

EARLY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS: RELATIONSHIPS AND  
SUCCESS ELEMENTS OF AN EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM  
BETWEEN 25 RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SOUTHWESTERN  
PENNSYLVANIA AND A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Title: Early College Partnerships: Relationships and Success Elements of an Early College Program Between 25 Rural School Districts in Southwestern Pennsylvania and a Community College

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In an effort to meet the societal demands for a better prepared workforce and the educational reform movements, such as the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, school districts have begun to partner with post-secondary institutions. In particular, community colleges and high schools are working together to make education more affordable, more accessible, and more attractive by bridging the gap between high school and college. Early College Programs exist to meet these needs. Although information about the academic, social, and emotional impact of early college programs is available, there is little research that has dealt specifically with the general topic of school-college partnerships in relationship to the success and sustainability of early college programs.

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational partnership of the early college program between a community college and 25 rural school districts; and the organizational partnerships among them and attempt to identify and analyze the factors integral to the success and sustainability of the program. The results of this study were based on the perception of those individuals who were involved in the Early College Program during the 2008-2009 academic school year.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

The future prosperity of the United States relies strongly upon the success of its higher education system. With an increasingly technological and competitive world economy, more jobs require the advanced skills and knowledge that higher education provides. Yet, despite the significant efforts toward improving elementary and secondary education in the U.S., our country's international lead in college attainment rates is slipping. The societal and personal benefits for continuing on to college and receiving a degree are clear, as formal education has an important impact on U.S. economic growth and prosperity. One type of initiative for improving college attainment is to increase the availability of and access to credit-based post-secondary transition programs (Plucker, 2006).

In addition, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB, 2006) was a direct result of the recent demand to evaluate and improve the criteria used by school districts to increase the academic rigor of high school courses. This reform movement has resulted in a restructuring of the educational system. Based on the principles of accountability, choice, and flexibility, school districts have had to rethink how to deliver educational services that effectively meet the needs of each student.

In order to meet these demands and principles, school districts have begun to partner with post-secondary institutions. In particular, community colleges and high schools are seeking new ways to collaborate that support student enrollment in post-secondary programs (Chapman, 2001). They aim to make education more affordable, more accessible, and more attractive by bridging the gap between high school and

college. This effort provides school districts with the opportunity to not only meet the needs of each student, but provide opportunities to partner with post-secondary institutions.

The concept of offering college course credits to high school students has developed over the years. Organized programs providing this opportunity date back decades in some cases, and are separate from the College Board Advanced Placement Exams that may yield college credits. It was not until the mid-1990s that these school-college programs really began to have a significant enrollment. Most states, according to the Education Commission of the States (Bailey, 2003), offer such programs. Nearly half the states pick up part or all of the tuition.

There are several types of school-college programs such as concurrent enrollment, dual enrollment, and early college. For the purposes of this paper and research early college was defined as the opportunity for students who have not yet attained a high school diploma to earn college credits. Early college includes concurrent enrollment and dual enrollment which gives a student the opportunity to earn college credit and credit toward high school graduation. In certain early college programs, the student goes to the college campus for instruction or enrolls in courses taught electronically. In other early college programs, the student may take the course at the high school during the regular school day taught by the high school faculty or by college faculty who go to the school. The early college program specifically offered through Allegany College of Maryland is referenced as the Early College Program.

Early college programs are reaching hundreds of thousands of secondary school students who are ready for an advanced program of study prior to leaving high school

(Andrews, 2001). Because most community colleges encourage high school students to co-enroll in college classes for credit, these programs are one of the fastest growing services offered by community colleges.

Early college programs offer a unified effort to provide students the opportunity to begin their college career for different reasons. These programs exist to meet the specific needs of the schools and the students they serve. Additionally, these programs are intended to ease the transition from high school to college, provide intellectual challenge, improved access for underserved students, assist college-bound students, and enhance curriculum opportunities that help students remain engaged in their junior and senior years of high school

This study examined the early college program of a community college and 25 rural school districts and the organizational partnership among them in an effort to identify and analyze the factors integral to the success and sustainability of the program.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although information about the academic, social, and emotional impact of early college programs is available, a review of literature reveals that little research has dealt specifically with the general topic of school-college partnerships in relationship to the success and sustainability of early college programs. Much of the current research addresses the growing demands of secondary and post-secondary institutions, as well as negative relations between the two. Furthermore, the information focuses on the descriptions of the history and development of specific model programs.

As these programs become more common, there will be a need for more information on the impact of these partnerships and how to better serve the needs of those

who participate. Research advocates for the involvement of higher education institutions in providing opportunities for high school students (Andrews, 2000). Since early college requires formal linkages between high schools and colleges, they are also a mechanism for promoting partnerships between the two education sectors. Whereby creating early college programs requires changes in collaborating organizations. Thus, there are a number of lessons to be learned from the successful school-college collaborations. These lessons include common elements for success, and common mistakes as well. As with any organizational relationship, it is necessary for all parties involved to commit to seeing the process through to fruition (Eddy, 2003).

A study conducted by Susan Harkins (1998), found that there has been concern about the lack of research and information available for school-college partnerships. Hord (1981) argues that, “definitely, the interactive process begs to be studied. Much of what is written is based on intuition or folklore. A great deal of further inquiry, elaboration and refinement needs to be done (p. 16).” Greenberg (1991) also expressed his concern saying, “because the field of high school-college partnerships still is actively developing, significant research issues remain to be addressed (p. 86).” He adds that because there is little information known, it is important to study what happened to program participants before, during and after their involvement in the partnership. He continues that there is a need for greater insight into the process of their creation, operation, and possible demise.

Further analysis of what is known about successful partnerships will help maturing partnerships understand their next steps as well as help new partnerships take a

more solid first step. To better serve the needs and maintain the momentum of school college partnerships, more study is needed.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study examined the organizational partnership of the early college program between a community college and 25 rural school districts and the organizational partnerships among them and attempted to identify and analyze the factors integral to the success and sustainability of the program.

A growing body of literature suggests that high school curriculum, especially during the senior year, is greatly lacking in academic intensity. A recent report from the National Commission on the High School Senior Year (2001) indicates that students find the last year of high school to be “a waste of time” and “boring.” Not only are students not being challenged during their senior year, they are also not preparing for college. The Education Trust reports that while almost three-quarters of high school graduates are entering higher education each year, only about half of these students have completed at least a mid-level college preparatory curriculum (Kirst, 2001). They advocate the involvement of higher education institutions in providing opportunities for high school students to enroll in more challenging courses.

These and other forms of school-college programs have a purpose and play an important role in the education process. Rather than using the final years of high school to prepare for college, an increasing number of students are studying less and electing to take less demanding courses. A wasted senior year of high school can result in negative social and economic consequences for students during college.

According to a study conducted by Adelman (1999), the strongest predictor of whether a student gains a bachelor's degree is the level of academic rigor of his or her secondary education. Horn and Kojaku (2001) found that three years after entering a four-year post-secondary institution, 87% of those students who had completed rigorous coursework in high school had persisted and remained continuously enrolled at a four-year college or university, whereas 62% of students who had not taken a rigorous secondary coursework did the same. The consequences are that a number of these students, who have taken less rigorous course work, must take remedial coursework. These students waste time and money having to repeat topics they have studied in high school instead of moving on to college coursework.

Traditionally, these school-college programs have been reserved for high achieving students. However, contrary to popular belief, early college is not exclusively for the academically gifted learner. There are many programs that target the less-gifted student. Recently many educators have argued that middle and even low-achieving students can benefit from dual enrollment programs (Burns, 2000). These early college programs allow high school students to enroll in a college course prior to high school graduation, giving them first-hand exposure to the requirements of college-level work while gaining high school and college credit simultaneously.

In the face of budgetary pressures, high schools must often limit the courses they offer. Early college programs enable students to take advantage of such courses at the college level even if the high school itself is unable to provide such instruction (Adelman, 1999). Therefore, using such programs to supplement the high school curriculum can



increase student motivation by expanding the selection of interesting and challenging courses and student success in college by exposing them to advanced coursework.

Success in post-secondary education is strongly correlated with both rigorous academic preparation in high school and a clear understanding of the expectations for college-level academic work. Hence, improving the rigor and relevance of high school coursework has risen to the top of the education reform agenda to prepare students better for post-secondary education and the workforce (Plucker, 2006).

### **Research Questions**

During the course of this study the following inquiries guided the investigation:

1. What specific factors characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnerships?
2. What type of organizational partnerships exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?
3. What are the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?

### **Significance of the Study**

High schools vary in the breadth and depth of their college-level course offerings. Some provide sufficient depth for a high school student to complete up to two full years

of college material. Other high schools provide no college-level courses. As students complete the levels of academic work available at their high school, they may run out of available course options. At this point, early entrance to college may be a way to resolve the dilemma (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2002).

Early college requires the commitment, consensus, and communication of all parties involved. The success of not only the student, but also the program relies heavily on the relationships and dedication of both organizations. The decision to take advantage of early college coursework is one that should be primarily the student's, but once made, families need to be supportive and to recognize that despite their child's desire and ability, there will be challenges, but also a great deal of positive growth (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2002).

Early college programs can serve as a demystifying experience for students and ease the psychological transition to college. Moreover, expensive false starts in college can be avoided (Bailey, 2003). The experience as an early college student may show some students that college, at least at this time, is not for them. For others, it may reinforce their decision to pursue a college education and ease the transition. It is the culmination of community, social attributes, and academic interests that define college students, not age.

In examining the implications of early college, the issue of state policy for programs and students must be briefly addressed. A report by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) (2004) finds that the state policies to guide these dual school-college programs differ widely. The CCRC identifies 10 features by which early college programs can vary from state to state, including admission requirements, program

structure, course content, funding, and whether state policies mandate their existence. In all, 12 states do not have any legislation addressing these programs at all, while the remaining states do not address all 10 criteria. Where policies exist, states often focus on ensuring that early college programs preserve the standards of a college education and protect their financial investment (CCRC, 2004). Because of this lack of consistent state policies and regulations, many institutions are left to make the program decisions.

In recent years efforts have been made by policymakers to improve the transition to post-secondary education in a variety of ways. Some ideas include the onset of college awareness and academic preparation as early as middle-school, the establishment of higher graduation standards, and ensuring each student an adult to provide advice and guidance.

If early college programs continue to grow as rapidly without adequate funding to track the transfer of school-based credit, to provide professional development, and evaluative quality assessment, academic integrity will be threatened.

### **Definition of Terms**

Advanced Placement--is an examination-based college credit (Hoffman, 2003).

Concurrent Enrollment--refers to programs that offer community college-level courses to high school students on either the high school or college campus. Students enrolled in these courses usually receive academic credit on both their high school and college transcripts (Boswell, 2001).

Distance Learning--allows virtual high schools to provide students with an opportunity to take advanced and more rigorous courses that are not offered at their high school (Carr, 1999).

Dual Enrollment--allows high school students to enroll in college courses prior to high school graduation, giving them first-hand exposure to the requirements of college-level work while gaining high school and college credit simultaneously (Bailey, 2003).

Early College--allows high school students to take college courses, taught by college faculty, on a college campus, high school building, or at a satellite center but remain enrolled in high school and the courses bear high school and college credit simultaneously (Hoffman, 2003).

Early Decision Program--allows students to apply for admissions early, be informed of decisions early, and pledge to enroll if accepted (Hoover 2002).

School-College Program--is any planned activity where schools and colleges work together toward some goal. The implication is that it is not a onetime exposure but an on-going effort. Several different designations can be used for school-college programs. Most often used are cooperative, collaborative, and partnership (Harkins, 1998).

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to responses obtained through a survey instrument distributed among administration, faculty, and governing agencies affiliated with the early college program between Allegany College of Maryland and 25 school districts. Therefore, the data collected were limited to the survey responses received from one community college and its partnership with 25 school districts. Additionally, this study focused on a rural setting; the responses varied from that of a more urban setting. Additionally, early college programs varied not only by the school-college partnership, but by each state. Thus, the results cannot be over generalized.

This study lead to further analysis about successful partnerships and which type of partnership is right for that particular school and college, and how to tailor an approach that fits. This study also provided for follow-up research and formal tracking of students who participate in the early college program.

### **Summary**

Based on the lack of current information, this study examined a school-college partnership to examine the factors which are integral to the sustainability of an early college program.

Early college draws on lessons learned from the experiences of concurrent enrollment, dual enrollment, middle colleges, small schools, studies of time wasted in the senior year, and existing examples of high school and colleges working together. The partners involved in early college believe that encountering the rigor, depth, and intensity of college work at an earlier age will inspire average, under-achieving, and well-prepared high school students to work hard and stretch themselves intellectually.

Instead of pointing blame, community college and high school partners are continuously working together. This relationship is especially crucial in districts where the high schools are unable to offer advanced courses due to staffing and financial restraints. Additionally, new jobs in the workforce require greater education and skills.

Effective and successful early college programs rely on the strength of the relationship between the high schools and colleges. According to Bridges (2003), it takes the leadership efforts of the organizations to come together, and in the end develop and offer a program that will empower others to take part. Although there is limited research regarding early college partnerships, the review of literature reveals many different

leadership roles that play out within the two organizations. The focus of the research in this study highlighted organizational theory. This study drew upon existing literature mostly from the corporate world, but applicable to education. That literature is reviewed in Chapter Two.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the literature and research guiding the concept of the school-college partnership known as early college, as well as the organizational theories of John Kotter, Peter Senge, and Rosabeth Moss Kanter. This study was theoretically driven and drew upon multiple theories to support this theoretical framework. Literature regarding the organizational partnership was based upon the process that is associated with the school-college partnership when establishing an early college program, the persistence of the school-college partnerships, and those critical factors of school-college program success.

This chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) an overview of early college; (b) an overview of the early college program in Pennsylvania; (c) an overview of the early college program offered through Allegany College of Maryland; and, (d) the organizational theories of Kotter, Senge, and Kanter. A summary concludes the chapter.

#### **A Review of Early College**

Known to many as early college, dual enrollment and other initiatives like it, are difficult to define for many reasons. There are many uses and objectives associated with these school-college partnerships. The early college program has allowed juniors and seniors to obtain college credit. Secondary schools have allowed the students to use that same credit as part of their secondary school graduation requirements. A number of universities and four-year colleges across the nation have also developed dual-credit or

concurrent enrollment programs. The most significant growth recently, however, has been in the community college systems across the country (Andrews, 2001).

There are obvious reasons for community colleges to sponsor early college programs. These include: revenue generation; minimal instructional costs to the college; ease of course registration; college marketing advantages from enlisting students while they are still in high school; and, stimulation of additional collaborations between the high school and community college (Barnes, 2001).

Early college programs, currently being implemented in many states and localities, are a way to link high school and college. In its most simple form, early college is a system of cooperation between a high school and a university or community college that allows a student to attain college credit while pursuing a high school diploma (Burns, 2000).

Though such programs have been in existence, their enrollments have recently increased rapidly. They are often seen as a way to offer high school students access to coursework not available at the high schools as well as means of exposing them to the academic demands of college (Bailey, 2002).

Likewise, early college draws on lessons learned from the experiences of dual-enrollment programs, middle colleges, small schools, studies of time wasted in the senior year, and existing examples of high schools and colleges working together. The partners involved in early college believe, in part, that encountering the rigor, depth, and intensity of college work at an earlier age will inspire average, under-achieving, and well-prepared high school students to work hard and stretch themselves intellectually.



Additionally, these programs help to eliminate time wasted during the junior and senior years of high school and facilitate the transition of motivated students to higher education. Ultimately it demonstrates new ways of integrating levels of schooling to better serve the intellectual and developmental needs of young people (Levinson, 2002).

Early college allows students access to education. This access focuses on a quality education, in a convenient location, and at an affordable cost. Admission to college requires a formal process. Placement testing and college-level expectations for reading, writing, and math are required.

On the other hand, students who complete high school requirements while enrolling in college can simultaneously earn credits toward a certificate or degree and be awarded high school credit. Early college can save not only time for the students, but potentially money for their families. Early college offers college courses taught in the high school or on a college campus. Services, resources, and facilities are available and welcoming to students, including laboratory and arts facilities, academic support centers, information resources/libraries, and technology (CCRC, 2004).

Some also use the courses to better prepare for college, or to bank college credits toward double, even triple majors. At the very least high school students can enhance their college applications and resumes (Levinson, 2002).

Additionally, new jobs in the workforce require greater education and skills. Therefore, more training past high school is necessary. Seventy percent of the 30 fastest-growing jobs will require an education beyond high school. Forty percent of all new jobs will require at least an associate's degree, and total college-level job openings between

1990-2008 will nearly equal the number of college-educated entrants to the workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000).

Policy reports issued by such groups at the National Commission on the High School Senior Year (Commission) (2001) have emphasized the frequency with which young people opt out of challenging coursework in the final year of high school. They note that the senior year high school curriculum can have little meaning for the students' post-high school experience, as students have frequently already completed graduation and college-entry requirements. Thus, early college, with its college-credit-bearing component, is seen as a way to encourage students who might otherwise "slack off" to engage in demanding coursework during the final year of high school.

The Commission (2001) continues that, for a variety of reasons, student motivation drops in the senior year. Short of a miserable failure in the senior year, practically every college found that a student knows that what they have accomplished through grade 11 will largely determine whether they attend college, and if so, which college. As a result, serious preparation ends at grade 11.

This "senior slump" as referred to by Kirst (2001) is cause for both economic and social concern. There is a lack of academic fortitude in the senior year and that has the following impact: (a) rising cost of remediation for English, math and science classes for entering college freshman; (b) high college drop-out rates for students who are not academically prepared for college; and, (c) poor academic readiness for those students who move directly into the workforce.

