

Enhancing Student Outcomes: The Promise of Career Credentials and College Credit Partnerships for Ypsilanti Community Schools

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College Credit and Career Credentials (C4) Community Advisory

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Executive Summary

In response to its charge to research, recommend, and develop a system with multiple ways for all students to earn college credit and/or career credentials prior to high school graduation, the College Credit and Career Credentials (C4) Community Advisory Group strongly recommends that the newly created Ypsilanti Community Schools (YCS) offer all its high school students **enhanced dual enrollment options**. Dual enrollment refers to students taking college courses and earning college credit before they officially graduate from high school.

Research has clearly and consistently shown that dual enrollment leads to positive and improved student outcomes. For example, students who dual enroll are more likely to persist in postsecondary education, graduate from college, and eventually earn a bachelor's degree compared to students who do not dual enroll. It is important to note that **low-income and first-generation college students (students whose parents did not attend college) are shown to especially benefit from participating in dual enrollment** (An, 2013). Dual enrollment programs that effectively create an authentic college experience by holding courses taught by college faculty on a college campus, convey a clear pathway to career, and offer strong student support measures and professional development for teachers and staff have been shown to be especially successful. One such dual enrollment model that offers these elements and especially emphasizes academic and social supports for their students is the **early/middle college model**.

In summary, based on national research and local data, **it is strongly recommended that the YCS partner with Washtenaw Community College (WCC), develop other possible partnerships with institutions in the county, and apply to become an early/middle college that offers all its students the chance to earn college credit while in high school.** With the Boards from both institutions recently signing a resolution of support to this end, as a next step, it is recommended that a taskforce be created consisting of community and school leaders that will be charged with leading the design efforts of such a dual enrollment partnership. These partnerships will greatly expand the opportunities available to YCS families, beyond the current slot allocations in existing early college programs. Further, it is suggested that the taskforce leverage the lessons learned from the existing programs so that programs can work more efficiently and effectively, as well as leveraging the institutional knowledge from best practices. Once this model is built, YCS will be one of only a few national examples of an aligned pre K through grade 14 system.

As soon as Fall 2013, all YCS high school students who meet WCC's dual enrollment requirements and demonstrate proficiency of learning behaviors (soft skills) would be able to enroll in the wide range of WCC classes available to them. The same diversity of courses and programs that are currently open to WCC's dual enrolled students—including but not limited to courses in business and entrepreneurial studies, information technology, general studies, foreign languages, math and science, and advanced manufacturing systems—would be open and available to YCS dual enrolled students. **For students who are not yet ready for college-level courses, it is**

recommended that specially designed dual enrollment programs in career pathways of construction trades and health sciences be offered during the 2013-2014 school year as well. Additionally, it is recommended that YCS staff partner with the existing early/middle college programs to co-construct scaffolds and supports for youth, as well as participate in collaborative professional development to learn about instructional methods to best meet students' learning and behavior needs. Developing youth's mindset of a life-long learner and equipping them with the skills and work habits to do so is at the core of this work.

Finally, due to declining projected enrollment in the Regional Career and Technology Center (RCTC) programs (only two to seven seniors are predicted to enroll per section in 2013-14, see Table 3), **it is recommended that YCS begin a redesign process of RCTC during the 2013-14 school year.** Additionally, it is suggested that staff interview all rising seniors in RCTC classes to explore their programming desires and options, offer one section per strand to support the rising seniors with current program completion if enrollment criteria are met, and consult with other career centers in the region to explore student enrollment partnerships. This also allows staff to deeply explore workforce data and the blending of career pathway programming into the new Small Learning Communities program structure.

Becoming an early/middle college is a great undertaking, but the leadership from both school districts has already made great strides to better prepare students for college and careers. For example, more and more high school students have taken the COMPASS placement tests early, worked with teachers through an advisory process to explore career pathways and deepen college knowledge, and enrolled in college readiness math and English Language Arts (ELA) specially designed courses to address skill needs. The recommendation to become an early/middle college builds on the work that has already been done in this county to enhance student outcomes. It is a natural next step for the consolidated school district and the community at large.

Introduction

With the creation of YCS, the unified school district that has brought together the Willow Run and Ypsilanti districts, there is great opportunity to explore and implement innovative educational models that have promise to improve student achievement and outcomes. In response to its charge to research, recommend, and develop a system with multiple ways for all students to earn college credit and/or career credentials prior to high school graduation, the College Credit and Career Credentials (C4) Community Advisory Group strongly recommends that YCS offer all of its high school students **enhanced dual enrollment options.**

Dual enrollment involves high school students taking college courses with the aim of earning college credit before graduating from high school. Several different dual enrollment models exist, including early/middle colleges, which are public high schools

designed to allow a student to earn a high school diploma while also earning an associate's degree, a certificate of completion, or transferable college credits toward a four-year degree.

The purpose of this white paper is to (1) provide an overview of what dual enrollment is and the different types of dual enrollment models that exist; (2) review the research on dual enrollment programs, including identifying best practices associated with designing such programs; and (3) analyze local contextual factors in the Washtenaw county area, including workforce data, student data, and current institutional strengths, that can help guide decisions about what a dual enrollment model might look like for YCS. This white paper concludes with a set of recommendations on how YCS should proceed in designing and offering dual enrollment opportunities for its students.

