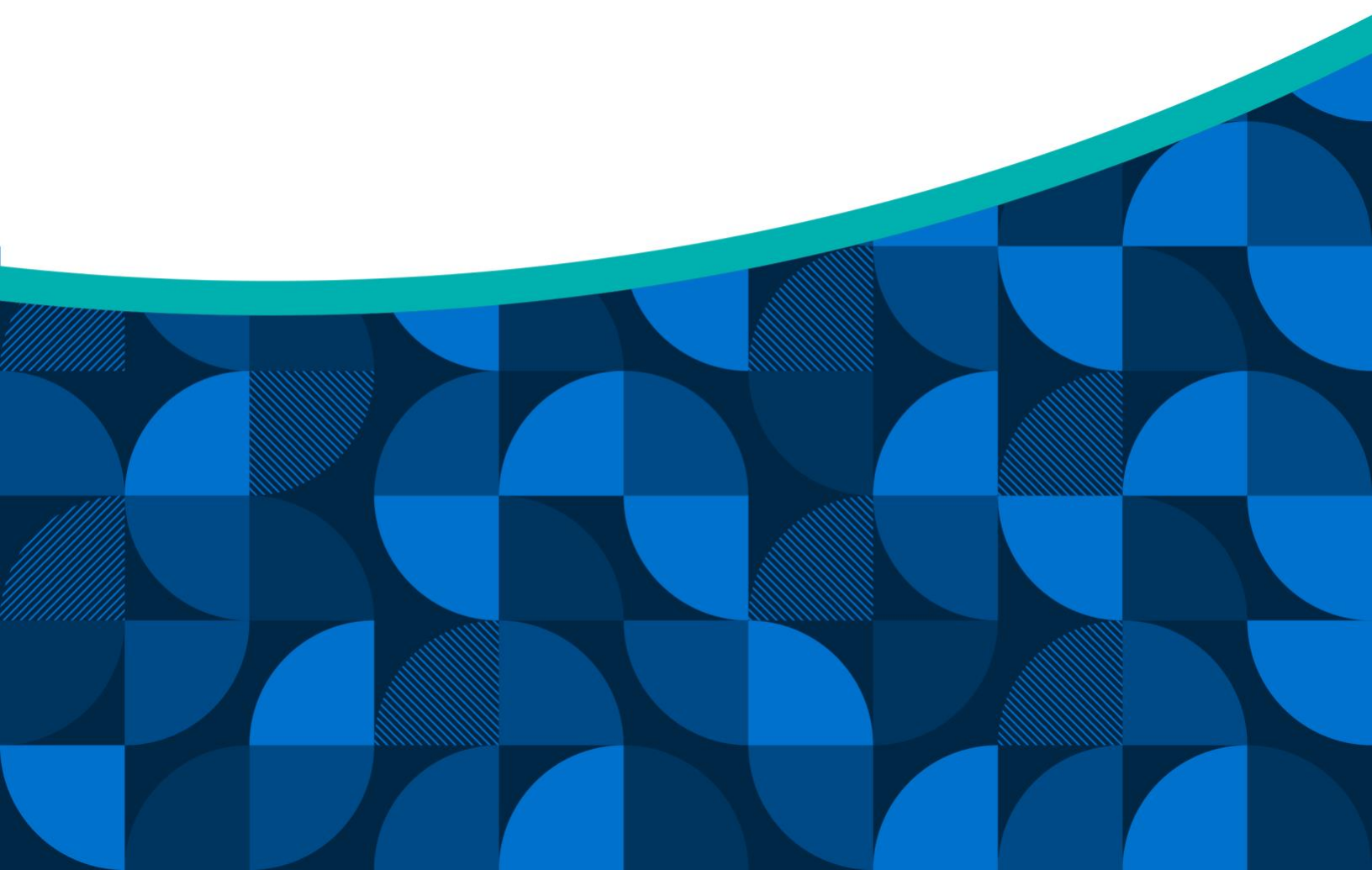




RESEARCH REPORT

# Early College and Work-Based Learning Programs

An Overview of Wall-to-Wall Early College and Career Exploration Initiatives



# District Leadership Forum

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# 1) The Current State of Early College and Work-Based Learning Programs

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## The Demand for Early College and Work-Based Learning Programs

### Colleges and Employers Have Expressed a Need for Student Readiness...

High school students across the country are facing a college and career readiness crisis, with both employers and colleges reporting that students are less prepared than ever. A 2019 survey found that 73 percent of employers believed that it was difficult to find prepared candidates for jobs, with 34 percent reporting that they believed schools had not adequately prepared students for employment.<sup>1</sup> Surveys have found that colleges and universities report similar issues with incoming students, with a significant majority of faculty reporting that students are less prepared in critical thinking, problem-solving, and close reading and analysis skills.<sup>2</sup>

### ...And Students Are Interested in Participating in the Programs That Prepare Them

In addition to higher education institutions and employers hoping for more prepared students, an overwhelming majority of the students themselves are interested in opportunities for development. In a survey conducted by American Student Assistance, 79 percent of high school students expressed interest in participating in work-based learning experiences.<sup>3</sup> Participation in work-based learning programs has a direct, positive impact on students' post-high school achievement, giving students the qualifications, connections, and experience needed to compete in the job market.<sup>4</sup>

