

FORGING REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

The Role of a Community College in High School Transformation

The Central Ohio Partnership for College and Career Readiness Expansion



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COLUMBUS STATE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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COLUMBUS STATE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Columbus State Community College, based in Columbus, Ohio, is an open-access, two-year college that is the only community college in the nation to earn the three key distinctions of a Guided Pathways college, an Achieving the Dream Leader College and a Right Signals Initiative college. Founded in 1963, Columbus State currently enrolls approximately 27,000 students, one of the largest student populations in the state. The college offers nine Preferred Pathway relationships with four-year institutions enabling students to complete an associate's degree before seamlessly transferring to pursue a bachelor's degree, while also offering two-year degree programs in areas including business, health, hospitality, public service, human services and engineering technologies. Columbus State has also partnered with area businesses: private funding provided by American Electric Power and JPMorgan Chase & Co. has led to innovative programs to introduce college-level classes in high schools where students earn tuition-free college credit. The college is the convener of the 2011-founded Central Ohio Compact, which brings together K-12, higher education and business community partners in collaboration toward the goal of increasing the number of residents in the region with postsecondary degrees or certificates to 65 percent by 2025.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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THE CENTRAL OHIO PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS EXPANSION (CCRE)

The Central Ohio Partnership for College and Career Readiness Expansion (CCRE) is a collaboration led by Columbus State Community College in partnership with JFF, the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESC), the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and seven school districts that aims to increase college readiness and raise graduation rates by implementing early college designs. CCRE is supported by a five-year Investing in Innovation (i3) grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education in December 2015. This paper is the first in a series that will highlight lessons learned from the initiative.

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Introduction

A surprising change is underway in Central Ohio. Seven distinct school districts—each with its own locally elected leaders, stakeholder interests, and demographic contexts—are joining together in a bold plan to strengthen the region’s economic vitality by increasing educational achievement and closing equity gaps. Their shared vision relies on substantially raising the number of high school students who earn college credit to give them a huge head start on earning college degrees or industry-recognized credentials.

The school districts in the Central Ohio Partnership for College and Career Readiness Expansion (CCRE) have agreed to pursue this vision by implementing principles of early college designs. These include professional development in proven instructional strategies and college course-taking through dual enrollment in pathways leading to specific college degree and certificate outcomes. Leaders from across the districts meet monthly to make critical implementation decisions and track progress toward specific objectives.

But perhaps most surprising of all is that the hub organizing this large-scale regional effort is a single community college: Columbus State.

Transforming high schools is not a typical role for a postsecondary institution. K-12 districts and higher education

typically operate in separate worlds, with their own institutional incentives, accountability systems, and cultures of teaching and learning. Reaching across this divide is rare. Nonetheless, Columbus State’s leaders see this work as a natural extension of the college’s mission. Indeed, the institution’s vision statement reads: “Columbus State Community College is Central Ohio’s front door to higher education and a leader in advancing our region’s prosperity.”¹ Embracing this perspective, the college has been a central actor in a range of initiatives focused on strengthening the pipeline that extends all the way from K-12 education through college completion and into careers with the region’s employers.

Columbus State’s history as an intermediary—a connector and moderator between a broad set of institutions and stakeholders—helped prepare the college to take on the leadership of the CCRE. Other partners in the initiative are JFF, the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESC), and school districts in urban, rural, and suburban areas. The work is supported by an Investing in Innovation (i3) grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

This brief, the first of a series, explores the beginning of the CCRE story—how an urban community college has become a hub linking educational and economic development efforts across a broad region.

The author conducted interviews with senior leaders, faculty, and staff from Columbus State and the ESC, as well as a sample of K-12 district superintendents and district coordinators. Additional research included review of artifacts from the i3 grant's first two years and publications on earlier regional efforts led by Columbus State. The rest of this series will delve deeper into implementation of the CCRE, from the perspective of the school districts as well as the community college.