In short, it is strongly recommended that YCS partner with WCC, the local and highly respected two-year college in the county, and applies to become an early/middle college that offers all its students the chance to earn college credit while in high school. After examining local workforce data, student needs, and the current strengths and available resources of YCS and WCC, it is further recommended that during the 2013-2014 school year that:

1. expanded dual enrollment options are created, including allowing all YCS high school students who meet WCC's dual enrollment requirements and demonstrate proficiency of learning behaviors (soft skills) to enroll in the wide range of WCC classes available to them,
2. programs are piloted in the career pathways of construction trades and health sciences, with the goal and intention of expanding program offerings in subsequent years, and
3. a work team with faculty and staff from Washtenaw Technical Middle College, the early/middle college located on WCC's campus, Michigan Works!, and YCS form to develop essential professional development, supports and programming, as well as defining potential shared resources.

What is Dual Enrollment?

Dual enrollment refers to students who are enrolled both in high school and in college. Hence the "dual" in the name dual enrollment, these students are both high school students *and* college students. Ideally, once they complete the college course(s) they are taking, they are awarded college credit that can be applied toward a college degree.

This distinguishes dual enrollment programs from programs like Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB). AP and IB courses include college-level content but are not, in fact, college courses. Furthermore, successfully completing AP or IB courses does not guarantee that a student will accrue college credit the way successfully completing dual enrollment college courses does. That means a student who successfully completes an AP or IB course does not receive college credit the way he/she would if he/she dual enrolled at

a college and successfully completed a college course (Speroni, 2011). In short, dual enrollment generates a college transcript, while taking AP or IB courses does not.

Dual enrollment enables high school students to take college classes and earn postsecondary credentials and/or degrees before graduating from high school.

Dual Enrollment Models

Several different dual enrollment models exist. On one side of the spectrum is the **traditional dual enrollment** model whereby students who want to earn college credit while in high school initiate the process of taking college courses entirely on their own without being part of a specific dual enrollment program. This is a good option for students who are already high achievers and college-ready, meaning they have fulfilled requirements via standardized tests or college placement tests to take college courses.

On the other side of the spectrum is the **early/middle college model**. Early/middle colleges are institutional collaborations between high schools and postsecondary institutes that provide support and structure for high school students to dual enroll and attain college credit. Generally, early/middle colleges follow a five-year academic plan that offers a combination of high school and college classes that culminate in a career credential, an associate's degree, and/or up to 60 transferable college credits (Middle College National Consortium, 2013). Because they are characterized by and emphasize academic and social supports for their students, ranging from tutoring to college knowledge seminars, early/middle colleges are particularly ideal for underserved and disadvantaged students who would benefit the most from this type of institutionalized student support system.

In between, there exist dual enrollment models that provide some structure and support to high school students to dual enroll in college but not to the same extent as an early/middle college. **Enhanced dual enrollment systems** may offer one or more of the following opportunities for students: taking college placement tests in high school, college success seminars, tutoring support/supplemental instruction, early warnings to alert students if they are falling behind in a class, dedicated academic counselors, and other related extra supports.

Early/Middle College Models in Washtenaw County

In addition to students who participate in traditional dual enrollment, three dual enrollment institutional-based programs currently exist in Washtenaw County. They are each unique and include:

- **Washtenaw Technical Middle College (WTMC)**
WTMC is a Michigan Public School Academy chartered by and located on the campus of Washtenaw Community College (WCC). WTMC students jointly enroll as full time

students at WCC and are required to meet all pre-requisites, requirements and conditions of WCC students. WTMC students graduate with a high school diploma and a certificate and/or an associate degree from WCC, precluding the need to offer Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or high school honors courses. 74% of 2011 WTMC graduates earned an associate degree and 95% report that they plan to eventually enroll in a four-year college or university. 95% of WTMC students complete their courses with a grade of C or better. In 2012-2013, 72 students that reside in either the Ypsilanti Public Schools or Willow Run Community Schools enrolled in WTMC. (<http://www.themiddlecollege.org/>)

- **Early College Alliance (ECA) @ Eastern Michigan University (EMU)**

The Early College Alliance @ Eastern Michigan University is a public early/middle college program on the campus of Eastern Michigan University, a fully accredited post-secondary institution of the North Central Association (NCA). The ECA @ EMU is a Shared Educational Entity that partners the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, EMU, and eight local school districts (Ann Arbor Public Schools, Chelsea Public Schools, Lincoln Consolidated Schools, Manchester Community Schools, Milan Area Schools, Ypsilanti Public Schools, Whitmore Lake Public Schools, and Willow Run Public Schools). In 2011-2012, students posted EMU grades of C or better at an overall rate of eighty-two percent (82%) in 100 or above level courses. In 2012-2013, 82 students from Ypsilanti Public Schools and 11 students from Willow Run Community Schools enrolled in ECA. (www.earlycollegealliance.org)

- **Ypsilanti New Tech @ Ardis**

Focused on a project-based learning instructional approach that reflects the work place, Ypsilanti New Tech offers a one-to-one computing ratio in all classrooms as well as dual enrollment at WCC for eligible students. Any YNT student who passes the WCC COMPASS placement tests in Writing and Reading and demonstrates proficiency of learning behaviors (soft skills) can enroll in up to two courses per semester earning college credit. Currently, approximately 30 students from YNT are participating in dual enrollment. (<http://www.ypsd.org/ypsilantinewtechardis/>)

Why Dual Enrollment?

