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

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Evaluation of Innovative High School Programs>

G.S. 125C-238.55 (rewritten in 2012)

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NORTH CAROLINA NEW SCHOOLS

Update on Small Restructured High Schools

North Carolina has made significant progress in opening and sustaining innovative secondary schools that share the critical goal of graduating every student well prepared for success in college, careers and life. An initiative that began in 2004 with about two dozen schools scattered across the state now includes more than 100 schools in two thirds of the state's 115 school districts. In addition, a growing number of districts are now embracing similar innovations for all their schools as a result of the success demonstrated by these pioneering, break-the-mold schools.

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, North Carolina leaders created the North Carolina New Schools Project in August 2003 to focus leadership and financial resources on significant reform in the state's high schools. The purpose of the recently renamed North Carolina New Schools is to accelerate innovation in public schools statewide so that ultimately every student will graduate well prepared for postsecondary success. In cooperation with state and national partners, NC New Schools has helped create high schools that are academically rigorous and flexible, with a clear focus on developing the kinds of skills needed for students to thrive in the 21st century and to best serve the state's workforce needs. The State Board of Education; the N.C. Department of Public Instruction; the UNC and N.C. Community College systems; national organizations such as Jobs for the Future and the New Technology Foundation, among others, have worked in partnership to create these innovative high schools.

NC New Schools forms partnerships with local school districts and higher education institutions to transform the structure of schools, including governance, student support and teaching and learning. Each innovative school is autonomous, with its own principal and school budget, and serves up to 100 students per grade level, or a maximum of 400 students in grades 9-12 or 9-13. Some models may emerge as 6-12 schools serving up to 600 students.

While NC New Schools now facilitates the development of many different approaches to school innovation, this report is limited to the early-stage models, the first of which opened in 2005, as small, autonomous schools. In addition to early college high schools, covered in a separate report, NCNS now supports a number of other approaches, including the transformation of conventional schools, career academies, STEM education, regional economically-themed schools and other approaches that continue to evolve.

Each innovative school also adopts a rigorous set of best-practice conditions, known as Design Principles, all aligned to student success. These Design Principles are based on the practices of innovative schools across the country that succeed in graduating all students prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce, research on best practices, and the experience of NC New Schools partner schools. The Design Principles are:

- **Ready for College:** Innovative high schools are characterized by the pervasive, transparent, and consistent understanding that the school exists for the purpose of preparing all students for college and work. They maintain a common set of high standards for every student to overcome harmful tracking and sorting.

- **Powerful Teaching and Learning:** Innovative high schools are characterized by the presence of commonly held standards for high quality instructional practice. Teachers in these schools design instruction that ensures the development of critical thinking, application and problem solving skills often neglected in traditional settings.

- **Personalization:** Staff in innovative high schools understand that knowing students well is an essential condition of helping them achieve academically. These high schools ensure that adults leverage knowledge of students in order to improve student learning.

- **Redefined Professionalism:** The responsibility to the shared vision of the innovative high school is evident in the collaborative, creative, and leadership roles of all adult staff in the school. The staff of these schools takes responsibility for the success of every student, holds themselves accountable to their colleagues, and is reflective about their roles.

- **Leadership:** Staff in NC New Schools-partner schools work to develop a shared mission for their school and work actively as agents of change, sharing leadership for improved student outcomes in a culture of high expectations for all students.

- **Purposeful Design:** Innovative high schools are designed to create the conditions that ensure the other four design principles: ready for college, powerful teaching and learning, personalization, and redefined professionalism. The organization of time, space, and the allocation of resources ensures that these best practices become common practice.

Design Principles

NC New Schools and its partners work with local school districts and their higher education partners to create several types of innovative high schools, including restructured high schools, early college high schools, STEM-focused schools and regional schools.

Restructured Small High Schools: NC New Schools has partnered with local school districts to create new schools or subdivide conventional high schools into small autonomous, focused and academically rigorous schools. Each of these new schools have adopted a curricular focus or common methodology as one strategy to enable teachers in core courses to collaborate and make connections between courses and the world of work. The intent of a focus is not preparation for a specific career but preparation for a lifetime of learning and change. These schools have all now adopted a STEM focus.

Early College High Schools: Based on the campus of two- or four-year community colleges and universities, 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 transferable credit or an associate's degree. The North Carolina Early College High School Initiative submitted a separate status report to the State Board of Education and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee in January 2012 in accordance with SL 2007-323. Early college high schools target students for whom conventional schools are not a good match and who are the first in their family to attend college.

For the purposes of this report, SL 2009-305, s. 3, calls on the State Board of Education to report on the results of an annual evaluation of those schools that have been approved as cooperative innovative high schools under GS 115C-238.50. Schools that are part of the state's early college high school initiative are addressed in a separate report. The Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) in conjunction with the North Carolina New Schools (NCNS) is monitoring and evaluating the progress of these schools in implementing the school model and in the schools' effect on student achievement. This report provides an update on the initiative and the schools that were open for students during the 2011-2012 school year, as well as student achievement data from these schools

Restructured Cooperative Innovative High Schools

Thirteen high schools other than early colleges designated as cooperative and innovative high schools and also in partnership with North Carolina New Schools were open for students during the 2011-2012 school year. The 13 schools were initially created as "redesigned" schools or redesigned schools with a STEM focus. Starting in 2011-2012, all of the schools adopted a STEM focus. Six[1] of the 13 schools were created as part of the turnaround high school initiative with NCDPI. The six schools chose to work with NCNSP as part of their turnaround requirement. These six schools received initial planning grants from the General Assembly in 2006-07, but have not received any additional supplemental funding from the General Assembly to support the implementation of their redesigned high school model. Instead, these six schools have used local funds from their respective school districts to cover the cost of their implementation and support from NC New Schools. For a complete list of the 13 non-early college cooperative innovative high schools that were open for the 2011-2012 school year, see Attachment A.

All but one of the schools completed their five-year grant support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2010-2011. Significantly, however, all 13 continued to operate during the 2011-2012 school year as small schools with ongoing support from NC New Schools, with support from other grant-making organizations. In addition, four additional innovative schools formerly supported under the Gates grant continued to operate in 2011-2012. They are not included in this report. Also not included in this report are nine comprehensive high schools and one formerly traditional middle school that NC New Schools served as part of its STEM initiative.

Student Demographics

Collectively, the 13 small restructured high schools served 10,740 students in the 9th through 12th grades during the 2011-2012 school year. The number of students per grade level that were served in redesigned high schools for the 2012-2012 school year is presented in Table 1 below. Student demographic information for the 13 schools combined is presented in Table 2 below:

[1] One STEM turnaround school, James Kenan School of Engineering, converted in 2009-10 to Duplin Early College High School

Table 1. Number of Students per Grade Level in CI High Schools, 2011-12

Grade Level	No. of Students
9th	926
10th	896
11th	666
12th	711
Total	3,199

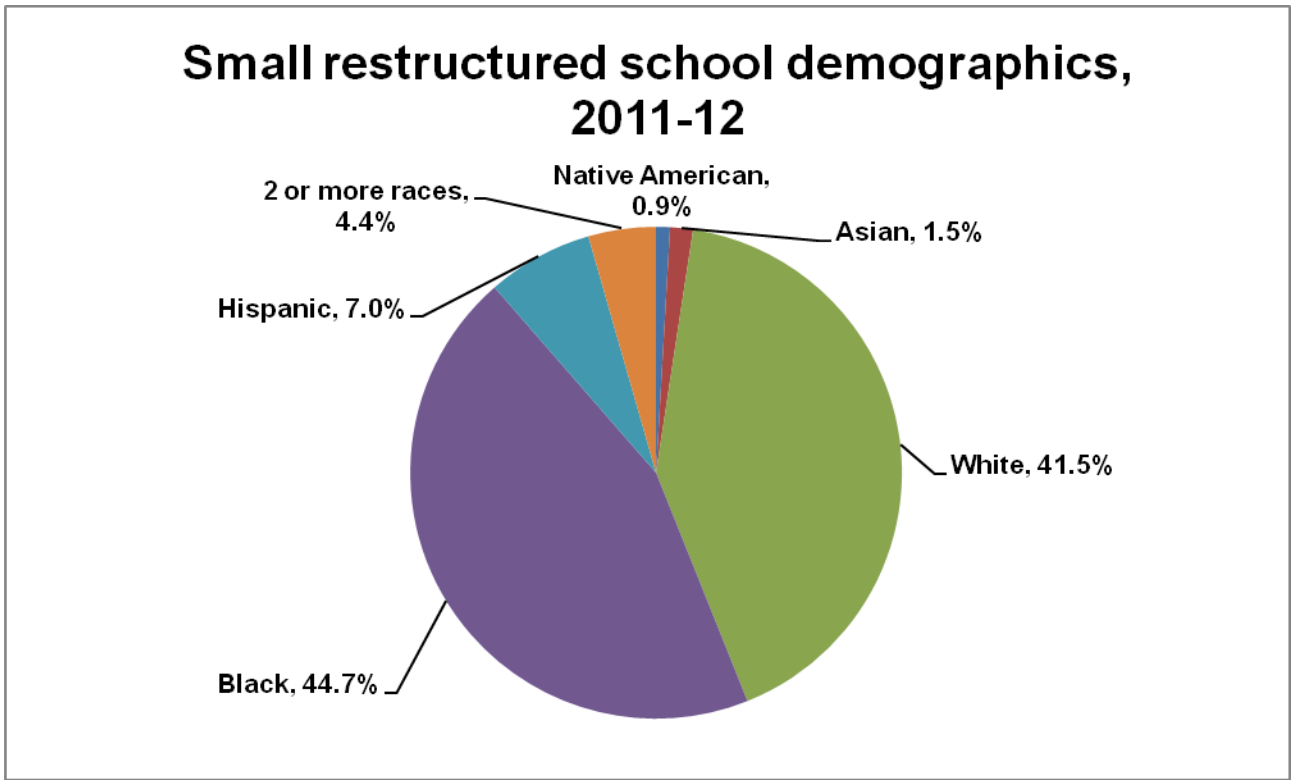
Source: Grade, Race and Gender Data from NCDPI

