



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

Learn and Earn High Schools
Session Law 2005-276, Section 7.32
(SB 622, 2005 Budget Act)

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DPI Chronological Schedule, 2006-2007

Summary Status of the *Learn and Earn* Early College High School Initiative

In September 2004, Governor Mike Easley launched the Learn and Earn Early College High School Initiative in response to the workforce needs in North Carolina. The initiative is jointly administered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina New Schools Project. It is designed to improve high schools, to better prepare students for college and career, to create a seamless curriculum between high school and college, and to provide work-based experiences to students. Based on the campuses of two- or four- year colleges and universities, *Learn and Earn* early college high schools 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 university transfer credit or an associate degree. Governor Easley has laid out the goal of establishing at least one *Learn and Earn* early college high school in every county in North Carolina by the 2008-09 school year.

SL 2004-124 calls on the State Board of Education to report the results of an annual evaluation of the *Learn and Earn* Early College High School Initiative. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) in conjunction with the North Carolina New Schools Project (NCNSP) is monitoring and evaluating the progress of the schools in implementing the school model and in the schools' effect on student achievement. NCDPI and NCNSP is partnering with Jobs for the Future in establishing a comprehensive student-level database to collect and analyze data on the achievement of students who attend *Learn and Earn* early college high schools. NCDPI and NCNSP are also partners along with SERVE, Duke University, Abt Associates and UNC-Greensboro in a recently federally funded comprehensive research study on the effects of the *Learn and Earn* early college high school model on student achievement and other outcomes. While data from these two evaluation efforts will not be available for another year or two, this report will provide an update on the initiative and information on student demographics and student achievement for the 13 *Learn and Earn* early college high schools that were open for the 2005-06 school year.

***Learn and Earn* Early College High Schools**

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 NC 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. Five of the thirteen sites existed as middle college high schools prior to the *Learn and Earn* early college high school initiative and became a part of the initiative to convert from a middle college into an early college. Middle college high schools are schools that are also located on a university or

community college campus. However, students do not typically attend the school from 9th grade until graduation and they are only guaranteed to complete some college credit and not a full two years of university transfer credit or an associate degree. For a complete list of the thirteen sites, please see Attachment 1.

Student Demographics

Collectively, the thirteen *Learn and Earn* early college high schools served just over 1,100 students during the 2005-06 school year. Overall, most of the early colleges served primarily ninth grade students for the 2005-06 school. Over the course of the next four or five years, the schools will add an additional cohort of ninth graders until they reach their capacity of approximately 200-400 students. Student demographic information for the thirteen schools combined is presented in the table below.

Table 1. Demographics of Students in *Learn and Earn* Early College High Schools, 2005-06

<i>Number of Students per Grade Level</i>			
	<i>9th</i>	622	
	<i>10th</i>	186	
	<i>11th</i>	131	
	<i>12th</i>	176	
	<i>Total</i>	1115	
<i>Race and Gender of Students</i>			
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>White</i>	21.4%	29.1%	50.5%
<i>Black</i>	12.2%	24.1%	36.3%
<i>Hispanic</i>	2.4%	3.3%	5.7%
<i>Other</i>	2.2%	5.2%	7.5%
<i>Total</i>	38.2%	61.8%	100.0%

Student Achievement and Attendance

For the 2005-06 school year, eight of the thirteen *Learn and Earn* early college high schools met or exceeded the growth targets set for their school by the state. The thirteen

schools had performance composites¹ ranging from 50.9% to 98.9%, with six of the schools having a performance composite above 80%. Five early college high schools significantly outperformed the other high schools in their districts.² Lastly, six schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) required under federal law (only seven schools were subject to AYP requirements in 2005-06).

In addition, the schools have reported data on college course-taking patterns and success rates by students during the 2005-06 school year.³ 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.⁴ 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 13 *Learn and Earn* early college high schools are also available for the 2005-06 school year.⁵ Regular school attendance is a key indicator of a student's likelihood to graduate. Overall, attendance rates are higher in *Learn and Earn* early college high schools than in their respective comparison high schools in their districts.⁶ 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).

Funding and Additional Support

The thirteen *Learn and Earn* early college high schools that opened for students for the 2005-06 school year signed a five-year implementation agreement with NCDPI and NCNSP to receive grant funding from the state and technical assistance in the implementation of their early college high school. For details on the amount and uses of grant funding for each *Learn and Earn* early college high school, see Table 2 below.

The implementation grant funding covers, among other things, the cost of a school change coach, professional development for teachers, professional development for principals, three instructional support positions, evaluation and local cash to cover additional expenses. The local cash was primarily spent by the schools over the course of

¹ A performance composite is the percentage of all students who were performing at or above grade level on all End-of-Course tests administered during the school year. End-of-Course data is from the Department of Public Instruction.

² The five schools were Anson County ECHS, Catawba Valley ECHS, Cross Creek ECHS (Cumberland), Nash-Rocky Mount ECHS, and Rutherford ECHS.