The ability to earn college credit—and even a college degree—while still in high school is one of the clear benefits of dual enrollment. The personal and public benefits of higher education are well documented (IHEP, 2005). Compared to individuals without postsecondary education, individuals who have a college degree have higher personal income and lower unemployment.¹ They also have improved health and higher life expectancy. State and local communities benefit from a more educated citizenry as well. Areas with a more educated populace have increased tax revenues, decreased reliance on

¹ According to IHEP (2005), the difference in annual income between those with a high school diploma and a bachelor's degree in Michigan was \$23,347 in 2003. In 2004, the unemployment rate of Michiganders with a high school diploma was 10.1%. For Michiganders with a bachelor's degree, it was 2.9%.

governmental financial support, reduced crime rates, and increased quality of civic life. Implementing dual enrollment programs can help students *and* communities achieve these benefits because dual enrollment programs help students earn college credit and achieve a college degree.

Several states across the country have recognized the value of dual enrollment. In 2011, the Michigan state legislature passed a series of bills that expanded high school students' access and opportunity to participate in dual enrollment. Students can begin to dual enroll as early as ninth grade, as opposed to eleventh grade under the prior law. More recently, the State of Michigan has mandated all Michigan public universities must award credit for college-level courses taken by high school students. Given this legislative mandate, now is an optimal time for Michigan high school students—and districts more broadly—to consider pursuing dual enrollment options.

Creating a 5-year early/middle college model provides additional funding to help decrease the cost of post secondary for the families and youth of YCS & build essential supports.

Research on Dual Enrollment

In the last ten years, there have been several studies that have analyzed outcomes of students who participate in dual enrollment programs. **The research clearly and consistently shows that dual enrollment leads to positive and improved student outcomes.**

The Community College Research Center (CCRC) located in Teacher's College at Columbia University in New York City has been a leader and vanguard of research on dual enrollment. They recently published findings from their analysis of eight programs involving ten colleges and 21 high schools in California (Hughes, Rodriguez, Edwards, & Belfield, 2012). After extensive evaluation using robust research methods, they found that program participants, compared with other students in their districts who did not participate in a dual enrollment program, were:

- More likely to graduate from high school
- More likely to transition directly to a four-year college than a two-year college
- Less likely to have to take basic skills (developmental) courses in college
- More likely to persist in postsecondary education, i.e., more likely to continue enrollment in college from semester to semester
- More likely to accumulate college credits

Several other studies have arrived at these same findings and have identified other positive student outcomes from participating in dual enrollment as well (Karp et al., 2007;

Michalowski, 2007; Swanson, 2008). Even after controlling for a range of student background characteristics, including race/ethnicity, gender, family background, and academic ability as measured by prior test scores; research shows that participating in dual enrollment also is associated with:

- Higher college grade point averages (GPA)
- Graduating from college
- Eventually earning a bachelor's degree

Recent research also demonstrates that low-income and first-generation college students (students whose parents did not attend college) are shown to especially benefit from participating in dual enrollment (An, 2013). This can be explained in part because students with college-educated parents are likely to attend college and attain a degree regardless of their participation in dual enrollment, while low-income, first generation students are more likely to truly benefit from the structures and supports that dual enrollment programs provide because they otherwise may not have access to them. Therefore, instead of assuming that low-income students and/or students whose parents did not attend college may not be ready or a “good fit” for dual enrollment, it is recommend that students in low-income high schools not only be given the opportunity to participate in dual enrollment programs but that they are targeted, recruited, and strongly encouraged to participate.

Low-income students and students whose parents did not attend college are shown to especially benefit from participating in dual enrollment.

Best Practices for Designing Dual Enrollment Programs

CCRC also has recently published a practitioner brief based on their longitudinal research on dual enrollment that highlights the essentials for program success and key considerations for program format that leaders, planners, and designers of dual enrollment programs should take into account (Hughes, et al., 2012). These key takeaways are reproduced below.

Essentials for Program Success

CRCC's research suggests that the following elements of a dual enrollment program are essential to success in especially reaching disadvantaged, underrepresented students and measurably improving their academic performance and attainment:

- *Connect high school and college.* Bring together secondary and postsecondary teachers, faculty and administrators to prepare students for college and to support them in their first college experience.
- *Convey a clear pathway to career.* Embedding dual enrollment opportunities within career-focused small learning communities encourages student participation by giving coursework focus and relevance, and it broadens students' expectations for themselves.
- *Create an authentic experience.* A dual enrollment class should be perceived by students as an authentic college experience where they can "try on" the college student role and view themselves as capable of doing college work, eventually creating a new norm and expectation for college-going.

