

Minutes of the Early College Joint Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 31, 2017
3:00 p.m. –4:30 p.m.
One Ashburton Place, Boston MA

Members of the Early College Joint Committee Present:

Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education

Chris Gabrieli, Chair, Board of Higher Education

Paul Sagan, Chair, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Paul Toner, Member of the Board of Higher Education

Margaret McKenna, Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Participating Department Staff:

Cliff Chuang, Sr. Associate Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Carlos Santiago, Commissioner of Higher Education

Patricia Marshall, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success, DHE

Nyal Fuentes, College and Career Readiness Coordinator, ESE

Keith Westrich, Associate Commissioner for College, Career, and Technical Education, ESE

Christine Williams, Director of Strategic Initiatives, DHE

Chair Gabrieli called meeting to order at 3:08pm.

Chair Gabrieli thanked agency staff for their hard work. Both Chair Gabrieli and Ms. McKenna shared examples of early college programs in the news.

Chair Sagan commented on the logistics of bringing the same resolution to both boards for approval at their respective meetings in June.

Dr. Pat Marshall introduced the agenda for the meeting. Ms. Williams then reviewed the stakeholder engagement process thus far, along with common themes that emerged from the process. She reported that, on the whole, the feedback was positive and that staff have analyzed and incorporated appropriate changes into the Early College Designation Criteria. She highlighted key changes from the previous version, as reviewed by the committee. Ms. Williams emphasized that some revisions to the document were intended to provide clear expectations and guidance but also leave enough room for flexibility and innovation to emerge from the process.

Mr. Toner asked whether or not there were any bright spots in terms of collective bargaining. Ms. Williams responded that campuses and schools so far have managed any relevant collective bargaining issues on a local level. She added that the criteria requires applicant verification that collective bargaining issues have been considered and managed. Mr. Toner asked Commissioner Santiago if individual campuses have the ability to negotiate these contracts individually. Commissioner Santiago explained that traditionally they do not; noting, however, that these matters depends on whether or

not a grievance is filed. Mr. Sagan asked whether or not this should be managed as a state or left it up to local agreements. Mr. Chuang added that local agreements have been negotiated for existing early college programs, but that the agencies should be aware of impacts if and when these programs grow in scale. Ms. McKenna suggested looking into existing bargaining agreements to ascertain what practices have proven promising. Dr. Marshall noted that programs have confronted some problems relative to concurrent enrollment arrangements, but that those issues have been managed locally. Mr. Chuang added that cataloguing the arrangements that have worked will be worthwhile as we move forward and provide technical assistance to applicants. Chair Gabrieli also offered the suggestion of reaching out to an organization that has experience in these labor management challenges. Dr. Marshall noted that there were a few grievances filed last fall and that those should be looked at more deeply. Chair Sagan added that this initiative is not about spending less time in school or using fewer faculty.

Ms. Williams then introduced a number of discussion points for the group. First, the group discussed the role of private higher education institutions and whether or not the Commonwealth should ask for joint applications or require one of the institutions to be a lead applicant. Ms. McKenna noted that there are already a number of private/public partnerships, suggested encouraging this work at as many institutions as possible. Secretary Peyser affirmed the idea of equal partnerships, but noted that the expectation of a joint venture may be too ambitious. On discussion, committee members agreed they wanted to ensure the application is a joint application, indicating a solid partnership, and that it should be signed by the campus President, District Superintendent, and Principals. They also agreed that one applicant could be the lead applicant in practice, and fiscal agent. The committee also agreed that regardless of structure, both applicants will be held accountable for outcomes.

The committee then turned its discussion to the issue of cohort size. Agency staff pointed out that some experts in the field have noted that the impact of early college is greatest when programs are part of a high school designed entirely as an Early College, or when programs within a larger high school are relatively large. Ms. McKenna thought that the “per grade” allotment was quite prescriptive. She encouraged flexibility and recommended including a total across all grades. Chair Sagan recommended starting with an indication within the criteria that the goal of programs should be to get achieve critical mass within the program. Mr. Chuang noted that he has received feedback from educators that building large programs can be a challenge in the current environment. Chair Sagan noted that we may get few applications this year because the bar is so high, but also described comfort with that notion. Secretary Peyser noted that a sustainable cohort size will also depends on the funding source and amount. He suggested that the agencies may learn that delivering an early college program under this model is sustainable at a certain revenue level, but to grow a particular program to scale will require a different level of funding. Stephanie Davolos, State Director of Gateway to College, spoke from the audience and noted that the average cost of a gateway program is \$6500-\$9000 per student. She noted that in some districts some dual enrollment or postsecondary programming is funded via school choice, while in

some districts the district provides funding. Committee members continued to discuss the issue with regard to funding, and given that no state funding sources had been identified, it was agreed that there would not yet be specific parameters with regard to how programs could fund themselves. Chair Gabrieli suggested to agency staff that the departments should explore what guidance will be offered with regard to funding parameters, and suggested that the Parthenon report could provide some insight with regard to expected costs of early college.

The committee next discussed the issue of a performance contract for Designated Early College Programs, and affirmed that 5 years would be appropriate term length for the designation. Chair Gabrieli stressed that the Committee should revisit exact performance metrics that would be required, and suggested that some metrics may be non-negotiable for all programs and others may be specific to each program individually. The group agreed that there should be a clear link between the performance metrics in the MOU and the Commonwealth's monitoring of performance and tied to renewal of a program's designation. Secretary Peyser added a request that data on programs, when collected, should be delineated by subgroups.

The committee then discussed whether a designation require that students complete MassCore, unless they have a specific reason not require students to complete MassCore. The committee agreed that MassCore should be a required part of the criteria.

Finally, the group discussed whether or not to require math and English composition courses as a requirement for all early college programs, which were framed in the draft criteria as a "strong suggestion." Through discussion, the committee agreed with leaving the language for this portion of the criteria as a "strong recommendation."

Mr. Chuang noted that we may not want to include a "time on learning" requirement, so that this is not a burden for programs seeking a waiver in this area. The committee agreed that it could be included as a footnote to the criteria.

Secretary Peyser asked whether or not a collaborative of schools or districts could apply for designation, or whether multiple high schools could apply together. The committee and agency staff discussed this issue and the committee agreed that such a consortium structure could be possible in concept. Agency staff agree to articulate this more explicitly in the criteria.

Chair Gabrieli noted that given the extensive vetting of the Early College Designation Criteria by the Joint Committee present, that the Early College Designation Criteria could be presented for approval to the Board of Higher Education and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education without going through the Board of Higher Education's academic affairs committee.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion to endorse the general approach as outlined and direct staff at DHE and ESE to refine the details as needed based on stakeholder

feedback and then send the proposed Massachusetts Early College Designation Criteria and Process to the two boards for their approval. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Chair Sagan moved to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2017 Committee meeting, and the motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Secretary Peyser introduced the group to the Mass Pathways document detailing the High Quality College and Career Pathways Initiative, and encouraged Committee members to review the document and provide feedback.

On motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

List of documents used:

- Draft Application Criteria for Early College Program Designation

DRAFT