

Early College High School (ECHS) Webinar on Benchmark 4: “Curriculum and Support”

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Laura Gaines: Good morning, this is Laura Gaines. I’m the Early College High School Program Coordinator at the Texas Education Agency (TEA). I’d like to thank you all for joining us this morning for our first webinar today in a series of webinars that we will be hosting. The topics we chose were based on feedback provided from a survey sent out earlier this semester. Also thank you to those of you who participated in the survey. Today’s webinar is based on Best Practices in Curriculum and Support Benchmark. As you know, providing that support and giving the appropriate curriculum to students is very important to the success of your students which is; therefore, going to be very important to the success of your program.

Today the webinar will be led by Sarah Croft, one of our leadership coaches here at Region 13 providing support through the TEA grant. Also, we are joined by Kim Woodson, our Lead Coach and Project Coordinator with Education Service Center Region 13; and two of our Early College High School network administrators, Margie Nelson Rodriguez and Paul Covey, who are very excited to be providing some of the best practices they are implementing out in the field. Margie Nelson Rodriguez is from El Paso Community College and Paul Covey is the Principal from Valle Verde Early College High School. We are excited to have them. Thank you both for joining us today. At this point I’m going to turn the webinar over to Sarah; thank you, Sarah for leading the webinar.

Sarah Croft: Thank you Laura, I appreciate that kind introduction. I certainly appreciate all of those who could join us today. The second slide is our business slide. You may take some time later to know that none of this may be reproduced, rebroadcast or aired etc., etc., other than the NBA, no not really, TEA. Keep in mind that the proprietary rights do apply to this particular webinar today.

02:34 – 04:10 Slide 3: Sustaining Systems Benchmark 4

Sarah Croft: We are going to talk about sustaining systems in benchmark 4, and of course try to provide you with some best practices through the use of the Early College High School blueprint implementation. As you move through years one, two, three, four, five, (and some of you have been in existence a little bit longer than that) and have some experience and, have discovered that you have to have a plan A, a plan B, a plan C, and plan D, E, and until you reach F, and maybe all the way to Z.

Sometimes, because as your school evolves so do your practices evolve, you might have changes in superintendents, C&I (curriculum and instruction) people have different views, interpretations of things, your IHE (Institutions of Higher Education), your board of education.

They all have a stake in the success of your program, in hoping that your early college high school becomes one of the most successful in the state. You need a grounding document to keep you on the straight and narrow, and that's what this blueprint is providing you. It is a working document, Laura has said that many times. We are always constantly refining it and hoping that we can certainly make it better each time we go through each year of our service. Benchmark 4, of course, is curriculum and support; this is the framework from which we try to provide that four-year course of study. You are very familiar of the definition of Benchmark 4, but for today's purpose we are going to concentrate on some of the components of this particular benchmark.

04:10-06:14 Slide: Purpose of Webinar

Sarah Croft: The purpose of this webinar is to remind everyone that we're dedicated to serving a certain population. Simply putting students in dual credit as a ninth grader doesn't give them the tools that they need to earn that associate degree, so we have to have adequate support for them to ensure that. We will discuss some of the systems we've come up with and brainstormed and certainly welcome you to add to them as we go through this process, making that learning environment such that the students can be successful. The ninth grade, tenth grade, and even your juniors and seniors will need their progress monitored closely. They don't always have the discipline for themselves and sometimes we have to supply that for them. We have to provide them with the academic support whether that be in the form of tutoring, extra re-teaching, web-based programs, whatever that may be.

Social support - you may be a ninth grader but you're going to act like a college student when you're in a different setting and learn the decorum that you need to be a successful student, no matter what environment you're in. Whether it's the high school or the college, the students are going to behave differently, and they need those tools to do so. Also, with the emotional support, we have at-risk targeted student population and their emotional and social needs are going to be greater than perhaps you anticipated. They may have some academic tools that will make them successful. They may not always know how to act or interact between adults either at your campus or at your partnering institute. You've got to have some assistance in place to give them the best tools to prepare them for moving through different environments in this educational endeavor that we're holding for them.

06:15-11:08 Slide: Systems for Monitoring Student Progress

Sarah Croft: That brings us to Systems for Monitoring Student Progress as the first tool. It's also essential that you have good communication protocols for everyone in your building and hopefully interacting with everyone at your IHE partner. You need to make sure that's done in a timely manner and at regular intervals.

I know as a first-year early college high school principal, it seemed like I wanted to monitor them every day, every period. Then I got more relaxed and I was able to let it go for maybe a week or two at a time, but certainly we all learn to live our lives by three week interim progress reporting periods as educators. It's very important that we stay on top of their attendance, the drops, the withdrawals, and the failures have changed in complexion over the last several years and become increasingly more important; you could just drop a class whenever you felt like it. Sometimes I found that students dropped it without even telling you as the principal. Because once they're a college student, they can walk across to that

college environment and campus, show their ID, and perhaps do some things they shouldn't. So you've got to make sure they understand the impact of what satisfactory academic progress is.

