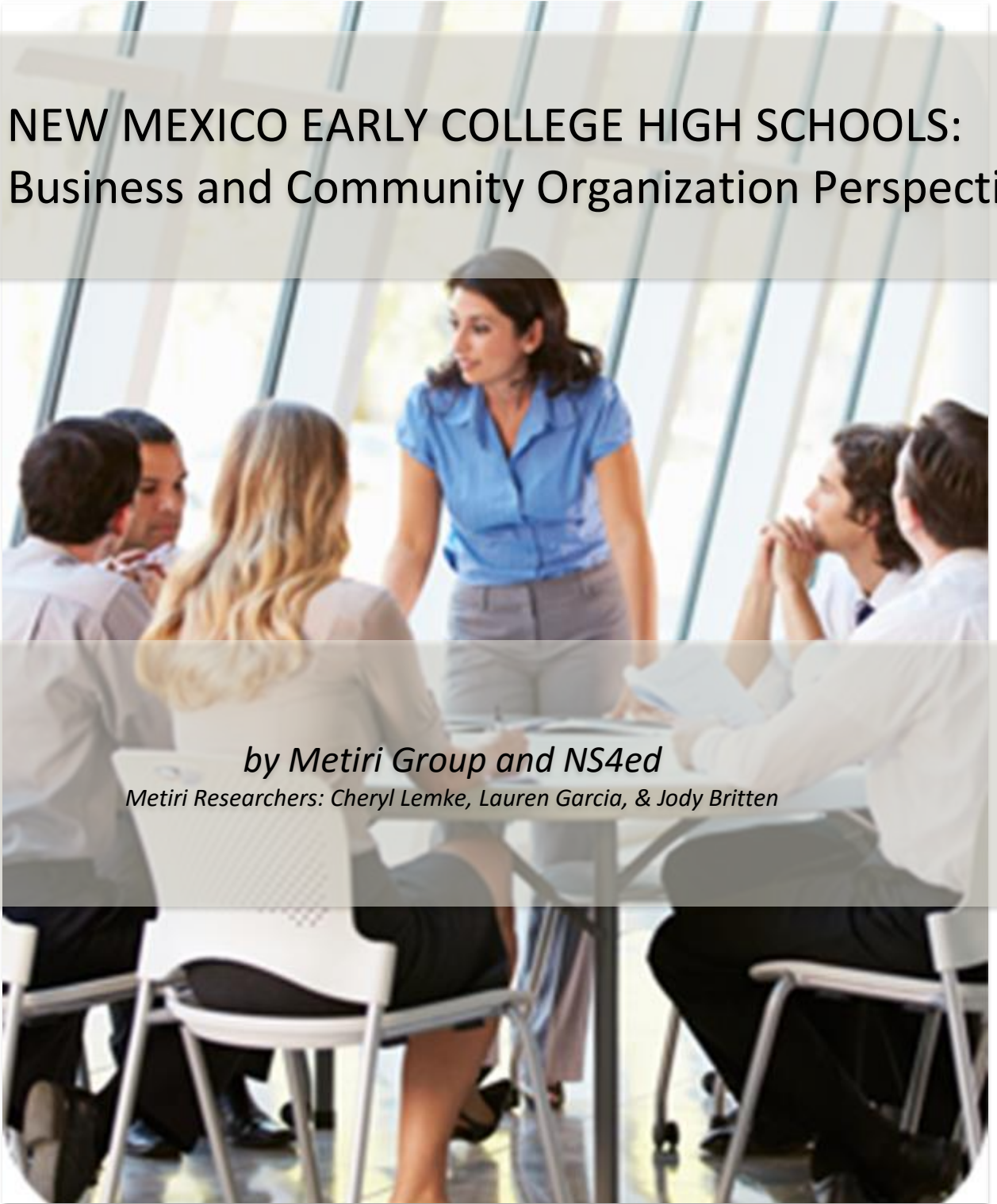


March **2017**

NEW MEXICO EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS: The Business and Community Organization Perspective

by Metiri Group and NS4ed

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Introduction: A 2016 Study on Early College High Schools in NM

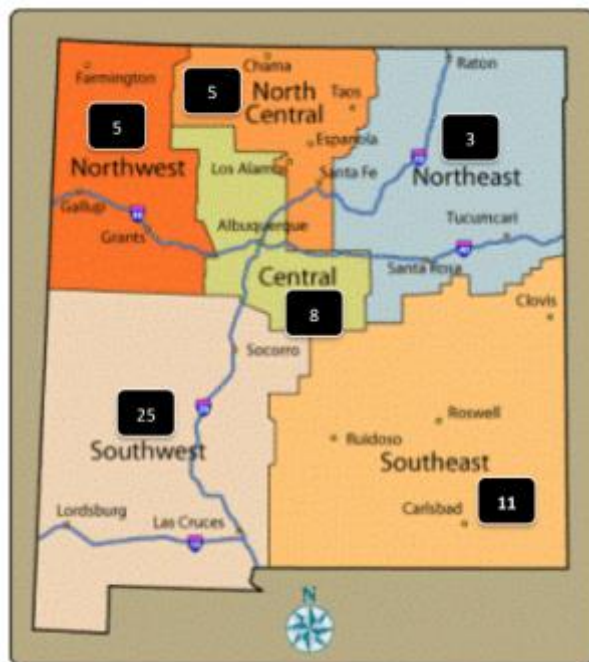
The Early College High Schools (ECHSs) in New Mexico are designed to propel students toward high school graduation while simultaneously earning college credit toward career certifications and two-year degrees. Models vary, but typically students start the acceleration in grades 9 and 10 by completing a significant percentage of their high school course requirements for graduation. Then, in grades 11 and 12, they attend a local community college, college, or university to earn a 2-year degree or workforce credential prior to their high school graduation. Currently there are 21 self-identified ECHSs in New Mexico (see list in Appendix A). The formal definition of an ECHS is listed in Appendix B.

