



## Largest Innovative School Network in U.S. Celebrates Success of its 210 Schools

### *Early College High Schools Make College a Reality for 46,000 Students Nationwide*

*'High schools shouldn't just make sure students graduate -- they should make sure students graduate ready for college, ready for a career, and ready for life. And that's why we'll foster **early college high schools** that allow students to earn a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or college credit at the same time.'* - President Barack Obama, March 1, 2010

BOSTON, April 22 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ --Early college high schools and their partners around the country will bring together students, administrators, parents, community leaders, and legislators to celebrate **Early College High School Week 2010**, May 3-9.

Early college high schools prepare high school students who are least likely to attend college through academic rigor and college-level courses -- not remediation. The average early college graduate earns **23 free college credits** even before they receive a high school diploma.

To hear a special message from Education Secretary Arne Duncan about ECHS Week 2010, please click [HERE](#).

"Early college high schools help more students graduate from high school prepared for college and career success," said Marlene B. Seltzer, CEO and president of Jobs for the Future, which leads the Early College High School Initiative. "Early colleges show that all students are capable of achieving success, regardless of their family income or their skill levels upon starting high school."

There are 210 schools nationwide in the Early College High School Initiative, twice the number of schools in any other innovative school network in the United States. The initiative is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, among others. These schools serve more than 46,000 students in 24 states. Their students are predominately young people of color. They are from low-income families, and few of their parents have attended college. Despite those facts, 92 percent of these students graduate high school -- compared to the national rate of 69 percent, according to a 2009 Education Week report. Of those, 37 percent graduate with at least a full year of free college credit -- 22 percent even graduate high school with a diploma and an Associate's degree.

One of these students is Diego Camposeco, a senior at Pender Early College High School in Burgaw, North Carolina. Camposeco will graduate this spring with both a diploma and an Associate's degree. He is choosing between going to Harvard and accepting a full four-year scholarship from the University of North Carolina.

"The early college program is amazing," said Diego. "Both of my parents are immigrants without college degrees and we live in a rural community. Because of the early college program, I have been able to stand out from students at other high schools. I feel like so many doors have been opened for me."

The Early College High School Initiative has garnered the attention of policymakers and education leaders nationwide. Advocacy efforts have led several states to craft statewide dual enrollment policies specifically for broader student populations.

"Early College High School Week provides a fantastic opportunity to spotlight the success of students, teachers, administrators, and parents in Texas and across the nation," said John Fitzpatrick, executive director of the [Texas High School Project](#). "Through our partnership with Jobs for the Future and the Texas Education Agency, the number of early college high school campuses in our state continues to grow. As a result, the lives of thousands of students are being changed for the better and the economic future of Texas is strengthened."

### **Early College High School Partner Organizations**

Early college schools are partnerships between school districts and colleges. Jobs for the Future leads a coalition of national organizations that provides startup and ongoing technical support, guidance, and professional development for their networks of schools. These national partners are:

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- [Center for Native Education](#)
- [City University of New York](#)
- [Communities Foundation of Texas](#)
- [Foundation for California Community Colleges](#)
- [Gateway to College National Network](#)
- [Georgia Board of Regents](#)
- [KnowledgeWorks Foundation](#)

- [Middle College National Consortium](#)
- [National Council of La Raza](#)
- [North Carolina New Schools Project](#)
- [SECME, Inc.](#)
- [Utah Partnership for Education](#)
- [Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation](#)

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For more information about the Early College High School Initiative, visit [www.earlycolleges.org](http://www.earlycolleges.org).

### **About Jobs for the Future**

Jobs for the Future identifies, develops, and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states, and the nation compete in a global economy. In nearly 200 communities in 41 states, JFF improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers.

[www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org)

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### **About the Early College High School Initiative**

Since 2002, the partner organizations of the Early College High School Initiative have started or redesigned 210 schools in 24 states and the District of Columbia. The schools are designed so that low-income youth, first-generation college goers, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education can simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an Associate's degree -- tuition free.

[www.earlycolleges.org](http://www.earlycolleges.org)

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Marlene Seltzer

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