Students are similarly interested in taking college classes in high school — 34 percent of students completed a college credit in 2019 compared to just ten percent of high school students who completed a college credit in 2010.<sup>5,6</sup> Participation in these early college programs also supports student achievement, with more than 76 percent of Early College students from the class of 2019 having enrolled in post-secondary studies within six months of graduating high school, in comparison to the 56 percent of those who did not participate in early college programs.<sup>7</sup>

## The Insufficient Accessibility of Early College and Work-Based Learning Programs

### Few Districts Offer Work-Based Learning and Early College Programs...

Despite this need and interest in early college and work-based learning opportunities, too few school districts offer these programs to students. Students in the United States spend less time in work-based learning programs than those in other comparable countries, and only 15 states have dedicated funding for work-based

1) Baker, J. (2020, January 6). [Work-based learning: Why you have to get with the program](#). Forbes.  
2) College Board Research. (2024, July 6). [Recent trends in college readiness and subsequent college performance](#). College Board.  
3) Martinez, T. O., Pearce, A., & DeMio, P. S. (2024, April 2). [K-12 Work-Based Learning Opportunities: A 50-State Scan of 2023 Legislative Action](#). Center for American Progress.  
4) Ross, M., Kazis, R., Bateman, N., & Staterler, L. (2020, November 20). [Work-based learning can advance equity and opportunity for America's young people](#). Brookings.  
5) [Dual Enrollment: Participation and Characteristics](#). (2019, February). National Center for Education Statistics.  
6) [NACEP Fast Facts](#). (n.d.). National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships.  
7) [Early College as a Force for Equity in the Post-Pandemic Era](#). (2021, April). Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth.

learning programs in secondary schools.<sup>8,9</sup> Similarly, only a limited number of districts operate schools with robust or comprehensive early college programs, leaving many students across the country with inadequate access to early college opportunities.<sup>10</sup>

Even in districts which do offer early college or work-based learning opportunities to students, many of these programs do not offer the quality or depth that is necessary to sufficiently prepare students. For example, many work-based learning programs do not include strong connections to employers in the region, limiting students' access to real-world career experiences that prepare them to enter the workforce after completing high school.<sup>11</sup>

## ...And Many of Those That Do Are Not Making Programs Accessible

Another barrier students face even in districts which do offer work-based learning or early college programs is a lack of awareness around existing programming and programs which are inaccessible to many students. Many schools fail to effectively communicate the availability of work-based learning opportunities, with a 2023 survey finding that only 34 percent of students were aware of the work-based learning opportunities available to them.<sup>12,13</sup>

Furthermore, at the state level, only a limited number of states are actively taking steps to ensure that students can access work-based learning programs.<sup>14</sup> Only a few states have policies or programs that remove barriers to work-based learning or early college programs that would support higher-needs students.<sup>15</sup> A report from the Government Accountability Office on career and technical education (CTE) found that even in instances where school districts do offer work-based learning programs, many students are unable to participate due to insufficient transportation and support services, language barriers, and inflexible scheduling.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, despite the proven benefits of early college programs overall, the impact of programs is not equally experienced by all students. Many early college programs only effectively support the students who would be attending college regardless, leaving behind students who do not believe that college is for them.<sup>17</sup> Eligibility requirements for dual enrollment or other early college programs often limit access to only "academically advanced" students and exclude middle-achieving students.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, students are often left to find early college programs on their own, leaving out students who are not aware that programs are even an option.<sup>19</sup>

- 8) [What is work-based learning?](#) (n.d.). Colorado State University STEM Center.
- 9) Martinez, T. O., Pearce, A., & DeMio, P. S. (2024, April 2). [K-12 Work-Based Learning Opportunities: A 50-State Scan of 2023 Legislative Action](#). Center for American Progress.
- 10) [Mapping early colleges across the U.S.](#) (n.d.). American Institutes for Research.
- 11) [What is work-based learning?](#) (n.d.). Colorado State University STEM Center.
- 12) [Working to learn and learning to work: A state-by-state analysis of high school work-based learning policies.](#) (n.d.). ASA.org.
- 13) Martinez, T. O., Pearce, A., & DeMio, P. S. (2024, April 2). [K-12 Work-Based Learning Opportunities: A 50-State Scan of 2023 Legislative Action](#). Center for American Progress.
- 14) [Working to learn and learning to work: A state-by-state analysis of high school work-based learning policies.](#) (n.d.). ASA.org.
- 15) Ibid.
- 16) Martinez, T. O., Pearce, A., & DeMio, P. S. (2024, April 2). [K-12 Work-Based Learning Opportunities: A 50-State Scan of 2023 Legislative Action](#). Center for American Progress.
- 17) Stout, K. A., & Mathern, N. (2022, February 11). [Early college can be a second chance for struggling students.](#) Higher Ed Dive.
- 18) Zinth, J., & Barnett, E. (2018, May). [Rethinking dual enrollment to reach more students.](#) Education Commission of the States.
- 19) Stout, K. A., & Mathern, N. (2022, February 11). [Early college can be a second chance for struggling students.](#) Higher Ed Dive.

