. She started this fall at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Pitt County Early College High School, Pitt County Schools

When we started our program, we committed to following the original tenets of the early college model. We ensured that we targeted first generation and low socioeconomic status students. We have maintained this commitment to this day. Our school has 315 students. Approximately 33% are African-American, 33% are Caucasian, and 33% Latino. We have approximately 71% Female population and 86% are considered economically disadvantaged.

One of our many success stories involves a member of our inaugural class. A young lady who statistically would not have gone to college and most likely would not have graduated high school were it not for our program. During the first month, she experienced the death of her grandmother, whom she was extremely close to. However, this was not her first experience with profound loss. During her time with us, she lost her sister, brother, another grandmother and her mother within the span of four years. In a traditional school setting these losses might have led to her dropping out or worse. With each loss of her biological family, the Early College became her family, which has always been our mission as a school. Educating the whole child took on a whole new meaning with this student and the many others like her. Effectively educating our students begins and ends with the relationships we build.

What we love about this model is that as a result of the size of the school and classes, education is more personal. We are able to build relationships with our students and become as much of a part of their family as they are of ours. One of our precepts is that results are just a relationship away. This is evidenced by our school performance. When our student experienced these losses during her five years with us, we were able to provide the love and support that she needed. As a result of partnerships we have created within our community, we were also able to expand our resources to meet pretty much any need she had. We are proud of this young lady and excited that she gets to continue her education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. We are changing lives every day.

Richmond Early College, Richmond County Schools

REaCH is a real family. During the 2019-2020 school year, we worked together to help one of our own. An 11th grade visually impaired student was given the gift of sight. We bonded together, reached out to our community, and were able to raise over \$6,000, as a school family, to purchase ESight classes for him. It was a time of celebration, love, and happiness that made a huge impact on our students and staff. This is just another example of the many types of successes that we experience here at REaCH.

Roanoke Valley Early College High School, Weldon City Schools

Back in the fall, our district decided to have each school go through the comprehensive needs assessment process through NCDPI. One of our parent panel participants told the DPI representatives that our school saved her son's life – that because he was at the early college, he was studying and taking school seriously, and not running the streets where he would end up dead or in jail. She said we gave him hope that he could go somewhere in life, and that college was reachable now.

Sandhoke Early College High School, Hoke County Schools

Serving in a school in rural America can be challenging due to funding per student and cultural understanding of academics beyond high school. So when we begin to look at how we serve our students to see life beyond high school, it is essential we know the cultural challenges we face. A paradigm shift has been in the making for over 10 years and now our school is thriving. Current enrollment is 450 and we have created a learning structure where all students can grow and find their dreams through the support of a great school and great staff. This past year despite having to transition to emergency remote learning, our school continued to teach at a high level of academic expectations. We continued engaging in relationship building, using our MTSS process, and our students stayed engaged, continuing with their college courses and earning passing performance. We graduated 23 super seniors and 68 seniors and one junior. Of this total 48% completed associate degrees. Five students completed CTE certifications in EMT, Cosmology or Drone operator. 69 of the graduates were planning to enter a 4-year university this fall. We are so proud of the many students accepted into NC State, Chapel Hill, UNC Charlotte,

Greensboro and more. We feel that we will continue to meet the needs of our students regardless of the obstacles COVID 19 placed in front of us.

Scotland Early College High School, Scotland County Schools

We have a student who is on track to graduate this year with his high school diploma and his welding certificate. He won third prize in a major welding competition with the state. He decided to stay for a 5th year to not only receive his welding certificate but his HVAC credentials as well. He was a student that was having a hard time coming out of his shell, wanting to attend school, and finding his path. Early College and the partnership with Richmond Community College gave him the opportunity to find his passion.

Wake STEM Early College High School, Wake County Schools

Our students participated in a project between the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation along with our sister school, Person Early College for Innovation and Leadership. These two Innovative High Schools – one rural and one urban – engaged in a four-week Project-Based Inquiry (PBI) Global on global water and sanitation to support students' science content knowledge development. Students worked in cross-school teams to investigate an issue related to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 6 – ensuring access to clean water and adequate sanitation. The project culminated with a student showcase at which teams presented their research findings, advocated for their issue, and participated with community members in a collective action event. Students participating in this PBI Global held a Walk for Water to raise awareness, build empathy, and collect funds for Water for South Sudan, a non-profit working to build water wells across South Sudan. Researchers from NC State University are investigating how PBI Global supports students' science content knowledge, motivation, and engagement. Additionally, researchers are examining how PBI Global professional development influences teachers' attitudes toward engaging in inquiry with their students. Students at both schools were able to learn and collaborate together across time and space. This unique collaboration through our partnerships was possible because of the intimate size and focus of our early college high school and its project-based learning pedagogy. To see a video presentation of students in action, view the content at this url: <https://stemforall2020.videohall.com/presentations/1763>.

