Early College as an Equity Strategy

Bakersfield College
Rural High School Initiative

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Introduction

This report summarizes the RP Group’s evaluation of Bakersfield College’s (BC) early college efforts. The purpose of the evaluation was to understand the successes and challenges of the early college program including what aspects are working, what could be improved, and what specific components are needed in order to scale the program successfully. At BC, early college is a catch-all term that includes concurrent enrollment, dual enrollment, and early college high schools (see sidebar). In California, concurrent enrollment provides an opportunity for high school students—usually those who have completed advanced secondary coursework—to enroll in a course at a community college upon the recommendation of a principal and with the approval of a caregiver. Dual enrollment was defined by Assembly Bill 288 (College and Career Access Pathways) as “special part-time” high school students who complete community college courses at their high school and/or local community college as part of an agreement between a school and college or a school district and community college district. Students often earn credit for both high school and college.

The evaluation was informed by data provided by BC’s Program Director of Outreach and Early College, and feedback gathered from focus groups with 12 students at Wasco High School (Wasco), and eight students and four parents at Wonderful College Preparatory Academy (WCPA). At both high schools, students have access to bundles of courses in predetermined pathways that are organized by cohorts beginning in the 9th grade. Interviews with three BC administrators helped elaborate on program structure and design.

This report begins with an overview of the rural high school initiative at BC, followed by a summary of key findings that emerged from the research activities. The next section includes program considerations and opportunities for improvement identified by the evaluation team. The report concludes with recommendations to address challenges in the early college program, and final remarks on how BC can use the findings to strengthen and expand their early college program. A complementary report on the final research activity involving Level 3 students at McFarland High School will be available in late spring 2021.

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1 See Appendix A for an overview of the various levels of BC’s early college programming.
2 AB 288 Public schools: College and Career Access Pathways partnerships
3 See Appendix B for more information on the evaluation questions and methodology.
4 See Appendix C for an overview of the two high schools where focus groups were conducted and a key Level 2 industry partner.
Rural High School Initiative

Bakersfield College’s large scale and coordinated rural high school initiative was designed to promote equity by increasing college exposure and completion for first-generation college students attending rural high schools as a strategy to increase social and economic opportunity and mobility. This commitment was operationalized by the following:

- Building partnerships with rural high schools to which BC would normally be the postsecondary institution of choice except for the geographic distance between these communities and the college campus to offer college courses
- Collaborating with employers to inform the development and support the implementation of pathways linked to regional job market opportunities, particularly in agriculture
- Creating and offering a number of academic pathways with proactive support where students can complete requirements for general education and at some sites, an associate degree
- Conducting outreach to students at these rural high schools and their parents beginning in 8th grade to encourage and facilitate student enrollment in “free college courses” and an opportunity to “complete college before/while finishing high school”

The overarching goal of BC’s early college programming is to provide students with opportunities to earn college credits and graduate from high school with an associate degree or technical certificate. The BC rural high school initiative is not organized through CCAP partnerships; however, the goals of the program are similar in that BC aims to improve high school graduation rates and college and career readiness specifically for students “who may not already be college bound or who are underrepresented in higher education. The main approach was to develop and offer seamless pathways from high school to community college for career technical education or preparation for transfer” (Assembly Bill 288). Early college aligns with Guided Pathways (GP), an equity and economic mobility framework adopted by the California Community Colleges system to ensure more students complete their postsecondary education, without financial stress and completion of unnecessary units, prepared to begin a career or continue their education. Programs of interests or meta-majors are a core GP strategy to help students clarify and enter an academic and career path shortly after starting their community college journey. Through its rural early college initiative, BC aims to create clear academic, career, and technical education pathways to relevant programs of interests at universities and/or jobs in the region.

The quote below from a BC administrator underscores how important early college is to the BC’s equity agenda:

...Early college is a strategy and an initiative to get students who typically are not on a

5 Bakersfield College Early College website
college trajectory started on their college education early. And a lot of the students in the early courses would be your obvious pick of a student: Your AP [Advanced Placement] students that take academic courses. But those students are on a college trajectory. They’re most likely on a trajectory out of Bakersfield. So what early college is doing is an equity strategy to say, “What about the rest of the students in high schools?” They would be first-generation college students. It’s not even on their parents’ tongue to talk about college. Or they’re 50 miles from Bakersfield. They’re never going to get here. So considering these groups, how do we use early college as the tool it was intended for originally?

**Headlines**

The evaluation investigated whether BC’s rural early college initiative has been successful in creating a structure with strong and clearly defined partnerships to expose and prepare participants for college. Based on the findings, we surmise that BC’s early college is a strategy that demonstrates the following attributes:

- **Early Exposure to College**: Provides students with a head start on the college experience while simultaneously reducing the time required after high school to finish a college degree and the improving college affordability.
- **Social and Economic Mobility**: Increases postsecondary educational attainment while preparing students for high-growth careers in their communities, helping to meet regional labor market demand.
- **Opportunity for Growth**: Can be scaled to successfully reach and engage many students who otherwise could not enroll in college due to geographic distance.

**Key Findings**

The following sections elaborate on each of the key themes mentioned above by drawing on the information and data provided by the college and the experiences of administrators, students, and parents.

**Early Exposure to College**

Early college programming provides students with a head start on the college experience, while simultaneously reducing the time required after high school to finish a college degree—factors that are also important to parents. Student focus group participants reported several benefits from participation in early college including: having a better sense of what to expect in terms of college course rigor and instructors’ styles and expectations—the most often mentioned program benefit; completing courses that count for both high school and college credit, learning to be responsible for academic success by putting in the work, and advocating for themselves with their instructors. As one student shared:
I thought it was a good class [the Career and Life Planning course completed during the summer] because, yes, I want to go into politics, but now I want to be like a policy analyst. And at first, I would say lawyer, lawyer, lawyer. That’s the only thing I thought you could do with that and then after I took the class, I saw the options that were actually available and it was actually a learning experience for me.

Students who complete college credits in high school can continue their education at one of BC’s campuses or transfer to a four-year university of their choice. Most of the student focus group participants planned to go to a university after graduating from high school. Few students indicated they would pursue university pathways related to their early college major given that only a small number of the region’s universities offered a seamless transition from the high school program. Three local universities6 offer bachelor degrees in agricultural programs and accept all early college credits, but student focus group participants indicated an interest in a variety of fields. When asked what major they wanted to pursue in college, students reported a diverse assortment of disciplines, including biology, criminal justice, engineering, forensic pathology, kinesiology, mathematics, music, political science, psychology, and sociology.