In addition, some believe that under-achieving students can actually perform at a much higher level; these students are just not motivated to do so because they are bored

in class or see little relationship between their achievement in high school and their future success (Lords, 2000). Offering these early college opportunities--academically rigorous and engaging courses--might promote hard work and high achievement. Thus, the presumed challenge of early college courses is viewed as a way to motivate students to work harder than they would in a regular high school class.

This notion is consistent with the popular view that a wide range of students respond well to high expectations (Bailey, 2002). Research estimates that 560,000 of the nation's high school juniors and seniors or about 8% are taking college courses (Levinson, 2002).

The increase in early college programs is also a result of the rising costs of a college education. Since many early college programs are free to participating students, they serve as an inexpensive way for young people to earn college credit, thus lowering the long-term cost of a college degree (Orr, 2002).

Similarly, the ability to accumulate college credit prior to entering college allows the students to shorten the time it takes to earn their degree and save significantly on the overall cost of their education. State educational coordinating agencies, community college, and universities have worked closely with their state legislators to develop supportive legislation, funding, standards for delivery, and guarantees for transferability of these early college programs to universities and colleges across the state and nation.

Further, Oregon's Joint Boards of Education commissioned a study of current policies and practices across the country in 1997. A total of 31 states responded as having some type of early college program. Fourteen states reported having specific laws or policies addressing early option programs such as dual-credit. They were Arizona,

Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Washington (Andrews, 2001).

This same study identified 23 of the states responding as having programs with: (1) dual enrollment (high school and college); (2) concurrent enrollment; and/or, (3) dual-credit. A number of other states pointed out that they offered secondary school students the Advanced Placement (AP) program, College Level Equivalency Program (CLEP), Dante Challenge Exam or some other post-secondary options. At the time of the study, 44 states were represented.

There are “state plans” for early college programs that utilize both the college campuses and high school campuses for the teaching of the courses. These plans offer flexibility to the secondary school students as to what courses are available and where they can be taken. Early college course options are brought to local high schools in a number of states.

While the largest early college enrollments are in community colleges, some four-year public institutions, although not many flagship universities, also participate. In 1999-2000, about 20% of Minnesota High School seniors (12,000 students) took advantage of post-secondary enrollment options (created in 1985). Increasing by about 3% a year, Running Start (created in 1990) had a total of 13,669 students taking courses for free at Washington State’s 34 state community and technical colleges and several universities.

College Now in New York City was created by an agreement between City University of New York (CUNY) and the New York City Public Schools in 1984. When CUNY imposed more stringent entrance requirements in 2000, College Now grew from 6

to 17 schools as a strategy to better prepare students for admission. It now includes a pilot for 9th graders and had a goal to serve 45,000 students in 2002-2003. In Arizona, 11,000 students took dual enrollment classes.

Early College programs in the Florida Community College System had an 82% cumulative increase between 1991-1992 and 2000-2001. At Salt Lake City Community College, with 18,450 full-time students, 8,000 students were taking college-level courses at their high school (Hoffman, 2003).

### **Overview of Pennsylvania's Early College Program**

Early college in Pennsylvania is known as the Dual Enrollment Program. This allows school districts to partner with eligible post-secondary partners to offer high school juniors and seniors, who can show they are ready, the chance to earn college credit while completing their high school requirements (Martin, 2007). Dual enrollment, referred to as "concurrent enrollment" in the School Code, is an effort by the Commonwealth to encourage a broader range of students to experience post-secondary coursework and its increased academic rigor, while still in the supportive environment of their local high school. The intent is to increase the number of students who go on to post-secondary education and to decrease the need for remedial coursework at post-secondary institutions. Dual enrollment is a locally administered program that allows a secondary student to concurrently enroll in post-secondary courses and to receive both secondary and post-secondary credit for that coursework. The local programs are run through partnerships between school entities and eligible post-secondary institutions. The 2007-2008 state budget included \$12 million to fund dual enrollment programs for high school students enrolled in higher education courses.

## **Overview of Allegany College of Maryland's**

### **Early College Program**

For the purpose of this study the early college program offered through Allegany College of Maryland was chosen. This regional example highlights a national movement. The early college program began in 1996 with only one participating school district and has grown to serve 25 school districts in 6 counties: Bedford; Blair; Cambria; Franklin; Fulton; and, Somerset.

The vision of Allegany College of Maryland (ACM) is to embrace the dynamic spirit of learning and the mission is to provide quality, affordable, and accessible educational opportunities to the residents of its service region. Along with the main campus located in Cumberland, Maryland, there are two branch campuses located in Pennsylvania that serve Bedford and Somerset Counties. As part of the community outreach, ACM has developed an Early College Program (ECP) whereby high school juniors and seniors, at least 16 years old, have the opportunity to access ACM courses at a reduced rate at one of the campus locations or in certain instances on-site within their own high school environment.

The mission of the ACM early college program is to offer general education courses for high school students to get a head start on college, attend small classes, earn college credits at a reduced cost, and transfer credit and/or finish their degree at another institution. Students who plan to continue their education at a four-year institution will find excellent transfer opportunities. Currently, ACM has “full articulation agreements” with over 50 institutions to ensure that students can transfer with full credit. This list includes, but is not limited to, California University of Pennsylvania, Shippensburg

University, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Frostburg State, and The Pennsylvania State University Altoona. ACM is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. It is also approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

To maintain quality and integrity of the early college program, ACM has adopted the following “Standards of Quality:” (1) The Maryland Higher Education Commission COMAR requirements state that the faculty for these courses shall be selected, employed, and evaluated by Allegany College of Maryland. They should be selected from full-time faculty and/or from adjunct faculty with appropriate credentials and teaching experience; (2) Students enrolled in college-level courses should have appropriate academic qualifications, a high level of motivation, and adequate time to successfully complete the course requirements. The students must meet all college criteria and follow all college procedures for enrolling in courses; (3) Students must have access (a) to library resources, (b) to the course instructor outside of the classroom, and (c) to other academic support services on an as-needed basis; (4) Courses should be selected that typically transfer to post-secondary institutions or courses that apply to a certificate or an Associate of Applied Science Career Program; (5) Course syllabi, textbooks, teaching methods, and student assessment strategies should be comparable to courses taught on the main campus; (6) Faculty should participate in appropriate orientation sessions and professional development workshops related to teaching/learning; and, (7) Implementation and evaluation of the standards will be continuous (ACM Catalog, 2007).

## **Theoretical Perspectives**

There are a variety of approaches to school-college partnerships, although one set model does not exist for all to follow. However, within every successful partnership there is a process by which programs are initiated, maintained, and ultimately sustained. There are necessary elements toward successful school-college partnerships. Furthermore, there are recurring themes that link them together. Kotter (2002), Senge (1999), and Kanter (1989) agree there are specific characteristics or factors critical to successful school-college partnerships. In addition, there are factors these programs must possess in order to persevere. There must also be some characteristics which are enduring for organizations to continue to work together.

Within this framework are the following points of alignment: shared vision; leadership; communication; empowerment; innovation; organizational learning; and, stewardship. The theoretical approaches of Kotter (2002), Senge (1999), and Kanter (1989) address the necessary steps that need to be taken for a partnership to experience long term success.

As Henry Ford once said, “Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is a progress, and working together is success.”

## **Initiating an Early College Partnership**

In her research, Harkins (1997) quoted Goodland’s (1988) concept of partnership. A school-university partnership represents a planned effort to establish formal, mutually beneficial, interinstitutional relationships characterized by sufficient commitment to the effective fulfillment of overlapping functions to warrant the



inevitable loss of some present control and autonomy on the part of the institution currently claiming concomitant interest. The intent is to create a process and an accompanying structure through which equal party to a collaborative agreement will seek to draw on the complementary strengths of the other equal parties in advancing its self-interests. Each partnership is a means to this end and not an end to itself. (p. 42)

Similarly, Kanter (1989) identifies structure to achieve flexibility, focused planning, and the steady management needed for long-term growth as essential characteristics of successful organizational partnerships. A delicate balance is necessary for the development, implementation, and sustenance of any program. In her book, *When Giants Learn to Dance* she states, “The development of formal alliances with ‘external parties’ also changes internal roles, relationships, and power dynamics for the organizations entering into them” (p. 141).

The key element to an effective and successful early college program relies on the strength of the relationship between the high schools and colleges. Being able to work together to provide quality, accessible, and affordable opportunities for the students is a daunting task. Through a strong commitment, clear consensus, and excellent communication the groundwork is laid for an early college program.

Thus, leadership plays an important role in organizational effectiveness. Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2004). As a process, leadership is available to everyone. In the case of the early college program the leadership role comes from both

the high school and the community college. Northouse (2004) goes on to say that leadership occurs in groups. It involves influencing a group of individuals who have a common purpose. In this particular case it is a large group encompassing an entire organization. There must be a goal. The leaders, the schools, have the role of directing the group toward accomplishing some task. The goal of early college is to create an opportunity for high school students to take advantage of an early start to their college career.

In a sense, early college goes against the norm or the way things have been done in the past. Change occurs and only through effective leadership will the constituents buy into the program. It takes the combined leadership efforts of both organizations to come together and in the end develop and offer a program that will empower others to take part. Introducing a new initiative can be risky and requires both organizations to provide seamless transition to the process.

Strong leadership is necessary to guide the program. Because transition is a process by which people unplug from an old world and plug into a new world, we can say that transition starts with an ending and finishes with a beginning (Bridges, 2003).

For change to take place, Kotter (2002) describes an eight-step path to success for an organization. There must be a feeling of urgency by reducing the complacency, fear, and anger that prevent change from occurring. High schools and community colleges joined forces because they saw the need to supplement the curriculum, to allow for a seamless transition to post-secondary education, and to offer students the opportunity to jump start their college career.

Secondly, Kotter (2002) states it is important to build the guiding team by pulling together the right group of people. Each institution must have people who believe in the program for it to be a success. They must be willing to work together and accept one another's cultural climate. Thirdly, Kotter goes on to say, get the vision right. This goes beyond just putting numbers on paper. For early college programs to begin there must be a vision, a vision that is clearly defined and a well-thought plan that can be shared by all parties involved. By painting a clear picture others are better able to understand the ideology and will likely join forces to move the project ahead.

The fourth step is clear communication. For faculty, staff, students, and parents to buy into the program it is crucial to provide multiple forms of clear and effective communication. The communication process must be ongoing. It cannot merely cease once the program is up and running or when the student attends the college campus. More importantly, communication must exist at all levels at all times. Effective leadership lends itself to empower the groups to take action. Taking action necessitates removing obstacles. Allowing all members of the organization to feel some sense of ownership will lend itself to the continuous success and growth of the program. In some cases this may be easily done by changing the class period when an on-site course is offered to allow for the students to participate. Or it may mean rescheduling a student's classes so that the student can enroll in college courses at the campus. Successful early college partnerships encourage input from the parents, teachers, school representatives as well as college officials.

Next is to create short-term wins. This is accomplished by allowing the students and all parties involved to see the positives of the program. Additionally, motivate the

students by encouraging them and applauding them for their efforts. Of course, do not let up. As well, continuous evaluation of the program is vital. It allows the opportunity to change what is not working and strengthen what is. Lastly, make the change stick. The reputation of the program is not enough. Both organizations must continue to work together.

One sure way to achieve a smooth transition is for the program to have a stable administrative and funding base within the organizations, the universities, and the schools. Beyond that, a core of dedicated program leaders seems to be an absolute necessity to ensuring a stable future. It takes the investment of many hours of time and planning to get a program off the ground.

In their inception, many programs will face challenges and surprises. However, with commitment to vision, flexibility, and communication many of these obstacles can be overcome. As with any college-school partnership, effective and constant communication is key to orchestrating any program according to the article *Reaching for College* (1992). The article continues with quotes among those participants who were interviewed, "Do not take anything for granted. In planning programs, clarity of goals, details, effective communications, and feedback are important." The day-to-day details of phoning, returning calls, clarifying arrangements, following up immediately, taking notes, writing individual notes and letters, confirming every arrangement, and understanding in detail are things that make for smooth implementation.

Breholt (2004) continues by noting that the capacity to develop leaders begins with a strong sense of organizational definition. Organizational definition is what makes the group unique or different. It is what lies at the core of everything. The core issue is

found in the purpose of the group. Leaders must function with other people. There is an inherent tension between the values of the organization and the individual. To be effective in an organization, a person's values must be compatible with the organization's values.

### **Maintaining an Early College Partnership**

From the perspective of Kotter (2002) the eight steps for change are considered a roadmap. Many begin with urgency, but lose direction along the way. As with any organizational relationship, it is necessary for all parties involved to commit to seeing the process through to fruition. Kotter (2002) explains that while it is possible to undertake more than one step at a time, it is necessary to follow the model sequentially. Skipping steps or making critical mistakes within a step could be detrimental to the success of the change initiative. This includes sustaining the vision for it to be successful in the future which includes the belief in a common central mission and vision through honest dialogue and communication throughout and among the organizational partnership.

Creating early college programs requires changes in collaborating organizations. Leadership development is seen by those who practice it well as a key strategic priority, not an appendage to everything else. It is a missional issue, not a human resources issue, or a time and budget casualty (Breholt, 2004).

Based on an analysis, Rice (2003) discusses the four frames of organizational leadership. The structural frame focuses on the formal organization, including the official goals of the organization; the formal way in which the organization is structured, typically illustrated by an organizational chart; and descriptions of the formal roles of organizational participants. When developing early college programs it is necessary to

outline the organizational chart. Identifying who is involved and describing the roles of participants facilitates the process of the program. This direction can lead to clear roles and can eliminate confusion. It is important to remember that these roles are not written in stone and can change as the program develops.

The human resource frame focuses on the relationship between the organization and its members, with special attention to motivation and morale (2003). Organizations need people and people need organizations. The morale and motivation of the early college students, parents, faculty, administration, and community college is the lifeline of the program.

The political frame is another perspective (2003). This focuses on the power relationships within organizations and the ways in which scarce resources influence organizational dynamics. Organizational members and interest groups, often across formal organizational divisions and with external allies, negotiate for resources. This is clearly evident as early college programs vie for funding to cover the cost or partial cost of the programs.

The last frame of the organizational theory that Rice (2003) discusses is the meanings and values that undergird organizational life. The culture carries the norms that tell members how to act and behave and are taken for granted by those inside the organization. The early college partners are guided by the mission and vision of the program and in turn provides for the overall direction of the program or courses.

Each frame builds upon the other. The ability to employ a multi-frame approach produces more effective leadership options and solutions that are developed as the program builds. To maintain a successful program there is need for quality and control.

This process requires long-term commitment to a culture constantly striving for excellence in the teaching and learning process (Vazzana, 1997).

Highum and Lund (2000) examine the nature of programming partnerships between student affairs, staff, and others, including four case studies that highlight benefits associated with these partnerships. The themes that ran through each program emerged as components to ensure success. At the heart of any successful initiative is relationship building. Findings in the case study revealed collaborative relationships were fostered and cemented by a belief in the positive benefits of the relationships. A collaborative relationship fosters the beliefs in the benefits. Being able to transcend boundaries reinforces trust and understanding. Ultimately, there is ownership of the program and the program's fit into the institutional goals. Furthermore, to keep the program going the partners need to be able to resolve problems and move forward.

Highum and Lund (2000) remind us that with any successful venture it takes time. What is necessary is a modicum of patience and a long, sustainable vision for the final product.

Eddy's (2003) study investigated the formation of a strategic alliance among five two-year institutions within the same state. An analysis of the formation of the consortium examines the effects of the alliance on the institutions from the perspective of Kotter's model for planned change.

This alliance relied on Kotter's eight steps for change as a roadmap. Although this alliance and others similar to it may begin with urgency, but lose direction along the way. As with any organizational relationship, it is necessary for all parties involved to commit to seeing the process through to fruition. Kotter explains that it is possible to

undertake more than one step at a time, it is necessary to follow the model sequentially. By skipping steps or making critical mistakes within a step could be detrimental to the success of the change initiative. This includes sustaining the vision for it to be successful in the future which includes the belief in a common central mission and vision through honest dialogue and communication throughout and among the organizational partnership.

Most of the research, thus far, focuses on successful change or the steps to achieve long-term success. With any change, resistance and hurdles will appear. It is how the organizations handle those situations that will ultimately affect the final outcome. Research identifies the difficulties involved in collaborative efforts between public school bureaucracies and university teacher-education organizations. In her research, Slater (2003) describes the difficulties involved in collaborative efforts between public school bureaucracies and university teacher-education organizations.

With any change, resistance and hurdles will appear. It is how the organizations handle those situations that will ultimately affect the final outcome. Issues and concerns of leaders, organizational behavior, team membership, problem solving, communication, and conflict resolution are all crucial steps for organizational partnership. These repeating themes not only work for the corporate world, but for education or any organization experiencing change.

According to Kanter (1989) successful partnerships tend to have “six I’s” in place. The relationship between partners is important. This is crucial to the success of an



early college program. Both parties must have a shared vision in order to provide adequate resources, attention, and sponsorship that is necessary for long-term investment. By being interdependent one party is not overpowering the relationship. There is integration among the partners which allows for direction. Those involved need to be informed. Essentially, the partners involved must share and communicate information to one another. Lastly, the partnership is institutionalized. Herein lies the framework to operate and ultimately defines the partnership and builds the trust.

In addition, Sanders and Harvey's (2002) study revealed four factors that supported one urban school's ability to develop and maintain meaningful community partnerships. These factors were: (1) a high commitment to learning; (2) principal support for community involvement; (3) a welcoming school climate; and, (4) two-way communication about the level and kind of community involvement. As with any partnership it is necessary to have useful and committed partners, as well as guidance and support to implement any programmatic changes.