Key Considerations for Program Format

Educators and administrators should consider the following program format options as they begin to design and evolve dual enrollment programs:

- *Location of classes.* On college campuses, students find a highly authentic experience and access to college support services. But because the cost and time needed for travel can make these arrangements difficult to manage for schools and students, some programs successfully locate dual enrollment classes at the high school.
- *Type of instructor.* College instructors teaching high school students for the first time often need help in understanding and connecting with them, while high school instructors teaching college courses may need to change their pedagogy to create an authentic collegiate environment. Professional development can help both types of instructors improve student persistence and success.
- *Course offerings.* Appropriate course selection is informed by program priorities and student needs. Student success classes, in which students develop study skills, establish career goals, and investigate colleges and majors give students tools for postsecondary success. Hands-on career-technical courses appeal to student interests and offer relevance to future employment.
- *Mix of students.* When dual enrollment students are mixed in classes with regular college students, they are likely to display greater maturity and feel their college experience is authentic.
- *Type of credit.* The opportunity to receive credit for both high school and college is a significant incentive for students to participate in dual enrollment programs, as doing so can save money and time. Additionally, high schools should obtain student consent to view college transcripts so they can play an active role supporting success.
- *Timing of courses.* Similar to location, the timing of classes presents trade-offs. Integrating dual enrollment courses into the regular school day on the high

school campus generally broadens the pool of students able to participate. However, in this arrangement, students may not strongly distinguish college courses from their high school courses. Offering courses after school on the college campus provides an authentic college experience but may conflict with students' other after-school responsibilities.

In addition to these considerations identified by CCRC, other important components to consider when designing a dual enrollment program include offering sufficient counseling, tutoring, and other ranges of support for students, incorporating learning behaviors/soft skills and career exploration components, and providing adequate professional development for instructors and staff.

- *Student support.* Providing sufficient support to students in dual enrollment programs is absolutely critical. Taking college courses as a high school student can be very challenging and demanding. Without supports in place, students may find themselves feeling discouraged, failing classes, and dropping out. The most successful dual enrollment programs utilize counselors and peer mentors who are dedicated to supporting dual enrolled students with everything from personal and professional goal setting, choosing classes, setting a class schedule, time management, and general problem solving. Student-focused seminars and workshops can also be offered (and required) that can prepare students for the different types of challenges they may face as dual enrolled students.
- *Learning to learn and learning to work.* Because youth are also college students, dual enrolled students must take more responsibility for their own effort, education, and behavior than traditional high school students. Learning and mastering competencies and skills such as time management, communication, persistence, digital literacy, and organizational skills is critical. Whether called soft skills, life management skills, habits of the mind, or school-wide learning outcomes, the most effective dual enrollment programs incorporate educational components that focus on learning to learn and learning to work as part of its curriculum. This explicit and intentional focus results in developing youth's mindset of a life-long learner and equipping them with the skills and work habits to do so. Internships and job shadowing experiences are essential tools.
- *Career exploration and planning.* Because they are college students, too, dual enrolled students have to choose and act on major and career interests earlier than traditional high school students. As a result, successful dual enrollment programs incorporate several consistent opportunities for students to explore potential majors and careers. Career exploration is particularly important for dual enrollment programs that feature career-focused small learning communities. Partnerships with workforce development organizations can provide wrap around supports and funding for services like resume writing, skills assessments, transportation & clothing needs, and internship placements.
- *Professional development.* Building in professional development for all instructors and staff—including from high schools, early/middle colleges, and

postsecondary institutions—is also key to the success of a dual enrollment program. Offering joint professional development on topics ranging from curricular alignment, academic intervention strategies, and adolescent development can not only benefit the instructors and staff and help them teach and support students better, it can assist with creating a collaborative culture and strengthening communication lines across institutions, benefiting the program and all participating institutions overall.

Local Contextual Factors to Consider

When planning and designing a new dual enrollment program, local context matters. Three main context-specific questions are important to consider:

1. What does my community need?
 - More specifically, what skills and education are needed to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs?
2. What do our students need?
 - More specifically, what level of support do most of our students need to become college-ready and be successful?
3. What are the strengths of a dual enrollment partnership across institutions?
 - More specifically, what capabilities and resources already exist between the high school and partnering college(s) that will lead to the creation of strong dual enrollment programs?

This information will help to guide decisions about what the best dual enrollment model is for your community and what types of course offerings it might provide. The following sections explore these topics as they pertain to the YCS community and the planned partnership between YCS and WCC.

Local Workforce Data

Determining what your community needs in terms of skills and education requires an analysis of workforce data to identify the in-demand jobs in the area. Several data sources were accessed to determine the workforce needs in Washtenaw county and surrounding areas, including the Workforce Intelligence Network of Southeast Michigan (WIN), the Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB).

The data clearly show that the most in-demand, high-wage jobs absolutely require some level of postsecondary education. As the highly reputable Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University recently has noted, making a livable wage with only a high school degree is becoming increasingly less likely. With the rising influence and integration of technology in today's world, many jobs that once required only a high school

diploma—such as manufacturing, administrative support, and construction jobs—now increasingly require a postsecondary vocational certificate, state certification or license, or an Associate’s degree. In short, higher education has become a “virtual must” for American workers (Carnevale, Smith, Stone, Kotamraju, Steuernagel, & Green, 2011, p. 26).

The most in-demand, high-wage jobs absolutely require some level of postsecondary education. Higher education has become a “virtual must” for American workers.

According to the latest WIN report (2013), Southeast Michigan’s largest employment occupation is **health care**, its fastest growing employment occupation is **information technology**, and its top contributor to gross regional product (a combination of earnings, property income, and taxes on production) is **advanced manufacturing**. More specifically, the top jobs across these areas include registered nurses, software developers for applications, and mechanical engineers.