In 2016, the New Mexico Department of Public Instruction commissioned a study to document the current needs of ECHS programs and the nature of the ECHS models that had evolved in the state. Survey data were collected from three respondent groups in New Mexico: K-12 school districts, colleges and universities, and businesses and community organizations.

The Business and Community Organization Perspective

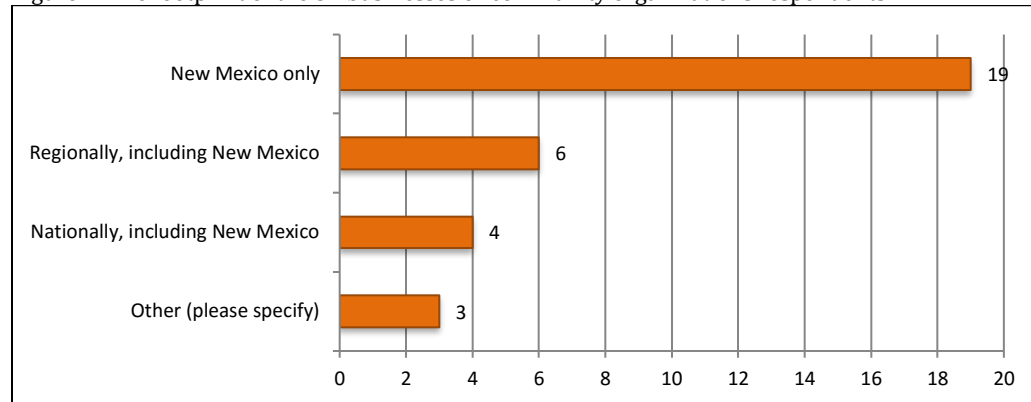
This report represents the component from this 2016-17 study documenting the perspectives of the business and community organizations. A survey was conducted with recruitment of business and community organizations accomplished by requesting the local ECHS principals to reach out to their partners; and by requesting that the regional business consortia ask their members to take the surveys. Survey respondents included 32 respondents, with the largest numbers from the Southwest and Southeast regions of the state (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Count of business and community organization respondents in each region of the state



Of the 32 respondents, 19 conducted business in New Mexico only, while the other 23 worked regionally, nationally, or internationally (see Figure 2). The majority of the respondents were CEOs, CFOs, or other administrators.

Figure 2: The footprint of the 32 businesses or community organizations respondents



n = 32

Sectors Represented

The sectors represented by respondents are listed in the table below (see Table 1).

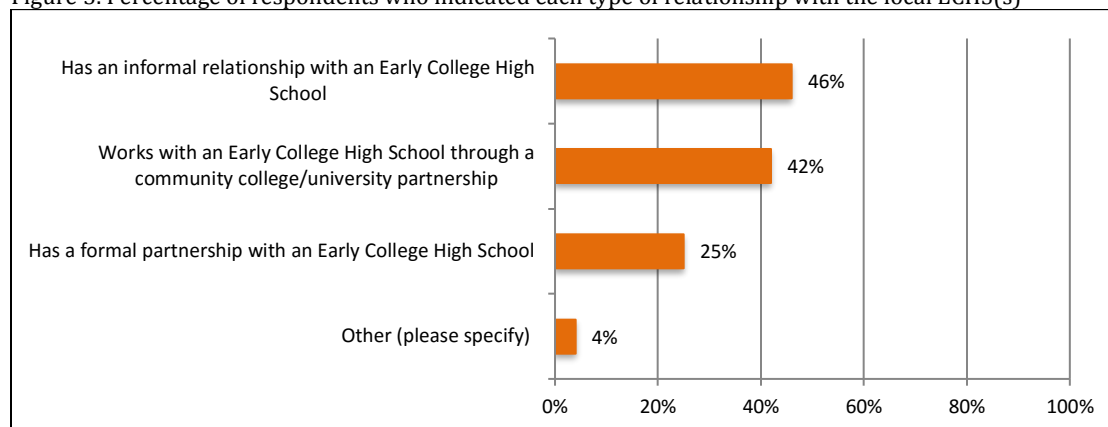
Table 1. Sectors represented by respondents

Sector	Percentage of Respondents N=32
Finance	16%
Government & Public Administration	13%
Architecture & Construction	9%
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	6%
Education & Training	6%
Health Science	6%
Arts, A/V Technology & Communications	3%
Business Management & Administration	3%
Hospitality & Tourism	3%
Human Services	3%
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	3%
Information Technology	0%
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	0%
Manufacturing	0%
Marketing	0%
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	0%
Other: Automotive; Church, counseling, mentoring; Insurance and Real Estate; Mining- Minerals; National Park Service, Non-profit, Oil and Gas, and Retail supermarket.	28%

Current ECHS Partnerships/Relationships

While only 25% of the respondents reported to have a formal partnership with an ECHS, 42% indicated that they work with ECHS through a community college/university partnership, and 46% said they have an informal relationships with an ECHS.

Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who indicated each type of relationship with the local ECHS(s)

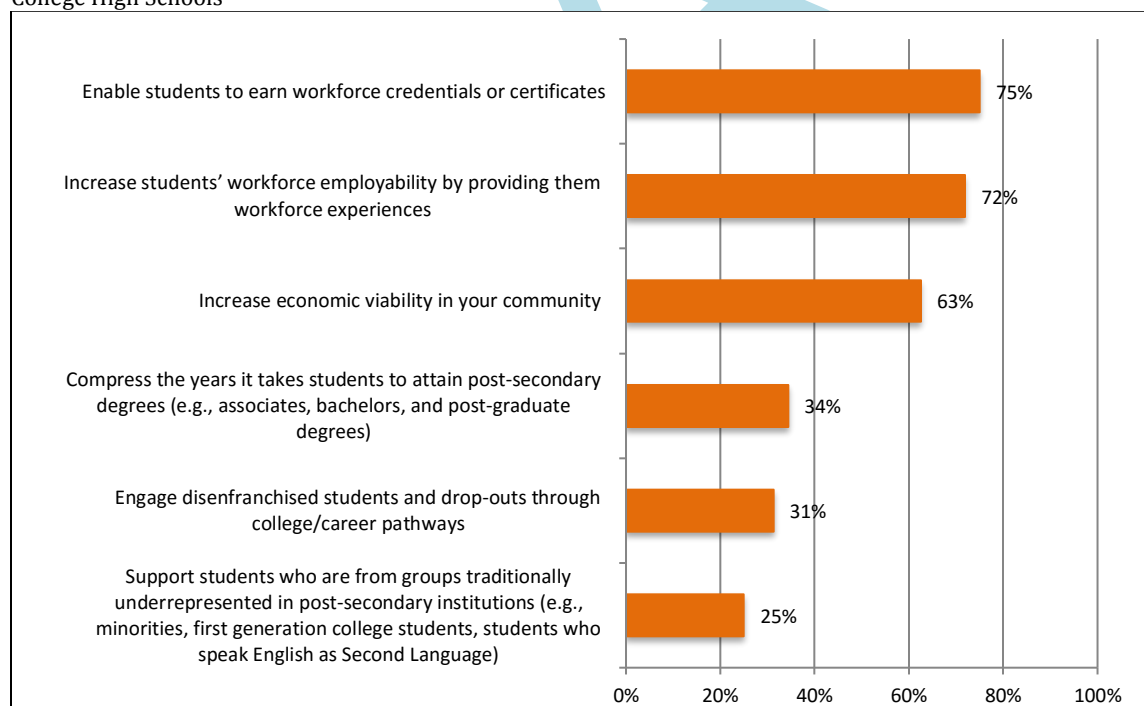


The Purpose of the ECHS

When asked to rank a list of potential focuses for the ECHSs, the top selections were: enable students to earn workforce credentials or certificates, increase students' workforce employability by providing them workforce experiences, and increase economic viability in the local community (see

Figure 4).

Figure 4. The percentage of respondents who ranked the following in their top three priorities for a focus of the Early College High Schools



n = 32

Skills Essential for Students to Be Successful in the Workforce

Business and community organization respondents were also asked about the key skills they believe are most critical for students' success in the workforce. The skills that the majority of

respondents included in their top three were self-direction/taking responsibility (75%), communication (63%), and evidence-based reasoning/critical thinking (53%). Time management and teaming/collaboration and relationship building ranked just behind them garnering (38%) and (34%) respectively in respondents' top three rankings.

Figure 5. The percentage of respondents who included following in their top three most critical skills for students' success in the workforce



n = 32

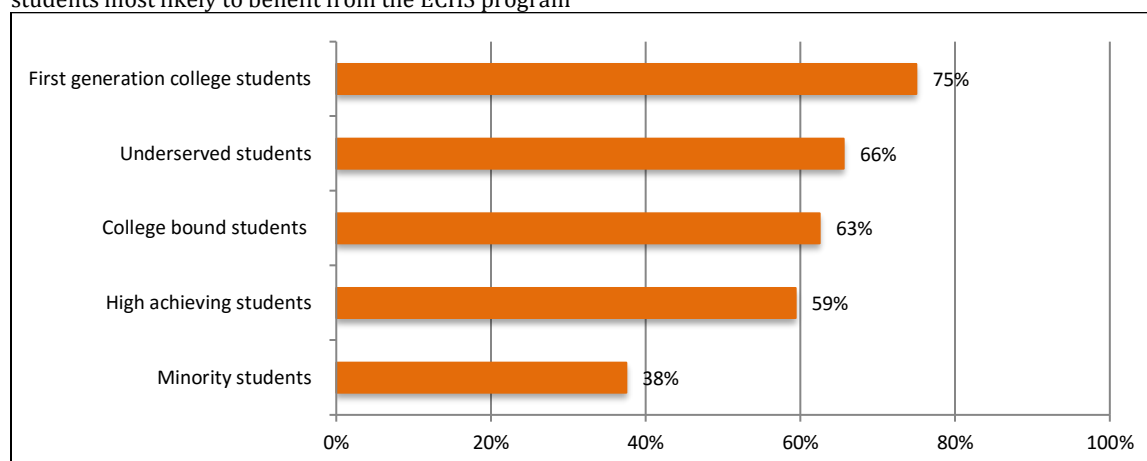
When asked to add to this list of essential skills, respondents added the following:

- Being professional in dress, speech, manners, hygiene, and being punctual.
- Digital fluency and computer skills such as spreadsheets, presentations, and word processing.
- Interpersonal skills (emotional IQ), conflict management, self-esteem.
- Knowing how to interview. Employer expectations, in general.
- Pride and ownership in any task assigned.
- Personal goal setting.
- Understanding that paychecks should be earned.
- Independence, working without constant supervision.