## 2) Expanding Access to Work-Based Learning and Early College Programs

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### District Initiatives to Expand Program Participation

#### Developing New Programs, with a Focus on Equity

To meet the increasing demand for skills from employers and colleges and cater to student interest, a number of school districts across the country have recently added or are currently developing new work-based learning and early college programs. Many of these districts are doing so with the support of or at the initiative of states, with some state governments designating increased funding for programs or passing legislation to support program development —34 states and Washington, D.C. passed legislation related to work-based learning in 2023.<sup>20</sup>

Some school districts and state legislatures are taking additional steps to make these new programs more equitable. These steps include removing barriers to access and increasing funding designated for underrepresented groups. These initiatives help students who have been historically overlooked by and excluded from programs to participate, including women, minorities, non-native English speakers, and students from low-income backgrounds.<sup>21</sup>

### Overview of Profiled Programs

#### Early College and Work-Based Learning Program Criteria

Our researchers spent six weeks reviewing school districts' early college and work-based learning programs to identify a selection of programs that meet the following criteria:

1. Wall-to-wall services
2. Non-selective enrollment
3. A significant portion of the student body from historically underserved populations (e.g., students of color, students from low-income backgrounds)

While the profiled districts meet most of the outlined criteria, due to limitations on the number of school districts that offer comparable programs, and the availability of information on those programs, not all districts profiled in the report meet all three of the outlined criteria. For example, some programs maintain eligibility criteria for participating students, even if those criteria are lowered to expand access. Additionally, some district websites do not directly specify whether programs have non-selective enrollment.

20) Martinez, T. O., Pearce, A., & DeMio, P. S. (2024, April 2). [K-12 Work-Based Learning Opportunities: A 50-State Scan of 2023 Legislative Action](#). Center for American Progress.

21) Ibid.

## Profiled Districts

This report profiles a total of 13 programs in 11 states, including seven school districts with work-based learning programs and six school districts with early college programs.

### Profiled School Districts

School District	District Enrollment (2023-2024)	School/Program Name	Program Type
Anchorage School District (AK)	43,727	Academies of Anchorage	Work-based learning
Appoquinimink School District (DE)	12,804	Appoquinimink Pathways	Work-based learning
Hampton City Schools (VA)	19,796	Hampton Career Academies	Work-based learning
Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (TN)	80,651	Academies of Nashville	Work-based learning
Rock Ridge Public Schools (MN)	2,406	Rock Ridge High School	Work-based learning
San Francisco Unified School District (CA)	48,785	Balboa High School	Work-based learning
Scottsbluff Public Schools (NE)	3,519	Scottsbluff High School	Work-based learning
Lynn Public Schools (MA)	15,556	Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy	Early college
Montgomery County Public Schools (MD)	160,554	Montgomery County Public Schools Early College	Early college
North Adams Public Schools (MA)	1,216	Drury High School	Early college
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District (TX)	30,003	PSJA Southwest Early College High School	Early college
Richmond County Schools (NC)	6,678	Richmond County Early College Programs	Early college
Southern Berkshire Regional School District (MA)	618	Mount Everett Regional School	Early college

# 3) Work-Based Learning District Profiles

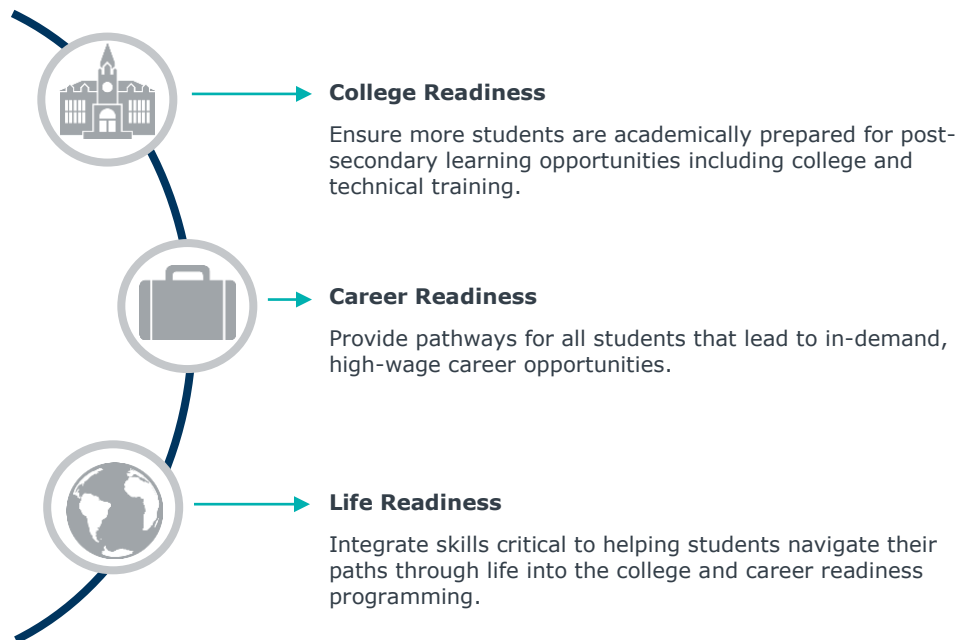
## Anchorage School District (AK)

### About the Academies of Anchorage

Founded in 2024 and open to students in the Class of 2028 and beyond, the Academies of Anchorage create areas of career focus called “pathways” in Anchorage high schools. At the end of their freshman year, students choose the pathway that best fits their own college or career path interests and take related electives over the course of their high school experience. All comprehensive high schools within the district will offer academies and associated pathways.<sup>22</sup>