Course grades, communication about GPA (grade point average) to the students - I know that a lot of times they don't understand that the high school GPA is calculated differently perhaps than the college GPA and they need to understand that their grade point average is so essential to getting to that four-year university or college of their choice. Credit hours and financial aid, all of these things can be impacted if their student progress is not satisfactory. It's certainly an important facet of our job as educators in helping the students understand that.

We need to establish protocols for communicating with college instructors. That's always a tricky thing. As a principal, you've got many tools and you understand how to communicate with other adults, but your students may not. You've got to have protocols not only as a principal, a counselor and your students, but also with your parents and guardians. They are going to come up and demand, "I want to talk to that college instructor," and you've got to have a system in place so that everyone is treated with respect and the systems for communication are clear to everyone.

We also talk about other systems for monitoring student progress. You have lots of two way streets that go back and forth. You have collecting and managing college credited attainment, trying to get it from your (IHE) partner, trying to get information from your student's college instructors, one of the most difficult things is to get that information from the student themselves. Of course as an administrator in charge of your campus, you've got to make sure that you're keeping up with it by their population and special characteristics such as being a first generation college goer in their family, or an at-risk student, or a sub-population of ethnicity, or things of that nature.

It is also important to have systems for monitoring students' progress and what I've learned to call academic integrity. If you use that term with the freshmen, and they say, "What?", and I say, "Cheating, it's called cheating." You have to have academic integrity which means you're not cheating, you're not taking work and presenting as your own (even though someone else perhaps helped you or collaborated with you on it,) or used a friend's paper. The students need to understand the impact of academic integrity, or the opposite of that, and the idea of cheating is so critical to them understanding what academic integrity is. Because if they're not, that can certainly lead very quickly to an academic probation warning or status; it can put a student on probation, dismissal, and you need to have a system in place for reinstatement. And sometimes it feels like you are in a no win situation. A student gets on academic dismissal because their grade point drops below 2.0 and they can't get it back up unless they can take a class and they can't take a class because they have dropped below that grade point. You've got to make sure you have lots of systems in place for managing all those issues that can arise through the academic part.

11:09-15:20 Slide: Academic Support

Sarah Croft: Providing academic support is also important and everyone has lots of different ways that we provide that support, and hopefully lots of best practices to share as we move through the rest of this year.

Providing tutoring opportunities before and after school is essential, but many times you have constraints because your kids may be bussed to your campus and they can't get home, they don't have a way home, they can't stay after school, they can't come early, and so on. So you've got to have some systems of support that are enacted by your teachers making students aware of how college instructors

may provide tutoring support, what their college office hours are, where those college offices are, and how to communicate with the professor on receiving tutoring support or conferencing from their college instructor.

Also you might have access to college tutors, sometimes you have that through your AVID programs, (Advancement Via Individual Determination) if you're associated with AVID, or perhaps you have some extra money with Title I funds where you can hire some college students who can be tutors, and setting up tutoring by peers. If you just have a grade one this year, then that may be a little bit different. As you acquire sophomore, juniors and high school level students they can become tutors to maybe a mentoring or peer tutoring system.

We show some other examples of Saturday school perhaps intensified instruction, intervention, or re-teaching. One real interesting thing is how you coordinate your high school and higher education partner academic calendars. We are all used to grading periods of 36 weeks. At the end of the school year, you'll have at least gone through 36 weeks; and then colleges typically work on 16 week semesters and so on. So coordinating those things when the college is open and when it is closed, when the high school is open and when it's closed, and the differences in those calendars certainly have to be managed closely. And just in my short time in speaking with some of my Dallas schools, in the last few days, they have some really innovative ways of meshing the calendars that I hope they will take the time to show us later with some best practices.

Coordinating assessment and homework calendars is very important. For example: Having every high school teacher give homework on the same night is not always a good idea, particularly if they are taking college classes so managing those things. Flexible master scheduling, your flexible instructional cycle, your daily bell period, I've shared with my schools, that I changed my bell schedule the first six weeks about 10 times before I found something that was beneficial to students. And that's certainly the most important thing, is making sure it's best for your students.

Meshing your high school diploma and your associate degree development and also looking at career exploration and interest inventories with your students; all those things are very important in supporting the academic side. Again, college and career readiness with some support time built in for that program of study can come in the form of AVID, some of you may have advisory programs, and you may have a college prep class. I know that one important resource book that I used as principal was *The Advisory Guide* by Rachel Poliner and Carol Miller Lieber, that's a very, very good source for those of you that are running a formal advisory class that's not associated so much with AVID. Teaching those study skills, note taking skills, ensuring that students know where the library and college facilities and resources are all very important, and also another type of academic support can be internship opportunities.