Most students decided to join the program given the opportunity to earn both high school and college credits, secure a Chromebook, have access to TWC’s college and university scholarships, and to save time and money. Despite taking college courses and working to complete an associate degree, most of the students did not see themselves as BC students perhaps a result of the program structure—all courses were offered at the high school, as the following quotes from two students suggest:

I just recently realized I’m a Bakersfield College student because I was at Starbucks and I was studying for my PolySci class and ... I ran into a friend of mine that graduated last year. And I was like “Oh, what are you doing?” And I looked and he was doing the same work as I was... he’s taking... PolySci with [the same professor] and I was like, “No, way. Let’s study together.” He was like, “What do you mean? You graduated already?” I was like, “No, I haven’t graduated. I’m [taking] college courses in high school.” ... He was so amazed. He was like, “What high school is that? You’re still going to [local high school]? I was like, “No, I’m at Wonderful.” That’s what made me like, “Oh, I’m taking the same classes as people that are out of high school.”

I’d say I don’t feel like a Bakersfield College student because we’re still in our high school.

The themes that emerged from the student focus group pointed to students’ perceptions of the following benefits and motivators that enticed students to enter and persist in the program:

- An opportunity to dream big and have access to better and greater economic opportunities than their parents

6 California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo; California State University, Fresno; and University of California, Davis.
• Exposure to and preparation for postsecondary course rigor and expectations
• Ability to serve as an example to younger siblings and family members

The following quotes underscore the ways students felt the pathways had benefited them and their motivations for participating:

Coming from a small town, I think we’re expected to just stay here... field workers here with the little businesses...go to community college and stop there. But this school tells you, “Why not go farther?”

I strongly agree [that the program] helps me better understand why college is important [to] reaching my future goals because my family doesn’t really come from experience in college because nobody has ever [gone] to college. And I’ll be one of the first ones to actually leave from here and go into an actual real college. And if I didn’t have this program, I feel like I would have been the same as them. I wouldn’t have pushed myself as hard as I am now.

It’s me being first-gen [first-generation college goer]. Just seeing my parents work really hard... it’s tough to watch and them also telling you “Hey...I really want you to do this ...If it’s not for you ...do it for me.”

How I stay motivated is... I’m a first-gen and I have three little sisters. So if I graduate college first, it sets a bar of ... how they look up to and ... they see that I graduated college and if I set that example for them, they would want to graduate college too, and be in the program. So they’ll also have a sense and feel of what it’s like to have college classes in high school.

Although they did not know program specifics other than some of the college courses offered, parents appreciated that their children could save time and money by completing free college courses, and as the students reported, determining whether they wanted to continue postsecondary education, and in what field, or start their career before leaving high school. Parents appreciated the program for providing opportunities for their children to explore and decide on a major or field before leaving high school, as well as the encouragement and preparation to pursue additional postsecondary degrees and credentials. The top themes from the WCPA parent focus group included:

• Building confidence in students’ academic capacity to successfully complete college coursework
• Improving students’ ability to manage academic and non-academic priorities
• Strengthening students’ ownership of, responsibility for, and agency in their own futures
• Saving time and money by having students complete free college courses while in high school
Parents mentioned the following changes in their children as a result of being involved in the program:

"I think there’s a strong confidence in it. I don’t think they look at it like, “Oh, this is a college class.” I don’t think they have that mentality anymore. When they first started their freshman year was like, “Oh I’m going to take this,” and it was kind of more of a like, “Okay, this is what I’m getting geared into.” But I think as soon that first semester was done, that whole mentality just disappeared because I think they got really confident, quick.

...I have noticed a lot of change in my daughter, especially because overall she ... wants ...calm, she doesn’t want noise. She goes and locks herself in her room. And she says, “I’m going to study. And I don’t want any noise.” Sometimes if we’re going to go somewhere [and] she says, “No, I need to do my homework. You guys go.” And she’s fine at home.

...just probably the ownership. And responsibility of what they need to do, and what they need to accomplish. And what’s the end game of it.

During the focus groups, students and parents were invited to indicate their levels of agreement with a number of statements on a rating sheet related to how early college opportunities help students, and to indicate the importance of certain factors on students’ success. Nearly all students and parents agreed or strongly agreed with statements that noted early college offered a real-world perspective on what college is like, preparation for career and additional education, confidence in academic abilities, understanding of the role of postsecondary education in future goals, and how early college saves time and money. Students were also asked to rate the importance of various program aspects that helped them clarify and choose a path (life and career goals). Nearly all of the students and parents strongly agreed or agreed with each statement that indicated various program elements, such as information on possible careers and their median wages and advancement opportunities; and culturally competent academic support that addresses real-world issues, were extremely or somewhat important. Furthermore, both students and parents indicated that early college courses increased confidence in academic abilities and provided an easier transition to college and career education/training.

Another important factor—particularly for parents—was the money and time students save by taking free college courses while still in high school. Students who successfully complete at least 30 credits save $1,458 in community college tuition (Table 1). If these same students had started their postsecondary journey after completing high school, 2020-21 tuition and fees at a California State University would have run, on average, about $7,400 annually. In the University

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7 See Appendix D for more information about the rating sheet used to assess early college benefits.
8 CCC Tuition and Fees 2021
9 CSU Tuition and Fees 2020-21
of California system, students can expect to spend $14,000 annually\(^{10}\) for tuition and fees. Additionally, college students spend an estimated $2,000 per month\(^{11}\) for non-tuition costs such as textbooks, food, and housing. If those expenses are factored into the total cost of college attendance, BC students can save over $50,000\(^{12}\) by participating in early college. Students who go on to enroll at a CSU or UC are eligible for scholarships through TWC, which cover tuition and fees for the remaining two years of their bachelor’s degree. Ultimately, early college students have the potential to cover most, if not all, of their postsecondary education.

**Table 1. Estimated Cost Savings for Early College Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Annual Tuition and Fees</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Financial Aid Award</th>
<th>Total Cost Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>$1,458</td>
<td>Rural Initiative</td>
<td>$1,458/year</td>
<td>$2,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>$7,400</td>
<td>TWC Scholarship</td>
<td>$8,000/year</td>
<td>$16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
<td>TWC Scholarship</td>
<td>$24,000/year</td>
<td>$48,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social and Economic Mobility**

Early college can improve future social and economic mobility by exposing students to college-level courses while preparing them for high-growth careers in their communities. Participation in the program can lead to credential and degree completion for students, many of whom did not consider or anticipate going to college. BC offers programs that lead to higher-paying, higher-skilled jobs, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) as a strategy to increase prosperity for a larger share of the community and respond to regional labor market needs.

