



**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**

**NEWS RELEASE  
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**EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS PROVIDE BOLD  
SOLUTION TO EDUCATING EVERY STUDENT**

**Week of May 4-10 Celebrates Success of 200 Schools in National Program**

*"In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity, it is a prerequisite."*

—President Barack Obama

BOSTON, MA (April 2, 2009) — At a time when our nation's economic competitiveness depends on providing every child with an education that will enable them to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce, over 200 early college high schools nationwide are providing pathways to higher education for 42,000 young people who might not otherwise go to college.

From May 4-10, early college high schools and their partners around the country will celebrate *Early College High School Week*, bringing together students, administrators, parents, community leaders, and legislators to honor the commitment and success of the Early College High School Initiative.

With startup support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other funders, early college high schools offer college courses to high school students underrepresented in higher education (low-income, minority, English language learners, and first-generation college students) so they gain the skills they need to succeed in college and careers.

Over 9 in 10 early college students get a high school diploma at a time when up to half of young people drop out of traditional schools. Not only that, 88 percent of students graduate with at least some college credit. In fact, 40 percent of students who enter early college as 9<sup>th</sup> graders earn a full year—or more—of college credit. This college credit is earned tuition free, at a time when one year

of public college costs an average of \$6,600. Students with two years of credit or an Associate's degree would save an average \$13,000.

“These numbers prove that challenge—not remediation—is an approach to education that works,” said Marlene B. Seltzer, CEO of Jobs for the Future, which leads the Early College High School Initiative nationally. “The opportunity to earn *free* college credit is something every student and parent would invite, especially during these hard economic times.”

“We will have 250 schools by 2012, serving 100,000 students,” added Seltzer. “Early college high schools are already helping the nation meet President Obama’s charge: ‘By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.’”

“Early College High School Week is our way of telling America we can educate all our students, and Early College has proven that,” said Dawn Cooper, Director of Early College Initiative in the P-16 Office of Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, an ECHS partner providing technical support and professional development to 12 early colleges throughout Georgia. “Educating underrepresented students is about more than just social equity. It’s about making our collective workforce smarter, and our collective economy stronger and more secure.”

“I never thought about going to college. I never thought it was remotely possible, or that I was smart enough,” said Lauren Merrell, a senior at Toledo Early College High School on the campus of University of Toledo in Ohio. “Once I got the hang of actually having to commit to the work and having homework every night, I was fine. I was one of the first students to take a college class. Since then, I have taken more and more classes, and I love it.”

### **ECHS Partner Organizations**

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

- 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

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

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

Through research, analysis, action, and advocacy, Jobs for the Future develops promising education and labor market models, expands successful models in communities across the country, and shapes the policy environment that enables American families and companies to compete in a global economy. Jobs for the Future is the lead coordinator and policy advocate for the Early College High School Initiative.

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

Since 2002, the partner organizations of the Early College High School Initiative have started or redesigned more than 200 schools in 24 states and the District of Columbia. The schools are designed so that low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English language learners, 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.

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