



September 2021

# Developing Successful Dual Enrollment Models at Ohio's Community Colleges

*Case Studies of College Credit Plus  
Partnerships*



## Case Studies

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**Across the nation, community colleges are serving** increasing numbers of high school students seeking to earn college credit through dual enrollment programs. Research shows that such students are more likely to graduate high school and earn college degrees than their peers who do not participate.<sup>1</sup> A federally funded study found that dual enrollment students in Colorado were more likely to earn a college degree on time or early and have higher workforce earnings after five years.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, study authors noted that dual enrollment “improved the odds of college entrance, success, and earnings by similar amounts regardless of student income, minority status, gender, or ninth grade reading scores.”<sup>3</sup>

Ohio’s dual enrollment program, College Credit Plus (CCP), offers a jump-start on college for students in grades 7 and above, with most participants drawn from grades 9 through 12. Throughout its first five years—up until the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in early 2020—the program saw steady annual growth as these younger students pursued college courses that reduce the time and cost to a certificate or degree.<sup>4</sup> Emergency legislation and state flexibility regarding program parameters helped schools and campuses adapt to widespread disruption to school and campus operations. While the full impact on CCP enrollment and delivery remains to be seen, the Ohio Department of Higher Education notes that “even with all these disruptions, students persevered and the participation and performance success rates showed the great resilience of these students.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fink, John, Davis Jenkins and Takeshi Yanagiura, “What Happens to Students Who Take Community College ‘Dual Enrollment’ Courses in High School?,” Community College Research Center and National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (September 2017). Available at <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/what-happens-community-college-dual-enrollment-students.pdf>. Accessed December 1, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Buckley, Pamela, Philip Pendergast, Kristin Klopfenstein, Lauren Ramsay, Kim Poast, Michael Vente and Maggie Yang, “Does Concurrent Enrollment Improve College Access, Success, Time-To-Degree and Earnings? A Quasi-Experimental Analysis of Colorado Students,” University of Denver, Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (September 2020). Available at <https://coloradolab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Concurrent-Enrollment-Policy-Brief.pdf>. Accessed December 1, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Buckley et al.

<sup>4</sup> Ohio Department of Higher Education, “College Credit Plus Annual Report 2019-2020, Year 5” (2021). Available at <https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/default/files/uploads/CCP/College%20Credit%20Plus%20Annual%20Report%20%282019%29.pdf>. Accessed March 5, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Impactful Models

The Success Center for Ohio Community Colleges developed this series of case studies to highlight strong CCP models that represent a sampling of the good work underway in college-K12 partnerships across the state. The case studies illuminate what it takes to develop, launch and grow a CCP initiative—and how to adapt to changing circumstances.

The five colleges featured are geographically diverse and represent both urban and rural communities. Collectively, they serve thousands of CCP students of all backgrounds, abilities and interests—and those students are succeeding in their college-level courses. With transformative impact on students and communities, these colleges' CCP programs are helping students to:

- Chart a path to a college degree and rewarding career;
- Develop in-demand skills;
- Pass college-level courses, boosting their academic confidence and resiliency;
- Earn college credits, helping them achieve a certificate or degree faster and at lower cost;
- Enroll in college at high rates—often at the college that delivered their CCP coursework; and
- Make valuable connections with area employers and industry experts.

The CCP models profiled sprang from communities' recognition of both the need to better equip more students to succeed and the opportunity CCP presents to change the paradigm for college and career preparation. In these communities, earlier access to college-level coursework, combined with strong support, is changing students' perceptions about their readiness and ability to succeed in college—and thereby changing life trajectories.

## Essential Elements

Each college has embraced CCP in unique ways, from a college-wide approach to initiatives tailored to meet a particular local need. And each has identified lessons and recommendations that can guide practitioners and policymakers seeking to understand and replicate what's working to maximize investment in dual enrollment. Regardless of specific approach, there are several essential components underlying a successful CCP model:



*Committed leaders and partners.* Creating, operating and refining a high-quality CCP program requires a significant investment of time and resources. Leaders at both the college and its K12 partner districts and schools must demonstrate that CCP is a priority through policy, personnel, budgetary, communications and other decisions. Embracing a spirit of collaboration and shared purpose can help leaders to overcome logistical hurdles and inherent tensions when bridging secondary and postsecondary culture and processes.



*Effective communication.* Consistent communication within and across partners and stakeholders develops necessary trust and cohesion. Within the college, communication promotes collaboration and support for CCP across many functional units, from faculty and academic departments to the enrollment team and the president’s office. Frequent communication between the college and its K12 and industry partners helps ensure that the program runs smoothly and adheres to the college’s standards. Outreach to students, parents and the community promotes awareness of CCP’s benefits and a pipeline of future applicants.



*Skilled program management.* While day-to-day CCP oversight varies at each college, the necessity for skilled program management does not. The program manager must have the skills and experience to align the efforts of a wide supporting cast, from college faculty and advisors to high school principals and teachers. At some colleges, this role is combined with that of student advisor, requiring adaptability to coach and support younger students through the challenges of college-level work and expectations.



*Supportive instruction and advising.* From experiential, project-based learning to more traditional instruction, colleges are offering challenging, high-quality CCP curricula that engage students and broaden their skills and knowledge base. Strong advising complements this instruction, whether through dedicated college advisors or informal faculty guidance. At its most effective, advising is infused throughout the program, so that students receive support, encouragement and insight from everyone they encounter. Advising helps students see the possibilities before them—and what it takes to realize them. For disadvantaged students, intensive advising can be especially impactful in helping them stay on track in their postsecondary and career preparation.



*Flexibility.* In a multifaceted program like CCP, adaptability is critical. The colleges must customize their approach to meet students’ and schools’ varied needs, year to year and cohort to cohort—as well as manage the unexpected. The COVID-19 global pandemic prompted an abrupt shift to online learning in 2020, with myriad associated logistics to continue serving students while meeting changing state and local guidelines.

## Equity Gaps Remain

While featured colleges and others across the state are achieving promising results with CCP students, Ohio Department of Higher Education data show a persistent participation gap for students of color that must be overcome to extend the program's benefits more equitably as it continues to expand.<sup>6</sup> A report by the Aspen Institute and Community College Research Center (CCRC) examining nine sites across Ohio, Florida and Washington State offers principles to advance equity in dual enrollment. Several of these principles are reflected in the CCP models examined, from providing advising and supports that go “above and beyond to nurture students” to “high-quality instruction that builds students’ competence and confidence.”<sup>7</sup>

Eastern Gateway Community College and Lorain County Community College were chosen for the Aspen Institute-CCRC study given their above-average dual enrollment participation rates and strong outcomes for underrepresented students of color.

Yet more can be done to expand equitable access, another key principle. Two of the featured colleges have received a state waiver of CCP's statutory college-readiness eligibility requirements, enabling them to serve a broader range of students. Removing such barriers for all dual enrollment programs, as the Aspen Institute-CCRC report recommends, would narrow equity gaps and ensure that more Ohio students—especially the most disadvantaged—can reap the benefits of CCP.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Mehl, Gelsey, Joshua Wyner, Elisabeth Barnett, John Fink and Davis Jenkins, “The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A Guide to Equitable Acceleration for Students,” The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, The Aspen Institute Education & Society Program and Community College Research Center (2020). Available at <https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ASP-2020-Dual-Enrollment-Playbook.pdf>. Accessed December 1, 2020.