Historically, Kern County has ranked amongst the lowest in postsecondary educational attainment in California, with only 16% of residents having obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher, which is less than half the California state average of 34% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Furthermore, 26% of adults aged 25 years and older in Kern County do not have a high school diploma. The unemployment rate is the sixth highest in California at 11% (California Employment Development Department, 2021) and 21% of residents live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The region’s largest industry—agriculture—employs approximately 16% of the civilian population in Kern County, and there is a growing need for skilled professionals to meet the demand of this increasingly high-tech field (US Census Bureau, 2019).

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\(^{10}\) [UC Tuition and Fees 2020-21](#)

\(^{11}\) [CSAC 2018-19 Student Expenses and Resources Survey](#)

\(^{12}\) Based on the cost of completing two years of community college ($2,916) and paying two years of living expenses ($48,000).
Linking program pathways with real-world technical skills can lead to positive occupational outcomes in the region. Many of BC’s early college pathways are supported by a key agricultural employer in the region. In the case of Wasco and WCPA, BC has partnered with The Wonderful Company (THC) to create and manage early college options that are linked to agricultural careers. For example, at WCPA, one of the two college pathways according to the school’s website is Ag (Agriculture) Prep, which includes college courses such as Introduction to Ag Business; Introduction to Plant and Soil Science; Ag Sales and Marketing; Ag Leadership; and Agriculture, Environment, and Society. At WCPA, the Agriculture Business Associate Degree for Transfer offers students an opportunity to complete similar courses such as Agriculture, Environment, & Society; Introduction to Ag Business; Agriculture Economics; Introduction to General Chemistry; and Soil Science in addition to leadership, foreign language, English, and economics courses. These pathways were designed to help to create a pool of trained workers for agriculture, while exposing students to the benefits of postsecondary education.

Opportunity for Growth

Early college opportunities can be scaled to successfully reach and engage a large number of students who otherwise could not enroll due to geographic distance. Dr. Sonya Christian, BC’s president, envisioned early college as one strategy to increase regional postsecondary educational attainment. Similar to other community colleges, the early college program was originally under Career Technical Education, but eventually became the responsibility of a cross-functional team that included members from outreach to instruction.

Given the importance of outreaching to parents to leverage their existing relationships with high school counselors, the outreach director’s title was changed to the Executive Director of Outreach and Dual Enrollment. Collectively, release time and stipends for early college staffing in 2019 totaled almost $1 million. The two primary funding sources for non-instructional staffing are the Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP) and Guided Pathways. All instructional costs are paid from BC’s general fund.13

Along with BC’s commitment to assign dedicated staff to early college, the number of high schools participating in the program continued to grow over the last five years as partnerships with local districts have strengthened (see Figure 1). As of 2019-20, the program coordinates with 31 different high schools14 across five districts in Kern County offering students access to a variety of college courses and opportunities to earn between three and 60 units, enough for an associate’s degree.

13 See Appendix E for more information on early college faculty and staff.
14 See Appendix F for a list of participating high schools.
Many students from rural communities within BC’s catchment area have access to college coursework as a result of the BC’s early college initiative. Between 2015-16 and 2019-20, the number of early college course sections increased from 75 to 664 (see Figure 2).

Enrollments in early college also grew significantly in that time period. Between 2015-16 and 2019-20, there was 84% growth in enrollments, increasing from 2,423 to 15,566 (see Figure 3).
To support the rural initiative, BC outlined Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) detailing various partnerships with the college. These partnership agreements underscore a collaborative and coordinated effort by BC to design pathways of interest to students and employers to promote college-going and career readiness. Core and common elements of the MOUs between the college and four of its high school district partners and in some cases, its industry partners included:

- Academic Support
- Coverage of or Waivers for Costs and Fees including textbooks
- Curriculum Design and Oversight
- Identification, Hiring, and Support of Instructors
- Insurance
- Outreach to and Orientation of Potential Students
- General Program Oversight
- Reporting on Program Progress and Outcomes and Student Success
- University scholarships
- Work-based Learning Opportunities

The evaluators’ conversations with high school and college administrators emphasized a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, a shared commitment to equity, and a commitment to develop and maintain a program that ensures as many students as possible are successful. An effective partnership between the college and its high school partners required a coordinated effort with regular meetings, communication, and a shared agreement on the goals and program structure. A review of these discussions highlighted three key themes common to both the secondary and college partners:

- A realization that the region’s residents could benefit from higher levels of postsecondary unit and baccalaureate attainment
- A shared understanding of how early college opportunities were an effective strategy to promote and increase college degree attainment
- A commitment to designing and supporting pathways beginning in high school as an equity strategy

Although interviews and focus groups targeted Wasco students and WCPA students and parents, we learned from BC administrators that several high school districts and individual school sites expressed an interest in offering students college courses as part of the regular high school day. Early college pathways were an opportunity to expand class offerings to students, while preparing students for both college and the regional job market. The ability to complete college courses while still in high school was also seen by the school sites as a way to add value to its students, their parents, and the community at large. However, managing the number of courses and where they would be offered was often an uncomfortable role for the college

\[15\] See Appendix G for more information on the core and common elements included in the MOUs.
administrators given their desire to do more, but facing the reality of having limited personnel and funding, as noted by one of the college administrators in the following quote:

[High school partners] feel [that dual enrollment opportunities] add some value to their [schools], so they can say our program is also giving you some collegiate units. It’s making them more marketable perhaps... I’ve been told from the teaching staff that we’re being pushed. And we’re being pressured. Every single Ag class we have has to offer dual enrollment.

High school partners helped recruit students and supported the college’s outreach director and his staff to schedule opportunities to engage and orient students and their parents about the available early college options. While the college determined the academic, career, and technical education pathways, the sequence of courses, the course outline of record, and were responsible for registering and withdrawing students from the college courses, the high schools were largely responsible for providing academic support (e.g., hiring and managing tutors who were students at a local CSU), ongoing communication with parents, and monitoring students’ academic progress. The high school counselors also were responsible for indicating when students were struggling and needed to be withdrawn from a course before the college’s course drop date and determining a new class schedule for these students.