Like Kotter, Sanders and Harvey (2002) discovered that to maintain a successful program continuous training, development, and guidance is crucial. Schools are looking to organizational partnerships to meet the demanding needs of challenging educational reforms. The problems of educational achievement and academic success demand resources beyond the scope of the school and of most families. Partnerships are one solution to this problem. It is important for all parties to buy into the overall vision.

As with any partnership, it takes time and with time the relationship evolves. Kanter (1989) states that the parameters are never completely clear at first, nor do partners want to commit fully until trust has been established. And trust takes time to

develop. It is only as events unfold that partners become aware of all of the ramifications and implications of their involvement.

### **Sustaining an Early College Partnership**

Organizational theorist, Peter Senge's (1999) growth processes of profound change detail the challenges of initiating, sustaining, redesigning, and rethinking change. Learning organizations are where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together. He emphasizes building a shared vision, team working, personal mastery, and the development of more sophisticated mental models.

Sanders and Harvey (2002) also examined the nature of programming partnerships between student affairs staff and others, including four case studies that highlight benefits associated with these partnerships. The themes that ran through each program emerged as components to ensure success. At the heart of any successful initiative is relationship building. Findings in the case study discovered collaborative relationships were fostered and cemented by a belief in the positive benefits of the relationships.

Being able to transcend boundaries reinforces the trust and understanding between partners. Ultimately, if trust exists then there is ownership of the program and the program fits into the institutional goals. Consequently, to keep the program going the partners need to be able to resolve problems and move forward as with any successful venture it takes time. Accordingly, a modicum of patience and a long, sustainable vision for the final product is necessary (Mulford, 2003).

The Leadership for Organizational Learning and Student Outcomes (LOLSO) Research Project addressed the need to extend present understandings of school reform initiatives that aim to change school practices with the intention of supporting enhanced learning (Mulford, 2003). The study focused on four implications relating to distributive leadership, development, context, and a broader understanding of student outcomes.

Success is more likely when people are empowered. They become a part of the decision-making process, are trusted, respected and encouraged. A shared vision guides the organizations through the process from infancy even to critical reflection. In addition, these characteristics were found in an ongoing, optimistic, caring, nurturing program. Although following “the great man or woman” theory may provide initial success, it is the team approach that builds long term success (Rice, 2003).

Successful partnerships take time. This is especially true since relationship building is not a quick process. The focus of the programs may change as they are revised or directed by new individuals, new goals, and the needs of the organizations involved.

Through their research, Highum and Lund (2000) maintain that collaborative relationships are fostered and cemented by a belief in the positive benefits of the relationships. They maintain that successful programs find ways to transcend departmental or unit boundaries, help build trust and understanding among participants, and draw on the talents of all individuals who may be able to contribute to a better program. Relationship building lies at the heart of successful initiatives.

Additionally, teamwork is a major component through the sharing of ideas and focusing on common goals. This process requires long-term commitment to a culture constantly striving for excellence in the teaching and learning process (Vazzana, 1997).

The most powerful way to encourage people to embrace change is to develop a shared vision of an even more positive future, a vision created jointly by all of a corporation's stakeholders, its customers, suppliers, employees, and its potential industry and government partners (Kanter, 1998).

In *Reaching for College* (1992) there are some common elements for success and common elements for mistakes as well.

To achieve a smooth transition is for the program to have a stable administrative and funding base within the organizations; the university and the schools. A core of dedicated program leaders seems to be an absolute necessity to ensuring a stable future. It takes the investment of many hours of time and planning to get a program off the ground. In their inception many programs will face challenges and surprises. However, with commitment to the vision, flexibility and communication many of these obstacles can be overcome. Do not take anything for granted. In planning programs, clarity of goals, details, effective communications, and feedback are important.

### **Summary**

Despite the fact that early college programs vary in definition, it is clear that students who take advantage of this opportunity greatly benefit. States, community

colleges, and high schools are more aware than ever of fiscal accountability, program scrutiny to ensure a quality offering, and clear policy that encompasses articulated objectives and guidelines. The organizations involved, must embrace the opportunity through consensus, commitment, and communication.

Community colleges and high schools are continuously working together. The benefits of these programs outweigh the negatives. The partners involved in early college believe in part that encountering the rigor, depth, and intensity of college work at an earlier age will inspire average, under-achieving, and well-prepared high school students to work hard and stretch themselves intellectually. Additionally, the program makes higher education more accessible, affordable, and attractive by bridging the divide between high school and colleges.

The leadership role will be crucial to the overall effectiveness of early college. It is not merely offering a course in a high school or having a student attend class on campus. Instead, it is providing a clear vision to provide affordable, quality, and accessible educational opportunities to the students.

Although there is a great deal of research on the academic, social, and emotional impact of these programs for students; a review of literature reveals little research has dealt specifically with the college-school cooperation. Since early college programs require formal linkages between high schools and colleges, they are also a mechanism for promoting partnerships between the two education sectors.

Kanter (1989) quoted the baseball great Yogi Berra. He said, "The future ain't what it used to be" (p. 370). The future of America depends on the educational system to

face the changes and challenges that lie ahead. Collaboration among secondary and post-secondary institutions is one possible solution.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology used in this research. The information gathered in this study was collected to gain a better understanding of the early college program of a community college and 25 rural school districts and the organizational partnership among them in an effort to identify and analyze the factors integral to the success and sustainability of the program from the perspective of those directly involved.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

In 2001, President George W. Bush's *No Child Left Behind Act* was voted into legislation. This was a direct result of the demand for school districts to increase the academic rigor of high school courses. As a result, high schools and colleges are working together in cooperation, collaboration, or partnership toward the ultimate goal of improving student achievement (Harkins, 1997). Most often the literature on school-college partnerships is focused on student achievement, the history of and development of specific programs. There is an inherent gap in the information available regarding the implications of such programs between high schools and colleges. In order to better serve the needs of this expanding opportunity and to continue the momentum of early college programs more research needs to be done on this particular subject.

The purpose of this study was to: gain a better understanding of the early college program from the perspective of those directly involved by examining the organizational partnership of the early college program between a community college and 25 rural school districts; and the organizational partnerships among them and attempted to identify and analyze the factors integral to the success and sustainability of the program. This chapter provides an overview of the methods and a description of the participants used to collect data for this study. During the course of this study the following research questions guided the interview process:

1. What specific factors characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnerships?

2. What type of organizational partnership exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?
3. What are the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?

### **Rationalization for Quantitative Methodology**

The survey was the preferred method of data collection for this study given that this researcher attempted to collect responses from 25 school districts across a 6 county region. It was not practical to use qualitative research methods, such as focus groups or interviews, as the population to be studied was beyond local reach and the purpose to generalize rather than particularize results.

The purpose of a survey is to use a questionnaire to collect data from a sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis can be generalized (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). When conducting a survey, the questionnaire asks the same questions of all individuals in the sample. However, within this study there are three different subgroups, therefore, the questions asked of each subgroup will vary. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) the questionnaire has two advantages. First, the cost of sampling respondents over a wide geographic area is lower. Second, the time required to collect the data typically is much less. Survey research



typically employs questionnaires and interviews in order to determine opinions, attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of persons of interest to the researcher (Borg & Gall, 1979).

Likewise, Gay (1992) reinforces the use of the questionnaire when collecting data among members who are not conveniently found together in one location. In comparison to other methods of collection, a questionnaire is much more efficient in that it requires less time, is less expensive, and permits collection of data from a much larger sample.

Questionnaires may be administered in person, by mail, or electronically via the Internet. For this study, the questionnaires were sent to each participant in cooperation with the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Research Laboratory. Further, by utilizing a web based questionnaire, the data were received in electronic format, thus eliminating the possibility of missing data or errors in the transfer of information process.

### **Sample**

The sample for this study was limited to the post-secondary and college administrators, staff, guidance counselors, and faculty who were involved with the Allegany College of Maryland Early College Program during the 2008-2009 academic school year. This sample included Allegany College of Maryland and 25 participating school districts from Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Franklin, Fulton, and Somerset Counties. The list of school districts includes: Altoona, Bedford, Bedford Career and Technology Center, Bellwood-Antis, Berlin, Chestnut Ridge, Everett, Fannett Metal, Hyndman, McConnellsburg, Meyersdale, Northern Bedford, North Star, Portage, Rockwood, Salisbury, Shade, Shanksville, Somerset, Somerset Career and Technology Center, Southern Fulton, Turkeyfoot, Tussey Mountain, Williamsburg, and Windber. The information received will serve to better understand the educational partnership between

high schools and colleges. All necessary approvals, including permission to contact the participants, were in place prior to the distribution or use of any information obtained.

For this research purposeful selection was utilized. Maxwell argues there are at least four possible goals for purposeful selection: achieving representativeness or typicality of the settings, individuals, or activities selected; ensure conclusions adequately represent the entire range of variation; deliberately examine cases that are critical for this research study; and, establish particular comparisons to illuminate the reasons for the differences between settings or individuals (Maxwell, 2005).

### **Instrumentation and the Pilot Study**

This research utilized an adapted version of an existing survey used in a similar research study on early college programs. In 1999, Susan C. Harkins studied the concurrent enrollment partnerships of programs offering college courses at the high school that were taught by the high school teacher. Permission from the original author was granted.

Although studies on early college have been conducted, most focus on the perspective of student achievement. Because of the limited research that exists on the school-college partnership an adapted survey was created. This survey provided the necessary information regarding the organizational relationship of the early college partners and the factors necessary for persistence and sustainable success. Since there are three distinct groups who participate in the Allegany College of Maryland Early College Program directly; the program administrators which include personnel from the college and school districts, the adjunct college faculty, and the college approved high school

faculty. Therefore, three relatively similar surveys were developed to elicit response from the participants.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Survey Instrument**

In order to establish content validity, the initial draft of the survey instrument was given to a small group of administrators at Allegany College of Maryland for the purpose of determining clarity, usability, and ease of administration. These individuals were asked to provide feedback with regards to the survey instrument and the research questions from which it was designed. Additionally, the pilot group assisted in determining that the survey questions were understandable and reasonable. After receiving feedback from this panel of experts regarding the survey instrument and making the appropriate changes to establish the necessary validity and reliability, the survey instrument was formally piloted to a group of eight retired superintendents from Bedford and Somerset Counties.

This pilot group consisted of a convenience sample of eight retired superintendents selected because of their experience in leadership roles and knowledge of the Early College Program offered through Allegany College of Maryland and their respective school districts. Prior to conducting the pilot study each superintendent was contacted by phone. The eight superintendents who were contacted agreed to participate. The pilot survey was then emailed to each of the retired superintendents. They were given a two week time period to respond. All eight responded to the survey. In addition, they were asked to provide feedback regarding the survey and its ability to measure the research questions from which they were designed. Upon receiving the feedback from

the group of retired superintendents a few minor changes were made to the survey instrument.

### **Development of the Final Survey**

The superintendents participating in the pilot suggested changes to a few of the survey questions they felt were unclear or ambiguous. Some of the changes included adding language that specifically identified the early college program as that of the program offered by Allegany College of Maryland. In order to prevent ambiguity on the part of those being surveyed, they suggested the questions in each survey refer specifically to the educational institution being referenced, i.e., Allegany College of Maryland or secondary institution. Based on the research questions, it was also suggested to include a question concerning the major obstacles for the Early College Program and the working relationship among the partnering institutions. These questions were added to the end of each survey instrument.

### **The Formal Study and Data Analysis**

Prior to conducting the survey, a formal request was mailed to each of the 25 participating school districts in Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Franklin, Fulton, and Somerset counties as well as the President of Allegany College of Maryland for permission to contact their respective staff members. Permission was received from all of the participants. The formal study was conducted through the cooperation of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Research Laboratory during October and November of 2009.

The survey instrument was distributed to individuals who worked with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program during the 2008-2009 academic school

year. In the event there had been a change in personnel it was requested the survey be forwarded to that individual's replacement. The list of individuals includes 45 faculty members consisting of high school teachers and adjunct college instructors; 10 college administrators and staff; 87 high school personnel which included superintendents, directors, principals, guidance counselors, and guidance counselor secretaries.

Each participant received a formal survey through their school, college, or personal email address and were given a two week time frame in which to respond. After such time follow-up contact was made to nonrespondents by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Research Laboratory. The formal study was completed within a six week time frame.

A cover letter accompanied each survey. The function of the cover letter was to explain the purpose of the study, emphasize its importance and significance, and give the responder a good reason for cooperating (Gay, 1992). The participants were informed the results of the study would be shared with them.

The survey was designed to gather demographic data and to assess the factors integral to the success and sustainability of an early college program. The first set of questions were in closed form for respondents to provide a prespecified response. The data collected were analyzed to determine frequency and percentage of responses. In contrast, the second set of questions were open form to allow the respondents to make any response they wish.

Results were presented using descriptive analysis. Additionally, a narrative approach was used due to the nature of the data collected. Findings were reported using various tables and graphs to further present the data. In addition, the information

received was supported with documentation and historical data provided by Allegany College of Maryland.

### **Formal Matrix**

The Figure 1 details the research questions and their association to the formal survey instrument.

### **Triangulation**

In order to further establish validity for this study, additional data collection included a review of documents for historical analysis. This collection of data known as triangulation was used to corroborate evidence among multiple and different sources of information to provide a more comprehensive representation of the object of study (Creswell, 2000). The research presented in this study includes a formal survey and the collection of both document and historical analysis.

This documentation included dual enrollment agreements, information pieces, letters, and general information that is distributed among the community college and participating school districts. The review of college and high school records provided useful information to support the data gathered. The documents and historical data were directly related to the research questions.

## High School and College Personnel

### Survey Instrument

General Information	What is your working title? What is your highest level of education? What is the subject area(s) of your highest degree? How many years have you been involved with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program (ECP)?
What specific factors characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnership?	In what year did the EDP begin at your school? How many faculty from Allegany College of Maryland participated in the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year? How many high school teachers participated in the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year? How many students were enrolled in the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year at your institution? In total, how many students have benefited from the ECP? How many staff members administered/directed the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year at your institution? What courses were offered through the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year? What was the budget for the ECP in the 2008-09 academic year? How is the ECP funded at your institution? If the student paid a fee or tuition in 2008-09, how much did they pay? How much would a matriculated student have paid for a similar course in 2008-09? What is the grade level of students who are eligible to participate in the ECP?

*Figure 1.* Formal matrix of research questions and their association to the formal survey instrument.

What type of organizational partnership exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration, college administration, and faculty?

Who establishes the academic qualifications for the students to participate in the ECP?

How do teachers employed by the school district become part of the ECP?

Are teachers required to attend periodic seminars or conferences related to the ECP?

How often?

Who designs and conducts the seminars or conferences?

Do you know where the idea came from for the ECP?

The ECP originated from the following.

In your opinion, for what purpose was the ECP designed?

Of the purposes you marked, which would you consider the primary purpose?

From your perspective why does your institution participate in the ECP?

Have goals for this ECP been established? Please list the goals.

Who participated in developing these goals?

How were these goals developed?

Does the high school faculty and college appointed faculty use common exam/materials?

Who is responsible for generating those materials/exams?

How would you describe your partnership with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program?

*Figure 1 (continued).* Formal matrix of research questions and their association to the formal survey instrument.



What are the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the high school administration, college administration, and governing faculty?

Based on your perception, please mark the rewards, if any, that you think the high school and the college receive as a result of participating in the ECP.  
 What would you identify as major obstacles for the ECP?  
 What are the three critical elements to the success of ECP?  
 In your opinion, what is the direction of the ECP over the next five years?

### **Faculty Appointed by Allegany College in Maryland**

#### **Survey Instrument**

General Information

What is your working title?  
 What is your highest level of education?  
 What is the subject area(s) of your highest degree?  
 How many years have you been involved with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program (ECP)?

What specific factors characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnerships?

In your opinion, for what purpose was the ECP designed?  
 Of the purposes you marked, which would you consider the primary purpose?  
 How do teachers employed by the school district become part of the ECP?  
 Are the teachers required to attend periodic seminars related to the ECP?  
 How often?  
 Who designs and conducts the seminars or conferences?  
 Does the high school faculty and college appointed faculty use common exam/materials?  
 Who is responsible for generating those materials/exams?

*Figure 1 (continued).* Formal matrix of research questions and their association to the formal survey instrument.

What type of organization partnership exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration, college administration, and faculty?

From your perspective why does your institution participate in the ECP?  
Have goals for the ECP been established?  
Please list the goals.  
Who participated in developing these goals?  
How were these goals developed?  
How would you describe your working relationship?

What are the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the high school administration, college administration, and governing faculty?

Based on your perception, please mark the rewards, if any, that you think the high school and the college receive as a result of participating in the ECP.  
What would you identify as major obstacles for the ECP?  
What are the three critical elements to the success of this ECP?  
In your opinion, what is the direction of the ECP over the next five years?

### **High School Adjunct Faculty Approved by**

### **Allegany College of Maryland**

### **Survey Instrument**

General Information

What is your working title?  
What is your highest level of education?  
What is the subject area(s) of your highest degree?  
How many years have you taught in the classroom?

What specific factors characterize the organizational relationship of the school college partnerships?

In what year did the ECP begin in your school?  
How many years have you been involved with Allegany College of Maryland Early College Program (ECP)?  
What was the total number of students enrolled in your high school class(es) during the 2008-09 school year?

*Figure 1 (continued).* Formal matrix of research questions and their association to the formal survey instrument.

How many students from these classes were actually enrolled for college credit through the ECP?

Including yourself, how many teachers from your high school participated in the ECP during the 2008-09 school year?

How many other concurrent enrollment programs were offered at your high school during the 2008-09 school year?

Was the College Board Advanced Placement offered at your school in the same subject area as you teach for the ECP?

What was the approximate amount of financial commitment from your school district for the ECP during the 2008-09 school year?

