Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

Evaluation of Student Success in Cooperative Innovative Education Programs

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Summary Status of High School Innovation Projects under the Innovative Education Initiatives Act (GS 115C-238)

Three compelling needs drive high school redesign in North Carolina: 1) student achievement and performance; 2) teacher professionalism and satisfaction; and 3) economic restructuring. In response to these needs, Governor Mike Easley and the NC Education Cabinet with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation created the North Carolina New Schools Project (NCNSP) in August 2003 to focus leadership and financial resources on change in the state's high schools. The clear intent of the NCNSP is to engender dramatic structural change rather than creating new programs in the state's high schools. In cooperation with state and national partners, the NCNSP has launched an unprecedented effort to create 100 academically rigorous, focused and flexible new and redesigned high schools over the next five years. The NC State Board of Education, the NC Department of Public Instruction, the UNC and NC Community College systems, national organizations such as Jobs for the Future, the New Tech Foundation, Asia Society and the Middle College National Consortium, among others, are working together in partnership to create these new and redesigned high schools.

Unlike previous attempts to reform high schools, the NCNSP relies upon a six-year partnership (one year of planning followed by five years of implementation) with local school districts and higher education partners to change fundamental high school structures including governance, student support and teaching and learning. Each new and redesigned school is completely autonomous, with its own principal and school budget, and will serve when fully implemented 400 students or less in grades 9-12 or 13. In addition, each school will offer all students an academically rigorous, university-prep curriculum that will ensure that every student graduates ready for college, work and citizenship. All students will also participate in work-based learning experiences, such as internships or job shadowing, and will work closely with a teacher advisor during their time at the school. Students will complete at least their first semester or year of college before graduation, and they will be well versed in 21st Century workplace skills including the ability to work in teams, to communicate both orally and through writing, and to analyze and solve problems.

The NCNSP and its partners are working with local school districts and their higher education partners to create two types of schools: redesigned high schools and early college high schools.

• Redesigned High Schools: The NCNSP is partnering with local school districts to convert conventional high schools into a series of autonomous, focused and academically rigorous new schools which operate on the existing campus. These new schools each adopt a curricular focus or common methodology as one strategy to enable teachers in the core courses to work together to make connections between courses and to the world of work and to link learning to the adult world of work. The intent of a focus is not preparation for a specific career but preparation for a lifetime of learning and workplace restructuring.

• Learn and Earn Early College High Schools: Based on the campus of two-orfour year community colleges and universities, Learn and Earn early college high schools will provide an academically rigorous course of study with the goal of ensuring that all students graduate with a high school diploma and two years of transferable credit or an associate degree. The Learn and Earn Early College High School Initiative submitted a separate status report to the State Board of Education and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee in September 2006 in accordance with SL 2004-124, Sec. 7.22.

Collectively, these redesigned and *Learn and Earn* early college high schools are called High School Innovation Projects (HSIPs). The HSIPs are and will be operating as Cooperative Innovative High School Programs under the Innovative Initiatives Education Act (GS 115C-238). GS 115C-238 calls on the State Board of Education to report on an annual evaluation of the success of students in Cooperative Innovative High Schools. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the NCNSP are monitoring and evaluating the progress of the schools in implementing the school models and in the schools' effects on student achievement. These evaluation efforts are on-going and data will not be available for another year or two. However, this report will provide an update on the initiative and the schools that opened for the 2005-06 school year.

HSIPs in Implementation for 2005-06 School Year

A total of 24 HSIPs were open for students for the 2005-06 school year. Of those, eleven were redesigned schools that are located on eight existing high school campuses. Eight of the eleven are health and life science-themed high schools, two are pre-engineering themed high schools, and one is a computer technology themed high school. Over the next three years, those eight high school campuses will convert into a total of 22 redesigned high schools. For a complete list of the eleven redesigned high schools that were open for the 2005-06 school year, see Attachment 1.

Thirteen *Learn and Earn* early college high schools opened for students for the 2005-06 school year. Each of these schools is working in partnership with a community college or university that is providing facilities for the school and college-level courses for the students. Of those thirteen, two are partnered with a UNC system school and eleven are partnered with a North Carolina community college. Four of the thirteen sites were designated for the 2004-05 school year as "acceleration" or pilot sites for the initiative and were serving students during that school year. These sites served as models for the other nine sites that opened for students for the 2005-06 school year. For a complete list of the thirteen *Learn and Earn* early college high school sites that were open for students for the 2005-06 school year, please see Attachment 1.

