



El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

PRESS RELEASE

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El Monte Union, Rio Hondo College Partner to Create Early College Academy

Program to provide students opportunity to earn college credit

EL MONTE – The El Monte Union High School District is teaming up with Rio Hondo College to provide free college courses to South El Monte High School students, paving the way for the teens to get a jumpstart on earning college credit and maximize their potential as they pursue higher education.

The EMUHSD Board of Trustees last month approved a partnership with Rio Hondo College to create an Early College Academy for a cohort of between 35 and 70 students at South El Monte High School. Rio Hondo College’s Board of Trustees also approved the agreement.

The program, which is still in the early stages of design, is expected to launch in fall 2018. A Parent Orientation meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. **Tuesday, April 17** at South El Monte High School, 1001 Durfee Ave., South El Monte.

“Early College is a head start to success and we are proud to work in conjunction with our local education partners to promote college readiness and provide our students with resources to achieve their goals,” Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said.

Currently, students who are typically high-achievers can earn college credit while in high school by taking rigorous Advanced Placement courses and passing the challenging exams.

Under the Early College plan, SEMHS students can earn a high school diploma and up to two years of college credit in four years, or about 40 credits, which are transferable to UCs or CSUs. Students can take the college-level general education courses for free at SEMHS or at the Rio Hondo College campus, reducing the cost of attaining a college degree.

“This program is essentially free college for our students, particularly those who may not be top academic scholars or may not see themselves as college-going students,” El Monte Union’s Director of Research and Curriculum Hillary Wolfe said. “This opportunity allows our students to pursue college while in high school, taking a variety of subjects and setting the foundation for their success.”

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As part of the partnership, Rio Hondo will provide students with counseling, advisement and matriculation services; work with site administrators to plan, schedule and implement the program; and cover the cost of providing the courses and salary costs for RHC staff members in the program. RHC's services will be in addition to its Rio Promise, which offers recent EMUHSD high school grads free first-year tuition and priority registration.

"We are excited to be working with South El Monte High School on a program that will bring the promise of a college education to a greater number of students in our community," Rio Hondo College Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "This partnership will not only deliver academic opportunity, but valuable counseling and support services to ensure students receive the maximum benefit."

El Monte Union will be tasked with supporting the recruitment and concurrent enrollment process for SEMHS students and providing academic counseling services to ensure they are on track. The District will also be responsible for covering the cost of textbooks and materials for all courses.

The program may expand to other EMUHSD schools should it prove successful.

"This program will help prepare our students for success, enhance their high school experience, and provide them the invaluable opportunity to earn college credit and begin building their college transcripts at an accelerated rate," Zuniga said.

For more information, call (626) 444-9005, ext. 9925. More information, including the application, is available at www.emuhsd.org/earlycollege.

PHOTO CAPTION:

040918_EMUHSD_EARLYCOLLEGE: South El Monte High School and Rio Hondo College are teaming up to launch an Early College Academy in Fall 2018, enabling high school freshmen the opportunity to earn free college credits while in high school. The school is currently accepting applications from eighth-graders throughout the region who want to attend South El Monte High School.

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The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.