Table 2. Race and Gender of Students in Redesigned High Schools, 2011-12

	Male	Female	Total
White	17.6%	23.92%	41.52%
Black	20.51%	24.14%	44.65%
Hispanic	2.66%	4.32%	6.98%
Native Amer.	0.38%	0.53%	0.91%
Asian	0.72%	0.78%	1.50%
2 or more races	1.84%	2.6%	4.44%
Total	43.71%	56.29%	100%

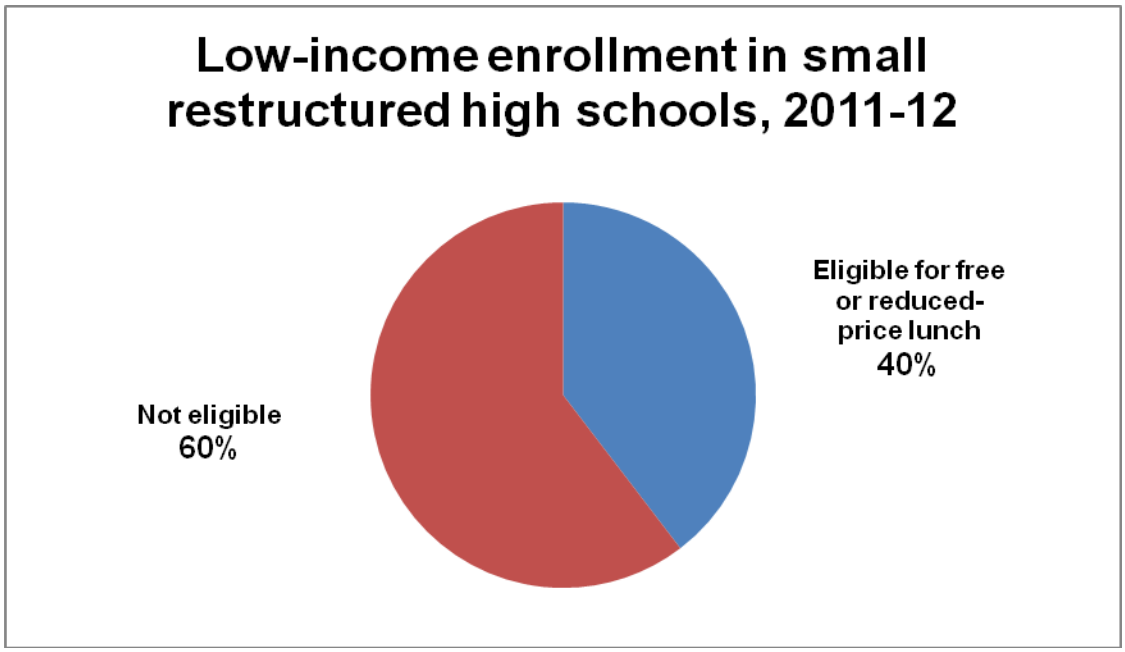
Source: NCDPI, Grade, Race, Sex data, school year 2011-12

Chart 1. Redesigned High School Enrollment by Race, 2010-11



Source: NCDPI, Grade, Race, Sex data, school year 2011-2012

Chart 2: Small Restructured High School Enrollment by Poverty, 2011-2012



Source: NCDPI Free and Reduced-Price Lunch data, 2011-12

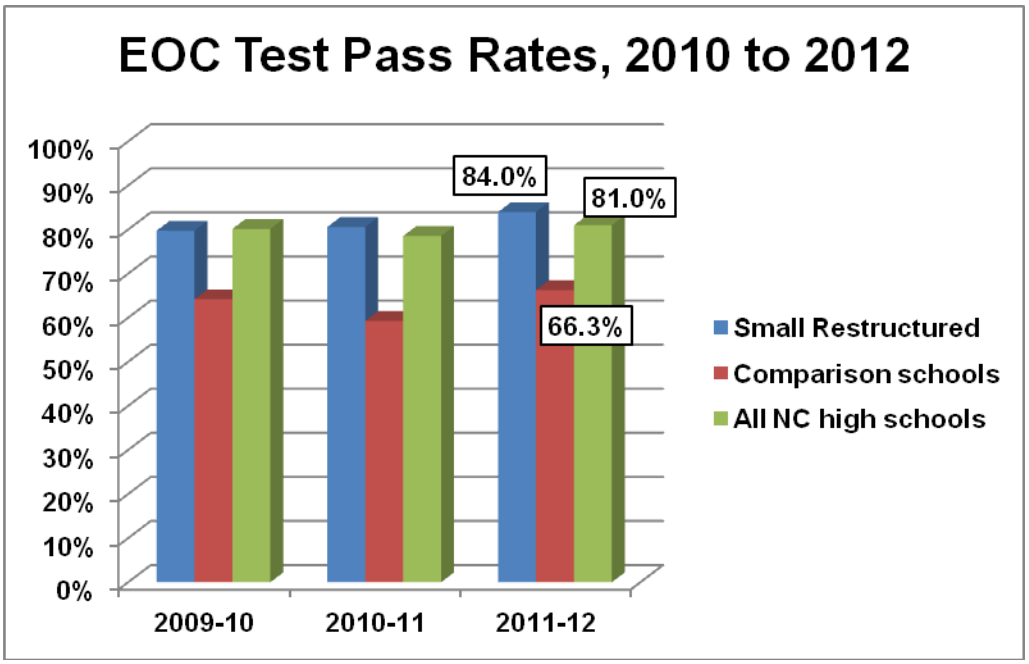
ABCs End-of-Course Test Results

Taken together, the small restructured high schools showed improved performance in 2011-12, generally mirroring the performance of high schools statewide. However, they outperformed comparison schools within their district. The three years of data presented includes combined pass rates only for the three end-of-course tests administered in 2011-12: Algebra I, English I and Biology.

Pass rates on the three tests combined ranged from a low of 67 percent to a high of 95 percent. Five the 13 schools had pass rates above 90 percent.

On the specific tests, 72 percent of all students in the 13 schools passed the Algebra I end-of-course exam; 84 percent passed the biology exam and 89 percent passed the English I exam.

Chart 3: End-of-Course Exam Composite Pass Rates, 2009-10 to 2011-12

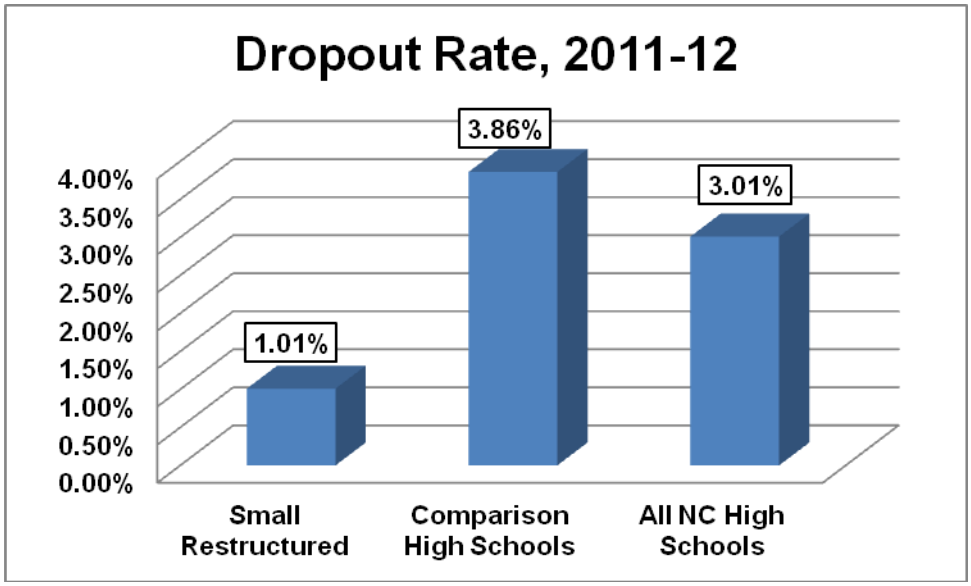


Source: NCNSP analysis based on NCDPI EOC data by school, 2009-10 to 2011-12

Dropout Rates

To graduate all students, schools must ensure that students stay in school and do not drop out. During the 2011-12 school year, the 13 redesigned high schools reported school-wide dropout rates ranging from 0 percent to 2.02 percent, with three of the schools reporting **no dropouts** (by contrast, all comparison schools reported some students dropping out of school)**.** All 13 of the schools also reported dropout rates that were lower than the dropout rate for their comparison high school. The 13 restructured high schools had a combined school-wide dropout rate in 2011-12 of 1.01 percent compared to a combined rate of 3.86 percent for their comparison high schools and 3.01 percent for all high schools statewide.

