

START COLLEGE EARLY,

# FINISH COLLEGE STRONG

A NYCAN ISSUE BRIEF



# START COLLEGE EARLY, FINISH COLLEGE STRONG

ESTABLISH TUITION ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM FUNDING FOR EARLY  
COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS

This report was published  
in March 2012 by NYCAN:  
The New York Campaign for  
Achievement Now.

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# Introduction

NYCAN: The New York Campaign for Achievement Now believes that early college high school programs deserve expanded state support and access to financial aid. Early college high schools are programs established within existing high schools that enable students to accrue college credit while earning their high school diploma. Students participating in the programs can earn up to two years of college credit before even graduating from high school, putting them well ahead of the curve and significantly increasing their chances of graduating with a college degree.

These programs are currently funded through \$6 million in state funds, matched by a private donation. Continued reliance on outside funding is unsustainable. Allowing these programs to apply for and receive college-level financial aid on behalf of their eligible students assures long-term sustainability and the potential for growth by offsetting the increased cost of providing college-level instruction, textbooks, curriculum, appropriate staff and other materials.

State lawmakers should support legislation that would extend resources to make sure that low-income New York students continue to have access to this important path to college.

# The Benefits

The benefits of higher education are clear: individuals with higher levels of education earn more and are more likely than others to be employed. College-educated adults are more likely to receive health insurance and pension benefits from their employers and to be satisfied with their jobs. College education also leads to healthier lifestyles, reducing health care costs for individuals and society.<sup>1</sup> Median earnings of bachelor's degree recipients working full-time year-round in 2008 were \$55,700, \$21,900 more than median earnings of high school graduates.<sup>2</sup>

Nationally, early college high schools provide an all-important mechanism to help kids who otherwise would not consider college a realistic option prepare for the rigors of higher education. By exposing high school students to college level coursework, these programs offer high-need students the experience they need to be prepared for college.

In 2010-2011, 75,000 students in 28 states attended early college high schools. Statistics surrounding those programs are astounding:

- More than 250 early college high school graduates earned merit-based college scholarships. Four earned the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship, awarded to 1,000 high-achieving, low-income students each year.
- 23.3 percent of graduates earned an associate's degree or technical certificate.
- 77 percent of graduates went on to some form of postsecondary education: enrolling in four-year colleges (52 percent), two-year colleges (23 percent) and technical programs (2 percent).
- Of 109 schools reporting data on graduates, more than half (56 percent) said that students had earned two or more years of college credit.
- 80 percent of early college high schools had a graduation rate equal to or higher than their school district (54 out of 68).
- The average graduation rate for early colleges was 84 percent, compared to 76 percent for their school district.<sup>3</sup>

Most impressive, more than three-fourths of early college high school students nationwide aspired to complete a four-year degree following high school.

<sup>1</sup> Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society - Sandy Baum, Jennifer Ma and Kathleen Payea. College Board Advocacy & Policy Center (2010)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Early College High School Initiative, Overview and FAQ. <http://www.earlycolleges.org/overview.html#outcomes1>

# Status of Early College High Schools in New York

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The 23 early college high school programs in New York serving approximately 5,600 students from Long Island to Buffalo demonstrates the state's commitment to ensuring that all students reap the benefits of higher education. The 23 early college high school programs, in partnership with 25 SUNY, CUNY and independent colleges, support 32 high schools in 25 districts.

New York's early college high school programs are designed to provide low-income students and students of color with greater access to college. For example, 90 percent of students of color and 64 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch make up attendance at early college high school programs affiliated with the City University of New York.<sup>4</sup> These schools have between a 67 and 99 percent graduation rate, and students graduate with an average of 10 college credits.<sup>5</sup> Statewide, in 2011, 574 early college high school students took college courses, and 83 percent had a grade point average of 2.0 or higher.<sup>6</sup>

These low-income students would qualify for financial aid in college, but they are not allowed to access this funding while enrolled in an early college high school. Yet if New York changes its policy, approved early college high schools could apply for funding based on their number of eligible students. By receiving financial aid in early college high school, students would not limit the amount or duration of funds that they may receive in the future.

