



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

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Bill), sec. 7.11(g)*

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Update on Cooperative Innovative High Schools

Executive Summary

In the 11 years since the General Assembly authorized the development of and funding for cooperative innovative high schools – including early college high schools and small restructured high schools – a growing number of students is benefitting from new opportunities leading to stronger outcomes with higher rates of academic achievement, graduation and postsecondary enrollment.

Cooperative Innovative High Schools that are supported through partnerships with NC New Schools are assisted in their efforts to transform education by a set of strategies proven and refined by the experience of the last decade. NC New Schools promotes an approach to excellence in education that is independent of any particular school model or structure, instead emphasizing three central components critical to successful schools: talent, design and quality.

- **Talent:** Enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators
- **Design:** Aligning all resources toward the goal of college and work readiness for all students
- **Quality:** Using all data sources for continuous improvement

The footprint of Cooperative Innovative schools extended across **71** of the state's 100 counties with **84 individual schools** during the 2013-14 school year, the period covered by this report. Early college high schools or other Cooperative Innovative high schools were available last year to students in 77 of North Carolina's 115 districts (66 percent). This includes 71 of 100 county districts and six of 15 city districts. Several counties have more than one early college.

Together, these schools are transforming teaching and learning for their students who while also helping to prompt innovative practices in many other districts and schools.

Highlights of the cooperative innovative schools included these in 2013-2014:

- Of total 1st month enrollment of **45,103** for 2104-2015 in network schools of NC New Schools, enrollment in cooperative innovative schools in 2013-2014 was **18,194 students**.
 - 15,670 students enrolled in 76 early college high schools
 - 2,524 students enrolled in nine other cooperative innovative high schools
 - Of total graduating class of **7,370** in 2014 from NC New Schools partner schools, **3,173** graduated from cooperative innovative schools
 - 2,618 graduates of 69 early college high schools
 - 555 graduates of other cooperative nine innovative high schools
 - Academic outcomes above state averages
 - Early colleges achieved a combined **college-and-career ready** passing rate of **63.3 percent** on end-of-course exams for 2014 and a **grade-level performance** passing rate of **75.9 percent**. (All NC high schools reported comparable passing rates of 45.1 percent and 58.5 percent, respectively.)
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- The combined **career and college ready** passing rate for nine other cooperative innovative high schools (other than early colleges) was **40 percent** and a **grade-level performance** passing rate of **53 percent**.
- College preparedness above state averages
 - **82.5 percent** of early college 11th graders achieved the minimum ACT score required for admission to the University of North Carolina system. (59.3 percent of all 11th graders in the state scored at the minimum level.)
 - **51.7 percent** of 11th graders in nine other cooperative innovative schools achieved the minimum ACT score for UNC admission
- Acquisition of college credit while in high school
 - **58 percent of 2014 early college graduates earned an associate degree or two years of transferrable credit while still in high school**

Cooperative Innovative High Schools: Changing Education

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 140 schools in more than two thirds of the state's 115 school districts. 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 initial support from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, state 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. 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 skills students need and the state's evolving economy demands in the 21st century. The State Board of Education; the N.C. Department of Public Instruction; the UNC and N.C. Community College systems; the U.S. Department of Education; and national organizations such as the National Academy Foundation, 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 teaching and learning along with the structure of schools, including governance and student support. 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 education innovation, this report focuses only on schools supported under the Cooperative Innovative Schools Program (G.S. 115C-238.50). In addition to *early college high schools*, also covered in this report, NC New Schools supports a number of other approaches, including the transformation of districts and conventional schools, rural innovative schools, career academies, STEM education, regional economically-themed schools and other approaches that continue to evolve. Since these schools are not defined as “cooperative innovative,” they are not included in this report.

Each innovative school adopts a set of rigorous best-practice conditions, known as Design Principles, as well as aligned instructional strategies, which provide the foundation on which teachers advance a common language about teacher effectiveness and student engagement. The 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 (Innovative High Schools): NC New Schools has partnered with local school districts to create new schools or to help divide conventional high schools into small autonomous, focused and academically rigorous schools. Each of these new schools has 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.

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. 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.

Until 2014, 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 accordance with SL 2007-323. The status of the state's early colleges is now included within this report on Cooperative Innovative High Schools.

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 G.S. 115C-238.50. 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 2013-2014 school year, as well as student achievement data from these schools.

Restructured Cooperative Innovative High Schools (Innovative High Schools)

Nine high schools other than early colleges designated as cooperative and innovative high schools and also in partnership with NC New Schools were open for students during the 2013-2014 school year. The nine 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. Five¹ of the nine schools were created as part of the turnaround high school initiative with NCDPI. The five schools chose to work with NC New Schools as part of their turnaround requirement. Four STEM-focused 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 schools have used local funds from their respective school districts

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

to cover the cost of their implementation and support from NC New Schools. For a complete list of the nine non-early college cooperative innovative high schools that were open for the 2013-2014 school year, see Attachment A.

Five of the schools completed five-years of grant support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation ending in 2010-2011. Significantly, all nine schools have continued to operate as small schools with ongoing support from NC New Schools, along with additional support from other grant-making organizations. A number of additional innovative schools formerly supported under the Gates grant continued to operate in 2013-2014. 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 under the state’s federal Race to the Top initiative. This report also does not cover the federally-funded Rural Innovative Schools initiative (18 traditional high schools).

Student Demographics

Collectively, the nine small restructured high schools that were partners with NC New Schools in 2013-2014 served 2,524 students in the 9th through 13th grades. The number of students per grade level that were served in redesigned high schools for the 2013-2014 school year is presented in Table 1 below. Demographic information for the nine schools combined is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 1. Number of Students per Grade Level in Innovative High Schools, 2013-2014

Grade Level	No. of Students
6 th , 7 th , 8 th	132
9 th	651
10 th	578
11 th	629
12 th	525
13 th	9
Total	2,524

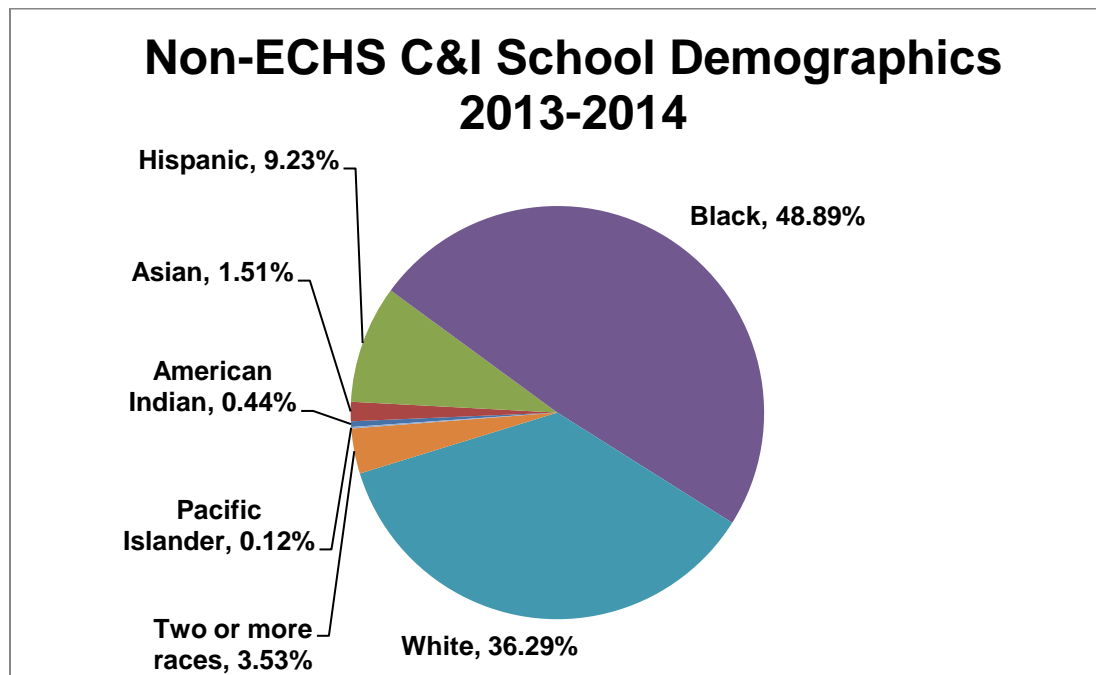
Source: Grade, Race and Gender Data from NCDPI, 2013-2014