# Broadening Horizons: Youth Technology Academy Helps Students Chart Their Future



## *Cuyahoga Community College*

**Cuyahoga Community College, known as Tri-C, has provided Cleveland, Ohio area** residents with high-quality, affordable education and programming for more than 50 years. As part of its mission, the state's oldest and largest community college seeks to promote individual development and improve the overall quality of life in a multicultural community. Tri-C's Youth Technology Academy (YTA), a unique STEM<sup>8</sup>-focused program that has served thousands of disadvantaged urban students, is a highly impactful way to advance this mission. YTA enables underserved youth to earn college credits through Ohio's College Credit Plus (CCP) dual enrollment program, using an experiential, project-based technical curriculum delivered at their high schools and at Tri-C's Metropolitan campus. Students gain access to cutting-edge technology through the study of robotics, engineering and related domains, igniting a sometimes-newfound passion for learning and offering a platform for STEM career discovery and exploration. The opportunity to compete in prestigious robotics competitions and be mentored by NASA and other industry experts makes this an unparalleled opportunity for area teenagers.

## How It Began

Created in partnership with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, YTA launched in 2003 as a youth workforce robotics program serving a dozen students with federal Workforce Investment Act funding through the City of Cleveland. The program's goal was to expand equitable access to technology among the city's underrepresented youth, increasing their academic and technical skills and broadening their career prospects in a growing, marketable field. Its experiential learning design was based on research demonstrating that struggling urban students who were given hands-on opportunities to explore the concepts they were learning, such as building a robotic arm that lifts a weight, performed better in technology courses.

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<sup>8</sup> STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

The program grew exponentially to meet strong demand at area schools and widened its curricular and technological offerings to include unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) and single board computers. YTA students received subsidized tuition through Ohio's Post Secondary Enrollment Options Program, the precursor to CCP. Today, CCP funding provides the program's primary operating support, with supplemental resources from Ohio Means Jobs-Cleveland/Cuyahoga (via the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act), NASA, The George Gund Foundation and various charitable foundations and corporate sponsors.

## The Approach

### Recruiting underserved students

The program targets students in all high school grade levels for enrollment in CCP technology classes. In concert with school district officials, they conduct outreach to area administrators and community groups to publicize the opportunity and encourage students to apply. YTA staff begin recruiting students during the spring and summer before 9th grade. Publicity around YTA robotics competitions generates additional visibility and interest among potential

"The YTA program demystifies higher education for urban students through the provision of college-credit STEM courses within their home high schools. Through the study of complex concepts and mastery of technology projects, these bright, capable young people have a world of opportunity opened for them and develop a sense of their own abilities."

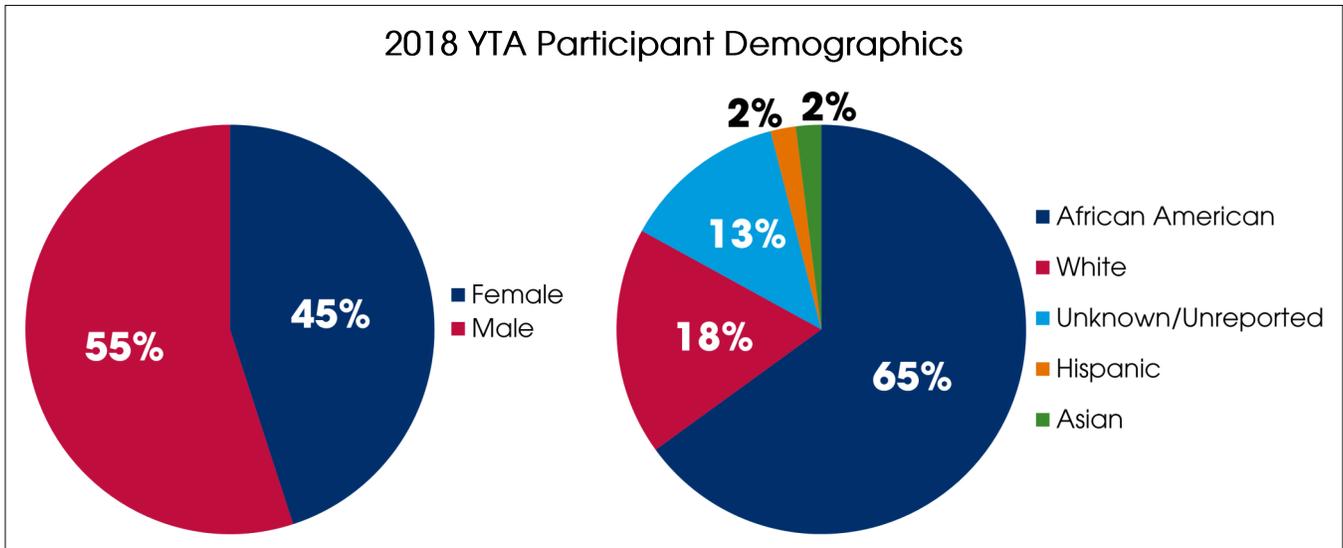
– Mary Kay Bitterman, Executive Director, Technology Academies, Cuyahoga Community College

participants. Staff and student presentations and participation at both community and school-sponsored events effectively generate interest in program enrollment among both youth and parents. Students apply by selecting YTA Robotics as an option on the college's standard CCP application.

A CCP Innovative Program Waiver from the Ohio Department of Higher Education enables Tri-C to admit CCP students who score below the college-ready level on the Accuplacer exam.<sup>9</sup> Importantly, these students go on to earn an aggregate 3.017 grade point average in their college-level YTA CCP courses—evidence that they can do the work with the right supports.

To date, YTA participant demographics closely reflect those of Cleveland Metropolitan School District students. Without the state waiver, however, Tri-C estimates that YTA would lose more than 90% of its enrollment—denying hundreds of students the opportunity to participate each year.

<sup>9</sup> Tri-C has received a waiver of CCP college readiness requirements annually since the 2018-19 academic year. During the COVID pandemic, however, Tri-C and other colleges may admit CCP students who have a cumulative high school grade point average of 3.0 or higher, in lieu of a college-ready score on the Accuplacer exam.



## Technical curriculum

In collaboration with Tri-C, YTA partner high schools determine which program courses to offer their students, selecting from options in electrical, mechanical and integrated systems engineering technology and construction technology. Program offerings allow students to explore various facets of technology and engineering, but are not a structured pathway to a particular degree, certificate or career.

Students earn between one and four college credits per course. Most begin with introductory electrical engineering technology robotics classes that build math competencies and feature both lecture and lab components. The courses are project- and teamwork-based; all participants are required to build and program a robot and use it in a local competition. Other courses teach students to: build a computer using a credit card-sized, single board computer known as a 'Raspberry Pi'; use this device to do physical computing with sensors utilizing Python programming language; and build and calibrate unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), learning to fly autonomous missions using GPS sensor technology. Students can apply this emerging technology in commercial settings in various industries upon graduation from high school and/or college.

Tri-C faculty preceptors are assigned to each participating high school, teaching classes on site and working with each school's schedule. High-school teachers can serve as adjunct instructors if they possess the requisite qualifications. The college maintains an inventory of technology tools to loan each school, including various robotics and computing platforms.

Students from any school may attend Tri-C's campus one evening each week to take optional supplemental technology classes of their choice with dinner provided, helping them acclimate them to campus life and access the many resources available through the college. Program coordinators and field specialists provide YTA students with direction, support services and assistance navigating enrollment, assessment and college planning.

## Exciting extracurriculars

Interested students can join the YTA Varsity Robotics Club that meets on campus twice a week and each Saturday during robotics season. All are encouraged to participate in two prestigious annual international robotics competitions, the VEX Robotics Challenge and the FIRST Robotics Competition, in which students must design, manufacture, build and program robots to meet innovative, engineering challenges. Teams can advance through multiple levels of competition culminating in a world championship round. The program covers all costs to participate, from travel and uniforms to student stipends, competition entrance fees, learning materials, tools and more. Engineers and industry experts from NASA and leading technology companies mentor and train the student teams competing, enriching the experience immeasurably. YTA also offers student internships and other educational activities.

