

## DALLAS TECH-PREP PROGRAM PROFILE<sup>1</sup>

As previously described in the Accelerating Student Success Through Credit-Based Transition Programs September 2004 site profiles,<sup>2</sup> the Dallas Tech-Prep CBTP consists of a partnership between Texas Community College, Dallas Tech-Prep High School, and The Global EDGE Tech Prep Consortium. Tech-Prep, which is federally supported,<sup>3</sup> is designed to link two years of high school and two years of community college course work through a sequenced program of study in a career or technical field. Tech-Prep students may earn college credit for their secondary course work.

The Global EDGE Tech Prep Consortium, with an office on the campus of the community college, facilitates the Tech-Prep program. The consortium is one of 26 Tech-Prep consortia in the state of Texas and is a partnership among the local community college district, 30 local high schools, and local businesses. The partnership has existed for more than 10 years.<sup>4</sup>

The Texas Community College District has four main campus locations throughout the

metropolitan area.<sup>5</sup> Each campus has one large building with several wings organized by academic and administrative departments. The facilities at the four campuses are spacious, have multiple entrances, sizeable parking areas, and large open areas for students to meet. Texas Community College also has two satellite locations on high school campuses in surrounding counties that provide classes and training services to far-reaching exurbs and rural areas surrounding the Dallas metropolitan area. Accounting for all of its locations, Texas Community College enrolls more than 20,000 students in AA and AAS degree programs in over 60 areas of study.

Dallas Tech-Prep High School is the only high school in its school district. There are 119 teachers, five counselors, four vice principals and a principal on staff at Dallas Tech-Prep High School. Until the late 1990s, the town in which the school is located was a rural farming town; the extension of a major highway linking the area to downtown Dallas has resulted in rapid growth and suburbanization. During the 2002–03 school year the school enrolled 1,340 students, which increased to 1,640 students the following year; the growth in the student

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<sup>1</sup> In order to give the study participants anonymity, the specific research sites were given pseudonyms. However, the name of the general program is used in some cases.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the Accelerating Student Success Through Credit-Based Transition Programs study's Web page on the U.S. Department of Education's Web site to download and view two-page profiles of each of the study's five case sites at: [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/cbtrans/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/cbtrans/index.html).

<sup>3</sup> Tech-Prep programs are supported at the federal level by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. For more information on the legislation, please go to: [www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/CTE/legis.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/CTE/legis.html). Additional information about Tech-Prep can be found at: [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cte/tpreptopic2.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cte/tpreptopic2.html).

<sup>4</sup> Please also see on the study Web page, listed above, the program description for more information on Tech-Prep.

<sup>5</sup> This descriptive information is provided so the reader has a better understanding of the program environment.

population is expected to continue. Eighty-two percent of the students are white, 12 percent are Hispanic and 5 percent are African-American.

The school building is eight years old and is currently being expanded. The entire school is networked and each classroom contains a monitor through which school and district announcements and information are broadcast. In addition to the main building, there is a separate structure that houses workshop areas for a wide variety of career and technical programs, including autobody repair, welding, and computer aided design. All of these are furnished with up-to-date equipment. The consistent integration of technology and current industrial machinery throughout the curriculum and instruction at Dallas Tech-Prep High School is an indicator of the school's commitment to career and technical education (CTE). In addition, students attending the high school can participate in any of 13 competitive sports teams and more than 24 clubs and organizations.

Classes at Dallas Tech-Prep High School begin at 8:45 a.m. and conclude at 3:41 p.m. The school operates on a 90-minute alternating A and B block schedule. The schedule also includes a "zero hour" that starts at 7:30 a.m.; this hour allows school staff to provide tutoring or instruction for students with schedule conflicts. For example, a student taking courses in the information technology strand of the Tech-Prep program also may want to participate in one of the school's band programs. If the band period conflicts with the period that

the largely self-directed information technology course is offered, the student can elect to complete his or her course work during the zero hour period each day.

Dallas Tech-Prep High School currently offers five of the nine Tech-Prep concentrations that The Global EDGE Tech Prep Consortium sponsors; these are: Hotel/Restaurant Management, Early Childhood Education, CISCO Networking Systems, Office Systems Technology, and Criminal Justice. These articulated career and technology sequences vary in length. Dallas Tech-Prep High School students enrolled in a particular concentration may complete the sequence of courses within an academic year, or over the course of two or three years including prerequisite courses. Though they are encouraged to select a concentration and take the entire curricular sequence, students may choose to take just one course in a given concentration.

### **Student Outreach**

Dallas Tech-Prep High School is a neighborhood comprehensive high school. Once at the school, students can learn about the Tech-Prep programs in several ways. Teachers do much of their own publicity and recruitment, reaching out to students themselves. The Tech-Prep courses and concentrations also are described and listed in the school's course catalogue, which informs students about their options and aids in course selection and scheduling. The catalogue describes in detail which courses fit into the various career and technology concentrations offered by the high school.