Chart 4: Dropout Rates, Grades 9-12, 2011-12



Source: NCNSP analysis of NCDPI dropout rate data, 2011-12

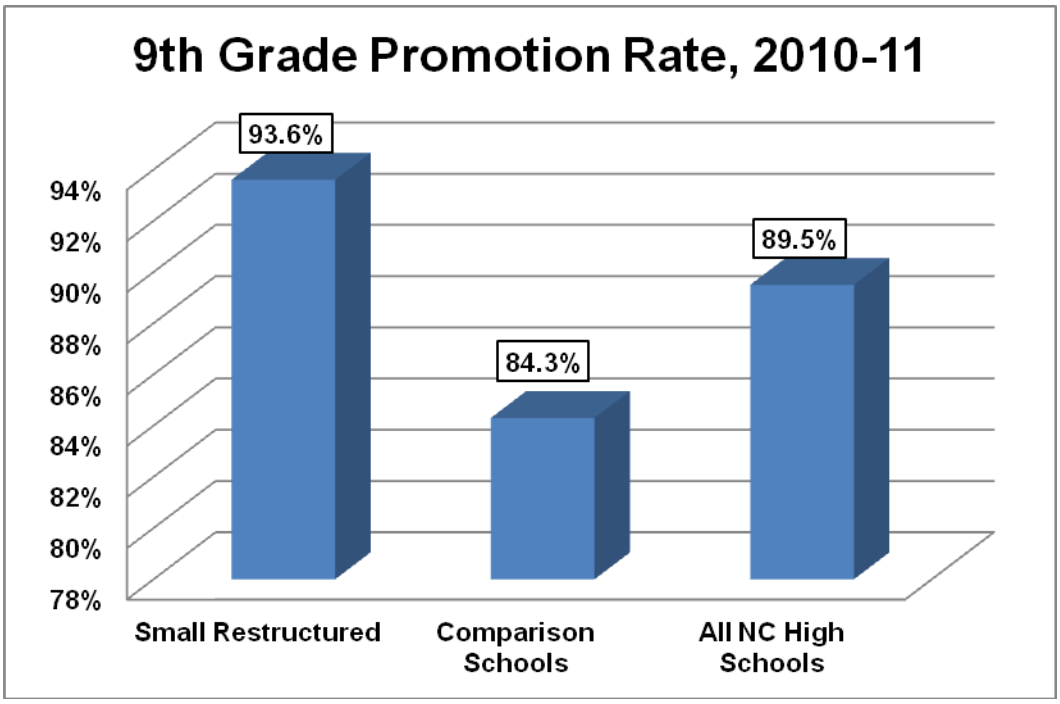
As mentioned earlier, a student's success in the 9th grade is crucial in terms of their eventual success in graduating from high school. Research has shown that 9th grade is the year where students are the most likely to drop out of high school. For that reason, NCNSP also tracks dropout rates at the 9th grade in addition to school-wide dropout rates for redesigned high schools.

For the 2011-12 school year, the 13 small restructured reported 9th grade dropout rates ranging from 0 percent to 2.22 percent, with 10 of the 13 schools reporting **no 9th grade dropouts** (again, all comparison school reported some 9th grade dropouts; and only 15 percent of all schools statewide reported no dropouts from 9th grade.) All of the 13 schools had 9th grade dropout rates that were lower than the 9th grade dropout rate for their comparison high school. The 13 redesigned high schools had a combined 9th grade dropout rate of 0.77 percent, compared to a combined rate of 3.27 percent for their comparison high schools and 2.84 percent for all high schools statewide.

Ninth Grade Promotion Rates

To graduate, a student must complete the required courses and be promoted from grade to grade. Research has shown that promotion from 9th grade is an especially strong indicator of a student's likelihood to graduate. During the 2010-11 school year (the most recent for which promotion rates are available), the 13 small restructured high schools reported promotion rates ranging from 84 percent to 99 percent, with eight of the schools promoting at least 95 percent of their 9th graders. Together, the 13 schools had a combined 9th grade promotion rate of 93.6 percent, compared to a combined promotion rate of 84.3 percent for comparison high schools and 89.5 percent for all high schools in the state.

Chart 5: 9th Grade Promotion Rates, by school type, 2009-10

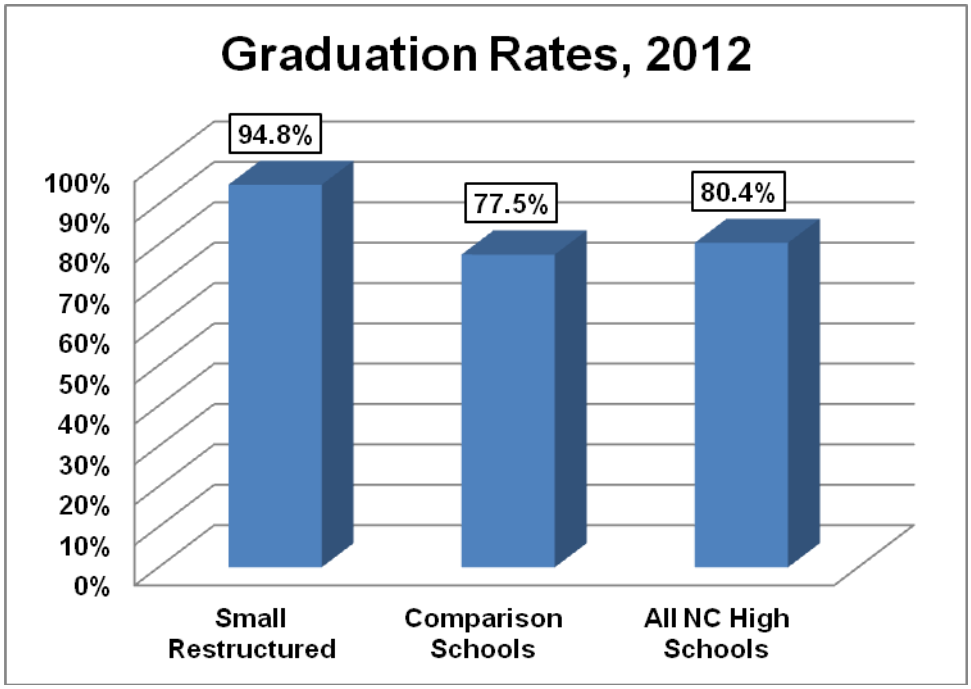


Source: NCNSP analysis of NCDPI grade promotion data, 2010-11 (most recent available)

Graduation Rates

Graduation rates for the 13 small restructured high schools ranged from 100 percent (City of Medicine Academy in Durham and Howard Health and Life Sciences High School in Cumberland County) to 89.4 percent (South Granville School of Health and Life Sciences). Five the of the 13 schools graduated more than 95 percent of the 9th grade cohort from four years earlier. The aggregate graduation rate for the 13 schools was 94.8 percent, compared to 77.5 percent for their comparison schools and 80.4 percent for the state as a whole.

Chart 6: Graduation Rates Compared



Source: NCNSP analysis of NCDPI graduation rate data, 2012

College enrollment following graduation

For 2011 high school graduates, the most recent year for which initial fall enrollment data is available from the UNC General Administration, 37.3 percent of graduates from small restructured high schools enrolled at one of the UNC campuses. This compares to 28 percent of all other public high schools, excluding charters, and 24.5 percent of the comparison high schools.

Funding and Additional Support

Seven of the 13 state-supported small restructured high schools enrolling students for the 2011-12 school year received supplemental funding from the General Assembly to support the implementation of their innovative high school model. Each school received a position allotment for one state-funded guidance counselor (approximately $68,000 per year) and two position allotments for two clerical support positions (approximately $36,000 per clerical support position per year). The six STEM-focused redesigned high schools that were developed under the turnaround high school initiative through NCDPI did not receive the supplemental funding from the General Assembly (all implementation funding for these nine schools came from local school district sources).[2]

In addition, each of the innovative high schools (with the exception of the six STEM-focused high schools) signed a five-year implementation agreement with NC New Schools to receive grant funding that provided technical assistance in the implementation of their innovative high school model. The implementation grant funding came from a $20 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The implementation grant funding covered the cost of a school change and instructional coach, professional development for teachers and principals, and local cash to cover additional expenses, including travel to professional development events. Grant-funded support concluded for all but one of the remaining schools before the 2011-12 school year.

For more information, contact North Carolina New Schools at 919-277-3760.

[2] A 10th STEM turnaround school, James Kenan School of Engineering, converted in 2009-10 to Duplin Early College High School.