Table 2. Race and Gender of Students in Innovative High Schools, 2013-2014

	Male	Female	Total
White	15.61%	20.68%	36.29%
Black	24.17%	24.72%	48.89%
Hispanic	4.16%	5.07%	9.23%
Native Amer.	0.32%	0.12%	0.44%
Asian	0.87%	0.63%	1.51%
2 or more races	1.58%	1.94%	3.53%
Total	46.75%	53.25%	100%

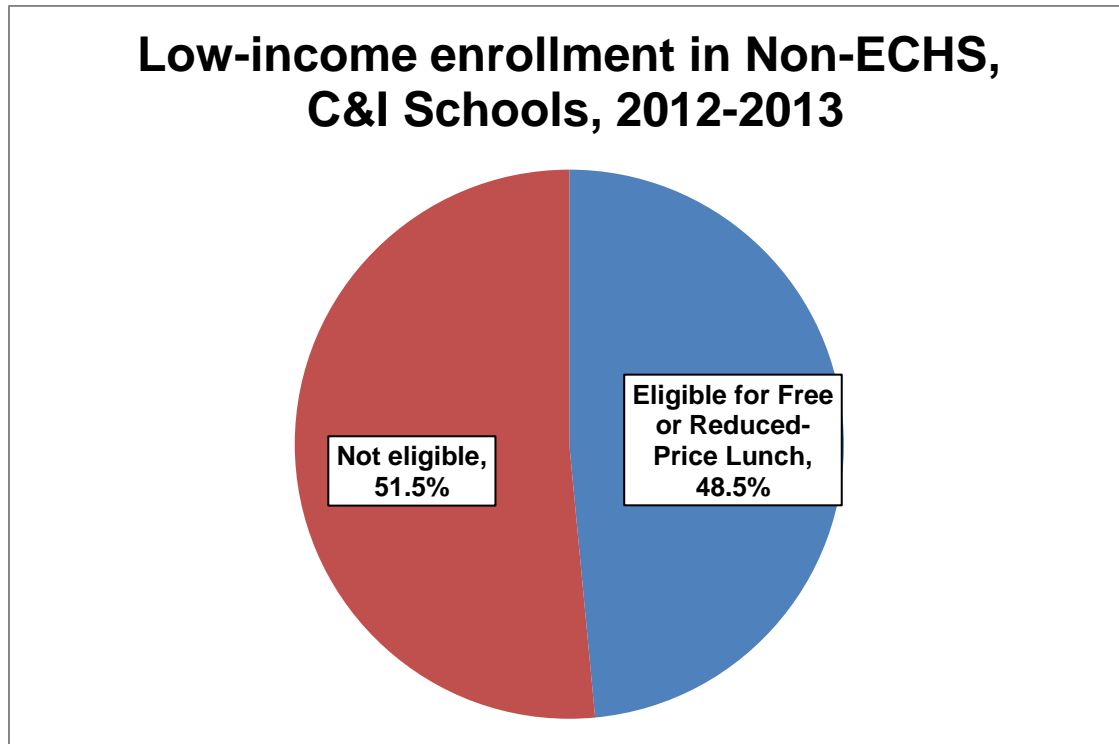
Source: NCDPI, Grade, Race, Sex data, school year 2013-2014

Chart 1. Innovative High School Enrollment by Race, 2013-2014



Source: NCDPI, Grade, Race, Sex data, school year 2013-2014

Chart 2: Innovative High School Enrollment by Poverty, 2012-13
Most recent available



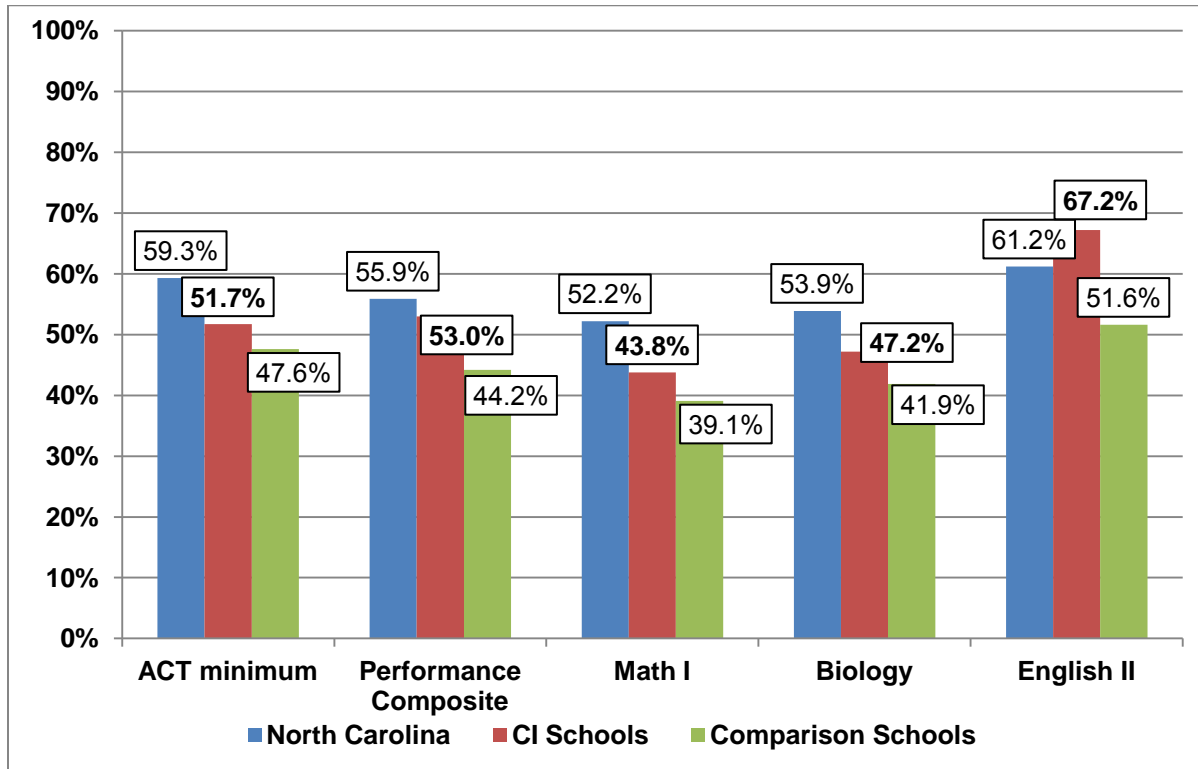
Source: NCDPI Free and Reduced-Price Lunch data, 2012-2013 [**Most recent available**]

READY Accountability Results

As measured by the state's READY accountability system, the nine cooperative innovative restructured high schools showed performance that was below overall state results but above the traditional high schools used for comparison. Similar to virtually all schools statewide, passing rates on end-of-course tests reflect more rigorous standards adopted by the state beginning with the 2012-2013 school year.