15:18-19:09 Slide: Social Support

Sarah Croft: The other critical areas are kind of what we usually call the soft skills, the social support and the emotional support. Even though they seem to be kind of separated it seems like you never can really separate them completely. Social support - a lot of you will already have seminar classes for interacting skills for our students from when they move from the high school environment to the higher education environment. Many of you will have college orientation courses that are required. I always call this a formal and informal decorum program. Students really need to understand how they may act at home is not how they may act school, and certainly not how they may act in the college environment.

Students need to learn how to know and recognize the environment they're in and certainly know the decorum and interacting skills that they need no matter what the setting is.

Some of you may use character education, *7 Highly Effective Habits for Teenagers (The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens)*, or something like that. And almost all of our schools somehow typically have some kind of bridge program just before school starts perhaps in June/July/August, wherever it fits into your program to get our kids ready for that first year. I know as an early college high school principal, my intention was to have one every year for every grade level because at some point you need to make sure that you know that you're getting them ready for that first year as a freshman. Things change and they need to be prepared differently for that second year as they move through. And once they have two years behind them they may need to be prepared differently for that third year and certainly for that fourth year too.

Make sure that you know the academic and behavior policies at the college and their code of conduct; make sure that the students know that. We're always ready to know that we have our own code of conduct in place and that we got the parents signed off on it and the students signed off. It's also important that they understand the college has a code of conduct too and it will look much different, but it will have much of the same behaviors perhaps expressed in a different way.

Students need to know how to interact at the high school and at the college when they're involved in activities and organizations in those settings. Many times you have social support coming through a college advisor or perhaps, a term I hear quite often is, a student success specialist. Sometimes they just call them a college counselor but those are modes of support that are certainly available to our students through the college. Community service programs, mentorship programs, if you're just a ninth grade level and maybe a sophomore level you might end up having student to student peer support. As your students grow older through this system, you may start assigning junior to freshman, senior to sophomore, and so on, peer to peer programs.

It would be wonderful if you go research the college organization. Sometimes college students are required to have some kind of community service in their classes and in their program degree and it might be that you can find some organizations where you can pair up a college student as a mentor to one of your students and, of course, exploring your own adult to early college high school student. Even at the freshman level, if it's just that one teacher that has that home room group, teacher to student may be all that you have at the first grade level until you become more familiar with everything.

19:09 –21:01 Slide: Emotional Support

Sarah Croft: The emotional support is, you know our kids are trying to deal with a whole lot of things, they are trying to become a college student and they're at-risk already and they're dealing with so many issues at home and then all of a sudden they have the weight of all this academic expectation on them too. Their emotions at the ninth and tenth grade and moving up to the junior/senior level can all affect their behavior and it can affect their performance.

It's certainly important that you understand the community and the home life that each of your students come from. How you can reach out to the parent and get them involved into a plan and recognize those student needs as they occur. That social decorum program can also teach them coping strategies providing different kinds of student interventions, and as I know when I had that freshman group, I needed to always be thinking ahead to what's going to come when they become sophomores, juniors, and seniors and moving through the application assistance, financial aid and counseling, college

and career counseling, and so on. All these things should be integrated into their lives and should be just part of the fabric of what they're doing when they're communicating with you and communicating with the college. They should be aware of their resources and you should make sure they understand where they are at the time of need for those students. So, having said all that, kind of takes you through the blueprint components. At this time I'm going to turn it over to Kim Woodson, our Project Coordinator, and she will move forward with the webinar from there.

Kim Woodson: Good morning. Sarah thank you so much for sharing that information. It is so important that we do everything that we can to meet the needs of all our students. On this call, as it was mentioned earlier by Laura, I was able to get some information or should I say some support from Margie Nelson Rodriguez. She is a professor over at El Paso Community College in Valle Verde, hopefully I have pronounced that correctly, and she's going to share some of the strategies of best practices used at the college level to assist.

Before I turn the mic over I just want to let everyone know that all of the questions that are being posed, we are going to answer those at the end. And if anyone else has any more questions, you are allowed to post them; we can see them and at the end we will address them. So at this time, I'd like to ask Margie, I'm going to give you rights on this one to go ahead and share some of the best practices that you're implementing at your campus with the early colleges.

Margie Nelson Rodriguez: Hi! Well, good morning. Thank you very much Kim. I just want to talk about a couple of things and then my colleague and friend Paul Covey will have a lot more to share. I'm just going to go over a few things that we do at El Paso Community College (EPCC) to support early college high school curriculum.

This first thing is we have a close working relationship between the EPCC counselors, the college counselor with the early college high school counselor. We have an EPCC counselor who works with each one, of course the counselor has other duties, but one of his/her duties is to work directly with the high school counselor. That helps make sure that students are staying on their degree plan and not taking unnecessary classes and if they're on track to graduate with their associate.

We also have a counseling coordinator who works with all seven of our early college high schools to make sure that the services are consistent, and that all of the early colleges are getting the counseling support they need to stay on track.

