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## **Summary of Indiana Policy Environment to Support and Sustain Early College High Schools**

## Introduction

Within the State of Indiana, interest in the national Early College High School (ECHS) model as defined by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is strong and growing.

*Early College High Schools are small, autonomous schools where students earn an associate's degree or two years of college credit toward the baccalaureate while in high school. Generally, mastery and competence are rewarded with enrollment in college-level courses, and years to a postsecondary degree are compressed. A core belief of the national partners is that students encountering the rigor, depth, and intensity of college work at an earlier age will inspire average, underachieving, and well-prepared students to work hard and ultimately attain their bachelor's degrees at higher rates than their peers.*

In Indianapolis, three small start-up high schools supported by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) have plans to become Early College High Schools: the Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School (opened 2004); Lawrence Early College High School for Science & Technologies (opening 2006); and Herron High School (opening 2006). Beyond Indianapolis, a career academy located on the campus of Lafayette Jefferson High School in Lafayette, Indiana initiated a small pilot program similar to Early College in 2005. In addition, the Monroe County Community School Corporation is actively exploring the possibility of establishing an Early College with Ivy Tech Community College – Bloomington campus.

Interest in the Early College model is also developing within the higher education community within the state. Ivy Tech Community College, Anderson College, the University of Indianapolis and Indiana University are each pursuing discussions about establishing Early College High School programs in partnership with local school corporations and/or charter schools.

## Early College High School/Dual Credit Work Group

A favorable policy environment is critical to starting and sustaining successful Early College High Schools. The Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning convened three Early College High School/Dual Credit work group meetings in October 2005 to solicit input from key stakeholders. The task of the group was to analyze Indiana's current policy environment to identify conditions necessary for Early College High Schools to realize their full potential in Marion County and throughout the state. This analysis is captured in the comprehensive tables on pages 3-8 using ideal policy for ECHS and typical state policy barriers identified by Jobs for the Future (JFF).<sup>1</sup>

### Participating Organizations and Stakeholders

#### K-12

MSD of Decatur Township  
Lafayette Jefferson High School  
MSD of Lawrence Township  
Signature School - Evansville

#### Higher Education

Ball State University  
Indiana University-Bloomington  
Indiana University-Indianapolis  
Ivy Tech Community College  
University of Indianapolis  
University of Southern Indiana  
Vincennes University

#### Other Government and Non-profit Agencies

American Student Achievement Institute, Inc.  
Ball State University, Office of Charter Schools  
Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning  
Governor's Office of Indiana  
Indiana Association of School Principals  
Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE)  
Indiana Department of Education (INDOE)  
Indiana Department of Workforce Development  
Indiana Pathways to College Network  
Mayor of Indianapolis, Charter Schools Office  
Sagamore Institute for Policy Research  
State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana

<sup>1</sup> Hoffman, Nancy and Joel Vargas, *Integrating Grades 9 Through 14: State Policies to Support and Sustain Early College High Schools* (Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future, January 2005), 2.

## Indiana State Policy Levers and Barriers – Early College High School Model

**Ideal Policy for ECHS:** Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit - ECHS college courses count simultaneously for high school graduation, college credit, and high school/day minute requirements.

**Indiana Context:** Stakeholders generally agreed that Indiana’s 1987 Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (PSEO) is favorable for the development of Early College High Schools and other dual enrollment programs. The State Board of Education’s (SBE) implementing regulations (511 IAC 6-10) leave most authority to local level agreements between K12 school corporations and postsecondary institutions. However, with much discretion subject to local agreements, some stakeholders expressed concern that school corporations will continue to limit access to dual credit courses.

**New Developments:** In 2005 the Indiana legislature passed Public Law 218, which encourages much broader student participation in dual enrollment courses. For instance, students will no longer need approval from their school corporations to enroll in college courses and there is a provision to encourage participation by students at all achievement levels. In Nov. 2005, The Commission for Higher Education adopted state policy governing how postsecondary institutions work with K12 school corporations to offer dual credit taught by high school teachers. The State Board of Education will be updating its dual enrollment regulations to conform to P.L. 218 and jointly carry out the CHE policy.