Wilmington Early College High School, New Hanover County Schools

When students make the decision to apply to Wilmington Early College, they do so for a variety of reasons. One young lady applied because she thought it would be great to earn a degree and transfer to a university. During her first year, she was an average student. After her first year, she thought about transferring to her district school, but decided to “stick it out.” She had established a support group of friends and their conversations began to shift from social conversations to academic conversations and conversations about the future. During her tenth-grade year, she began to listen to her teachers and began building relationships with her teachers and the college liaison. For her first college class of ACA, she made an A. This student graduated from high school with a 3.86 weighted GPA and she was accepted into UNC-Charlotte, which was her first choice for post-secondary admission. This young lady entered as a first-generation student and is well on her way to becoming the first in her household to earn a college degree. Despite the setbacks from COVID-19, she completed her course work and remained focused on her post-secondary goals.

Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy, Davidson County Schools

Success at YVRCA can be defined in many different ways. We are extremely proud of our students that went through the programs and were able to gain immediate employment. For example, at least two of our former students are currently working as EMT's in nearby counties. One is partnered with his former Davidson County Community College instructor. One of our students went to work at an HVAC company and the owners came to the school to find out more about the program and how to support YVRCA.

Continued on next page

COOPERATIVE INNOVATIVE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS Special Recognitions from across North Carolina

Based on CIHS 2019-2020 Annual Reports submitted by Schools

Bertie Early College High School, Bertie County Schools

- 2020 College Success Award from GreatSchools.org

Cross Creek Early College High School, Cumberland County Schools

- 2020 National Blue Ribbon School
- Maureen Stover, 2020 NC Teacher of the Year

Davidson County Early College High School, Davidson County Schools

- NC Global Ready School

Middle College High School at Durham Technical Community College, Durham Public Schools

- Magnet Schools of America 2020 Magnet School of Distinction

Edgecombe Early College High School, Edgecombe County Schools

- Matt Bristow-Smith, 2019 NC Principal of the Year

Early College at Guilford, Guilford County Schools

- US News Best High Schools

Granville Early College High School, Granville County Schools

- US News Best High Schools

Haywood Early College High School, Haywood County Schools

- Principal Lori Fox, National Association of Secondary School Principals NC
Secondary Principal of the Year

Hertford Early College High School, Hertford County Schools

- 2020 College Success Award from GreatSchools.org

Pitt County Early College High School, Pitt County Schools

- 2019 National ESEA Distinguished School

Robeson County Early College, Public Schools of Robeson County

- 2020 National Blue Ribbon School – Exemplary High Performing

Vernon Malone College and Career Academy, Wake County Schools

- Magnet Schools of America Demonstration Level Certification

Wake Young Women’s Leadership Academy, Wake County Schools

- US News Best High Schools

Wayne School of Engineering, Wayne County Schools

- NC STEM School of Distinction, NC Public Schools Purple Star Award

APPENDIX A: CAREER AND COLLEGE PROMISE

Summary of Findings for Why Students Participate in CCP Pathways

SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

The CCP Evaluation Research Project has been exploring factors that influence whether eligible students participate in CCP pathways. This paper summarizes key findings from interviews conducted with student and school staff around why students might elect to participate or not participate in CCP pathways.

Reasons Students Participate in CCP (College Transfer and CTE pathways)

Financial. A prominent theme expressed by most students participating in CCP, as well as high school and community college staff, was the financial savings to students and their families given that students could earn transferable college credits and/or credentials that could help offset future postsecondary education costs.

College readiness and preparation. Students and staff discussed how taking college courses in high school helped students develop college readiness skills, get ahead academically, and better prepared them for the college admissions process. For example, several students described how taking dual enrollment courses was motivating because these courses allowed students to feel like a college student because the courses were rigorous, students had more autonomy and flexibility, and because CCP gave students the opportunity to be on a college campus. Also, most students mentioned how accumulating transferable course credits would allow students to “get ahead” by reducing the number of college courses that they may need to take in the future. In fact, several students expressed a preference for dual enrollment over AP because they were concerned that they might not pass the AP exam and thus lose out on accumulating transferable credits. Finally, several students discussed how participating in CCP could increase their competitiveness in the college admissions process, particularly given that successfully completing dual enrollment courses would boost their GPA.