How is the ECP funded at your school?

What is the grade level of students who participate in the ECP?

Who establishes the academic qualifications for the students to participate in the ECP?

How do teachers employed by the school district become part of the ECP?

Are the teachers required to attend periodic seminars or conferences related to ECP?

How often?

Who designs and conducts the seminars or conferences?

Does the high school faculty and college appointed faculty use common exam/materials?

Who is responsible for generating those materials/exams?

*Figure 1 (continued).* Formal matrix of research questions and their association to the formal survey instrument.

What type of organizational partnership exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration, college administration, and faculty?

Do you know where the idea came from for the ECP?

The ECP originated from the following.

In your opinion, for what purpose was the ECP designed?

Of the purposes you marked, which would you consider the primary purpose?

Have goals been established for the ECP?

Do you have a copy of these goals?

Who participated in developing these goals?

How were these goals developed?

How would you describe your working relationship?

From your perspective why does your institution participate in the ECP?

What are the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the high school administration, college administration, and governing faculty?

Based on your perception, please mark the rewards, if any, that you think the high school and the college receive as a result of participating in the ECP.

What would you identify as major obstacles for the ECP?

What are the three critical elements to the success of this ECP?

In your opinion, what is the direction of the ECP over the next five years?

How would you describe your partnership with the Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program?

*Figure 1 (continued).* Formal matrix of research questions and their association to the formal survey instrument.

## **Summary**

As a result of high school reform initiatives, early college programs are on the rise. More and more school districts and colleges are partnering to establish early college programs. This chapter reviewed the methodology used to analyze the organizational partnership of the early college program between a community college and 25 rural school districts. Chapter Four will discuss the data collected and its analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS**

The creation of early college partnerships provide post-secondary enrollment options to high school students that may: (a) ease transition to college; (b) reduce college costs by accelerating time to degree completion; and, (c) provide a highly-trained workforce that can compete in a global marketplace. These school-college partnership programs are helping high school students obtain higher-level job skills, get a head start on college coursework, and make the most out of their senior year in high school (Smith, 2007).

The future of this country depends on the education system's success in generating educated students who possess the knowledge, skills, and the ambition to realize their potential (Boswell, 2001). Early college programs have provided many students with this opportunity as well as strengthened educational partnerships between high schools and colleges.

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational partnership of the early college program between a community college and 25 rural school districts and the organizational partnerships among them and attempt to identify and analyze the factors integral to the success and sustainability of the program.

A formal survey was conducted to receive the perceptions from individuals who worked with the Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program during the 2008-2009 academic school year. The sample study was limited to the high school and college administrators, staff, guidance counselors, and faculty from Allegany College of Maryland and 25 participating school districts from Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Franklin,

Fulton, and Somerset Counties. Each participant received a cover letter and an electronic survey by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Research Laboratory. The participants were given a two week time frame in which to respond with weekly correspondence to non-respondents. The research was completed over a six week time period.

This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What specific factors characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnerships?
2. What type of organizational partnership exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors and faculty?
3. What are the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?

This chapter presents the analysis of the data drawn from the study. First the chapter begins with a brief review of the sample used in this research. This section is followed by the data presented and formulated by themes related to each research question. Finally, the use of historical and document analysis were used to further examine and correlate data gained through the study as related to the research questions.

### **Review of Sample**

The survey was the preferred method of data collection for this study given that this researcher attempted to collect responses from 25 school districts across a 6 county

region. The sample for this study was limited to the post-secondary and college administrators, staff, guidance counselors, and faculty who were involved with the Allegany College of Maryland Early College Program during the 2008-2009 academic school year. This sample included Allegany College of Maryland and 25 participating school districts from Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Franklin, Fulton, and Somerset Counties. The list of school districts included: Altoona, Bedford, Bedford Career and Technology Center, Bellwood-Antis, Berlin, Chestnut Ridge, Everett, Fannett Metal, Hyndman, McConnellsburg, Meyersdale, Northern Bedford, North Star, Portage, Rockwood, Salisbury, Shade, Shanksville, Somerset, Somerset Career and Technology Center, Southern Fulton, Turkeyfoot, Tussey Mountain, Williamsburg, and Windber. It was determined that by surveying the participants the information received will serve to better understand the educational partnership between high schools and colleges.

In November of 2009, the formal survey (Appendix A) was put into electronic format for distribution to 145 individuals who were currently involved with the Early College Program offered through Allegany College of Maryland. The list of individuals included 47 faculty members, consisting of high school teachers and adjunct college instructors; 98 program administrators consisting of college administrators and staff and high school personnel who include superintendents, directors, principals, guidance counselors, and guidance counselor secretaries. Although there are a number of individuals who are involved with the ECP, presently, two staff members from the Pennsylvania Campuses are responsible for the Early College Program operations.



Table 1

*Survey Participants*

Participants	Numbered Surveyed	Number of Respondents
Faculty (College and Adjunct High School Teachers)	47	15
Program Administrators	98	53

The total population sample was 145 individuals, and it was hoped that the survey would result in a minimum of 30% response rate. Each of the participants was sent weekly reminders in an attempt to maintain his or her interest in the survey and to achieve the desired response rate. As part of the reminders and the initial request for participation, it was clearly explained that the study was voluntary, anonymous, and approved as legitimate research by the IRB at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. After the sixth week, it was determined by the researcher and the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Research Laboratory, that the survey be closed due to the limited number of responses during the final week of the survey. Upon finalization of the survey, it was evident that the survey resulted in a 46.9% response rate which was deemed an adequate response rate for a meaningful analysis. It is important to note that 76 individuals participated in the survey; however, only 68 completely finished the survey. Only the surveys that were completed were used in the final analysis. Additionally, the researcher

was contacted by one individual stating that his district would not be participating in the survey, thus the responses from six individuals were not included in the final analysis.

The data presented in this chapter are presented in five sections. The first section represents demographic information regarding the 68 respondents to the survey. The second section of the data reflects what specific factors characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnerships and subsequently initiating an early college program. The third section focuses on the type of organizational partnership that exists between the schools and colleges that maintain an early college program. The fourth section focuses on the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary to sustain the program. The final section of this chapter includes the historical and document analysis conducted for this study.

There are three distinct groups who participate in the Allegany College of Maryland Early College Program directly, the program administrators, which include personnel from the college and school districts, the adjunct college faculty, and the college approved high school faculty, and therefore, three relatively similar surveys were developed to elicit responses from the participants. For the purposes of this research, high school faculty approved to teach in the Early College Program (ECP) will be referred to as Group A. Likewise, adjunct faculty who teach in the Early College Program will be referred to as Group B, and the high school and college personnel will be referred to as Group C. Of the 68 individuals who responded to the survey, Group A had 11 respondents, Group B had 4 respondents, and Group C had 53 respondents. The results of the survey are reported here in a variety of formats. Some are reported in text form only, some in tables, and some in combination.

## Analysis of Data

### Demographic Information

The demographic information for Group A represented in Table 2, shows that all of the respondents were high school teachers. Of that group 45.5% held a bachelors or masters degree, and one individual held a doctoral degree. The subject area of their highest degree varied. The degrees were in the fields of history, political science, English education, biology, communication/English, curriculum and instruction, counseling, workforce development, and criminology. The majority of participants had taught for at least 10 years (54.5%), and 45.4% had taught 6 to 9 years.

Table 2

#### *Demographics for Group A*

High School Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree	Subject Area
0	5	5	1	Developmental Biology, Education, Law, School Counseling

#### How Many Years Have You Taught in the Classroom

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3-5 years	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
6-8 years	1	25.0	25.0	50.0
9+ years	2	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	

The demographic information for Group B represented in Table 3 shows that the respondents were an adjunct instructor, school superintendent, and an attorney. Of that group one held a master's degree and three individuals held doctoral degrees. The subject area of their highest degree varied. The degrees were in the fields of school counseling, education, law, and biology/anatomy. Two of the participants had been in the ECP for at least 10 years while one reported they had taught for 3-5 years and one had taught 6-9 years.

The demographic information for Group C as represented in Table 4 shows that the respondents were superintendents, directors of education, curriculum, special education, and administration, principals, guidance counselors, administrative assistants, and secretaries, as well a vice president and dean. The majority of Group C participants held a master's degree (77.4%) while 11.3% held a doctoral degree, 3.8% held a high school diploma, and 1.9% a bachelor's degree. The subject area of their highest degree varied. The degrees were in the fields of education, administration, supervision, leadership, business, counseling psychology, guidance counseling, stenography, and medical secretarial. The majority of Group C participants (39.6%) had been involved with the ECP for 3-5 years. Further, 26.4% of the participants had been involved in the program for 10+ years, 17% had been for 6-9 years and 9.4% had been for 0-2 years.

Table 3

*Demographics for Group B*

High School Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree	Subject Area
0	0	1	3	Biology/ Environmental Education, Communication, English, Counseling, Criminology, Curriculum and Instruction, History, Workforce Education and Development, Political Science, Social Sciences

How Many Years Have You Been Involved with  
Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-2 years	1	9.1	9.1	9.1
3-5 years	3	27.3	27.3	36.4
6-8 years	4	36.4	36.4	72.7
9+ years	3	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

Table 4

*Demographics for Group C*

High School Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree	Subject Area
2	1	41	6	Special Education, Computers, Secondary Counseling, Administration and Supervision, Administration, Administration and Leadership, English, Superintendent, Health and PE, Business, Counseling, Psychology, Counselor Education, Education, Educational Administration, Guidance and Counseling, Human Resources, Interdisciplinary, K-12 Guidance, Medical Secretary, Organizational Leadership, Secondary Administration, Stenographic, Workforce Education

Table 4 (continued)

*Demographics for Group C*

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How Many Years Have You Been Involved with  
Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program

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	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-2 years	5	9.4	10.2	10.2
3-5 years	21	39.6	42.9	53.1
6-8 years	9	17.0	18.4	71.4
9+ years	14	26.4	28.6	100.0
Total	49	92.5	100.0	
Missing System	4	7.5		
Total	53	100.0		

---

## **Presentation of Data and Themes**

Coming together, sharing together, working together, succeeding together.

*~author unknown*

A key factor leading to the success, or in its absence, the failure, of an early college program is an explicit understanding of the goals and motives of all parties involved. All constituents in the process, including the students, should examine and delineate their desired outcomes before becoming involved (Farrell & Seifert, 2007). Farrell and Seifert (2007) continue that with an open dialogue between participants, true collaboration can occur that will ultimately result in production of a stronger partnership. The most important characteristic of successful early college partnerships is communication among all parties. Thus, all participants must effectively communicate and actively seek to openly deal with differences in vision and needs. When these characteristics are missing from the partnership the integrity of the program will be in doubt and is doomed to fail. Through a strong commitment, clear consensus, and excellent communication the groundwork is laid for an early college program.

### **Initiating an Early College Program**

Research question #1: What specific factors characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnerships?

In this knowledge-based economy, state policy makers realize that a vital state resource is the intellect of its population (Campbell & Eckerman, 1964; Krueger, 2006). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that a majority of the fastest growing and highest-paying occupations require some form of post-secondary education. As a result, a high school diploma is no longer sufficient (Krueger, 2006). Post-secondary



institutions and high schools enter into dual enrollment programs for well-intentioned reasons.

An emerging body of research and practice suggests that providing college-level work in high school is one promising way to better prepare a wide range of young people for college success, including those who do not envision themselves as college material (Hoffman, Vargas, & Santos, 2009). Further, Essex (2001) argues, that an effective partnership has a clearly defined purpose and direction. Everyone involved in partnerships, school and college professionals, must understand and agree on the purpose, direction, and expected outcome(s) of the partnership. Without clear purpose, efforts and energy are wasted, frustration builds, and the partnership dies. Considerable time must be devoted to a discussion of these issues with agreements that are mutually supported by both groups reached during the conceptual stages of planning the partnership. Once determined, a clear purpose and direction will ultimately give meaning to the partnership and influence, to a measurable degree, its potential for success. The vast majority of those involved in partnership must be comfortable and committed to its direction and purpose and understand the various roles that are essential to the success of the partnership. The real challenge is to create a coherent and well coordinated framework that engages teachers, university faculty, schools, and invitations of higher education in a shared vision about how they can address the educational needs of young people together.

A system that is poorly connected has harmful “effects on both institutions and students. For the institution, it leads to inefficiency in programs and resources; for the

student, it results in wastefully duplicated experiences or gaps in learning that may prevent progress to high levels” (Ambach, 1982).

O’Keefe (1981) suggests avoiding duplication in coursework, allowing students to begin college-level work while still in high school or even matriculate into college while still in high school. This also builds a professional working relationship between high school teachers and college faculty.

The community college and 25 school districts studied are located in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Allegany College of Maryland has more than 250 full and part-time instructional and professional and support staff. Over 1,600 students are enrolled at the multiple campuses through degree and non-degree programs. The majority of students are enrolled in transfer and career programs. The 25 school districts range in size and are located throughout a 6 county region.

In the fall of 1992, the college partnered with a local high school for the first time to begin offering a psychology course for college credit to its students. At the time nine students were enrolled. The college did not begin keeping official information specific to the early college program until 1996.

### **Findings from Group A**

The majority of respondents in Group A (72.7%) were unsure of what year the ECP began at their high school; however, 27.2% believed the ECP began over seven years ago in their high schools. Of that group, 81.8% have been involved with the ECP for at least 6 to 9 years; while 18.1% have been involved for over 10 years.

The majority (72.7%) had 11-20 students enrolled in their high school class (es); yet 63.6% responded that 11-20 students were actually enrolled for college credit, while 18.1% indicated that 0-10 and 21-30 students were dual-enrollment credit.

The majority of individuals (81.8) responded that at least two faculty members from their high school participated in the ECP, and 18.1% reported that three to five teachers participated in the ECP at their high schools. All of the participants indicated that three to five dual enrollment courses were offered at their high schools. Ten individuals (90.9%) reported that the College Board Advanced Placement was not offered at their high school with one (9.1%) reporting the College Board Advanced Placement was offered.

The range of the financial commitment from their school district was \$0-\$500 per year (81.8%) while 18.1% reported \$500-\$1,000. When asked to select the funding sources for the ECP at their institutions, the participants indicated the following resources: student tuition and fees (100%); external grants from private sources (63.6%); governmental sources (63.6%); and, by their institution (18.1%). All agreed that 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are eligible to participate in the ECP and that the academic qualifications for the students to participate are established by the high school and college. The majority (90.9%) did not know where the idea for the ECP came from. However, 9.1% indicated the idea came from someone in the college.

The participants reported that the majority (81.8%) believe that the college and high school confer on who will teach in the ECP, while 18.1% indicated the high school determines who teaches. Of the 54.5% who responded that the teachers are required to attend periodic seminars or conferences related to the ECP, 45.4% of the group selected

only when new to the program, but not required, while 54.5% indicated once each semester.

All indicated the program administrators design and conduct the seminars or conferences. Likewise, all indicated that the high school and college appointed faculty use common materials and exams, which are generated by the college faculty.

### **Findings from Group B**

The participants in Group B indicated that teachers become part of the ECP as determined by the high school (50%) and 25% responded that the college endorses them, college and high school confer, or no special process is required. Seventy-five percent indicated that teachers were not required to attend periodic seminars or conferences related to the ECP. However, one participant did indicate that the teachers are required to attend a seminar or conference once a semester. The seminars are designed by the program administrators.

The majority of Group B participants (75%) indicated that high school faculty and college faculty use common materials/exams. Additionally, 75% of the participants reported that the college faculty is responsible for generating those materials/exams.

### **Findings from Group C**

Although most of the Group C participants were unsure of the year the ECP began at their institutions, the earliest date recorded was 1992, and the most recent date was 2008.

Table 5 demonstrates that 79.2% reported that 0-5 faculty members from Allegany College of Maryland participated in the ECP during the 2008-2009 academic year, while 3.8% reported 11-15 faculty members participated, and 1.9% reported that 6-10 and 15+ college faculty participated in the ECP.

Table 5

*How Many Faculty from Allegany College of Maryland Participated in the Early College Program During the 2008-2009 Academic Year*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-5 years	42	79.2	91.3	91.3
6-10 years	1	1.9	2.2	93.5
11-15 years	2	3.8	4.3	97.8
15+ years	1	1.9	2.2	100.0
Total	46	86.8	100.0	
Missing System	7	13.2		
Total	53	100.0		

Table 6 demonstrates that 77.4% reported that 0-5 high school teachers participated in the ECP during the 2008-2009 academic year, while 3.8% reported 6-10 and 15+ high school faculty participated in the program, and 1.9% reported that 11-15 high school faculty participated in the ECP.

Table 6

*How Many High School Teachers Participated in the Early College Program During the 2008-2009 Academic Year*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-5 years	41	77.4	89.1	89.1
6-10 years	2	3.8	4.3	93.5
11-15 years	1	1.9	2.2	95.7
15+ years	2	3.8	4.3	100.0
Total	46	86.8	100.0	
Missing System	7	13.2		
Total	53	100.0		

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the majority reported that 46+ students (28.3%) and 16- 30 students (26.4%) participated in the ECP.

Table 7

*How Many Students were Enrolled in the Early College Program During the 2008-2009 Academic Year at Your Institution*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-15 years	8	15.1	17.4	17.4
16-30 years	14	26.4	30.4	47.8
31-45 years	9	17.0	19.6	67.4
46+ years	15	28.3	32.6	100.0
Total	46	86.8	100.0	
Missing System	7	13.2		
Total	53	100.0		

It was reported that 50-100 students (28.3%) and 351+ students (26.4%) have benefited from the ECP.

