

HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

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 Horry County Business/Education Expectations (BE2), and 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
- *Districts Served:* Horry County Schools

Research and Evaluation

*What national or other research was considered during the development of this program/initiative?
Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works.*

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.

The HCS Early College has continued to exceed performance goals. In addition to state end-of-course scores exceeding state and district averages, on the state’s high school exit exam, 100% of the students passed both the English Language Arts and the math portions on the first attempt. Graduating seniors earned an average of 56 hours

of college credit. Of these seniors, 32 earned recognition on the technical college's President's List (GPA of 3.75 or higher) and 22 earned recognition on the college's Dean's List (GPA of 3.5 or higher). One hundred percent of the students' parents sign an agreement of support for their students, participating in conferences and support team meetings, and social and support services are provided to families. One hundred percent of the students participate in the AVID program, and instructors work with every student to develop 9-14 college and career goals and monitor student progress. Teachers have developed a comprehensive program of service learning, peer tutoring, shadowing, and college success skills, and all students participate in these. Additionally, HCS Early College students far surpassed Early College students nationally, with 100% earning college credits, 79% earning more than one year of college credit, and 40% earning an associate's degree or two years of college credit in addition to earning their high school diplomas. Horry County Schools monitors the program success through annual performance goals to include student performance on state end-of-course tests, high school exit exam, MAP testing, the college placement testing COMPASS, and in college and high school courses. In addition, survey data from parents, students, and teachers are reviewed regarding school climate and school/community relationships. Student engagement in service is also measured. The school's performance is also presented in the SC Annual School Report Card.

Not only does the partnership between Horry County Schools and Horry Georgetown Technical College ensure that students earn college credits, but a community partnership, Horry County Business/Education Expectations (BE2) supported scholarships for additional education. During this past year, through the partnership with our technical college, 40 Early College graduates were awarded \$20,000 in scholarships, and through the Business Education/Expectations partnership approximately \$21,000 was awarded to 17 Early College graduates. Not only have students been recognized for academic achievement at the high school and college levels, but they have also earned the district's Superintendent's Award for excellence in integrating meaningful community service with instruction two years in a row, won the SC Bar Association's 2011 Project Citizen State Showcase, was identified by the South Carolina Council for the Social Studies as the 2011 Program of the Year, won 24 awards in all categories at the Regional National History Day Project completion with the opportunity to compete at the state level, finished as the number one school in SC for the Capitol Hill Challenge for the Stock Market Game, and been named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Resources

- *Annual Cost:* \$2.8 million
- *Funding Sources:* District and state allocations. Horry-Georgetown Technical College (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.
- *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 Building 200 on the Conway campus of HGTC. Office areas, 15 classrooms, and cafeteria space are allocated for early college use. Horry County Schools has leased land and is building a new facility on the HGTC campus, slated to open in 2013.
- *Partner Organizations:* Horry County Schools, HGTC, and Business/Educations Expectations Partnerships

Contact Information

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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.