We also have a dual credit early college high school office that helps facilitate success by providing assistance with Apply Texas applications and also providing a secure server on Banner (multi-module management system for higher education) so that early college high school counselors have access to information they need. These reports are generated daily, and they cover a variety of topics. For example, the reason why we open the secure server is that we were having issues with the early college high school counselor having information about the students that they needed in order to advise them and in order to help them. We have an agreement with the early colleges, with the ISDs, that they have access, most counselors have access to information that they wouldn't normally, they didn't have before, or they had to do actual physical reports, like carrying over the reports and that didn't work very well. So some of the topics that are covered are academic history, and official final grade report which also shows registration holds, admission status report, current enrollment status report, historical testing scores report, overall GPA academic standing report, and valid placement testing scores report.

These reports aren't actually in real time, they are generated at the end of each day, seven days a week, so the counselors have access to that information. One lesson learned from that though, is that you need to make sure that if you have a system like that in place, that the IT departments of the college and the ISD are talking to each other. So in case there's a new fire wall or something set up at the ISD, the college knows so that the IT people can get together and talk in their language to make sure that the early college high school counselor still has access to that information. That's been something that has been a stumbling block. As long as you get the right people in the room, you can get that taken care of.

We also have progress reports that the early college high school students can get online or from their counselor, and they can take them to the college professor to see how their doing. Like many colleges, we do not require our college professors to do midterm grades or anything like that. So sometimes the early college high school student isn't quite sure how he/she is doing. So if they get that progress report and go to the professor during office hours, or before or after class, it's a good opportunity for them to learn to take action and have agency on what their grades are. And the professor can fill that out for them. It's really simple, it's satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Or if the professor chooses, they can put more detailed information. The early college high school student can then go back to his/her campus and give that to the high school counselor so they have a better idea of how they are doing before the end of the semester and before the grades are posted.

And lastly - something that was discussed just now about academic dishonesty and academic integrity - some of our schools request that we send personnel over to the early college high school to present on this. For example, earlier this semester we had our English department and our writing center go to one of our early colleges to do a presentation on plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and also, conversely, on the writing center and how if the student is having trouble or feeling stressed or overwhelmed with a paper, the college writing center is a great resource. I'm sure that Mr. Covey will mention that his school has its own writing center as well, which really helps those students so they have a writing center actually on their campus. And with that said, I don't want to take up too much time and I know Mr. Covey needs to speak and we have some questions, but those are our best practices to share today.

Kim Woodson: Margie, thank you so much for sharing that information. I know that's going to be a great benefit to quite a few of the people listening. And once again, if you have questions please go ahead and post them and we will address them at the end. At this time I'd like to turn the mic over to Paul, so Paul can share some of the best practices that he's using or implementing at his campus to make sure that his students' needs are being met. Paul?

Paul Covey: Good morning everybody. Sorry for my voice, I have a little bit of laryngitis here. So much to cover and I'll try to be brief here so we can get to your questions.

The first thing I'd like to say about making sure our students are served and have safety nets for them in this whole endeavor that we're doing, and it starts off with communication. We really emphasize having a strong, consistent communication with the college and with our parents. That helps us deal with all issues and all of the rules we have to follow with TEA, Higher Education Coordinating Board, your district policy, and rules you have to make up on your own to make all three merge. It can seem like a lot of do's and don'ts and we don't want to come across as being just a rule-oriented system even though there are a lot of rules. We try to make sure there is constant communication with everybody so we can explain why these rules are in place, and they're really there to help the student to succeed.

It's really important that we have a lot of meetings with our parents, monthly meetings with our parents. With the freshman parents we start when they're in eighth grade after they are accepted. We have two meetings with them, one in May and one in the summer, just to constantly re-iterate what we're about and what we're going to do, and how important it is for them to have an avenue. It was brought up about the parents not being able to talk to the professors and how it can be challenging for them. We try to provide an avenue of how they can express their concerns through us, and then we'll talk to the college. The professor will talk to Margie, or other people, and see what can be worked out. And also talk to the kid, the student, and show them the tools on how to basically approach the professor and handle their problems on their own.

In that effort, let's talk about what we actually have in place. In our schedule we have two things we had built in. We've already mentioned AVID, every freshman and sophomore have AVID and most juniors and seniors have AVID, depending on their schedule. An AVID with our students will go meet with that class four times a week, because of our schedule and that's a whole other topic the way we have our schedule oriented.

We also have a class called College Transition, and we created that class ourselves. And that's a Tuesday/Thursday class from 9-10, it's the first class of the day on Tuesday/Thursday and every freshman and sophomore have that class, about 99% of the juniors have that class. Some seniors don't because again of their scheduling when their college classes take place.