## Impact

YTA serves up to 1,000 students per year. While most hail from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, the program has expanded to serve several neighboring school districts and private and parochial schools. Participant results are strong:

- Students have achieved an aggregate grade point average of 3.017 in YTA CCP courses to date—despite testing below “college ready” prior to participating.
- Between Fall 2016 and Spring 2020, 87% of YTA students successfully completed their college-level technical courses.
- Every member of the 2020 YTA Varsity Robotics Team graduated from high school. Eighty-four percent went on to postsecondary enrollment; of these, 20% enrolled at Tri-C and 80% enrolled at 4-year institutions.

“YTA has made a dramatic difference in my life. By giving me the tools to succeed, such as understanding the importance of teamwork and the development of both technical and creative skills, my experience with YTA contributed to the selection of my STEM major in college. YTA opened so many doors for me.”

Students have also achieved impressive success in regional, national and international robotics competitions, drawing welcome interest to the program and college. Tri-C’s YTA Varsity Robotics Team is one of only ten NASA-sponsored teams nationwide. Together with three school partners, the YTA team bested 640 teams to win the 2016 FIRST Robotics Competition. This was an impressive feat with over 75,000 high school students from 24 countries competing in that competition season. Soon after, a student on that team traveled to the White House to serve as one of only 12 “Kid Science Advisors” to President Barack Obama. YTA student teams have realized successes the past several years in competitions, and in 2019 the YTA Varsity Robotics Team

were Finalists in the Ohio Buckeye Regional FIRST Robotics competition and won the Industrial Design Award sponsored by General Motors.

YTA was featured in an article in the peer-reviewed International Journal of Advanced Research in Education & Technology examining how urban students' experiences in a technology program impacted their skills, self-efficacy and postsecondary plans. Study authors found that participation in a structured, project-based STEM program like YTA broadens students' perceptions about their abilities and options for post-secondary education and careers, countering the negative effects that structural factors such as poverty have on these views.<sup>10</sup> While initially skeptical of their ability to succeed in STEM courses, YTA students in the study sample believed the program's hands-on approach increased their self-esteem, self-efficacy and critical-thinking skills. It also boosted confidence in their preparedness for college.

## Lessons and Recommendations

Given the number of students it serves, the program's impact is far-reaching, changing both individual lives and benefiting the community as it generates positive social impact and shapes Cleveland's future technical workforce. Colleges interested in launching a program like YTA should consider the elements Tri-C deems critical to success:



**Strong partnership.** Tri-C has a longstanding partnership with Cleveland Metropolitan School District, spanning a variety of initiatives. This relationship offered a solid foundation on which to build and scale an intensive program like YTA that involves many stakeholders and logistics. The buy-in of school administrators and teachers is vital.



**Early recruiting and planning.** Recruiting middle school students before they enter high school ensures that they derive maximum benefit by participating in as many program offerings as possible. Colleges must have a plan to administer required college-readiness assessments, which can be challenging to deliver at scale to students from a multitude of schools. The collection and review of students' transcripts—an alternative to testing during the COVID-19 pandemic—requires similar focus.

<sup>10</sup> Giraldo-Garcia, Regina, Lisa Suarez-Caraballo and Mary Kay Bitterman. "Urban Students' Views about Technology: Academic Skills, Career Interest, and Post-Secondary Choices." International Journal of Advanced Research in Education & Technology. Vol. 6, Issue 1 (Jan. – Mar. 2019). Available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332877404\\_Urban\\_Students'\\_Views\\_about\\_Technology\\_Academic\\_Skills\\_Career\\_Interest\\_and\\_Post-Secondary\\_Choices\\_Cuyahoga\\_Community\\_College](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332877404_Urban_Students'_Views_about_Technology_Academic_Skills_Career_Interest_and_Post-Secondary_Choices_Cuyahoga_Community_College). Accessed November 19, 2020.



*Innovative Program Waiver to serve underrepresented students.* The state waiver from CCP's college-readiness requirements allows the college to serve its target YTA population: disadvantaged students who could benefit from the program's structured, hands-on approach despite scoring below the readiness benchmark. Tri-C's successful results with such students demonstrate that test scores are not always predictive of student performance. With the right supports and effective pedagogy, underprepared students can achieve at a level that surpasses their own expectations—and others' as well.



*Applied learning.* Experiential, project-based learning boosts student engagement, capturing and sustaining their interest and enabling them to practice and develop skills that will open doors to myriad opportunities in postsecondary education and STEM careers. Particularly for disadvantaged students, this program design can be a lifechanging launching pad.



*Collaboration across the college.* The YTA program is housed in the Workforce Community and Economic Division and is fully integrated into the college. Tri-C leaders at all levels are committed to and engaged with the program, promoting it in the community, participating in student activities and providing space and resources—including a new robotics and innovation lab—to support its growth. Functional units across the college also provide helpful support, from the CCP staff, engineering department, enrollment and recruitment offices to government affairs staff and the foundation office.

## Next Steps

YTA leaders continually explore ways to broaden their reach to disadvantaged, underrepresented students who could benefit from this innovative, one-of-a-kind technology program. Though remote learning has temporarily diminished the experiential learning component, YTA staff will continue the new practice of curating technology kits and sending them to students at home to keep them engaged. The YTA team welcomes and encourages any interested local school district or school to become a YTA partner and to provide equity in access to technology for all students through program participation. While the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily dampened participation and complicated the program's core hands-on approach as learning shifts online, the college's mission to serve is stronger than ever.

# 'Guided' Pathways: Embedded Academic Advising Supports Student Success



## *Edison State Community College*

**Edison State Community College, Ohio's first general and technical college, serves the** largely rural, west central part of the state with a main campus in historic Piqua and three regional campuses. The college has experienced significant enrollment growth in recent years, thanks to a growing influx of students taking courses through College Credit Plus (CCP), the state's dual enrollment program. The college now has among the highest enrollment by percentage of CCP students in the state—nearly half its student body. With such a large proportion of younger students, the college recognized the imperative to strengthen and expand its approach to CCP student advising, following an advising overhaul undertaken campus-wide. Edison State leaders launched an embedded academic advising model in which advisors deliver support to CCP students at partner high schools, guiding them along self-selected academic and career pathways that lead to in-demand degrees and jobs.

## How It Began

Edison State's leadership embraced and promoted CCP from the beginning, quick to recognize its potential to broaden the college's reach and pipeline and better serve local students. When first implementing the program, the college's CCP enrollment managers visited area high schools, working with students through the program and college intake process and offering initial advising to get them started. After the first semester, advising transitioned to faculty members with more specialized expertise, a handoff that was not always smooth. Edison State leaders realized the need to both better support these younger students with a seamless, more comprehensive approach to advising and bolster the college's connection to its high school partners.

"The dramatic results in student enrollment, success and satisfaction of high school partners drove us to overhaul job duties and resources in order to launch the embedded CCP advising model throughout our service area."

– Dr. Doreen Larson,  
President, Edison State  
Community College

In 2015, the college piloted a new approach at its Greenville campus: expanding the CCP enrollment manager role to include embedded student advising delivered at local high schools, supplementing traditional faculty advising. Area high school administrators were given the opportunity to determine how regularly and how long they wished to have the enrollment manager-advisors on their campuses, subject to capacity. The response was tremendous, validating the strategic shift and paving the way for a full scaling of the approach during the 2017-18 academic year.

## The Approach

### Identifying college-ready students

School guidance counselors seek to identify qualified students who would most benefit from CCP and encourage them to apply. Given the strength and number of the college's local partner schools, the pool of eligible students is large.

Edison State uses multiple measures to assess whether student applicants meet CCP college readiness requirements. Students are admitted if their cumulative high school grade point average is 3.0 or higher. The college also reviews high school transcripts or academic records for evidence of sufficient achievement and course prerequisites. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the college used Accuplacer and ACT test scores as the primary determinant of CCP eligibility; however, the tests cannot be readily administered under current conditions. Students must now complete a virtual self-placement test developed by the college. They must also complete an online readiness workshop and obtain placement into college-level reading in order to take courses online.