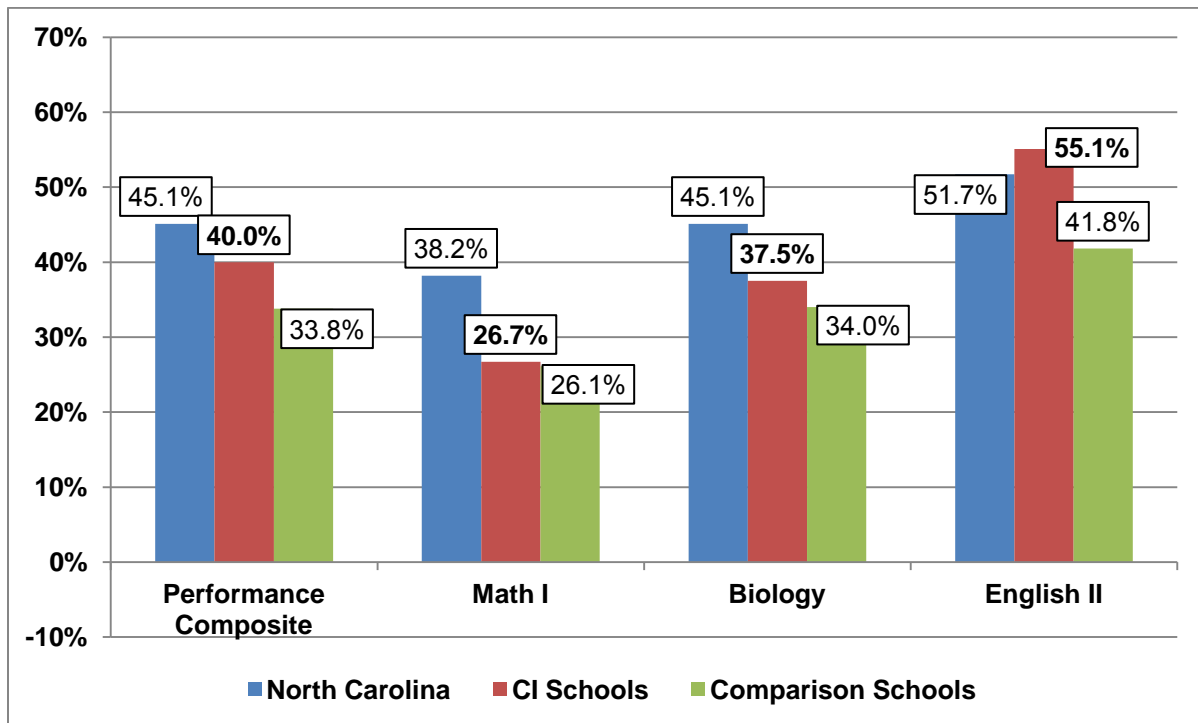
In terms of gains measured by EVAAS (Educational Value Added Assessment System), two of the nine schools exceeded expectations for student progress, two met growth goals and five fell short of predicted gains. College-and-Career Ready passing rates on all exams taken (performance composite) ranged from 20.3 percent at Hillside New Tech High School in Durham to 69.2 percent at Wayne School of Engineering in Goldsboro. In terms of the less rigorous grade-level performance passing standard, rates ranged from 35.8 percent at Hillside New Tech to 80 percent at Wayne School of Engineering.

Chart 3: NC READY Accountability Results, 2013-2014 (Grade-level performance)



Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI READY accountability data by school, 2013-2014

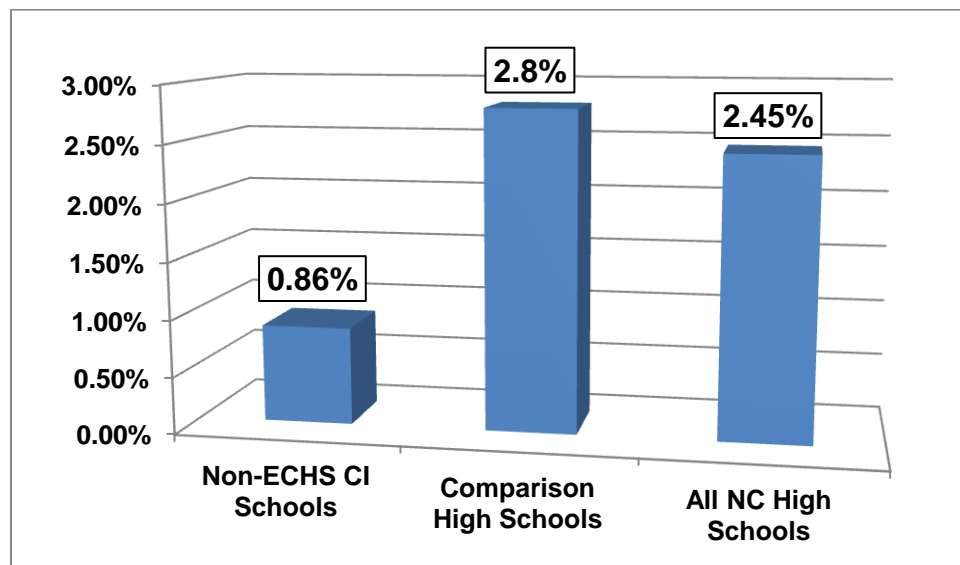
Chart 4: College and Career Ready Results, 2013-2014



Dropout Rates

To graduate all students, schools must ensure that students stay in school and do not drop out. During the 2012-2013 school year, the nine cooperative innovative high schools reported school-wide dropout rates ranging from 0 percent to 5.3 percent, with four of the schools reporting **no dropouts** (by contrast, all comparison schools reported some students dropping out of school). All but one of the nine schools also reported dropout rates that were lower than the dropout rate for their comparison high school. The nine cooperative innovative high schools had a combined school-wide dropout rate in 2012-2013 of 0.86 percent compared to a combined rate of 2.8 percent for their comparison high schools and 2.45 percent for all high schools statewide.

Chart 5: Dropout Rates, Grades 9-12, 2012-2013



Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI dropout rate data, 2012-2013

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, NC New Schools also tracks dropout rates at the 9th grade in addition to school-wide dropout rates for redesigned high schools.

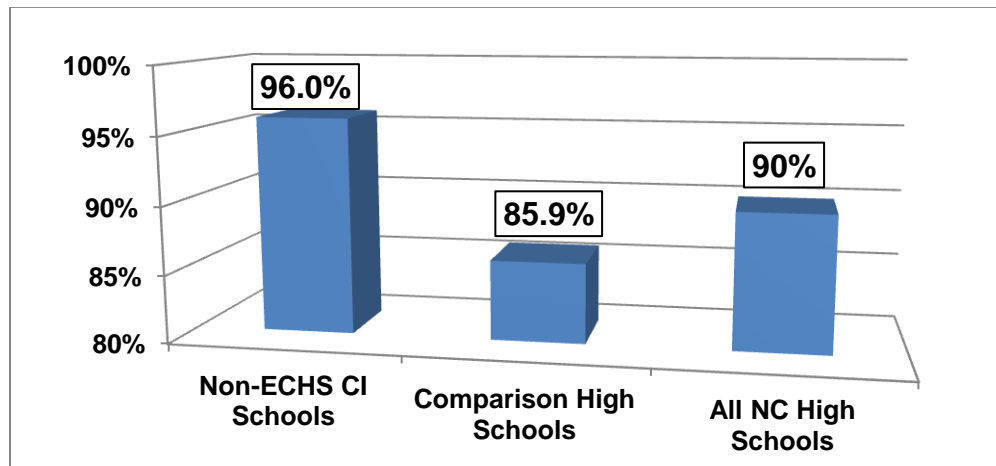
For the 2012-2013 school year, the nine cooperative innovative schools reported 9th grade dropout rates ranging from 0 percent to 7.14 percent, with six of the nine schools reporting **no 9th grade dropouts** (again, all comparison school reported some 9th grade dropouts; and about 30 percent of all schools statewide reported no dropouts from 9th grade.) All but two of the nine schools had 9th grade dropout rates that were lower than the 9th grade dropout rate for their comparison high school. The nine cooperative innovative schools had a combined 9th grade dropout rate of 1.4 percent, compared to a combined rate of 2.7 percent for their comparison high schools and 2.4 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 2012-2013 school year (the most recent for which promotion rates are available), the nine cooperative innovative high schools reported promotion rates ranging from 81.3 percent to 100 percent, with seven of the schools promoting at least 95 percent of their 9th graders. Together, the nine schools had a combined 9th grade promotion rate of 96 percent, compared to a combined promotion rate of 85.9 percent for comparison high schools and 90 percent for all high schools in the state.