Typical state policy barrier identified by JFF	Indiana law and/or administrative code	Indiana Regulatory Oversight Commission for Higher Education (CHE) State Board of Education (SBE)	Recommendation and modifications to strengthen Indiana policy and administrative code
Restrictions on the use of college courses to fulfill requirements for high school seat time.	<b>Barrier:</b> SBE regulations for graduation include seat time requirements to obtain secondary course credits. In addition, the PSEO leaves authority with school corporations to determine which dual credit courses count for secondary credit. Some school corporations place limits on which college courses and how many are approved for high school credit.	.	<b>Recommendation:</b> The SBE should amend the graduation requirements to clarify that seat time requirements do not apply to secondary credits earned through dual enrollment. This action is necessary to ensure that the graduation requirements conform to the PSEO.
Choice of either high school or college credit but not both.	<b>Favorable:</b> The PSEO allows high school students to obtain both secondary and college credit for approved dual credit courses, whether the course is taught at the high school or on a college campus.	<b>Favorable:</b> CHE policy supports having dual credit courses count for both high school and college credit. <b>Partially Favorable:</b> SBE provides for dual credit under code 511 IAC 6-10, which encourages agreements between colleges and school corporations.	_____
Caps on number of college courses high school students may take	<b>Barrier:</b> Many K12 and postsecondary institutions impose limits at the local level on the number of college credit hours.	<b>Favorable:</b> Although CHE policy limits the number of credits hours generated through dual credit to 15 semester hours, approved early college high schools and college/district partnership articulation agreements are exempted.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Students should be allowed to take increased quantities of dual credit courses under SBE regulations. The policy should guide the process to maximize, rather than limit, access.

## Indiana State Policy Levers and Barriers – Early College High School Model

**Ideal Policy for ECHS:** *Eligibility for College Courses* - Eligibility requirements for college courses assess academic readiness but do not exclude students based on “all-or-nothing” criteria.

**Indiana Context:** The Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (PSEO) in Indiana limits participation to high school juniors and seniors except on a case by case basis for gifted and talented 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. Many stakeholders are familiar with dual enrollment targeting a gifted and talented population and are less familiar with the broader intent of the legislation to serve students of all academic abilities and achievement levels. A sampling of existing college access programs offering dual credit indicates that most have admission criteria primarily based on GPA which is often higher than what is required for regularly enrolled college students. Some postsecondary institutions, however, admit high school students into college courses using ACCUPLACER and COMPASS placement tests, just as it does for regularly enrolled college students.

**New Developments:** With ongoing statewide marketing and outreach efforts to encourage dual enrollment by all students, the attitude that dual credit is available exclusively for the top 10% of the high school student population is beginning to change. The 2005 revisions to the PSEO send a clear message that the state intends a broader group of students to have access to dual credit courses. The PSEO now allows students to apply for enrollment to postsecondary institutions without obtaining permission from their school corporation. The postsecondary institution shall accept or reject the student based on the standards ordinarily used to decide student enrollments and a student may not be refused admission solely because the student has not graduated from high school.

Typical state policy barrier identified by JFF	Indiana law and/or administrative code	Indiana Regulatory Oversight Commission for Higher Education (CHE) State Board of Education (SBE)	Recommendation and modifications to strengthen Indiana policy and administrative code
Restrictions based on age or grade level	<b>Partially Favorable:</b> A 2005 legislative change to the PSEO permits high school juniors and seniors (and on a case by case basis gifted and talented 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> graders) to enroll in college courses without approval of the school corporation.	<b>Favorable:</b> There are no restrictions in CHE policy based on age or grade level.	<b>Modifications:</b> The PSEO should be amended to allow students in the 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> grades at approved early college high schools to complete college courses that build skills for college readiness such as Study Skills, Time Management and Note Taking. Such skill courses often do not require prerequisites but are important in preparing the “habits of mind” necessary for high school students to succeed in college.
Restrictions on access to dual enrollment courses are often based on combined assessment scores or GPA	<b>Partially Favorable:</b> The PSEO states, “The institution [colleges] shall accept or reject the student based on the standards ordinarily used to decide student enrollments.” <b>Barrier:</b> School corporations and colleges may impose additional admission criteria at the local level that are more rigorous (higher GPA) than criteria for regularly enrolled college students.	<b>Partially Favorable:</b> CHE’s new dual credit policy partially aligns to recent changes to the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act. However, CHE included language that may have the effect of limiting universal access when it states: “the secondary and the postsecondary campus may jointly establish additional criteria for determining how students are selected into dual credit courses.” CHE’s policy allows school corporations and colleges to put in place additional selection criteria that could continue to limit student participation in dual enrollment.	<b>Modification:</b> CHE should reconsider allowing secondary and postsecondary institutions to place additional admission criteria on high school students above and beyond what is determined for regularly enrolled college students.

