

Starting Early:
Middle and Early College High School Programs
Riverside Community College District

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Middle and Early College Programs:

The National Context

The middle college was founded in 1973 at La Guardia Community College in New York City as an alternative approach to the education of adolescents who were not experiencing satisfaction or success in large comprehensive high schools. The American Comprehensive High School had grown rapidly in popularity after World War I and by the 1950s was well established as the dominant institution of American secondary education. Even today, following half a century of national criticism, it remains comparatively popular and still closely resembles high schools of half a century earlier.

Middle college high schools have become one program alternative to large comprehensive high schools. By the 1970s, and continuing to the present day, critics were characterizing large high schools of 2,000 to 4,000 students as “one-size-fits-all” institutions that were dysfunctional and off-putting institutions for many students. The students referred to were largely from lower socio-economic backgrounds and from ethnic groups who often were under represented in the college going population. They were, nevertheless, students who had been identified by school officials as having high academic potential, frequently greater potential than what they had been able to demonstrate through their high school records.

In contrast to the comprehensive high schools, the middle college/high schools generally had no occupational programs, no athletic teams, no marching bands or cheer leaders,

Rather, virtually all of the effort is placed on academic skills in a close and supportive environment for every student. Nobody is allowed to become lost or alienated.

- Generally speaking, the middle college high school programs are small, generally limited to 450 students or fewer.
- Typically, middle colleges are located on college campuses, but occasionally the reverse is true.
- The operation usually occurs on a college schedule, with no bells, hall monitors, or metal detectors.
- Quite often, high school faculty gain privileges of college faculty, such as offices, personal telephones, professional respect, and frequently are given an opportunity to teach college classes.
- Class size tends to be smaller than comparable classes at comprehensive high schools
- The programs typically feature intense peer and group counseling, with a high ratio of counselors and paraprofessionals to students. Teachers are expected to be counselor-teachers.

- The school calendar is typically arranged on the college schedule.

The more recent Early College concept is a variation on the middle college. As implied in the name, “early,” this school begins in the 9th grade, as contrasted with the 10th grade for middle colleges. Like the middle college, it focuses on underserved populations. Class size and school size are similarly small, but the school size is typically limited to no more than 400 students. The nature of early colleges requires closer collaboration between the cooperating high school and college.

The concept is recognized officially in California through Education Code Section 11300. That said, states provide no special funding for this type of institution. Both the high school and the community college *are* however, able to collect their usual funding from the state. This means that the high schools are able to claim full average daily attendance (ADA) funding for the students, while the community college is able to claim enrollment credit (FTES) for the students’ enrollments in college classes. Overall, if all the features described earlier are implemented, the middle colleges/early colleges are more expensive to operate than are the comprehensive high school. Program evaluation data are generally positive, consistently so in terms of students appreciating the personalized treatment, and the programs usually result in an increased college-going rate.

Although most early college/middle college programs have targeted comparatively low achieving students with high potential for their programs, there is an alternative model that targets the most talented students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The socio-economic backgrounds of admitted students remain similar, but comparatively high achievement and high motivation must be demonstrated in order to enter the programs. LaGuardia and Bard High School Early College are among the best known of these programs. Faculty training in the recommended seminar style and project based learning pedagogy takes place annually at Bard College at Simon’s Rock. Over the years, both have been visited by district administrations, board members, K-12 and college faculty who have participated in the training.

The following pages provide a summary of middle and early college programs offered at RCCD.

Middle and Early College High School Programs
at the Moreno Valley Campus of the RCCD

Moreno Valley is the host to three middle/early college programs. These include:

1. *The flagship **middle college high school** in the Riverside Community College District, located entirely on the Moreno Valley Campus, with Moreno Valley Unified School District and Val Verde Unified School District, initiated in 1999, and sustained by funding from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office;*
2. ***Vista del Lago Middle College High School** with Moreno Valley Unified School District, initiated in 2002;*
3. ***Nuview Bridge Early College High School in Partnership with the Moreno Valley Campus of RCCD**, with Nuview Union School District, initiated in 2005, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in cooperation with the Foundation for California Community Colleges.*

MCHS

The middle college high school on campus (which still has not been given a formal name, descriptive or honorary) is staffed by a full-time director, three full-time high school teachers/counselors, and one full-time secretary. This MCHS attracts ability-identified, under-performing youngsters from feeder high schools representing two unified school districts—Moreno Valley (MVUSD) and Val Verde (VVUSD). All instructional activity during the participants' junior and senior years is carried out at the Moreno Valley Campus. Through college-course enrollment, the students complete all subject matter requirements for high school graduation. Requisite high school English and social studies courses are also provided. This initiative was founded with the vision of reaching high school students academically capable of postsecondary education, but unlikely to complete high school or go to college.