The Academies of Anchorage will offer 26 general pathways with 85 specialties.<sup>23</sup> Program pathways will include industry and career programs such as business, community planning and infrastructure, industry and construction, and culinary arts.<sup>24</sup>

### Academies of Anchorage Program Goals<sup>25</sup>



### Expanding Access to the Academies of Anchorage

All students in Anchorage School District will participate in the Academies of Anchorage program. To make the Academies of Anchorage accessible to all families, the program and its pathways are available at no cost to students.<sup>26</sup> The program will also include support structures for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).<sup>27</sup> Anchorage School District serves a student body that is majority-minority, and just over half of its students are from economically disadvantaged families.<sup>28,29</sup>

22) [Academies of Anchorage: The plan for high school transformation in the Anchorage School District.](#) (n.d.). Anchorage School District.  
23) [Academies of Anchorage: Academies.](#) (n.d.). Anchorage School District.  
24) [Our academies / Explore our academy schools.](#) (n.d.). Anchorage School District.  
25) [Academies of Anchorage: Academies.](#) (n.d.). Anchorage School District.  
26) [Academies of Anchorage: The plan for high school transformation in the Anchorage School District.](#) (n.d.). Anchorage School District.  
27) Ibid.  
28) [Anchorage School District Ethnicity Report.](#) (n.d.). Anchorage School District.  
29) [Anchorage School Board Strategic Planning: ASD Student Data.](#) (n.d.). Anchorage School District.



## Appoquinimink School District (DE)

### About Appoquinimink Pathways

Students in Appoquinimink School District begin career exploration in sixth grade. When starting high school, each freshman student chooses a career Pathway which relates to their individual career goals.<sup>30</sup>

Appoquinimink School District offers students 24 different Pathways, which all include work-based learning experiences such as job shadowing, mentorships, mock interviews, and site visits. These work-based learning pathways also all include course options in Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement, and Advanced Standing, offered in partnership with local institutions of higher learning.<sup>31</sup>

In their senior year, students participate in a work-based learning immersion experience, and are required to complete a capstone project related to their chosen Pathway.<sup>32</sup>

### Expanding Access to Appoquinimink Pathways

Appoquinimink School District's district-level coordinator focuses on support for students with IEPs and those in alternative programs. Appoquinimink uses a tracking tool to monitor students' participation, hours, and skill gains.<sup>33</sup> Monitored activities include opportunities for paid and unpaid internships, job shadowing, attendance at lectures from guest speakers, and service-learning programs.<sup>34</sup>

## Hampton City Schools (VA)

### About Hampton Career Academies

The Hampton Career Academies model offers students 16 academies containing 44 different career pathways across Hampton City Schools' four high schools. Potential pathways include career areas such as travel and tourism, journalism, engineering and robotics, and law and legal studies.<sup>35,36</sup> In each academy, students become part of a small learning community and take courses with students who share their interests. Students have the opportunity to listen to classroom speakers, attend site visits, shadow jobs, and partake in internships.<sup>37,38</sup>

Students may also take advanced placement courses, dual enrollment courses, and industry certification exams.<sup>39</sup> In addition to its pathways model, Hampton Career Academies offers three accelerated college preparatory programs.<sup>40</sup>

### Expanding Access to Hampton Career Academies

The Hampton Career Academies model includes all students attending high school in Hampton City Schools. To match students with their desired career academy, the

30) [Appoquinimink School District Teaching & Learning](#). (n.d.). Appoquinimink School District.

31) Ibid.

32) Ibid.

33) Shields, K. A., Hutchins, B. C., Reese, K., Fletcher, E. C., & Hughes, K. (2024). [Building robust district work-based learning data collection systems](#). American Institutes for Research.

34) [Appoquinimink School District Teaching & Learning](#). (n.d.). Appoquinimink School District.

35) [Academies of Hampton: 16 academies, 44 pathways, which one will you choose?](#) (n.d.). The Academies of Hampton.

36) Ibid.

37) [What are The Academies of Hampton?](#) (n.d.). The Academies of Hampton.

38) [Transforming our Learning Spaces: Academies of Hampton](#). (n.d.). Hampton City Schools.

39) [What are The Academies of Hampton?](#) (n.d.). The Academies of Hampton.

40) [The Academies of Hampton: Frequently Asked Questions](#). (n.d.). The Academies of Hampton.

district uses a lottery system. Students rank their top five academy and pathway choices, and nearly all students receive placement in their top choice academy.<sup>41</sup>

District students with disabilities also participate in the Hampton Career Academies Model, with IEPs designed and implemented to ensure their success.<sup>42</sup>

## Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (TN)

### About the Academies of Nashville

Metro Nashville Public Schools' Academies of Nashville, which was founded in 2005, offers students access to 35 different career pathway academies. The goal of the Academies program is to bring real-world experiences into the classroom and help students develop skills that are relevant to industry needs.<sup>43</sup>

Students' career exploration begins in the Freshman Academy, during which ninth grade students have the opportunity to explore different career options before selecting a career academy. As freshmen, students take classes with a core team of teachers and have the opportunity to hear from industry professionals in over 400 career areas as well as participate in college visits. As they progress through the Academies, students participate in field trips, job shadowing programs, internships, and complete a capstone project. Students may also earn dual credit, dual enrollment, and industry credentials.<sup>44</sup>

### Academies of Nashville Career Exploration Opportunities by Grade<sup>45</sup>



### Making the Academies of Nashville Accessible

The Academies of Nashville offers open enrollment to its students, with all students in the 12 zoned Academies of Nashville schools able to choose between the 35 different academies.<sup>46</sup> Over 12,000 students graduated from the Academies of Nashville from 2006 to 2016 in the Academies' first 10 years of operation.<sup>47</sup> Across the whole of Metropolitan Nashville Public School District, 23.2 percent of students come from families living below the poverty level.<sup>48</sup>

41) [The Academies of Hampton: Frequently Asked Questions](#). (n.d.). The Academies of Hampton.