Table 8

*In Total, How Many Students Have Benefited from the Early College Program*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 50-100 years	15	28.3	34.9	34.9
151-250 years	9	17.0	20.9	55.8
251-350 years	5	9.4	11.6	67.4
351+ years	14	26.4	32.6	100.0
Total	43	81.1	100.0	
Missing System	10	18.9		
Total	53	100.0		

Table 9 demonstrates that the majority (66.0%) of the institutions had 0-2 staff members administer the ECP.

Table 9

*How Many Staff Members Administered/Directed the Early College Program During the 2008-2009 Academic Year at Your Institution*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-2 years	35	66.0	76.1	76.1
3-5 years	9	17.0	19.6	95.7
6-8 years	2	3.8	4.3	100.0
Total	46	86.8	100.0	
Missing System	7	13.2		
Total	53	100.0		

Group C reported that courses were offered in a variety of disciplines including English, humanities, language, math, social science, and science.

Table 10 demonstrates the budget for the ECP was \$1500+ (30.2%), \$0-\$500 (22.6%), \$501-\$1000 (5.7%), and \$1001-\$1500 (3.8%). The ECP is funded by their institution by the following sources: student tuition and fees (67.9%); external grant money from governmental sources (50.9%); their institution (24.5%); external grants from private sources (18.9%); and, 1.9% from ACM Foundation and Dual Enrollment Grant. Group C reported that if students paid tuition during the 2008-2009 academic year, that the student paid anywhere from \$30.00 to \$467.00, fees \$35.00 to \$150.00, and textbooks \$80.00 to \$150.00. Whereas a matriculated student would have paid tuition during the 2008-2009 academic year of \$99.00 to \$2500.00, fees \$47.00 to \$200.00, and textbooks \$50.00 to \$500.00.

Table 10

*What was the Budget for the Early College Program During the 2008-2009*

*Academic Year*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid \$0-\$500	12	22.6	36.4	36.4
\$501-\$1000	3	5.7	9.1	45.5
\$1001-\$1500	2	3.8	6.1	51.5
\$1500+	16	30.2	48.5	100.0
Total	33	62.3	100.0	
Missing System	20	37.7		
Total	53	100.0		



All agreed that 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students are eligible to participate in the ECP, and in certain instances, grade 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. The majority of Group C (54.7%) indicated that the academic qualifications for the students to participate are established by the high school and college while 17.0% responded that the program administration established the qualifications and 3.8% reported there are none.

The participants in Group C reported that the majority (59.4%) believe that the high school determines who will teach in the ECP while 45.3% indicated the college and high school confer on who will teach, 37.7% college endorses them, and 13.2% indicated other procedures such as teacher interest, college sends teachers, and applicant must meet college standards. Of the 54.7% who responded that the teachers are required to attend periodic seminars or conferences related to the ECP, 13.7% selected only when new to the program, but not required while 5.75% indicated once each semester and one each academic year. Another 1.9% responded once each summer.

Group C indicated the college faculty (13.2%) and program administrators (11.3%) design and conduct the seminars or conferences; whereas, 56.6% reported that the high school and college appointed faculty use common materials and exams and those are generated by the college faculty (39.6%) and high school faculty (34%).

The majority of Group C (49.1%) did not know where the idea for the ECP came from. However, 22.6% indicated the idea came from someone in the college, 11.3% original idea from someone in a high school, 5.7% idea from a model program, and 3.8% other, such as Governor Rendell or a school district superintendent.

## **Maintaining an Early College Program**

Research question #2: What type of organizational partnership exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors and faculty?

It is critical to create an ongoing collaborative environment, to confirm that the institutions are aligning standards at all levels and sharing those expectations with students, parents, and faculty. Coordination also creates opportunities to evaluate existing programs, so successful approaches can be replicated; coordination ensures administrative resources are used effectively. According to Krueger (2006), it is the community college's responsibility to lead the coordination effort, ensuring easy transfer of course credit from high school to college, and then from community college to four-year institutions. This is an essential component of any successful early college program. Dougan (2005) notes that some of the most common issues concern students' academic preparation, the availability of college student services, faculty preparation, and training, and lack of formal evaluation measures. In some cases conflict develops from the state policy or the relationship between partnering institutions.

Essex (2001) states that an effective partnership is enthusiastically endorsed by top level leaders in schools and colleges. Without a strong and visible commitment from its leadership, a partnership has no chance of survival. Top-level leaders from public schools and colleges should be visible and influential in demonstrating the potential that an effective partnership can offer toward educational improvement for both partners. Not only must both fully support the partnership, but they must also provide the necessary

commitment of resources to facilitate its development and success. This means that personnel involved must be provided release time, travel funds, publication support, and other resources needed to support the partnership. They must also be provided the freedom to be creative in recommending needed curricula and instructional changes. One prudent way to demonstrate leadership support is through active participation. When top leaders actively participate in partnership activities, they send a powerful message to their subordinates regarding the value of the relationship. Their active participation should gain commitment and acceptance from their subordinates.

Additionally, an effective partnership involves trust and open communication among partners. Schools and colleges represent two different cultures. Oftentimes, the issue of trust is difficult to achieve. Trust begins with openness and truthfulness regarding purpose, commitment, role, outcomes, and relationships among partners, when these are established early in the formation of the partnership and followed judiciously (Essex, 2001). The level of trust will build as the partnership develops and the partners become more comfortable with each other. Thus, when conflict does occur or obstacles emerge, they should be addressed openly and sincerely.

Essex (2001) continues to report that open communication is a key ingredient to effective partnerships. All involved in the partnership must establish a culture that encourages open, free and non-judgmental expression. Open communication facilitates understanding and minimizes miscommunication, rumor, or misperceptions regarding the inner workings of the partnership. A culture must be established that allows members to debate, brainstorm, and agree to disagree on issues without damaging relationships.

Professional disagreement should be allowed as a strength as partners search for new and improved educational strategies.

Unless schools and colleges work together in a united front, education itself is likely to be the loser. Working together in a cooperative relationship is more likely to benefit education than severe competition for scarce resources (Harkins, 1998).

### **Findings from Group A**

The information in Table 11 demonstrates that there was a wide range of opinions in Group A as to what purpose the ECP was designed. The majority of participants (72.7%) indicated that the purpose was to assist students in moving from high school to college. While 54.5% marked that it provided early college experience, and 36.4% believed it provided a more challenging curriculum for students. When asked to indicate the most important purpose, 45.4% selected to assist students in moving from high school to college. While there are many benefits to the Early College Program it is evident that the vision of the program is for the benefit of the students.

Table 11

*In Your Opinion, for What Purpose was the Early College Program Designed*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Public relations for the college	1	10
Provide a more challenging curriculum for students	4	7
Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students	1	10
Assist students in moving from high school to college	8	3
Improve public image of schools	1	10
Recruit good students for the college	0	11
Improved teaching in the college	0	11
Public relations for the high schools	1	10
Satisfy the demands of parents	1	10
Provide early college experience	6	5
Improve school/college relations	2	9
Improve public image for the college	1	10
Improve teaching in the high school	1	10
Other, please specify: to make money, money for college, reduce tuition rates	3	8

The majority of Group A participants (90.0%) indicated that goals for the ECP have been established. Those goals included to prepare students for college, make the transition from high school to college easier, provide college credits for advanced students, and provide early college experiences for high school students. It is important for all parties involved to have shared and unified goals in order for the Program to continue and grow over time.

The information in Table 12 demonstrates that the goals were developed by a cross section of individuals from the high school and college. In order for a program to

achieve long term success it is imperative that there is consensus and buy-in by all constituents.

Table 12

*Who Participated in Developing These Goals*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
High school teachers	5	6
High school administration	4	7
High school staff	2	9
College faculty	4	7
College administration	3	8
College staff	2	9
Community representatives	0	11
Parent(s)	0	11
Do not know	4	7

Table 13 demonstrates that although goals have been established, the majority of Group A participants (54.5%) did not know how the goals were developed. Although the majority was unaware of how the goals were developed, a strong partnership requires the collaboration of all parties involved.

Table 13

*How were These Goals Developed*

		A Joint Meeting(s) with the High School and College	Separate Meeting(s) of the High School and College	Do Not Know	Other Please Specify
N	Valid	2	1	6	0
	Missing	9	10	5	11

Table 14 demonstrates that all participants have a positive partnership. The partnership is based on mutual support and cooperation; a vital element to a successful program and partnership.

Table 14

*How Would You Describe Your Partnership With Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Excellent. Except the billing system which is very confusing	1	9.1	9.1	18.2
Excellent communication and cooperation	1	9.1	9.1	27.3

Table 14 (continued)

*How Would You Describe Your Partnership With Allegany College of Maryland's**Early College Program*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
I teach my classes in my high school and once a year someone from Allegany comes to observe me.	1	9.1	9.1	36.4
Other than the occasional e-mail about some irrelevant matter, I have no other contact with the college	1	9.1	9.1	45.5
It is a good relationship that I am comfortable with	1	9.1	9.1	54.5
It is one of cooperation and mutual support. The ACM ECP has assisted me whenever I have requested it. I believe I have contributed to this mutually acceptable relationship	1	9.1	9.1	63.6
No problems with Early College Program. Everyone is cooperative and the money to order materials is great	1	9.1	9.1	72.7
Organizational and supportive—ACM will help get the program started and will be there for help but will not attempt to micro-manage	1	9.1	9.1	81.8
Our partnership has always been a positive one. This relationship is imperative for our students to continue to compete in a college setting with other students from schools all over the state and the country	1	9.1	9.1	90.9
So far, it has been very positive	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Supportive—accessible and easy to work with	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	



## **Findings from Group B**

The participants in Group B indicated that all believed the ECP was designed to assist students moving to college, while 75% indicated recruit good students for college and provide early college experience. Half of the participants indicated that the ECP provides a more challenging curriculum. Of the purposes marked, 50% indicated provide more challenging curriculum and provide an early college experience as the primary purpose of the ECP.

The participants in Group B indicated that their institutions participate in the ECP to provide more challenging curriculum and assist students in moving from high school to college (75%), to provide early college experience (50%), and to assist school in meeting needs, improve public relations for the high school, to improve school college relations, and improve teaching in the high school (25%). While there are many benefits to the ECP it is evident that the vision of the program is for the benefit of the students.

All of the participants in Group B marked yes that goals for the ECP have been established. Table 16 demonstrates that two participants from Group B did not know who participated in developing the goals, whereas high school teachers, high school administration, college faculty and college administration were selected.

Table 17 demonstrates that 75% of the respondents do not know how these goals were developed, however one participant marked a joint meeting(s) with the high school and college. Although the majority were unaware of how the goals were developed, it is critical to have input from all of the constituents.

Table 15

*From Your Perspective, Why Does Your Institution Participate in the Early College*

*Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Public relations for the college	0	4
Provide a more challenging curriculum for students	3	1
Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students	1	3
Assist students in moving from high school to college	3	1
Improve public image of schools	0	4
Recruit good students for the college	0	4
Improve teaching in the college	0	4
Public relations for the high school	1	3
Satisfy the demands of parents	0	4
Provide early college experience	2	2
Improve school/college relations	1	3
Improve public image for the college	0	4
Improve teaching in the high school	1	3
Other, please specify	0	4

Table 16

*Who Participated in Developing These Goals*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
High school teachers	1	3
High school administration	1	3
High school staff	0	4
College faculty	1	3
College administration	1	3
College staff	0	4
Community representatives	0	4
Parent(s)	0	4
Do not know	2	2

Table 17

*How Were These Goals Developed*

		A Joint Meeting(s) with the High School and College	Separate Meeting(s) of the High School and College	Do Not Know	Other Please Specify
N	Valid	1	0	3	4
	Missing	3	4	1	0

Table 18 demonstrates that all participants have a positive partnership. There is a strong sense of mutual respect and two-way communication among the partners. In

beginning a new partnership or group project, it is important to recognize that even if group members use similar language they may in fact have differing understandings of the situation. When possible, set the tone by demonstrating willingness to clarify early discussions and ensure that all those present have an opportunity to participate.

Recognize that an open communication system is a critical element of any partnership process, and it takes purposeful, consistent attention to make this happen (Bracken, 2007).

Table 18

*How Would You Describe Your Partnership with the Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Excellent. Good working relationship, aid with curriculum, text, tests, and networking with other instructors	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
Excellent. Great two-way communication	1	25.0	25.0	50.0
My partnership is a very good one. My ideas are taken seriously and when I need support I get it. There is always someone to answer my questions or to point me in the correct direction.	1	25.0	25.0	75.0
Very rewarding	1	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	

## **Findings from Group C**

The information in Table 19 demonstrates that there was a wide range of opinions in Group C as for what purposes the ECP was designed. The majority of participants (66.0%) indicated to provide early college experience, while 64.2% marked assist students in moving from high school to college and 39.6% provide a more challenging curriculum for students. Of the purposes marked, the primary purpose was to assist students in moving from high school to college, to provide early college experience, and to provide a more challenging curriculum for students. While there are many benefits to the Early College Program it is evident that the vision of the program is for the benefit of the students.

The participants in Group C indicated that their institutions participated in the ECP to assist students in moving from high school to college (69.8%), to provide early college experience (67.9%), and to provide a more challenging curriculum for students (49.1%). Other responses included, to assist the school in meeting the needs of gifted students, to satisfy the demands of parents, other costs, to improve public image of schools, public relations for the high schools, to recruit good students for the college, and to improve teaching in the high school. All parties agree that the benefits received by the students are at the forefront of the ECP.

Table 19

*In Your Opinion, for What Purpose was the Early College Program Designed*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Public relations for the college	3	50
Provide a more challenging curriculum for students	21	32
Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students	10	43
Assist students in moving from high school to college	34	19
Improve public image of schools	2	51
Recruit good students for the college	4	49
Improve teaching in the college	0	53
Public relations for the high school	2	51
Satisfy the demands of parents	5	48
Provide early college experience	35	18
Improve school/college relations	5	48
Improve public image for the college	0	53
Improve teaching in the high school	2	51
Other, please specify, provide inexpensive credits for a student thus allowing the student to have a lighter financial obligation in the early years of college, save money, save money for parents for college costs, transfer of college credit	4	49

Table 20

*From Your Perspective, Why Does Your Institution Participate in the Early College**Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Public relations for the college	3	50
Provide a more challenging curriculum for students	26	27
Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students	7	46
Assist students in moving from high school to college	37	16
Improve public image of schools	3	50
Recruit good students for the college	2	51
Improve teaching in the college	0	53
Public relations for the high school	3	50
Satisfy the demands of parents	6	47
Provide early college experience	36	17
Improve school/college relations	0	53
Improve public image for the college	0	53
Improve teaching in the high school	2	51
Other, please specify, defray college costs for students, financial and early credits for students, help to reduce the long term cost of college, save parents money for college costs	4	49

The majority of Group A participants (64.2%) indicated that goals for the ECP have been established. Those goals included, providing early college experience for students at a reduced cost, making education geographically accessible, enhancing the educational opportunities of the district's students, increasing the number of students who consider post-secondary education, increasing the number of post-secondary students who are eventually successful in graduation.

Table 21 demonstrates that three respondents from Group C did not know who participated in developing the goals, whereas high school teachers, high school administration, high school staff, college faculty, college administration, college staff, community representatives, and parents were selected. Although the majority was unaware of how the goals were developed, a strong partnership requires the collaboration of all parties involved.

Table 21

*Who Participated in Developing These Goals*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
High school teachers	13	40
High school administration	24	29
High school staff	7	46
College faculty	5	48
College administration	14	39
College staff	10	43
Community representative	7	46
Parent(s)	7	46
Do not know	3	50



Table 22 demonstrates that 28.3% of the respondents indicated the goals were developed in a joint meeting(s) with the high school and college. However, 15.1% did not know how these goals were developed, 11.3% indicated separate meeting(s) of the high school and college, and 1.9% marked other strategic planning procedures. Although the majority was unaware of how the goals were developed, the majority indicated that the goals were developed through a joint effort.

Table 22

*How Were These Goals Developed*

		A Joint Meeting(s) with the High School and College	Separate Meeting(s) of the High School and College	Do Not Know	Other Please Specify
N	Valid	15	6	8	1
	Missing	38	47	45	52

Table 23 demonstrates that all participants have a positive partnership; however, cost and billing have been a concern. The ECP partnership is viewed as being mutually beneficial. Aside from billing and cost issues, the participants view their relationship as being an excellent and cooperative collaboration. A successful partnership is clear about the purpose of their endeavor, and that members reach agreement about who is responsible for which aspects of the partnership. A good partnership recognizes that each member's unique contributions reflect trust and commitment to clear communication.

