College and Career Readiness
2013-14 Report:
Early College High Schools

Department of Evaluation and Assessment

June 2014

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Superintendent of Schools
Approved Report of the
Department of Evaluation and Assessment

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Early college high schools enable students to complete their high school educations and earn up to 60 hours in college credit simultaneously. These schools strive to foster a “college-going culture” and improve access to higher education opportunities for traditionally underserved students. Through a partnership with the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD), Dallas Independent School District operated three early college high schools in 2013-14, all located on DCCCD campuses. The district plans to open a fourth early college at Samuell High School in fall 2014 and Spruce High School in fall 2015. The three early college high schools in 2013-14 enrolled higher percentages of African-American, female, and talented and gifted students than other district high schools. The schools also enrolled lower proportions of at-risk students. Early college high school students had higher passing rates on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness End of Course exams than students at other Dallas ISD high schools. They also met the Destination 2020 college readiness benchmarks for the SAT and ACT at higher rates than their counterparts in other district schools. More than 60 percent of 2013 early college high school graduates went on to enroll in college after high school. Among 2012 graduates, more than 75 percent enrolled in college.
Program Description

Background Information

Early college high schools enable traditionally underserved students to earn a high school diploma and up to two years of college credit, which can be applied toward an associate’s or bachelor’s degree. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation created the Early College High School Initiative, in partnership with other funding agencies, in 2002. Since then, more than 200 early college high schools have been established across the United States. In Texas, there are more than 40 early college high schools serving an estimated 10,000 students (Jobs for the Future, 2011).

An evaluation of Texas early college high schools by Jobs for the Future (2011) found that these schools served student populations that have been traditionally underserved in Texas higher education and that the students outperformed their peers on state standardized assessments. Additional research by Bernstein, Yamaguchi, Unlu, Edmunds, Glennie, Willse, Arshavsky, and Dallas (2010) on the implementation and impact of early college high schools across the country found positive impacts on enrollment and success in college preparatory math courses. The authors also found limited impacts of these schools on student engagement and attitudes toward school work.

Dallas Independent School District had three early college high schools in 2013-14 and is scheduled to open two more by the fall of 2015. The district opened the three campuses through a partnership with the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). Dallas ISD’s three early college high schools, all located on DCCCD campuses, are:

- Kathlyn Joy Gilliam Early College High School, located at Cedar Valley College
- Trinidad “Trini” Garza, located at Mountain View College
- J. Wright Lassiter Early College (formerly called Middle College), located at El Centro College

In addition to these three campuses, the district plans to open two additional early college high school programs. W.W. Samuell Early College High School is scheduled to begin in partnership with Eastfield College in the fall of 2014. An additional Dallas ISD-Eastfield College partnership is scheduled for the fall of 2015 at H. Grady Spruce High School.

Dallas ISD students enter the early college high schools through an application process. Students in grade 8 who are interested in attending an early college high school submit an application directly to the school. A screening committee at each school reviews the applications, which include grade reports, attendance records, letters of recommendation, and other evidence of student effort, and recommends students for interviews with a panel of teachers and administrators. Students who are interviewed are then put into a lottery system, where names are selected for admission and enrollment.

Purpose and Goal

Dallas ISD’s early college high schools strive to lower barriers to higher education opportunities for first-generation college-going students, increase student success rates, and promote a “college-going
culture” by strengthening connections among middle schools, high schools, and area institutions of higher education. Students who enroll in the early college high schools have the opportunity not only to earn a high school diploma, but also accumulate up to two years of college credit, which can be applied toward an associate’s degree at a Dallas County community college or transferred for credit toward a bachelor’s degree at a four-year college. Students are not charged tuition for the college courses they take while attending an early college high school.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to collect and report various academic outcome measures for the early college high schools, including results on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exams, the SAT and ACT college entrance exams, college admission and financial aid application rates, and college enrollment rates after high school.

MAJOR EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

What were the characteristics of students in the Early College High Schools?

Methodology

District databases provided the data for this section. Descriptive statistics calculated for this section include demographic characteristics for students in the early college high schools, as well as all district high schools, for comparison.

Results

A total of 1,009 students were enrolled in Dallas ISD’s early college high schools in 2013-14. As shown in Table 1, the early college high schools enrolled higher proportions of African Americans and students identified as talented and gifted, compared to district high schools overall. Female students outnumbered male students by about 58 percent to 42 percent. The early college high schools also had lower proportions of at-risk students than the district overall.
### Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Early College High School Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Gilliam</th>
<th>Garza</th>
<th>Lassiter</th>
<th>All Early College HS</th>
<th>Dallas ISD High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>98</td>
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<td><strong>Socioeconomic Status</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Econ. Disadv.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Econ. Disadv.</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talented and Gifted (TAG)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TAG</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not TAG</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>At Risk</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Risk</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not At Risk</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did Early College High School students perform on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness End of Course (EOC) Exams?

**Methodology**

Students in the state of Texas must pass the following *STAAR EOC* exams to graduate from high school: English I, English II, Algebra, Biology, and U.S. History. District databases provided *STAAR EOC* exam results for this section. Data included the proportion of students who met the phase-in 1 standard for satisfactory performance on the exams, as well as the proportion who demonstrated advanced performance on the exams. These proportions were calculated for the early college high schools and district high schools overall.