### Enhanced advising

In keeping with the college's brand promise, "A personal experience, a rewarding education," advising at Edison State now starts from the moment students apply. Once CCP eligibility requirements are determined to have been met, an advisor personally calls each student to welcome and guide them through preliminary requirements and orientation.

The first advising appointment—along with much of the coursework—happens at the high school. Enrollment manager-advisors meet with students to discuss their academic and career goals, aspirations and concerns. They also administer an occupational assessment to measure students' interests in relation to the local and regional job market.

With the aid of degree mapping software, the advisors help students build a customized academic degree plan with specific courses that achieve their objectives. At any point, students can see how close they are to earning a degree, helping them stay focused and on track toward timely graduation. Having an easily accessible degree plan for each student

helps advisors monitor progress and provide personalized advice to address individual goals and challenges.

Enrollment manager-advisors visit partner high schools regularly, spending up to a full day each week with students and staff at larger schools. Smaller schools may need only monthly visits. The in-person presence helps build rapport and alignment between institutions and ensures that students are receiving the support they need to meet the expectations of college-level coursework. The visits serve another purpose: solidifying students' connection and familiarity with Edison State and their identity as college students.

These advisors—recently renamed career pathway advisors—stay with their students through graduation for consistency, alongside college faculty advisors with subject matter expertise. Together, the advising team aids students with short-term and long-term planning to help them identify and reach their academic and career goals.

## Guided pathways

Edison State's advising overhaul coincided with another important reform: the adoption of a guided pathways model college-wide. In contrast to the scattered course-by-course approach students often take, guided pathways offer students a highly structured, coherent educational program with carefully sequenced courses aligned to their interests and career goals. The college's strategic plan reinforces the importance of the guided pathways model for CCP, noting that it "provides the most comprehensive support for the long-term career goals of CCP students."

The college gears the approach to CCP students by requiring them to select one of seven career pathways on their Edison State CCP application. Options include: Arts, Humanities and Communication; Science and Mathematics; Business; Engineering and Manufacturing; Health Sciences; Information Technology; and Social and Public Services. Career pathway advisors are then assigned to students by pathway. Edison State closely monitors the advisors' workload since student selection can lead to imbalances.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which triggered a shift to online learning, the majority of these sequenced CCP courses were taught at the high schools by credentialed high school instructors. Edison State faculty continuously mentor the high school instructors teaching the college's CCP courses, ensuring curricular integrity and quality of delivery. Smaller schools that lack instructors qualified to teach college materials send their CCP students to Edison State or arrange for online courses. About 40 percent of CCP students take their courses on campus with instruction by an Edison State faculty member.

## Impact

While some colleges have experienced a leveling off in CCP enrollment, Edison State has seen steady growth each year—a testament to the value students and area school personnel see in the college’s intensive embedded advising, guided pathways approach. The program has expanded to serve students from nearly 50 high schools in surrounding counties. More than half of those high schools benefit from the full complement of advising and on-site instruction, while students in the other schools take CCP courses online or at Edison State and still receive full-service advising.

Edison State has seen nearly 43,000 CCP student enrollments over the past six years. Given their numbers, CCP students are integral to the success of the college as a whole. For example, Fall 2019 retention was the highest in 10 years—a notable increase of 2.5% over a typically steady rate. Fall 2020 credit-hour enrollment was up 12%, with a 7% increase in headcount. Edison State has seen increases in several other key metrics:

- Credits earned. On average, CCP students earn approximately 95% of the credits they attempt.
- Degrees or certificates earned. In 2020, 32 CCP students were awarded a degree or certificate from Edison State at the same time they receive their high school diploma. Over 150 students have achieved this milestone over the past five years.
- Enrollment after high school. More CCP students—nearly 400 in 2020 alone— are choosing to enroll at Edison State after high school to complete their associate degree, having earned significant accumulated credit toward that honor.

The college encourages students to maintain momentum toward their postsecondary degree by offering a “CCP Scholarship” to graduating high school seniors in the college’s service area and CCP partner high schools. In light of the economic hardships and uncertainty imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the college expanded eligibility for full-tuition CCP Scholarships to all local graduating seniors regardless of CCP participation.<sup>11</sup> Students must continue their studies at Edison State by registering for summer or fall classes immediately after high school graduation in order to redeem the scholarships. The CCP Scholarship helped fuel a surge in the number of recent high school graduates enrolling at the college in Fall 2020.

“One of the many benefits that we have seen with the embedded advising is the relationships that are built between our CCP students and our staff. Students are able to build a rapport and comfort level with the Edison State advisor at their high school. Thus the students have readily available tools to succeed in their coursework and in their future college endeavors.”

– Amber Hare, Director of Career Pathways Advising, Edison State Community College

<sup>11</sup> Prior to the pandemic, the college offered scholarships worth half the cost of tuition to students who completed 9-44 credit hours of CCP coursework. Students with 45 or more CCP credits were eligible for a full tuition scholarship for courses to complete their degree.

## Lessons and Recommendations

The college's promising model attracted the notice of the Community College Research Center, which has offered Edison State a platform to share best practices with other institutions. Key elements include:



***Committed leadership.*** The foundation for success is a resolute dedication to CCP emanating from the college's leadership and permeating its people, policies and practices. Leaders must cultivate intentionality around excellence in serving CCP students and partner schools and ensure that CCP is fully integrated into the college's service paradigm. CCP is a core element of Edison State's strategic business plan and operations, ensuring continued focus on strengthening and growing the program.



***Effective communication.*** CCP involves acclimating students, parents, teachers, counselors and administrators—each accustomed to traditional high school processes and culture—with the college's unique ethos and practices. Thoughtful, early and consistent communication across these varied players is critical. Leaders must carefully manage high school administrators' expectations for level and frequency of advising to align with advisors' capacity.



***Exceptional advising and management.*** Quality advising is the glue of the program, helping younger students bridge the gap to college-level coursework and identify a pathway to meeting their aspirations. Yet advisors must balance their roles as coaches with that as managers of myriad logistics across partners.



***Flexibility.*** Needs vary from school to school and from student to student. CCP advisors must be prepared to adjust their approach frequently, including adapting to state CCP requirements and changes mandated by circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Next Steps

Building on its guided pathways approach, the college is working to strengthen connections with area employers, such that career pathways coursework can be linked to the requirements of jobs available in the community. Students appreciate being able to see how a specific sequence of courses will prepare them for a particular local job with an expected salary range. High school administrators gain insight into how well their current course offerings align with the requirements for a degree or career track.

Edison State continues to welcome outreach from administrators interested in partnering to offer CCP courses at their high schools.

# Navigating College: 'GPS' Program Expands Access to College and Careers



## *Marion Technical College*

**Nestled in Central Ohio midway between Columbus and Lake Erie, Marion Technical College (MTC)** has set about building a culture of intentionality, where decisions are aligned with its mission to provide the region's most accessible, supportive and personal pathway to career success. Its vision: a highly educated local workforce elevates quality of life and contributes to a thriving economy. Launched in 2016, MTC's Graduate Pathways to Success (GPS) program is a key element of the college's strategic approach to realizing this vision. GPS helps underserved high school students navigate the unfamiliar terrain of college preparation with intensive advising along a curricular pathway that includes college coursework. Graduates leave high school with a certificate or associate degree—or transferable credits toward them—and the skills to succeed in locally in-demand jobs.

## How It Began

When nearby Marion City Schools (MCS) officials tracked their students one year after high-school graduation, they discovered that 60% were neither attending college, nor gainfully employed—while good local jobs went unfilled. These economically disadvantaged young adults had the ability to succeed, but lacked the focus and direction needed to chart a course for college or skilled employment. Alarmed, school officials sought to engage MTC and the local business community in crafting an approach to better guide and equip high school students for life after graduation.

