

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

RESOLUTION ON SUPPORTING EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAMS FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Resolution Summary

A multitude of studies have pointed to a troubling finding that despite rising college enrollments nationwide, the U.S. continues to lag other industrialized countries in the rate of college participation. Between 1995 and 2005, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reports the U.S. slipped from second place to 15th among 30 industrialized countries in the percentage of its population that entered postsecondary education. A generational degree gap threatens to make the situation even worse. While the U.S. has the largest percentage among developed countries of college-educated persons in the 55-64 age group, they are nearing retirement age. Among younger Americans aged 25-34, the U.S. ranks seventh.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, one in five occupations that will experience the largest growth in the next decade will require a four-year postsecondary degree. Similarly, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems estimates that 55 percent of the population will need college degrees by 2025 in order to equal the degree attainment rates of top performing countries. If this is true, the U.S. faces a potential degree shortage of 15.6 million.

College participation is particularly low among low-income, racial and ethnic minority groups and first-generation college students. One initiative that is intended to increase access to postsecondary education for these underserved populations is the early college high school concept. These schools allow low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English language learners and other underrepresented students an opportunity to enroll in college courses while simultaneously earning a high school diploma – tuition free. These schools have mushroomed during this decade, from just three in the 2002-03 school year to more than 200 this year in a total of 24 states.

The majority of students enrolled in early college programs nationwide are low-income and minority youth. According to the national advocacy group, The Early College High School Initiative, initial results show early college students outperform students at other schools in their districts on state mandated math and language arts exams and attendance rates average more than 90 percent, indicating high levels of student engagement and commitment to the academic program.

Additional Resource Information

The Early College High School Initiative

<http://www.earlycolleges.org/>

“Smoothing the Path: Changing State Policies to Support Early College High School” (2006)

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/29/e1/e8.pdf

Education Commission of the States: “Early Colleges/Middle Colleges: Brief Profile of State Policy”

<http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=1319>

CSG Management Directives

Management Directive #1: Promote efforts to sustain funding for early college high schools where they currently exist.

Management Directive #2: Support efforts to expand early colleges to other areas where they are needed to improve postsecondary access for underrepresented populations.

Management Directive #3: CSG staff will post approved resolution on CSG’s website and make available through its regular communication venues at the state and local level to ensure its distribution to the state government and policy community.

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**RESOLUTION ON SUPPORTING EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAMS
FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS**

WHEREAS, between 1995 and 2005, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reports the U.S. slipped from second place to 15th among 30 industrialized countries in the percentage of its population that entered postsecondary education;

WHEREAS, among Americans in the 25-34 age group, the U.S. ranks seventh in the world among industrialized nations for those with a college education;

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, one in five occupations that will experience the largest growth in the next decade will require a four-year postsecondary degree;

WHEREAS, the U.S. faces a potential degree shortage of 15.6 million by 2025;

WHEREAS, college participation is particularly low among low-income, racial and ethnic minorities and first-generation college students;

WHEREAS, early college high schools allow low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English language learners and other underrepresented students an opportunity to enroll in college courses while simultaneously earning a high school diploma – tuition free;

WHEREAS, more than 200 early college high schools exist in 24 states;

WHEREAS, the Early College High School Initiative reports early college students outperform students at other schools in their districts on state mandated math and language arts exams and attendance rates average more than 90 percent, indicating high levels of student engagement and commitment to the academic program;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The Council of State Governments encourages collaboration between state legislators and executive branch officials to adopt measures that promote the creation, sustainability and growth of early college high schools.

Adopted this ____ Day of November, 2009 at the CSG Annual Meeting in La Quinta, California.

Gov. Joe Manchin III
CSG President

Sen. Bart Davis
CSG Chairman