According to data from the DTMB, the major occupational categories that are forecasted to grow specifically in Washtenaw and Livingston counties by 2018 include **professional jobs** (including accountants, software developers, engineers, lawyers, and educators), **health care jobs** (including physicians, nurses, and health technicians), **service jobs** (including childcare, food service, and law enforcement service workers), **administrative support jobs** (including executive secretaries, receptionists, and bookkeepers), **sales jobs** (including retail and insurance salespersons), and **construction and repair jobs** (including mechanics, electricians, and construction workers). See Table 1 below for specific employment forecast data. Important to note is the growth of construction and repair, which is projected to need to hire an additional 1,330 workers by 2018 (a 8.4% increase) in our local area.

Table 1. Employment Forecasts by Major Occupational Category for Washtenaw and Livingston Counties, 2008-18

Occupational Category	2008	2018	Employment Growth	
			Number	Percent
<i>Total, All Occupations</i>	<i>240,775</i>	<i>263,215</i>	<i>22,440</i>	<i>9.3%</i>
Professional (e.g., software developers, engineers, educators)	61,090	69,345	8,255	13.5%
Health Care (e.g., doctors, nurses, health technicians)	18,550	23,020	4,470	24.1%
Service (e.g., personal, food, protective service workers)	40,425	44,520	4,095	10.1%
Administrative Support (e.g., executive secretaries, receptionists, bookkeepers)	34,845	37,430	2,585	7.4%
Sales (e.g., retail, insurance salespersons; cashiers)	27,025	28,615	1,590	5.9%
Construction and Repair (e.g., mechanics, electricians, construction workers)	15,915	17,245	1,330	8.4%

Source: Michigan DTMB, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives

Specific high-wage and high-demand occupations that are projected to grow in Washtenaw and Livingston counties include registered nurses, certified nursing assistants, executive secretaries, dental hygienists, self-enrichment education teachers (who teach classes that generally do not lead to a degree or certification, such as classes in music, foreign languages, personal finance, or recreation), and first-line supervisors/managers in construction trades (Table 2). Clearly, healthcare workers are and will continue to be in high demand in our local area, as well as across the state. In fact, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation includes healthcare as one of its top sectors for growth and emphasis. Information technology, manufacturing, agriculture, and energy are other sectors that Michigan is emphasizing and forecasting to grow across the state.

Health care, information technology, and advanced manufacturing are occupational areas that are in-demand in Southeast Michigan.

Table 2. Projected High Growth Jobs in Washtenaw and Livingston Counties that Require an Associate's Degree or Work Experience (2008-18)

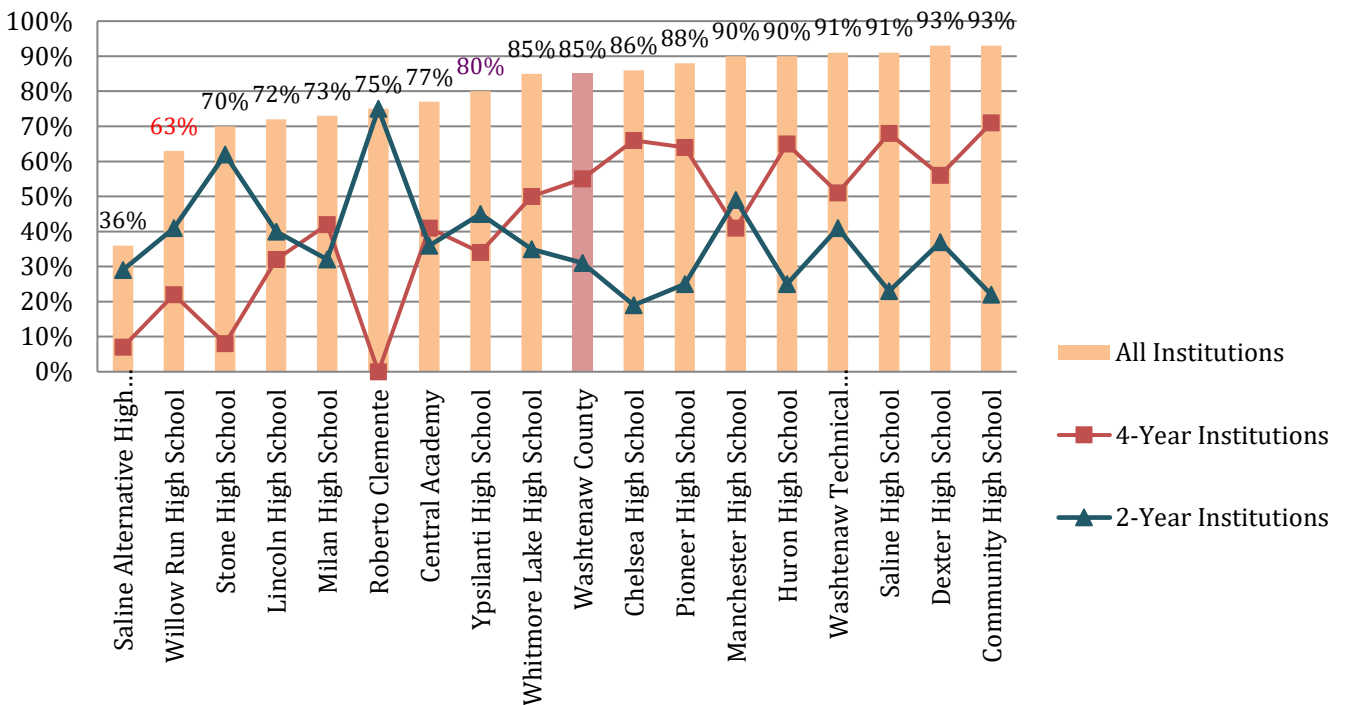
Occupation	Numeric Job Growth	Percent Job Growth	Hourly Wage
Registered Nurses	995	23.4%	\$29.48
Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	380	11.5%	\$20.77
Dental Hygienists	175	34.4%	\$32.74
Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	175	28.9%	\$22.84
First-Line Sup/Mgrs of Const Trades and Extraction Workers	105	13.9%	\$32.21