In that college transition class that they have, we focus on a lot of the soft skills that we were talking about earlier, about how to interact with the professors, how to go ahead and use the office hours effectively, how to communicate with professors and your issues. We also use that time where the teacher who has these 25 kids all year long, and if possible will have them all four years again depending on if scheduling will allow, will work with that kid and kind of be a college mentor and check their syllabus, and see how they are doing on their assignments. If they see they have a project coming up two months from now, or a month from now based on the syllabus, they'll ask them have they started yet. The student can't wait until the week before like some kids think they can in high school, and honestly they can't do that either, but sometimes they think they can.

So we have this whole idea of a mentor to help them interact with the college and check with them. And they have a student handbook that they keep with a calendar where they're supposed to write down all their assignments for the whole semester already in their calendar so they have a place where they can see it and it's not just on the five different syllabus that is stuffed in a bag.

Of course in AVID the whole focus of their course is the actual study skills. And in an AVID class we focus primarily on reading and taking notes, because we don't have AVID every day, and we can't follow all of the AVID lessons, so we try to focus on those two main skills the most because we feel those are the ones the kids need the most help with. They are learning how to take notes and learning how you can't possibly try to write down every single thing. We talk about how to read textbook and highlight and write in the books and etc., etc. The AVID skills are really about textbook and note taking.

--Margie mentioned that we also have a writing center. When I first came here as principal, I came in after the school had been open for 18 months. So school was still roughly in its infancy stage, but it had at least been open for one year. One thing I had noticed was that our writing skills were dramatically deficient. What we decided to do was trade FTEs (full-time employees) with the district and try to basically negotiate things so I could actually have a writing center that was going to be staffed by a full-

time English teacher. We had one at the university where I went to school, and I found that to be very effective for me when I was in college.

So we set one up and it took a while, it took about a year and a half to get set up, but it's fully staffed with 30 computers and we have a full-time writing teacher there. The English teachers bring their kids there occasionally to get help. It's open before school, all day long, during lunch, and after school. And when our teacher there is on conference or has lunch, we have some added tutors that are in there that can assist the kids that do come at that time. And they go in there to work on their essays, primarily an essay writing center for our freshman through sophomore. Juniors and seniors use that a lot for their college applications and their scholarships. In fact, the seniors are required to take a class in the writing center in the fall or in the spring, and the whole focus in there is going to be on their applications. The writing skill center teacher there will work with them to help them be successful in their applying for college and getting the money they need to continue on. The writing center has been an enormous help for our kids.

It was also mentioned our bridge programs earlier by Sarah, we have our own bridge program we call it Project Endeavor. It's a 10 day program in the summer. It starts right after the school ends. It's in June, and in that program a large portion of that is focused on TSI (Texas Success Initiative assessment test) and getting them ready, because we give them the TSI in the summer.

Also about an hour and half is focused on student clubs, interaction, bonding skills, we do a field trip on one day just to get them to bond because in our situation, we're bringing kids together from 12 different middle schools at a minimum, and that's not even counting the few kids that come into our program from private schools or charter schools. So we're getting kids that have identities from a lot of different schools and we have to drop all those identities and have them bond together and have them be Spartans.

So we have that bridge program. They learn about the writing center at both the college and the one we have here, and they work really well together to get the kids ready to be successful when they start in August. So that's our writing center that we find to be a very big bonus for us.

I guess I should stop there Kim because I see that we have lots of questions, so I'll turn it over to you and we'll go through the questions.

Kim Woodson: Paul, thank you so much for sharing that information. There were several things that have actually been mentioned and how much we appreciate both of you for providing feedback. One of the main things that both of you have shared has been the importance of communication.

As one of the questions ask, **We have to have systems, what type of suggestions?**

As you start thinking about what you need on your campus, what it would depend on, that's how you would build your system. So for example if you're working on needing information for attendance, one of the main people you can work with, or when I was a principal at my previous employer we worked with the liaison, and the liaison was the communicator with all of the college professors. It is a difficult job when you're trying to merge two separate entities into one to get information regarding the district and high school and the college. However, your liaison is the person who helps to bridge that gap or make sure that communication is fluid.

There are forms, there are different things, so at the best practices conference that we're going to have in August (and that information is going to be coming up real soon), we're going to start looking at sharing some data, sharing some information, some forms, and some things that might be beneficial. Also I will have some of the participants send me information and we can go ahead and put it on the website which is updated on a regular basis in regards to providing information.

One of the questions asked was to Margie, **Can you share a copy your server agreement?** You talked about how you work with your high schools, is there an agreement that you have posted or accessible that you can share?

Margie: Sure I'll send that to you Kim. We have a lot of information about the secure server that we share with our partners. But we also have information in our MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) I can send that you to share.

