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TO: Board of Education

FROM: Dale Ellis

DATE: July 13, 2015

SUBJ: INFORMATION ITEM (MCS Early College Presentation)

I have enclosed a copy of a presentation I will be covering to discuss the need for, and advantages of, having an early college in Montgomery County. With the rise and proliferation of charter schools and the ongoing technical skills needed for the advanced work forces of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the time to move forward with an early college concept is now.

I will be available to answer any questions you may have.

# Montgomery County Schools

## The Early College Need

### July 13, 2015

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Portions of presentation directly quoted from:  
<http://www.jff.org/blog/2014/10/13/top-5-benefits-early-college-support-academic-success>

# MCS Needs

- In-district High School options
- An alternative to “standard” curricula
- A refined and focused CTE component that leads directly to jobs
- Advanced options that leads to degrees and college credits for advanced students
- STEM, STEM, STEM
- In short, an alternative to what we currently have and an alternative to the perceived need of traveling out of county to charter schools to get the rigor our students want and need

# Advantages of an Early College

## 1. You can't predict the future...or can you?

Nearly every struggling high school student has believed at one time or another that they don't have what it takes for college. Teachers at early college high schools—who are often professors or specially certified high school educators—know that about 90% of their students go on to further college education. They have every expectation that all kinds of learners can flourish with the right preparation and support, and that message gets through to their students every day, so that students' previous expectations don't become predictors of their future.

# Advantages – Cont.'

## 2. I think I can, I think I can

Students who have a history of struggling academically may lack the confidence they need to progress. An early college experience can be a safe place to test their abilities—before applications, SATs, and financial aid even enter the equation. Early success here builds the confidence they need in order to continue taking the risks that lead to academic achievement and the resiliency to overcome setbacks.

# Advantages – Cont.'

## 3. “When will I ever use this?”

Early college students take classes that relate to real-world jobs, and academic advisors provide crucial insights on how material they cover now can expand their career options and their paychecks. With special emphasis on STEM skills, programs are developed with career applications in mind, and often offer work-based learning or internship opportunities. All of this helps the student make the connection between classroom and career, a big motivation booster.

# Advantages – Cont.'

## 4. But everybody else is doing it!

Some early college programs are based within community college campuses. Others are created within a more traditional high school setting. Either way, students are exposed to peers who are already on their way to attaining a college education, and who also may have similar challenges to overcome. Personal relationships with kids who see the value of education and are finding a pathway to college provides important inspiration, and are living proof that college is a possibility.

# Advantages – Cont.'

## 5. Great expectations = high achievements

How do you empower a struggling student to prepare for college level work? Often, the answer is to put low performing high school grads into remedial classes, often at their own expense, and without earning credit toward a degree. Early college turns that solution on its head, and offers high school students—regardless of past achievement—a stimulating, challenging environment. Teachers have high expectations, and students are buoyed by significant support from academic advisors. The result? Turns out that having a team of teachers, advisors and peers who believe in you makes a difference. About 30% of early college students have earned an Associate's degree or other postsecondary credential by the time they graduate high school, and many will continue that postsecondary education.

# Next Steps

- Education Facilities Committee recommendation
- Approval by MCS Board of Education
- Approval by MCC Board of Trustees
- Approval by MC Board of Commissioners

Such an educational concept has never been more needed for students and families in Montgomery County and the timing has never been more right to do it!