Chart 6: 9th Grade Promotion Rates, by school type, 2012-2013

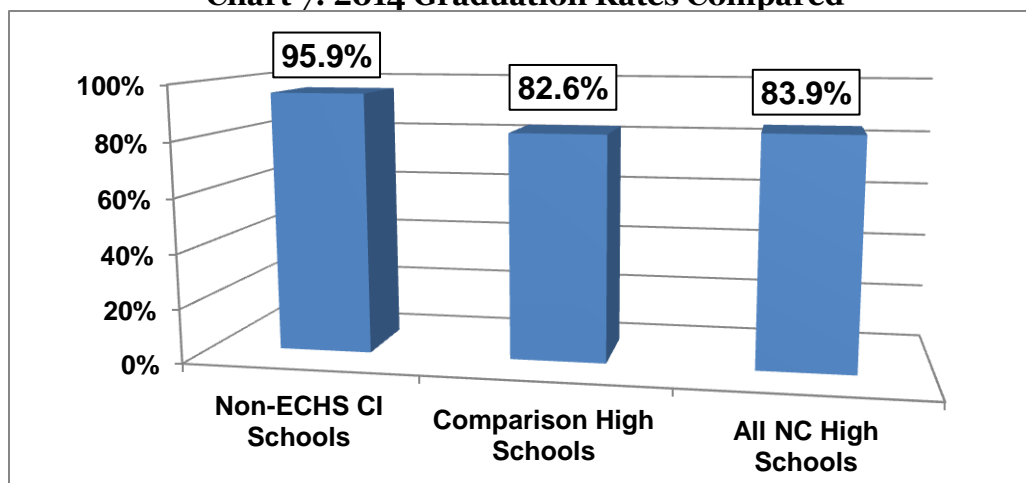


Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI grade promotion data, 2012-2013 (most recent available)

Graduation Rates

Graduation rates for the nine cooperative innovative high schools ranged from 100 percent (City of Medicine Academy and Hillside New Tech high schools in Durham and Wayne School of Engineering in Goldsboro) to 89 percent (J.F. Webb School of Health and Life Sciences). Seven of the nine schools graduated at least 95 percent of the 9th grade cohort from four years earlier. The aggregate graduation rate for the nine schools was 95.9 percent, compared to 82.6 percent for their comparison schools and 83.9 percent for the state as a whole.

Chart 7: 2014 Graduation Rates Compared



Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI 2014 graduation data

Funding and Additional Support

Three of the nine state-supported small restructured high schools enrolling students for the 2013-2014 school year previously received supplemental funding from the General Assembly to support the initial 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 other cooperative innovative schools did not receive the supplemental funding from the General Assembly (all implementation funding for these nine schools came from local school district sources).²

North Carolina Early College High School Initiative

North Carolina's *Early College High School Initiative* is one of the nation's most ambitious efforts to transform education around three critical goals:

- **Improving academic outcomes for all students**
- **Creating a workforce well prepared for the state's emerging economy**
- **Demonstrating effective ways to transform conventional schools and districts**

NC New Schools administers the early college program for North Carolina in cooperation with the Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education, supporting the innovative schools through intensive professional development, coaching for teachers and principals and advocating for policies and funding to expand the approach to reach more students across the state. NC New Schools is now expanding approaches that have demonstrated success in early colleges to traditional high schools in rural communities under an initiative supported largely with two federal grants.

Neither high schools nor colleges in a traditional sense, early colleges adopt a unique hybrid model that transforms teaching and offers significant opportunities for student success. Since the state's first 13 early colleges opened in 2005, North Carolina has become a national leader, with **79 schools** open in 2014-2015, serving a combined enrollment of **more than 16,000 students in 71 counties and districts** across the state. Nationally, about 200 early college high schools are open in 24 states.

Typically located on the campuses of two- and four-year colleges and universities, early colleges provide a rigorous course of study with the goal of ensuring that all students graduate with a high school diploma and two years of transfer credit or an associate degree –at no cost to their families.

The schools are proving to be effective by setting expectations high – both for students and teachers – and focusing on the essential need to ensure 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 69 schools with full cohorts of students completing in 2014 was

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

95.6 percent. From 2008-2014, nearly 10,000 students graduated from early college in North Carolina, with more than half earning associate degrees in addition to their high school diplomas.

These results are even more significant considering that early colleges focus specifically on serving students who are typically underrepresented in college, including minorities, first-generation college-going students, students from low-income families and under-performing students.

Developed in partnership with the Department of Public Instruction, the NC Community College System, the University of North Carolina, the NC Independent Colleges and Universities and North Carolina New Schools, the early college high school initiative was aimed from the outset as a way to encourage more students to graduate high school and gain the advanced skills demanded in the 21st century workplace. It is designed to transform high schools in ways that better prepare students for college and careers by creating a seamless curriculum between high school and college, and by giving students work-based learning experiences. Early college high schools support students through what effectively become their first two years of college — typically the most vulnerable period for students from low-income families.

Since the state's first early college aimed at underserved students opened on the campus of NC Central University, the early college initiative has evolved from schools located only on a college campus to virtual access to college courses, to a stronger focus on work readiness, and now to a regional scaling of early college strategies into traditional high schools.

North Carolina's early college initiative has developed through a progression of enhanced versions:

- 1.0** – High schools located on college and university campuses with a focus on a consistent set of rigorous conditions proved effective with students in innovative schools
- 2.0** – Pilot phase using virtual strategies to create the same college-going culture in remote communities lacking ready access to a college or university
- 3.0** – Incorporating STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and workforce readiness strategies into the college-focused approach
- 4.0** – District and regional scaling to bring early college strategies to all students, not only those in specific early college high schools

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.

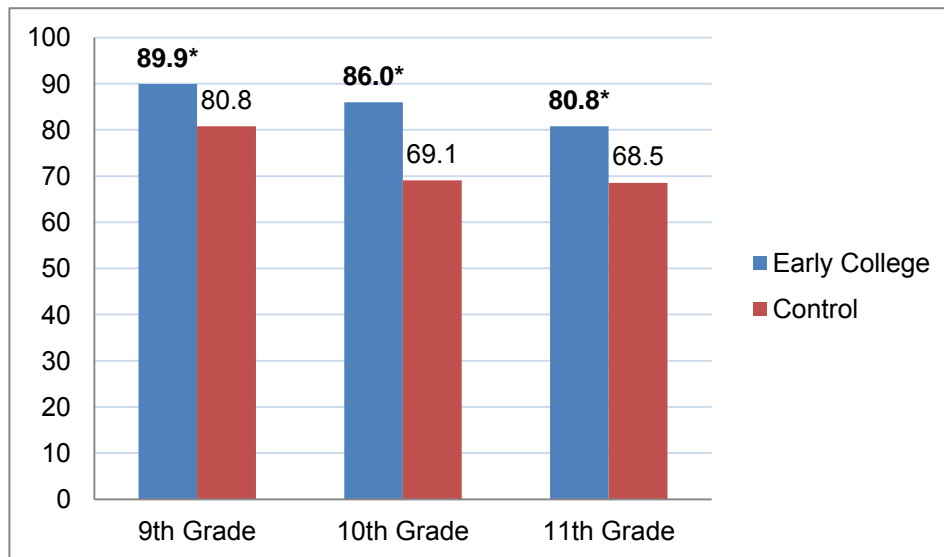
Experimental Study of the Impact of Early College High Schools

An ongoing experimental study by the SERVE Center at UNC-Greensboro finds persuasive evidence on the effectiveness of North Carolina's early colleges. The study, now in its ninth year, compares the progress of more than 2,000 students who applied to and were randomly accepted in early college to a control group of about the same number of students who applied to the early college but were randomly not accepted and enrolled elsewhere. This experimental methodology, often called the "gold standard" in educational research, means that the study is comparing results for two groups of students who were similarly motivated and had similar educational and demographic backgrounds.