Student Groups Targeted

When respondents were asked to rank groups of high school students in terms of which group would benefit most, the group that the largest percentage of respondents included in their top three choices was first generation college students. However, respondents indicated that all groups could benefit. The reader should keep in mind that, while the minority students category was in only 38% of the top three rankings, minority students are represented in the other four categories (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. The percentage of respondents selecting the following groups of students in their top three categories of students most likely to benefit from the ECHS program

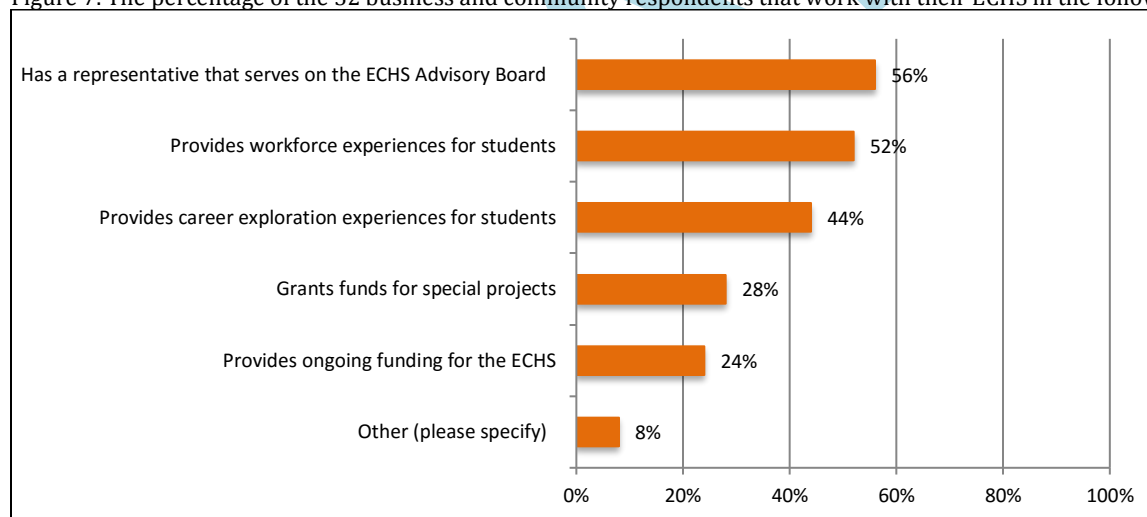


n = 32

Business and Organizational Roles in the ECHSs

When asked about the ways in which their business or organization works with your local ECHS(s), the top two responses were “serves on the ECHS advisory board” and “provides workforce experiences for students.” The full range of responses is included in Figure 7.

Figure 7. The percentage of the 32 business and community respondents that work with their ECHS in the following ways

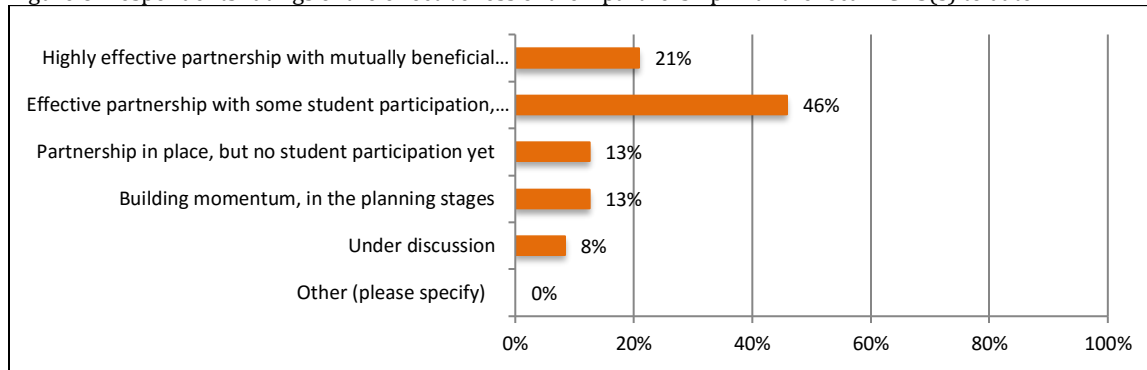


n = 24

Note: Respondents checked all that applied, so percentages will not sum to 100%.

The 24 respondents who indicated that they did have partnership with the ECHS were asked to describe the effectiveness of the partnership. Over two-thirds described that partnership as either “highly effective with mutually beneficial outcomes” (21%) or “effective, with some student participation and mutual benefits (46%). Others indicated that “the partnership was in place, but had not student participation yet” (13%), “it was building momentum, but was in the planning stages” (13%), or it was “under discussion” (8%) (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Respondents ratings of the effectiveness of their partnership with the local ECHS(s) to date