"The GPS program provides students with an intentional path to career and educational success. The ability of MTC to expand this program beyond our initial partner is exciting. I believe in the program goals even more now that my son is a GPS student."

– Dr. Ryan McCall, President, Marion Technical College

MTC President Ryan McCall well understood the far-reaching social and economic impacts of having large numbers of high school graduates unanchored to higher education or employment. Through his work with economic development coalitions and the local chamber of

commerce, he had developed relationships with key local employers who were having difficulty filling engineering and technical positions. Leaders from Whirlpool, Honda of America, OhioHealth and other companies were eager to join the dialogue around strengthening the pipeline of qualified candidates to meet their current and future workforce needs and build the local economy.

MTC and school district leaders designed the GPS program to offer students an intentional, supportive pathway to earn college credits in a field of study before high school graduation. Former MTC Chief Academic Officer Vicky Wood conceived the program design and led the effort to secure a \$60,000 grant from the Marion Community Foundation, which provided critical start-up funding. Together with supplemental resources from the school district, the grant enabled the college to hire a full-time GPS program coordinator to manage day-to-day operations and advise students. Today, Ohio's College Credit Plus (CCP) dual enrollment program provides core funding to sustain the program.

## The Approach

### Identifying college-ready students

Program leaders sought to identify rising freshmen who could be successful in college but were unlikely to attend without intervention. At the direction of MCS' superintendent, the district's 8th grade teachers hand-selected a group of students who met that criterion and who would otherwise not apply for CCP on their own. Teachers identified nearly three times as many students as initially expected, underscoring the need for the program. An application process with student and parent interviews was instituted in the second year to better manage the demand generated by the program's successful launch. While teachers continue to nominate students they believe would most benefit, MTC and partners also promote the opportunity with annual GPS Information Nights held to educate parents and students on the program's expectations and requirements around college readiness.

Every 8th grader at GPS partner schools is now tested for college readiness in reading, with scores provided to school counselors and parents to help them assess whether students are ready for the program. Those that are not ready may retest the following year after receiving extra support. Even those students that begin GPS later than freshman year derive great benefit from the program's structured approach, and can still earn significant credits toward a certificate or an associate degree.

## Extensive support

GPS students benefit from dedicated coaching that far surpasses what CCP participants typically receive. They are grouped by grade level into cohorts that remain together for all four years of high school, providing unity, camaraderie and mutual aid during the intensive program.

The GPS coordinator is a strong presence for freshmen and sophomores, offering hands-on guidance including weekly progress checks for each student and vigilant monitoring of academic progress through grades and assignments. Housed at MTC, the coordinator visits participating schools regularly to build relationships, answer questions and facilitate interventions as needed. She helps students learn the skills and discipline needed to succeed in college-level courses, such as how to engage with professors and how to advocate for themselves. Parental involvement and communication are encouraged to reinforce program expectations.<sup>12</sup> Upperclassmen are transitioned to a less intensive advising model in preparation for the shift they'll undergo if they continue their college studies after high school graduation.

## Guided pathways

Admitted students begin their studies with a college preparatory summer course before they begin 9th grade. Whereas many CCP students take just a few courses in areas of interest, GPS students follow a carefully sequenced program of study culminating in an associate of arts degree, associate of technical studies degree or in-demand certificate upon high school graduation. Students who do not meet those goals still earn credits that can be used at MTC or, in most cases, transferred to another college or university. Students are guided in selecting a pathway from a range of fields: Health; Business; Information Technology (IT); Engineering; Criminal Justice; and Arts & Sciences.

GPS participants take two college courses in 9th grade and four in 10th grade either in the high school or online. Most of their junior and senior year coursework is college-level, delivered at MTC with free transportation provided.

## Impact

The Ohio Department of Higher Education awarded MTC a \$350,000 Innovation Grant in 2017. The funding enabled GPS expansion to two additional high schools in Marion County, with a streamlined version of the program in select schools in two other counties. The grant also supported North Central State College in replicating the successful program in its own

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<sup>12</sup> A Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) release must be on file to enable parental communication with college students—in this case, high school students taking college courses.

community 45 minutes to the northeast. The state’s CCP funding model will sustain GPS as the program continues to grow.

With many first-generation college students among its ranks, the first GPS cohort graduated from Marion City Schools’ Marion Harding High School in May 2020, capping off four years of rigorous study. Results are strong:

- Degrees earned. Twelve GPS students received an associate degree alongside their high school diploma, collectively saving \$138,565 in tuition at MTC and accelerating their entry into the workforce—at no cost to them or their families.
- Credits earned. The 33 graduating members of the cohort earned 1,246 college credits valued at \$230,510—credits that could easily cost twice as much at other universities.
- Coursework. Graduates in the initial cohort earned a 3.04 GPA, with grades of C or better in approximately 90% of courses.

“Students in the GPS program have overcome barriers to achieve success and demonstrated a relentless level of resiliency and persistence. They are able to transfer meaningful credits or begin work in their desired career field immediately upon high school graduation. The financial savings alone is astounding. Having watched their confidence grow, I know they have the skill set to be successful in life.”

– Amanda Sivey, GPS  
Coordinator, Marion Technical  
College

The program lost some participants for personal reasons, while other students opted for a less demanding, traditional high school experience.

MTC will follow GPS graduates’ education and employment trajectory over time through the National Student Clearinghouse and wage-match data from the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services. This data and long-range view will help shape program enhancements and ensure that GPS is best preparing participants for four-year colleges and/or in-demand careers.

Local employers are already seeing results, and the benefits will grow as more GPS students graduate in the years to come. GPS leaders built a certification pathway to address OhioHealth’s shortage of medical assistants—and upskilled the company’s current workforce by helping them achieve certification, too. The community support and connectivity between the secondary education, postsecondary education and industry sectors is a winning combination—a magnetic “gold mine” in the words of economic development officials conducting a mock corporate site selection process.

## Lessons and Recommendations

As the program continues to evolve, its positive impact and thoughtful design have elicited strong interest within Ohio and nationally.<sup>13</sup> For those considering replicating GPS, MTC leaders underscore the importance of:



*Skilled management and advising.* Having the right combination of organizational and interpersonal skills is key for the GPS coordinator/advisor role. The logistics of running a program with multiple partners, schedules and interests are many. Yet an equally vital focus is coaching students effectively along their guided pathways, addressing the challenges that come with bringing college-level material and expectations to younger students.



*Consistent communication.* Assisted by the program coordinator, college and high school faculty and school guidance counselors must maintain open lines of communication to ensure that students' needs are being identified and met. Serving GPS students requires a supportive mindset that often extends beyond what is typically required for older students.



*Adaptability.* Leaders must also be ready to make programmatic changes to meet student needs. For example, early program cohorts were bussed to MTC for nearly all of their college classes, causing students to miss out on important elements of their high school experience. Program officials recognized that this arrangement could dampen interest for future participants. Now, GPS college courses for freshmen and sophomores are largely delivered online or at the high school so that students can remain engaged with extracurriculars and non-GPS peers as they acclimate to the program. Juniors and seniors transition to taking more courses at MTC, with transportation provided.

## Next Steps

MTC envisions expanding GPS to all schools in the three counties currently served, broadening its service area to other counties as resources permit. For now, leaders are focused on adapting program delivery amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, with in-person instruction and events shifting online. While the global pandemic has slowed GPS program growth, it has not dampened enthusiasm for this transformative initiative.

<sup>13</sup> GPS has been featured in presentations to the American Association of Community Colleges, National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Programs, OACC's Student Success Leadership Institute, Ohio Business Roundtable and the Ohio Department of Higher Education, among others.

