



## IMPROVING INSTRUCTION TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

Early College Design Services is based on the belief that transforming high schools begins with transforming instruction. All students—especially those most at risk of leaving high school without graduating—need rich and meaningful learning experiences that engage and prepare them for viable postsecondary options.

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### OUR COMMON INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Early College Design Services introduces a proven instructional framework that has been demonstrated in schools to improve rigor and higher-order thinking in all subjects and grade levels, not just traditional honors or “college prep” courses. Aligned to college-ready standards, JFF’s Common Instructional Framework provides a coherent approach to teaching centered around six core strategies:

- > Collaborative Group Work
- > Writing to Learn
- > Literacy Groups
- > Classroom Talk
- > Scaffolding
- > Questioning

“JFF helped *transform* the culture of our schools so every teacher focuses on developing the higher-order skills students need to be successful. Their *rigorous approach* to instruction, combined with supports for individual students, has *helped ensure* that *every student* sees him or herself as *capable* of doing college-level work. These changed expectations matter, as students who find schoolwork relevant are more motivated, less likely to drop out, and have *better long-term outcomes*.”

– Sharon D. Riley Ordu, principal, DeKalb Early College Academy, Stone Mountain, Georgia

Together, these strategies provide structure to instruction that encourages complex critical thinking and open-ended classroom discussion. The framework also provides a common language teachers can use to collaborate and reflect on improved instructional practices. Numerous studies have demonstrated that implementing coherent instructional strategies across an entire district can—and does—improve student achievement.

Along with extensive professional development for both teachers and administrators, ECDS focuses on developing each school's internal capacity to sustain high-quality instructional practices through coaching, observations, and other feedback.

## ACCELERATION, NOT REMEDICATION: BACK ON TRACK

Our experience in high schools across the country indicates that low-performing students need acceleration, not remediation. They are capable of rigorous college-level work with the right instructional supports and opportunities.

ECDS conducts longitudinal data analysis of students to help districts create school designs to graduate populations of students who are significantly off-track or have dropped out. These designs, which gradually transition students into college-level work using the same rigorous instructional strategies as all early college high schools, are being implemented in schools and programs across the country and are enabling dropouts and off-track youth to reengage and achieve a postsecondary credential, in many cases at two to three times the rate of their peers.

Districts that have implemented these strategies and designs have seen dramatic gains in graduation rates. In the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD in Texas, for example, graduation rates nearly doubled in three years, as more than 1,000 dropouts and non-completers graduated, and annual dropout rates fell by 75 percent.

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**For more information, contact:**

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