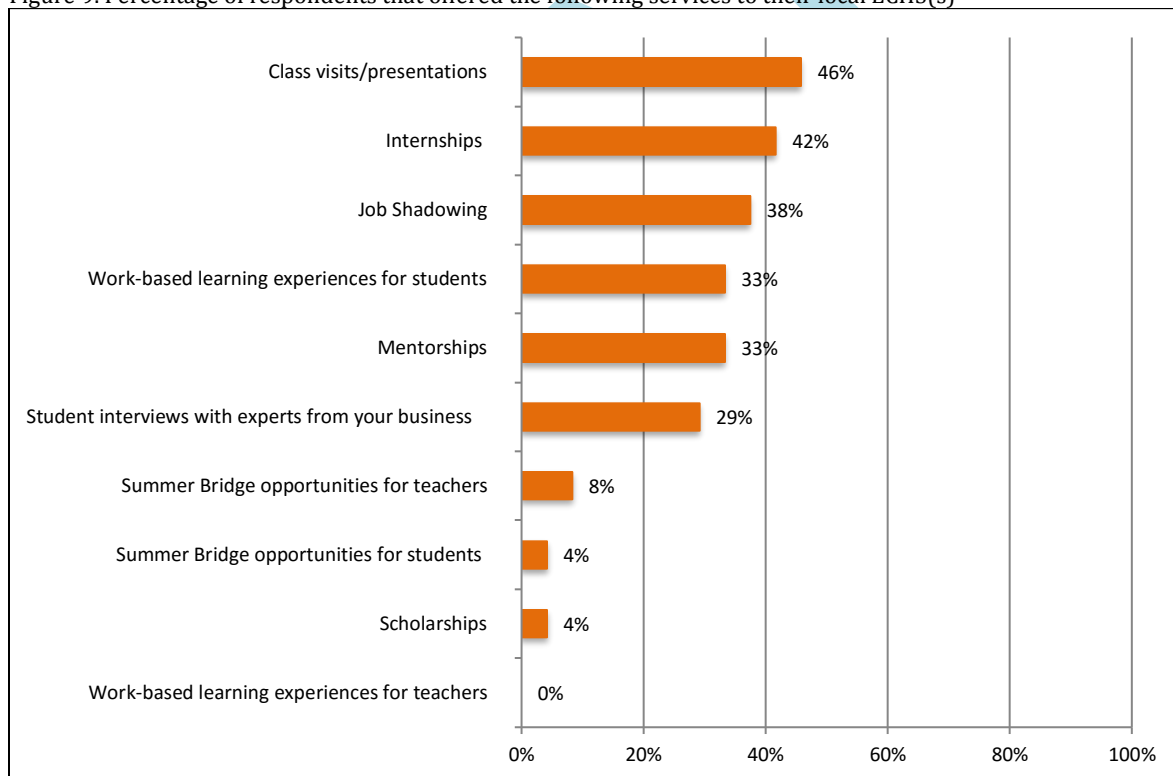


n = 24

Direct Services to the ECHS

The direct services offered to the ECHS by respondents' businesses or organizations were mostly focused on serving students during the school year. The services to students included class visits/presentations, internships, job shadowing, work-based learning experiences and mentorships. Summer programs for teachers and students were offered by 8% and 4% of respondents respectively (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Percentage of respondents that offered the following services to their local ECHS(s)



n = 24

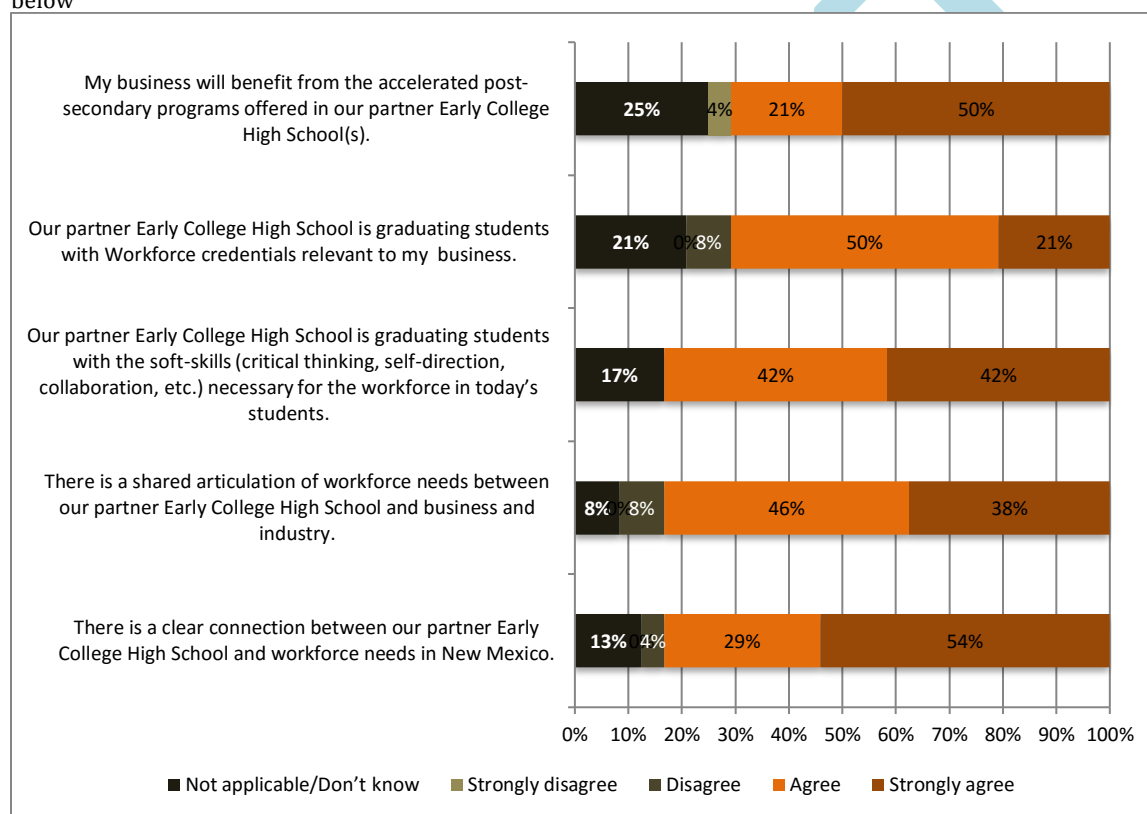
Note: Respondents checked all that applied, so percentages will not sum to 100%.

Potential Impact on New Mexico Workforce and Economy

The majority of the respondent businesses and organizations strongly agreed that there is a clear connection between their partner ECHS and the workforce needs in New Mexico and that their business (or organization) will benefit from the accelerated post-secondary programs offered by the ECHS. In addition, the respondents generally agreed to the statements that their ECHS was graduating students with workforce credentials relevant to them, that their ECHS was graduating students with the soft skills (critical thinking, self-direction, collaboration, etc.) necessary for the workforce, and that there is a shared articulation of workforce needs between them and their local ECHS.