42) Ibid.

43) [Academies of Nashville](#). (n.d.). Metro Nashville Public Schools.

44) Ibid.

45) Ibid.

46) Ibid.

47) [The Academies of Nashville: The storybook](#). (n.d.). Academies of Nashville.

48) [District demographic dashboard 2018-22: Metropolitan Nashville Public School District](#). (n.d.). National Center for Education Statistics.

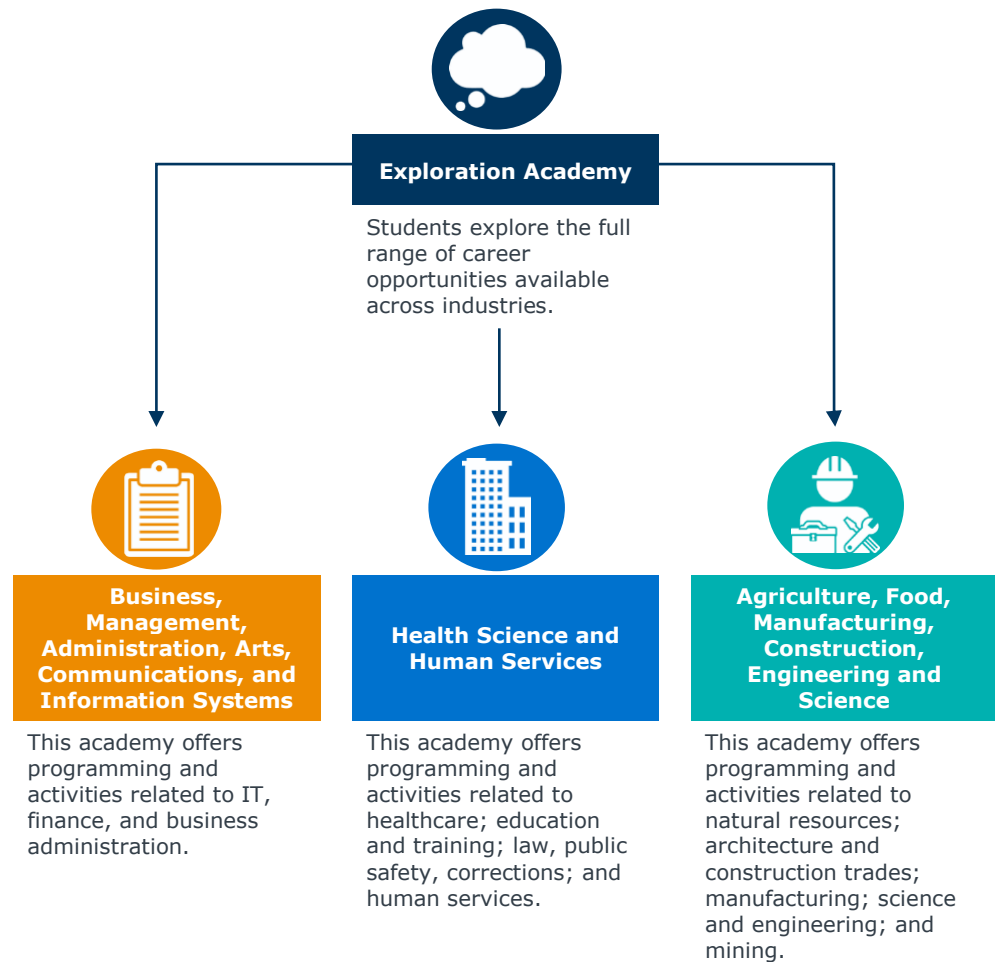
# Rock Ridge Public Schools (MN)

## About Rock Ridge High School

Opened in 2023 and enrolling almost 700 students, Rock Ridge High School is a wall-to-wall career academy in the newly formed Rock Ridge School District (MN).<sup>49,50,51</sup>

To help prepare its students for the job market, Rock Ridge High School offers a career pathway format that promotes the exploration of different career fields and partners with local businesses for internships, job shadowing, and interview practice. First-year students begin with an introductory “Exploration Academy” before choosing one of three career academies to focus on during the rest of high school. The pathway also includes project-based learning to support students as they develop their collaboration, communication, and entrepreneurial skills. The school’s applied curriculum is designed to align academics and real-world relevance.<sup>52</sup>

## Academy Pathways at Rock Ridge High School<sup>53</sup>



49) *Consulting Engineering: Rock Ridge High School*. (n.d.). CMTA, Inc.  
50) *Rock Ridge High School*. (n.d.). Minnesota State High School League.  
51) *Rock Ridge Public Schools*. (n.d.). Rock Ridge Public Schools.  
52) *Academies*. (n.d.). Rock Ridge Public Schools.  
53) Ibid.