Creating regional solutions to common challenges, such as low college completion rates, has not always been a smooth journey in Central Ohio. The process of “vertical alignment”—building seamless transitions between K-12 districts, two-year colleges, four-year universities, and the workforce—is far from complete. Nonetheless, Columbus State's experience already offers lessons for other higher education institutions that aim to promote student success across a pipeline that begins long before high school graduation and ends with financial sustainability.

Key recommendations for other colleges, which have emerged from Columbus State's experience and are explored in detail throughout this paper, include:

- ▶ Build a regional, cross-sector coalition focused on increasing educational attainment—with employers at the table from the beginning.

- ▶ Co-lead with organizations that have deep roots in K-12 education.
- ▶ Develop strategies and structures for scaling up promising practices to reach a much larger group of students, teachers, and leaders.
- ▶ Bridge the gap in organizational cultures between the high school and college levels, and foster collaboration between faculty, staff, and leaders of both systems.
- ▶ Be willing to rethink institutional structures and processes, guided by a focus on success for all students, including underrepresented subgroups and those who are the first in their families to access higher education.

The brief begins with a review of the region's recent history of economic and talent development initiatives in which Columbus State has played a central role. The next section describes the strategic vision and early implementation of the CCRE, with a focus on lessons learned so far about the institutional changes and cultural shifts needed to build stronger partnerships and support the growing number of high school students accessing college courses. The brief concludes with a set of next steps and remaining questions to be answered as the CCRE continues.

About the Central Ohio Partnership for College and Career Readiness Expansion (CCRE):

The CCRE is supported by a five-year i3 grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education in December 2015. This paper is the first in a series that will highlight lessons learned from the initiative.

The goal: The CCRE aims to increase college readiness and credit completion by high school students, and raise graduation rates by implementing several key components. These components include: professional development for teachers, school leaders, and college faculty; curriculum development and creation of grades 9 through 14 pathways; implementation of student support services; and strategic planning and governance. The partners have agreed on an overarching goal for participating schools: 90 percent of high school graduates will finish high school with some college credit by 2020.

The main partners:

- ▶ Columbus State Community College: an urban community college with an enrollment of approximately 27,000 students.
- ▶ JFF: a national nonprofit that accelerates the alignment and transformation of the American workforce and education systems to ensure access to economic advancement for all.
- ▶ Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESC): a nonprofit agency serving 28 districts in 6 counties of Central Ohio.
- ▶ The SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro: a research, development, dissemination, evaluation, and technical assistance center that is conducting an external evaluation of the CCRE.
- ▶ Seven school districts: Columbus City School District, Groveport Madison School District, Licking Heights Local School District, Hamilton Local School District, Reynoldsburg City School District, South-Western City School District, and Whitehall City School District.
 - ▶ The districts represent a wide range of urban, suburban, and rural areas, with varying demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.
 - ▶ The 16 participating high schools enroll approximately 16,000 students.
 - ▶ Overall, 63 percent of students across the participating schools are economically disadvantaged—but this figure is as high as 95 percent in the participating Columbus City schools.

I. Forming a Coalition

The origins of CCRE can be traced to a strong history of cross-sector collaboration in the Columbus region and a set of pivotal employer investments in education and workforce development. The Columbus Partnership, a group of leading CEOs from Columbus' largest corporations and institutions that first came together in the late 1990s, has long focused on supporting the region's economic development and public education. In 2010—the height of the Great Recession—this group joined forces with the city of Columbus and other public-sector groups to lay out an ambitious economic development strategy for the 11-county Central Ohio region. While Columbus had benefited from a sustained period of economic growth, wages remained low compared to other major metropolitan areas in the Midwest, public funding was strapped, and employers were concerned that the region could lose its competitive edge.² The Columbus 2020 Regional Growth Strategy sought to add 150,000 new jobs by 2020, generate \$8 billion in capital investment, raise personal per capita income by 30 percent, and earn national recognition through strategies to attract new business and grow existing industries.³

Excitement about this plan was tempered by concerns about the ability of the local talent pipeline to meet future employers' needs. Looking back at this period,

education leaders recall growing alarm about the gaps in the student achievement rates of the region's school districts. This alarm was fueled in part by increasing attention on the excessive number of high school graduates needing remediation at the college level—as high as 80 percent of entering students at Columbus State—and failing to complete a degree or credential.⁴

Community members feared that the reputation of local educational institutions would negatively affect prospective businesses' interest in locating their offices in Columbus. As articulated by Dr. Tom Goodney, superintendent of the ESC, “Regional initiatives are stunted or accelerated by the effectiveness of the largest local school system.” For leaders at the ESC and Columbus State, the message was clear: educational institutions needed to develop a strategy to respond to the direction set by business and industry.



