



NEWS RELEASE

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NEW INVESTMENT TO LAUNCH EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAMS AT EIGHT CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOLS

\$1.8 million grant to the Foundation for California Community Colleges will provide 3,200 more students the opportunity to complete high school and earn college credit

CALIFORNIA – The Foundation for California Community Colleges (FCCC) has been awarded \$1.8 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help develop new college partnerships at eight existing high schools state-wide. These schools will adopt the Early College High School (ECHS) model, allowing students to enroll in college-level courses and earn up to two years of college credit or an associate's degree while they also earn their diploma.

Early college high schools are designed to increase high school graduation rates and the number of underserved youth who achieve a post-secondary education. The FCCC currently supports 11 early college high schools in California and is scheduled to open three more in 2007. With this investment the FCCC will work with an additional eight existing Gates Foundation grantee schools to develop early college partnerships, resulting in 22 FCCC-supported programs total, serving about 8,800 students once fully enrolled.

“Our foundation is honored that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is willing to support an expanded FCCC leadership role in the California Early College High School Initiative,” said Jeff Thompson, Vice President for Learning Programs at the Foundation for California Community Colleges. “We view this as a strong vote of confidence for the progress we are making in this work.”

According to the Manhattan Institute, one-third of all students fail to graduate from high school and two-thirds of all students are not prepared for college success. Just half of African-American and Latino youth earn their diploma in four years and fewer than 20 percent of those who graduate are ready for college.

To support better student outcomes, particularly for low-income and minority youth, these innovative early college high schools expose students to the resources, rigor, and intensity of college-level academics, while still providing appropriate personal support. These new ECHS partnerships will be aligned with the national Early College High School Initiative. Since 2001, \$114 million has been committed to supporting early college high schools in 25 states.

The Foundation for California Community Colleges is the sole official auxiliary to the California Community Colleges' Board of Governors, Chancellor, and System Office. The Foundation for California Community Colleges is a team of dedicated people who work within a unique structure that enables it to bring expertise and resources to benefit, support and enhance the missions of the California Community College System. Additional information about the Foundation for California Community Colleges is available at www.foundationccc.org.

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