The program is limited to a maximum of 65 entering juniors each fall, serving approximately 120 total students at a time. Because interest exceeds available spaces, a selection process involving high school and college personnel determines those who both qualify for and are most likely to succeed in a college environment. Interested students and their parents/guardians attend an Information Program held each spring which typically draws an audience of 650. Enrollees are carefully tracked by the director and instructors/counselors in residence to ensure they are meeting expected standards of academic progress and personal comportment in an adult learning environment. Weekly required "house" meetings led by the MCHS staff bring students together in groups of six for peer support.

Ongoing since its inception, grant funding from the State Chancellor's Office (approximately \$137,00 per year) has paid the salaries of the director and secretary. The three high school faculty are maintained on the payrolls of their school districts of origin (two from Moreno Valley and one from Val Verde).

Vista del Lago

Second-semester sophomores who are in good standing and have passed both sections of the high school exit exam may apply to participate in Vista del Lago Middle College High School during their junior and senior years. With the permission and guidance of their high school counselors and administrators, as well as from their parents/guardians, students usually select early morning or late afternoon courses.

Located less than one mile north of the Moreno Valley Campus on Lasselle Street, the Vista Del Lago Middle College High School program was conceptualized in the fall of 1998 through planning meetings led by Moreno Valley Unified School District, with representatives from the Moreno Valley Campus, the University of California at Riverside, and the community at large. Moreno Valley Unified chose to emphasize four career pathways: health science, pre-engineering, performing arts (orchestra), and telecommunications/multimedia, with the objective of providing an opportunity for the students to transfer sequentially or directly to a two- or four-year college or to enter the workforce with marketable skills. The MVUSD School Board voted in the fall of 2001 to allow for a minimal geographical service area, with an otherwise magnet recruitment base.

The vision of Vista del Lago Middle College High School is to blend the high school and college curricula by integrating content standards, and to accelerate college readiness for the participants.

This initiative is sustained without grant funding, with coordination carried out by a part-time College coordinator in cooperation with the Campus academic administration.

Nuview Bridge

In September 2005, Nuview Bridge Early College High School became California's seventh early college high school to receive funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in association with the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Initially, the Foundation for California Community Colleges provided funding for the planning grants and, now, provides ongoing project oversight statewide. The signature Gates organizational framework requires yearly written progress reports focusing on student learning outcomes and sustainability plans, as well as site visits, and twice-yearly "Early College Institute" attendance by faculty and administration from both the high school and the college.

The Gates formula also allows no more than 400 students total, promotes outreach to underserved populations, and expects the completion of a high school diploma and an associate degree and/or transfer to a four-year university and/or a certificate leading to a family-sustaining wage. Four career pathways are in place at Nuview Bridge—health science, early childhood studies, arts, and computer technologies—which seek to capture the imaginations of the participants and assist in formalizing student plans for entry into college.

The funding (\$400,000 over a four-year period) is utilized for the provision of a 40-hour college-high school liaison, a part-time outcomes specialist, and frequent bus transportation between the

two sites on a daily basis. Grant monies initially provided opportunities for college and high school faculty to meet and discuss high-school exit skills in relation to college entry skills with the objective of fostering a smooth transition to the postsecondary curriculum.

Comparative Outcomes

By June 2008, the MCHS on campus will have facilitated the graduation of approximately 390 students from high school since the program's inception, with nearly half of those simultaneously receiving an associate degree. Nuvview Bridge will be graduating its first dual-degree recipient this spring, with some twelve more expected in June 2009.

Graduates from the MCHS on campus have transferred to UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Riverside, UC Irvine, UC Santa Cruz, La Sierra University, Howard University, Clark University, Cal State Fresno, Cal State San Bernardino, and other institutions. The Nuvview Bridge graduate has announced her choice as UC Berkeley, having had invitations from others. Middle college high school graduates typically apply to transfer to colleges as freshmen, and, upon admission, are awarded upper class status because of their accumulated college-course record.

As for success, the MCHS on campus shows a 79.39% rate, Vista del Lago 70.12%, and Nuvview Bridge 78.48% (compared to a 65.51% District average), with full-time equivalent student (FTES) counts of 48.42576, 23.64702, and 35.80696, respectively.

