

HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

Short Summary

The HCS Early College High School is a public school program where students attend school on the campus of Horry Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) and may earn up to two years of college credit by the time they graduate high school. This public high school has grades 9 – 12, has capacity for up to 400 students, and is accredited by The SC Dept. of Education and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Early College program is also an AVID National Certified School. The HCS Early College High School was established in 2006 by Horry County Schools, Horry Georgetown Technical College, and Business Education Expectations (BE2), local business partners. This free program provides transportation, tuition, technology, and books. Through AVID, the Early College provides academic supports, enrollment in dual enrollment courses, academic coaches, and opportunities for service learning projects.

Criteria for eligibility include students who have the potential to succeed in college with academic support, average standardized test scores, and a 2.0 or higher GPA. Other factors include the desire and determination to attend college, the first generation to attend college, under-representation in postsecondary education, and/or financial need.

The HCS Early College mission statement is “to provide a small, personalized learning community that accelerates our diverse student population to become responsible citizens who are strong critical thinkers, collaborators, and communicators who can successfully meet and face the challenges of competing in an ever-changing global society.” HCS Early College believes that college readiness is attainable by drawing on a college environment to build students’ identity as future college students.

Demographics

- *Target Settings:* Urban, rural
- *Target Groups Served:* Groups traditionally underrepresented in post-secondary education
- *Schools/Districts Served:* Horry County Schools

Research and Evaluation

The development of program/initiative is based on/grounded in what research? Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works. Description of data collection and analysis should be included.

A recently published three-year study by Jobs for the Future (JFF), *Unconventional Wisdom: A Profile of the Graduates of Early College High School*, shows key findings that Early Colleges have higher high school graduation rates with most students graduating high school with some college credits and a large majority continuing to college after high school. Other findings emphasize the increase in school attendance rates and grade-to-grade promotions. Data is collected through Student Information System (SIS). The SIS is a highly secure system that provides data to support the Early College High School Initiative. The SIS collects aggregated data and unidentifiable, student-level data for the period beginning at least two years prior to enrollment in the early college high school through graduation or departure from the school. Another report by the American Institute for Research and SRI International finds similar findings.

HCS Early College High School students consistently surpass both the district and state averages on statewide testing. Completing the fifth year since opening, 40% of seniors graduated from high school with an Associate of Arts degree from Horry Georgetown Technical College. This compares with 24% reported in the JFF report. The average senior earned 56 college credits in their four years of high school which compares to 44% nationally who earned more than one year of college credit in the JFF report. The 2011 graduates have been accepted to Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, The Citadel,

Francis Marion University, University of South Carolina, Winthrop University, Tusculum University, and University of North Carolina-Pembroke. Some students will remain at HGTC for another year to complete either an Associates degree or degree in another major. Three plan to enter the Armed Forces.

Other honors include:

- SC Bar Association 2011 Project Citizen State Showcase at the high school level.
- HCS Superintendent's Service Learning Award for 2009-10/High School
- HGTC/HCS Early College were named to the 2009 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction by the Corporation for National and community Service.

Program Resources

- *Annual Cost:* \$2.8 million
- *Funding Sources:* District and state allocations. HGTC provides our location and funds other on-site needs. HGTC also provides a Presidential Scholarship for tuition for one additional school year. Private funding is provided by BE2 for enrichment activities and scholarships to three state universities for graduates.
- *Partner Organizations:* Horry County Schools, Horry-Georgetown Technical College, and Business/Education Expectations Partnership
- *Staffing Needs:* Principal, Assistant Principal, Guidance Counselor, 22 Classroom Teachers, Nurse, Secretary, Bookkeeper, 2 Cafeteria Staff, and a part-time Career Development Facilitator.
- *Infrastructure/Equipment Needs:* The high school is located in Bldg. 200 on the Conway campus of Horry Georgetown Technical College. Office areas, 15 classrooms, and cafeteria space are allocated for Early College use. Horry County Schools has leased land is building a new facility on the HGTC campus slated to open in 2013.

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The top photo shows the students in their high graduation regalia. Students graduated at their individual high schools on June 3 & 4, 2011. The bottom photo shows some of them in their HGTC graduation regalia for HGTC Commencement which occurred on May 5, 2011.