LAYING OUT AN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AGENDA—WITH EMPLOYERS AT THE TABLE

When Dr. David Harrison assumed the presidency of Columbus State in 2010, he met with many superintendents of the region's school districts in an effort to better understand their needs and challenges. He embraced the role of the two-year college as a lynchpin connecting the high school, the university, and the workforce. This convener role is particularly important in Columbus State's context: the institution is the only open-access, public community college serving a wide geographic area.

Dr. Harrison had a key ally in Bart Anderson, then-superintendent of the ESC, a role which gave him a strong vantage point across the diverse school districts that potentially feed into Columbus State. Together, Columbus State and the ESC convened a wide group of K-12 district leaders, institutions of higher education, and employers, which jointly launched the Central Ohio Compact in 2011.

The Compact is focused on building a stronger talent pipeline to meet the needs of the region's economy. It is a "coalition of the willing," as participation is entirely voluntary. As of 2018, the Compact includes 11 colleges and universities, approximately 25 industry and public-sector groups, and over 40 partners

from the K-12 sector. The members have identified a range of outcomes that they are trying to achieve, including: a dramatic increase in the number of students earning a postsecondary credential; college readiness for all college-bound high school graduates; and an increase in the number of high school graduates with credit toward a college degree or certificate.⁵

In the early years of the Compact, Columbus State and the other partners embraced Lumina Foundation's national goal of achieving 60 percent college credential attainment by 2025. They have since set their sights on an even higher goal—65 percent—which is aligned with the statewide "Attainment Goal 2025" adopted by the Ohio Department of Higher Education in 2016.⁶ As described by Dr. Harrison, the 65 percent goal has given all parties a unifying focus that is easy to understand. The Compact has also developed a data dashboard to track the progress of the region's K-12 school districts, higher education institutions, and adult education and training programs on interim metrics leading to degree completion.⁷

Foundational investments from employers enhanced the early momentum of the Compact and built an infrastructure for the work that followed for Columbus State and its K-12 district partners (see "Columbus State's Cross-Sector Regional Initiatives" for a summary of key investments). For instance, JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s New

Columbus State's Cross-Sector Regional Initiatives: Important Milestones

- ▶ 2011: Creation of the Central Ohio Compact, a broad coalition of K-12 districts, higher education institutions, employers, and public-sector organizations focused on raising the region's college degree and credential attainment.
- ▶ 2013: Credits Count program launched, with support from American Electric Power Foundation, to develop STEM pathways in several Columbus City high schools.
- ▶ 2013: Straight A Fund from the Ohio Department of Education awarded to several Compact partners and the Pathways to Prosperity Network; focused on building career pathways in 15 school districts.
- ▶ 2014: JPMorgan Chase & Co. New Skills at Work initiative invests in advancing the Compact's efforts.
- ▶ 2015: Central Ohio Partnership for College and Career Readiness Expansion launched with five-year i3 grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education.
- ▶ 2016: Joyce Foundation's Great Lakes College and Career Pathways Partnership begins, focused on pathway development and employer engagement in several Central Ohio districts as well as three other sites in Illinois and Wisconsin.

Skills at Work initiative, which was launched in 2014, helped Columbus State scale its promising practices focused on grades 9 through 14 career pathways. New Skills at Work also provided important backing for the Central Ohio region to join the national Pathways to Prosperity Network, organized by JFF and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.⁸

During the same time period, the American Electric Power Foundation (AEP) funded the Credits Count initiative, a five-year project focused on creating STEM dual enrollment pathways in five Columbus City School District high schools. As Columbus State staff recall, this

grant offered an impetus for the college to adjust its dual enrollment programs, which at that point had primarily served higher-achieving students from more affluent districts. Beginning with Credits Count, more focus would be placed on partnering with urban high schools and providing opportunities for students from underrepresented groups.

