

**This issue's topic: The strengths and challenges of implementing a Middle College (MC) program.**

**Overview:** Middle College (MC) offers eligible high school students an opportunity to complete college-level courses towards earning a degree while concurrently earning their high school diploma. This report briefly examines the strengths and challenges of running an early college high school program.

**Research findings indicate that MC...**

- ...students are more likely to graduate with a high school diploma and were significantly more likely to enroll in college.
- ...students are more likely to earn a degree at a two-year college and ultimately transfer to a four-year institution.
- ...programs reduce the traditional educational attainment gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students.

**MC Challenges and Possible Solutions**

Challenges	Possible Solutions
<p><b>Insufficient program funding</b> Existing funding streams may not cover needed additional supports and services. As well as costs associated with textbooks and enrichment activities.</p>	<p>In states like California with strong legislation that support dual enrollment efforts, secondary and postsecondary partnerships can help to share the costs of additional supports and services.</p>
<p><b>Defining, promoting and ensuring college readiness</b> Students may need additional support to become academically and socially prepared to make a successful transition into college.</p>	<p>Provide accelerated course sequencing along with supplemental instruction. This gives students who test at a pre-collegiate level an opportunity to strengthen/improve both academic, affective knowledge and skills so they are college ready by the time they fully transition to college.</p>
<p><b>Policies and Regulations</b> Middle College programs are responsible for and required to meet the reporting standards at the local, district, state, and federal levels.  Teachers/Instructors must meet the credentialing requirements of both the K-12 system and the community college.  Balance/managing two different academic calendars. Mandating standardized testing dates that may conflict with the community college's schedule. Financial requirements that limit how funds can be used to support key strategies and activities.</p>	<p>A detailed agreement between the participating secondary and postsecondary partners can help to ease the burden of the myriad requirements by clearly outlining the responsibilities for instruction, the credential requirements for instructors, access to available resources, alignment and articulation between high school and college courses, liability concerns, and who will be responsible for paying for tuition and various expenses.</p>

**References**

Berger, A. , Turk-Bicakci, L., Garet, M. , Knudson, J., & Hoshen, G., (2014). Early college, continued success: early college high school initiative impact study. *Association of Institutional Research*. Retrieved November 5, 2014 from <http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/AIR%20ECHSI%20Impact%20Study%20Report-%20NSC%20Update%2001-14-14.pdf>

Purnell, R., (2014). A guide to launching and expanding dual enrollment programs for historically underserved students in California. *Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges*. Retrieved November 5, 2014 from <http://www.rpgroup.org/sites/default/files/DualEnrollmentGuideJune2014.pdf>