The Global EDGE Tech Prep Consortium develops and disseminates brochures, flyers, and other promotional materials. These materials are mailed out to students who reside in the local community college district. Promotional materials also are provided to all of the high schools that partner with The Global EDGE Tech Prep Consortium to hang in classrooms, offices, and hallways, as well as to distribute to students during school orientations and in counseling offices.

## **Tech-Prep Admissions Process**

### *Student Selection Process*

Students interested in the Tech-Prep courses and concentrations complete an application in order to demonstrate motivation and inform the instructors of their interests and any special accommodations they may need. This application varies by concentration and asks for basic information such as grade point average and grade level, along with information regarding previously taken prerequisites or similar courses and any special scheduling situations (e.g., band or sports team participation).

The high school's counselors and Tech-Prep teachers screen students to determine if they have completed recommended prerequisites as well as for past disciplinary problems. Courses within several of the concentrations require maturity and responsibility, according to Dallas Tech-Prep High School teachers and administrators. For example, the Early Childhood Education concentration includes a laboratory component that requires students to observe and assist in kindergarten classes at local elementary

schools. Students must provide their own transportation, which means carpooling or driving their own vehicles to the participating schools. The information technology concentration includes a great deal of independent and self-directed work, in addition to highly sensitive technical security issues (i.e., working with a number of the school and district's servers). The Hotel/Restaurant Management concentration requires students to work with outside organizations to cater and plan events.

### *Tech-Prep Course Enrollment*

Students can enroll in a Tech-Prep course and choose to receive only high school credit. Those who plan to petition Texas Community College for the dual credit must register with The Global EDGE Tech Prep Consortium. The online registration process must be completed within a designated time period each semester.

## **Tech-Prep Curriculum and Program**

### *Curriculum and Instruction*

The Tech-Prep courses are taught at the high school by high school teachers who are certified to teach secondary education as well as approved by Texas Community College as being at the same level as an adjunct professor at the college. Tech-Prep teachers at Dallas Tech-Prep High School base their Tech-Prep course curriculum and content upon that used in the analogous courses at Texas Community College. The textbooks used are either the same textbooks used in the analogous course at Texas Community College or ones that are approved by the college. Students in the five Tech-Prep

## Exhibit A-11: Dallas, Tech-Prep Curriculum and Program

Program Area Concentration	Secondary Course Name	Credits (awarded in escrow) <sup>a</sup>	Postsecondary Course Name
CISCO Networking Systems	Internetworking Technology I	3 and 3	Local Area Networking Design: CISCO 1 and Basic Router Configuration: CISCO 2
	Internetworking Technology II	3 and 3	Local Area Management: CISCO 3 and Wide Area Management: CISCO 4
	Computer Maintenance	4	Introduction to Computer Maintenance
Criminal Justice	Introduction to Criminal Justice	3	Introduction to Criminal Justice
	Crime in America	3	Crime in America
Early Childhood Education	Preparations for Parenting and Child Development	3	Child Growth and Development
Hotel/Restaurant Management	Food Sanitation and Safety	2	Sanitation and Safety
	Introduction to Hospitality Industry	3	Introduction to Hospitality Industry
Office Systems Technology	Business Computer Information Systems I	3	Computer Applications I
	Business Computer Information Systems II	3	Integrated Software Applications
	Accounting I	3	Introduction to Accounting

<sup>a</sup> Credit-in-escrow refers to an arrangement whereby students receive college credit for high school work only if they subsequently enroll in and complete additional courses of the postsecondary level.

concentrations at Dallas Tech-Prep High School have both traditional classroom and work-based learning experiences.

### *Pre-Tech-Prep Curriculum*

There is no official pre-Tech-Prep curriculum. However, enrollment in some

concentrations hinges on students taking appropriate prerequisites. For example, students are encouraged to have taken Algebra I and an introductory personal computer (PC) maintenance class before entering the information technology concentration. The Hotel/Restaurant

Management and Early Childhood Education programs both require year-long prerequisite courses. Taking into account the various prerequisites, many of the students at Dallas Tech-Prep High School begin taking courses within the Tech-Prep concentrations during either their sophomore or junior year.

### *Tech-Prep Curriculum*

Among the five Tech-Prep concentrations offered, course duration varies so that a course may take place either over an entire academic year or over a semester. Exhibit A-11 lists the courses of the five concentrations that potentially yield credit at Texas Community College. It is important to note, however, that the career and technology department at Dallas Tech-Prep High School offers course work in the Tech-Prep concentrations in addition to the articulated courses. Students thus may continue in sequenced course work and related work-based learning opportunities through their senior year.