**Results**

Students in the three early college high schools passed the *STAAR* exams at higher rates than students in other Dallas ISD high schools, as shown in Figure 1 below. For most of the tests, passing rates for the early college high schools were at or near 100 percent. The lowest passing rates were for English I. When comparing these results to those of district high schools overall, it is important to consider that the early college high schools have lower proportions of at-risk students and higher proportions of students identified as talented and gifted (see Table 1).
Although most early college high school students passed the STAAR EOC exams in 2014, fewer of them showed advanced performance on the exams, as shown in Figure 2. Advanced performance rates were the highest in Algebra. In other subjects, advanced performance rates were less than 10 percent at some of the early college campuses.
Table 2 displays SAT and ACT results for seniors in the early college high schools, compared to the district overall. All three schools had higher average SAT and ACT scores than other district high schools. In addition, higher proportions of early college high school seniors met the district’s Destination 2020 benchmarks for college readiness on the SAT and ACT. The SAT benchmark is a score of 990 on the reading and math sections combined. For the ACT, the benchmark is a composite of 21 (the average of ACT scores in reading, English, science, and math).
Table 2. SAT and ACT Results for Early College High Schools and District, 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Gilliam</th>
<th>Garza</th>
<th>Lassiter</th>
<th>Dallas ISD HS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average SAT score (sum of reading and math)</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pct. Meeting Destination 2020 Benchmark for SAT (990 reading plus math)</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average ACT Composite score</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pct. Meeting Destination 2020 Benchmark for ACT (21 composite)</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What were the college application and enrollment rates for early college high school graduates?

Methodology

Data for this section came from three sources: the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which tracks ApplyTexas college application rates; Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rates from the U.S. Department of Education, and college enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), based in Virginia. ApplyTexas is a common application for college admission that is accepted by all public colleges and universities in the state of Texas, as well as many private institutions in the state. The FAFSA is the application form that determines student eligibility for need-based student financial aid. NSC provides data and reports on college enrollment and completion rates for school systems across the country. Dallas ISD has subscribed to NSC’s service since 2006.

Results

Campus-level FAFSA and college application completion rates can be a useful indicator of a school’s college-going culture. Dallas ISD strives to foster a college-going culture in its schools. In addition, the district’s Counseling Services department evaluates high school counselors on a variety of criteria, including ApplyTexas and FAFSA completion rates at their schools. As shown in Figure 3, students in the early college high schools completed ApplyTexas applications for admission and the FAFSA at higher rates than district high schools overall. ApplyTexas completion rates exceeded the district target of 80 percent at all three early college high schools, ranging from 91.8 percent to 100 percent. FAFSA completion rates exceeded the district target of 50 percent. About 65 percent of early college high school seniors completed and submitted a FAFSA in 2013-14.
College enrollment rates for 2013 early college high school graduates ranged from 60 percent to 68 percent, compared to 49 percent for district high school graduates overall, according to NSC data. The 2013 NSC data reported college enrollment rates for 2013 graduates who enrolled in college the fall after high school graduation (sometimes referred to as “seamless enrollments”). One-year delayed enrollment rates, for students who enrolled in college up to one year after graduating from high school (2012 graduates), ranged from 76 percent to 86 percent for the early college high schools, compared to 59 percent for the district overall. College enrollment rates reported by NSC include both two- and four-year institutions of higher education.
**SUMMARY**

Dallas ISD operated three early college high schools in the 2013-14 school year, all located on Dallas County Community College District campuses: Kathryn Joy Gilliam Early College High School, located at Cedar Valley College; Trinidad “Trini” Garza, located at Mountain View College; and J. Wright Lassiter Early College (formerly called Middle College), located at El Centro College. A fourth early college high school, located at Samuell High School, is scheduled to open in 2014-15, and a fifth one at Spruce High School is scheduled to open in fall 2015. Both the Samuell and Spruce early college high schools would be affiliated with Eastfield College, a DCCCD campus in Mesquite.

The early college high schools offered students who have been traditionally underserved by higher education the opportunity to not only complete a high school diploma, but also earn up to 60 college credits that could be applied toward an associate’s degree from DCCCD or transferred to a four-year college or university after graduating high school. Admission to the early college high schools was through an application and lottery process. Students whose applications were selected underwent interviews, after which their names were entered in a lottery system, from which names were drawn for admission.
The early college high schools had higher proportions of African-American and female students, as well as students identified as talented and gifted, than district high schools overall. They also had lower proportions of at-risk students. Early college students passed the STAAR EOC exams at higher rates than other Dallas ISD high schools. In some cases, 100 percent of early college students demonstrated satisfactory performance on the EOCs. Fewer students showed advanced performance on the EOCs, although their rates of advanced performance exceeded those for other district high schools.

Seniors in the early college high schools had higher average scores on the SAT and ACT college entrance exams than their counterparts in other Dallas ISD high schools. They also met or exceeded the Destination 2020 college readiness benchmarks at higher rates.

Seniors in the early college high schools were more likely than their counterparts in other high schools to complete ApplyTexas college admissions applications and FAFSAs. Completion rates for both of these documents exceeded overall district rates, as well as the target rates for completion set by the district’s Counseling Services department. More than 60 percent of early college high school graduates for 2013 enrolled in college right after high school. One-year delayed college enrollment rates for the class of 2012 at the early college high schools exceeded 75 percent.

REFERENCES