John F. Kennedy Middle College High School of the Norco Campus

Overview of John F. Kennedy Middle College High School: “... Dream of things that never were ...”

On any given day students can be seen traversing the sidewalk path that leads to and from the Norco Campus. To the unknowing eye one might mistakenly assume that these students were walking to a distant parking lot, or are on their way to a class at some remote location. However, the on-going trail of students going to and coming from the Norco Campus are high school students who attend the John F. Kennedy Middle College High School (JFK). They are the fortunate recipients of a lengthy and strongly forged partnership between the Corona Norco Unified School District (CNUSD) and the Riverside Community College District's Norco Campus.

Preliminary discussions for preparations of JFK's opening began in Spring 2000, followed by visits to 8 other California Middle College High Schools in the Fall 2000 – 2001 academic year. In Summer 2000 – 2005 a Joint Advisory Committee convened, consisting of CNUSD staff and teachers, Deans of Instruction and Student Services, and Norco faculty. It began with a review of literature pertaining to Middle College High Schools and went on to determine application and recruitment processes, eligibility requirements, curricular goals, and admissions procedures. On June 4, 2002, a Planning document was presented to the joint Governing Boards. Joint meetings between the Norco Campus and JFK personnel continue on a weekly basis, and today, John F. Kennedy Middle College High School, which opened on August 9, 2006, serves 450 students from the surrounding CNUSD with a capacity for serving up to 1,200.

John F. Kennedy Student Eligibility

Founded with the mission of increasing school engagement in students who find it difficult to connect with traditional high school programs, JFK promotes career development, AA/AS attainment, and transfer, by following a course of study that combines high school classes and college courses taken at the Norco Campus. Students are expected to complete their core academic courses at the high school, and may complete their electives at the college. As with other CNUSD students, JFK students must meet the graduation requirements of the Corona-Norco Unified School District which includes passing the California High School Exit Exam.

Students attending JFK must enter at either the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade level. Student eligibility requires a 2.0 GPA, and a score at the Basic level or above on the STAR California Standards Test in English/Language Arts and Math. Students who wish to enter JFK as juniors or seniors must also have a passing score of 350 or above on the English/Language Arts and Math sections of the CAHSEE. Students who wish to enter JFK, but fall below the required GPA, may interview with the principal, and be considered based on other factors such as maturity level, academic potential, and motivation.

Collaborative Efforts

Dialogue and collaboration at the early planning and development stage forged the strong partnership that exists today between JFK and the Norco Campus. A \$100,000 Congressional

Grant provided opportunities for curriculum and articulation planning between Norco and JFK faculty resulting in an articulation agreement between RCCD and CNUSD. The agreement permits JFK students who pass Algebra 2 with a “B” or better to be eligible to enroll in Math 4 – Finite Math, Math 5 – Business/Life Calculus, Math 11 – College Algebra, Math 12 – Statistics, Math 36 – Trigonometry, and Math 25 – Math Survey. A Robotics Summer Innovation Institute – Robotics Camp was tailored to the interests of JFK students and offered in July 2007, and curriculum was developed for a new course in Introduction to Robotics. In addition, special efforts are made to facilitate JFK student enrollment in Guidance 45 and 47 courses. Today, Norco’s Deans of Instruction and Student Services, and Admissions and Records Supervisor maintain standing weekly meetings with JFK’s principal, counselor, and assistant principal, in order to facilitate open communication, problem solving, and a continuation of services which ensure the success of JFK’s students.

Registration Processes

Exemplifying the successful partnership between RCC-Norco and JFK are the registration processes which have been developed specifically to facilitate a seamless navigation for JFK student enrollment. Much care and discussion led to the development of these procedures which are designed to be fair and equitable to JFK students, while not displacing the general RCC-Norco student population.

As part of the application for admittance to JFK, a streamlined process allows parents to complete *one* consent form which grants parental approval for participation of JFK students in all Norco Campus activities, whether it be course-taking, club involvement, extra-curricular activities, or health services.

Students are permitted to take up to 8 units in the Fall/Spring and 5 units in the Winter/Summer with a provision to extend that limitation by 3 units with special permissions by the Norco Dean of Student Services and the JFK counselor. Complete Web Advisor access is given to JFK students, permitting them to register after new/returning students or after continuing college students if they are continuing students themselves. A limitation exists of 5 JFK/high school students per course without specific faculty authorization.

