

ED286559 1987-06-00 High School-Community College Collaboration. ERIC Digest.

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Table of Contents

If you're viewing this document online, you can click any of the topics below to link directly to that section.

High School-Community College Collaboration. ERIC Digest.....	1
IMPROVING CURRICULAR COORDINATION WITH LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS.....	2
HELPING HIGH SCHOOLS MORE EFFECTIVELY PREPARE STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE.....	3
SHARING FACULTY AND/OR FACILITIES.....	5
IMPROVING INTERINSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION.....	5



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High School-Community College Collaboration. ERIC Digest.

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A number of recent educational reform reports have stressed the need for increased

cooperation among educational institutions to address such problems as high dropout rates, a workforce without the job skills needed by high-tech industries, and the absence of clearly defined career goals among high school and college students. For community colleges, these problems underscore the importance of strengthening their relations with secondary institutions by

- * improving curricular coordination with local high schools,
- * helping high schools prepare students academically and effectively for college,
- * sharing faculty and/or facilities, and
- * improving interinstitutional communication.

A recent study conducted by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) revealed that the overwhelming majority of two-year colleges participate in some type of collaboration with local high schools (Parnell, 1985). For the most part, these linkages fall into the areas of dual or joint enrollment or advanced placement programs. Under dual enrollment programs, students who have the time and the aptitude are permitted to take regular college courses for credit outside of their normal high school schedule. In advanced placement programs, students receive college credit or are placed into advanced courses on the basis of the completion of selected high school courses or based on their scores on tests of prior learning. Both of these activities are designed to motivate academically gifted high school students.

While dual enrollment and advanced placement programs are the most common types of two-year college/high school collaboration, a variety of other methods of strengthening these linkages are being used in community colleges across the country.

IMPROVING CURRICULAR COORDINATION WITH LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS

While the most difficult to establish and maintain, agreements which improve curricular coordination are among the most important for ensuring continuity in learning. In many cases, these agreements establish course content, exit criteria, and/or skills to be mastered at each educational level to ensure that there is neither overlap nor gaps between sequential courses. The following represent examples of institutional and state-level efforts to promote this kind of collaboration:

...the Kern Community College System, Bakersfield College, and Kern

High School District in California have developed a 2 + 2 tech-prep

associate degree program in agriculture, which begins in the junior year of high school and continues through the two-year college program (Kern Community College District, 1984).

...eight of Maryland's community colleges have formal articulation agreements in place between the college board of trustees and the local board of education. Six of these institutions have 22 letters of agreement for 19 occupational programs and 3 transfer programs (Maryland State Board, 1984).

...the Dallas County Community College District in cooperation with area school districts in Texas is developing articulation plans in 14 occupational programs and preparing manuals for each area listing required competencies and criteria for determining mastery (Parnell, 1985).

...the Florida State Board for Community Colleges has adopted a state-level policy requiring that community college/high school articulation agreements be developed to enhance learning opportunities and avoid duplication of courses (Parnell, 1985).

...Cuyahoga Community College (Ohio) worked with area school districts to develop curriculum ladders ensuring a cohesive curriculum from high school through the community college to a four-year institution (Schaier-Peleg, 1984).

HELPING HIGH SCHOOLS MORE EFFECTIVELY PREPARE STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE

Community colleges have become involved in various activities to improve students' ability to perform college-level work and succeed in a college environment before the students leave high school. In some instances, this type of collaboration takes the form of staff development programs which ensure that high school teachers and counselors are aware of the skills and knowledge their students will need to succeed. In other instances, colleges are working directly with high school students. Examples of these types of cooperative effort include the following:

...Florida Junior College at Jacksonville conducted a workshop for

high school principals and counselors to help them identify

students who might benefit from a targeted outreach and retention

program. (Campbell, 1984)

...Cuyahoga Community College has joined forces with Links, Inc., (a

national organization of black women dedicated to civic, cultural,

and educational activities) to administer a program designed to

improve the test-taking skills of inner-city high school students

and to help them build the skills needed to succeed in

postsecondary education. (Harris and Rohfield, 1983)

...Clark Technical College's (Ohio) High School Liaison Project has

sponsored several projects for local high school students, such as

a summer "bridge" workshop on college survival skills. Efforts

also include supporting local high school participation in

state-wide testing programs that are designed to encourage high

school juniors to obtain remedial education if necessary before

college matriculation. (Bordner, 1985)

...The Community College of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) has cooperated

with a local high school in a program designed to improve the

reading, writing, and thinking skills of low-achieving,

poverty-level students in the 11th grade. CCP professors have visited the high school to conduct classes, and the students have the opportunity to go to the college for special lectures and courses (Hatala, 1982)

SHARING FACULTY AND/OR FACILITIES

This form of cooperation may involve the joint purchase or use of equipment and facilities, interinstitutional contracts for instruction, or the operation of high schools on college campuses. Samples of this kind of activity include the following:
...six of the seven Maricopa Community Colleges in Arizona are involved

in over 100 articulation projects with local high schools, focusing

in many cases on resource coordination, joint use of facilities,

shared instructors, and shared use of equipment (Gorman, 1985);

...Lake Land Community College (Illinois) undertook a project which

provided for the joint purchase and use of 150 microcomputers by

the college and 15 public school districts and which resulted in

college enrollment gains, lower initial purchase costs, teaching

opportunities, and educational benefits for students. (Admire, 1983);

...The Alamo Community College District and San Antonio College have

established a high-technology high school on the college campus,

which enrolls junior high and high school students in science, math

and computer courses taught by college faculty. In addition to

receiving credit toward high school graduation students receive a

special high-tech certificate. (Parnell, 1985)

IMPROVING INTERINSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Colleges are utilizing several strategies to foster ongoing communication between high school and college chief administrators, faculty, and counselors who share common concerns about student attrition and educational continuity. Examples of cooperation include the following:

...LaGuardia Community College (New York) has established the Center for High-School College Articulation, an information network for the exchange of data on high-school/college programs. (Parnell, 1985)

...The Community College of Baltimore (Maryland) conducted workshops with administrators from five city high schools to explore ways of easing the transfer of high school students to college through formal articulation policies. (Schaier-Peleg, 1984).

...On the first Wednesday of each month, the President of San Juan College (Arizona) meets with the four county superintendents in the college's service area to discuss such items as curricula, legislation, school calendars, and other subjects of mutual concern. (Henderson, 1986)

Parnell (1984) points to several consistent patterns in successful high school/community college collaboration:

- * School boards and trustees must support program coordination and articulation in policy and practice.
- * The chief executive officers of the college and school system must take responsibility for initiating dialogue and maintaining communication.
- * Early in the discussions, agreement should be reached on priorities for action so that the institutions' goals are achievable.
- * Faculty and staff participants in articulation development should

receive recognition and reward, including reduced workloads.

* One individual must be assigned to direct the project--build agendas, call meetings, maintain time-lines, and prepare and edit reports.

* The duties of all participants in the effort should be clearly defined.

* The resulting written program-articulation agreement should be widely distributed to those who will be called upon to implement it.

* All agreements should be reviewed annually.

Increasingly, community colleges and high schools are realizing the importance of working together to overcome such barriers as incompatibility of curricula and schedules, turfmanship, inaccurate and inadequate information, and differences in educational philosophy. The result of these efforts will be better informed, better prepared, and better qualified high school and college students.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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