# 'STEMming' the Tide of Job Vacancies: Public-Private Partnership Program Builds a New Generation of Engineers

*Northwest State Community College*



**Situated in the rural northwest corner of Ohio, Northwest State Community College aims** to affordably equip students with the education and skills needed to secure family-sustaining, local jobs, many of which are in manufacturing. The college anchors a six-county region that is home to more than 100 manufacturers who collectively employ thousands of residents. Yet the manufacturing industry has struggled to address a talent shortage that threatens to derail the economic stability of the community. Together with industry and K-12 partners, Northwest State developed the transformative STEM<sup>14</sup> Public-Private Partnership Program—known as STEM P<sup>4</sup>—to bridge the gap between students and these local job opportunities. Through the state’s College Credit Plus (CCP) dual enrollment program, STEM P<sup>4</sup> provides high-school participants with targeted, hands-on technical education and advising support that enables them to earn credits toward an associate degree and gain valuable exposure to potential careers and employers.

## How It Began

U.S. Department of Labor statistics show that over 90% of STEM occupations have mean wages significantly above the national average for all occupations.<sup>15</sup> Employment in STEM fields is projected to continue strong growth over the next decade.<sup>16</sup> Despite the financial rewards and career prospects these jobs offer, there are thousands of open STEM positions in Ohio alone.<sup>17</sup> Mindful of the impact of this disconnect, community partners in the local

<sup>14</sup> STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. These academic disciplines underpin the technical curriculum of STEM P<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> “News Release: Occupational Employment and Wages – May 2019,” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, March 31, 2020. Accessed October 30, 2020. Available at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ocwage.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> “Employment Projections: Table 1.11 Employment in STEM occupations, 2019 and projected 2029,” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Last modified date: September 1, 2020. Accessed October 30, 2020. Available at <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/stem-employment.htm>

<sup>17</sup> An October 30, 2020 search at OhioMeansJobs.com for jobs with “engineer” in the title returned more than 6,000 open positions. The numbers would be higher with expanded STEM-related search terms.

U.S. Route 6 Compact workforce development group met regularly to discuss how Northwest Ohio businesses could attract and retain well-prepared local graduates to fill the skilled jobs needed to sustain the local economy. And in 2014, a partnership was born.

Peter Beck, the owner of Automatic Feed Company, a coil processing and automation equipment design and manufacturing company, approached Northwest State and local Napoleon City Schools officials for expertise in designing an experiential learning program to foster interest in modern manufacturing, engineering and technology. The partners jointly developed and piloted a series of focused, hands-on STEM courses taught by Northwest State faculty for Napoleon High School. Automatic Feed hosted the students on-site in the Northwest Ohio Learning Center for Manufacturing Sciences, a facility specially designed for the program and located within the company's headquarters. Following the successful pilot, the partners expanded program delivery to other local high schools through CCP. A STEM Public-Private Partnership grant from the Ohio Department of Higher Education further fueled the program's growth—and provided inspiration for its name—enabling Northwest State faculty to expand outreach and advising to CCP students in those schools.

"NSCC wants to be able to assist students to connect the link between education and employment. STEM P<sup>4</sup> allows us to help students working in STEM, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering while earning college credit."

– Ryan Hamilton, Dean of STEM and Industrial Technologies, Northwest State Community College

## The Approach

### Recruiting participants

High school teachers and guidance counselors initially nominated students to participate, but program leaders wanted to ensure that all students were aware of the opportunity. Northwest State engineering faculty ensure a wide reach by visiting local high school biology classes that all students are required to take. The faculty members deliver an engaging presentation that helps students see the possibilities the program and STEM fields afford, from visits to area manufacturers and access to cutting-edge technology to lucrative, in-demand jobs. They try to assuage concerns that engineering is only for the highest-performing students, explaining how the field is accessible to students with a wide range of interests and aptitudes. This approach has netted increased student interest and program enrollment.

A dedicated Northwest State advisor conducts targeted outreach to the local homeschool population, guiding families through the CCP application and enrollment process.<sup>18</sup> The advisor is in frequent contact with the homeschool co-op that covers the college's six-county

<sup>18</sup> The advisor facilitates homeschool students' participation in all of the college's CCP offerings, not just STEM P<sup>4</sup>.

service area. Communication strategies include phone calls, texts and appointments with families, attendance at community events and a monthly newsletter featuring scheduled activities, logistical information and other resources. This focused effort has improved homeschoolers' enrollment and retention in STEM P<sup>4</sup> and other CCP offerings.

The college promotes STEM P<sup>4</sup> at CCP Information Night, with two time slots featuring customized messages for both public school and homeschool students. An annual CCP Senior Night recognizes graduating students who have taken CCP classes at the college and promotes resources available to help those students maintain momentum toward their degree, such as financial aid and advising. This event also signals the benefits available to potential participants.

## Supportive advising

College CCP advisors test each interested student using Accuplacer to determine readiness for college-level work, meeting with students individually to discuss whether they qualified or need to retest the following year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, students are admitted if their cumulative high school grade point average is 3.0 or higher, in accordance with state guidelines.

Upon acceptance to CCP, the advisors help students to select their academic pathway and enroll and prepare for their college courses. The advisors stay in contact with students throughout each semester, learning about their successes and coaching them through challenges in concert with program faculty and high school guidance counselors. Seniors receive advising on scholarships, financial aid and how to transition as a continuing student at Northwest State or another institution.

Northwest State faculty help students appreciate the full spectrum of STEM career possibilities through informal advising in class. For example, within the field of engineering alone there are more theoretical engineering science positions involving research, analysis and design as well as more applied engineering technology jobs such as operations, service and maintenance or distribution and sales. The instructors help students assess where their interests and skills best fit within the myriad options available.

## Technical curriculum

STEM P<sup>4</sup> students, typically juniors and seniors, follow the prescribed course sequence for the Electrical/Mechanical Engineering Technology Program pathway. Courses include: Introduction to Engineering; Engineering Graphics; Manufacturing Processes; and Microprocessors. Students attend these classes up to two hours each day, with a lab day every Friday. Courses are held in one of three locations, with transportation provided by the student or school district:

- At the student's high school, on a schedule jointly determined with the college;
- At Northwest State's advanced Manufacturing Training Center, a state-of-the-art facility used both for undergraduates and workforce development; and
- At area employers' facilities, including Automatic Feed, Napoleon Machine, Mayville Engineering Company (MEC), B&B Molded Products and APT Manufacturing solutions.

Applied learning brings the classroom material to life, with students gaining firsthand experience with a variety of related disciplines. Industry partners permit instructors to bring their students on the manufacturing shop floor, using specialized equipment and tools to test ideas and illuminate concepts.

Students receive up to 12 college credits by completing the STEM P<sup>4</sup> sequence. Upon high school graduation, students may enter directly into the workforce and/or continue their education, building on accumulated credits to earn an applied certificate in Computer Numerical Control or Computer Aided Design or an associate degree in Mechanical or Electrical Engineering Technology.

## Impact

Funding from the STEM Public-Private Partnership state grant award enabled the college to expand the program to nine school districts in nearby counties. Each is served by an industry partner. Participant results are strong:

- Over 90% of STEM P<sup>4</sup> students pass their classes.
- Nearly all participants continue their postsecondary studies after high school graduation. On average, approximately 50% enroll at Northwest State for up to three semesters to complete their associate degree. Of these, about 65% pursue a bachelor's degree through a transfer partnership with Miami University in southwest Ohio.
- Approximately one quarter of participants are female—notably higher than the proportion of female engineers nationally.
- About 15% of participants decide the engineering and manufacturing fields are not for them—an outcome the college considers positive because students did not spend time and money reaching this conclusion in college.
- Area employers are hiring program graduates, often covering the costs for them to finish their degrees while working. Almost all STEM P<sup>4</sup> students have a well-paying job in their field within several months of graduation. Given the connectivity between the college and industry partners, program faculty stay in touch with former students as they build their careers.