Key findings to date include:

- **More early college students were on track for college:** Early college students completed courses in math and other subjects required for college admission at a rate higher than students in the control group.

Chart 8: Percentage of Students on Track for College

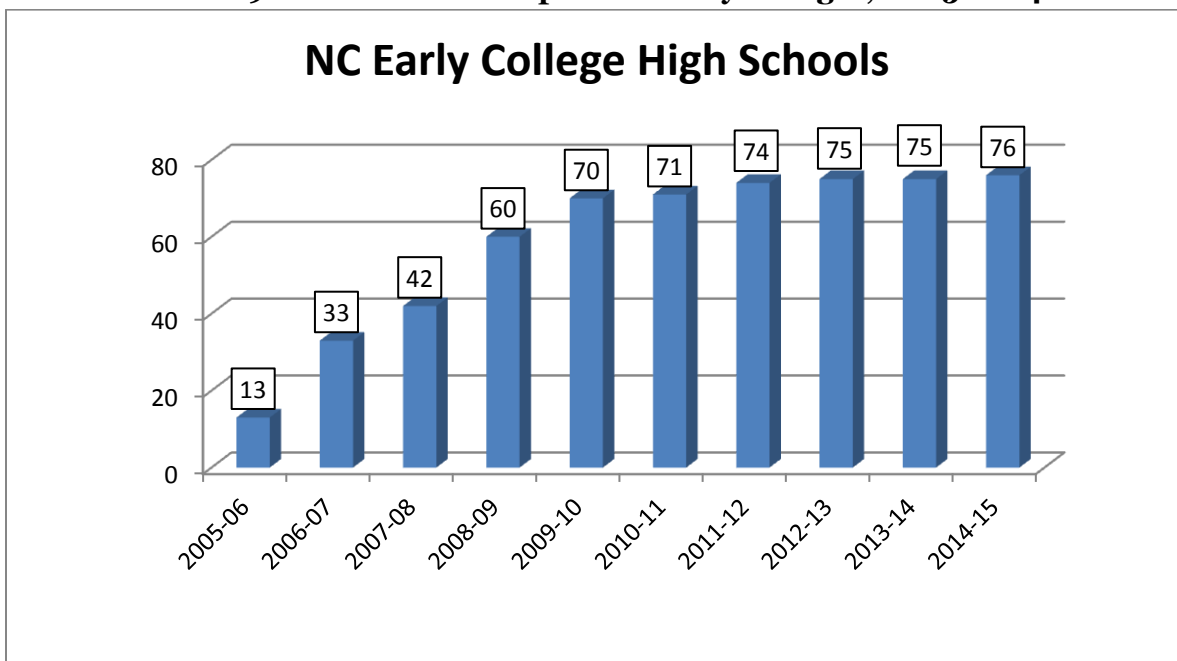


- **Early college students earned about eight times as many college credits in high school as control students.** By the end of 12th grade, early college students had earned an average of 23.8 college credits compared to 2.8 college credits earned by students in the control group. These results include credits earned by taking dual enrollment courses and by taking the Advanced Placement exam.
- **More early college students graduated:** Early college students graduated at a rate that is four percentage points higher than the control group (83% vs. 79%).
- **Early college students were more likely to enroll in and graduate from postsecondary education.**
 - Including those students who may have transferred out of early college, 89 percent of students included in the early college group had ever enrolled in postsecondary education, compared to 74 percent of students in the control group.
 - Among the early college sample, 31 percent had earned an associate degree seven years after beginning 9th grade, compared to 4 percent of the control group.
- **More positive experiences:** 9th graders in early college reported more positive experiences than control students on every school dimension examined in student surveys, including more rigorous instruction, more relevant instruction, higher academic expectations, better relationships and more support. Most of those differences persisted through school with eleventh graders also reporting higher academic expectations, more relevant instruction, and more support.

North Carolina’s Early College High Schools: A Snapshot

Of the 75 early colleges open in 2013-2014, 67 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 9: NC New Schools-partner early colleges, 2005-2014



Source: NC New Schools

For a complete list of the 76 sites that were open in 2012-13, please see Attachment B.

Nine of the 75 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 75 early college high schools with cooperative innovative status open in 2013-2014 served 15,670 students, with most of them in grades 9-13. 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. Across the schools, about 40 percent of the student

population was male and 60 percent was female. More than half (55 percent) of the student population was white, about one quarter (23 percent) was African-American, and nearly 15 percent was Hispanic. Based on state-reported data, 49 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 2013-2014 school year is presented in Table 1 below. Student demographic information on race and gender for the 75 schools combined is presented in the Table 2 below.

Table 3. Number of Students per Grade Level in North Carolina Early College High Schools, 2013-2014

Grade Level	No. of Students
6 th , 7 th & 8 th	177
9 th	4,136
10 th	3,696
11 th	3,306
12 th	3,025
13 th	1,330
Total	15,670

Source: NCDPI, Grade, Race, Sex Data; School year 2013-2014

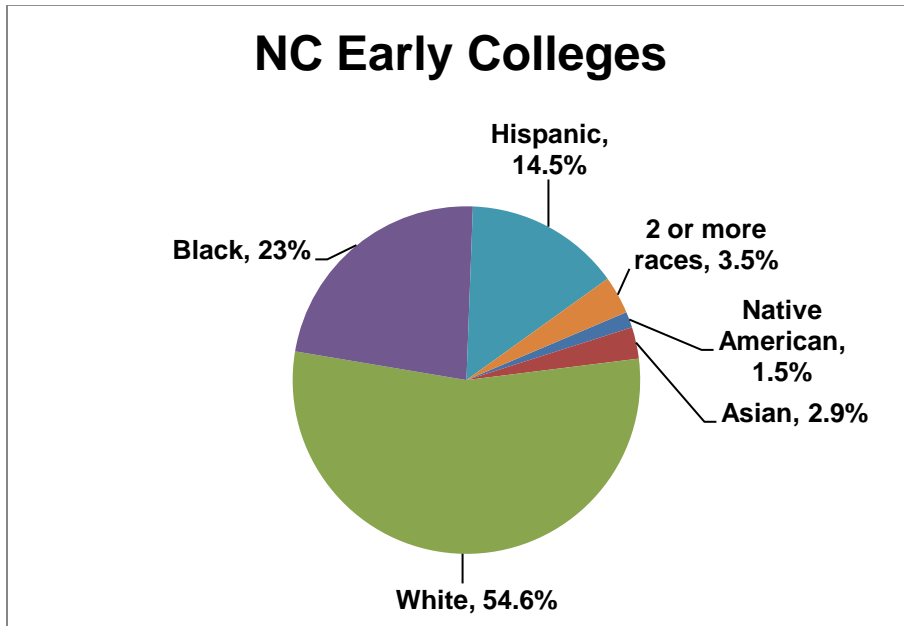
Table 4. Race and Gender of Students in North Carolina Early College High Schools, 2013-2014