Attachment A: List of Restructured Cooperative Innovative High Schools Open in 2011-12

School	District	Year Opened	Type
Anson County New Technology High School	Anson County Schools	2007-08	STEM Redesigned High School
School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville (SILSA)	Asheville City Schools	2005-06	Redesigned High School
Avery High STEM Academy	Avery County Schools	2010-11	Redesigned High School
Bertie County STEM High Schol	Bertie County Schools	2007-08	STEM Redesigned High School
Howard Health & Life Sciences High School	Cumberland County Schools	2005-06	Redesigned High School
City of Medicine Academy	Durham Public Schools	2008-09	Redesigned High School
Hillside New Technology High School	Durham Public Schools	2007-08	STEM Redesigned High School
Southern High School of Engineering	Durham Public Schools	2007-08	STEM Redesigned High School
J.F. Webb School of Health and Life Sciences	Granville County Schools	2005-06	Redesigned High School
South Granville School of Health and Life Sciences	Granville County Schools	2005-06	Redesigned High School
Newton-Conover Health Science High School	Newton-Conover City Schools	2005-06	Redesigned High School
Warren New Tech High School	Warren County Schools	2007-08	STEM Redesigned High School
Wayne School of Engineering	Wayne County Schools	2007-08	STEM Redesigned High School

NORTH CAROLINA NEW SCHOOLS

Update on North Carolina Early College High School Initiative

North Carolina's Early College High School Initiative represents the nation's most ambitious effort to implement an innovative educational approach intended to achieve the twin goals of improved outcomes for students and a workforce well trained for the state's emerging economy. Since the first 13 early colleges opened in 2005, the number of the schools has grown to 76 in 2012-13, with a combined enrollment of nearly 15,000 students. The schools are proving to be effective by setting expectations high – both for students and teachers – and focusing on the essential goal of ensuring that every student graduates well prepared for college, career and productive lives. Dropout rates are low; achievement on state end-of-course exams is high. The combined graduation rate for the 50 schools with full cohorts of students completing in 2012 was 93.5 percent. The number of graduates in 2012 reached about 1,800, with about half of them earning associate degrees in addition to their high school diplomas. Those kinds of proven results are now driving similar innovations in more traditional high schools and across entire districts in North Carolina.

But the most compelling arguments supporting early college high schools come from students themselves. Here's what a few 2012 graduates said about their experience:

"Attending Caldwell Early College High School gave me the opportunity to experience smaller classes and form closer attachments with my peers than I would have at a larger school.

"My teachers challenged me with team-based and project-based learning. I had to develop the ability to work with others in a group. The hardest thing about Caldwell Early College is that students have to formulate the ability to learn in all types of ways. We learn by listening, reading, writing, and teaching. By the time we graduate, we are prepared for any work a college can throw at us."

Amelia Hawkins
Caldwell Early College High School
Class of 2012

"At Early College you feel like you are a part of something. And not just another face at school. There are many ways to get involved with the school and to have your voice heard. Here you don't have to be afraid to be yourself because we are all different in some way. After being at the Early College of Forsyth, I do feel very prepared for college life. We were taught independence through this school. There was not always a constant reminder of what we had to do."

Sierra Gulley
Early College at Forsyth
Class of 2012

The early college high school initiative was launched in September 2004 in response to the state's changing workforce needs and its persistently high dropout rate. The initiative is administered jointly by North Carolina New Schools and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction. It is designed to improve high schools, to better prepare students for college and careers, to create a seamless curriculum between high school and college, and to provide work-based learning experiences to students. Typically located on the campuses of two- and four-year colleges and universities, 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's degree. Early college high schools are intended to make a priority of serving students who are typically under-represented in the college-going population, including students who are first generation college-going, students from low-income families, those who are members of minorities underrepresented in higher education and those who are underserved in conventional schools. In addition, each early college high school is expected to implement and exhibit a rigorous and far-reaching set of conditions, known as the Design Principles, which lead to student success as judged by all students graduating ready for college, careers and life. Those Design Principles are:

NC New Schools Design Principles
A Framework for Secondary School Innovation

- **Ready for College:** Innovative high schools are characterized by the pervasive, transparent, and consistent understanding that the school exists for the purpose of preparing all students for college and work. They maintain a common set of high standards for every student to overcome harmful tracking and sorting.

- **Powerful Teaching and Learning:** Innovative high schools are characterized by the presence of commonly held standards for high quality instructional practice. Teachers in these schools design instruction that ensures the development of critical thinking, application and problem-solving skills often neglected in traditional settings.

- **Personalization:** Staff in innovative high schools understand that knowing students well is an essential condition of helping them achieve academically. These high schools ensure that adults leverage knowledge of students in order to improve student learning.

- **Redefined Professionalism:** The responsibility to the shared vision of the innovative high school is evident in the collaborative, creative, and leadership roles of all adult staff in the school. The staff of these schools takes responsibility for the success of every student, holds themselves accountable to their colleagues, and is reflective about their roles.

- **Leadership:** Staff in New Schools schools work to develop a shared mission for their school and work actively as agents of change, sharing leadership for improved student outcomes in a culture of high expectations for all students.

- **Purposeful Design:** Innovative high schools are designed to create the conditions that ensure the other four design principles: ready for college, powerful teaching and learning, personalization, and redefined professionalism. The organization of time, space, and the allocation of resources ensures that these best practices become common practice.

SL 2007-323 calls on the State Board of Education to report the results of an annual evaluation of the North Carolina Early College High School Initiative. The Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) in conjunction with the North Carolina New Schools is monitoring and evaluating the progress of the schools in implementing the school model and in the schools' effects on student achievement. NCDPI and New Schools 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 early college high schools.

Experimental Study of the Impact of Early College High Schools

NCDPI and NC New Schools are partnering with SERVE Center, Duke University, Abt Associates, RTI International and the University of North Carolina-Greensboro in a federally funded comprehensive experimental study on the effects of North Carolina's early college high schools model on student achievement and other outcomes. The study compares results for students who were randomly selected to attend an ECHS with students who were randomly selected not to attend and went to a different school, most often the regular high school in the district. This experimental design, often called the "gold standard" in educational research, means that the study is comparing results for two

groups of identical students. When the study is completed, it will have results for an estimated 4,000 students in 19 schools.

The study is tracking students from their 9th grade year into postsecondary education. Very early results looking at high school graduation rates showed that early college students were graduating at a rate that was approximately 10 percentage points higher than the control group. In the small sample with graduation data, 85 percent of treatment students graduated on-time compared with 73 percent of control students.

The study is also examining students' enrollment and progression in postsecondary education. Preliminary results for the small sample with data through the second year after grade 12 show a large and positive impact on postsecondary outcomes. By the second year after grade 12, an estimated 81 percent of the treatment group had been enrolled at least one semester in postsecondary education, compared to 56 percent of the control group, an impact of 24 percentage points. By the second year after grade 12, approximately 28 percent of the treatment group had attained an associate's degree compared to 0 percent of the control group ($p \leq .001$).

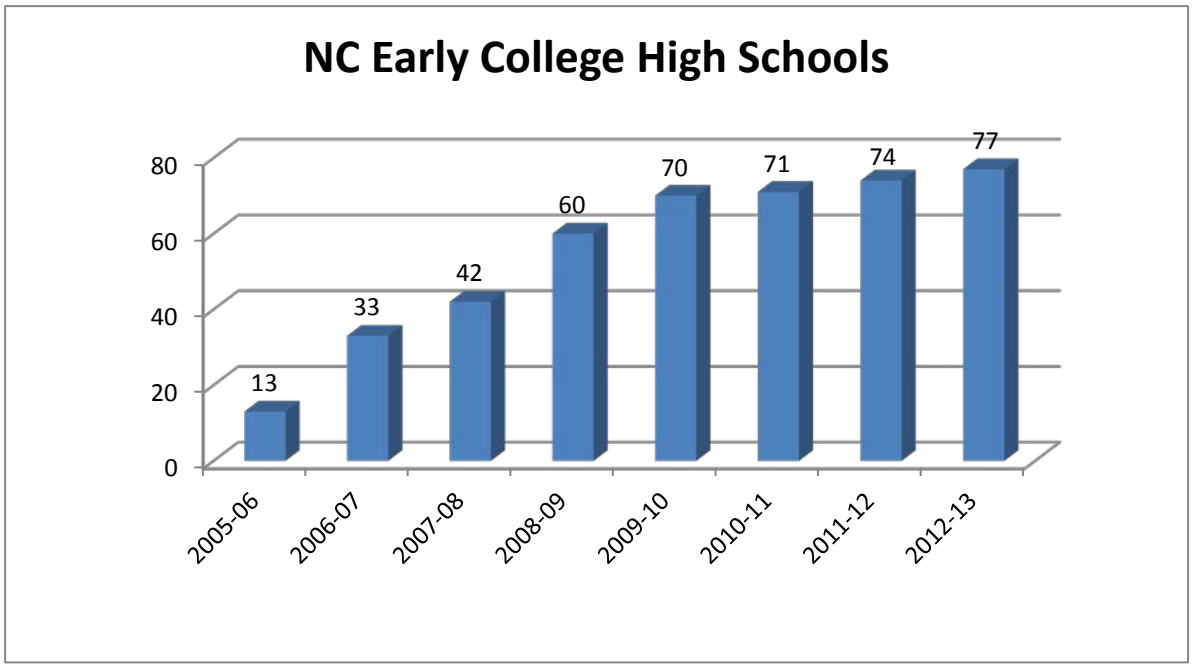
Patterns of results for 9th, 10th, and 11th grades show the following impacts:

- More Early College High School students are on-track for college. For example, 71 percent of the 10th grade early college students have successfully completed the math courses they need to be on track for college compared to 59 percent of the control group.
- Early college students had better attendance and lower suspension rates.
- More early college students remain enrolled in high school. For example, in the 11th grade 94% of the early college students were still enrolled in school, compared to 83% of the control group. In all three grades, early college students reported significantly more positive schooling experiences than students in the control group. On average, ECHS students reported significantly higher expectations, more rigorous and relevant instruction, and higher levels of academic and social support in their schooling.