Compact partners were also awarded a \$14.4 million "Straight A" grant from the Ohio Department of Education for an expansive effort involving 15 school districts along with Columbus State, the ESC, and the nonprofit organization Battelle for Kids. Led by Reynoldsburg City

Schools and supported by the Pathways to Prosperity Network, the initiative—which was termed Innovation Generation—focused on developing career pathways in four high-demand sectors: advanced manufacturing, information technology, health care, and logistics. Stephen Dackin, superintendent of School and Community Partnerships at Columbus State, recalled that the grant was an important step in “building the notion that districts can collaborate with each other, and with the community college, on a shared goal and achieve something together.”

SHARED LEADERSHIP: INTERMEDIARIES AT THE K-12 AND POSTSECONDARY LEVELS

The ESC has been a vital asset for Central Ohio’s regional collaborative efforts due to its strength in convening a diverse set of K-12 school districts. Every small district in Ohio is required to be aligned with an ESC, and many larger districts also align themselves with an ESC by choice. As described by Marcy Raymond, director of College and Career Readiness, the ESC’s foundation of trust with the Central Ohio districts has been critical in opening doors for cross-system initiatives: “[Districts] know that the ESC is there as a service to them. This trust allows the ESC to have a high level of access,” and the districts appreciate that ESC leaders bring a deep understanding of the K-12 environment and culture.

Dr. Goodney, the ESC superintendent, recognizes the value of the interdependent relationship between Columbus State and the ESC in terms of leading the CCRE i3 grant and the Compact work more broadly. His suggestion for other communities: “You need both entities to be on board. You need the top person of a K-12 organization that spans the region and the community college leader. You need two parties to share the initial work and messaging.”

Columbus State, meanwhile, was well positioned to bring four-year universities and employers into the Compact. Under Dr. Harrison’s leadership, Columbus State has developed seamless transfer agreements, known as “2+2 Agreements” or “3+1 Agreements,” with nine public and private universities in the region. These agreements allow students who complete two or three years of coursework at the community college to transfer their credits directly to certain four-year degree programs. Such an arrangement reduces the cost of earning a bachelor’s degree and expands options for students. Columbus State also counts on longstanding partnerships with employers, including JPMorgan Chase & Co., AEP, Honda of America, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, and other companies that are well-poised to provide internships and work-based learning programs for high school dual enrollees as well as “regular” college students.

Evolving Policy and its Impact on Dual Enrollment Participation at Columbus State

At the same time that Compact members were strengthening their partnerships through the New Skills at Work and Credits Count initiatives, state dual enrollment policy was also evolving. Before 2014, dual enrollment agreements between high schools and colleges varied significantly across Ohio, with little consistency in access, eligibility requirements, or costs. The College Credit Plus (CCP) Act of 2014 ushered in a new era. It required all high schools and colleges to provide free dual credit courses for all students meeting the institution's entrance requirements. The legislation, which took effect in July 2015, mandated that high schools create pathways for participating students to earn 15 to 30 college credits toward a college major or career path.

Columbus State already offered robust dual enrollment programs for students from a core group of high schools before the CCP Act. With the new legislation, the college was required to negotiate more comprehensive memoranda of understanding with these partner schools and broaden the target population. These actions led to a sharp increase in demand from additional high schools. Initial implementation of the CCP Act brought challenges and stretched capacity.