Source: Michigan DTMB, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives

YCS Students' Aspirations and Current Outcomes

Students in Willow Run and Ypsilanti high schools have voiced strong aspirations for attending college and yet have faced several challenges in past years. Nearly half of all respondents to the Senior Exit Survey from 2009 to 2011 reported that they planned to attend a four-year college, and over 30 percent of students reported that they planned to attend a two-year college. While data suggests that 80 percent of 2009 graduates of Ypsilanti High School enrolled in college, only 63 percent of graduates of Willow Run High School enrolled (Figure 1).

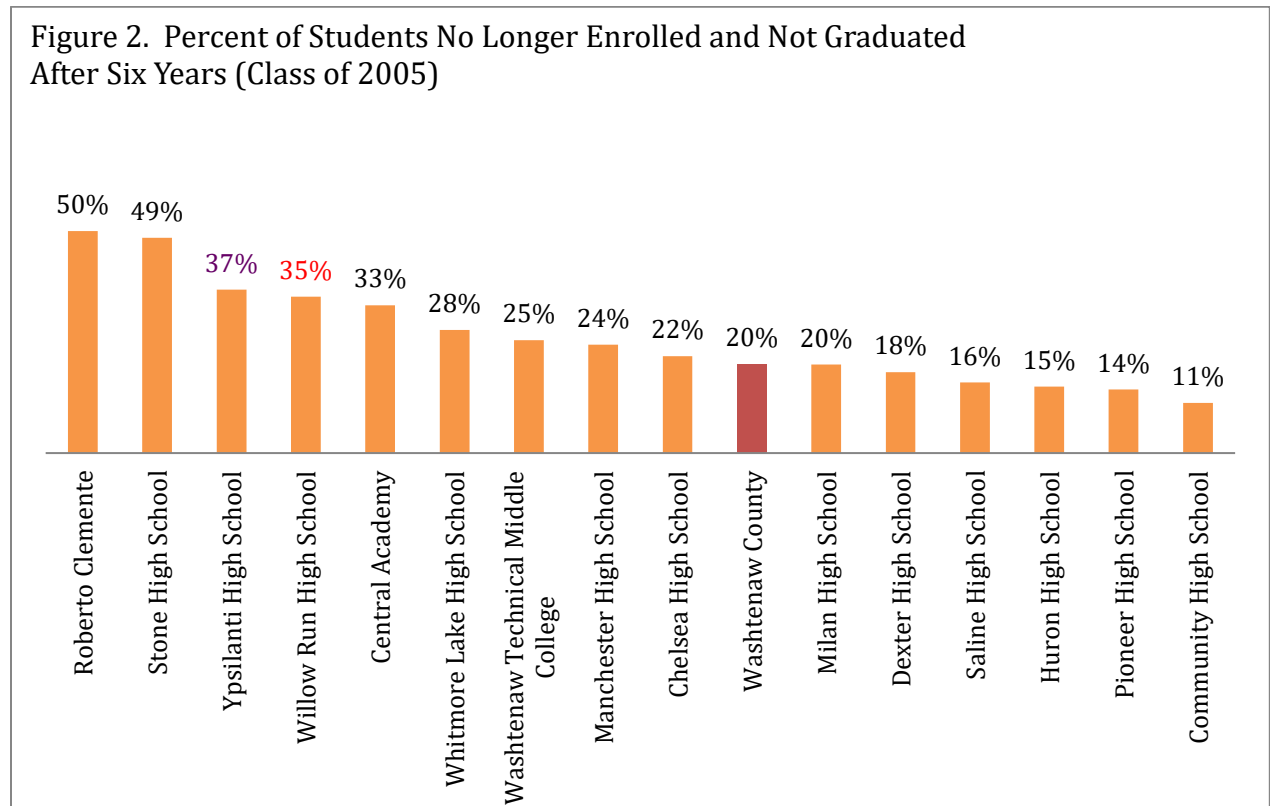
Figure 1. Percent of Students Enrolled in College at Any Time During the First Two Years After High School by Institutional Level (Class of 2009)



Source: National Student Clearinghouse – Student Tracker

Results from the Senior Exit Survey (2009-2011) also indicate that Willow Run and Ypsilanti High School students were most interested in pursuing degrees in health sciences (122 students), the arts (94), business and information technology (91) and science, technology, engineering, and technology (STEM) fields. Like most fields, these fields require competence in writing, reading, and math. Yet, according to a Michigan Department of Education study of Michigan high school graduates (MiSchoolData.org), **39 percent** of 2008 graduates from Ypsilanti High School and **32 percent** of 2008 graduates from Willow Run High School required taking **remedial coursework** at a Michigan public college.