North Carolina's Early College High Schools

Seventy-four early college high schools were open for students during the 2011-12 school year. The 74 schools reached students in 65 counties and districts across the state. Sixty-seven of these schools were 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 67, six were partnered with a UNC system school, one was partnered with a private college and 60 were partnered with a community college. Six remote early college high schools that are located on comprehensive high school campuses or in other district facilities provide college courses via online instruction through partnerships with local community colleges and, in some cases, four-year institutions. New Schools and these rural districts are using this approach to test the effectiveness of "virtual" college coursework as a means to overcome distance to build college-going cultures.

Chart 1: New Schools-partner early colleges, 2005-2012



Source: NC New Schools

For a complete list of the 74 sites that were open in 2011-12, please see Attachment A.

Nine of the 74 sites existed as middle college high schools prior to the early college initiative and became a part of the initiative to convert from a middle college into an early college. Middle college high schools 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 given the opportunity to earn a full two years of university transfer credit or an associate degree.

Student Demographics

Collectively, the 74 early college high schools open in 2011-12 served 13,712 students, with most of them in grades 9-12, and a growing number of students in a final 13th grade attending early colleges on community college campuses. Most of those schools operate on a five-year curriculum that allows students the time to earn their high school diploma and an associate's degree or two years of transferrable college credit. During the next two to three years, the newer schools will add additional grades until they reach their capacity of approximately 200-400 students each.

Across the 74 schools, about 40 percent of the student population was male and 60 percent was female. More than half (58 percent) of the student population was white, about one quarter (24 percent) was African-American, and 11 percent was Hispanic. Based on state-reported data for 64 of the 74 schools, 43 percent of the students were from low-income families, according to eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch. The number of students per grade level who were served in early college high schools for the 2011-12 school year is presented in Table 2 below.

Student demographic information on race and gender for the 74 schools combined is presented in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Number of Students per Grade Level in North Carolina Early College High Schools, 2011-12

Grade Level	No. of Students
6th, 7th & 8th	166
9th	3,807
10th	3,358
11th	2,968
12th	2,474
13th	939
Total	13,712

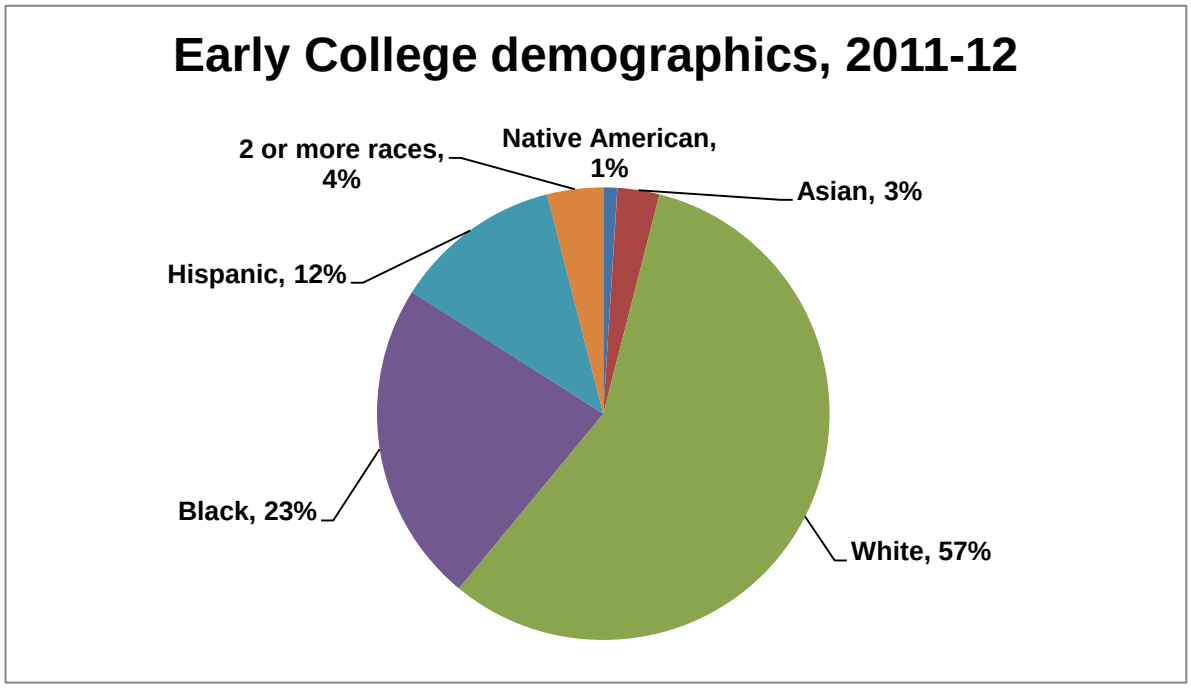
Source: NCDPI, Grade, Race, Sex Data; School year 2011-12

Table 2. Race and Gender of Students in North Carolina Early College High Schools, 2011-2012

	Male	Female	Total
White	24.3%	32.7%	57.7%
Black	8.4%	14.9%	23.6%
Hispanic	4.4%	7.5%	10.8%
Native American	0.5%	0.9%	1.5%
Asian	0.9%	1.7%	2.6%
2 or more races	1.4%	2.3%	3.7%
Total	39.8%	60.2%	100.0%

Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI enrollment data, 2011-12

Chart 2: Early College High School Enrollment by Race



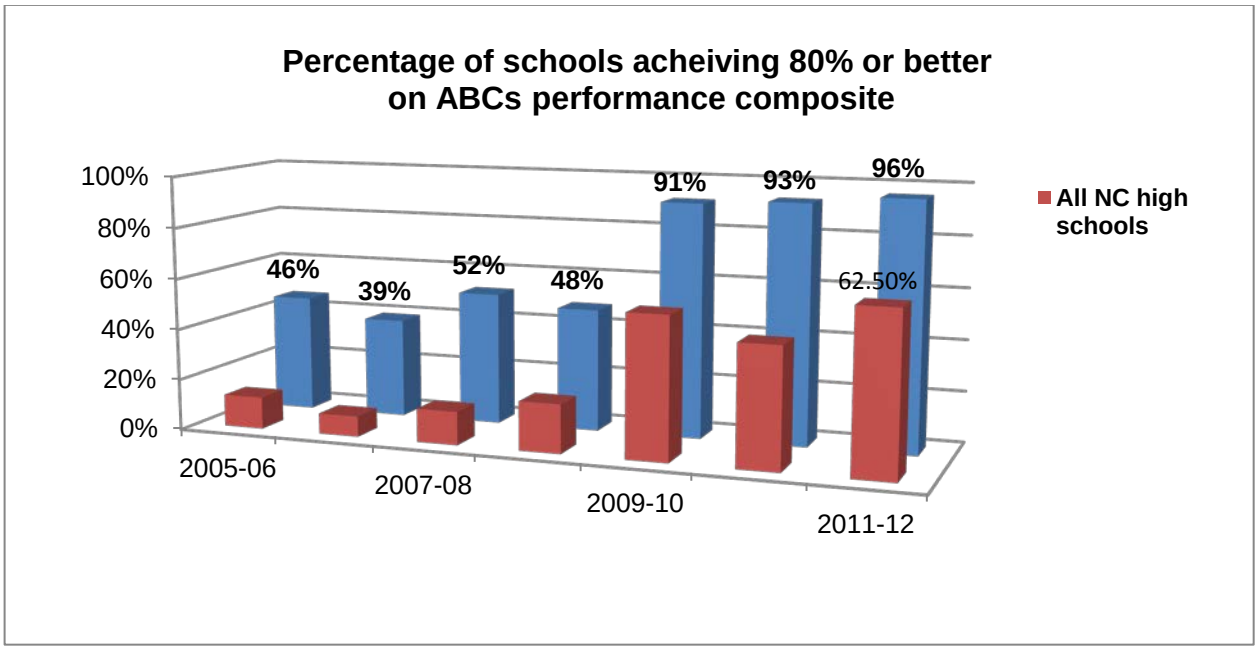
Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI enrollment data, 2011-12

ABC End-of-Course Test Results

In 2011-12, the 74 early college high schools had performance composites (or the percent of students proficient on all End-of-Course tests) ranging from 70 percent to greater and 95 percent, with nearly three quarters (72 percent) of the early college high schools posting performance composites of 95 percent or higher (compared to 3 percent of the early college high schools' comparison high schools[1] and 17 percent for all schools statewide with high school grades). All but four of the 74 early college high schools (95 percent) had performance composites that were greater than their comparison high school. Eight of every 10 early college high schools in 2011-12 (81 percent) met the growth targets set for their school under state ABCs accountability measures (made expected growth), compared with 83 percent of the comparison high schools and 78.6 percent of all schools statewide with high school grades. About half (51.4 percent) of the 74 early college high schools exceeded their growth targets (made high growth) compared to 65 percent of the comparison high schools and 59.7 percent of all high schools statewide.

[1] NC New Schools has strategically selected a traditional, comprehensive high school to serve as a comparison high school for each early college high school. The comparison high school serves as a benchmark in order to more effectively judge the growth and progress of the early college high school in improving student achievement. Each comparison high school was selected based on its similarities to the early college high school on geographic location (either in the same school district or in a neighboring school district), its student demographics (primarily race, gender and the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch when available) and the school's prior student performance on End-of-Course tests.