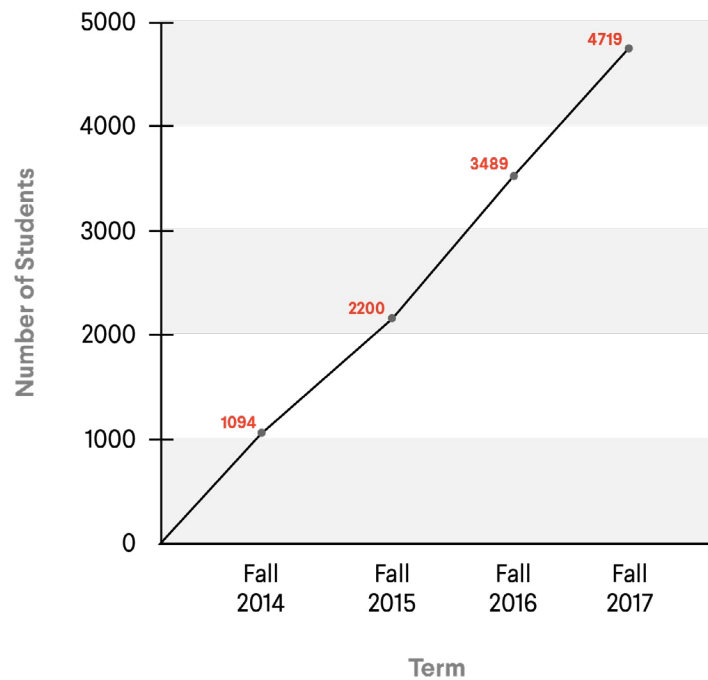
Nonetheless, Columbus State leaders reported that the region was ahead of the curve because of the strong working relationships and pathways that had already been built with the Compact members.⁹ By fall 2015—the first full term after the legislation took effect—

Columbus State had already doubled the number of high school students enrolled in college courses, compared to the same term in 2014 (see “High School Students Enrolled in College Courses at Columbus State: Unduplicated Headcount” on page 14).¹⁰ By fall 2017, dual enrollment doubled yet again, rising to a new record of over 4,700 students, due in large part to the efforts of the CCRE partnership. Approximately one-third of these students attend courses on the college campus or online. The remainder take college classes in their high schools, delivered either by Columbus State instructors or by high school teachers with the qualifications to serve as college adjuncts.

In addition to raising the total number of dual enrollees, Columbus State has maintained a focus on increasing access and equity—even as state policy changes have narrowed eligibility criteria. Legislative changes to the CCP Act passed in 2017 required students to pass college-readiness assessments in at least one subject area before they were eligible for funding.¹¹ Many of the students in the CCRE districts do not score at the college-ready level; however, they meet the college's prerequisites for enrollment in some courses, including the college success course that is required for all degree-seeking students at Columbus State.

The revised legislation jeopardized the college's strategy for providing college credits to a wider group of students at earlier grade levels; however, the college applied for and received a waiver from the new eligibility requirements in March 2018. The state created this waiver process specifically for “innovating programming proposed to exclusively address the needs of students from underrepresented student subgroups.”¹²

High School Students Enrolled in College Courses at Columbus State: Unduplicated Headcount



II. A New Phase of Partnership: Scaling up to Reach All Students through the CCRE

With the i3 grant, which was awarded in December 2015, Columbus State and the seven participating districts committed to take their partnership to a new level, with more ambitious goals. While the Credits Count and Straight A Fund grants focused on creating pathways to degrees and credentials for groups of students at large high schools, CCRE is different. The partnership has a vision of whole-school transformation based on early college design elements, including college-ready academic programs, a head start on earning college credits, and a set of wraparound student supports.

“ We are trying to move beyond college and career pathways that had a few kids in them to create systems in which all kids have pathways. ”

- Marcy Raymond, director of College and Career Readiness, ESC



CCRE also aims to have an impact on instruction in all subjects by implementing JFF's Common Instructional Framework, a set of six research-based strategies for increasing rigor and engagement to prepare all students for the intellectual demands of college-level courses. JFF and ESC coaches provide professional development for small cohorts of teachers in each of the participating high schools, as well as larger workshops for groups of teachers, principals, and district leaders.