"I thought I would be studying books and have a few projects here and there. I never expected anything like this... This (prosthetic hand) project has made me think that I may want to work on projects like this for my career, too."

– Erika Getzinger, STEM P<sup>4</sup> student

The program's transformative benefits extend not only to participants, but also to the community. In 2017, a team of Northwest State students, including STEM P<sup>4</sup> students, designed and crafted a prosthetic right hand for a local boy born without one. Volunteering their time under the guidance of program faculty, the students created several prototypes, one final mechanical hand and replacement parts in the three-year-old's favorite colors using an online model and a 3D printer. Their work opened a world of possibility for the little boy and served as a captivating real-world application of their studies. More recently, students and faculty created 3D-printed face shields for local health care providers and senior care facilities at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Lessons and Recommendations

Northwest State leaders champion the value of constructive public-private partnerships for all involved. STEM P<sup>4</sup> students gain valuable exposure to potential employers and career paths while reducing the time and resources needed to complete their certificate or degree. Partner school districts can offer a wider range of opportunities to their students in a format that appeals to those who thrive on learning by doing. The college's participation furthers its mission to serve the community and strategic goals to increase access to high-quality, life-changing education and promote collaborative partnerships that support student success. Industrial partners benefit from an increase in human capital that strengthens their workforce pipeline as local talent is developed and retained.

To replicate such a strong venture, the college emphasizes the importance of:



*Commitment and communication.* Implementing a program like P<sup>4</sup> well requires significant commitment and trust across the team. Partners must each appoint qualified people with the requisite dedication to student success and motivation to work through challenges, with open communication about what is working and where changes are needed. Academic partners must reconcile differences from thorny class scheduling conflicts to institutional norms while keeping student needs at the forefront. Industry partners must be prepared to roll up their sleeves, opening company facilities to students, faculty and tours, and standing ready to hire graduates. STEM P<sup>4</sup> has strengthened relationships among these key players to the benefit of students and the community.



*Building awareness.* All partners must work together to educate students, parents, teachers, counselors, administrators and the community about the program and the advantages of a STEM career. This outreach involves not only promoting the specifics of STEM P<sup>4</sup>, but also challenging assumptions about who can succeed in the field of engineering and addressing fears of gritty factory conditions seen in industrial days past. Program leaders stress that STEM P<sup>4</sup> prepares students to succeed as engineers in modern manufacturing, an exciting and evolving field with innovative technology and solid growth prospects.



*Leveraging full-time faculty.* Full-time college faculty are well positioned to work with students as both subject-matter experts and informal career advisors. As practitioners who have real-world experience and industry ties through advisory boards and past employment, they help students not only learn the critical content, but also envision themselves applying that knowledge in a career.



*Experiential learning and personalized career advising.* Northwest State leaders consider the hands-on experiential learning and thoughtful career advising as equally vital components of STEM P<sup>4</sup>. To be successful with each, faculty and advisors must be able to spark student interest and enthusiasm and gain their trust, building rapport among a disparate group of students from different high schools.



*Flexibility.* Program partners must be prepared to quickly adapt, whether to changes in state policy or the impacts of an unforeseen pandemic. Team members themselves must also remain flexible, prepared to recruit, advise or instruct program participants regardless of their job title.

## Next Steps

The COVID-19 pandemic stalled conversations with additional high schools seeking to partner with Northwest State to offer STEM P<sup>4</sup>. And despite strong interest among students, the fall 2020 program cohort is smaller than average after the pandemic disrupted spring recruiting and cast uncertainty around students' and schools' plans. The college is adapting to socially distanced instruction, working to maintain safety during the hands-on group work that is the program's hallmark.

Several efforts are underway to expand access to STEM coursework amidst this fluid and challenging time. Faculty members are piloting a program to remotely deliver computer assisted design coursework to CCP students, providing access to the college's software at designated high schools. The college is also strengthening partner high schools' capacity through a "train the trainer" approach. Northwest State STEM faculty will offer a one credit-hour class to high school science, agriculture and industrial arts teachers to equip them to teach the college's Introduction to Engineering course, which serves as a foundational gateway to other STEM P<sup>4</sup> offerings. Once scaled, this effort has the potential to dramatically expand the pool of students who pursue the engineering technology pathway.

# Aiming Higher in Appalachia: 12th Grade Redesign Program Expands Opportunity



*Zane State College*

**On the outskirts of Appalachia, two neighboring institutions have long endeavored to** serve a largely White, under-resourced community, opening doors of opportunity through education. Like the hillside country, the challenges were steep—poverty, addiction, a sense of resignation to the status quo—and too often overshadowed students’ ambitions. In a community where college-going is not a deeply rooted tradition, many students at Zanesville High School were seemingly uninterested in the college down the road and did not see themselves as college material. That’s changing thanks to an innovative partnership with Zane State College that boosts their preparedness for and familiarity with the college during their senior year. The 12th Grade Redesign initiative offers a structured pathway through an otherwise challenging high school-to-college transition, providing students who are not college-ready with postsecondary and career coursework and support, enabling them to develop clear plans and accumulate college credits before graduating high school.

## How It Began

In 12th Grade Redesign, a concept conceived by national nonprofit Jobs for the Future, Zane State College President Chad Brown saw an opportunity to better align the extensive work each institution had undertaken to improve college readiness and support student success—and meet their missions by better supporting underserved students. Ohio’s College Credit Plus (CCP) dual enrollment program had already enhanced the connection between the institutions, but 12th Grade Redesign was a way to extend CCP’s benefit to a group of students who would otherwise struggle on the path beyond high school. Building upon their ongoing dialogue, Dr. Brown approached Zanesville City Schools Superintendent Doug

“I am so proud of what this program has done to increase college-going rates, but if we want to have significant, lasting impact, our partnership must evolve to reach these students in elementary and middle schools.”

– Chad Brown, President,  
Zane State College

Baker with the idea of recasting the senior year of high school to better equip underprepared students for success through postsecondary course exposure, accelerated developmental education and college and career planning support. Dr. Baker embraced the concept as a tool to help his district's students graduate high school with a roadmap and a jump start toward a credential or college degree.

Jobs for the Future selected Zane State College and Zanesville City Schools as one of just three partnerships nationally to pilot its 12th Grade Redesign model, in recognition of the strength of their existing collaboration and the college's leadership in student success initiatives. Over the course of a year, Jobs for the Future supported the partners in developing the initiative's parameters and planning for its launch in Fall 2017. The core team included Zane State's president, provost, chief student affairs officer, CCP director and college success coach alongside Zanesville's superintendent and high school principal. Teachers, guidance counselors and college faculty and advisors provided vital input as the program took shape.

## The Approach

### Targeting underserved students

The team zeroed in on a population that's often overlooked in reform efforts: the so-called "middle third" of high school students who in their junior year are uncommitted to or unqualified for other college and career tracks offered (such as College Credit Plus, Advanced Placement or Project Lead the Way), but who have demonstrated academic capability and could be successful with the right supports. Often the first in their families to even contemplate college, these students have a solid GPA and attendance record, but lower college readiness scores on the ACT and Accuplacer tests. They may not have a plan for their next step after high school graduation—or may be targeting a college or career goal that is out of reach based on their academic history. Teachers and guidance counselors guide the identification and selection of students to ensure the best fit.

In order to serve these students through CCP dual enrollment, Zane State College received a waiver from the Ohio Department of Higher Education on CCP's college-readiness eligibility requirements. 12th Grade Redesign students demonstrate readiness by completing the college's developmental education courses in lieu of a high score on the Accuplacer exam, which is a barrier to participation for many underserved students.

### Strategic outreach

The partners take a multifaceted approach to familiarizing students and their families with the program and with college-going culture. It begins with an intentional parent outreach strategy that communicates the postsecondary and career possibilities that await successful

program participants. Framing 12th Grade Redesign as an exclusive program for which rising seniors are chosen generates commitment and a sense of pride among both students and parents. A parent information night for each newly selected cohort and participation in the program's kickoff orientation helps ease anxiety for parents who may not have attended college themselves.

