



Presentation to the New York State Board of Regents
May 19, 2014

What is Early College High School?

Institutions of higher education partner with public school districts to create early college high schools that provide students with the opportunity and preparation to accelerate the completion of their high school studies while earning a minimum of twenty-four but up to sixty transferable college credits at the same time.

Major Goals of ECHS

To help students who might otherwise not attend college . . .

- Develop the academic and social skills they need to graduate high school and be successful in college
- Earn significant college credit (up to 60 credits or an Associate's Degree) – *at no cost* - by the time they graduate high school.
- Reduce college tuition costs as a result of the compressed time needed to complete a college degree

Smart Scholars ECHS Profile

- Developed by the NYS Board of Regents in 2009
- 25 School-College Partnerships across the state
 - Cohort 1 through USNY, 11 partnerships initiated in 2010
 - Cohort 2 through NYSED, 14 partnerships initiated in 2011
- Serving 5,400 students in 2013-14
- As of Summer 2013, Smart Scholars had earned over 30,000 transferable college credits.
- 625 Smart Scholars from Cohort 1 are on track to graduate with an average of 22 college credits in June 2014.

Smart Scholars ECHS Program Design

- Academies or programs within schools as well as stand-alone schools, mostly located near their partner college campus.
- Provides students the opportunity to earn 24 or more college credits by the time they graduate high school.
 - the equivalent of one year of college coursework.
- Students may take college courses taught at the high school by “vetted” teachers . They may also take courses at the college with cohorts of their peers or mixed with traditional college students.
- Some ECHSs include a fifth year to allow students time to complete an Associate’s Degree.

Commendations from the NCREST Evaluation of the Smart Scholars Program, November 2013

While still a relatively new initiative, there are now a number of well-established schools and programs with a positive track record. Some of the most notable accomplishments:

- Enrollment of the target population
- Serving many students
- High quality implementation of whole-school and cohort-model programs
- Strong partnerships with Post Secondary institutions
- Majority of students take and pass college courses
- Evidence that college courses are authentic
- Strong leadership by state and intermediary.

Challenges from the NCREST Evaluation of the Smart Scholars Program, November 2013

The list of challenges points to areas where additional help may be needed. For the most part, the challenges mentioned are of the type that have long been encountered by early colleges across the United States, and typically are overcome with time and good guidance. The majority of those mentioned fell into four categories:

- ▣ The Importance of leadership support for the program
- ▣ Ensure that the needs of students with poor academic preparation are consistently met
- ▣ Providing students with robust college experiences