It is also noteworthy that 25% of the ECHS partners did not know whether their business would benefit and 21% did not know whether the ECHS was graduating students with workforce credentials relevant to their business/organization.

Figure 10. Percentage of respondents with ECHS partners who indicated their level of agreement about the statements below

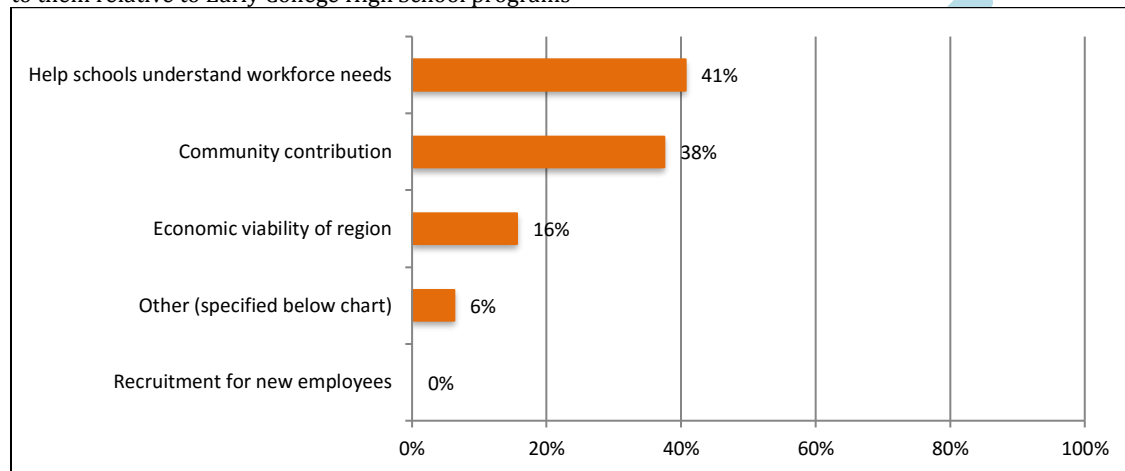


n = 24

Potential Partnership Benefits

When asked about the most important benefit for a business or organization relative to participation in Early College High School programs, the top two responses were “to help schools understand workforce needs” (41%) and “community contributions” (38%). The respondents selecting the other option specified: mentoring students, preparing them for life, recruitment of temporary and possibly permanent employees, exposing students to organizational need, and preparing them with real-world experiences (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Percentage of respondents selecting the following options when asked which was the most important benefit to them relative to Early College High School programs



n = 32

The most important benefit of the ECHS partnership to the 24 respondents who have current ECHS partners fell into three categories: employee pool, preparing tomorrow’s workforce, and community involvement. The three categories are listed below along with the actual text from respondents.

Table 2. Responses to the question: In your opinion, what is the most important benefit of your ECHS partnership to your business?

Category	
Employee Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allowing us a chance to see kids that could possibly fill positions in the bank after they return from college, if they come back to Carlsbad. ▪ Can provide an employee pool. ▪ Educating students in our community to possibly fill positions in the future with our organization. ▪ Potential employees in the future. ▪ We have found someone who could come on as an employee and benefit the company. ▪ We have someone who can help us when we are short staffed. ▪ When we have employees in a rural community environment, it's important to have nurses and teachers, etc., to support community services. We also use local contractors, so having employees with higher education means we can have strong contractor base as well.

Category	
Preparing tomorrow's workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Future skilled employees that stay in New Mexico. ▪ Helping to provide qualified workers in the future to businesses in the area will help to improve the local economy and expand my client base. ▪ Preparing tomorrow's workforce. ▪ Skilled and work-ready students will be entering the workforce, making it easier for us to assist them in procuring employment that will turn into a career, rather than just a job. ▪ Students who are able to enter the workforce earlier and with better credentials. ▪ Work ready labor force. ▪ Availability of credentialed graduate.
Community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community contributions / stewardship. ▪ Community improvement that is a positive draw for potential candidates and their families looking to relocate to our area. ▪ Community involvement.

Benefits to students

According to the 24 respondents with current partnerships or relationships with a local ECHS, the most important benefits of the ECHS program to the students are: career opportunities, work experiences in the field, new educational models, lower cost of the college degree, and increased knowledge in STEM/medical fields.

Table 3. Responses to the question: In your opinion, what is the most important benefit of your ECHS partnership to the ECHS and its students?

Category	
Career opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to learn about career opportunities in Finance and to learn more about requirements to be successful in those jobs. ▪ Gaining workforce skills. Solidifying their career goals. ▪ Giving the kids a safety net way to see if a career in these fields is what they ultimately want to do, before actually pursuing a full degree and/or job placement in the industry. ▪ Students can obtain perspectives on what industry is seeking in new employees. ▪ Students developing a feel for real world obligations and expectations. ▪ Students have a head start with obtaining an education, which will give them better opportunities for employment into higher-paying positions.
Work experiences in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students developing a feel for real world obligations and expectations. ▪ Better learning environment ▪ Gives the students customer service skills. ▪ Input from a business perspective. ▪ Providing a place for internships to further the students knowledge and work experience. ▪ Real-world experience in addition to the education. ▪ They get real workplace experience.
New educational models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenging all parties involved. College, community, school board. ECHS are new and present challenges in understanding and accepting change. ▪ Better educational and work experiences for our students. ▪ Greater opportunity, educational options.
Lower cost of college degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Able to obtain a college degree at a fraction of the cost. ▪ Donations to help in the teaching of higher education for local students.
STEM/ Medical fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being able to assist with education about the medical field. ▪ Hopefully, the math and science skills.