Kim: Thank you. And on our website which is going to, in case every one doesn't have it, which would be the www.txechs.com, we're in the process of continuing to update information. It's kind of like the blueprint, always a working document, so this is a working website that we continuously add information that we think would be helpful in regards to meeting the needs at each one of the campuses. For the next question that we have it says:

39:15-39:23 (Audio Gap)

Laura: This is Laura, one of the questions we got are **How are drops handled at the high school side?** There are a couple of areas where transcripts/transcribing dual credit courses are handled. One is in the AAR (Academic Achievement Records), the minimum guidance for academic achievement records, and the other is in the guidance and the TAC (Texas Administrative Code) for Dual Credit. The Texas Administrative Code for Dual Credit says that if a grade is given for a course, then it needs to be transcribed. If there is a drop there is guidance in the Academic Achievement Record that states that courses attempted, needs to be transcribed but that's kind of vague to kind of what is a course, what an attempted course means. That we really do say that's left up to local districts discretion on how to handle that. To kind of answer/not answer your question, you do have a little bit of discretion in there on how to handle drops. And a little bit of other advice I would give is that any dual credit course that happens outside of regular school day, because I have had questions about dual credit classes: can they be taken on the weekends or after the regular school day, you also have a little bit more flexibility as to how those are transcribed on to the student's high school transcript. Take that as you will, if you have any additional questions you might want to ask me after the webinar. But you do have a little bit of discretion there, as how to handle drops. I hope that was helpful.

Kim: Ok great, thank you Laura for sharing that. The next question I think this was kind of answered but I would like for us to address it, Margie or Paul if you would like to comment on it. It says:

What about FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)? College Professors don't want to talk to parents or principals. What do you do?

I shared my information in regards to when I was a previous principal, I worked with my liaison. Before a student would be dropped from a class, it had to be communicated with the liaison. Students weren't allowed to go drop a class. Their information was flagged over at the college to make sure that if they were a particular student and they wanted to go drop a class, I would automatically be notified before they were trying to make any changes.

My communication with the liaison in regards to classes that they were not being successful in, or those that were struggling, or even if there were possibly any behavior or academic concerns; all of that information was communicated from the professor directly to the liaison who shared that information. It was a Google doc that the liaison had created, and the professors were able to log in under their own special code. The professors can log in, type the information in regards to the student from that class and that information came directly to me. It was my job to make sure that, some people had AVID instructors; we had college prep instructors and those instructors were the ones who spent one-on-one time talking with students.

The parent communication is very important. Paul mentioned that his monthly meetings, for freshman students, we've all done something very similar in regards to making sure parents were informed. And if your parents aren't able to come on particular nights, we've even received information from one of the other schools that said they're doing something very similar to what we're doing now, it was like a Skype or webinar or something that they could log in from work so that could also help with not having so many late night events - just some opportunities for them to be able to receive the same information and post questions.

Paul, anything else you'd like to add to that?

Paul: In our situation, we have a couple of things. First of all, we are very clear with our parents when they first come in, that talking with the professors is not something they are going to be allowed to do. We explain why, we talk about FERPA, but more importantly that their child will be treated as a college student and we have a little contract they sign about they understand the rules and going back to the do's and don'ts. So they sign that understanding that situation.

In over the years, we've been here for about eight years now, the college professors have really opened up and accepted us not as partners, but as part of them. We are an extension of the college. In some cases, many of the professors now are comfortable calling me directly and letting me know if they are having a problem with a kid. They won't go into a lot of details exactly, but they will let me know if they're worried about this particular student or that particular student. Not all of them do but many do and that allows us to work with the student.

Just this year we were able to hire a part-time social worker, and that person's primary job is to help with the attendance. Bottom line if the kid is going to skip college classes, they're probably going to also be skipping high school classes. So we know who's going to be an attendance problem in general and this person works with the child, even going into the college to see if they're hanging out at the union or hanging out playing ping pong or something, just to make sure the kids are in their classes. They don't go into the classes with the kids, that's taking it a little too far, but they're out there watching because they know where the kids are going to be hanging out.

But as far as the college professors and FERPA, we're starting to get a better relationship. We really haven't had a problem with parents calling the professors directly because we've made it very clear from the very beginning. We also haven't really had a problem with drops occurring without notification because we again don't tell our kids they can drop and the college knows that if a student tries to drop on their own, they're not going to allow that. As far as the professor initiating a drop, that's another story. The professor can do that of course, but that rarely happens because at the community college

they are not big on dropping kids either. They want to the kids to be successful and they're going to work with the kids in keeping them in class and having them be successful.

Margie: I'd go ahead and piggy back on that, Paul's absolutely right. There are other schools as well, drops are not a big problem either, because of course the professor can drop their students, but we don't allow our early college high school students just to go and drop themselves, that's not how it works. Also just to talk a little bit about the FERPA and talking to professors - as the liaison or coordinator, often some faculty will come to me directly and it's usually because they're not sure which early college high school that student attends; we have students from four to five different campuses, attending class at this one campus. Sometimes they assume they are at Valle Verde Early College, but they might be being bused over from another campus. I help facilitate them with getting in contact, if they want to contact the principal directly which a lot of them do. They feel comfortable doing that because I think we've done a good job integrating the early colleges into our college, into our culture. Sometimes they want me to talk to the principal or sometimes they want their dean to talk to the principal, who is the administrative liaison between the early college and the college, and that's acceptable as well. Whatever works for them to keep what the whole goal in mind is for the student to be successful.