Table 23

*How Would You Describe Your Partnership with Allegany College of Maryland's**Early College Program*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	34.0	34.0	34.0
A great working relationship	1	1.9	1.9	35.8
Excellent	1	1.9	1.9	37.7
Excellent	2	3.8	3.8	41.5
EXCELLENT EASY TO WORK WITH INTERESTED IN PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS	1	1.9	1.9	43.4
Excellent partnership, excellent communication and service	1	1.9	1.9	45.3
Excellent relationship	1	1.9	1.9	47.2
Extremely positive	1	1.9	1.9	49.1
Fantastic; affordable learning for High school student. Partnership exceeds expectations	1	1.9	1.9	50.9
Funding resource	1	1.9	1.9	52.8
Great	1	1.9	1.9	54.7
Great to work within this program	1	1.9	1.9	56.6
Great! Very professional. Very easy to work with	1	1.9	1.9	58.5
Has been excellent	1	1.9	1.9	60.4
I believe the partnership is strong, cooperative, and valuable	1	1.9	1.9	62.3

Table 23 (continued)

*How Would You Describe Your Partnership with Allegany College of Maryland's*

*Early College Program*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
I feel the partnership with Allegany has been profitable for our high school students. The college has gone above and beyond in providing services for our students. The connection has afforded many students who may not have had it, the opportunity to experience college level classes. I hope the college has benefited as much as the high school students have	1	1.9	1.9	64.2
I oversee the department the recruits students in the schools for both early college and post-secondary education. In addition, I oversee the admissions area that admits the early college students and helps with their advising	1	1.9	1.9	66.0
I would describe it as mutually beneficial	1	1.9	1.9	67.9
It has its ups and downs	1	1.9	1.9	69.8
It is a professional and collaborative partnership	1	1.9	1.9	71.7
It is adequate. We do seem to have more problems with their procedures than with the other colleges that provide ECP	1	1.9	1.9	73.6
It is okay when working with the faculty. The issues that are bothersome to our school and students and parents are the billing notices that indicate a collection agency will be notified if the bill not paid. ACC cost is the highest of the colleges that we work with	1	1.9	1.9	75.5

Table 23 (continued)

*How Would You Describe Your Partnership with Allegany College of Maryland's**Early College Program*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Positive in establishing and implementing and maintaining the courses. Excessively negative with student billing issues	1	1.9	1.9	77.4
Strong teamwork and collaboration	1	1.9	1.9	79.2
Successful	1	1.9	1.9	81.1
The staff is very helpful, kind and cooperative with the students and faculty	1	1.9	1.9	83.0
Usually very good	1	1.9	1.9	84.9
Very collaborative	1	1.9	1.9	86.8
Very good and both sides	1	1.9	1.9	88.7
Very good partnership	1	1.9	1.9	90.6
Was very good until this year. Money has become an issue along with a change in teacher qualifications	1	1.9	1.9	92.5
We couldn't ask for a better relationship	1	1.9	1.9	94.3
We have a good working relationship	1	1.9	1.9	96.2
We have an excellent relationship and the program runs seamlessly	1	1.9	1.9	98.1
We occasionally have students enrolled, not regularly	1	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	53	100.0	100.0	

This is demonstrated by a “commitment to learning from each other and changing our own ideas as a result” (Tett, 2005).

### **Sustaining an Early College Program**

Beyond the benefits to the students themselves, the accelerated learning option points the way to practices and state policies that can improve the alignment of the secondary and post-secondary sectors. The options are most likely to be supported and spread in states with certain policies, and by the same token, exemplify practices for improving college readiness and success that states may choose to expand through policy changes ((Hoffman, Vargas, & Sanos, 2009).

As early college programs gain popularity, state policy makers need to carefully consider how to best design and evaluate these programs. Creating a mechanism for moving students through the system without paying attention to rigor or quality is a waste of student time and state resources. It is in the interest of both the students and the legislature to support and encourage implementation of early college programs. For the student, transition to college is more feasible if the program considers, not only academic preparation, but the social aspects of college (Farrell & Seifert, 2007).

Essex (2001) states that an effective partnership involves mutual respect among partners, provides tangible benefits for all partners involved, and has mechanisms to assess progress and measure outcomes. Sometimes the cultural differences among college educators and public school teachers impede effective partnerships. Actual involvement in each partner's work environment can be very revealing and contribute to a real understanding of the issues, challenges, and obstacles faced by each partner. Until efforts are made to erase negative perceptions, a successful partnership may not become a

reality. Mutual respect is a cornerstone for effective collaboration with a genuine view that all partners bring value to the partnership. Partners must recognize and respect the unique contributions that each brings to the partnership.

Unless partners see potential benefits by the partnership, there is no incentive to participate. If partners realize the value of their efforts they are more willing to make an investment of time, energy, effort, and resources. An effective partnership must have the capacity to assess progress and redirect efforts based on assessment data. There must be a mechanism to gauge the degree of progress and to determine if outcomes are consistent with the goals of the partnership. Without this analysis, there is little meaning for the partnership. The old adage, “If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there,” is certainly applicable here (Essex, 2001). Partners must monitor the progress of the partnership to ensure that desired results are achieved and that the flexibility to make adjustments as needed' is maintained. In short, there should be some measurable means of assessing the effectiveness of the partnership and redirecting efforts to ensure that desired results are achieved.

### **Findings from Group A**

Table 24 demonstrates that the majority of Group A participants indicated better experience for students (63.6%) and reduced or free tuition for college courses (54.5%) as benefits the high school receives for participating in the ECP. Although there are monetary benefits associated with the ECP, the majority of respondents signified the experience for the students.

Table 24

*Based on Your Perception, Please Mark the Rewards, If Any, that You Think the High School Receives as a Result of Participating in the Early College Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Supplemental pay	1	10
Institutional pay	2	9
Connection with other faculty	0	11
Connection with the college and staff	0	11
Reduced or free tuition for college courses	6	5
Recruiting good students	3	8
Free materials/equipment	4	7
Knowledge of curriculum	3	8
Computer access	0	11
Professional development opportunities	1	10
Professional reputation	3	8
Communication with colleagues	0	11
Better experience for students	7	4
None	0	11

Table 25 demonstrates that the majority of Group A participants indicated that recruiting good students (54.5%) and better experience for students (45.5%) as benefits the college receives for participating in the ECP. Although there are many benefits of the ECP, the majority of respondents indicated the student benefits as a college reward for participating in the ECP.

Table 25

*Based on Your Perception, Please Mark the Rewards, If Any, that You Think the College Receives as a Result of Participating in the Early College Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Supplemental pay	1	10
Institutional pay	3	8
Connection with other faculty	1	10
Connection with the college and staff	0	11
Reduced or free tuition for college courses	0	11
Recruiting good students	6	5
Free materials/equipment	1	10
Knowledge of curriculum	3	8
Computer access	0	11
Professional development opportunities	0	11
Professional reputation	2	9
Communication with colleagues	0	11
Better experience for students	5	6
None	0	11

Table 26 demonstrates that 63.4% of Group A participants identified funding as a major obstacle for the ECP. Other obstacles included communication 34.4%, shared vision 27.3%, and student interest 18.2%. Although several obstacles have been



identified, they can also offer opportunities for clarification and enhanced collaboration, so long as participants are able to work through the issues (Bracken, 2007).

Table 26

*What Would You Identify as Major Obstacles for the Early College Program*

		Funding	Student Interest	Communication	Shared Vision
N	Valid	7	2	4	3
	Missing	4	9	7	8

Table 27 demonstrates that Group A participants indicated cooperation (72.7%), adequate funding/cost (54.5%), communication and commitment (45.5%), shared goals and quality assurance (27.3%), and time (18.2%) were elements critical to success. None of the respondents marked shared policy, rewards, or action. These characteristics are crucial to the sustenance of the ECP.

Table 28 demonstrates that Group A participants have a mixed reaction to the direction of the ECP over the next five years. Although the indication is for the program to continue and grow, there are concerns.

Table 27

*What are the Three Critical Elements to the Success of the Early College Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Shared goals	3	8
Shared policy	0	11
Adequate funding/cost	6	5
Time	2	9
Communication	5	6
Rewards	0	11
Action	0	11
Cooperation	8	3
Commitment	5	6
Quality Assurance	3	8

Table 28

*In Your Opinion, What is the Direction of the Early College Program Over the Next Five Years*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	27.3	27.3	27.3
Expansion is likely because of the increased costs of higher education	1	9.1	9.1	36.4
Hopefully, the direction will be to continue to prepare students for their college experience	1	9.1	9.1	45.5
I don't know. I can see the program growing with increased student demand, however I believe that there is resistance by both the high school teachers and college staff to continue to use high school teachers vice college faculty	1	9.1	9.1	54.5
I hope that it stays status quo, because I am satisfied with it as it is now	1	9.1	9.1	63.6
Not looking positive from my perspective. They want to allow my high school transcript to dictate college credits without the challenging aspects of my college level assessment	1	9.1	9.1	72.7
The early college program helps students gain college credit at a more reasonable cost so that their costs after high school are less overwhelming. There should be more opportunities for students to take these courses by offering more within the school setting	1	9.1	9.1	81.8

Table 28 (continued)

*In Your Opinion, What is the Direction of the Early College Program Over the*

*Next Five Years*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
There is a lot of student interest – the grants have helped defer the costs for students. There is a student concern that the courses will not transfer to the college of their choice especially when they haven't decided on a school	1	9.1	9.1	90.9
We should continue to strive to make the program better for our students	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

## Findings from Group B

Table 29 demonstrates that the majority of Group A participants (75.5%) indicated better experience for students; while 50% selected professional reputation, and reduced or free tuition for college courses as benefits the high school receives for participating in the ECP.

Table 29

*Based on Your Perception, Please Mark the Rewards, If Any, That You Think the High School Receives as a Result of Participating in the Early College Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Supplemental pay	0	4
Institutional pay	0	4
Connection with other faculty	1	3
Connection with the college and staff	1	3
Reduced or free tuition for college courses	2	2
Recruiting good students	1	3
Free materials/equipment	1	3
Knowledge of curriculum	1	3
Computer access	0	4
Professional development opportunities	0	4
Professional reputation	2	2
Communication with colleagues	1	3
Better experience for students	3	1
None	0	4

Table 30 demonstrates that the majority of Group B participants (50.0%) indicated that professional reputation and better experience for students as benefits the college receives for participating in the ECP.

Table 30

*Based on Your Perception, Please Mark the Rewards, If Any, That You Think the College Receives as a Result of Participating in the Early College Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Supplemental pay	1	3
Institutional pay	0	4
Connection with other faculty	1	3
Connection with the college and staff	1	3
Reduced or free tuition for college courses	0	4
Recruiting good students	1	3
Free materials/equipment	0	4
Knowledge of curriculum	1	3
Computer access	0	4
Professional development opportunities	0	4
Professional reputation	2	2
Communication with colleagues	0	4
Better experience for students	2	2
None	0	4

Table 31 demonstrates that 75.0% of Group B participants identified that funding was a major obstacle for the ECP. Other obstacles included communication (25.0%) student interest, and shared vision.

Table 31

*What Would You Identify as Major Obstacles for the Early College Program*

		Funding	Student Interest	Communication	Shared Vision
N	Valid	3	1	1	1
	Missing	1	3	3	3

Table 32 demonstrates that Group B participants indicated communication (75.5%), adequate funding/cost, time, and commitment (50.0%), and shared goals, shared policy and quality assurance (25.0%) were elements critical to success. None of the respondents marked rewards, action, or cooperation.

Table 33 demonstrates that Group B participants have a mixed reaction to the direction of the ECP over the next five years, however, the focus is on growth and expansion of the program.

Table 32

*What are the Three Critical Elements to the Success of the Early College Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Shared goals	1	3
Shared policy	1	3
Adequate funding/cost	2	2
Time	2	2
Communication	3	1
Rewards	0	4
Action	0	4
Cooperation	0	4
Commitment	2	2
Quality assurance	1	3

Table 33

*In Your Opinion, What is the Direction of the Early College Program Over the Next*

*Five Years*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
Bring in more faculty from the Outside to teach in the high schools	1	25.0	25.0	50.0
Expand	1	25.0	25.0	55.0
To increase course offerings	1	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	



## Findings from Group C

Table 34 demonstrates that the majority of Group C participants (67.9%) indicated better experience for students, while 62.3% selected reduced or free tuition for college courses as benefits the high school receives for participating in the ECP.

Table 34

*Based on Your Perception, Please Mark the Rewards, If Any, That You Think the High School Receives as a Result of Participating in the Early College Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Supplemental pay	4	49
Institutional pay	8	45
Connection with other faculty	8	45
Connection with the college and staff	22	31
Reduced or free tuition for college courses	33	20
Recruiting good students	8	45
Free materials/equipment	8	45
Knowledge of curriculum	20	33
Computer access	4	49
Professional development opportunities	14	39
Professional reputation	13	40
Communication with colleagues	10	43
Better experience for students	36	17
None	1	52

Table 35 demonstrates that the majority of Group C participants (52.8%) recruiting good students, while 35.8% selected better experience for students as benefits the college receives for participating in the ECP.

Table 35

*Based on Your Perception, Please Mark the Rewards, If Any*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Supplemental pay	3	50
Institutional pay	14	39
Connection with other faculty	7	46
Connection with the college and staff	8	45
Reduced or free tuition for college courses	4	49
Recruiting good students	28	25
Free materials/equipment	1	52
Knowledge of curriculum	12	41
Computer access	2	51
Professional development opportunities	9	44
Professional reputation	15	38
Communication with colleagues	8	45
Better experience for students	19	34
None	0	53

Table 36 demonstrates that 67.9% of Group C participants identified funding as a major obstacle for the ECP. Other obstacles included communication and student interest (11.3%), and shared vision (9.4%).

Table 36

*What Would You Identify as Major Obstacles for the Early College Program*

		Funding	Student Interest	Communication	Shared Vision
N	Valid	36	6	6	5
	Missing	17	47	47	48

Table 37 demonstrates that Group C participants indicated adequate funding/cost (60.4%) quality assurance (37.7%), and shared goals (32.1%) were the top three elements critical to success. All of the elements are critical to the success of the ECP.

Table 38 demonstrates that Group A participants have a mixed reaction to the direction of the ECP over the next five years. Although the indication is for the program to continue and grow there are concerns that will need addressed.

Table 37

*What are the Three Critical Elements to the Success of the Early College Program*

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Shared goals	17	36
Shared policy	1	52
Adequate funding/cost	32	21
Time	10	43
Communication	15	38
Rewards	3	50
Action	1	52
Cooperation	14	39
Commitment	10	43
Quality Assurance	20	33

Table 38

*In Your Opinion, What is the Direction of the Early College Program Over the**Next Five Years*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	34.0	34.0	34.0
Blending more and more with student's needs	1	1.9	1.9	35.8
Continue as is	1	1.9	1.9	37.7
Continue offering education opportunities for high school students and increase the number of those students attending ACM after high school graduation	1	1.9	1.9	39.6
Decline if not supported by college administration	1	1.9	1.9	41.5
Due to the current economic situation, the program should continue to grow	1	1.9	1.9	43.4
Expand the program to include more opportunities for our students	1	1.9	1.9	45.3
I am unsure due to budget cuts in the Dual enrollment Grant	1	1.9	1.9	47.2
I believe it will continue to grow	1	1.9	1.9	49.1
I believe our school district will continue to support and provide ECP opportunities for our students	1	1.9	1.9	50.9
I believe that it will help better prepare our students for the rigor of college work	1	1.9	1.9	52.8
I believe the early college program will expand and will include distance learning opportunities	1	1.9	1.9	54.7
I expect our college in high school curriculum to grow as long as our higher institutions of learning will continue to accept the college credits earned while in high school	1	1.9	1.9	56.6

Table 38 (continued)

*In Your Opinion, What is the Direction of the Early College Program Over the**Next Five Years*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I see an increase in enrollment due to the increasing costs of education and to shorten the time a student needs to commit to their education prior to employment	1	1.9	1.9	58.5
I think to maintain the program and add more class to the selection process	1	1.9	1.9	60.4
I would like to hope that the ECP will expand offerings in rural areas where students do not have access to facilities and educational opportunities available in urban and suburban areas	1	1.9	1.9	62.3
Increasing numbers	1	1.9	1.9	64.2
It is only going to increase in need and desire on the student's part	1	1.9	1.9	66.0
It will continue at a greater scale	1	1.9	1.9	67.9
It will continue to be a prospering program	1	1.9	1.9	69.8
It will continue to grow	1	1.9	1.9	71.7
It will increase in importance	1	1.9	1.9	73.6
It will only continue to expand in our district	1	1.9	1.9	75.5
More colleges and universities appear to be offering online courses for high school students to consider	1	1.9	1.9	77.4
More students leaving school for classes at local campuses	1	1.9	1.9	79.2
No change, we are happy with the program	1	1.9	1.9	81.1
Offer general ed credits to students but identify completers for the ACM	1	1.9	1.9	83.0
Retention of existing program and attract more students	1	1.9	1.9	84.9

Table 38 (continued)

*In Your Opinion, What is the Direction of the Early College Program Over the*

*Next Five Years*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
To continue providing students with the opportunity to acquire college credits while in high school and saving students and parents money as the costs of post-secondary education continue to rise	1	1.9	1.9	86.8
To continue to provide advanced courses at a reasonable cost to secondary students	1	1.9	1.9	88.7
To decrease funding	1	1.9	1.9	90.6
To get more students involved	1	1.9	1.9	92.5
To keep providing a quality education at a reduced rate	1	1.9	1.9	94.3
Unfortunately due to the funding of dual enrollment, it appears ECP may suffer greatly over the next five years	1	1.9	1.9	96.2
We will continue our ECP regardless of funding. However, if state funds are not continued, I anticipate that parents will opt for programs from the least expensive universities or not have their student participate	1	1.9	1.9	98.1
Without funding, enrollment will likely decline	1	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	53	100.0	100.0	

### **Findings from Historical Document Analysis**

The ECP offered through Allegany College of Maryland provides students with the opportunity to experience affordable, quality, and accessible educational opportunities. The College, in partnership with 25 local school districts, works collaboratively to provide students with an opportunity to experience the rigors of college level coursework while still in high school.

The researcher was permitted to review and examine several types of documents distributed to potential students and parents of the program in addition to historical data. The documents examined consisted of a parent permission form, marketing brochure, *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) waiver, information letter to potential students and parents, cost and payment information, application for admission, registration form, and contact information. The researcher learned that the college staff reviews each piece of information with the early college students and high school personnel. The information is included in a folder that is marked as important information for early college parents. The folder and information are to be shared with the parents of each student.

A review of the parent permission form disseminated by the college to the students and parents emphasized the importance of communication with and commitment from parents. The form requires the parent/guardian to initial and sign the form. Once completed the form must be returned to the college by the designated deadline. As a result, the parent must give consent for his or her son or daughter to enroll in the early college program. Further, the parents acknowledge that once permission is granted a bill will be generated by the college. At that time they become financially obligated.