Furthermore, graduation rates of Ypsilanti and Willow Run High School students are well below the county average. Of the students who graduated in 2005, 15 percent of Willow Run students and 23 percent of Ypsilanti students completed a degree within six years. Conversely, 37 percent and 35 percent of Ypsilanti and Willow Run 2005 graduates respectively were no longer enrolled and not graduated after six years (Figure 2).



In summary, students in Willow Run and Ypsilanti high schools have strong aspirations for college yet unfortunately often face challenges that prevent them from accomplishing their postsecondary education goals. As the research presented earlier reveals, dual enrollment programs like an early/middle college will help remove barriers and actively support students to not just become college-ready but actually become college students.

Participating in dual enrollment can help YCS high school students realize their educational aspirations and achieve their college and career goals.

Strengths of YCS and Institutional Partners in Washtenaw County

Washtenaw county programs have over 15 years experience with early/middle college programs that offer enhanced dual enrollment options to high school students. These programs have developed strategies and supports to help all youth complete a five-year program with a career credential, at a minimum. A key component of YCS' career credentials and college credit partnerships will be to leverage these lessons and backward-design them into the YCS system, in collaboration with WCC and early/middle college partners.

WCC has long-standing experience welcoming high school students to dual enroll and take a wide range of its courses. Dual enrolled high school students at WCC must demonstrate college level basic skills by achieving at least a 19 and 20 on the ACT Reading and Writing tests respectively, achieving a 460 and 480 on the SAT Critical Reading and Writing tests respectively, or achieving an 82 and 81 on its COMPASS Reading and Writing placement tests respectively.

Once YCS students meet WCC's dual enrollment requirements and demonstrate proficiency of learning behaviors (soft skills), they will have the opportunity to enroll in a vast array of courses and programs, including business and entrepreneurial studies, information technology, 3-D animation, broadcast arts, welding, industrial electronics, general studies, foreign languages, math and science, and advanced manufacturing systems, just to name a few. Dual enrolled students are not limited to just one WCC program either. Many dual enrolled students have graduated with multiple certificates and/or associates degrees by the time they graduate from high school.

The early/middle colleges currently operating in Washtenaw County offer another strong advantage to YCS's career credentials and college credit partnership possibilities. Since 1997, WTMC has helped students from across southeastern Michigan earn college credit and achieve college degrees. ECA @ EMU has done the same since 2007. The staff and faculty at WTMC and ECA know how to support and engage students to be successful at dual enrollment and achieve their education and career goals. Both WTMC and ECA have already offered guidance and support in the planning and design of YCS's enhanced dual enrollment programs by serving on the Community Advisory Committee and Work Team. For example, WTMC is willing to offer valuable professional development opportunities to YCS teachers and staff over the summer of 2013 so that YCS is best prepared to serve and support its students and implement its enhanced dual enrollment options in the fall.

In terms of resources and facilities, both WCC and YCS offer a great deal to support a dual enrollment partnership. For example, WCC has a state-of-the-art construction training facilities that are generally underutilized during the day, since most of its classes are scheduled during the evenings. Vice President Linda Blakey and faculty chair of the

Construction Programs Department, Cristy Lindemann, have already collaborated on designing a dual enrollment construction program especially for high school students in the area. YCS has a new culinary arts facility at Ardis School and has made significant investments in automotive equipment and facilities as well. The space and facilities at Ypsilanti High School formally utilized for health care and graphic arts programs can also be leveraged to support programming for YCS's high school students.

The Career Credential and College Credit pillar of YCS captured the community's interest in creating a tighter alignment with the top two postsecondary partners, WCC and EMU. Additionally, WCC has a strong interest in working more closely with eastern Washtenaw county K-12 systems to address workforce development needs. As noted in the next section, a task force can focus on how to better leverage existing resources from both institutions to lead to more successful outcomes for youth. To expand the potential benefit to students, additional partnership opportunities will also be explored and developed with EMU.

Recommendations

The Career Credential and College Credit Community Advisory submits the following 7 recommendations to the YCS Board of Education based on the research and data presented above.

First, it is strongly recommended that steps be taken to institute a dual enrollment partnership between YCS and WCC. Boards from both institutions have recently signed a resolution of support to this end. As a next step, a **taskforce should be created** consisting of community and school leaders that will be charged with leading the design efforts of such a partnership. This task force should explore and develop additional opportunities with additional partners, such as EMU, Michigan Works!, and Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

In addition, to build on the resolution that both boards recently signed, a **formal Service Agreement should be written** by the task force representing both WCC and YCS that defines the:

- vision and goal of the dual enrollment partnership
- type of dual enrollment model that serves and suits the YCS community best
- roles and responsibilities of each partner institution (YCS and WCC), and
- financial obligations involved in planning, implementing, and running of the dual enrollment program.

As part of this WCC Service Agreement, it is recommended that a **work team be created** to focus on developing essential professional development, supports, and programming, as well as defining potential shared resources.

Second, based on the analysis of student data and needs, it is recommended that YCS **apply to become an early/middle college dual enrollment model** because it offers the highest level of academic and social supports for students compared to other dual enrollment models. If YCS applies to become an early/middle college in Michigan, it would be able to offer all of its students the chance to earn college credit while in high school and be able to receive fifth-year student funding, which can be used to further strengthen its student support systems and enhance student success outcomes.

An early/middle college designation will help advance the YCS vision of becoming the first choice for an exceptional cradle to career education.