Over the summer, student and parent excitement continues to build with ongoing engagement, including a gift card for branded items and supplies at the college's bookstore and messages with tips to support student success. Redesign students are invited to participate in a range of Zane State campus activities, from campus tours and sporting events to seasonal festivals and food fairs, further building connection to the college and a sense of belonging. Teaching courses at both the high school and college ensures that students have an early and ongoing relationship with college advisors and faculty, helping ease their transition to campus upon graduation.

## Key elements

The 12th Grade Redesign pathway features three design principles: the college and high school *co-design* and *co-deliver* coursework and supports, then *co-validate* the experience through their respective institutional requirements. The partners share ownership for each program element to develop a seamless approach for participants, who participate in a cohort over the course of the year, providing built-in peer support and buy-in. The pathway includes:

### First semester of 12th grade: At Zanesville High School

- *Developmental education.* In the fall, students take prerequisite courses for gateway college-level English and math. These developmental education courses are taught at the high school by high school faculty serving as college adjunct professors using syllabi and textbooks provided by the college. Co-validated, these courses count toward high school graduation requirements and ensure that students avoid remediation upon enrollment at the college.
- *Holistic advising with college and career exploration.* A Zane State college success coach embedded at the high school teaches the college's First-Year Experience course, providing tools and skills for navigating college and career exploration. The course includes visits from financial aid advisors to help students learn how to apply for various forms of student aid. High school teachers and guidance counselors provide support through early intervention and tutoring.

### Second semester of 12th grade: On Zane State College campus

- *Credit-bearing college courses.* In the spring, students enroll in gateway college-level English, math and other courses taught at the college, earning dual credit—another form of co-validation. The program provides transportation.

- *Intensive personalized support.* The college success coach transitions delivery of services from the high school to the college campus, gathering the cohort daily for ‘study tables’ to complete homework, meet with tutors and counselors and provide other resources as needed.

Zane State was aided in its ability to deliver these robust student supports by an array of interwoven initiatives previously undertaken or underway on campus, including efforts to: redesign and scale holistic, data-driven case management advising; revamp student onboarding and create shared ownership for student progress; reform developmental education; and develop new pathways for students.

## Impact

While the COVID-19 pandemic brought the on-campus component of the 2019-20 spring semester to an abrupt halt in the program’s third year, there’s no doubt about the positive impact 12th Grade Redesign has had on both participants and the partners themselves.

Student satisfaction and outcomes are strong. Among the Zanesville students who completed the program during the 2018-19 academic year, the last full year of delivery:

- 91% successfully completed college-level math;
- 82% successfully completed college-level English;
- 82% successfully completed at least 9-12 college credits, saving them time and money toward a postsecondary credential or degree;
- 100% believed the program increased their college readiness;
- 100% indicated they would recommend the program to other students; and
- 91% enrolled in college after the program.

“(12th Grade Redesign) has performed way beyond our expectations... What’s really fabulous about this program is that students who are often led to believe that they’re not quite ready for college actually have outperformed the students who have been declared college-ready.”

– Richard Woodfield, former Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Zane State College

Among those who enrolled in college after high school graduation, 70% enrolled at Zane State—whereas fewer than 10% were considering the college prior to program participation. The program thus expanded the pool of college-ready students attracted to the college—while bringing additional resources into the high school and boosting teaching capacity. Both institutions benefit from the increased engagement with the other.

The Redesign program expanded to an additional high school in its third year, with programmatic changes tailored to that school’s unique needs and assets.

## Lessons and Recommendations

Highlighted by prominent local, state, regional and national organizations, the program's success has attracted attention from institutions across the country interested in replication.<sup>19</sup> As the implementation team continues to adapt and expand 12th Grade Redesign, Zane State leaders have identified key elements essential to success:



**Collaborative leadership.** Leaders of both the college and high school(s) must embrace a spirit of true partnership to dedicate the time and resources required for a co-designed, co-delivered and co-validated program. Zane State's and Zanesville City Schools' shared commitment to their Appalachian community fuel their effort.



**Strong management and communication.** The program manager must have the skill, creativity and drive necessary to create an experience that meets the needs of students—and the people serving them. Zane State's program manager, an embedded college success coach who serves as the main point of contact for students, spends significant time at the high school cultivating relationships that help students to flourish. She also ensures consistent communication between high school and college faculty and advisors.



**Engaged faculty.** Zane State faculty mentor the Zanesville teachers who serve as part-time adjuncts for the developmental education courses delivered at the high school. And the high school instructors offer their faculty colleagues guidance on classroom management—a challenge for some professors unaccustomed to teaching younger students. All faculty are committed to student success and engaged with advising.



**Flexibility.** The program team must identify and adapt to the unique needs and assets of each partner school and cohort of students; replication of the program may look different from year to year or school to school. Program leaders must also work around turnover among key school district personnel that disrupts momentum and be mindful of social issues facing students, such as homelessness and addiction.



**Logistical plan.** Partnering with a neighboring school district increases buy-in and facilitates the many logistics of a co-delivered program, from scheduling to transportation.

<sup>19</sup> The program and its staff have won awards from the Community Colleges of Appalachia and Ohio ACT. It has been featured in communications by the Ohio Department of Higher Education, Jobs for the Future, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Hechinger Report, among others.

## Next Steps

Given the program disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, new participants were not recruited for the 2020-21 academic year. Program administrators are considering options for renewing the program when it is safe to deliver in person, having determined that an online format does not offer the intensive, personalized experience that has been instrumental to the program's success to date. Despite the uncertainty, the Zane State-Zanesville team remains fully committed to 12th Grade Redesign and eager to serve its next beneficiaries.

## Resources

### Cuyahoga Community College

**Program website:** [www.tri-c.edu/yta](http://www.tri-c.edu/yta)

**In the news:**

<https://www.industryweek.com/talent/article/22025503/stem-saves-the-world-how-the-avengers-made-the-heroes-manufacturing-needs>

### Edison State Community College

**Program website:** <https://www.edisonohio.edu/CollegeCreditPlus/>

**In the news:**

<https://www.ccdaily.com/2020/10/strategies-colleges-used-to-increase-enrollment-this-fall/>

### Marion Technical College

**Program websites:**

<https://www.mtc.edu/gpsgraduates/>

<https://www.marioncityschools.org/schools/harding-high-school/collegecareer-ready/graduate-pathways-to-success>

**Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAcB8VkYRjs>

### Northwest State Community College

**In the news:**

<https://www.wtol.com/article/news/nsc-students-make-mechanical-hand-for-3-year-old-archbold-boy/512-952c3006-0150-485b-94ff-b5a5c8e3a63b>

[https://www.13abc.com/content/news/3-year-old-Wauseon-boy-gets-a-new-hand-thanks-to-students-and-staff-at-a-local-college-456472333.html?fbclid=IwAR0WONc1BxYi-QNoFeXESnlhOPpr5tFnVUrJ\\_niDTJx2FPD9T4ynVfLA9zQ](https://www.13abc.com/content/news/3-year-old-Wauseon-boy-gets-a-new-hand-thanks-to-students-and-staff-at-a-local-college-456472333.html?fbclid=IwAR0WONc1BxYi-QNoFeXESnlhOPpr5tFnVUrJ_niDTJx2FPD9T4ynVfLA9zQ)

### Zane State College

**College website:** <https://www.zanestate.edu>

*Creating Strong Transitions From High School Through College: A Progress Report on Redesigning Senior Year.* Joel Vargas and Krista Sabados, Jobs for the Future, 2018

**For more information, please contact the Success Center at [studentsuccess@ohiocc.org](mailto:studentsuccess@ohiocc.org).**

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