Course-taking Patterns and Student Success Rates

The success rate of JFK’s students in Fall 06 was 64.73% while the success rate of Norco’s general population was 68.2%. In Fall 07 the JFK success rates increased to 65.95%, a rate which is slightly higher than the district’s average of 65.51%, and less than 1% lower than Norco’s general student success rate of 66.88%. The commitment to increasing the success rates of JFK students has been the topic of meetings between Norco and JFK staff and administrators during which strategies have been identified for ensuring future student success.

Examples of strategies include, establishing a task force comprised of JFK and RCC-Norco faculty and administrators, a JFK orientation component which focuses more heavily on college expectations for behavior both inside and outside the classroom, workshops on college study habits, JFK recognition assemblies for college achievement, increased monitoring of homework by JFK homeroom teachers, and increased and on-going feedback from Norco faculty who are teaching JFK students. Future strategies for student success might also include a unit limitation for JFK students who are struggling in their college classes. This limitation could be lifted upon the student's academic improvement.

Student Success Rates

JFK Fall 06	Norco Fall 06	JFK Fall 07	Norco Fall 07
64.73%	68.2%	65.95%	66.88%

Interestingly, the course-taking patterns of JFK students reflect a serious interest in transfer. Students tend to take courses in Psychology, Sociology, Health Science, and Speech Communication with the most consistent frequency.

Most Frequently Enrolled Classes by JFK Students

<u>Fall 06</u>	<u>Fall 07</u>	<u>Spring 07</u>	<u>Spring 08</u>
PSY 1	GUI 47	PSY 9	SOC 1
SPE 1	PSY 1	SOC 1	PSY 1
GUI 45	HES 1	PSY 1	HES 1
CIS 119	ANT 2	HES 1	PSY 9
PSY 9	PSY 9	SPE 1	HUM 10

Challenges

As with any new initiative of this nature, there are challenges associated with implementation. The challenge in this case is in regards to the success rates of JFK students, and the associated impact of those rates on Norco's efforts to increase its overall student success rates. In both fall 2006 (the first semester of the JFK-Norco partnership) and fall 2007, success rates of JFK students enrolling in Norco classes were slightly lower than the overall campus student success rates (3.47% lower in Fall 06, less than 1% in Fall 07). In light of Norco Campus' objective (and that of the District) to achieve a 70% student success rate by 2010, we will continue our commitment to address this issue through careful analysis of the data, and concerted collaborative efforts on the parts of both Norco and JFK. As the second year of our partnership approaches its conclusion, both campuses look forward to the continued dialogue, trust, and respect that facilitates improved student success.

Special thanks to Don Ward, Dr. Gaither Loewenstein, Raj Bajaj, Mark DeAsis, and Jefferson Tiangco for their invaluable assistance in preparing this report.

Rubidoux Early College High School

A Partnership Between Riverside Community College and Jurupa Unified School District. Rubidoux Early College High School (RECHS), is a partnership between Riverside Community College District/Riverside City College and the Jurupa Unified School District. The Jurupa district encompasses 44 square miles of rural and suburban areas and serves four unincorporated communities with a population of approximately 150,000. Over 36% of the district's students are classified as *limited English proficient* and 74% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunches. The high school is located on the western edge of the community college district in an unincorporated section of the city. According to the 2000 Census, the average income for a household in the neighborhood surrounding the early college high school was \$38,731 with 20% of the households in the area below the poverty line.

During the 2005-2006 academic year, 3,105 students attended Rubidoux High School. (*JUSD Fact Book*, <http://www.jusd.k12.ca.us/cnt/docs/fact%20book.pdf>) According to the Fact Book, the student body was composed primarily of three groups: 67% Hispanic/Latino, 6% Black, and 25% White. The California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in Language Arts was passed by 57%, while 62% of the students were successful on the Mathematics portion of the exam. The Accountability Progress Index (API) for the school in 2006 was 653 out of a possible 1000 (state average was 689 in 2007).

Although the site is located just four miles from Riverside City College, the college-going rate has been consistently lower than the statewide average. The superintendent of the district, Elliott Duchon, is quoted to have said, "It may only be 4 miles from the college to here, but it's 400 miles from here to the college." In 2006, 47% of graduates from the unified school district went on to college compared to the statewide average of 56% for the same period.

California Post Secondary Commission, www.cpec.ca.gov.

