This document provides guidance on creating an integrated and seamless high school, college and workplace curriculum designed to graduate students college- and career-ready. It serves as one key tool related to the P-TECH 9-14 model.

HOW TO ENSURE CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT AT A P-TECH 9-14 SCHOOL

Most high schools have a goal of preparing their students for post-secondary education. High school teachers develop curriculum in a variety of content areas and use a number of academic standards, including the Common Core Learning Standards, to create a "college-ready" academic culture.

What makes an early college school different in this regard, however, is that teachers have the opportunity to develop curriculum, alongside college professors and often with industry professionals, with the goal of preparing students to be ready for specific college courses in targeted degree pathways.

Aligning high school curriculum to college courses and learning outcomes of particular degree pathways is crucial to the success of the academically diverse group of students enrolled in an early college school. By thoughtfully planning curriculum, teachers, professors, and industry professionals can construct learning experiences that develop the skills and knowledge necessary for students to transition successfully into entry-level college courses while they are in high school. Without this thoughtful curriculum alignment, it is entirely up to the students, once they are enrolled in a college course, to make their own connections between the high school subject matter and college material, fill in the learning gaps, and quickly transition to the new skill and content knowledge expectations of college. The early college model offers a more far-sighted, and thus greater student-supported, approach to high school teaching and learning that is designed to enable students to meet the rigorous demands of college.

Who benefits from curriculum alignment?

Students benefit from more successful transitions into entry-level college courses in a variety of subject areas.

Teachers benefit from teaching curriculum and utilizing instructional practices that they know will provide their students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the entry-level college courses. Teachers also can improve their instructional practices by learning together with college faculty.

College Professors benefit from understanding what students are expected to know and do from students' high school experience so that they can improve their own instructional practices in order to meet the needs of younger students. Professors will also benefit from teaching students who are better prepared for the rigors of college classes.

Industry professionals benefit from knowing that students have had a seamless academic experience that has prepared them to engage in substantive work in internships and other workplace learning experiences and to assure that they will meet the skill needs for the targeted jobs.

Who should be involved in aligning high school curriculum to college curriculum and industry standards?

establish **norms and procedures** on its own. Individual **roles and responsibilities** should be made clear during the initial meetings.

The Key Steps in Aligning Curriculum

Faculty from the high school and college and employer partner should begin with the following questions:

- What are the main things that experts 'do' in a specific profession? Similarly, what are the discipline-specific skills that college faculty expect to see as important for success in their field of study?
- What should high school students know and be able to do in order to be prepared for the specific entry-level college courses in various disciplines? How do those expectations relate to academic standards in high school and college courses? Is the coursework aligned with current industry practice? Are pre-requisites designed to assure student success in required courses or is there a misalignment?
- How do teaching strategies and classroom technologies differ between high school, college and workplace settings? Are there opportunities to mimic elements of one setting in another?
- How are skills and content knowledge assessed in different settings? What are critical "high stakes" assessments in high school, college, and/or the workplace? How can we demystify those assessments for students and faculty? How do college placement exams affect the content of courses that are offered either before or after them? Is there alignment between high school exit exams and college placement exams?
- What are the roadblocks that college students experience in the entry-level courses that stand in the way of students acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful?
- How should we assess our alignment work moving forward and plan to adjust as necessary?

Depending on the goal and composition of the group, the committee should begin to review and adapt curriculum for the identified courses.

Here are a few curriculum development suggestions:

- Begin with discrete units rather than entire courses in order for curriculum committee members to learn lessons from well-tested units in the classroom.
- Create opportunities for committee members to review and compare student work from different settings (i.e., high school, college, workplace) but in closely related subjects. Compare the ways in which student work is assigned and assessed. Discuss opportunities to share the different types of expectations with students as they move from one environment to the next.
- For a high school course that leads to a college course, develop an end-of-course assignment in the high school course that mimics the first assignment in the entry-level college course.