Chart 3: EOC Pass Rates, Early College High Schools vs. All NC High Schools

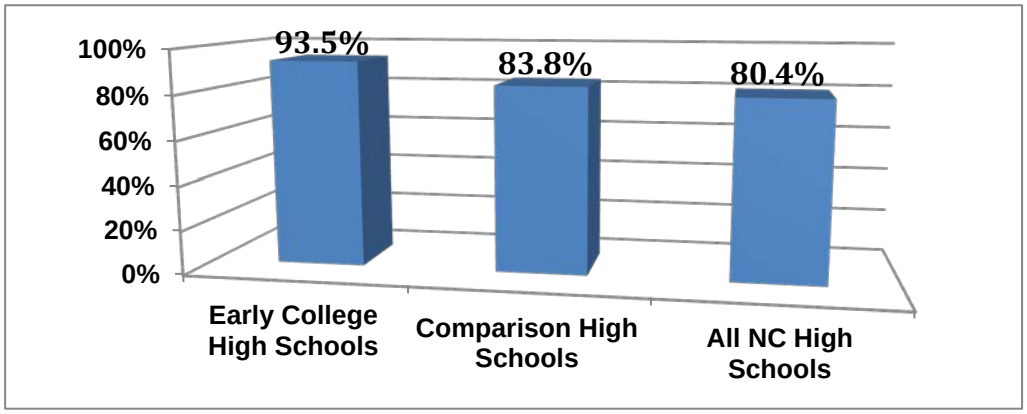


Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI test results data

Graduation Rates

The Class of 2012 represented the third cohort of significant size to complete early college since the initiative was launched. Fifty of the schools graduated full cohorts, with graduation rates ranging from 100 percent to 59 percent. Forty two of the 50 schools (84 percent) graduated 90 percent or more of their initial 9th grade cohort from four or five years earlier, depending on each school's curriculum program. Fourteen of the 50 schools (28 percent) had perfect graduation rates of 100 percent. The aggregate graduation rate for the 18 schools was 93.5 percent, compared to 83.8 percent for their comparison schools and 80.4 percent for the state as a whole. The early college rate was up from 91.2 percent in 2011.

Chart 4: ECHS Graduation Rates vs. Comparisons and All NC High Schools

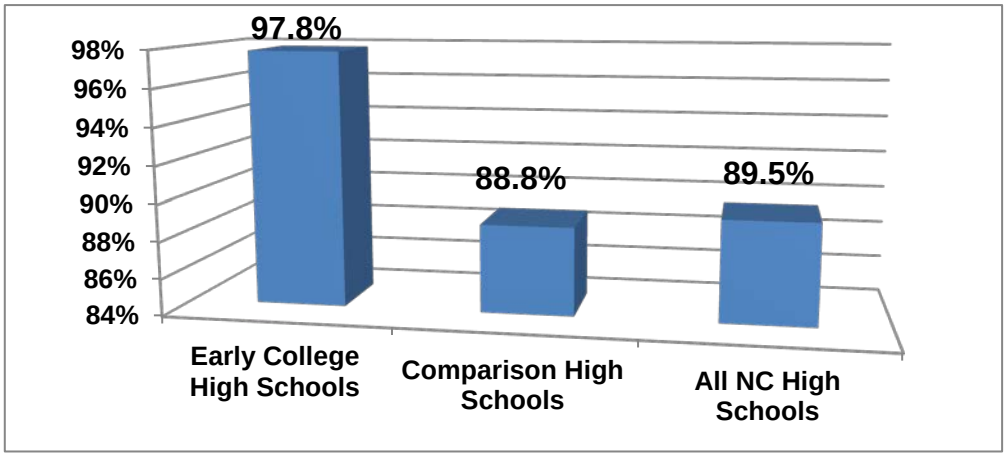


Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI graduation rate data, 2012

Ninth Grade Promotion Rates

To graduate, a student must complete the required courses and be promoted from grade to grade. Research shows that promotion from 9th grade is a strong indicator of a student's likelihood to graduate. During the 2010-11 school year (the most recent year for which data is available), the 71 early college high schools had a combined promotion rate from 9th grade of 97.8 percent, compared to a combined rate of 88.4 percent for the comparison high schools and also about 87 percent for all N.C. high schools.

Chart 5: ECHS Promotion Rates vs. Comparisons and all NC High Schools



Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI grade promotion data, 2010-11 school year

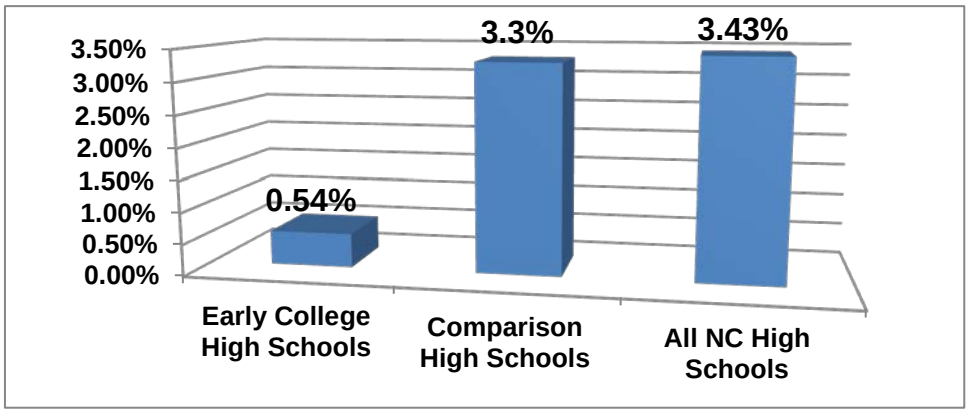
The 71 schools reported 9th grade promotion rates ranging from 73 percent to 100 percent. Nearly 90 percent of all early college high schools (89 percent) reported 9th grade promotion rates of 95 percent or higher (compared to 15 percent of comparison schools and 36.3 percent of all schools statewide with ninth grades), and more than two thirds (71 percent) of the early college schools promoted 100 percent of their 9th graders. Seventy four percent of early college high schools had 9th grade promotion rates that were greater than the rates for their comparison high schools.

Dropout Rates

To graduate all students, schools must ensure that all students stay in school and do not drop out. During the 2010-11 school year (the most recent year for which dropout rates are currently available), the 71 early college high schools that enrolled students that year reported schoolwide dropout rates ranging from 0 percent to 3 percent, with 32 of the 71 schools reporting **no dropouts** (no comparison schools reported no dropouts). All but two of the 71 early college high schools reported dropout rates that were lower than the dropout rate for their comparison high school. The 71 early college high schools had a combined school wide dropout rate in 2008-09 of 0.54 percent, compared to a combined rate of 3.3 percent for their comparison high schools and 3.43 percent for all high schools statewide.

> 32 Early College High Schools – 45 percent – had no dropouts

Chart 6: ECHS Dropout Rates vs. Comparisons and All NC High Schools



Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI dropout data

As mentioned earlier, a student's success in the 9th grade is crucial in terms of their eventual success in graduating from high school. Research has shown that 9th grade is the year when students are most likely to drop out of high school. For that reason, NC New Schools and NCDPI also track dropout rates at the 9th grade in addition to schoolwide dropout rates for early college high schools. During the 2010-11 school year (the most recent year for which 9th grade dropout rates are available), the 71 early college high schools that enrolled students that year reported 9th grade dropout rates[2] ranging from 0 percent to 2.4 percent, with more than 9 in 10 schools (94 percent) reporting **no 9th grade dropouts** (one comparison school reported no 9th grade dropouts, and only 25 percent of all schools statewide with a 9th grade class of at least 10 students – including the early colleges – reported none from 9th grade). Seventy of the 71 early college high schools had 9th grade dropout rates that were lower than the 9th grade dropout rate for their comparison high school, and one was equal at zero. The 71 early college high schools had a combined 9th grade dropout rate of 0.14 percent, compared to a rate of 3.4 percent for their comparison high schools and 3.5 percent for all high schools statewide.

College course completion

A key goal of early college high schools is to provide students with the opportunity to earn significant college credit at the same time that they fulfill state requirements for a high school diploma. Data from the North Carolina Community College system shows that students in the early college high schools in 2010-11 took a total of 48,900 classes – or an average of four college classes per student. Early college students received better grades, on average, than college-age students in all the core academic areas. Including all college courses taken by early college students on community college campuses, 77 percent received a passing grade of C or better. For all other students in community college courses, 70 percent earned a C or better.

[2] Ninth grade dropout rates were calculated using a formula similar to the NCDPI 9-12 grade dropout rate calculation formula. The 9th grade dropout rate was calculated by dividing the number of 9th grade dropouts by the first month membership last day for the 9th grade classes 2010-11 plus the number of 9th grade dropouts.

Associate degree completion and college credit acquisition

About half the 1,859 graduates reported by NCDPI from the 50 early college high schools with graduating cohorts in 2012 earned an associate degree.

College enrollment following graduation

For 2011 high school graduates, the most recent year for which initial fall enrollment data is available from the UNC General Administration, 33 percent of graduates from early college high schools enrolled at one of the UNC campuses. This compares to 28 percent of all other public high schools, excluding charters.