Collectively, the 24 HSIPs served just under 3,000 students during the 2005-06 school year. Overall, most of the HSIPs served primarily 9th and 10th graders for the 2005-06 school year. As the schools continue to implement the models over the course of the next four years, the schools will add additional cohorts of ninth graders until they reach their

capacity of approximately 200-400 students. Student demographic information for the 24 schools combined is presented in the table below.

Table 1. Demographics of Students in High School Innovation Projects, 2005-06Source: NCDPI

	Redesigned HS	Learn and Earn Early College HS
9th	662	622
10th	591	186
11th	371	131
12th	219	176
Total	1843	1115
% White	37.0%	50.5%
% Black	49.9%	36.3%
% Hispanic	7.8%	5.7%
% Other	5.3%	7.5%
% Male	43.3%	38.2%
% Female	56.7%	61.8%

At this time, school-level student achievement data based on the end-of-course tests is not available for the 24 schools for the 2005-06 school year. In addition, data around graduation rates and higher education persistence rates will be available in six years. However, the *Learn and Earn* early college high schools have reported some preliminary data on college course taking patterns and success rates by students over the 2005-06 school year. At twelve of the thirteen *Learn and Earn* early college high schools, 708 students over the course of the year took college credit-bearing courses. The college course pass rate for those 12 schools ranged from 76% to 100%, with 9 of the schools having a 90% college course pass rate or greater.

Attendance rates for the 24 HSIPs are also available for the 2005-06 school year. Regular school attendance is a key indicator of a student's likelihood to graduate. Overall, attendance rates are higher in redesigned and *Learn and Earn* early college high schools than in their respective comparison high schools in their districts.² Collectively,

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¹ One early college high school did not enroll or plan to enroll any students during their ninth grade year in college courses.

² For a redesigned high school, the comparable comprehensive high school is typically the comprehensive high school located on the same campus as the new school and / or the school from which the new school's student population is drawn. For an early college high school, the comparable comprehensive high schools

the 11 redesigned high schools had an average attendance rate for the 2005-06 school year of 94.2% (compared to an average attendance rate of 93.5% for the comparison comprehensive high schools).³ Collectively, the 13 *Learn and Earn* early college high schools had an average attendance rate of 95.7% (compared to an average attendance rate of 94.0% for the comparison comprehensive high schools).

Data from Governor Easley's 2006 Teacher Working Conditions Survey shows that teachers in redesigned and *Learn and Earn* early college high schools are significantly more satisfied with their working conditions than teachers in other high schools from around the state. Across each of the five domains, ⁴ redesigned and *Learn and Earn* early college high schools had significantly higher domain averages than other high schools in the state (see table 2). In addition, more than 85 percent of teachers in redesigned and *Learn and Earn* early college high schools agreed that their "school is a good place to work and learn." In fact, 48 percent of teachers in redesigned and *Learn and Earn* early college high schools **strongly agreed** that their school is a good place to work and learn compared to just 26 percent of teachers in other high schools.

Table 2. Teacher Working Conditions Domain Averages in Redesigned and *Learn* and Earn Early College High Schools (ECHS) Compared to Other High Schools Source: 2006 Teacher Working Conditions Survey with analysis by Center for Teaching Quality

Teacher Working Conditions Area	Redesigned and ECHS	Other High Schools
Time	3.76	3.09
Professional Development	4.04	3.48
Empowerment	3.90	3.29
Leadership	4.03	3.44
Facilities and Resources	4.00	3.27

Supports for HSIPs

The six-year partnership that HSIPs enter into with the NCNSP and NCDPI provides the schools with several supports that are integral to implementing the school model and in creating an academically rigorous learning environment. These supports include among other things a school change coach, professional development for teachers, professional

are the other high schools in the district and the schools from which the new school's student population is drawn.

³ There is not a lot of variation in school attendance rates. The mean statewide school attendance rate is 94.8%.

⁴ The questions on the Teacher Working Conditions Survey are divided into five domains: time, professional development, empowerment, leadership and facilities and resources. For each school, district and the state, the responses to the questions in each domain are averaged together to create domain average. Responses to the questions in each domain are on a five point scale, with a 1 being strongly disagree with the statement and a 5 being strongly agree with the statement. This data comes from analysis by the Center for Teaching Quality.

development for principals, and local cash to cover additional expenses, including college textbooks for students. Funding for the partnerships with the redesigned high schools comes from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and funding for the partnerships with the *Learn and Earn* early college high schools comes from the State of North Carolina.