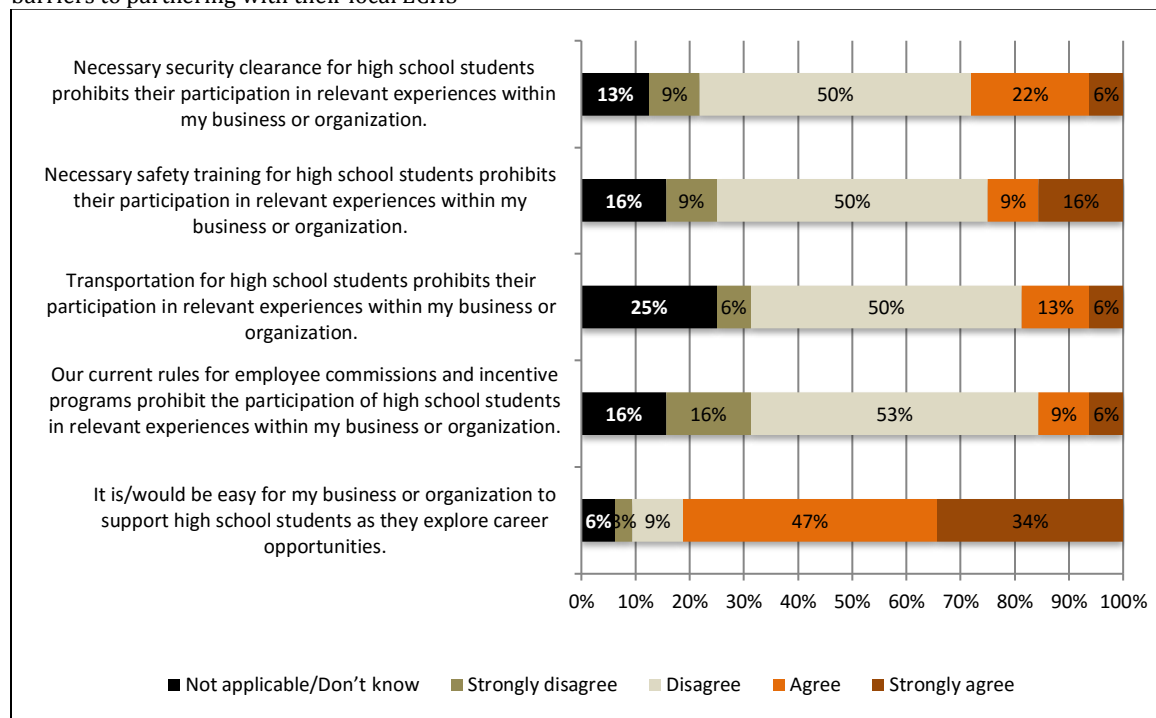
Challenges to partnering with ECHS programs

Of the 24 respondents with current partnerships or relationships with an ECHS, 25% indicated there is a significant challenge their business faces in partnering with their local ECHS(s). They provided the following explanations:

- The problem with interning a person in HR is the confidentiality aspect, so there are many things that have to be shown "generically" and not involving real employees or their salaries etc.
- Cannot have anyone who is under 18 years of age on the property.
- Primarily, the only difficulty has been coordinating schedules between the student and me.
- Scheduling- getting interns to show up at designated time.
- Unfortunately we are bound by HIPPA and would love to allow more students to shadow but run into laws and regulations that prevent that.
- Working with the college and its teachers.

Insights into additional barriers can be seen in Figure 12, which documents the respondents levels of agreement to potential barriers.

Figure 12. Percentage of respondents who indicated their levels of agreement with the following statements related to the barriers to partnering with their local ECHS



n=32

Advice on ECHS Partnerships

The respondents offered the following advice to other businesses and community organizations that are considering getting involved in partnerships with their local ECHS(s):

Maintain connections with your local schools

- All organizations need to be in touch with the school systems, letting them be aware of the types of skills needed to perform the jobs available, and the education level needed as well. This will help each community to prepare its youth for adulthood, strengthening our communities.

Become an active participant in ECHS programs

- Attend some meetings, talk to students, see what's going on and how it is benefitting our communities and businesses
- It is the wave of the future in education and you need to know and understand how you can get in and work with an ECHS program

Take the commitment seriously

- Make expectations clear from the first day. No casual cancellations of appointments.
- Remember that although these are very bright kids, they are still kids and by incorporating things like quizzes or worksheets it helps you ascertain if they are retaining the stuff you are teaching them, and lets you know if maybe a different approach needs to be taken. In other words approach it a little from a classroom setting which is what they are used to at this point.
- Screen prospective students carefully.

Invest your time and resources; it is worth it

- We have the opportunity to recruit more economic development in the state if we can raise the higher education attainment across the state. It's an important opportunity that everyone should get behind and support.
- Support the ECHS in your community as it is the least expensive and quickest way to develop a trained workforce.
- Partnering only empowers our students by providing them with knowledge and allows them to have more varieties of areas that can think about going into in the future.
- Set aside time to go and visit students in the Early College High Schools to see first hand how effective the program is. This program is preparing tomorrow's leaders in an accelerated fashion. The more support this program receives from businesses, the quicker it can grow and the better our communities, our state, and our nation will perform on the world stage.
- Best investment of time you can make
- Do as much as you can. A great program.
- Get involved whether financially or one who is willing to work with a new and talented generation.
- Get involved, help to set the course for the ECHS
- Join us! There is nothing to lose, and everything to gain!
- Great program and students are succeeding in areas that would have taken them much longer to succeed in.
- I encourage all businesses to partner with ECHS.
- It's totally worth it. Invest now for their future and ours.