Funding and Additional Support

The 71 early college high schools that were open for students for the 2010-11 school year signed a five-year implementation agreement with NCDPI and New Schools to receive grant funding from the state and technical assistance in the implementation of their early college high school. For the 2010-11 year, each early college high school received an allocation from the state of $307,650 to cover the cost of various positions and other needs associated with the model. See Table 4 below for a list of positions and other items.

Table 3. Grant-Funded Positions and other Costs, 2010-11

• School Change and Instructional Coaches • Teacher Professional Development • Principal Professional Development • 1 Guidance Counselor and one Career Development Coordinator (or other support position) • 1 College Liaison • Evaluation • Local Cash[1] • College Textbooks	
Total:	**$307,650**

[1] ECHS in their first year of implementation receive an additional $10,000 in local cash to help with additional implementation needs.

The implementation grant funding covers the cost of a school change and instructional coach, professional development for teachers and principals, three instructional support positions, evaluation, local cash to cover additional expenses, including travel to professional development events and funding to purchase college textbooks for students.

School development and support services: New Schools' Integrated System of School Support Services (IS^4) is a comprehensive approach to whole school development that includes coaching for teachers and principals, professional development and ongoing support from experienced educators.

During an early college high school's first year, the school is assigned a professionally trained and highly experienced school change coach who serves as a facilitator for the planning and implementation of the school. Beginning in the second year, each ECHS receives the services of a highly trained and experienced instructional coach who works directly with the faculty on-site to support sustained change in instructional approaches. Both types of coaches are identified and trained by NC New Schools.

New Schools has continued efforts during the past year to achieve the broad goal of the grant to improve the quality of the state's ECHS by focusing on professional development for school staff, data use and analysis and the capacity of the organization to sustain the early college initiative.

- ***Instructional Coaching:*** During the 2011-12 school year, New Schools continued the work of instructional coaches in partner schools and continued the focus on deepening the practices in the Common Instructional Framework. Additionally, coaches worked in the schools to differentiate professional development in three areas: 1) effective integration of technology for instruction; 2) Planning for Student Understanding, an New Schools-developed framework for effective unit planning using big ideas; and 3) assessment for learning. Coaches encouraged the regular use of schoolwide instructional rounds as an effective tool to strengthen teachers' skills through focused sharing and collaboration.

Through the rounds model, coaches helped teachers apply such strategies as student-learning questions, data collection and teacher analysis to improve their classroom practices. Instructional coaches also planned and facilitated professional development sessions, co-taught and modeled lessons using innovative practices in classrooms, conducted one-on-one and small group instructional rounds and provided feedback and support to teachers, worked with staffs to understand and effectively use data and partnered with the school principals to support a changing learning environment.

During the 2012-13 school year, instructional coaches at each school are part of a larger team that includes the principal, a lead teacher, and leadership coach and portfolio manager. That team focuses on the school's action plan for improvement and will meet regularly to assess progress and course-correct.

- ***Leadership coaches****:* Principals in New Schools-partner schools were provided an additional level of support during the 2010-11 year from one of four leadership coaches to help schools effectively introduce and execute the key school and instructional change embodied in the New

Schools Design Principles. All schools except those in their first year of implementation received the services of one of the leadership coaches during monthly school visits throughout the year. The leadership support positions, filled by seasoned principals under contract to New Schools, help ensure school-based follow up to regional and statewide development programs focused on critical instructional approaches such as project-based learning and Critical Friends Groups. The coaches also provide valuable support to inexperienced principals with untested leadership skills. It is critical for principals to understand, recognize and be able to discuss with teachers how to change instruction to ensure student success.

- ***Instructional Support Positions:*** ECHS implementation grants also provide each school with funding for a college liaison and two school-based positions, typically a school counselor and a career development coordinator or other support staff. The college liaison position helps connect the university or community college and the ECHS, and facilitates student placement in college courses and the identification of additional college resources. The career-development coordinator helps facilitate partnerships with community organizations and local businesses and to develop internships and job shadowing opportunities for students.

- ***The North Carolina Center for Educational Leadership*** **(NCCEL):** This initiative expands on the traditional model of school-specific leadership ***support*** by providing individualized and transferrable leadership ***development***. Through collaboration with thought partners, including the BB&T University, NCCEL is helping to create and validate a leadership development initiative with a goal of cultivating leaders focused on building a culture of high expectations and learning for all students in the 115 schools served in the NC New Schools network across the state. In partnership with the internationally recognized Center for Creative Leadership, NCCEL is working to improve each principal's effectiveness by assessing leadership competencies and personalizing leadership supports. As a component of the North Carolina New Schools' Integrated System of School Support Services (IS4), school leaders develop the skills to serve as catalysts for the creation of collaborative cultures focused on leading, teaching, and learning.

    - Recent research and our seven years of observation of NCNS schools shows that effective school leadership is a key component of student achievement. In order to significantly impact the direction of student achievement in North Carolina, we need to focus on succession development and sustainability across the state. With this in mind, we are expanding our leadership services to other school-based administrators both inside our network and across North Carolina and to eventually include district level leaders. This focus on ***succession*** and ***scaling across the state*** comes from evidence that highlights the need for a greater level of support and leadership development to help develop more leaders – at both the school and district level – who are prepared to successfully lead in the innovative environments that are better serving our students.

- ***2012 Summer Institute:*** New Schools has continued to build on the successes of recent years to capitalize on the knowledge and experience of its partner schools as a way for educators to learn from one another and deepen their commitment and understanding about secondary school transformation. This past year's event was attended by more than 500 educators from NC New Schools-affiliated schools. Summer Institute serves as a bridge for learning and building community, connecting teams from innovative schools across the state as they share success, learn promising practices and plan next steps. Highlights include facilitated team time for reflection and planning, opportunities to hear from nationally-known education leaders and networking among principals, teachers, counselors, college liaisons and community college and district leaders.

Other Initiatives: NC New Schools also continues to pursue high school innovation with other initiatives.

North Carolina Investing in Rural Innovative Schools (NC iRIS): In a significant effort to broaden the reach of successful early college approaches, New Schools has launched an initiative called NC iRIS. The effort, funded with a $15 million federal Investing in Innovation (i3) grant and $1.5 million in private support, will allow more than 20,000 students in as many as 20 high schools in rural, low-income counties to benefit from many of the same strategies pioneered by the state's early college high schools. Students will have access to tuition-free college courses matched with the kind of strong instructional support that characterizes the early college experience. The goal of the five-year initiative is to increase graduation rates, improve student achievement and improve the capacity of local districts to sustain effective high school innovation.

In all, the five-year NC iRIS initiative will apply early college strategies to 18 traditional high schools in rural communities and reach more than 20,000 students by 2016. Five high schools joined the initiative this past fall: Northside and Southside high schools in Beaufort County, Madison (County) High School, East Rutherford High School and North Surry High School. High schools in six additional districts are currently included in the initiative over the five-year grant: Alleghany, Hertford, Jones, Wilkes, Warren and Yancey. Each individual school will receive three years of service.

District-wide early college model: NC New Schools, working with the State Board of Education, higher education partners and Duplin County Schools, is helping to develop the first district-wide early college model in the state. The goal is to use best practices in designing and implementing a comprehensive approach that will translate into every child in the school system graduating prepared for college and careers. Specifically, the effort is focused on the New Schools Design Principles and core classroom strategies found in the Common Instructional Framework.

Learning Laboratory Initiative: Four schools, which are demonstrating effective execution of New Schools' six Design Principles, began hosting formal visits from schools in 2010 and continue to host visits. Through rigorous application of the New Schools Design Principles and the "instructional rounds model," the four schools demonstrate strong success in improving student achievement, eliminating dropouts and increasing the job satisfaction of teachers.

The four schools are Wayne School of Engineering in Goldsboro, Cross Creek Early College in Fayetteville, Hillside New Tech High School in Durham and Caldwell Early College in Hudson. The

emerging partnerships between the schools and university staffs at Appalachian State, NC Central, Fayetteville State and East Carolina will provide a foundation for parallel work within the education schools of all NC colleges. The project has been funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is a collaborative between NC New Schools and the University of North Carolina.

STEM-focused school development: Schools with a focus on science, technology, engineering and math and with career orientation to health and life sciences, biotechnology and agriscience, energy and sustainability, or aerospace and advanced manufacturing and security – include participation from a number of early college high schools and other innovative schools. Currently, 26 schools statewide with partnerships with NC New Schools are part of the STEM network. The development of the STEM-focused schools is supported by a number of foundations and with funding from North Carolina's federal Race to the Top grant.

NC STEP: Under a five-year grant from the federal Transitions to Teaching Program, NC New Schools is training mid-career professionals and non-education college graduates for teaching jobs in science, technology, engineering and math. An initial group of 10 candidates is currently enrolled in the program, with 40 slots open for the 2013-14 year. New Schools is one of 30 organizations nationwide awarded five-year grants from the U.S. Department of Education to train non-education graduates to teach in high-needs schools. The total cost for the full five years of the program is $2.7 million.

The NC STEM Teacher Education Program (STEP) initiative is focused on training teachers in innovative and effective STEM-based instruction. Candidates in the program receive a year of on-the-job training at an innovative school supported by New Schools, combined with online coursework through WIDE World, a professional development program of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Nearly 200 new teachers in STEM-related disciplines would be trained over the full five years of the program. The initial teacher apprenticeships this year are offered at four schools that form the Learning Laboratory Initiative, a joint effort of the University of North Carolina and NC New Schools that is aimed at showcasing the kind of teaching and learning that ensures all students graduate ready for college, careers and life.