³ College-course taking data was collected from the individual school sites by school-level survey.

⁴ One early college high school did not enroll or plan to enroll any students during their ninth grade year in college courses.

⁵ Attendance data is from the Department of Public Instruction.

⁶ 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 are the other high schools in the district and the schools from which the new school's student population is drawn.

Table 2. *Learn and Earn* Early College High School Implementation Grant Funding, 2005-06

	Funding 2005-06
<i>Learn and Earn Implementation Grant:</i>	
School Change Coach	\$19,000
Teacher Professional Development	\$10,000
Principal Professional Development	\$6,000
1 Guidance Counselor and 1 Work-Based Learning Coordinator	\$140,000
1 College Liaison	\$58,000
Evaluation	\$4,500
Local Cash	\$57,500
Total:	\$295,000

the 2005-06 school year on professional development expenses (salaries for teachers during the summer, travel and other expenses), instructional materials and supplies, college textbooks and computer equipment and other equipment.

School Change Coach: Each *Learn and Earn* early college high school is assigned a professionally trained and highly experienced coach who serves as a facilitator for the planning and implementation of the *Learn and Earn* early college high 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 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-ups 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 the *Learn and Earn* early college high schools 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 *Learn and Earn* early college high school 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 *Learn and Earn* early college high school 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 *Learn and Earn* early college high school 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 *Learn and Earn* early college high school 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 *Learn and Earn* early college high school 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 thirteen *Learn and Earn* early college high schools 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 *Learn and Earn* early college high school 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.

Instructional Support Positions: *Learn and Earn* implementation grant funding also provides for one additional guidance counselor, one work-based learning experiences coordinator and one college liaison. The work-based learning experiences coordinator is intended to facilitate partnerships with community and business organizations that will provide internships and job shadowing opportunities for early college students. The college liaison position is designed to be the point of contact between the university or community college and the early college high school and facilitates student placement in

college courses and the identification of additional college resources to support the early college high school.

Sites Opening for the 2006-07 School Year

During the 2005-06 school year, 22 *Learn and Earn* early college high school sites began a planning process for opening an early college. Twenty of those sites plan to open for students for the 2006-07 school year. For a complete list of the twenty new *Learn and Earn* early college high schools, please see Attachment 1. 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.

Each planning site received a small planning grant from NCDPI and NCNSP 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 *Learn and Earn* early college high school 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. NC New Schools Project staff and coaches also facilitated discussions around the design principles for a *Learn and Earn* early college high school and the structures that need to be in place to ensure that an early college high school is different from a comprehensive high school. Planning teams also attended the NC Early College High School Conference (discussed below).
- *Study Visits to Model Schools:* NCNSP and NCDPI staff also led a series of study visits to model schools across the country for *Learn and Earn* early college high school planning teams. Each planning team could send one LEA planning team member and one university or community college planning team member. 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; and Mott Middle College High School in Flint, MI. 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 and led the participants in discussions about what questions they hoped to get answered. NCNSP staff also facilitated an accountable talk with participants focused on an article on student support and reviewed the *Learn and Earn* early college high school design principles. 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, the accountable talk article, and additional articles on high school redesign and the design principles.

- *Teaching and Learning Conference:* In April, two teachers from each *Learn and Earn* early college high school 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 *Learn and Earn* early college high school 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.

NC Early College High School Conference

In September, NCNSP and NCDPI hosted the North Carolina *Learn and Earn* Early College High School Conference. Teams from *Learn and Earn* early college high school planning sites and approximately 60 general members of the education community attended the conference. The conference was held in conjunction with the NCNSP Fall Institute. Student support expert Perry Good and a panel of teachers and administrators addressed the participants on the need for and characteristics of an effective student support system in redesigned and early college high schools. State Superintendent June Atkinson also addressed the conference on the need for high school reform in NC. Participants had the opportunity in concurrent sessions to learn from state policy makers, leaders from national organizations, and North Carolina early college teachers and administrators about early college high schools. The RFP for planning an early college high school for the 2006-07 school year was also released at the conference. The conference was primarily intended to inform education community members about early college high school and to further generate interest in the initiative.

Evaluation Efforts

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. *Learn and Earn* Early College High Schools as of September 2006

Opened 2005-06

Anson County Schools	Anson County Early College High School
Buncombe County Schools	Buncombe County Early / Middle College
Catawba County Schools	Catawba Valley Early College High School
Clinton City/Sampson	Sampson County Early College High School
Cumberland County Schools	Cross Creek Early College High School
Davidson County Schools	Davidson Early College High School
Durham Public Schools	Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School
Edgecombe County schools	Edgecombe County Early College High School
Guilford County Schools	The Early / Middle College at GTCC
Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	Nash-Rocky Mount Early / Middle College High School
Iredell-Statesville Schools	Collaborative College for Technology and Leadership
Robeson County Schools	Robeson County Early College High School
Rutherford County Schools	Rutherford Early College High School

Opening 2006-07

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