Encouragement and support. Several students reported being encouraged by families, peers, advisors, and teachers to participate in CCP. Several staff members mentioned how parents, particularly those experiencing financial difficulties, encouraged their children to take advantage of the cost savings afforded by CCP. Also, both staff and students mentioned the role that peers played in encouraging participation in CCP. For example,

some students mentioned taking part in CCP because their friends were participating. Some staff members mentioned that students learned about CCP from their peers or that peers pushed students to contact teachers or advisors to learn more about taking part in CCP. Finally, several staff members noted how some schools varied in their levels of emphasis on CCP and that in more supportive schools students were more likely to receive advising and other forms of outreach that encouraged CCP participation.

Personal interest. Some students reported taking part in CCP to learn more about an academic area or to explore possible jobs and careers. Some students reported taking part in CCP because they wanted to take a particular course more so than completing a particular pathway. In general, College Transfer pathway students were somewhat more likely to report taking part CCP for general college readiness and preparedness, whereas CTE pathway students were more likely to report taking part in CCP for career exploration or because they had an interest in taking particular courses.

Reasons Eligible Students Do Not Participate in CCP

Awareness. A common theme that emerged from our focus groups with students who were eligible to participate in CCP but did not do so was that many of these students lacked general awareness about CCP or were not sure how to participate. In fact, several students reported that had they known more about CCP or learned about the program earlier in their academic career they would have been more likely to participate. Some students reported that the school did not emphasize CCP as much as other programs. Our interviews with school staff also suggest that schools varied in their levels of emphasis on CCP with some staff members discussing that if administrators and advising staff did not buy into the program that students were less likely to receive information about the program or be encouraged to take part.

Financial. CCP covers the tuition cost for dual enrollment courses, but several of the students that we interviewed who were eligible to participate in CCP but did not do so reported that additional costs prevented them from participating. For example, some students mentioned textbook costs as a barrier. Other students, particularly students taking CTE courses, mentioned that having to pay equipment and supply fees was a barrier to participation.

Logistical. Transportation and scheduling were two prominent logistical issues that some students and staff reported for not participating in CCP. In terms of transportation, several students reported not being able to provide their own transportation or not being able to rely on other sources of transportation to get to off campus classes. Our staff interviews suggest that schools are often limited in their ability to meet CCP students' transportation needs. In terms of scheduling, students and staff mentioned how the lack of alignment between high school and community college schedules can create challenges for students who want to take certain courses, particularly when course times overlap or when students do not have enough time to travel from the high school and community college between courses. Finally, some students reported having too many other commitments such as jobs or sports to be able to participate in CCP.

Credit transferability. A commonly reported reason for eligible students not participating in CCP was a belief that dual enrollment courses would not transfer, particularly to private or out of state schools. In fact, several students who were eligible to participate in CCP reported taking AP courses instead because they believed that the credits earned through AP were more likely to transfer regardless of the type or location of the postsecondary institution. In addition, these students felt that AP courses were generally more rigorous and of higher quality than dual enrollment courses. We also learned from our interviews with school staff that some parents also viewed AP courses as being of higher quality than dual enrollment courses taken at a community college.

Implementation. Some eligible students reported not participating in CCP because of the way CCP was being implemented in their schools, particularly the course delivery method. Many of the schools that we visited offered dual enrollment courses online. However, several of the students preferred face-to-face courses because they believed that these courses offered more opportunities for instructor interaction and support. Students who commented on the online format believed that they would be less successful in online courses because they were less likely to have substantive and timely support from the instructor. Also, a few students reported a desire to have more courses offered on the high school campus if possible, to overcome logistical issues (e.g., transportation and scheduling) and to accommodate students who would feel more comfortable remaining on the high school campus.