College-going rate: College-going rate for Jurupa USD, Rubidoux High School compared to statewide average.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Jurupa USD	54.7	41.9	46.2	41.7	47.0
Rubidoux High School	51.8	51.0	50.4	43.7	47.8
Statewide	56.7	52.0	54.0	52.6	56.0

In 2003 while anticipating the closure of Rubidoux High School for an extensive modernization project, Jurupa Unified School District (JUSD) formed *The Blue Ribbon Committee*, comprised of Rubidoux High School teachers, present and past Rubidoux High students, Rubidoux High School parents, JUSD Board, Administration and staff, RCOE staff, Riverside Community College District (RCCD) Administration, community members and community business members. The committee's charge was to explore and propose an alternative learning experience/model for students to be used at Rubidoux High School. The committee examined national data and information on a number of programs to determine their efficacy and fit with the perceived needs of the student population.

In fall 2004, the *High School Planning Team* was formed to build upon the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee. The Team was given the responsibility of developing a working model of an innovative high school based upon the concept of Professional Learning Communities.

By 2005, plans were underway to close Rubidoux High School for one year to complete the modernization/renovation project. Students were to be temporarily relocated to a newly completed high school site while, at the same time, the Team was exploring innovative approaches to learning that could take place at the modernized school site when the students returned. The intent was to implement an approach that would promote student success, reduce a relatively high drop out rate, and increase the college-going rate.

Based on the proven results of dual enrollment programs and RCCD's success with middle and early college high school models, the Team had a growing interest in bridging the gap between high school and college through a dual-enrollment program and began to focus on *early college* models.

These programs provide opportunities for high school students to earn credit toward their high school diplomas and college credit simultaneously. The potential benefit of such a program is multi-dimensional. Students who are disenfranchised, disinterested or simply bored with high school classes often find the challenge of college studies exciting; therefore, the appeal of being able to take college courses that can be applied toward high school diplomas becomes a strong incentive to keep potential dropouts in school. Recent dropouts may be enticed back into school when offered the opportunity to be dual-enrolled in both high school and college. For others, early exposure to college by being enrolled in a college courses while still in high school may be the first step in building awareness to the possibility of a college education. High school students immersed in the college environment benefit from the maturity and experience of the college students and soon model their behavior. The gap between the high school preparation and college readiness narrows as students who are still in high school better understand and become more aware of the skills needed to succeed in college. Students become more fully engaged in their learning experience and their level of proficiency increases and, as a result, they complete high school educations, thereby reducing the drop out rate. At the same time, the college-going rate increases naturally.

Because of RCCD's involvement with and success in these programs, leaders and staff from the two districts submitted a grant proposal to the James Irvine Foundation to support the implementation of a dual enrollment/multiple pathway model of student learning. The grant provided \$300,000 in start up funds to support the initiation of learning communities/academies focused on career and transfer pathways, professional development for faculty and staff, faculty to faculty collaboration, innovative teaching strategies, articulation and curriculum development.

The unified school district and community college sent a team of faculty and administrators to New York and Boston to observe the Bard High School Early College and to receive training in the pedagogy associated with the program. As a result of its findings the Team reaffirmed the formation of a new approach to learning to be used at the high school, the concept of beginning an early college high school was finalized. The concept consisted of multiple pathways for

students clustered around career and technical and transfer level studies. Student-teacher interaction would be maximized to increase the level of student engagement.

In 2006, plans to renovate the high school campus were underway, students had been moved and were attending classes at the new site, and most of the campus, with the exception of eleven modular classrooms located on the north end of the high school, was closed for modernization. The unified school district offered the district the use of the eleven classrooms for which the college developed a schedule of 40 general education and career and technical courses, and began offering college courses to the surrounding community in fall 2006.

In late spring and summer of the same year, the unified school district began its recruitment efforts for the new early college high school. Although open to any high school student in the district, a focus was placed on recruiting underrepresented, at risk, and first-generation students, students who might not be considering college as an option. Students who were interested in a non traditional approach to learning were asked to apply. The application process consisted of a brief student-completed form, parental consent agreement, a short essay expressing a desire to attend the new school, and an expressed interest in one of the planned academies. Although Grade Point Average (GPA) was listed on the application form, GPA was not used as a screening device to admit students. Generally, students with a 2.0 or better were accepted into the program.