	Male	Female	Total
White	23.07%	31.5%	54.57%
Black	8.18%	14.75%	22.93%
Hispanic	5.4%	9.08%	14.48%
Native American	0.54%	0.94%	1.48%
Asian	1.16%	1.77%	2.93%
2 or more races	1.16%	2.36%	3.52%
Total	39.54%	60.46%*	100.0%

Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI enrollment data, 2013-2014

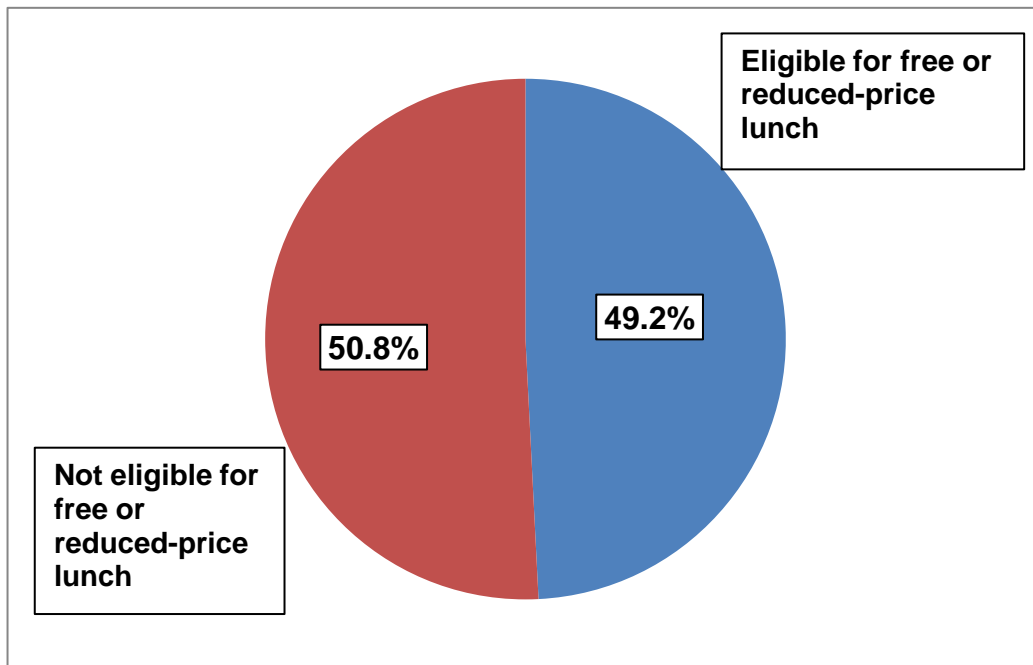
* Pacific Islander accounted for 0.09% of enrollment

Chart 10: Early College High School Enrollment by Race



Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI enrollment data, 2012-13

Chart 11: Early College Enrollment by Poverty

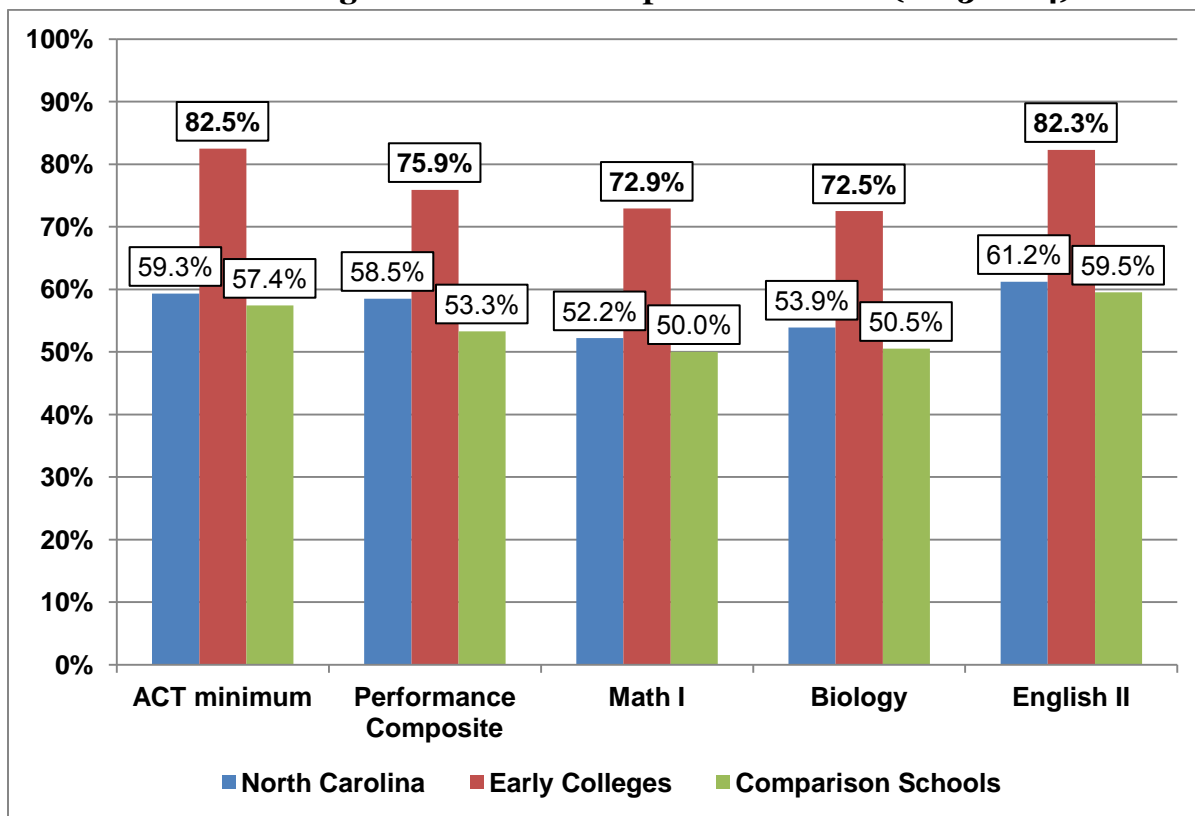


Source: NC New Schools analysis of free and reduced price lunch data, 2012-13 [Most recent available]

READY Accountability Results

In 2013-2014, the 75 early college high schools had performance composites (or the percent of students **grade-level** proficient on all End-of-Course tests) ranging from 98 percent 22.5 percent, with more than half of the early college high schools posting performance composites of 75 percent or higher (compared to 5 percent of the early college high schools' comparison high schools³ and 15 percent for all schools statewide with high school grades). All but five of the 75 early college high schools (94 percent) had **grade-level proficient** performance composites that were greater than their comparison high school. Nearly nine of every 10 early college high schools in 2013-2014 (86 percent) met or exceeded the growth targets measured by EVAAS, compared with 56 percent of the comparison high schools and 67.5 percent of all schools statewide with high school grades. About a third (30 percent) of the 75 early college high schools exceeded their growth targets compared to the about the same proportion of the comparison high schools and 34 percent of all high schools statewide.