Summary and Next Steps

Results from this initial analysis reveal that most eligible students, regardless of whether they participate in CCP, hold positive views about the program. Those who do participate, do so for a variety of reasons, such as saving money on college tuition, preparing for the rigors of college, accumulating credits or earning a credential, and improving chances of admission to postsecondary education after high school. Despite these generally positive views, students expressed a number of barriers to participating in CCP including, paying for non-tuition costs not covered by CCP, limited access to transportation, scheduling and/or logistical challenges, and a belief that college credits would not transfer under certain situations. Preference also played a role, with some students expressing a preference for dual enrollment courses that meet face-to-face (and on the high school campus where possible). One of the most prominent reasons that eligible students gave for not participating in CCP is that they were unfamiliar with the program or lacked enough knowledge to participate. Our interviews with high school and community college staff suggest that the emphasis on CCP varies across schools and communities and that this can impact the degree to which students are encouraged to participate or the degree to which staff work to address logistical issues that inhibit program participation.

Based on our preliminary findings we are exploring ways to address some of these challenges and barriers, particularly those factors under the control of the school. We are undertaking these efforts through our ongoing collaboration with the CCP Evaluation Partners and Advisory Board and through additional data collection and analysis.

Data sources

During the winter/early spring of the 2019-2020 school year, a team of evaluators from the CCP Evaluation Partnership conducted site visits in four districts across the state that included structured staff interviews and student focus groups to better understand how CCP is being implemented in schools and districts across the state. For this analysis we interviewed high school or community college staff and high school students including: 3 school counselors, 3 college liaisons, 2 career development coordinators, 3 principals, a distance learning advisor, and focus groups with 22 students participating in the College Transfer pathway, 18 students participating in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway, and 23 eligible students who were not participating in CCP.

APPENDIX B: COOPERATIVE INNOVATIVE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Impact of Early Colleges on Postsecondary Performance and Completion

SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

This is a summary of historical research by SERVE of a select group of CIHS and does not represent all Cooperative Innovative High School programs.



What Happens When You Combine High School And College?

The impact of early colleges on postsecondary performance and completion¹





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SUMMARY

Early colleges are an innovative model of schooling that combines high school and college. A 14-year, rigorous experimental study has been examining whether this model works. The study compares early college students who were accepted through a lottery to students who applied to early colleges but were not accepted through the lottery (the control group). The latest findings from this study include:

- More early college students earned postsecondary credentials. By six years after 12th grade, 44.3% of early college students had earned some sort of postsecondary credential compared to 33.0% of the control group.
- Early college students were three times as likely to get associate degrees as control students. 32.8% of early college students earned an associate degree, compared to 11.0% of control students.
- Despite the higher rate of associate degree attainment, early college students were not being steered away from bachelor's degrees. There was no significant impact on bachelor's degree attainment for the full sample. Among economically disadvantaged students, early college students were 4.5 percentage points more likely to earn bachelor's degrees than their control group counterparts.
- Early college students earned their degrees more rapidly. The early college model shortened students' time to degree by two years for associate degrees and by six months for bachelor's degrees.
- Despite the shortened time in school, early college students did equally well in college. Both groups had essentially the same postsecondary GPA.

This brief gives an overview of the early college model as implemented in North Carolina, the study's design, and the model's impacts on student outcomes.

The problem

Earning a living wage in the 21st century generally requires some sort of postsecondary training or credential.² Yet access to and success in college remains out of reach for too many students, particularly those who are low-income, those whose parents did not go to college, or members of historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups.³ Students face many barriers to enrolling in college, which include academic, financial, and logistical obstacles. For example, many students have not taken the courses they need to take in high school to qualify for college admission; they may not know how to get financial aid; or they may be unclear about the college application process.⁴ Early colleges seek to address this problem with a conceptually simple solution: combine the high school and college experience so that students can graduate from high school with a postsecondary credential.

Early colleges as part of the solution

Serving students in grades 9–12 or 9–13, early colleges are small schools, frequently located on college campuses, that seamlessly integrate the high school and college experiences. At the end of high school, students are expected to graduate with a high school diploma and an associate degree or two years of transferable college credit. The target populations for these schools are students who traditionally face challenges making the transition to college, including students who are low-income, the first in their family to go to college, or members of a minority group underrepresented in college. Our study looked at this model in North Carolina (NC), which has had a statewide program since 2005. Under the Cooperative Innovative High School legislation and with the financial support of the North Carolina General Assembly, NC has created a total of 133 early colleges and similar schools.⁵

As implemented in North Carolina, early colleges are not just dual enrollment programs on steroids. Instead, these schools redesign the entire high school experience to prepare all their students for success in postsecondary education. Thus,

early colleges provide a rigorous high school curriculum with instructional practices that support students' ability to think critically, write effectively, and work collaboratively. Students start taking college courses as early as 9th grade, and by 11th or 12th grade, they are taking college courses almost exclusively. To ensure that students are successful in the rigorous curriculum, early colleges provide students with academic and affective supports. The schools also focus on providing ongoing professional learning and opportunities for collaboration to the teachers.