The opening of RECHS in fall 2006 coincided with the renovation of the high school site, the relocation of over 3,000 high school students, and the opening of a college *annex*, on the high school site. The eleven modular units, collectively known as *The RCC Annex*, are located on the northern perimeter of the high school campus. Students enrolled in RECHS take high school classes for 240 minutes each day (7 periods each day including a mandatory Advisory Council period). After lunch, the RECHS juniors and seniors walk across campus to *The Annex* for their college classes. The early college high school students are enrolled in regularly offered college classes that are open to the community college public. Typically, the early college high school students comprise less than 20% of the total class enrollment. A small percentage of RECHS students also take evening courses, and, on occasion, they take courses at the Riverside City College campus.

The RECHS model began with 61 high school students placed into small learning communities/academies built around academic areas and career and technical education which lead to a college education and career preparation. At the onset, the program had one academy focused on allied health pathways and another on liberal studies. In year two of the program, a public safety academy/pathway was added. In fall, an engineering and technology pathway will begin.

RECHS is a *School within a School Model*. Its development and implementation, have resulted in a number of changes within Rubidoux High School, the large comprehensive high school of which RECHS is a part. The presence of a community college on the high school site has generated a great deal of interest in taking college courses and eventually attending college by high school students, parents, and community members. Other changes that have resulted include high school and college course articulation, ongoing collaboration between Rubidoux High

School and Riverside Community College faculty, high school master schedule aligning with the college semester schedule, innovative teaching methods, seamless transition of high school to college, more frequent progress reporting, advisory counsel course for all RECHS students, and above average API gains by the RECHS students.

Program evaluation has been ongoing with the assistance of Institutional Research to establish base line measures and to share data through California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (CalPASS). The data collected includes student demographics, like age, gender, ethnicity, and overall success rate for the RECHS students in courses for Fall 2006 and Winter 2007. To date, the data indicates that there is no significant difference between the performance of the RECHS students and the general college population in the college courses where comparisons apply. This is an indicator that the RECHS students are performing at the same level as the general college population and on an individual basis, some RECHS students out perform the college students.

In February 2007, the RECHS/JUSD administration and faculty developed a survey to assess *School Wide Effectiveness*. The survey responses indicated a very strong interest by the students in attending the academy as 86% replied they 'usually look forward to coming to RECHS'. According to 80% of the students, the RECHS academy has more contact with their home than other schools they have attended, and 77% of the academy students agree that RECHS has a positive relationship with their home (parents and guardians). Even more significant is the response that 86.3% of the students plan to attend college for 2 to 4 years after leaving RECHS. Another important success indicator for this program is the performance of the RECHS students on the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR). "The growth target for both a school and for each numerically significant subgroup at the school is five percent of the difference between the Base API and 800."

(<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/documents/infoguide07g.pdf>) The 2006 API for Rubidoux HS was 653. A gain of 7 points was the growth target. For spring of 2007, the API for RECHS students was 790; this is a 137 point gain and closely approaches the state goal of 800.

In conclusion, RECHS is an exemplary partnership between RCCD/RCC and JUSD. The program was recently recognized by the Riverside County Office of Education with an Excellence Award. The course of study followed by the early college high school students combines the best of traditional academic classes with training and hands-on application in a career and technical education field, referred to by Oakes & Saunders, 2006, as multiple pathways. It is an approach that prepares students who will go directly into the workplace with vocational knowledge and a solid foundation of academic skills. Likewise, for the college bound student, the curriculum provides a basic foundation or core in academic course work suitable for completion of an associate degree or transfer to a variety of majors at baccalaureate institutions. Similarly, the RECHS model has a three-prong approach: First, it prepares students with a variety of traditional college courses that are applicable to the associate of arts/sciences degree and transferable to four-year institutions in a number of different areas of emphasis; second, students choose a career academy (Health or Liberal Arts/Education) which forms the core of their career and technical courses; and, third, students get early exposure to their career area of emphasis through field-based work experience opportunities. Students are prepared to succeed in both college and career. "All pathways lead to the same destination: preparation to succeed in

both college *and* career, not one or the other. This single destination defies and seeks to change a long-standing social hierarchy that makes college *better than work*; and makes *work* the default for those who cannot succeed in college” (Oakes & Saunders. 2006, p. 4). On the basis of different indicators, API score, average GPA in college courses, and successful college course completion, RECHS appears to be positively impacting student performance. Student perception about the school, staff, faculty, class size and formulation of future education goal are overwhelmingly positive and the future goals of the majority include college. That spells SUCCESS by any measure!

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