The evaluation team noticed that high school and college partners shared the same impetus and desire for their collective efforts to increase college access and exposure. Each person with whom we interacted or interviewed was enthusiastic about how the BC’s early college pathways motivated and prepared students to consider going to a university, particularly those students who would be the first in their family to do so. Regular communication and in-person meetings with high school principals and counselors, TWC’s educational liaisons, and BC’s early college manager helped to clarify goals, identify and support students who were struggling with the college coursework, and proactively address any programmatic, student, or staffing needs. The following quote from a college administrator highlights the level of effort required to offer an initiative of this scope and scale:

Okay so ...the work is split up. So our Rural Initiatives Team works with our rural high schools. And the ones who have cohorts, so our level 2 and 3, they meet at least once a month with our high school partners. When we first started out, last January when we decided to roll this all out in the fall, we were meeting every other week with each partner. So it’s a lot of work, but they bring their administrators to the table. The counselors, their instructors when necessary, we bring our department chairs. Anybody we need from our end and try to make these two systems work together.
Student Outcomes

In line with BC’s effort to increase regional postsecondary unit, credential, and degree attainment, the anticipated outcomes for BC’s early college efforts would be increases in the percentage of participants—many of whom are the first in their families to go to college and who may not have believed they were “college material”—making progress towards a postsecondary credential or degree. The key metrics used to evaluate early college students’ academic performance and progress toward educational goal attainment include:

- Early college program retention
- College course success rates
- College-going and first-year retention rates
- Average high school GPA
- College unit completion
- Award completion and post-program college matriculation

The following section highlights Level 2 student outcomes. Comparisons between early college students who enroll at BC and traditional students who first enroll at BC after high school are noted where possible to demonstrate the impact participation in early college has had on student achievement and improving equity outcomes. It is important to note that student outcomes in this report are based on the data that was available at the time of the quantitative analysis. For this reason, some figures may not reflect the most recent academic year(s).

Early College Program Retention

While approximately half of the students who participate in the program do not complete an associate degree, the goal is to provide students with exposure and access to college courses and to provide support to encourage as many students as possible to complete at least 30 units, a full academic year. Overall, the BC and school site administrators were less concerned about program attrition and more focused on the number of first-generation college goers who successfully completed at least some college credits. True to the purpose and mission of the college’s early college initiative, Wasco and WCPA students—many of whom were the first in their families to go to college—saw the program as an opportunity to experience college while still in high school, to complete free college credits, and to earn an associate degree before graduating from high school. The quote below highlights one college administrator’s thoughts about program attrition, sentiments that were echoed by high school administrators:

*I think the original idea was if 60 [students] start and 30 fully complete, we’ve succeeded. And so, what we’ve noticed and there’s only really been a deep dive into the first cohort, but over 45 units on average [are] completed by every single student who started. So it’s not like that they dropped off after three or six [units], it’s 45 units, that’s three semesters. So the majority completed with a year and a half of college done.*
College Course Success Rates

Early college high school students have demonstrated higher course success rates (completing college coursework with a C or better) than traditional BC students. Early college students completed college courses at rates as high as 84% in 2014-15 to 92% in 2017-18, exceeding the BC Institution-Set Standard\(^\text{16}\) completion rate of 69% (see Figure 4).

*Figure 4. Course Success Rates for Early College High School Students Compared to Bakersfield College Institution-Set Standard (ISS) 2014-2018*

Source: Bakersfield College Early College Baseline Report, January 2019

Early college courses at BC work to address equity gaps by creating a college-going and college-ready culture for high school students. As one student reported:

> I feel … specifically with this school... there is no wrong answer when it comes to your pathway. You’ll still have your college credits and everything. And because we all understand the importance... we have to prioritize this and we know... what we have to do in order for us to succeed.

Approximately 90% of all high school students enrolled in BC’s early college courses are students of color, and the equity outcomes for these students are notable. The course success findings are mirrored for participating African American and Latinx high school students, a focus of BC’s equity plan, who far exceed the average course success rates for African American and Latinx traditional BC students. For Latinx early college students, average course success rates between 2014-15 and 2017-18 ranged from 88% to a high of 92% compared to the Latinx traditional BC student average of 67% (see Figure 5).

\(^\text{16}\) BC has established Institution-Set Standards (ISS) for student achievement that are appropriate to the college’s mission. These mutually-agreed upon, objective metrics enable all stakeholders to have a common frame of reference.
For African American early college students during the same time period, success rates ranged from 73% to 91% compared to the traditional BC African American student average of 52% (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6.** Course Success Rates for African American Early College Students Compared to African American Traditional BC Students

Source: Bakersfield College Early College Baseline Report, January 2019

College-Going and First-Year Retention Rates

Students’ progression and completion of early college courses are supported through activities focused on the development of clear and concise program pathways. Between 86-87% of all participating students went to college directly after high school (see Figure 7); however, students who earned an associate’s degree in the early college program were more likely to persist through the second semester. This group showed a marked increase in first-year
The retention rate compared to students who did not earn an associate’s degree (92% versus 85%, respectively).

*Figure 7. College-Going and First-Year Retention Rates among 2018 WCPA Students*

![Retention Rates Chart](image)

*Source: Wonderful Early College 2018 Grad Study for College Council*

**Average High School GPA**

Differences in academic performance were observed for students while still in high school, indicating positive benefits both during and after participation in the program. High school students who enrolled in early college courses achieved higher GPAs than high school students who did not enroll in these courses, 2.9 versus 2.7 (see Figure 8).

*Figure 8. Average GPA for High School Students in Early College Compared to High School Students Not in Early College*

![Average GPA Chart](image)

*Source: Dual Enrollment and Guided Pathways Converge for Equity: A Case Study, Career Ladders Project, November 2019*
College Unit Completion

Benefits of early college participation continue through the first year of college with students who were formerly enrolled in the program showing higher credit completion over the year compared to traditional BC students. This outcome was enhanced for graduates who had GPAs of 2.6 or greater in high school: 15.7 versus 12.9 units (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Average Unit Completion for First-Time Students with High School GPA of 2.6+ - Early College Graduates Compared to Traditional Bakersfield College Students

Award Completion and Post-Program College Matriculation

While BC’s early college program is still under development in rural area high schools, the goal is to align curriculum to help ease the path to degree attainment for students interested in college. From 2018 to 2019, the number of students who were awarded associate degrees more than doubled from 28 to 68 (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Number of Early College Students Who Earned Associate Degrees

Source: Wonderful Early College 2018 Grad Study for College Council

Source: Bakersfield College, January 2020
The majority of graduates from WCPA who earned an associate degree in the early college program matriculated to a public university in California, with 57% enrolling in the California State University system, and 29% enrolling in the University of California system (see Figure 11). Only 4% attended an out of state/private university, and the remaining 11% either did not enroll in postsecondary education or their data were not available. Of the AA earners with reported data, all bypassed the community college system in favor of a four-year university, likely due to having already completed the necessary transfer requirements. The majority of WCPA graduates who did not earn an associate’s degree enrolled in a CSU (70%), while a small percentage attended a UC (17%). Only 4% attended an out of state/private university, and the remaining 4% either did not enroll in postsecondary education or their data were not available.