## Indiana State Policy Levers and Barriers – Early College High School Model

**Ideal Policy for ECHS:** *Transfer* - Early College High School generated college course credits can be transferred to meet general education and academic major requirements for Associate’s and Bachelor’s degrees.

**Indiana Context:** Stakeholders generally agree that a lack of policies in Indiana governing the transfer of college course credit has historically been a major barrier to a strong dual enrollment environment. Until recently, no uniform system was in place to ensure that college credits would transfer between postsecondary institutions. Articulation and transfer agreements were developed on a case by case basis between individual institutions. Similarly, there was no requirement that colleges accept credits earned through dual enrollment. Transfer and articulation of the general education core curriculum to baccalaureate degree programs is critical for strong systemwide transfer agreements. Often times regardless of the content of the course, the granting of credit hinges on where the course is located and by whom the course is taught.

**New Developments:** Public Law 24 of 2003 and P.L. 246 of 2005 established CHE’s Statewide Transfer and Articulation Committee (STAC), which has worked tirelessly to build consensus across the transfer environment. In 2002 CHE adopted guidance on transfer and articulation, and has since created a bank of 40 core undergraduate courses that are accepted as equivalent by all postsecondary institutions. The bank will expand to 70 courses, as mandated by legislation. In addition, CHE recently adopted a policy on “Dual Credit Courses Taught in High Schools by High School Faculty.” CHE’s dual credit policy requires all public postsecondary institutions to accept dual credit courses in the same way they accept transfer courses from other Indiana colleges and universities.

Typical state policy barrier identified by JFF	Indiana law and/or administrative code	<i>Indiana Regulatory Oversight Commission for Higher Education (CHE) State Board of Education (SBE)</i>	Recommendations and modifications to strengthen Indiana policy and administrative code
No systematic means of equating courses across states’ higher education institutions	<b>Favorable:</b> P.L. 24-2003 and P.L. 246-2005 mandates an increase in transfer of credit among regional and main campuses in Indiana, especially with respect to articulation agreements.	<b>Favorable:</b> CHE through STAC has a systematic means of increasing statewide transfer of credit agreements for courses most frequently taken by undergraduates and statewide agreements for Associate degree programs that articulate fully with related baccalaureate degree programs.	<b>Modification:</b> CHE’s recently adopted 2005 dual credit policy guidance, where appropriate, should be expanded to include all dual credit courses, regardless of where the course is taught and by whom.
Unique prerequisites set by academic departments that can only be fulfilled within the same institution	_____	<b>Favorable:</b> STAC continues to identify and correct significant gaps that still exist in the coverage of transfer and articulation agreements between postsecondary institutions in the major academic disciplines.	_____
Uncertainty from four-year colleges regarding admission status of students with dual credit courses	_____	<b>See Above</b>	_____