The marketing brochure provides a brief overview about Allegany College of Maryland. Included in the brochure is information pertaining to the mission of the college, campus locations, programs of study, summary of costs, facts at a glance, and contact information. The early college students are informed about the post-secondary opportunities that are available to them at Allegany College of Maryland.

The researcher was also permitted to review the FERPA form that is provided to all students enrolling in the early college program. The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974* is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of education records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings. The college does not release any records that are considered to be confidential without the student's written consent. All students must sign and return the form which also provides for parents/guardians/high school representatives the right to request information regarding to academic, financial, and disciplinary records. The form must be completed each semester. Thus, by signing the form, the student gives permission to the parents, school district personnel, and college staff the permission to work collaboratively and to share information on behalf of the student.

Upon review of the information letter, it was apparent that the letter provided to the students and parents emphasizes detailed information regarding the early college program. The information established in this document includes a review of charges and fees, the admission/registration process, access to Student Web Services, transfer of credits, and the process for early college students who continue their post-secondary career with the college.

In addition, the researcher was permitted to review the cost and payment information. Each student is provided with a breakdown of costs for tuition and fees. As well, students are provided with a contact person in the business office should they experience any questions or concerns regarding the cost and payment incurred by the early college program.

The researcher was also permitted to review the application for admission form that must be completed by all students enrolling in the early college program. All students attending Allegany College of Maryland must complete the same application, regardless of the program of study for which they are applying. However, the early college students are required to insert a five digit code as an identifier. By doing so the college is able to accurately bill and track early college students.

In order to officially register for any early college course, each student is required to complete an official registration form. The form requires each student to indicate the name of the course (es) and the semester for which he or she are registering. The student's signature is also required.

Additionally, each student and parent is provided with contact information for the early college staff. Included in each folder is a business card for the early college contact person with name, address, phone, and email address.

In addition, the researcher was provided with historical data that included an overview of the early college enrollment by school district semester, and academic year. The information was separated by year, semester, school district, course, and enrollment. In addition, the college provided the researcher with a copy of the course rotation schedule and list of courses offered during the 2008-2009 academic year.

The researcher learned that prior to the start of each semester the early college staff from the community college contacts the program administrator(s) at each school district. This discussion may be formal or informal in nature depending upon the needs of both parties. The discussion includes verification of the following information: the course to be taught, days and times the course is to be offered, starting and ending dates of the course, course content and materials, evaluation process, registration process, and who will be instructing the course.

Additionally, the researcher learned that the courses offered follow the rigor and content required by the college. The course is taught by either an adjunct faculty member who is appointed or by a high school teacher who is approved by the college. These individuals must meet the college credentials. Most often courses are taught over a semester while some courses are taught over an entire academic year. Students have the option of registering for the class for college credit when taught by a high school faculty member. However, if an adjunct instructor is appointed to teach all students in the class must register for college credit. The tuition for the academic credits is reduced significantly from the normal student fee. The students become matriculated early college students and earn a grade and college credit based on their performance established by the grading criteria. The final grade is recorded on an official transcript and can be transferred to another university. As with any other transfer grade, the credits transfer, but not the grade, and must be a C or better. Not all colleges accept the transfer credit and students are encouraged to contact their respective institutions for confirmation. If the student continues at the community college, the grade from the early college course is calculated into the student's grade point average.

A review of the historical data provided an overview of the development and expansion of the early college program. The program originally began in 1992; however, official records regarding the early college program was not available until the fall semester in 1996.

Further review of the packet of information showed that it was evident that the early college students are required to follow and adhere to the same forms, policies, and guidelines as would be required of any student enrolling at Allegany College of Maryland. The information reviewed highlighted the collaborative effort on the part of the parent, student, school district, and college. The analysis of the documents and data is consistent with the perceptions shared by the participants of the early college program.

The data gathered through the document and historical analysis is consistent and supported by the information gathered during the formal survey. The research supports the need for quality, affordability, shared goals, communication, cooperation, and commitment for the success and longevity of any early college program.

### **Summary**

This chapter discussed the research findings from the formal survey conducted with the individuals who participated in the Early College Program offered through Allegany College of Maryland during the 2008-2009 academic school year. Although the partnership benefits the schools and college, it is the students who are at the center of this delicate balance that is necessary for the development, implementation, and sustenance of any early college program (Farrell & Seifert, 2007). An effective and successful early college program relies on the strength of the relationship between the

high schools and colleges. The commitment to provide quality, accessible, and affordable opportunities for the students is a daunting task.

The results of this study support the findings of previous research and the following themes emerged. First, the specific factors that characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnerships include the commitment from all parties involved. This is a crucial first step in initiating an early college program. The Early College Program offered through Allegany College of Maryland dates back 18 years to its inception in 1992. The long standing relationship with the various school districts is evidenced by the number of individuals directly affected by the program including personnel and students, not to mention the financial commitment from both the high schools and college.

Second, the type of organizational partnership that exists between the school districts and the community college that participate in the early college program is a very positive one. The partnership is based on open communication and a shared vision that focuses on the needs and interests of the students.

Third, the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the participants involved in the Allegany College of Maryland program include shared goals, communication, and quality assurance.

These characteristics will contribute to the continuation and growth of the Early College Program offered through Allegany College of Maryland. However, in spite of these efforts, funding or lack thereof and rising costs could greatly impact the future and

direction of the ECP. Chapter Five discusses the findings, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations for future study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational partnership of the Early College Program (ECP) between a community college and 25 rural school districts; and the organizational partnerships among them in an attempt to identify and analyze the factors integral to the success and sustainability of the program.

Chapter Five discusses the purpose of the study, the research questions, and summarizes the relationship that exists between the data collected and the original research questions proposed in Chapter One. This chapter concludes with recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Whatever the cause, college and high school educators are showing interest in each other. Harkins (1998) found such linkages between the nation's colleges and schools must be strengthened in order to establish academic standards, permit students to move more flexibly from one level to another, enrich the work of classroom teachers, and strengthen educational programs at the local schools. Education involves many relationships at many different levels and in the end all of these linkages must be strong. If they are not, the chain will snap and the nation will suffer an unbearable loss of education effectiveness.

Further, flexibility and understanding of each constituent's changing needs and the host institution's ability to provide services will positively affect the longevity and viability of the early college program. As tertiary institutions' curriculum requirements change, the early college program must be able to alter course offerings to meet those changes (Farrell & Seifert, 2007).

Although educational partnerships are complex and challenging, successful partnerships are clear about the purpose of their endeavor and that members reach agreement about who is responsible for which aspects of the partnership. A good partnership recognizes that each member's unique contributions reflect trust and commitment to clear communication. This is demonstrated by a commitment to learning from each other and changing our own ideas as a result (Buys & Bursnall, 2007).

Effective partnerships between agencies, schools, universities, businesses, government, and residents are a vital part of community growth. Such collaboration increases the likelihood that organizations reach a larger population, avoid duplication of services, make better use of their resources, and deal more effectively and thoroughly with the myriad of problems faced by communities (Buys & Bursnall, 2007). With an increasingly challenging social and economic environment, and scarcity of resources, it is even more important that communities, including universities, reach out to one another in an effort to build social capital. Collaborations can be viewed in various forms, from offering general advice to active participation, and may have diverse meanings to different members. University-community partnerships are therefore best described as the coming together of diverse interests and people to achieve a common purpose via interactions, information sharing, and coordination activities.

An on-line survey was conducted to determine the perceptions of individuals who worked with the Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program during the 2008-2009 academic school year. The list of individuals included 47 faculty members, consisting of high school teachers and adjunct college instructors; 98 program administrators consisting of college administrators and staff and high school personnel



including superintendents, directors, principals, guidance counselors, and guidance counselor secretaries. In addition, document and historical analysis were used to support the findings of this research. This study examined the perceptions of 145 individuals who partner with the Early College Program offered through Allegany College of Maryland to answer the following research questions:

1. What specific factors characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnerships?
2. What type of organizational partnership exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?
3. What are the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?

### **Summary of Findings**

Table 39 summarizes the major findings of this study as related to the literature review in Chapter Two. These characteristics are critical factors of school-college partnerships.

Table 39

*Major Findings as Related to the Literature Review*

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1. What specific factors characterize the organizational relationship of the school-college partnership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administration/Leadership</li><li>• Action</li><li>• Time</li></ul>
2. What type of organizational partnership exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shared Vision</li><li>• Shared Goals</li><li>• Communication</li><li>• Cooperation</li><li>• Rewards</li></ul>
3. What are the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality</li><li>• Benefits</li><li>• Commitment</li><li>• Cost</li></ul>

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In her research, Harkins (1997) reported that authors of the many articles and books on school-college programs profess the necessary elements, conditions, or characteristics toward successful school-college partnerships. She contends that they tout these as critical factors to success, to change, to a new culture, to a change in philosophy, and to working together. The authors, Hord (1981), Lieberman (1992), Ponticelli (1990), and Carruolo (1995), identified factors which school college programs must possess.

Research question #1: What specific factors characterize the organizational relationships of the school-college partnerships?

Although the statistics vary from school district to school district with regards to the total number of students who enroll/benefit from the ECP, the years of involvement with the ECP, and the varied funding sources, the partners involved in the ECP share a common interest that has brought them together.

Hord (1981) identified some factors that must be present for organizations to work together:

1. The organization and its people must be willing to devote the necessary time to the joint venture.
2. High energy individuals are needed to begin and sustain a collaborative spirit.
3. Participants must be willing to give up control in order to create a more flexible environment and can move closer to collaboration.
4. The organizational factors must be conducive to collaboration; the people within them are doing the actual work.
5. It is vital that each participant can empathize with the counterparts in the other organization.

6. The leader must be strong.
7. Participants must have patience, persistence, and a willingness to make the effort work.

Lieberman (1992) identified similar factors necessary for strong partnerships.

1. A small core of people actually working on the project.
2. Enough allotted time.
3. Skillful people working together to enhance the collaborative work.
4. Initially, the activities set the stage, not the goals.
5. Must have high energy people to sustain the effort.

The findings of this study indicate a strong commitment from those who work directly with the ECP. There is an appreciation for the history of the program and a commitment to continue into the future. Many of the participants who responded to the survey indicated that they have been involved with the ECP for at least 3 years and several for over 10 years. Also, they expressed their willingness to continue with the ECP based on their past experience and strong relationships.

Research questions #2: What type of organizational partnership exists between the schools and colleges that participate in an early college program from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?

The findings of this study conclude that a positive, cooperative, and collaborative partnership exists among the school districts and college that participated in the ECP. Further, there is a shared vision among all participants and that is to assist high school students. Additionally, the shared goal is to assist the students with transition to college,

the college experience, and to provide a more challenging curriculum. The partners view their role as high schools and colleges working together.

Hord (1981) identified the following as a framework for organizational partnerships. She found that large and small meetings to encourage communication are perpetual; and that participating organizations will share funds, staff, and other resources. Lieberman (1992) also identified characteristics that are necessary for ongoing partnerships that are for the use of conflict management, thus becoming more skilled in collaborative decision making and the sharing of problems, leadership, and change. She continues that through shared experiences, over time, build mutual trust, respect, and risk taking.

Ponticelli (1990) identified the following characteristics of a successful partnership:

1. Shared, reciprocal benefits.
2. Shared leadership and decision making.
3. Trust and acceptance of each other's knowledge and experience.
4. Common situations and experiences.
5. Common goals.

Further, the early college partners acknowledge a shared vision which includes the belief in a common central mission through honest dialogue and communication throughout and among the organizational partnerships. Findings in this study discovered relationships that were fostered and cemented by a belief in the positive benefits of the relationships.

Research question #3: What are the characteristics of a successful early college program and what is necessary for it to remain successful from the perspective of the high school administration and staff, college administration and staff, guidance counselors, and faculty?

There are specific characteristics critical to successful school-college partnerships. Additionally, there are factors that these programs must possess in order to persevere. There are also characteristics which must be present in order for organizations to continue to work together.

The partners of the ECP recognize the many tangible and intangible benefits of the relationship. Further, they readily acknowledge the many challenges that lie ahead as they work together to continue to provide for a quality, affordable educational opportunity. In addition to the growing concerns of costs and limited funding, the partners are very aware of the growing competition.

The following are recommendations to develop strong educational collaborative by Carriulo (1995):

1. Devise a system of incentive and rewards that will break down the long-standing pecking order that separates school from college.
2. Identify all the stakeholders and seek continuously their advice and consensus.
3. Establish goals that everyone can agree upon and then simplify activities.
4. Embed the partnership within the community.
5. Seek a few good leaders and many grassroots workers and active supporters.
6. Form reciprocal relations among equal partners to reinforce the relationship.
7. Value and respect the differing perspectives and cultures of the partners.

8. Review regularly the short- and long-term plans of the partnership and assess progress.
9. Take time to publicize and celebrate collaborations.
10. Learn from the experience of others.

The Early College Program through Allegany College of Maryland has been in existence for the past 18 years. Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that the program has seen continuous growth and expansion. The program, which began by offering 1 course at 1 high school, now serves over 890 students throughout 25 school districts. In order for Allegany College of Maryland and the 25 rural school districts to sustain this partnership, they cannot rest on past accomplishments. Instead, they must continue to build upon their existing relationships.

### **Conclusions of Findings**

Based upon the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the partners involved in the Early College Program offered through Allegany College of Maryland find the partnership to be very positive and rewarding. This is true for not only the school districts and the college, but for the students as well. The foundation of the Early College Program is grounded on a shared vision fostered by a collaborative and professional environment.

Further, with the inception of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), more and more school districts are partnering with post-secondary institutions to meet the demands to evaluate and improve the academic rigor of high school courses. This reform movement has resulted in the restructuring of educational offerings. Based on the NCLB principles of accountability, choice, and flexibility school districts have had to alter how

to deliver educational services that effectively meet the needs of each student. States are implementing and developing strategies: (1) to increase student participation in rigorous college preparatory courses; (2) better align expectations between high school and post-secondary education; and, (3) hold these systems accountable and ensure students graduate from high school ready for college or the workplace in the global economy (NGA, 2010). Thus, early college programs have been developed to meet this need; however, as these programs gain momentum it will be crucial to have legislation and policy available to provide the necessary direction and guidance in order to maintain quality and control.

The findings of this study are based on the perceptions of the faculty and staff who directly administer the Allegany College of Maryland Early College Program. Most research regarding early college partnerships focus on the academic achievement as well as the psychological, social, and emotional perspectives of the student. Also, previous research regarding early college programs focus on the negative relationships between high schools and colleges.

The mission of Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program is to provide a quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunity to high school students in the 25 school districts it serves. The findings of this research and the perspective of the administrators, staff, and faculty reinforce this viewpoint and further strengthen the partnership.

Although the program has established parameters, it does provide for the flexibility for those involved to work together in order to meet the specific needs of each school district. This collaborative effort among the participants may alleviate



unnecessary concerns and allow for future growth. Further, neither the financial commitment by the respective institutions, years of involvement, nor the number of courses offered, nor students enrolled had a direct impact on the overall effectiveness of the program and partnership. Rather, at the heart of the ECP are the needs of and benefits for the students.

From a historical perspective the Early College Program has shown considerable growth and expansion over time. In order to continue, the school districts and college will need to be cognizant of other early college programs and the changing composition of the student body. Further, they will need to stay abreast of federal and state legislation that may directly impact the program.

Additionally, the administrators, staff, and faculty perceived the overall relationship as being positive. They identified key characteristics, such as shared goals, communication, commitment, and time as vital to the current and future success of the Early College Program. Further, the findings indicated a slight concern regarding the paperwork process involved in the registration and billing of students. This may suggest that the administrators of the program will need to have further discussion, to address these issues and concerns.

Finally, the findings of this study clearly addressed the concern regarding increasing costs in these difficult economic times. This suggests that the school districts and colleges may need to seek alternative funding sources to address this issue. Although being faced with some internal and external concerns, it will be necessary for all partners involved with the Early College Program offered through Allegany College of Maryland to maintain focus on the vision. Thus, they will need to be committed to working

together and having open discussions in order to move forward in a positive direction and to strengthen existing and new partnerships.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational partnership of the Early College Program between a community college and 25 rural school districts and the organizational partnerships among them, and attempt to identify and analyze the factors integral to the success and sustainability of the program. The findings of this study concluded that there are many benefits to school-college partnerships, specifically early college programs. In order to initiate, sustain, and maintain an early college partnership, the following characteristics must be present: shared goals; shared policy; time; communication; rewards; action; cooperation; commitment; and, quality assurance. Additionally, the findings confirmed that in spite of all of the efforts of both parties, financial consideration is crucial to the overall success. However, the needs of the student are at the heart of any early college program.

A primary limitation to this study was the scope of the program. This study was limited to Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program. Therefore, the data collected was limited to the survey responses received from one community college and its partnership with 25 school districts and focuses on a rural setting; the responses may vary from that of other more urban settings. Also, early college programs vary not only by the school-college partnership, but by each state. Thus, the results cannot be overgeneralized.

Although there is limited research regarding early college partnerships, this study drew upon existing literature mostly from the corporate sector, but applicable to

education. Further research may want to investigate the implications of early college programs and their impact on the future workforce.

This study will lead to further analysis about successful partnerships and which type of partnership is right for that particular school and college, and how to tailor an approach that fits. This may include formal tracking of students who participate in the early college programs as well as programs offered through other four year and two year colleges and universities. Additionally, further research may want to investigate the implications of an early college program with regard to the demanding needs of challenging educational reforms. Future studies may want to investigate the characteristics of unsuccessful programs in order to gain greater insight. This study will add to the knowledge base as these Early College Programs and other similar initiatives continue to grow at rapid rates in an increasingly technological and competitive world economy that requires advanced job skills and knowledge that higher education provides.