Reflecting the Compact's origins and its strong employer backing, CCRE maintains a focus on economic advancement as the driving rationale and aims to expand opportunities in districts with a high concentration of low-income students. With support from the ESC, Columbus State, and JFF, schools are expected to develop pathways leading to careers and to integrate work-based learning—such as job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships—into the curriculum. By providing a continuum of embedded work-based learning opportunities, the CCRE partners aim to raise the postsecondary ambitions of all students, including those who would otherwise be disengaged, and connect them with a wider set of options for their future.

An initiative of this scale requires a solid governance structure to manage collaborative decision making and keep partners focused on common goals. Columbus State has convened a “CCRE Cabinet,” a steering committee that includes senior leaders from each of the seven districts along with administrators and project managers from the college and the ESC. The cabinet meets monthly and is responsible for CCRE's strategic vision.

The cabinet's decisions are put into operation by the Core Team, which is made up of key college staff representing academic affairs, student services, and other areas. Also included are “District Coordinators,” individuals hired by the districts to manage the i3 grant's various components. The coordinators perform a critical “bridging” position—they translate the direction set by the cabinet in a way that's relevant to their respective districts—and bring their districts' perspectives to inform discussions with Columbus State and the ESC. Overall, Core Team members credit this group with building relationships and developing trust between the college and the districts.

III. Early Lessons Learned: Organizational Cultures and Institutional Capacity

BRIDGING THE CULTURAL DIVIDE BETWEEN EDUCATORS FROM K-12 AND COLLEGES

CCRE partners have been repeatedly reminded of the mindset shifts that need to take place as part of any successful effort to align K-12 and postsecondary systems. As noted by Dackin, the partnership between Columbus State and the districts needed to evolve from a transactional relationship—with each party driven by its own self-interest—to one that was more collaborative and fostered the trust needed to tackle difficult aspects of improving each system. This shift can be seen in the topics covered in the i3 cabinet meetings, where recent discussions have focused less on administrative challenges and more on issues related to the alignment of high school and college curricula.

There are also signs of stronger connections being made between high school teachers and college faculty. In some cases, these two groups have worked together to tweak course material for Columbus State's college success course. This course, which is required for all

degree-seeking students at Columbus State, is now taught in CCRE high schools for dual credit. By jointly reviewing the course objectives and syllabus, high school and college faculty aim to ensure that the lessons are relevant to students' academic plans for grades 9 through 14.

More recently, Columbus State's English and math department chairs have begun to meet with teams of high school teachers in the same disciplines to unpack the skills required for students to be successful in the introductory-level college English and algebra courses that serve as prerequisites for more specialized courses in nearly all majors. The meetings are part of a pilot effort to address students' remedial needs before they graduate from high school. While the career-technical side of college has a well-established tradition of bringing together high school and college faculty teaching in the same fields on a periodic basis, these discipline-specific collaborations are newer for the academic departments. These examples provide a glimpse of the type of teacher-faculty collaboration that Columbus State is hoping to expand during the remaining years of the grant.

Developing stronger partnerships is fundamentally about culture change: the college and the districts are learning about each other's organizational cultures and trying to adapt their practices in order to improve the transition process for students. Both the high school and the



college need to have shared ownership of the students who are taking dual credit courses. They also need to view these learners as valuable members of their institutions. For the college, this means promoting the philosophy that today's dual credit students have the potential to be tomorrow's degree and certificate completers.

High school and college educators tend to have different perspectives on the amount of support that students need and the amount of self-advocacy that should be expected. For high school teachers delivering college courses, identifying appropriate ways to support students while still upholding “college-level” expectations can come with a learning curve. Meanwhile, college faculty and staff are learning how to make the non-academic aspects of college—such as course selection and online grading systems—clearer and less daunting, especially for students who are first-generation college-goers. These lessons on demystifying the college's administrative processes could lead to improvements that benefit Columbus State's entire student body, not just its dual enrollees.

BUILDING THE INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

The number of high school students taking Columbus State courses has more than

quadrupled in recent years (see “High School Students Enrolled in College Courses at Columbus State: Unduplicated Headcount” on page 14) and included more low-income and first-generation students. This growth prompted the college to reconsider its infrastructure for managing dual credit programs and supporting student success. Initially, all aspects of a high school student’s experience at Columbus State were managed by the Office of Dual Credit, from admissions and placement testing to advising, registration, and transcript services. This was intended to ease program management; however, as the size of the dual credit population grew, this model became impractical for the staff.