## Indiana State Policy Levers and Barriers – Early College High School Model

<p><b>Ideal Policy for ECHS: <u>Teacher Certification</u></b> - High school teachers are permitted to teach college-level, credit-bearing courses, and college professors are permitted to teach high school students within an early college high school.</p> <p><b>Indiana Context:</b> Stakeholders identified the necessity of having college faculty meet highly qualified criteria for teaching secondary students and high school teachers satisfying postsecondary credential standards for teaching college courses that will count for dual credit. To ensure compliance with postsecondary accreditation, colleges require teaching personnel to have at a minimum a Master’s degree or its equivalent in graduate hours, usually 18, and in the content area in which the person will teach. This is true regardless of where the dual credit course is taught and by whom.</p> <p><b>New Developments:</b> The U.S. Department of Education published guidance about No Child Left Behind on August 3, 2005 clarifying the conditions under which highly qualified teacher requirements apply to college instructors teaching high school students. If the school corporation directly employs the teacher, regardless of locale, then the highly qualified standard must be met. However, if the school corporation (1) pays tuition to an institution of higher education to permit students to take core academic courses at the college or university, or (2) acquires the teaching services of the college or university faculty member at the school corporation through a contract or a memorandum of understanding with that individual’s institution of higher education, then the faculty member is not an employee of the corporation and is not subject to the highly qualified requirements.</p>			
Typical state policy barrier identified by JFF	Indiana law and/or administrative code	<i>Indiana Regulatory Oversight</i> Commission for Higher Education (CHE) Indiana Department of Education (INDOE)	Recommendations and modifications to strengthen Indiana policy and administrative code
State and union regulations that prohibit college instructors from teaching high school students	<b>Barrier:</b> Collective bargaining agreements in some districts may impose an institutional barrier to college instructors teaching high school students at the high school during the school day.	<b>Favorable:</b> CHE has no specified policy with regard to college instructors teaching high school students. INDOE does not directly address college instructors’ credentials in administrative code.	<b>Recommendation:</b> INDOE’s Division of Professional Standards should adopt regulations that align with the federal guidance, to give it the force of law locally and to increase awareness by school corporations. The Division should revise its licensing standards to make clear under which conditions college instructors who teach high school students are licensed to do so.
High school teachers who cannot meet hiring criteria to become adjunct professors at certain postsecondary institutions	<b>Barrier:</b> Master’s degrees are no longer required for secondary teacher certification. Many of Indiana’s certified teachers do not meet the standard of 18 hours of graduate credit in the content area to be taught for dual credit.	<b>Favorable:</b> CHE’s recent dual credit policy states that secondary and postsecondary partners must work together to identify high school instructors whose qualifications are consistent with the credentials of on-campus college faculty. The college is responsible for ensuring professional development opportunities for high school instructors who teach dual credit courses.	<b>Recommendation:</b> The state should create incentives and provide resources to entice secondary faculty to meet the postsecondary credential standard. Schools of education should graduate new teachers with the appropriate academic training to qualify as dual credit instructors in both liberal arts and technical fields.

## Indiana State Policy Levers and Barriers – Early College High School Model

**Ideal Policy for ECHS: *Funding*** - Early college high schools can combine funding streams: high schools per-pupil allocation, postsecondary per-credit allocations, and state financial aid or incentive dollars.

**Indiana Context:** Institutional stakeholders agreed that Indiana has a mostly favorable environment for funding Early College High Schools and dual enrollment in general. School corporations continue to receive Average Daily Membership (ADM) and public postsecondary institutions receive state funds based on Full Time Equivalency (FTE). However, postsecondary entities are concerned with the funding environment, which still leaves a funding gap. Also, private colleges are concerned about how the funding will work for them. Representatives from school corporations as well as colleges, stress the importance of expanding incentives for participating institutions, particularly if the state wishes to increase dual credit and enrollment statewide. Currently, students must be high school graduates to access state financial assistance. Most students and families in Indiana must pay for dual credit participation. For income distressed families, tuition can pose a hardship. Postsecondary institutions vary widely from those that waive fees to those that charge students full tuition.

**New Developments:** CHE will address dual credit funding in 2006. Representatives from the Indiana Governor’s Office acknowledge additional resources will need to be identified to make dual credit funding attractive for increasing institutional participation in more comprehensive dual credit programs such as Early College High Schools.