Figure 11. College Matriculation for WCPA Students after High School

Source: Wonderful Early College 2018 Grad Study for College Council
Program Considerations

Administrators identified challenges that could impede BC’s plan to grow and strengthen early college partnerships and program pathways if not addressed. Three issues emerged from the interviews:

1. **Identifying and recruiting qualified and willing instructors for expanded pathways:**

   The success of BC’s efforts inspired a growing number of high schools to partner with the college, some with new program pathways outside the field of agriculture. College administrators have had to carefully consider how to expand their early college work given the limited faculty, staff, and resources available. Identifying and recruiting instructors who meet the minimum qualifications and who are willing to teach high school students at the high school sites is a challenge. The types of pathways that can be offered will be limited by who is eligible and willing to support early college efforts.

2. **Processing the documentation that is needed for early college students to enroll:**

   The sheet amount of paperwork required to enroll students in early college can be prohibitive. Currently, the college outreach staff hosts express enrollment days at the participating high schools to help students and their parents complete the necessary forms including the community college application. High school counselors must support the effort and assist students and parents with completing the necessary forms. However, adding additional schools will only increase the burden on the limited outreach staff who are also connecting and engaging other potential BC students.

3. **Being strategic in program expansion in light of growing interest from additional high school administrators and teachers wanting to offer early college pathways:**

   As the demand grows, BC will need to be strategic in identifying opportunities that are more likely to engage those students who are the focus—historically underrepresented, low-income, living in rural areas—and how to ensure more students persist. Also, additional industry partners in high growth industries that can provide financial and academic support would be required to offer the additional pathway options students’ desire.

For students, their concerns and challenges were related to key program elements. The focus group conversations highlighted that the experiences of Wasco and WCPA students differ. Although both schools offer BC courses of record and are supported by partnerships with TWC, the programs varied in three important ways as noted by students:

- Authenticity of the college experience
- Exposure to college instructors
- Course rigor
Both groups of students were grateful for the opportunity to complete college courses, but the full collegiate experience seemed to be simulated more authentically at WCPA. Most college courses are taught by BC instructors at this high school, and students spoke of taking advantage of instructors’ office hours, working as a cohort, and accessing tutoring services to manage and successfully complete difficult course work. Wasco students did not appear to mirror the same collegiate experiences in that some courses were taught by high school teachers, making the distinction between high school and college murky. In certain pathways, the same instructor taught multiple classes contributing to a smaller pool of faculty. Wasco students indicated that many of their teachers were newer in their careers, and how the college evaluated the teachers was unclear. They also shared that they did not always feel the early college courses were as rigorous as their high school classes, and being in the program created scheduling restrictions that limited access to Advanced Placement coursework.

Also, the WCPA students were more likely to indicate that the BC pathway courses were rigorous and were confident these courses mirrored what they would experience in college. Wasco students indicated that the program helped them manage various professors’ idiosyncrasies and expectations, whereas WCPA students were more likely to speak of building relationships with their instructors and using their instructors’ office hours to discuss homework and advocate for support when they struggled academically. While both groups of students did not see themselves as BC students, they did seem to feel prepared to take university courses and most were planning to transfer to state universities.

The following parent quotes suggest that students were successfully balancing their college and high school classes:

*I think [students] see [college and high school classes] all as one.*

*I’ve never seen [students] actually separate [high school and early college courses]. I think it’s just that’s their other class. They’ve never really changed it.*

*To [students], it’s just another regular school day... [for students] the college and the regular [high school] class doesn’t differ for them. And to them, it’s just another class they’re taking.*
**Recommendations**

The early college students participating in partnerships involving BC are benefiting personally, socially, and academically as highlighted by the students’ experiences and academic outcomes. Suggestions and recommendations made by students sought to strengthen the programs by doing the following:

- Offer additional pathways particularly those that will include more science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses
- Consider higher-level college courses in some subjects (e.g., Spanish)
- Identify and recruit more seasoned and experienced instructors

Four students’ comments highlight ways the early college program could be strengthened:

> Honestly, one pathway that I would like to see here are science pathways for those who are interested in that because mechanics and business are good pathways, but some people would like to pursue science. So science would be a good pathway.

> Well, for me, everyone just goes into Elementary Spanish. I just wish they had a more advanced Spanish class for people who are native Spanish speakers.

> ... I don’t know how they can control this, but I’d just say more experienced professors. I feel like some of ours are first or second year [teachers] ... I think for some, they have told us that this is their first or second year, but some [students] ... their style doesn’t really focus on people. They don’t go into as much depth as some would like them to.

> I feel like more hands-on classes should have two different classes because ... for example, during welding the teacher wasn’t there to help us all the time because of how many students he has to go through.

Parents of WCPA students spoke of the commitment the program required, specifically the requirement that their children attend school during the summer and that vacations be scheduled around the school schedule. Although parents were willing to ensure that their children could be present for the summer schedule, they spoke of the hardship this requirement had on family time. Perhaps a modified summer schedule could be proposed to provide students and their family a bit more down time.

Administrators remarked on many of the positive attributes the program has to offer, including early exposure to college classes and accessibility to structured pathways that lead to social and economic mobility within a region that has historically low levels of postsecondary achievement. Many of the suggestions from administrators (page 45) pertained to streamlining logistics and coordination around the registration process, expanding course and program offerings, and securing funds to strengthen and grow the program. The following key issues and recommendations were raised by administrators:
• While tuition and fees are waived for early college students, there is an immediate need to find funding sources for course materials.
• CCAP/Dual Enrollment legislation should not exclude courses with waitlists, which would allow schools to remove the requirement that courses be publicly listed and to raise the cap on units in which high school students may enroll.
• Community college instructor minimum qualifications should be re-evaluated and/or revised to consider and include the qualifications of high school instructors to allow them to teach dual enrollment courses.