<sup>4</sup> S5647-2011: Continues early college high schools in the state, <http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S5647-2011>

<sup>5</sup> CUNY Early College Schools, Overview for Assemblyman Rivera, The City University of New York (January 2011)

<sup>6</sup> New York State Education Department

# Directory: Early College High Schools in New York

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS
Albany	Albany High School	Hudson Valley Community College Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute State University of New York
Amityville	Amityville High School	State University of New York, Farmingdale
Amsterdam	Amsterdam High School	Fulton-Montgomery Community College
Ballston Spa	Ballston Spa High School	Hudson Valley Community College Saratoga Springs High School
Brentwood	Brentwood High School	State University of New York
Buffalo	Middle Early College High Schools Buffalo Middle Early College	Erie Community College D'Youville College
Cobleskill	Cobleskill-Richmondville Central Schools	State University of New York, Cobleskill
Freeport	Freeport High School	C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University
Hempstead	Hempstead High School	State University of New York, Farmingdale
Lake Placid	Adirondack Early College High School	North Country Community College Lake Placid High School
Massena	St. Lawrence Valley Early College High School Massena High School	State University of New York, College of Technology at Canton

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS
Middleburgh	Middleburgh High School	State University of New York, Cobleskill
Niagara Falls	Niagara Falls Early College High School	Niagara University
New York City	Bard High School Early College, Manhattan and Queens	Bard College
	Boys & Girls High School Springdale Education Center Program	Long Island University
	City Polytechnic High School	City University of New York, NYC College of Technology
	Pathways Early College High School	Adelphi U.
	Pathways in Technology Early College High School (housed in Paul Robeson High School)	City University of New York, IBM
	Smart Science Scholars High School Medgar Evers Prep High School	CUNY Medgar Evers College
Ogdensburg	Ogdensburg High School	State University of New York of Tech at Canton
Rochester	Rochester Early College International High School	Monroe Community College St. John Fisher
Roosevelt	Roosevelt Senior High School	State University of New York, Old Westbury
Saranac Lake	Saranac Lake High School	North Country Community College
Saratoga Springs	Saratoga Spring High School	Hudson Valley Community College
Schenectady	Schenectady High School	Schenectady County Community College
Schoharie	Schoharie Valley Smart Scholars Early College High School	State University of New York Cobleskill
Syracuse	Institute of Technology at Central High School	Onondaga Community State University New York Environmental Science and Forestry



DISTRICT	SCHOOL	HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS
Syracuse	Nottingham High School	Onondaga Community State University New York Environmental Science and Forestry
Tupper Lake	Tupper Lake High School	North Country Community College
Wyandanch	Wyandanch High School	State University of New York, Farmingdale
Yonkers	Roosevelt High School	Westchester Community College
	Academy of Medical Profession Smart Scholars Early College High Schools at Gorton High School	Westchester Community College

# Conclusion

It's time to help New York kids start college early and finish college strong. Providing access to financial aid for early college high school programs serving low-income students puts New York students on the path toward college completion, benefiting those students and the state. The time is now for state lawmakers to support this smart and sensible policy.

# About NYCAN

NYCAN: The New York Campaign for Achievement Now launched in January 2012 as an education reform advocacy organization building a movement of New Yorkers with the political will to enact smart public policies so that every New York child has access to a great public school. We are a branch of 50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now, a growing national network of state-based education reform advocacy groups with campaigns in Rhode Island, Minnesota, Maryland and New York based on the groundbreaking model developed by ConnCAN in Connecticut. NYCAN is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization funded by individual donors and foundations.

NYCAN is led by Founding Executive Director Christina Grant. A native New Yorker, Christina is a graduate of Hofstra University, the Teacher's College at Columbia University and Fordham University. In 2003, Christina became a New York City Teach For America corps member and went on to become a teacher at a KIPP school in the Bronx. Before joining NYCAN, Christina worked as managing director of new site development at Teach For America. She was previously the deputy director for the Office of Charter Schools at the New York City Department of Education.

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