This model would be able to serve both students who are already (or nearly) academically ready for college as well as students who do not have the academic skills and proficiency of learning behaviors (soft skills) to pass WCC's dual enrollment requirements. To illustrate, all YCS students who meet the dual enrollment eligibility for WCC would be allowed to enroll in WCC classes starting in Fall 2013. This means they would have the opportunity to take a wide range of college courses, from business and entrepreneurial studies, information technology, general studies, foreign languages, math and science, and advanced manufacturing systems, just to name a few.

Because of the importance of developing learning behaviors or soft skills such as communication, professionalism, time management, self-motivation, and persistence, a third recommendation is that the YCS early/middle college **incorporate learning behaviors (soft skills)** education into the program design. Existing early/middle college programs can provide technical assistance and longitudinal data on student outcomes demonstrating the necessity of developing an explicit curriculum and instructional plan. It is further recommended that **career exploration programming be intentionally designed**, targeting children as young as elementary school age, through partnerships with community stakeholders and summer camp experiences. For example, WCC is offering 2013 summer camp experiences for elementary, middle, and high school students to explore numerous occupations while also exposing the enrollees to the community college campus.

Fourth, it is recommended that it is optimal to **pilot career focused dual enrollment programs** in construction trades and health sciences during the 2013-2014 school year, after examining local workforce data, student aspirations, and the current strengths and available resources of YCS and WCC. An additional career pathway for the taskforce to explore programming is in the area of technology and business for fall 2014.

The YCS early/middle college could offer these **specially designed programs focused on specific career pathways** that allow students who do not meet WCC's dual enrollment requirements to take noncredit courses in career pathway programs *and* support them

with their academic and learning behaviors (soft skill) needs throughout their WCC program experience. These programs will align with credit courses for ease of transition once academic and learning behaviors (soft skills) are mastered.

Fifth, it is also recommended that the taskforce **review and redesign existing career pathway classes** currently offered by the Regional Career and Technical Center (RCTC); program options will be explored in hopes of providing rising seniors the opportunity to finish their career pathway. Table 3 provides current enrollment data for existing RCTC classes.

Table 3. Projected Enrollment Demographics for current RCTC classes for Fall 2013

Course	Class Capacity Per OCTE	Number of Rising Seniors	Resident District of Rising Seniors	Number Special Education Eligible
Auto Tech (AM)	22	5	3 YPS, 2 Lincoln	1
Auto Tech (PM)	22	2	2 YPS	1
Collision Tech (AM)	20	5	1 WR, 4 Lincoln	1
Collision Tech (PM)	20	7	7 YPS	1
Culinary (AM)	20	6	4 YPS, 2 WR	1
Culinary (PM)	20	4	4 YPS	0

Source: Michigan Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education, CTEIS Report, 3-4-2013

RCTC was a prior consortium agreement between three partner school districts: Lincoln Consolidated Schools (LCS), Ypsilanti Public Schools, and Willow Run Community Schools. Effective for the 2012-13 school year, LCS developed a partnership with the South/West Washtenaw Consortium (SWWC) at Saline High School to enroll 118 students in their programming options. LCS now has 8 slots in for Auto Tech I, 4 slots for Auto Tech II, and 20 slots for Hospitality/Culinary Arts at SWWC, as well as additional career pathways. LCS has dramatically decreased their enrollment in the remaining RCTC programs, as noted in Table 3. This enrollment change supports the recommended need to redesign programming during the 2013-14 school year. It is further suggested that the task force consider adopting the Lenawee ISD model for program evaluation of career pathway programming as its tool to review and redesign existing programming.

Sixth, to assist with the transition of becoming college students while still in high school, it is recommended that a **summer 2013 College and Career Readiness bridge program** be offered at WCC for YCS high school students. Ideally, WTMC faculty and staff would assist with curriculum design and material support for this program, along with YCS staff.

It will be important for YCS to determine how its career credentials and college credit offerings will be assessed as part of its planning and design efforts. A seventh recommendation is to **include feedback from students as part of its assessment data**. For example, student voices and feedback should be solicited throughout their program experience to find out what challenges or barriers they might encounter, what program features are most supportive of their success, and what they find beneficial about participating in dual enrollment. Tools to consider include the Senior Exit Survey and the NCREST student survey evaluation utilized at both WTMC and ECA.

Although becoming an early/middle college is a great undertaking, the leadership from both school districts has already made great strides to better prepare students for college and careers. More and more high school students have taken the COMPASS placement tests early, worked with teachers through an advisory process to explore career pathways and deepen college knowledge, and enrolled in college readiness math and English language arts (ELA) specially designed courses to address skill needs. The recommendation to become an early/middle college builds on the work that has already been done in this county to enhance student outcomes.

In summary, a dual enrollment partnership between YCS and WCC, like the one described above has great promise to benefit YCS students and the community at large. Dual enrollment programs have been shown to improve student educational outcomes, which are associated with higher personal income and lower unemployment at the personal level, as well as reduced crime rates and increased quality of civic life at the public level. Becoming an early/middle college, offering enhanced dual enrollment opportunities, and creating career exploration and career pathway programming tied to work forecasting regional needs will help YCS students achieve their aspirations at a higher success rate. Finally, this partnership has the potential to substantially decrease the cost of post secondary completion of either a career certificate or degree by utilizing existing funding revenue from K-12. This is a substantial benefit to the youth and families of YCS.

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