## Making Rock Ridge High School Accessible

Rock Ridge High School offers open enrollment for all families living within the district.<sup>54</sup> In 2022, 17.8 percent of households in Rock Ridge School District lived below the poverty line, almost double the state’s average.<sup>55</sup>

## San Francisco Unified School District (CA)

### About Balboa High School

Students begin at Balboa High School in San Francisco Unified School District by taking classes with an emphasis on career and college exploration before choosing from five School-to-Career pathways: Creative Arts for Social Transformation (CAST); Game Design Academy (GDA); Law Academy; Peers United for Leadership, Service and Equity (PULSE); and Wilderness, Art and Literacy Collaborative (WALC).<sup>56</sup>

Balboa’s five pathways offer students work-based learning opportunities, mentorships, internships, and other career-based opportunities. For example, students in the Law Academy participate in a six-week mentorship program with a lawyer, and participate in a community service-based research project.<sup>57</sup> Balboa additionally offers a selection of Advanced Placement course opportunities, though the emphasis remains on the student’s chosen pathway.<sup>58</sup> All instruction is organized through small learning communities.<sup>59</sup>

### Making Balboa Accessible

Students may apply to the school as freshmen or as transfer students by submitting an application to the school district.<sup>60</sup> All junior and senior students at Balboa High School participate in the career pathway model.

Balboa High School serves a majority-minority student population,<sup>61</sup> and enrolls a greater proportion of the city of San Francisco’s socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students in comparison to other comparably large high schools in the city.<sup>62</sup> Balboa High School offers Special Education programming for students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities.<sup>63</sup>

## Scottsbluff Public Schools (NE)

### About Scottsbluff High School

All students at Scottsbluff High School participate in Career Academies. The high school offers six different academies based on the Nebraska Department of Education career clusters: Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Business, Marketing & Management; Communication, Arts and Technology; Health Sciences; Human Sciences & Education; and Skilled and Technical Sciences.<sup>64</sup> The high school also

54) [Enrollment](#). (n.d.). Rock Ridge Public Schools.

55) [Rock Ridge Public Schools, Minnesota](#). (n.d.). United States Census Bureau.

56) [About Balboa High School](#). (n.d.). San Francisco Unified School District.

57) [Law academy](#). (n.d.). San Francisco Unified School District.

58) [Pathways at Balboa](#). (n.d.). San Francisco Unified School District.

59) [Ibid.](#)

60) [Ibid.](#)

61) [Balboa High Report \(38-68478-3830288\)](#). (n.d.). California Department of Education.

62) [Balboa High School brochure](#). (n.d.). San Francisco Unified School District.

63) [Balboa Special Education Department](#). (n.d.). San Francisco Unified School District.

64) [Career academies](#). (n.d.). Scottsbluff Public Schools.

offers community partnerships, internship opportunities, service-learning, training, and student clubs and organizations such as mock trial.<sup>65</sup>

Every student has a personal learning plan. Students may change academies or enroll in multiple plans of study to allow them to navigate to any career path that may interest them. All students participate in at least one work-based learning opportunity such as an internship or work study program during their time as a student at Scottsbluff High School.<sup>66</sup>

Scottsbluff High School receives input on the courses and skills taught to students through its community partnerships, who then offer teaching and internship opportunities to the school in return.<sup>67</sup>

For example, students enrolled in the Human Sciences and Education Pathways may take internships with local schools, counseling agencies, and law enforcement agencies to learn real-world skills.

## Making Programs Accessible

16.7 percent of families that reside in Scottsbluff School District live below the poverty line, higher than the national average.<sup>68</sup> In addition to offering open enrollment to students of families who reside within Scottsbluff Public Schools' district limits, families may request to option into Scottsbluff High School.<sup>69</sup>

To help students reach career and course offerings, Scottsbluff High School provides transportation for classes on the nearby Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) campus.<sup>70</sup>

65) [Human sciences & education](#). (n.d.). Scottsbluff Public Schools.

66) [Career academies](#). (n.d.). Scottsbluff Public Schools.

67) Ibid.

68) [District demographic dashboard 2018–22: Scottsbluff Public Schools, Nebraska](#). (n.d.). National Center for Education Statistics.

69) [New student enrollments](#). (n.d.). Scottsbluff Public Schools.

70) [Career academies](#). (n.d.). Scottsbluff Public Schools.

## 4) Early College District Profiles

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### Lynn Public Schools (MA)

#### Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy

In addition to offering designated early college programs at three high schools in the district, Lynn Public Schools is home to Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy, a “wall-to-wall” immersive early college high school located on the North Shore Community College campus.<sup>71</sup> Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy is the only state-designated Early College High School located on a college campus.<sup>72</sup>

#### Expanding Early College Program Access

Founded in 2022, Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy was created to increase college success for historically underserved students in Lynn Public Schools.<sup>73</sup> Of the 157 students enrolled in Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy in the 2023-24 academic year, 74.5 percent were considered high-needs and 70.7 percent came from low-income families.<sup>74</sup>



#### Reaching Overlooked Students

Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy was designed to support first-generation, low-income, and students of color in Lynn Public Schools.