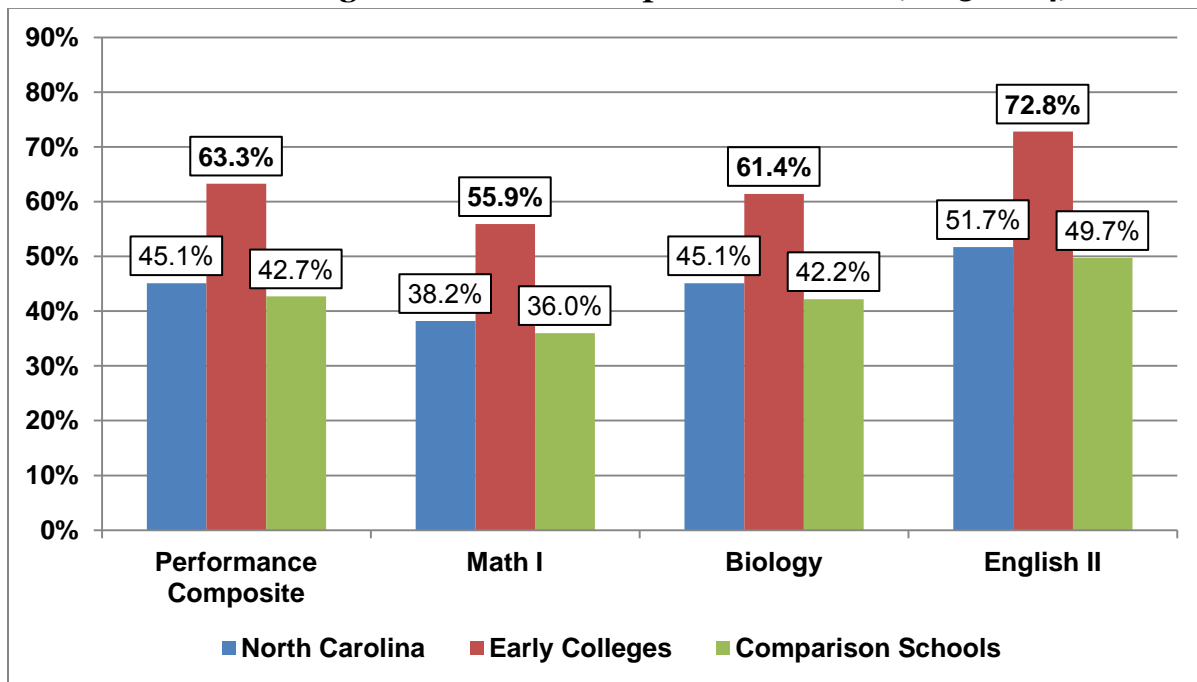
Chart 12: READY Accountability performance measures, Early College High Schools vs. All NC High Schools and Comparison Schools (2013-2014)



Source: NC New Schools analysis of 2014 NCDPI test results data

³ 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.

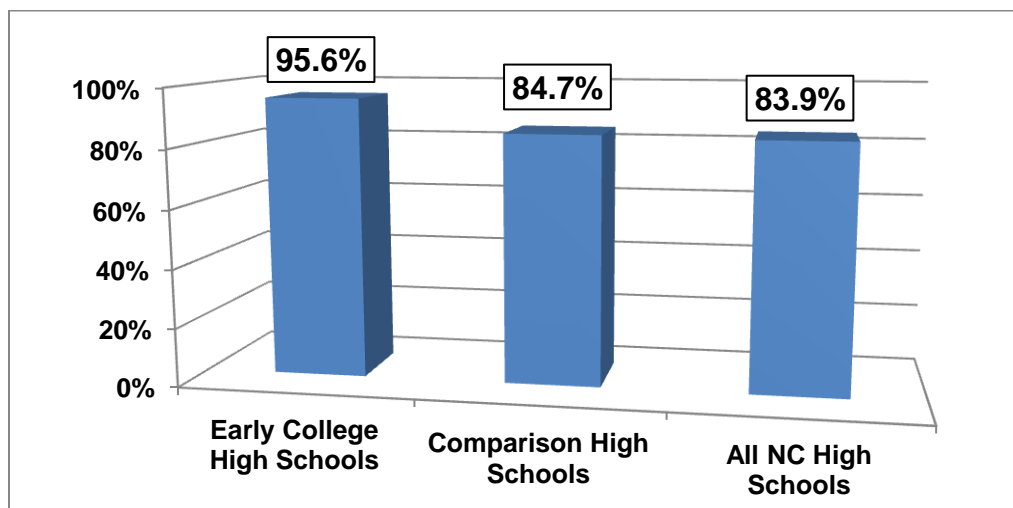
Chart 13: College and Career Ready performance, Early College High Schools vs. All NC High Schools and Comparison Schools (2013-2014)



Graduation Rates

The Class of 2014 represented the fifth cohort of significant size to complete early college since the initiative was launched. Sixty nine of the schools graduated full cohorts, with graduation rates ranging from 100 percent to just under 60 percent. Fifty seven of the 69 schools (83 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. Twenty five of the 69 schools (36 percent) had perfect graduation rates of 100 percent. The aggregate graduation rate for early college was up from 93.5 percent in 2012.

Chart 14: Early College Graduation Rates vs. Comparisons and All NC High Schools

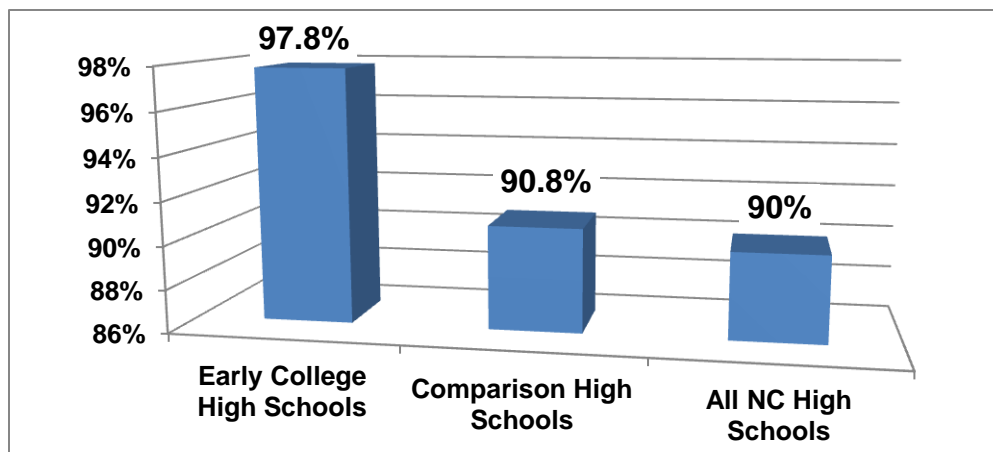


Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI graduation rate data, 2014

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 2012-2013 school year (the most recent year for which data is available), the 75 early college high schools had a combined promotion rate from 9th grade of 97.8 percent, compared to a combined rate of 90.8 percent for the comparison high schools and also about 90 percent for all N.C. high schools.

Chart 15: Early College Promotion Rates vs. Comparisons and all NC High Schools



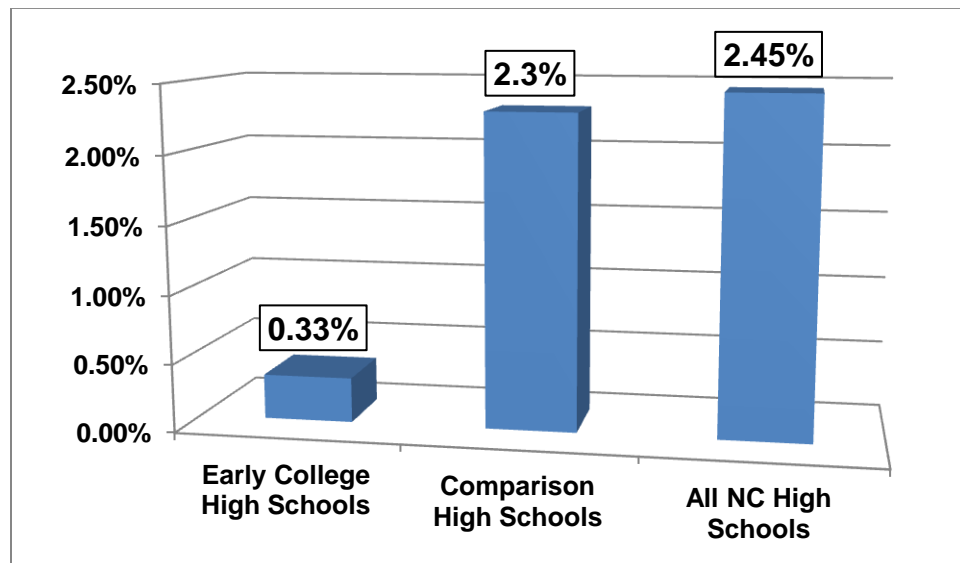
Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI grade promotion data, 2012-2013 school year