Conclusion

In five years, BC was able to design and implement a large-scale early college effort that is producing high school students who are completing relevant pathways linked to regional labor market opportunities and outperforming BC students and their non-early college high school peers in their college course success rates, high school GPA, units earned, and transfer-level math completion. Program challenges are limited to issues common with the growing pains of successful programs—a need to identify more staff, a desire for more available opportunities in terms of available pathways, and a process for how to successfully manage more student applications and related documentation. Students desired more—more pathways, more high-level college courses, and more opportunities to be taught by seasoned instructors. Although many students are not considering pursuing agricultural majors once they graduate high school, the program helps them to clarify programs of interest and potential careers, a core outcome of the Guided Pathways framework. However, the most important outcome is the collaboration of secondary, postsecondary, and industry partners working in a concerted effort to improve the social and economic mobility of residents as part of a social justice and equity agenda.
References


Appendices

Appendix A. Bakersfield Early College Program Levels

Figure A1. Bakersfield Early College Program Levels

Pre-Level: Pre-Exploration
High school students currently do not have access to dual or concurrent enrollment courses on the high school campus, but opportunities are available at nearby high school and college campus locations. Search nearby schools in levels 1-3 to see what they’re offering.

Level 1: Exploration
High school students can complete college courses on-site through a combination of dual and concurrent enrollment offered on the high school campus.

Level 2: Installation
High school students can complete a college degree or certificate on-site through a combination of dual and concurrent enrollment offered on the high school campus.

Level 3: Implementation
All incoming 9th grade students are on a pathway to complete between 9 and 60 units towards completing a certificate and/or degree through a combination of dual and concurrent enrollment offered on the high school campus.
Appendix B. Research Methodology

Interviews were conducted with BC administrators to learn about the early college program, particularly how it successfully addressed common barriers and challenges to dual enrollment implementation, and to determine which elements could be scaled or considered for replication by other programs. A total of three, 60-minute interviews took place in-person in at BC in November 2019 with key program personnel. Six topics were covered in the interview protocol including: Program and Partnership Overview, Program Structure, Participants and Their Experiences, Benefits and Challenges, Guided Pathways, and Scalability and Replicability. The following individuals were selected as interviewees based on their knowledge and expertise of the early college program and how it evolved from its early beginnings to its current status:

- Executive Director of Outreach and Dual Enrollment
- Program Director of Outreach and Early College
- Department Chair of Agriculture and Early College Instructor

Focus groups took place in November 2019 to learn more about the early college program from the perspective of students and parents. Two, in-person focus groups were held with students who were enrolled in the Level 2 Early College program at Wasco and WCPA, and one focus group was held with parents of WCPA students.17

Data tables and reports produced by BC’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness for program administrators were examined in order to assess the academic outcomes of Level 1 (concurrent enrollment), Level 2 (structured dual enrollment), and Level 3 (Early College) students as a complement to the focus group research.

Findings from the interviews, focus groups, and quantitative data were used to evaluate program implementation by identifying effective practices and areas for improvement in the early college program to inform recommendations for future implementation and scalability considerations.

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17 See Appendices H and I for the student and parent focus group questions.
## Table B1. Key Evaluation Questions and Corresponding Assessment Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Investigation</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student-Parent Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How do dually enrolled students’ secondary and postsecondary achievement (e.g., course completion, grades) compare to those of similar groups of high school and fellow Bakersfield College students and in what ways do student characteristics relate to students’ outcomes?</td>
<td>Comparative analysis of student academic record data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why do students and their parents decide to participate in dual enrollment and what messages, information, experiences, and program elements are particularly engaging and relevant in drawing students to, keeping them involved, and helping them be prepared for postsecondary/career success?</td>
<td>Focus groups with students and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do and what specific dual enrollment program elements/structures* help or hinder various groups of students’ understanding of, preparation for, and success in postsecondary education/careers?</td>
<td>Focus groups with students and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnership Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What constitutes an effective high school and college partnership that is necessary to adequately and effectively support dual enrollment, adapt, and expand it as an effective tool to help students clarify, select, and be prepared to enter and succeed along a postsecondary/career path?</td>
<td>Focus groups with students and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College-Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In what ways does/can dual enrollment inform and advance Bakersfield College’s overall reputation, enrollment, culture, and climate as well as Guided Pathways and other relevant efforts and to what degree?</td>
<td>College administrator interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Program elements, practices, supportive services, messaging, career-focused pathways, work-based learning opportunities; 9th grade start, model (e.g., ECHS), parental support, policies, cohort-based, etc.
Appendix C. Overview of Participating School Sites and Industry Partners

Wasco Union High School District
Located in the northern part of Kern County, the Wasco Union High School District (WUHSD) serves 1,850 students, the majority of whom are Hispanic (93%) and socioeconomically disadvantaged (80%). The district consists of a single, newly renovated comprehensive high school (Wasco) and a continuation high school (Independence High). A Wasco high school student has access to programs, clubs, athletics, and services, including a default college-preparatory curriculum and dual enrollment as part of the AgCareer Prep Academy, which was designed in partnership with BC and The Wonderful Company (TWC).

Wonderful College Preparatory Academy
By offering a longer school day and extended school year, Wonderful College Preparatory Academy (WCPA) is a free, public K-12 charter school that is sponsored and funded by The Wonderful Company (TWC). A sprawling, environmentally green building, WCPA serves over 1,500 students via two college- and career-preparatory pathways, one focused on liberal arts and the other on agriculture. Scholarships are offered to all students who maintain at least a cumulative 3.0 GPA and enroll as a full-time student in college after their high school graduation. Post-high school graduation support includes free tutoring, regular check-ins by a WCPA staff member, and workshops to support a successful transition to college.

The Wonderful Company
A privately held agricultural corporation, The Wonderful Company (TWC) grows and harvests a number of different fruits, vegetables, and nuts, and markets various products including Halos tangerines, Wonderful pistachios, Fuji water, and POM juice. With a stated commitment of offering “high-quality, healthy brands and helping consumers make better choices, every day” (TWC website), the $4.6 billion company supports efforts to significantly increase college degree attainment for students in the Central Valley communities where it calls home. The company’s education arm offers a rigor, college-preparation curriculum including work-based learning options focused on agriculture, the arts, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) as part of their sponsored and supported charter college preparatory high schools and early college agricultural pathways at partnering high schools.
Appendix D. Student/Parent Rating Sheet

HOW HAS COMPLETING COLLEGE COURSEWORK HELPED YOU/YOUR CHILD?