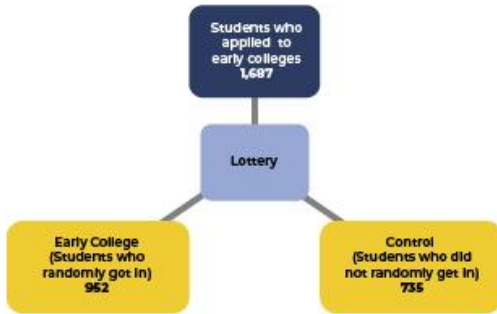
The study

Funded through four federal grants from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences and a grant awarded by Arnold Ventures, this 14-year study was the first to rigorously examine the impact of the early college high school model. This independent study is led by SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, partnering with researchers at RAND Corporation and RTI International. The study has been examining the impact of the model on a variety of student outcomes: high school achievement, attendance, suspensions, attainment of college credits in high school, graduation from high school, enrollment and performance in postsecondary education, and graduation from postsecondary education. This brief summarizes results for postsecondary performance and degree attainment.

METHODS

In this longitudinal experimental study, participating early colleges used a lottery to select students from their applicant pool. To track outcomes of all applicants who went through the lottery, the study team collected data from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the University of North Carolina System (postsecondary performance), and the National Student Clearinghouse (postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment after high school).

Figure 1: The Sample



The study uses a methodology known as “intent-to-treat,” which means that all students who were initially assigned to the early college remain in the treatment group, even if they did not end up going to the early college or if they left the school before graduating. The advantage to this approach is that it preserves the original ‘apples-to-apples’ comparison,⁶ the disadvantage is that the impact estimates are likely to be smaller because they include outcomes of students who withdrew from the early college prior to completion.

SAMPLE

This brief presents results from analyses conducted with 1687 students who applied to attend 12 early colleges and went through a lottery process (see Figure 1). Nine hundred fifty-two were randomly chosen to attend and 735 were randomly chosen not to attend and went to a different school. Results were compared for the early college sample and the control sample.

Comparing apples to apples

It is often challenging to determine the impact of a program like the early college model because the students who apply might be very different than regular high school students who do not apply. This makes it hard to tease out whether any positive outcomes are because of the strength of the school or because the school might be attracting more motivated or academically talented students. This study uses an experimental design—frequently called the “gold standard” in education research—to address this concern. The study only included schools that used a lottery to select their students. Eligible students were then randomly assigned to attend the early college or not. The study compares the outcomes for the students who applied and were randomly accepted to the results for the students who applied and were not randomly accepted. This means that we are comparing apples to apples.



Results

Overall, the study found that early colleges are meeting their goal of increasing the number of students successfully completing postsecondary education. Specifics on the key findings appear below.

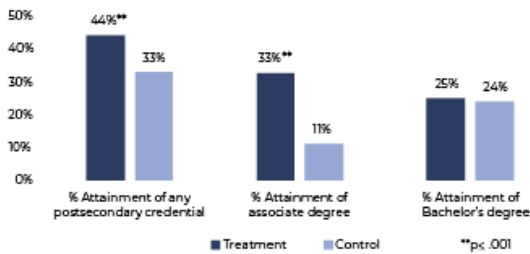
FINDING 1

More early college students earned postsecondary credentials. The study looked at the percentage of students who had earned any sort of postsecondary credential (associate degree, a bachelor's degree, or a technical credentials). By six years after 12th grade, 44.3% of early college students had earned some sort of postsecondary credential compared to 33.0% of the control group.

FINDING 2

Early college students were three times as likely to get associate degrees as control students. By six years after 12th grade, 32.8% of early college students had earned an associate degree, compared to 11.0% of control students (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Early College Students Earned More Postsecondary Credentials (Six Yrs. after 12th Grade)



FINDING 3

Economically disadvantaged students were more likely to earn a bachelor's degree. The higher rate of associate degree attainment did not result in a lower rate of bachelor's degree attainment. For the full sample, early college students were 3.9 percentage points more likely to have earned a bachelor's degree by four years after 12th grade, a statistically significant positive impact. However, by six years after 12th grade, the control group had caught up, and there was no significant impact on bachelor's degree attainment six years after 12th grade in the full sample. Exploratory analyses did find a statistically significant positive impact for economically disadvantaged students; 21.3% of the early college group earned a bachelor's degree by six years after 12th grade compared to 16.8% of the control group.