School Change Coach: Each HSIP is assigned a professionally trained and highly experienced coach who serves as a facilitator for the planning and implementation of the new school. Coaches are identified and trained by NCNSP and NCDPI. Brokering organizations, such as the Leadership Group of the Carolinas, work with NCNSP and NCDPI to facilitate the coaching process. Next year, the work of the school change coach will be supplemented by a highly trained and experienced instructional coach.

Teacher Professional Development: Over the course of the 2005-06 school year, teachers and counselors participated in a series of professional development sessions collectively called *Teaching for Results*. Many of the professional development sessions were follow-up to previous sessions so that teachers and counselors were receiving consistent and meaningful professional development. Teachers and counselors participated in the following sessions:

- Student Support: Principals and counselors from each HSIP participated in a two-day professional development session focused on providing effective student support in their redesigned high schools. The session was held in September at the 2005 North Carolina New Schools Project Fall Institute. The participants were engaged in discussions and hands-on activities centered on developing student advisories and seminar classes. Professional development leaders from the Middle College National Consortium led the session. This session was designed to support school sites in improving their student support systems in order to improve student-teacher relationships.
- Professional Learning Communities: In November, two teachers from each HSIP participated in a professional development session focused on developing successful professional learning communities in a redesigned or early college high school through effective teacher leadership and the use of critical friends groups and other protocols to analyze student and teacher work. The session was a follow up to a previous site-based professional development session. Two instructors from the National Staff Development Council and three teachers from Texas led the session.
- Differentiating Instruction: In December, two teachers from each HSIP participated in a session focused on differentiating instruction. The session provided participants with a variety of practical and ready-to-use differentiation strategies, including flexible groupings of students, learning contracts, and tiered lesson planning. Sandra Page from ASCD facilitated the session.
- *Project Based Learning:* In January, one to two teachers from each HSIP participated in a project based learning professional development session. The

session was a follow-up to two previous PBL sessions. Facilitators from the Buck Institute led the session. Teachers shared the PBL units they had been developing over the past several months and received feedback for improvement through the use of a tuning protocol from both the presenters and their colleagues.

- *Literacy:* In February, one teacher from each HSIP participated in a session focused on teaching literacy across the curriculum. The session was a follow-up to a previous literacy session. Steve Hauge, a local literacy professional development facilitator, led the session, which was focused on specific literacy teaching strategies, teaching writing across the content areas, and developing school-wide literacy plans.
- Teaching and Learning Conference: In April, two to three teachers and principals from each HSIP attended the second annual North Carolina New Schools Project Teaching and Learning Conference. The two-day collaborative session was designed so that the teachers and principals had the opportunity to share curriculum, best practices, successes and lessons learned. Teacher-facilitators from established innovative high schools including the Urban Academy, International High School at LaGuardia, International School of the Americas, and Dayton Early College Academy were available to discuss and provide feedback on a variety of topics including designing new courses, creating internship and service learning opportunities, developing integrated curriculum, and implementing differentiated instruction. School teams were asked to bring at least one curriculum unit, professional plan or professional dilemma that they have been working on at their school. The participants then worked on those units or plans over the two days in their teams and scheduled meeting times with the teacher-facilitators for advice and feedback.
- 2006 NCNSP Summer Institute: In June, teams of seven teachers, counselors and principals from the HSIPs attended the 2006 North Carolina New Schools Project Summer Institute. This annual institute provided the teams time for meaningful reflection on the past year and planning for the opening of school in the fall. In addition, members of each team were involved in a field-based learning experience to the NC Zoo where they learned how to enrich field-based learning experiences through the use of literacy. Teams also had access to instructional experts and teacher leaders who could share their experiences of teaching and leading in innovative high schools. Overall, the institute was designed to help school teams develop a deeper understanding of rigor. Noted author Tony Wagner, Co-Director of the Change Leadership Group at Harvard Graduate School of Education, kicked off the institute by discussing what rigor is and how to recognize it in a school or classroom.

Principal Professional Development: The North Carolina New Schools Project in partnership with the UNC Principals Executive Program launched last summer the Leadership Institute for High School Redesign. Over the course of the year, the Leadership Institute for High School Redesign has provided professional development for

HSIP principals focused on effective instructional leadership. Principals participated in five regional evening networking sessions in which they discussed issues they were facing in their new schools, how to build a professional learning community, how to distribute leadership among teachers, the teacher working conditions survey, and how to analyze student assignments for evidence of rigor. In addition, the principals participated in the student support, the Teaching and Learning Conference and the Summer Institute professional development sessions detailed above.