*Instructions:* Please select a response option (strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree) that most closely describes how you/your child has benefited from the dual enrollment/early college high school for each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Being a part of the dual enrollment program/Early College High School at [high school], helped me/my child in the following ways:</th>
<th>WCPA Parents (n = 4)</th>
<th>WCPA Students (n = 8)</th>
<th>Wasco Students (n = 12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provided a real-world perspective of what college is really like</td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will/has made my child’s transition to college easier</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared my child for future college courses and/or career education / training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped my child to explore interests, possible careers and/or college majors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided my child opportunities to address gaps in his/her/their skills or knowledge</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivated my child to want to keep going to college to reach his/her/their goals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made my child feel more confident in his/her/their academic abilities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped my child better understand why college is an important step in reaching his/her/their future goals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave my child an understanding of how taking college in high school saves time and money</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Review the elements below and circle the number that you think assesses the level of importance that element has for you (“4” is extremely important and “1” is not at all important).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help you clarify the path/s to your career/life goals</th>
<th>WCPA Students (n = 8)</th>
<th>Wasco Students (n = 12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information on possible careers and their median wages and advancement opportunities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An outline of courses you would need to take and when to complete an associate degree, certificate, or credential and/or transfer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math and other general education requirements are taught in a way that connects to your pathway or interests</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help you choose/enter a career/college path</th>
<th>WCPA Students (n = 8)</th>
<th>Wasco Students (n = 12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An initial introductory guidance course that helps you explore a career field and choose a related major</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A comprehensive education plan informed by the required college/career exploration</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic support that is culturally competent and addresses real-world issues to help you pass required courses</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 Parents were not asked these questions, so the results include students’ ratings only.
Appendix E. Bakersfield Early College Staffing

Figure E1. Bakersfield College Early College Staffing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title of Key Bakersfield College Personnel</th>
<th>Release Time per Person</th>
<th>Responsibilities Related to the Rural Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>CTE Dean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>CTE Dean - Program Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Director of Outreach</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Scheduling, partner meetings, instructor support, co-curricular event coordinating, marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Expert</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Program analysis, reports, providing experience- and research-based advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counselor (2)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Student intervention, enrollment support, completion tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department Assistant</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>Faculty onboarding, supporting Executive Director, business services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Director of Outreach, School Relations &amp; Early College</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Partner relations, administrative updates, team management, staffing assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counselor-Rural Initiatives</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Student intervention, enrollment support, completion tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty Leads (2; 1 stipend, 1 release time)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Instructor support, writing assignments, orientations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admission and Records Technician (2)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Registration, withdrawals, processing grades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bakersfield College Early College Salaries, December 2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Key Bakersfield College Personnel</th>
<th>Release Time per Person</th>
<th>Responsibilities Related to the Rural Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Assistant II</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Business services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director of Rural Initiatives</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Liaison to all rural high school districts, pathway design, course approval, allocating funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling Assistant</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Add, change, and cancel all dual enrollment course sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Manager-Rural Initiatives (4)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Scheduling, partner meetings, instructor support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, Student Success &amp; Equity</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Manage staffing, funds, and strategic planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix F. List of Participating High Schools**

*Figure F1. List of Participating High Schools by Program Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Bakersfield High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Centennial High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• East High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Foothill High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frazier Mountain High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frontier High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Golden Valley High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Highland High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homeschool Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Independence High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kern Valley High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mira Monte High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• North High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nueva High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ROC - Kern High School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ridgeview High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shafter High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• South High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stockdale High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tierra Del Sol High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Valley High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vista High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vista West High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• West High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Valley Oaks Charter School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Arvin High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cesar Chavez High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Delano High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Robert F. Kennedy High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wasco High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wonderful Academy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• McFarland High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G. Core Elements of Bakersfield Early College MOUs

Oversight
- BC has a program manager who supports student recruitment, orientation, and college course enrollment
- BC administrators evaluate high school instructors
- High school administrators handle student discipline

Outreach and Orientation
- BC outreach specialists give presentations at high schools to students and parents
- High school counselors are responsible for recruiting and orienting parents and students
- A specific number of students should be enrolled for each academic year by cohort based on the site

Instructors
- BC instructors and/or high school teachers with degrees and experience required are approved as adjunct BC faculty

Curriculum
- BC provides course curriculum to participating schools
- A combination of core General Education (GE) courses as well as Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses are integrated into high schools’ CTE pathways
- Courses are offered at high schools during regular high school day
- Courses must be open to the public

Textbooks
- School district purchases the college-approved textbooks and materials

Credits Earned
- Passing grades earned by the end of the course provide students with credit on both their high school and college transcripts

Costs and Fees
- College courses are offered at no cost to students and their families
- The cost of textbooks, materials, and equipment is supported by a combination of district/college, high school, and industry partner funding
- High school partners should identify and secure additional financial support from state, federal, and other sources, whenever possible

Academic Support
- Academic support and monitoring of students’ progress is the responsibility of both the high school and the college
  - The high school is involved in identifying, managing, and paying tutors; withdrawing students who are in danger of failing their college courses before the college’s course add-drop date; and identifying alternative course schedules to allow early college students to earn high school credits
○ BC counselors monitor student progress and adjust comprehensive education plans accordingly, and students may access all support resources BC offers (e.g., library, transfer center, computer labs)
○ BC counselors provide additional guidance on postsecondary planning including tutoring and support completing college applications; for WCPA students, their staff liaisons provide this support as part of TWC’s education arm

Reporting
● BC and high school provide the industry partner with a progress report on a quarterly basis
● BC and high school must agree to allow monitoring of students’ progress, and make adjustments to improve program quality, effectiveness and costs by the industry partner
● BC monitors student enrollment overall and participation in various program aspects, academic success indicators including course success rates, and units, certificates, and associate degrees earned

Insurance
● BC and high school must obtain, pay for, and maintain commercial general liability, commercial automobile liability, professional liability, and workers’ compensation
Appendix H. Student Focus Group Questions

INTRODUCTIONS
1. Please introduce yourselves
   a. First name, your home high school, your year in school, the college course/s you’ve taken (if you recall), and your current career interest and/or college major. [Use sheet to list the items students need to share - name home high school, etc.; students will pass to the next person]

PROGRAM AND PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW
2. How did you learn about the Bakersfield College early college opportunities at [name of high school]?
   a. What would you say is the number one reason that you decided to be a part of the early college program? (RQ2)
3. If you had to describe early college to a friend who knew very little about it, what would you tell them?
   a. What does a typical day as an early college student look like?
   b. Who do you interact with on a daily basis?
   c. What support services (e.g., academic counseling, tutoring, career advising) do you engage with? (RQ2)

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES
4. What are the benefits of being a student in the program? (RQ2)
   a. Earning college credits, completing college courses for free, getting a head start on your college journey?
5. What are the biggest drawbacks to being a part of the program?
   a. Conflicts with other outside opportunities, academically challenging?