### *Awarding of Credit for Courses*

Upon completion of Tech-Prep courses, students are awarded elective credit toward high school graduation. The courses are not weighted for the purpose of computing a student's grade point average. Tech-Prep teachers indicate to The Global EDGE Tech Prep Consortium and to Texas Community College, via the consortium Web site, whether a student is eligible to receive college credit. Depending upon the concentration, students may have to earn a grade of 80 or 85 in the course or pass an end-of-course examination for college credit

eligibility. College credits are not awarded immediately but are considered "in escrow," meaning that students must complete courses at the college in order to receive the credit.

In their senior year, students who have successfully completed Tech-Prep courses are sent an ID and information about how to receive the college credits. After graduation from Dallas Tech-Prep High School, students must enroll at Texas Community College in the Tech-Prep major that matches their high school Tech-Prep concentration. Students can then submit a petition for their credit to the registrar's office. Upon completion of six credit hours in the selected major at Texas Community College, which must occur within 24 months of high school graduation, college credits for the Tech-Prep courses completed in high school will appear on their Texas Community College transcript. Transcribed credit is generally accepted by institutions nationwide, at the discretion of the receiving institution.

## **Support Services**

### *Careers*

Information on skills and jobs that are in demand within the field are provided by the Dallas Tech-Prep High School career and technology department instructors, many of whom come from those industries. The instructors' industry connections contribute significantly to their ability to provide accurate and valuable information about career options to their students, both in the classroom and by providing students with formal and informal mentoring and

counseling relationships. The Career and Technology department at Dallas Tech-Prep High School, which includes the five Tech-Prep concentrations, benefits from a local trust that not only provides funds to program instructors for curriculum materials and equipment, but also allows the program to bring in outside guests throughout the year to speak on various topics in career and technology education and training.

Several of the Tech-Prep concentrations have work-based learning opportunities. Students in these concentrations benefit from opportunities to apply learned skills and to explore the demands of particular career fields in a supportive environment. For example, students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education concentration complete a field placement in an early childhood classroom, where they not only assist a teacher in a classroom but are also asked to reflect through journal writing. Throughout the duration of the placement, usually a semester, the writing assignments are used to help the students process their experiences and explore issues of child advocacy and development.

### *College Transition*

Dallas Tech-Prep offers all of its students general information on colleges and the admissions and financial aid processes; therefore these types of services are not targeted directly to students in the Tech-Prep program. The high school's local trust provides scholarships to graduating seniors who have participated and thrived in various areas of CTE during their high school career. Additionally, The Global EDGE Tech Prep Consortium has scholarships that are open

to Tech-Prep students at all of the high schools with which it partners.

### **Professional Development**

The Global EDGE Tech Prep Consortium sponsors a variety of professional development activities. High school-based Tech-Prep teachers and their college counterparts in the different concentrations are encouraged to attend annual meetings to discuss curriculum and textbooks. The consortium also organizes an annual Technology in Education conference. In addition, the consortium director is developing externship opportunities for Tech-Prep teachers. Finally, teachers and coordinators may attend the annual state-wide Tech-Prep conference.

### **Funding**

As noted, the Dallas Tech-Prep program is supported entirely by a federal grant. This grant covers the consortium staff, stipends for college and high school Tech-Prep coordinators, and professional development activities. Texas Community College receives 3 percent of the grant for administrative expenses. The college does not receive full-time-equivalent funding for high school students enrolled in Tech-Prep courses, nor does it receive tuition.

## Exhibit A-12: Dallas, Tech-Prep Outcomes, 2003–04

<b>Student Outcomes<sup>a</sup></b>
■ The total enrollment at Dallas Tech-Prep High School was 1,671 students. Approximately 15 percent of the student population was eligible for the National School Lunch Program free and reduced price lunch program.
■ Twenty-nine students were classified as English Language Learners, and 200 students were classified as special education students.
■ Three hundred forty-two seniors graduated from Dallas Tech-Prep High School in the 2003–04 school year. The four-year graduation rate for this class was 97.8 percent.
■ The daily attendance rate for the entire school is 96 percent.
■ Five hundred sixty-seven students were enrolled in a Tech-Prep course. This included 83 ninth graders, 151 10th-graders, 184 11th-graders, and 149 12th-graders.
■ Two hundred fifty-five Tech-Prep students (45 percent) were eligible for the the National School Lunch Program free and reduced price lunch program.
■ Fifteen Tech-Prep students (3 percent) are classified as English Language Learners.
■ Eighty-three percent of Tech-Prep students are white, 14 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, 1 percent as Native American, and 0.06 percent African-American.

<sup>a</sup> All data come from school staff and were not externally validated.