Kim: Ok, thank you. Paul we had a question that one of the participants wants to know if you're able to **share a copy of your student agreement**. I guess the student agreement, or the one that you have parents sign, the contract that you have with them that you share with them in the beginning of the school year for your freshman.

Paul: Yeah, I can definitely. I also saw some questions on how to contact me so let me give you my email and if you want something feel free to email me. I'm really big on sharing things because we're all in this together. My email is pcovey@yisd.net, and I'll be glad to share what I have. Nothing's perfect I can guarantee you, but everything we have is a starting point and what you may find useful great and if not that's fine, too.

Kim: Ok great, and we're looking at one other question, I apologize just one second, **What about parents that are wanting to drop their students from a college course because their child's GPA will be affected if the student currently holds a 75?** I guess they're asking in regards to parents making choices of students being dropped from a particular class I guess they think they aren't going to be successful. You know parents in my previous job, students aren't just allowed to drop courses and part of the MOU agreement is that students are registered for these different courses. I know Margie's going to share something because she works with numerous campuses and I know that their policies in regard to dropping/adding or anything would be part of your MOU or shared service agreement. Margie?

Margie: I'm going to let Paul talk specifically about the parents because that doesn't really come up with me at all. But yes, we have in sharing those agreements, I'll share any other documents that would be useful for drops. We also have special drop forms for early college students. Of course it has to be initiated with the counselor so the early college student doesn't just go drop themselves. We don't allow that either. I'll be happy to share those documents with you Kim.

Paul: Our philosophy is very similar to a comprehensive school. If we were in regular high school where we had kids in the top 10, you know it happens every senior year, you get to that second semester and all of a sudden a kid wants to drop a particular class because it's going to affect their top 10 status. We didn't allow that then, and even though they're in an early college high school, it's still in the high school

and you just don't drop classes, that just doesn't happen. You have a class, you finish it out and what we tell the students what's the reason why, and you're afraid of getting a 75 instead of an 80 then let's fix it. And here are the resources we can use to help you. The community college has tons of tutoring centers over there to help you. There's Kahn Academy can provide assistance if you need assistance at home.

And also, except maybe for engineering physics or something really advanced like that at the college, most courses over there, the core classes, there's going to be a high school teacher that we have on our side that can assist in that class. They may not be teaching it, but they have the background to at least help them. And so we try to pair them up with where they need help. And so we're not going to say well ok you're going to not get the grade you want, oh well, too bad. We're going to try to help the student get the grade they want, but they can't run from it. That's just not a good life lesson and it wouldn't happen at any high school anyway as far as comprehensive schools goes that are regular schools. If you're wanting to stay in the top 10 then you're going to have to work hard to stay in the top 10.

Kim: Absolutely. Thank you.

Sarah: There's a couple of questions that kind of have to do with **flexibility with curriculum support for students who participate in UIL or extracurricular activities**, and then one that it's kind of related to that about **how do you handle this in a traditional high school setting if you have an early college high school that's perhaps a school within a school**.

You know with over 100 early college high schools, the designs are very varied. And from where no students are particularly involved in extracurricular activities it's strictly an academic event, whereas you're in that traditional school within a school. Or some of our early college high schools allow their students to go participate in UIL activities at their home campus. So what happens is all those issues have to be dealt with kind of on a case by case basis.

The main thing is making sure that when you acquire the students in your campus that they understand what's expected of them when it comes to getting an associate degree and a high school diploma, and it may mean giving something up. If you're at a setting where you don't require that of students, they are still participating in UIL athletics or other kinds of things, then you're going to have to create a system where you can provide the support they need or give them the tools to go find the resources they need such as Paul said Kahn Academy or going to the college writing center on their own, going to the college library on their own, coming up with them to problem solve that if you're going to do the extra things too along with the academic event, then you're going to have to solve some of those problems and take responsibility for it.

In my experience I never would have gone to early college high school, I wanted to be in athletics, I was going to do the whole high school thing so I wouldn't have applied to this school. They need to understand that if you're applying to this school this is what you may have to give up and this is what you're going to get in advance. And if you're in one of those schools that allows the extracurricular activity, then it should be kind of incumbent upon you to sort of figure out how you can support the students either physically, emotionally or socially, or academically; or give them the tools and the resources to seek out their own resources and support.

Paul: In our case we're not a comprehensive school, we're a school by ourselves on the campus of El Paso Community College. But we do a lot of extracurricular activities because I want to try provide as

much of a normal high school well, definitely not normal, but try to provide the activities that they would have had at a regular high school, because I don't want them to have to give up everything. And I also know that in my high school experience, a lot of things I learned to prepare me for life I learned outside the classroom, not just inside the classroom. But we definitely cannot provide the full experience. Like Sarah said you have to make some sacrifices.