Moreover, administrators noticed that by keeping the dual credit program isolated as a separate entity, the college was preventing high school students from interacting with the normal administrative divisions of the college. This arrangement did not prepare students for the regular postsecondary experience. As noted by Kelly Hogan, former executive director of College Transitions in the Office of Dual Credit, “We realized that both Academic Affairs and Student Services needed to have ownership of this initiative.”

Today, the newly reorganized College Credit Plus Curriculum Office focuses exclusively on the academic aspects of dual enrollment and oversees course offerings, while Student Services handles advising.

Leaders of both divisions are part of the CCRE Core Team. The work of integrating dual enrollment throughout the college is an ongoing effort, as Columbus State continues to adapt to a rapid change in the composition of its student population. As the CCRE schools strengthen their college and career pathways over the next few years and increase college readiness, demand should only continue to increase.

Columbus State’s Student Services team has also experimented with new strategies for pushing additional support into the high schools. During the early years of the grant, district coordinators found that high school students and counselors tended to get bogged down in the process of submitting applications and registering for college courses. The i3 grant funds four Columbus State academic advisors who travel to the 16 participating schools each week. However, their time is stretched thin. Members of the Core Team have worked to try to identify the type of assistance that is needed and leverage the services provided by other community partners. One of the districts also has additional school-based advisors from the local nonprofit organization I Know I Can. Columbus State is actively pursuing similar opportunities to expand advising support to all of the CCRE districts.

IV. Next Steps and Remaining Questions

The CCRE partners have mapped out their next steps for the remaining three years of the grant. One of the next areas of focus will be career pathway development. The districts started the grant at different points, in terms of their experience in implementing pathways or career themes in their schools. Columbus State will continue to work with each district to align pathway coursework with the college's offerings and incorporate work-based learning as part of the curriculum. Columbus State and three of the CCRE districts are also participating in the Joyce Foundation's Great Lakes College and Career Pathways Initiative, which provides extra funding. With this support, JFF and national partner ConnectEd are providing technical assistance focused on building technology-related pathways and deepening employer engagement in several Central Ohio school districts.

Beyond career pathway development and the other clear next steps laid out in the districts' work plans, there are other questions and important areas of focus for Columbus State and its partners as they continue to build their capacity and advance their shared goals. A few of these issues are:

Dual credit staffing and teacher-faculty collaboration: As is the case for many

other dual enrollment partnerships across the country, Central Ohio faces a shortage of high school teachers who have the qualifications to teach college courses as adjunct instructors.¹³ To continue to scale college course-taking in the high schools, Columbus State and the CCRE districts will need to identify opportunities for more K-12 teachers to complete a master's degree, take additional graduate-level courses in their subject areas, or develop new strategies for recruiting and hiring teachers who already have these qualifications.

A separate but related issue is an ongoing need to build more robust teacher-faculty collaboration and stronger curricular alignment across grades 9 through 14. Columbus State and ESC leaders hope that high school and college faculty will see the value in working together to link their course objectives, outcomes, and teaching strategies, ideally resulting in improved outcomes for students and a reduced need for remediation at the college level. In an effort to advance this objective, JFF and the ESC plan to implement a series of professional development institutes targeting high school adjuncts as well as Columbus State faculty who are deployed to teach courses in the CCRE high schools.

Employer engagement: As leaders from Columbus State and the ESC have said, the CCRE partners' goals of vertical alignment will not be successful without increased

attention to employer engagement. Now that the schools have begun to incorporate a full set of early college design principles, employer engagement is the next piece of the puzzle to be tackled. Schools and districts used to approach local employers on an ad hoc basis as they developed pathways and pilot programs; however, this resulted in problems such as too many competing demands on the same companies. Columbus State is playing a central role in strategically coordinating the “asks” being made of employers and leveraging its partnerships to create substantive, work-based learning opportunities for larger numbers of students. Columbus State and the ESC intend to leverage the broader Central Ohio Compact’s Workforce Advisory Board, along with recent state legislation requiring all K-12 school districts to have a Business Advisory Council, to promote a regional approach to employer engagement that will involve cross-district planning.

STUDENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

As Columbus State and its K-12 partners design and implement new pathway courses and work-based learning opportunities, they must not lose sight of an important ingredient: student demand. Students and families need to understand the transition that is taking place in their schools, learn the value of

the courses offered, and provide feedback. Core Team members acknowledge a need for culturally competent ways to engage parents and families, including a large and growing number of households that speak a language other than English, so that local communities can play a more active role in shaping the vision of economic vitality that is at the center of these efforts.



Conclusion

From the inception of the Central Ohio Compact to the present, Columbus State has positioned itself as a regional connector for a wide range of stakeholders who depend on one another, and on the college, to build a stronger and more diverse talent pipeline. Through the CCRE, Columbus State is making a bold bet that a community college can drive the transformation of entire high schools through early college and career pathways. Along the way, the college itself is recognizing the need to transform, building greater institutional capacity to support dual enrollment and bridging the cultural divide between the worlds of high school and college, for the benefit of teachers, faculty, and students.

Columbus State's progress and lessons learned thus far can help inform other institutions of higher education that similarly view themselves as engines of educational and economic mobility for their local communities. In the words of Dr. Harrison, Columbus State's president,

“ Leaders engaged in this type of work sometimes have to suspend the notion of the institution, to focus on the prosperity of the greater community. ”

- Dr. David Harrison,
President of Columbus State

Future JFF publications will follow the evolution of the CCRE partners' efforts to use early college designs to advance regional prosperity.



Endnotes

1. "Vision, Mission & Values," Columbus State Community College, accessed May 3, 2018, <https://www.csc.edu/about/mission.shtml>.
2. *Columbus 2020! Regional Growth Strategy: Central Ohio's Comprehensive Strategy for Economic Development* (Columbus: Columbus 2020, 2010).
3. "Columbus 2020 Progress," Columbus 2020, accessed March 13, 2018, <http://columbusregion.com/columbus-2020/progress/>.
4. Jan A. Rivkin, *The Columbus Partnership* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Case Collection, May 2015), <https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=49148>.
5. *Central Ohio: A Regional Strategy, a Community College Hub* (Boston: Jobs for the Future, 2015).
6. *The Case for Ohio Attainment Goal 2025* (Columbus: Ohio Department of Higher Education, n.d.), https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/attainment/attainment-framing-paper_FINALb_050416.pdf.
7. The Central Ohio Compact, accessed March 13, 2018, <https://compact.chrr.ohio-state.edu>.
8. Central Ohio is unique among the Pathways to Prosperity Network, as it is the only Pathways member team led by a community college. It was also the first network member to take a regional focus, instead of a statewide approach.
9. Terri Gehr, "Sphere of Influence," *Business Officer*, November 2015, 18-24.
10. Gehr, "Sphere of Influence," 18-24.
11. "New Provisions for College Credit Plus: Amended Substitute House Bill 49," Ohio Department of Higher Education, October 2017, https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/CCP/resources/CCP_New-Provisions-HB49_100517.pdf.
12. "College Credit Plus: Waiver from the Requirements of the College Credit Plus Program," Ohio Department of Higher Education, January 2018, <https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/Waiver%20from%20CCP%20requirements%2001%2003%202018.pdf>.
13. According to the Higher Learning Commission, dual credit instructors must meet the same minimum qualifications as other community college adjuncts teaching academic credit-bearing courses: instructors must have a master's degree in the specific subfield they are teaching or a master's degree in another field, plus at least 18 graduate credit hours in the specific subfield. For a broader discussion of this issue, see: Sarah Hooker, *Solving the Dual Enrollment Staffing Puzzle: Strategies from the Early College Expansion Partnership* (Boston: Jobs for the Future, 2017).



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