Students receive a merit scholarship to attend Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy. The Early College program is available at no cost to families, with the cost of tuition, fees, and books all covered by the school district.<sup>75</sup>

### Montgomery County Public Schools (MD)

#### About Montgomery County Public Schools Early College

In partnership with Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools offers an Early College that offers qualified students the chance to complete an associate degree while still enrolled in high school. Students who participate in the early college program complete their eleventh and twelfth grades of high school as they also complete their first two years of college.<sup>76</sup>

#### Expanding Access to Montgomery County Public Schools Early College

If qualified, students may apply to participate in the early college program. In order to qualify for application, students must have passed mathematics and English state assessments, have completed the math courses required for the specific pathway, be on track to complete core required classes, have an unweighted GPA of 2.75 or

71) [Early college program](#). (n.d.). Lynn Public Schools.

72) [Lynn campus site of 1st state-designated early college high school](#). (n.d.). North Shore Community College.

73) Ibid.

74) [Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy](#). (n.d.). Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

75) [Welcome to Frederick Douglass Collegiate Academy & North Shore Community College](#). (n.d.).

76) [Early college](#). (n.d.). Montgomery County Public Schools.

higher, and have completed or almost completed the state’s 75 hours of required Student Service Learning (SSL).<sup>77</sup>

Montgomery County Public Schools covers all costs (i.e., tuition, fees, required textbooks, and required instructional materials) for college courses approved at Montgomery College and required for High School graduation and/or Early College degree attainment.<sup>78</sup> Montgomery County Public Schools also focuses on accessibility by offering transportation from a selection of centralized locations to Richard Montgomery High School and then to the Rockville College Campus.<sup>79</sup>

## North Adams Public Schools (MA)

### About Drury High School

In partnership with the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), Drury High School offers four academic pathways in Health Sciences, Education, Computer Sciences, and Liberal Arts.<sup>80</sup> In addition to the selection of courses offered to students on the Drury High School campus, junior and senior students may attend a selection of classes on the MCLA campus.<sup>81</sup>

The school also offers a dedicated counselor for students enrolled in the Early College program to help support students. Other supports for students include One-to-One advising, tutoring services, and access to resources on the MCLA campus.<sup>82</sup>

### Supports for Students<sup>83</sup>



#### One-to-One Advising

Students work with Early College Coordinators, Guidance Counselors, and School Adjustment Counselors.



#### Online Tutoring

Students have 24/7 access to an online tutoring program.



#### Campus Supports

Students may access all a range of the Community College’s resources, including the tutoring center, writing lab, and library.

### Making Drury High School Accessible

Drury High School’s Early College program offers open enrollment with no GPA requirement, and all students at Drury High School are enrolled in the school’s Early College program.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, all the school’s Early College students who meet admission criteria are accepted to MCLA after graduation.<sup>85,86</sup>

Drury High School’s Early College program is available to students at no additional cost, including textbooks and transportation.<sup>87</sup>

77) [Early college](#). (n.d.). Montgomery County Public Schools.

78) [Action plan](#). (n.d.). Montgomery County Public Schools.

79) [Ibid.](#)

80) [Early College at Drury High School-MCLA](#). (n.d.). North Adams Public Schools.

81) [Available course offerings at Drury and MCLA campuses during the 2023-2024 school year](#). (n.d.).

82) [Early College at Drury High School-MCLA](#). (n.d.). North Adams Public Schools.

83) [Ibid.](#)

84) [Ibid.](#)

85) [Ibid.](#)

86) [MCLA Office of Admission](#). (n.d.). MCLA.

87) [Early College at Drury High School-MCLA](#). (n.d.). North Adams Public Schools.

43.4 percent of families living within the limits of North Adams Public receive Food Stamp/SNAP benefits.<sup>88</sup>

## Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District (TX)

### About PSJA Southwest Early College High School

Southwest Early College High School in Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District partners with two colleges in the area to offer students the opportunity to earn dual enrollment credits. All students enrolled at Southwest Early College High School in Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District may participate in the school's early college program.<sup>89</sup>

Students can earn either a high school diploma and a two-year Associate Degree, or earn 60 college credit hours towards a four-year Bachelor's Degree.<sup>90</sup> Students may enroll in dual credit classes as early as the second semester of their freshman year, with some students also meeting the academic requirements necessary to take in college classes as early as eighth grade.<sup>91,92</sup>

### Making Early College Accessible

Students who wish to enroll in the early college program must take the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Assessment, which is a series of placement tests designed to help Texas schools determine whether a student is prepared for college-level reading, writing, and math courses. Students may be eligible for some college classes by attempting the TSI exam even without a passing score. Criteria for early college and dual enrollment programs vary depending on the higher education institution hosting the class.<sup>93</sup>

Southwest Early College High School serves an at-risk student population: in the 2021-2022 school year, 73.1 percent of students were considered at risk of dropping out of school. Most of the students enrolled in the school are also non-native English speakers, with 61.4 percent of students enrolled in bilingual and English language learning programs.<sup>94</sup>

Early College classes are available at no cost to students and their families.<sup>95</sup>

## Richmond County Schools (NC)

### About Richmond County Early College Programs

Richmond Early College High School (REaCH) was built on Richmond Community College's campus and allows its students to earn an associate degree while completing high school classes.<sup>96</sup> Students may begin participating in programming as early as their freshman year.<sup>97</sup>

88) [District demographic dashboard 2018–22: North Adams School District, Massachusetts](#). (n.d.). National Center for Education Statistics.