"I think that coming into this school as a freshman and now getting ready to graduate next year, the maturity level from when you enter to when you leave is completely different than when you go to a traditional high school...I've known that I can apply for grants since sophomore year, and I've known where I've wanted to go and I really don't think that would have happened if I would have went to my home school."

— Early college student



FINDING 4

Early college students earned their degrees more rapidly. Early college students who earned a degree did so more rapidly. On average, the early college group earned an associate degree two years more quickly than the control group did, and they earned a bachelor's degree six months more quickly.

FINDING 5

Both treatment and control groups had similar postsecondary GPAs. Some people might worry that the early college model, which shortens the students' total time in postsecondary institutions, will result in students being less successful at those institutions. To test this theory, the study used a matching design to look at students' college GPAs after they left the early college. Results showed that early college students had essentially the same postsecondary GPA (between 2.60 and 2.74, depending on the time point) as the control group (between 2.59 and 2.76).

CONCLUSIONS

The early college model is essentially a test case of whether we can merge the high school and college experiences in such a way that students earn a postsecondary credential or a substantial number of transferable college credits while they are in high school. According to results from this rigorous experimental study, more early college students earned associate degrees and economically disadvantaged students were more likely to earn bachelor's degrees. On average, early college students earned their degrees more quickly.

In addition to these impacts on postsecondary degree attainment, the team's prior research⁷ in North Carolina has shown that early college students were more likely to complete high school courses required for college; students also had higher attendance and lower suspensions. Early college students reported better experiences in school than control students. They were also more likely to enroll in college.

Additionally, preliminary cost studies of the model found that early colleges had higher costs per student than a traditional comprehensive high school; however, they were a less expensive route (for both the students and society) to a two-year degree and a much less expensive pathway to earning a four-year degree.

A potential critique of the model is that early college students might miss important high school learning opportunities and be less prepared for their future, including for success in college. At this point, there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case; both groups of students performed equally well after they left the early college or their high school. Of course, a key test of students' preparation will be how students perform in the workforce. As this study continues, it will continue following students and look at the impact of the program on students' employment and earnings.

For more information about the study, please contact Julie Edmunds, the Principal Investigator, at SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro: 336-315-7415 or jedmunds@serve.org.

Footnotes

¹This brief is based on the following peer-reviewed article: Edmunds, J.A., Unlu, F., Furey, J., Glennie, E., & Arshavsky, N. (2020) What happens when you combine high school and college? The impact of the early college model on postsecondary performance and completion. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373720912249>

²Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2010). Help wanted: Projections of jobs and education requirements through 2018. Retrieved from Washington, DC: <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/ursjbxaym2np1v8mgrv7>

³Ross, T., Kena, G., Rathbun, A., KewalRamani, A., Zhang, J., Kristapovich, P., et al. (2012). Higher Education: Gaps in Access and Persistence Study. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

⁴Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., Coca, V., & Moeller, E. (2008). From high school to the future: Potholes on the road to college. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

⁵For more information about North Carolina's Cooperative Innovative High Schools, many of which are early colleges, please visit <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/students-families/enhanced-opportunities/advanced-learning-and-gifted-education/career-and-college-promise/cooperative-innovative-high-school-programs>.

⁶Students who choose to leave the school might be different in some way than students who choose to remain. The students who remain might be more motivated or more prepared; if the study looked only at results for those students, it might overestimate the program's impact.

⁷See Edmunds, J. A., Bernstein, L., Unlu, F., Glennie, E., Willse, J., Smith, A., & Arshavsky, N. (2012). Expanding the start of the college pipeline: Ninth grade findings from an experimental study of the impact of the Early College High School Model. *Journal for Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 5(2), 136-159. Edmunds, J. A., Unlu, F., Glennie, E., Bernstein, L., Fesler, L., Furey, J., & Arshavsky, N. (2017). Smoothing the transition to postsecondary education: the impact of the early college model. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 10(2), 297-325. Edmunds, J. A., Willse, J., Arshavsky, N., & Dallas, A. (2013). Mandated engagement: The impact of early college high schools. *Teachers College Record*, 115(7), 1-31.

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