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## WWC QUICK Review

# “Early College, Early Success: Early College High School Initiative Impact Study”

### What is the study about?

The study authors examined whether attending Early College High Schools increased postsecondary outcomes. As defined in this study, Early Colleges are high schools that partner with local colleges and universities to offer students the opportunity to take courses towards earning an Associate’s degree or up to 2 years of college credit towards a Bachelor’s degree. The authors evaluated the impact of Early Colleges on high school graduation, college enrollment, and degree attainment both for the overall sample and for various subgroups of interest (women, racial/ethnic minorities, low income students, and first generation college students).

Using retrospective data, study authors found 10 Early Colleges in 5 states that (a) operated exclusively as Early College High Schools, (b) had graduates during the study years, and (c) used and kept records of a lottery process to determine who would be offered admission to the program. A total of 2,458 students from 3 cohort years entered the identified lotteries. Students who were offered admission to Early College High Schools via the lottery formed the intervention group, while students not offered admission formed the comparison group.

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### Handy Definitions

- ▼ *quick review*
- ▼ *study rating*
- ▼ *meets WWC evidence standards without reservations*
- ▼ *meets WWC evidence standards with reservations*
- ▼ *does not meet WWC evidence standards*

[See the full glossary ▶](#)

### What did the study report?

Study authors reported that from 2005 to 2011, 86% of the intervention students graduated high school versus 81% of comparison students. Postsecondary enrollment was 80% for the Early College students and 71% for the comparison students. Additionally, 22% of Early College students earned a postsecondary degree during the study period, compared to 2% of

comparison students. All of these differences were reported as being statistically significant.

## How does the WWC rate this study?

This study is a randomized experiment examining the impact of Early Colleges on a number of outcomes. The study had relatively low attrition rates (approximately 7% in the intervention group and 13% in the comparison group) for the outcomes of high school graduation, college enrollment, and degree attainment. Therefore, the study findings for these outcomes *meet WWC evidence standards without reservations*. A more thorough review (forthcoming) will provide more details and will determine whether the findings for different underrepresented subgroups can meet WWC evidence standards with or without reservations.

## Citation

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