When we do UIL academics, right now we have 10 kids who are absent today and tomorrow because they are at the state science fair, we do a lot of the academic triathlons, haikus', speech and debate. Like in speech and debate, we pick the event we're going to do. We don't do one act play, or cross examination debate, because those events from the speech tournaments require them to be out of school more often than say those kids that are just doing prose or poetry. So we kind of pick what they can do that won't cost them a lot of class time. That occurs after school and of course the grades are monitored and we make sure that they have the support like Sarah mentioned.

The hardest part, from our aspect, in doing these extracurricular activities, is getting the sponsors. We only have 19 teachers. At a regular high school, say like I was at previously had a 125, maybe a third of them sponsored clubs. That still meant that if they 125 teachers, that was over 30 teachers that sponsored clubs. That's more than, I'd have to have 100% at my campus participate if we're going to have all these clubs, and so we talk to our teachers and I would say of our 19, 18 sponsor clubs just to provide something for the kids to do so they get some experience outside of the classroom.

When they apply for college they do ask them about extracurricular still, it doesn't matter they went to an early college high school. They do ask them about leadership opportunities, they do ask them about community service. And at our school, actually our district, every kid is required to do 80 hours of community service to participate in college graduation ceremonies. Actually, we had that rule first and then our district adopted that rule for the whole district. So we have a large component where there is activities outside of the classroom, but Sarah is very right, you have to have a system if you're going to do that to allow and you got to pick and choose what you're going to do because something's just aren't feasible in an early college high school.

Laura: Final question we're going to answer before we wrap this up and I'll let Kim get into this later, any questions that we didn't get to we will address in writing and getting the answers out to you guys. But we did get a **question about the 6 drop rule and the three-peat rule and if there's any anticipation that those might be changing** and I haven't seen anything come through the legislature about that although Margie I might defer to you on that because you because that information may not go to TEA it might go straight to the Coordinating Board for us to weigh in on that. I've heard that satisfactory academic progress rules they were deferring to a bit more than the 6-drop rules and those kinds of rules. Because I'm not in the college realm, I'm not necessarily the best person to ask, but I do get the dual credit information, Margie, what is your take is on this?

Margie: I haven't heard anything like that from the Coordinating Board. I don't anticipate any changes, but if I do I'll make sure and share that, but no I have not.

Kim: Well we want to thank everyone for their time and being able to spend some time with us and go over the information we're sharing for the Benchmark 4 for Curriculum and Support. We hope this has been beneficial. Our next webinar is going to be on Thursday, April 23 and we're going to say 10 a.m. There will be an email that will go out again that will go out with the log in information.

Save your dates are coming out for our Best Practices Conference and we're pretty excited. The Best Practices Conference is going to be on August 6 and 7 at the Westin Austin Domain. 11301 Domain Drive in Austin. We will be having that information sent out through the listserv within the next week.

We do appreciate all of your support and want to thank TEA for always supporting our endeavors to make sure we're meeting the needs of all of our early colleges. Paul and Margie once again your support is greatly appreciated and we look forward to speaking to you soon.

At this time this will conclude our webinar, and the webinar will be posted on the website soon. Thank you so much and right now we're ending, I hope everyone has a great day.

Q&A Not Covered During the Webinar:

How are drops handled on the High School side? Are they given a W50 on their HS transcript?

Schools are required to transcript "courses attempted;" however, there is no guidance given as to exactly what this means. Therefore, it is left to the local districts to interpret/define. Law/Rule does require that the course be transcripted if a grade is given. If a student is in the course long enough to receive a grade; however, it is probably past the point of being considered a "drop."

What are the practices that campuses are using for students who are failing a high school course but are passing college courses? How do you work with faculty who "want to prepare students for college" and are part of the reason for student failure?

Campuses have varied tutoring schedules, AVID, or other college readiness classes for support, parent, and student contracts.

Professional development for teachers that involves co-planning with the college faculty. Let them shadow the college faculty. New teacher induction/mentorships.

We are developing our student intervention and support system. Are there some models out there that are solid and successful we could use as a resource?

We will be identifying best practice schools for site visits, and we will be doing some virtual showcases of their strategies and schools on the website in the coming year(s) and at the upcoming conference this August. TEA will also be conducting a survey to allow schools to self-identify their strengths so that we can share that with schools who are interested in visiting schools with specific strengths.

Curious as to how College Transition Classes are coded and appears on HS transcript?

There are a number of innovative courses that could be used for this purpose. (Note: Use the following codes to identify approved innovative courses. These codes may only be used by school districts that have the approval of their local board of trustees to offer these courses in accordance with 19 TAC §74.27. Information can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=6079>.)

N1290050 College Transition

N1290051	Path College Career I
N1290052	Path College Career II
N1290053	Path College Career III
N1290054	Path College Career IV