The 75 schools open in 2013-2014 reported 9th grade promotion rates ranging from 73 percent to 100 percent. More than 85 percent of all early college high schools (85.3 percent) reported 9th grade promotion rates of 95 percent or higher (compared to 25 percent of comparison schools and 28 percent of all schools statewide with ninth grades), and more than half (64 percent) of the early college schools promoted 100 percent of their 9th graders. Eighty-six 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 2012-2013 school year (the most recent year for which dropout rates are currently available), the 75 early college high schools reported schoolwide dropout rates ranging from 0 percent to 4.5 percent, with 50 of the 75 schools reporting **no dropouts** (no comparison schools reported no dropouts). All but four of the 75 early college high schools reported dropout rates that were less than the dropout rate for their comparison high school. The 75 early college high schools had a combined school wide dropout rate in 2012-2013 of 0.33 percent, compared to a combined rate of 2.3 percent for their comparison high schools and 2.45 percent for all high schools statewide.

50 Early College High Schools – **65 percent** – had no dropouts

Chart 16: Early College Dropout Rates vs. Comparisons and All NC High Schools

Source: NC New Schools analysis of NCDPI dropout data, 2012-2013

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 2012-2013 school year (the most recent year for which 9th grade dropout rates are available), the 75 early college high schools reported 9th grade dropout rates⁴ ranging from 0 percent to 4.9 percent, with all but three of the schools (96 percent) reporting **no 9th grade dropouts** (five comparison schools reported no 9th grade dropouts, and only 29 percent of all schools statewide with a 9th grade class of at least 10 students – including the early colleges – reported none from 9th grade). Three early college high schools had 9th grade dropout rates that were higher than the 9th grade dropout rate for their comparison high school. The 75 early college high schools had a combined 9th grade dropout rate of 0.13 percent, compared to a rate of 2 percent for their comparison high schools and 2.4 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 2012-2013 earned a total of 140,543 credits – or an average of 9.5 credits 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, 78.4

⁴ 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 2011-12 plus the number of 9th grade dropouts.

percent received a passing grade of C or better. For all other students in community college courses, 64.6 percent earned a C or better.

Associate degree completion and college credit acquisition

About 58 percent of the 2,618 graduates reported by NCDPI from the 69 early college high schools with graduating cohorts in 2014 earned an associate degree.

College enrollment following graduation

For the class of 2012, based on the most current data available, 33.7 percent of graduates from early college high schools enrolled at one of the UNC campuses. This compares to 24.9 percent of students graduating from other North Carolina public high schools.

Funding and Additional Support

Funding for the 2012-13 year, each early college high school received an allocation from the state of \$310,000 to cover the cost of various positions and other needs associated with the model. Two of the 76 early college high schools open in 2012-13 did not receive the state allocation and were funded instead by their local district. Those schools were STEM Early College at N.C. A&T State University and Early/Middle College at UNC Greensboro. See Table 4 below for a list of positions and other items funded by the state allocation to early colleges.

Table 5. State-Funded Positions and other Costs, 2013-2014

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Cash¹ • College Textbooks 	
Total:	\$310,000

The implementation funding covers the cost of a leadership 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: NC New Schools applies 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 early college receives the services of highly trained and experienced leadership and instructional coaches who work 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.

NC New Schools has continued efforts to achieve the broad goal of improving the quality of the state's early colleges 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 2013-2014 school year, NC New Schools continued the work of instructional coaches in partner schools and continued the focus on deepening the practices through aligned instructional strategies. 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 NC 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 help 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 2013-14 school year, instructional coaches at each school participated in larger teams that included the principal, a lead teacher, and leadership coach and education innovation specialist. That team focused on the school's action plan for improvement and will meet regularly to assess progress and course-correct.

- ***Instructional Support Positions:*** Early college high school funds also provide each school with resources 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 early college, 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:** This initiative expands on the traditional model of school-specific leadership **support** by providing individualized and transferrable leadership **development**. The leadership center helps 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 partner schools served in the NC New Schools network across the state. In partnership with the internationally recognized Center for Creative Leadership, the NC Center for Educational Leadership is working to improve each principal's effectiveness by assessing leadership competencies and personalizing leadership supports. School leaders develop the skills to serve as catalysts for the creation of collaborative cultures focused on leading, teaching, and learning.
 - **Leadership coaches:** Principals in NC New Schools-partner schools were provided an additional level of support during the 2013-2014 year from a leadership coach to help their school effectively introduce and execute the key school and instructional change embodied in the NC New Schools Design Principles. All received the services of one of the leadership coaches during school visits throughout the year. The leadership support positions, filled by seasoned school and district leaders, help ensure school-based follow up to regional and statewide development programs focused on leadership development. The coaches also provide valuable support to inexperienced principals with untested leadership skills.
- **2014 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, held in Concord, was attended by 900 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: In a significant effort to broaden the reach of successful early college approaches, NC New Schools in 2012-13 launched an initiative, funded with a \$15 million federal Investing in Innovation (i3) grant and \$1.5 million in private support, to 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 in the participating schools 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 initiative is applying early college strategies to 18 traditional high schools in rural communities to reach more than 20,000 students by 2016. An initial group of five high schools joined the initiative in 2012-13: Northside and Southside high schools in Beaufort County, Madison (County) High School, East Rutherford High School and North Surry High School. Seven additional high schools joined the initiative in 2013-14: Alleghany High School, Chase High School and Central High School, both in Rutherford County; East Surry High School, Hertford County High School, Mountain Heritage High School in Yancey County, and Washington High School in Beaufort County. A third and final cohort of schools joined for the current, 2014-2015 school year: East Bladen and West Bladen high schools, Jones County High School, Riverside and South Creek high schools in Martin County and Warren County High School.

Districtwide 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 districtwide 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 NC New Schools Design Principles and core classroom strategies found in the Common Instructional Framework.

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. In 2013-2014, 26 schools statewide were 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 STEM Teacher Education Program: 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. A second cohort of candidates is currently enrolled in the program. 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. This year, the program has been opened to current lateral-entry teachers as well.

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. SERVE, the Southeast Region Federal Education Laboratory, in partnership with Duke University, North Carolina New Schools, NC-Greensboro, Abt Associates and other organizations, continues its rigorous, experimental research

study of the Early College High School Initiative. (See discussion of results, pages 13-14.) 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 is following students through graduation and into postsecondary education. This study is providing useful information to NC 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, Early College Strategies for All and Transition to Teaching initiatives.

Attachment A: Cooperative Innovative High Schools Open in 2013-2014

School	District	Year Opened	Type
Bertie County STEM High Schol	Bertie County Schools	2007-08	STEM 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
Wayne School of Engineering	Wayne County Schools	2007-08	STEM Redesigned High School
Weldon STEM High School	Weldon City Schools		
Yadkin Valley Regional Career Academy	Davidson County Schools	2012-2013	

Attachment B: Early College High Schools Open in 2013-2014

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
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
The Early / Middle College at GTCC	Guilford County Schools	2005-06

School	District	Year Opened
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
Iredell-Statesville Visual and Performing Arts Early College High School	Iredell-Statesville Schools	2008-09

School	District	Year Opened
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
Pender Early College High School	Pender County Schools	2006-07

School	District	Year Opened
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
Union County Early College	Union County Schools	2006-07

School	District	Year Opened
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