Pathways to Prosperity: NC New Schools is supporting the NC Department of Public Instruction in this multi-state initiative that is aimed at building career pathways that enable all young people to successfully transition from high school through a post-secondary credential to high-skills, family-supporting careers. The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership initiative is a joint project between Harvard Graduate School of Education and Jobs for the Future. The effort grows out of a high-profile report released in 2011, *Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century*. The multi-state initiative responds to the report's call for an intensive effort on the part of employers, educators, and government leaders to build pathways that link work and learning, aligned with regional labor market demand. The multi-state network will convene teams of stakeholders from education, business, and government and will operate at both the state and regional levels. In North Carolina, a state-level leadership team is guiding this initiative. Co-chaired by AT&T President Cynthia Marshall and Duke Energy Senior Vice President Jeff Corbett, the team includes representatives from a broad range of industry, education and government partners.

Each participating state will build grade 9-14 career pathways aligned with high-growth sectors of their regional economies that combine rigorous academics with powerful technical education. The state leadership team launched its work August 20, and Jobs for the Future staff began asset-mapping work in two regions of North Carolina. The participating states will convene in early October at Harvard to identify common challenges, learn from each other's strengths, and take advantage of resources provided by JFF and Harvard's technical assistance teams.

New Schools and Sites Open for the 2012-13 School Year

Three new schools giving students greater opportunity to earn college credit while in high school opened for the 2012-13 school year: Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience in Plymouth, Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy in Lexington and STEM Early College at NC A&T State University in Greensboro.

- **Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience.** The regional school in Washington County, the first to be developed under new enabling legislation adopted by the General Assembly last year, opened in August to 60 ninth graders from five districts in the region. New Schools has been assisting with the school design with a focus on a regional impact of advancing teaching in mathematics and science. A team comprised of New Schools-partner school teachers, coaches and staff spent a week in early June developing courses, sequences and scheduling for use by the school's principal and faculty.

- **Valley Academy:** The Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy is part of the New Schools network of STEM schools focusing on advanced manufacturing and health and life sciences. As in other New Schools-partner schools, Valley Academy uses inquiry and project-based approaches to learning that incorporate real-world issues and problems along with an emphasis on critical thinking. Students graduating from the academy will be able to choose from among several post-secondary alternatives, each designed to maximize their options. All students will earn an industry credential in their specific field, if available, and then will enter a training or apprenticeship program or alternatively apply the college credits they earn to pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree at a partner university.

- **STEM Early College High School at NC A&T:** The STEM Early College at NC A&T follows a curriculum that integrates STEM content and skills with a particular emphasis on biomedical sciences, renewable energy and engineering. Students will take honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in ninth and 10th grades. In addition to required high school courses, the STEM curriculum incorporates courses such as robotics and scientific visualization. Project-based learning will be emphasized. Juniors and seniors will take college courses and focus on one of three STEM pathways. Students will graduate with a high school diploma and two years of college credit from NC A&T. Students will also have the opportunity to complete internships in their junior and senior years.

Evaluation Efforts

North Carolina New Schools is committed to ongoing program evaluation and to other efforts to learn from the innovative practices it is helping develop and promote. New Schools and NCDPI have built a partnership with Jobs for the Future (JFF), the intermediary for the national Early College High School Initiative, to include North Carolina's ECHS in the Early College High School Initiative Student Information System. The Student Information System (SIS) collects and analyzes student-level data from the schools on such areas as demographics, attendance, course-taking and course-completion patterns, test scores, GPA, disciplinary actions, and number of college courses taken. The Student Information System will allow New Schools, NCDPI and our ECHS to better track and evaluate the progress of students.

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, continues its rigorous, experimental research study of the Early College High School Initiative. (See discussion of early results on page 2.) The research project is studying the impact of the early college model on important student outcomes and will seek to determine the model's effectiveness with different student populations. The research will follow students through graduation and into postsecondary education. This study is providing useful information to New Schools, NCDPI and our early colleges on how to improve our practice.

SERVE will also be evaluating both the Validating Early College Strategies for Traditional High Schools and Transition to Teaching initiatives.

Attachment A: North Carolina Early College High Schools, 2012-13

School	District	Year Opened
Anson County Early College High School	Anson County Schools	2005-06
Mayland Early College High School	Avery, Mitchell and Yancey schools	2009-10
Beaufort County Early College High School	Beaufort County Schools	2008-09
Bertie County Early College High School	Bertie County Schools	2008-09
Brunswick County Early College High School	Brunswick County Schools	2006-07
Buncombe County Early / Middle College	Buncombe County Schools	2005-06
Caldwell Early College	Caldwell County Schools	2006-07
Catawba Valley Early College High School	Catawba County Schools	2005-06
Tri-County Early College High School	Cherokee County Schools	2006-07
Cleveland Early College High School	Cleveland County Schools	2008-09
Sampson County Early College High School	Clinton City/Sampson	2005-06
Southeastern Early College High School	Columbus County Schools	2006-07
Craven Early College High School	Craven County Schools	2006-07

School	District	Year Opened
Early College EAST	Craven County Schools	2010-11
Cross Creek Early College High School	Cumberland County Schools	2005-06
Cumberland International Early College High School	Cumberland County Schools	2011-12
JP Knapp Early College High School	Currituck County Schools	2008-09
Davidson Early College High School	Davidson County Schools	2005-06
Valley Academy	Davidson County Schools	2012-13
Davie County Early College High School	Davie County Schools	2007-08
Duplin Early College High School	Duplin County Schools	2009-10
Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School	Durham Public Schools	2005-06
Edgecombe County Early College High School	Edgecombe County schools	2005-06
Franklin County Early College High School	Franklin County Schools	2009-10
Granville Early College High School	Granville County Schools	2009-10
Greene County Early College High School	Greene County Schools	2006-07

School	District	Year Opened
The Early / Middle College at GTCC	Guilford County Schools	2005-06
GTCC Early/Middle College at High Point	Guilford County Schools	2006-07
NC A&T State University Early/Middle College High School	Guilford County Schools	2006-07
STEM Early College at NC A&T State University	Guilford County Schools	2012-13
GTCC Early / Middle College Greensboro	Guilford County Schools	2007-08
Early / Middle College at Bennett College for Women	Guilford County Schools	2008-09
Early / Middle College at UNCG*	Guilford County Schools	2011-12
Haywood Early College High School	Haywood County Schools	2006-07
Henderson Early College High School	Henderson County Schools	2009-10
Hertford County Early College	Hertford County Schools	2008-09
SandHoke Early College High School	Hoke County Schools	2006-07
Hyde County Early College High School	Hyde County Schools	2008-09
Collaborative College for Technology and Leadership	Iredell-Statesville Schools	2005-06

School	District	Year Opened
Iredell-Statesville Visual and Performing Arts Early College High School	Iredell-Statesville Schools	2008-09
Blue Ridge Virtual Early College	Jackson County Schools	2008-09
Jackson County Early College	Jackson County Schools	2008-09
Johnston County Early College Academy	Johnston County Schools	2008-09
Cabarrus/Kannapolis Early College High School	Kannapolis City Schools	2009-10
Lee County Early College High School	Lee County Schools	2006-07
Lenoir County Early College High School	Lenoir County Schools	2007-08
Macon County Early College High School	Macon County Schools	2006-07
Madison County Early College High School	Madison County Schools	2008-09
McDowell Early College	McDowell County Schools	2006-07
Nash-Rocky Mount Early College High School	Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	2005-06
Isaac Bear Early College High School	New Hanover County Schools	2006-07
Wilmington Early College High School	New Hanover County Schools	2007-08

School	District	Year Opened
Pender Early College High School	Pender County Schools	2006-07
Polk Virtual Early College High School	Polk County Schools	2007-08
Randolph Early College High School	Randolph County Schools	2006-07
Richmond County Early College High School	Richmond County Schools	2007-08
Robeson County Early College High School	Robeson County Schools	2005-06
Rockingham Early College High School	Rockingham County Schools	2008-09
Rowan County Early College	Rowan-Salisbury Schools	2008-09
Rutherford Early College High School	Rutherford County Schools	2005-06
Scotland Richmond Early College High School	Scotland County Schools	2007-08
Stanly Early College High School	Stanly County Schools	2006-07
Stokes County Early College High School	Stokes County Schools	2009-10
Surry Early College High School of Design	Surry County Schools	2006-07
Columbia iSchool	Tyrrell County Schools	2008-09

School	District	Year Opened
Union County Early College	Union County Schools	2006-07
Vance County Early College High School	Vance County Schools	2008-09
Wake Early College of Health Sciences	Wake County Schools	2006-07
Wake N.C. State University STEM Early College High School	Wake County Schools	2011-12
Warren Early College High School	Warren County Schools	2008-09
Wayne Early / Middle College High School	Wayne County Schools	2007-08
Roanoke Valley Early College High School	Weldon City Schools	2009-10
Wilkes Early College High School	Wilkes County Schools	2009-10
Wilson Early College High School	Wilson County Schools	2009-10
Early College of Forsyth	Winston-Salem / Forsyth County Schools	2008-09
Yadkin County Early College High School	Yadkin County Schools	2007-08
Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience	Beaufort, Martin, Pitt, Tyrrell, and Washington school districts	2012-13