Societal demands for a better prepared workforce and educational reform movements such as *No Child Left Behind* are asking the schools and colleges to do more with less and to do it better. To increase the number of well-trained and better-paid American workers, high schools across the nation are being pushed to implement reform initiatives. Further, three-quarters of all high school graduates now enter either a four-year institution of higher education or a community college within two years of high school graduation. Hundreds of thousands drop out without having earned a degree or certificate because they are under prepared when they arrive. Consequently, increased education results in higher levels of workforce productivity, thereby increasing the wealth of the U.S. and its citizens. Additionally, higher levels of educational attainment also

result in increased worker earnings. In order to meet these demands, school districts have begun to partner with post-secondary institutions. As a result, early college programs play an important role in the education process. These and other forms of early college programs have a purpose. They aim to make education affordable, more accessible, desirable, and more attractive by bridging the gap between high school and college.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Formal Surveys

#### Faculty Appointed Survey

Default Question Block

What is your working title?

What is your highest level of education?

- High School Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

What is the subject area(s) of our highest degree?

How many years have you been involved with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program (ECP)?

- 0-2 years      3-5 years      6-8 years      9+ years
- 

In your opinion, for what purpose was the ECP designed? Please check only three.

- Public relations for the College
- Provide a more challenging curriculum for students
- Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students
- Assist students in moving from high school to college
- Improve public image of schools
- Recruit good students for the College
- Improved teaching in the College

- Public relations for the high school
- Satisfy the demands of parents
- Provide early college experience
- Improve school/college relations
- Improve public image for the College
- Improve teaching in the high school
- Other, please specify

Of the purposes you marked, which would you consider the primary purpose?

## Block 2

From your perspective, why does your institution participate in the ECP? Please check only three.

- Public relations for the College
- Provide a more challenging curriculum for students
- Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students
- Assist students in moving from high school to college
- Improve public image of schools
- Recruit good students for the College
- Improved teaching in the College
- Public relations for the high school
- Satisfy the demands of parents
- Provide early college experience
- Improve school/college relations
- Improve public image for the College

- Improve teaching in the high school
- Other, please specify

Have goals for the ECP been established

Yes

No

Please list the goals.

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Who participated in developing these goals? Please mark all that apply.

- High school teachers
- High school administration
- High school staff
- College faculty
- College administration
- College staff
- Community representatives
- Payment(s)
- Don't know

How were these goals developed? Please mark all that apply.

- A joint meeting(s) with the high school and College
- Don't know
- Separate meeting(s) of the high school and College
- Other, please specify

How do teachers employed by the school district become part of the ECP? Please mark all that apply.

- College endorses them
- High school determines who teaches
- College and high school confer on who will teach
- No special endorsement process
- Other, please specify

Are the teachers required to attend periodic seminars or conferences related to the ECP?

Yes

No

How often? Please mark all that apply.

- Once each semester
- Twice each semester
- Once each academic year
- Once each summer
- Only when new to the program, but not required

Who designs and conducts the seminars or conferences?

- Program administrators
- College faculty
- High school faculty
- External conference planners

Does the high school faculty and college appointed faculty use common materials/exams?

Yes

No

Who is responsible for generating those materials/exams? Please mark all that apply.

- Program administrators
- College faculty
- High school faculty

Based on your perception, please mark the rewards, if any, that you think the high school and the College received as a result of participating in the ECP. Please check only three.

	High School Rewards	College Rewards
Supplemental pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connection with other faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connection with the College and staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Reduced or free tuition for college courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruiting good students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free materials/equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional development opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional reputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication with colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better experience for students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What would you identify as major obstacles for the ECP? Please mark all that apply.

- Funding
- Student interest
- Communication
- Shared vision

What are the three critical elements to the success of the ECP?

- Shared goals
- Shared policy
- Adequate funding/cost
- Time
- Communication
- Rewards
- Action
- Cooperation
- Commitment
- Quality assurance

In your opinion, what is the direction of the ECP over the next five years?

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How would you describe your partnership with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program?

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Default Question Block

What is your working title?

What is your highest level of education?

- High School Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

What is the subject area(s) of our highest degree?

How many years have you taught in the classroom?

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-8 years
- 9+ years

In what year did the ECP begin in your high school?

How many years have you been involved with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program (ECP)?

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-8 years
- 9+ years

What was the total number of students enrolled in your high school class(es) during the 2008-09 school year?

- 0-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 30+



- By external grant money from governmental sources
- Other, please specify

What is the grade level of students who are eligible to participate in the ECP? Please mark all that apply.

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- 11<sup>th</sup> grade
- 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Who establishes the academic qualifications for the students to participate in the ECP? Please mark all that apply.

- The high school
- The College
- The program administration
- There are none

Do you know where the idea came from for the ECP?

Yes

No

The ECP originated from the following. Please mark all that apply.

- Original idea from someone in a high school
- Original idea from someone in the College
- Idea from a model program

- Don't know
- Other, please specify

In your opinion, for what purpose was the ECP designed? Please check only three.

- Public relations for the College
- Provide a more challenging curriculum for students
- Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students
- Assist students in moving from high school to college
- Improve public image of schools
- Recruit good students for the College
- Improved teaching in the College
- Public relations for the high school
- Satisfy the demands of parents
- Provide early college experience
- Improve school/college relations
- Improve public image for the College
- Improve teaching in the high school
- Other, please specify

Of the purposes you marked, which would you consider the primary purpose?

Have goals for the ECP been established?

Yes

No

Do you have a copy of these goals?

Yes

No

Who participated in developing these goals? Please mark all that apply.

- High school teachers
- High school administration
- High school staff
- College faculty
- College administration
- College staff
- Community representatives
- Payment(s)
- Don't know

How were these goals developed? Please mark all that apply.

- A joint meeting(s) with the high school and College
- Don't know
- Separate meeting(s) of the high school and College
- Other, please specify

## Block 2

From your perspective, why does your institution participate in the ECP? Please check only three.

- Public relations for the College
- Provide a more challenging curriculum for students
- Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students
- Assist students in moving from high school to college
- Improve public image of schools
- Recruit good students for the College
- Improved teaching in the College
- Public relations for the high school
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- Provide early college experience
- Improve school/college relations
- Improve public image for the College
- Improve teaching in the high school
- Other, please specify

How do teachers employed by the school district become part of the ECP? Please mark all that apply?

- College endorses them
- High school determines who teaches
- College and high school confer on who will teach



- No special endorsement process
- Other, please specify

Are the teachers required to attend periodic seminars or conferences related to the ECP?

Yes

No

How often? Please mark all that apply.

- Once each semester
- Twice each semester
- Once each academic year
- Once each summer
- Only when new to the program, but not required

Who designs and conducts the seminars or conferences? Please mark all that apply.

- Program administrators
- College faculty
- High school faculty
- External conference planners

Does the high school faculty and college appointed faculty use common materials/exams?

Yes

No

Who is responsible for generating those materials/exams? Please mark all that apply.

- Program administrators
- College faculty
- High school faculty

Based on your perception, please mark the rewards, if any, that you think the high school and the College received as a result of participating in the ECP. Please check only three.

	High School Rewards	College Rewards
Supplemental pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connection with other faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connection with the College and staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced or free tuition for college courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruiting good students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free materials/equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional development opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Professional reputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication with colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better experience for students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What would you identify as major obstacles for the ECP? Please mark all that apply.

- Funding
- Student interest
- Communication
- Shared vision

What are the three critical elements to the success of the ECP?

- Shared goals
- Shared policy
- Adequate funding/cost
- Time
- Communication
- Rewards
- Action
- Cooperation

Commitment

Quality assurance

In your opinion, what is the direction of the ECP over the next five years?

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---

How would you describe your partnership with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program?

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Default Question Block

What is your working title?

What is your highest level of education?

- High School Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

What is the subject area(s) of our highest degree?

How many years have you been involved with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program (ECP)?

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-8 years
- 9+ years

In what year did the ECP begin at your institution?

How many faculty from Allegany College of Maryland participated in the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 15+

How many high school teachers participating in the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 15+

How many students were enrolled in the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year at your institution?

- 0-15
- 16-30
- 31-46
- 26+

In total, how many students have benefited from the ECP?

- 50-100       151-250       251-350       351+

How many staff members administered/directed the ECP during the 2008-09 at your institution?

- 0-2 years       3-5 years       6-8 years       9+ years

What courses were offered through the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year?

- English                                       Social Sciences  
 Humanities                                       Science  
 Language                                       Other, please specify  
 Math

What was the budget for the ECP during the 2008-09 academic year?

- \$0-\$500  
 \$501-\$1000  
 \$1001-\$1500  
 \$1500+

How is the ECP funded at your institution? Please mark all that apply.

- By student tuition and fees  
 By your institution  
 By external grant money from private sources  
 By external grant money from governmental sources  
 Other, please specify

If the student paid tuition or fees during the 2008-09 academic year, how much did he/she pay?

- Tuition per credit
- Fees
- Textbook(s)
- Other, please specify

How much would a matriculated student have paid for a similar course during the 2008-09 academic year?

- Tuition per credit
- Fees
- Textbook(s)
- Other, please specify

What is the grade level of students who are eligible to participate in the ECP? Please mark all that apply.

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- 11<sup>th</sup> grade
- 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Who establishes the academic qualifications for the students to participate in the ECP? Please mark all that apply.

- The high school
- The College
- The program administration

There are none

Do you know where the idea came from for the ECP?

Yes

No

The ECP originated from the following. Please mark all that apply.

- Original idea from someone in a high school
- Original idea from someone in the College
- Idea from a model program
- Don't know
- Other, please specify

In your opinion, for what purpose was the ECP designed? Please check only three.

- Public relations for the College
- Provide a more challenging curriculum for students
- Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students
- Assist students in moving from high school to college
- Improve public image of schools
- Recruit good students for the College
- Improved teaching in the College
- Public relations for the high school
- Satisfy the demands of parents
- Provide early college experience
- Improve school/college relations
- Improve public image for the College



- Improve teaching in the high school
- Other, please specify

Of the purposes you marked, which would you consider the primary purpose?

From your perspective, why does your institution participate in the ECP? Please check only three.

- Public relations for the College
- Provide a more challenging curriculum for students
- Assist the schools in meeting the needs of gifted students
- Assist students in moving from high school to college
- Improve public image of schools
- Recruit good students for the College
- Improved teaching in the College
- Public relations for the high school
- Satisfy the demands of parents
- Provide early college experience
- Improve school/college relations
- Improve public image for the College
- Improve teaching in the high school
- Other, please specify

Have goals for the ECP been established?

Yes

No

Block 3

Please list the goals.

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Who participated in developing these goals? Please mark all that apply.

- High school teachers
- High school administration
- High school staff
- College faculty
- College administration
- College staff
- Community representatives
- Payment(s)
- Don't know

How were these goals developed? Please mark all that apply.

- A joint meeting(s) with the high school and College
- Don't know
- Separate meeting(s) of the high school and College
- Other, please specify

Block 2

How do teachers employed by the school district become part of the ECP? Please mark all that apply.

- College endorses them
- High school determines who teaches
- College and high school confer on who will teach
- No special endorsement process
- Other, please specify

Are the teachers required to attend periodic seminars or conferences related to the ECP?

Yes

No

How often? Please mark all that apply.

- Once each semester
- Twice each semester
- Once each academic year
- Once each summer
- Only when new to the program, but not required

Who designs and conducts the seminars or conferences? Please mark all that apply.

Who designs and conducts the seminars or conferences?

- Program administrators
- College faculty
- High school faculty
- External conference planners

Does the high school faculty and college appointed faculty use common materials/exams?

Yes

No

Who is responsible for generating those materials/exams? Please mark all that apply.

- Program administrators
- College faculty
- High school faculty

Based on your perception, please mark the rewards, if any, that you think the high school and the College received as a result of participating in the ECP. Please check only three.

	High School Rewards	College Rewards
Supplemental pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connection with other faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connection with the College and staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced or free tuition for college courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recruiting good students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free materials/equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional development opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional reputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication with colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better experience for students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What would you identify as major obstacles for the ECP? Please mark all that apply.

- Funding
- Student interest
- Communication
- Shared vision

What are the three critical elements to the success of the ECP?

- Shared goals
- Shared policy
- Adequate funding/cost

- Time
- Communication
- Rewards
- Action
- Cooperation
- Commitment
- Quality assurance

In your opinion, what is the direction of the ECP over the next five years?

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How would you describe your partnership with Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program?

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**APPENDIX B**

**ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND  
AUTHORIZATION TO DISCLOSE EDUCATION RECORDS TO  
PARENTS/GUARDIANS  
EARLY COLLEGE**

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The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of education records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings.

Student education records (academic and financial) are considered confidential and will not be released without the student's written consent.

Please sign below to allow your parents/guardians/high school representative the right to request information regarding your records. This includes academic, financial and disciplinary records. This form must be completed each semester.

You may rescind this authorization by notifying the Admissions/Registration Office in writing within two weeks of the first day of the Spring semester.

_____	_____	_____
Student Name (Please print)	Student Date of Birth	Date
_____	_____	FALL SEMESTER
Student Signature	High School	

**ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND**

**AUTHORIZATION TO DISCLOSE EDUCATION RECORDS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS  
EARLY COLLEGE**

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You may rescind this authorization by notifying the Admissions/Registration Office in writing within two weeks of the first day of the Spring semester.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
High School

SPRING SEMESTER



## **APPENDIX C**

### **Payment Information**

Payment should be sent to the Cumberland Campus. The College mailing address is: *Allegany College of MD, Business Office, 12401 Willowbrook Road, Cumberland, MD 21502*. Please make checks or money orders payable to Allegany College of MD. The College accepts Discover, Visa and MasterCard. Billing questions can be directed to Connie Baublitz at (814) 445-9848 ext. 5223 or (814) 652-9528 ext. 5223

### **Payment Information**

Payment should be sent to the Cumberland Campus. The College mailing address is: *Allegany College of MD, Business Office, 12401 Willowbrook Road, Cumberland, MD 21502*. Please make checks or money orders payable to Allegany College of MD. The College accepts Discover, Visa and MasterCard. Billing questions can be directed to Connie Baublitz at (814) 445-9848 ext. 5223 or (814) 652-9528 ext. 5223

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**APPENDIX D**

**Allegany College of Maryland – Parent Permission Form**

**Allegany College of Maryland**

Early College Program  
Fall 2008 – Spring 2009

Bedford County Campus  
Campus  
18 North River Lane  
Everett, PA 15537  
(814) 652-9528

Somerset County  
  
6022 Glades Pike  
Somerset, PA 15501  
(814) 445-9848

**Parent Permission Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ as the parent/guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_ hereby give my consent for my son/daughter to enroll in  
Allegany College of Maryland’s Early College Program offered at his/her high school during the 2010 school year.

- I understand ACM will process my son/daughter’s registration form only after this permission letter has been received. After the registration form has been processed, a bill will be generated from the College. At that time my son/daughter will be officially enrolled and I will be financially obligated. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- I understand that I am responsible for the tuition and fees unless otherwise noted. **Non-attendance of classes or termination of attendance of classes does not constitute official withdrawal.** If withdrawal notification is received after the first day the class meets, I am responsible for the \$35 non-refundable registration fee and any other tuition and fee charges that are applicable. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)
- I understand this letter must be completed and returned by **June 11th , 2010** for my son/daughter to participate in the early college program. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Son/Daughter’s Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Son/Daughter’s Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Son/Daughter’s High School \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX E**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Informed Consent Form  
Participating School Districts  
(IUP Letterhead)

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate because of your involvement with the Allegany College of Maryland Early College Program during the 2008-2009 academic school year.

The purpose of this study is to examine the early college program between a community college and 25 rural school districts and the organizational partnership among them and attempt to identify and analyze the factors integral to the success and sustainability of the program.

For that reason, you will be asked to participate in an electronic survey administered through the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Applied Research Lab. The survey should take you approximately 30 minutes.

Further analysis of what is known about successful early college partnerships will help maturing partnerships understand their next step as well as help new partnerships take a more solid first step.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or IUP. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying Barbara Zuchelli. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. Should you decide to withdraw once the survey is started simply close the survey by clicking on the X at the top right corner of the Qualtrics screen. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will have no bearing on your school districts ability to participate in Allegany College of Maryland's Early College Program. Your response will be considered only in combination with those from other participants. The information obtained in the study may be published in a scholarly journal, or presented at conferences, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this research study, please feel free to contact the following:

Barbara K.Zuchelli  
Doctoral Student  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
195 James F. Barron Drive  
Jennerstown, PA 15547  
814-629-7532

Dr. George Bieger  
Professor and Dissertation Chair  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
114 Davis Hall  
Indiana, PA 15705  
724-357-3285

**APPENDIX F**

**Response Cards**

**Response Card**

\_\_\_\_\_ «School\_Districts\_» is willing to participate

\_\_\_\_\_ «School\_Districts\_» is not willing to participate

Name(s) and email addresses of administrators, staff members, faculty who you would recommend to complete a survey:

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Please return by Friday, June 27, 2008.

**Response Card**

\_\_\_\_\_ «School\_Districts\_» is willing to participate

\_\_\_\_\_ «School\_Districts\_» is not willing to participate

Name(s) and email addresses of administrators, staff members, faculty who you would recommend to complete a survey:

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Please return by Friday, June 27, 2008.

**Response Card**

\_\_\_\_\_ «School\_Districts\_» is willing to participate

\_\_\_\_\_ «School\_Districts\_» is not willing to participate

Name(s) and email addresses of administrators, staff members, faculty who you would recommend to complete a survey:

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Please return by Friday, June 27, 2008.