BC ENGAGES WASHINGTON, D.C. TO PRESENT BEST PRACTICES OF EARLY COLLEGE

The American Association for Community Colleges (AACC) and AASA, The School Superintendents Association convene bi-annually to discuss policy and practice around college and career readiness.

On March 25, 2019 Bakersfield College President, Dr. Sonya Christian and McFarland Superintendent, Aaron Resendez shared with the national audience of educators how BC’s Early College partnership is addressing nationwide educational gaps and problems.

"I was honored to be a part of a working team from McFarland High School - Early College and Bakersfield College that was invited to Washington D.C. to present to two of the country's top educational organizations about Early College and what I affectionately refer to as the 'McFarland Miracle," said Kern Community College District Trustee Romeo Agbalog. "Educational leaders from across the country were amazed to hear how educators from McFarland and BC collaborated in a bold, urgent, and innovative way to increase college completion, strengthen our local workforce, and transform a community through higher education delivered in a cost effective, efficient, and results driven way," he added.

By taking advantage of the Early College offerings, participants can save up to $3,000 in tuition costs, while taxpayers reap the benefits in efficiency of services, accelerated return on investment, and more degrees and a skilled workforce in the economy.

“Students in McFarland are true champions, both in athletics like cross country and academically in the classroom,” said Aaron Resendez, Superintendent of McFarland Unified School District. He added, “McFarland’s Early College program will offer nine different BC college pathways to propel these resilient and dedicated students in a clear and guided way towards a successful future earning a college degree as they earn a high school diploma.”

Nationally, colleges and universities are faced with issues related to student access, completion, and accountability. In California, fewer high school graduates go directly to college than the national average yet those who do complete a degree in California stand to gain more than any other state in their earnings upon completion.

“As a longtime advocate of education and former Renegade, it makes me proud to know the work of Bakersfield College continues to change lives. Growing up in Shafter myself, I know the importance of the college-going experience but also the real burdens which exist for families in rural communities. By scaling the Early College program, we give these students a fantastic head start to a college degree and successful career,” said California Senator Republican Leader, Jean Fuller.
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The Early College program expands on the existing dual enrollment concept by having high school freshmen complete college courses throughout their HS years so that a college certificate or Associate’s degree is awarded by the time they complete their high school diploma. Bakersfield College is working with high schools throughout Kern County to further develop Early College opportunities.

“BC has committed to expanding college offerings throughout Kern County, opening the doors to a college education and facilitating student’s success in an unprecedented way,” said Bakersfield College President, Dr. Sonya Christian. “The Early College program, piloted by Wonderful College Prep Academy, resulted in 38 graduates last May who earned their Associates degree weeks prior to their high school diploma. McFarland High School will be the first public HS to convert dual enrollment into Early College pathways for all 280 incoming freshmen,” she added.

Learn more about BC’s Early College on the Bakersfield College website at www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/earlycollege.

Bakersfield College provides opportunities for students from diverse economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds to attain Associate and Baccalaureate degrees and certificates, workplace skills, and preparation for transfer. Our rigorous and supportive learning environment fosters students’ abilities to think critically, communicate effectively, and demonstrate competencies and skills in order to engage productively in their communities and the world.

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