Untapped Potential

Nearly half (46%) of the 32 respondents said that they had services that represented untapped potential that could benefit the ECHSs. Examples of these untapped services and resources included:

- Our students need to have a better understanding of personal finance upon graduation. I have access to education programs that won't cost the school anything, but class time.
- Students could gain expertise as BPA students do with our firm (i.e. basic teller training or bookkeeping training).
- Many more departments- and longer or more in depth internships.
- Mentors, guest lecturers, site tours.
- More collaboration with the school.
- Personal financial management.
- Providing the ECHS with critical labor market information regarding in-demand occupations, the occupational outlook and wage data, will help the ECHS to develop curricula and pathways to success for its students.
- We employ a number of experts in Science, Accounting, Geology, Engineering, Occupational Safety, Business, Marketing, Quality Control, etc.
- We have experts in many areas of finance that could be a benefit to the ECHS.
- We have so many service areas that a student could shadow in the medical field.

Comments

This section lists the comments shared by respondents:

- Every National Park Service unit has different needs. Our intake may not be large, but our use of volunteers (HS students) and HS students in paid and unpaid seasonal summer positions would be a good fit with ECHS. Connecting a HS student to a specific park program where the student earns a grade based on the NPS work will ensure the student participates.
- Given the high rate of poverty and despair and the poor manner in which the State of New Mexico is run (rampant incompetence and corruption), the ECHS program is a shining bright spot in an otherwise dismal landscape. The program shows what can happen when committed teachers, administrators, students, parents and industry partners come together in an unfettered way to benefit our students and community. It is probably only a matter of time, however, before regulations, greed, hubris and corruption will infiltrate this program and dilute its success.
- I believe very strongly in the ECHS program and feel it is one answer to many of our educational issues that plague the country. It is difficult to deny the success of these programs when the proof lies in the nearly 100% graduation rate.
- I think this is a great opportunity, but there are some things that need to be adjusted, but since this is a fledgling enterprise that is to be expected.
- I've seen the program challenged by higher education. This should not be an area where students lose because adults feel threatened. I commend the school leadership for overcoming many obstacles and creating a unique and accelerated learning experience.
- If the other programs are as successful as Carlsbad Early College High School, we as a country need to be investing tremendously into this program. Our nation's brightest days are ahead of us if we can separate our students who are interested in learning and put them into this program.

Appendix A: List of ECHSs

Currently Early College High Schools are self-identified in the state of New Mexico. Table 4 represents those ECHSs that have had a principal or administrator complete the survey. Table 5 includes a list of those ECHSs in the state that did not have a principal or school administrator complete the survey and thus, is not represented in the report findings.

Table 4. The Early College High Schools represented in the report

District	Early College High School	City
Carlsbad Municipal Schools	Carlsbad Early College High School	Carlsbad
Albuquerque Public Schools	College and Career High School	Albuquerque
Albuquerque Public Schools	Early College Academy	Albuquerque
Las Cruces Public Schools	Early College High School	Las Cruces
Sandi Park	East Mountain High School	Sandia Park
Middle College High	Middle College High	Gallup
Penasco Independent Schools	Penasco High	Penasco
Las Cruces Public Schools	Rio Grande Preparatory Institute	Mesilla
Las Vegas City Schools	Robertson High	Las Vegas
Farmington Municipal Schools	San Juan College High School	Farmington
Taos Academy	Taos Academy	Taos
The Master Program	The Master Program	Santa Fe
Roswell Independent Schools	University High	Roswell
Walatowa High Charter Schools	Walatowa Charter High	Jemez Pueblo

Table 5. The Early College High Schools not represented in the report

District	Early College High School	City
Silver Consolidated Schools	Cliff High School	Cliff
Silver Consolidated Schools	Opportunity High School	Silver City
School of Dreams Academy	School of Dreams Academy	Los Lunas
Gadsden Independent School District	Alta Vista Early College High	Anthony
Hobbs Municipal Schools	Hobbs High School	Hobbs
Los Alamos Public Schools	Los Alamos High School	Los Alamos
Mesa Vista Consolidated Schools	Mesa Vista High School	Ojo Caliente
Raton	Raton Public Schools	Raton
Shiprock	Shiprock High School	Shiprock
Pojoaque Valley Public Schools	Pojoaque Valley Public Schools	Santa Fe

Appendix B: Draft Definition of Early College High School

The New Mexico DPE is in the process of formalizing a definition of an Early College High School (ECHS). Listed below is the current draft.

Draft of the PDE Definition of Early College High School (ECHS)

An Early College High School means a local educational agency in a partnership with at least one institution of higher education that:

- Allows participants to simultaneously complete requirements toward earning a regular high school diploma and to earn not less than 12 credits toward a college-level certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree at the partner institution of higher education.
- Ensures that Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are integrated into a structured program of study which meets local and state graduation requirements
- Provides a program of study toward a postsecondary credential or degree without tuition cost to the participant or the participant's family.
- Focuses on improving the academic achievement of low-achieving students and youth underrepresented in higher education by giving admissions preference to low-income students, such that the proportion of low income students in the student body is at least as high as that of the district in which the ECHS is located.
 - National School Lunch Program (NSLP) data shall be used as an indicator of poverty. Different combinations of available NSLP data may be used as a poverty measure for education program purposes. For example, NSLP data might include a combination of data from household applications (free and reduced price lunch forms) in addition to direct certification data available under the Community Eligibility Provision of the NSLP.
- Uses a lottery or other blind admission processes are used to ensure equitable access.
- Operates in partnership with local business and industry and leads to work readiness credentials
 - Programming includes meaningful work-based learning experiences
 - Career technical education courses use Common Career Technical Core Standards (CCTCS) to support core academic growth
- Accelerate participant learning beginning in ninth grade
 - Advanced Placement and dual credit courses are used to help high school students make a seamless transition into college.
 - Innovative, interactive, research-based support structures encourage positive outcomes for participants.