89) [Early college program](#). (n.d.). PSJA Southwest Early College High School.

90) [Early college high school program](#). (n.d.). Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD.

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92) [Early college high school program](#). (n.d.). Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD.

93) [Steps to enroll](#). (n.d.). PSJA Southwest Early College High School.

94) [PSJA Southwest Early College High School](#). (n.d.). The Texas Tribune.

95) [Early college high school program](#). (n.d.). Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD.

96) [About us](#). (n.d.). Richmond Early College High School.

97) [Early colleges](#). (n.d.). Richmond Community College.



## Making Richmond Early College Programs Accessible

Through a partnership between Richmond County Schools and Richmond Community College, REaCH covers the cost of tuition and books to provide no-cost college classes to all students.<sup>98</sup> The school also serves a student body with 45 percent minority students, and nearly all (99 percent) of students qualify for free lunch.<sup>99,100</sup>

REaCH is one of North Carolina's 134 Cooperative Innovative High Schools, which are small public high schools that are usually located on a community college or university campus. Cooperative Innovative High Schools emphasize serving underserved students and those who would otherwise benefit from accelerated learning opportunities.<sup>101</sup>



### Early College Programs in North Carolina

North Carolina's Cooperative Innovative High Schools target at-risk students, first-generation college students, and students who would otherwise benefit from accelerated learning opportunities.

As of September 2024, there are 134 Cooperative Innovative High Schools across the state of North Carolina.

## Southern Berkshire Regional School District (MA)

### About Mount Everett Regional School

Receiving its designation in 2022, Mount Everett Regional School was the first public wall-to-wall Early College in Massachusetts.<sup>102</sup> All students enrolled in Mount Everett take college courses before they graduate, with 80 percent of the class of 2023 earning college credit through the program in the school's first year of designation.<sup>103</sup>

Mount Everett offers college-preparatory courses, as well as occupational education programs.<sup>104</sup> Fully enrolled students may earn six to seven credits per semester at classes offered at Mount Everett and at nearby Bard College at Simon's Rock.<sup>105</sup>

Students' exposure to college-level coursework begins in middle school, with opportunities to explore the college model and to attend college campus tours. As they enter high school, students take sample coursework before enrolling in college-level courses in eleventh and twelfth grade. Students may also participate in internship programs in eleventh and twelfth grade. Mount Everett Regional School offers a selection of different pathways that align with a range of career or college major interests<sup>106</sup>

98) [2024-2025 student handbook](#). (n.d.). Richmond Early College High School.

99) [Richmond Early College High School](#). (n.d.). US News.

100) [Richmond Early College High](#). (n.d.). National Center for Education Statistics.

101) [Cooperative innovative high schools](#). (n.d.). North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

102) [Mount Everett is now an Early College](#). (n.d.). Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

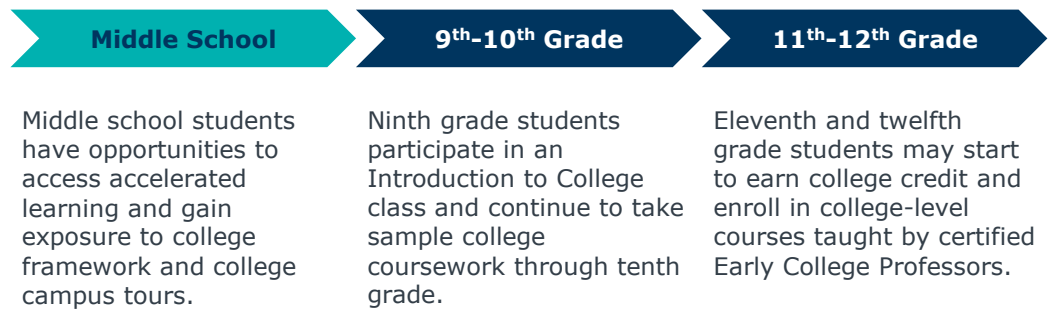
103) [Southern Berkshire Regional School District secures \\$155,000 in grant funding for Mount Everett's Early College and Innovation Pathways programs](#). (2023, October 5). *The Berkshire Edge*.

104) [Mount Everett is now an Early College](#). (n.d.). Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

105) [Early College Program at Mount Everett Regional High School FAQ](#). (n.d.). Mount Everett Regional High School.

106) [Mount Everett is now an Early College](#). (n.d.). Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

## Opportunities for exposure to college-level work<sup>107,108</sup>



## Making Mount Everett Regional School Accessible

As a comprehensive junior-senior high school, Mount Everett Regional School enrolls about 360 students.<sup>109</sup> Mount Everett Regional School offers open enrollment.<sup>110</sup>

As part of a Massachusetts state initiative to help remove barriers to higher education, all early college classes, books, and transportation are free of charge to students and their families.<sup>111</sup>

107) [Early College Program at Mount Everett Regional High School FAQ](#). (n.d.). Mount Everett Regional High School.

108) [Mount Everett is now an Early College](#). (n.d.). Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

109) [Mount Everett Regional School](#). (n.d.). Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

110) [Mount Everett Regional School profile](#). (n.d.). Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

111) Ibid.

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