Sites Opening for the 2006-07 School Year

During the 2005-06 school year, 14 redesigned high school sites and 20 *Learn and Earn* early college high school sites completed a planning process for opening a redesigned or *Learn and Earn* early college high school for the 2006-07 school year. Of the 14 redesigned high schools, six are information technology-enabled, project-based learning high schools; one is an international studies high school; and seven are a locally designed model school. Of the twenty new *Learn and Earn* early college high schools, two are partnered with a UNC system school and 18 are partnered with an NC community college. For a complete list of the redesigned and *Learn and Earn* early college high schools that are opening for the 2006-07 school year, please see Attachment 1.

Each planning site received a small planning grant from NCNSP and NCDPI which was used over the course of the year to fund a school change coach, various planning activities and additional associated costs. The planning activities included:

- Planning Support Session: In September, members from each HSIP planning team shared their school plans with other planning teams and received feedback on their planning process. The planning teams received initial training in the National School Reform Faculty's tuning protocol and used this tool in evaluating their school redesign plans. NCNSP staff and coaches also facilitated discussions around the design principles for redesigned and Learn and Earn early college high schools and the structures that need to be in place to ensure that a redesigned or Learn and Earn early college high school is different from a comprehensive high school.
- Study Visits to Model Schools: NCNSP and NCDPI staff also led a series of study visits to model schools across the country for two planning team members from each HSIP planning teams. Planning teams visited Dayton Early College Academy in Dayton, OH; Youngstown State Early College in Youngstown, OH; Middle College High School at LaGuardia Community College in New York, NY; International High School at LaGuardia Community College in New York, NY; Hollis Price Middle College High School and Middle College High School at SWTCC in Memphis, TN; Mott Middle College High School in Flint, MI; Humanities Prep High School in New York City; Julia Richman Education Complex in New York City; landmark High School in New York City; Napa New Technology High

School in Napa, CA; Minnesota New Country School in Minneapolis, MN; Avalon Charter School in Minneapolis, MN; Minnesota School of Environmental Studies in Minneapolis, MN; and Glen Este High School in Cincinnati, OH. Each study visit included an initial briefing session, in which NCNSP and NCDPI staff provided background information on the schools that the participants would be visiting, led the participants in discussions about what questions they hoped to get answered and facilitated an accountable talk with participants focused on an article on effective student support. After the site visits, NCNSP and NCDPI staff led participants in a debriefing session in which participants discussed what they saw, why it is important, and what they intend to do with the information they have gathered. Participants prepared powerpoint presentations from what they had learned to share with their other planning team members. Each participant also received a packet before the trip that included background information on the schools they are visiting, tools for use in gathering information from the site visits, and articles on high school redesign and the design principles.

- Teaching and Learning Conference: In April, two teachers from each HSIP planning site attended a two-day professional development session focused on project-based learning. Thom Markham from the Buck Institute led the session. The session served as an introduction, with follow-up sessions planned for the 2006 Summer Institute and several other times over the course of the 2006-07 school year.
- 2006 NCNSP Summer Institute: Teams of seven teachers, principals and counselors from the HSIP planning sites also attended the Summer Institute detailed above. The teachers and counselors from the planning sites participated in one of four professional development sessions while at the Summer Institute. Those sessions were focused on project-based learning, rigor in practice, equity, and professional learning communities. The principals participated in a leadership session facilitated by the Leadership Institute for High School Redesign that was focused on preparing for the opening of the new school and on effective instruction leadership strategies.

Evaluation Efforts

As mentioned earlier, there are several evaluation efforts underway to monitor the progress of HSIPs on improving student achievement, graduation rates and college enrollment and persistence rates. Below is a brief description of each effort. Data from each of these efforts will not be available for another year or two.

Redesigned High Schools

Fouts and Associates, NCNSP's external evaluators, are conducting an evaluation of the overall NCNSP initiative and the redesigned high schools. The evaluators are collecting

and comparing data from 16 NCNSP schools sites (both the comprehensive high schools and the redesigned high schools housed on the comprehensive campuses) to evaluate the impact of the new, redesigned high schools on student retention and graduation rates, college attendance and persistence rates, student perceptions of their school and student perceptions of college. In addition, 10 of the 16 sites are in-depth evaluation sites in which the evaluators are conducting annual site visits, which include interviews and focus groups with school and district personnel, to evaluate both the implementation of the redesigned high schools and the impact on teachers and administrators in those schools.