Typical state policy barrier identified by JFF	Indiana Law and/or administrative code	<i>Indiana Regulatory Oversight</i> Commission for Higher Education (CHE) State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI)	Recommendations and modifications to strengthen Indiana policy and administrative code
For dual enrollees, Lack of FTE reimbursement at colleges and/or high schools lose ADM dollars	<b>Favorable:</b> Public postsecondary institutions receive FTE-based operating funds and high schools receive ADM for high school students in dual credit courses.	<b>Partially Favorable:</b> CHE allows enrollment change to apply to courses taken on high school and college campuses. Draft policy on finances would allow enrollment change under certain circumstances.	<b>Modification:</b> Continue FTE funding to encourage college participation. The state should leverage additional funds for institutions to encourage the start-up and development of Early College High Schools.
Ineligibility of high school students for federal and state financial aid	<b>Barrier:</b> Indiana high school students may not access federal or state financial aid for college courses. Students generally pay for dual credit courses.	<b>Partially Favorable:</b> SSACI provides significant student assistance to high school graduates in college programs on the basis of merit and financial need	<b>Modification:</b> Allow SSACI to make exemptions for established Early College High Schools to allow students to access state financial aid funds to pay for college tuition for approved college credit bearing courses. Dual credit course costs in Early College High Schools should be shifted from students to state resources.
Inflexibility of funding rules to pay for student cohorts	<b>Partially Favorable:</b> Some colleges assist financially needy dual enrollment students with reduced fees.	_____	<b>Recommendation:</b> Establish a separate dual enrollment program with awards being made on the basis of financial need as an alternative to the modification above.  <b>Recommendation:</b> Allow secondary and postsecondary institutions to negotiate flexibility of funding for cohorts of students. For income distressed students, tuition should be waived altogether.

## Indiana State Policy Levers and Barriers – Early College High School Model

<p><b>Ideal Policy for ECHS:</b> <i>Autonomy</i> - Schools have autonomy to make decisions that enable accelerated advancement and integration of secondary and postsecondary education.</p> <p><b>Indiana Context:</b> Indiana law offers several opportunities for public schools to operate autonomously and obtain regulatory flexibility. Indiana’s 2001 charter school law allows schools to operate with considerable autonomy from school corporations, university authorizers, or the Mayor of Indianapolis. Freeway schools may obtain state waivers from state regulations. Indiana’s accountability law (P.L. 221-1999) requires every public school in Indiana to establish a committee of parents, teachers, and community leaders to draft school improvement plans, which can include requests for waivers from state regulations. However, few school corporations have taken advantage of these laws – only two school corporations serve as authorizers or operators of charter schools and no public schools have obtained freeway school status. While some school corporations allow (or require) schools to have school-based decision making bodies with stakeholder involvement, few provide them with significant autonomy in governance, controlling budgets, staffing decisions, or adopting curriculum.</p> <p><b>New Developments:</b> In Marion County, several school corporations are currently exploring the option of creating charter schools, including Early College High Schools. Successful district-sponsored or organized charter schools could provide districts with examples of models of autonomous schools governed by performance contract (charter) agreements. The legislature is soon to begin hearings on ways to provide all public schools with additional regulatory flexibility.</p>			
Typical state policy barrier identified by JFF	Indiana Law and/or administrative code	<i>Indiana Regulatory Oversight For Charters, Charter Authorizers For District Schools, ECHS Advisory Board</i>	Recommendations and modifications to strengthen Indiana policy and administrative code
<p>Insufficient autonomy at the school-level, particularly in traditional public school districts</p>	<p><b>Favorable:</b> State law specifies that charter schools are to offer autonomous programs. Other types of autonomous public schools are possible through other non-charter options.</p>	<p><b>Barrier:</b> Few school corporations have taken advantage of existing opportunities to allow significant levels of autonomy in school operations.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> Early College High Schools organized as charter schools will enjoy the advantages of autonomous operation inherent in that school design. Early College High Schools organized by school corporations should strive to employ policy that provides autonomy in such areas as governance, budget, staffing, curriculum, assessment, scheduling, fundraising and union contract provisions.</p>
<p>Policies that do not comparably fund charter schools or do not hold them accountable distinctively from district schools</p>	<p><b>Barrier:</b> Indiana charter schools do not receive funding for facilities, which creates an undue burden on school operating budgets.</p>	<p><b>Favorable:</b> Two independent authorizers, the Mayor of Indianapolis and Ball State University, have extensive accountability programs.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> Provide more equitable public funding for charter school facilities. School corporations sponsoring charter schools should establish accountability systems that allow for autonomous charter school operations.</p>