PROGRAM STRUCTURE
6. Are there classes you would like offered that have not been? (RQ2)
7. Did the classes you selected help you think more about your long-term career or college goals?
   a. If so, how?
   b. What about the support and guidance (e.g., tutoring, academic counseling, career advising) you received?
   c. Who and what specific information helped you with your long-term career and goal setting? For example, was there a class that you chose that helped you figure out what you may want to do in the future, or even help you pick a major? (RQ1, RQ2)
8. In thinking about the academic work required for the college classes you’ve taken, what has that experience (e.g., rigor of courses, amount of homework, understanding the syllabi, pace of classes) been like for you?
   a. What have you done to successfully manage and balance the effort required for your high school classes and college coursework? (RQ2)
PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR EXPERIENCE

9. What have you learned and from whom about what it takes to be a successful college student? (i.e., instructor, support services, high school staff, learning resources)
   a. What surprised you about what you learned?
   b. What was expected?
   c. What have you found really helpful/valuable about the experience?
   d. What could be improved? (RQ2)

10. What has been most challenging in your college coursework so far?
    a. Have there been specific gaps in what you were expected to already know from your college instructors that stand out to you? (i.e., reading or math skills, software)
    b. What supports/resources (e.g., counseling, tutoring, online resources) have you received/accessed to help you be successful/successfully complete your courses? Which have been particularly useful? What additional support/resources do you need to be successful? (RQ2)

11. What has helped you to stay engaged (e.g., excited about what you are learning, being an active participant in class, staying on top of your homework) in the college courses?
    a. What has motivated you to stay involved? (RQ2)

12. How has taking college courses helped you stay focused (e.g., completing A-G requirements19, not falling behind on your HS homework) on your high school studies?
    a. If so, why?
    b. If not, why not?

GUIDED PATHWAYS

13. How did college classes help you be better prepared for your future college or career?
    a. Do you feel more confident enrolling in college classes after having taken early college courses?
    b. If so, why?
    c. If not, why not? (RQ1, RQ2)

14. Do you feel connected to Bakersfield College?
    a. If so, how?
    b. Do you feel differently about the college now than you did before this program?
    c. Have you visited the BC campus?
    d. If so, do you feel comfortable there?
    e. What BC programs or services have you accessed?
    f. Did you get what you needed? (RQ1, RQ2)

FINAL THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS

15. What advice would you give other high school students about to take their first BC early college class?
    a. What do you know now that you would have liked to have known earlier? (RQ2)

16. Are there other thoughts or experiences you’d like to share that we didn’t discuss today?

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19 A-G requirements refer to specific subject requirements for freshmen admission to the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) systems.
Appendix I. Parent Focus Group Questions

INTRODUCTIONS
1. Please introduce yourselves
   a. First name, child’s high school, child’s year in school, child’s length of time in early college high school. [Use sheet to list questions; parents will pass to the next person]

PROGRAM & PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW
2. How did you learn about this program where your child can take college courses while a student at [name of high school]?
   a. What information was particularly important / resonated with you? (RQ2)
3. If you had to describe the program where your child takes college classes at his/her high school to another parent who was interested but knows very little about it, what would you tell them? (RQ2)

BENEFITS & CHALLENGES
4. What would you say is the number one reason that you suggested / recommended / allowed your child to be a part of this program? (RQ2)
5. What are the biggest benefits you see/saw for your child being a part of the program? (RQ2)
6. What are the biggest challenges you see for your child being a part of the program?
   a. Conflicts with other outside opportunities?
   b. Lack of time and energy to participate in athletics, extracurricular activities?
   c. The rigor of college classes?
   d. Balancing high school classes and college coursework?

PROGRAM INFORMATION, AWARENESS, & PERCEPTIONS
7. How/when do you receive information about the program?
   a. Does the program staff keep parents informed about the program elements, options, and components? In what ways? What are your overall impressions of the program?
   b. What do you know about the program structure? How aware do you feel about the classes offered? Course content? Course instructors? Available supportive services?
   c. Based on what you know, do you feel that the program is effective? Provides adequate support to students? Does a good job of keeping parents informed?
   d. Do you know how classes are selected for your child? (RQ2)
   e. What have you observed about your child since they started this program?
8. Has your child’s involvement in the early college program (e.g., the classes that allow your child to receive Bakersfield College credit) helped him/her to learn more about what it takes to be successful in college?
   a. If so, what do think they have learned?
b. Has the program had an impact on how your child feels about college and taking college-level classes? (RQ1, RQ2)

GUIDED PATHWAYS
9. Do you think your child has an idea of what s/he would like to do after high school in terms of college or career?
   a. Do you think the program has helped your child better understand their choices?
   b. Who and what specific information / program support / resources were helpful?
   c. Do you think your child is prepared for his/her next steps towards their future?
   d. What else do you think the high school or college could do to help your child understand his/her choices or prepare for the future? (RQ2)
10. Has your child’s involvement in the program inspired you and/or other members of your family to consider taking college classes? (RQ1, RQ2)
    a. Enroll in adult education?
    b. Pursue a college degree?

THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS
11. What advice would you give a fellow parent who was interested in the program at [HS] where their child can earn college credits?
    a. What do you know now that you would have liked to have known earlier? (RQ2)
12. Are there other thoughts or experiences you’d like to share that we didn’t discuss today?
Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges

As the representative organization for Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) professionals in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system, the RP Group strengthens the ability of CCC to discover and undertake high-quality research, planning, and assessments that improve evidence-based decision-making, institutional effectiveness, and success for all students.

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