Learn and Earn Early College High Schools

NCNSP and NCDPI are currently building a partnership with Jobs for the Future (JFF), the intermediary for the national Early College High School Initiative, to include NC's early college high schools in the Early College High School Initiative Student Information System. The Student Information System (SIS) collects and analyzes early college student-level data on such areas as demographics, attendance, course taking and course completion patterns, test scores, GPA, disciplinary incidences, and number of college courses taken. The Student Information System will allow NCNSP, NCDPI and our early college high schools to better track and evaluate the progress of the students in our early colleges.

SERVE, the southeast region Federal Education Laboratory, in partnership with Duke University, the North Carolina New Schools Project, UNC-Greensboro, Abt Associates and other organizations, has received funding from the US Department of Education to conduct a rigorous, experimental research study of the *Learn and Earn* Early College High School Initiative. The research project will study the impact of the early college model on important student outcomes and will seek to determine whether the model works for different student populations. In addition, the project will also study the implementation of the components of early college high schools by examining the association of those components with student outcomes. This study will provide useful information to NCNSP, NCDPI and our early colleges on how to improve our practice.

Attachment 1. HSIPs in Implementation as of September 2006

Cohort 1 (opened Fall 2005)	Health and Life Sciences
Asheville City Schools	School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville (SILSA)
Cumberland County Schools	The Cumberland School of Health and Life Sciences
Granville County Schools	South Granville School of Health and Life Sciences
Granville County Schools Newton-Conover City Schools Scotland County Schools	J.F. Webb School of Health and Life Sciences Newton-Conover Health Science High School Scotland High School of Health Sciences
Scotland County Schools	Scotland High School of Engineering and Skilled Trades
Wake County Schools Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools	East Wake School of Health Science Atkins School of Biotechnology Atkins School of Computer Technology Atkins School of Pre-Engineering
Cohort 2 (opened Fall 2005)	Learn and Earn Early College High School
Anson County Schools Buncombe County Schools Catawba County Schools Clinton City/Sampson Cumberland County Schools Davidson County Schools Durham Public Schools Edgecombe County schools Guilford County Schools Nash-Rocky Mount Schools Iredell-Statesville Schools Robeson County Schools Rutherford County Schools	Anson County Early College High School Buncombe County Early / Middle College Catawba Valley Early College High School Sampson County Early College High School Cross Creek Early College High School Davidson Early College High School Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School Edgecombe County Early College High School The Early / Middle College at GTCC Nash-Rocky Mount Early / Middle College High School Collaborative College for Technology and Leadership Robeson County Early College High School Rutherford Early College High School
Cohort 3 (opening Fall 2006)	Northeastern North Carolina
Camden County Schools Dare County Schools	Cam-Tech High School Cape Hatteras Secondary School of Coastal

Studies

Cohort 4 (opening Fall 2006)	Information Technology Enabled
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Garinger School of Information Technology
Cherokee Central Schools (Bureau of Indian Affairs)	Cherokee High School
Public Schools of Robeson County	Robeson New Tech High School
Scotland County Schools	Scotland High School of Math, Science, and Technology
Wake County Public Schools	East Wake School of Information Technology
Cohort 4 (opening Fall 2006)	International Studies
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Garinger School of International Studies
Cohort 4 (opening Fall 2006)	Local Design
Halifax County (Roanoke River Consortium)	Halifax County School of Ecology
Roanoke Rapids Graded School District	Roanoke Rapids Living to Learn High School
Scotland County Schools	Scotland High School of Visual and Performing Arts
Scotland County Schools	Scotland High School of Business, Marketing and Finance
Scotland County Schools	Scotland High School of Leadership and Public Service
Swain County Schools	Swain County School of Applied Science, Math and Technology
Cohort 5 (opening Fall 2006)	Learn and Earn Early College High School
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Brunswick County Schools	Brunswick County Early College High School
Caldwell County Schools	Caldwell Early College
Cherokee County Schools	Tri-County Early College High School
Columbus County Schools	Southeastern Early College High School
Craven County Schools	Craven Early College High School
Greene County Schools	Greene County Early College High School
Guilford County Schools	GTCC Early/Middle College of Entertainment Technology
Guilford County Schools	NC A&T University Early/Middle College High School
Haywood County Schools	Haywood Early College High School
Hoke County Schools	SandHoke Early College High School
Lee County Schools	Lee County Early College High School
Macon County Schools	Macon County Early College High School

McDowell County Schools New Hanover County Schools Pender County Schools Randolph County Schools Stanly County Schools Surry County Schools Union County Schools Wake County Schools McDowell Early College
Isaac Bear Early College High School
Pender Early College High School
Randolph Early College High School
Stanly Early College High School
Surry Early College High School of Design
Union County Early College
Wake Early College of Health Sciences