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Group

# Creating Aligned K12-Higher Ed State Policy Conditions for Accelerated Pathways to Degrees & Careers

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# What defines a high-quality, accelerated pathway partnership?

## Program Features

Fast-track to Associates Degrees  
in High-Demand Careers



At Minimal or No  
Cost to Students

Addresses Barriers to  
Equitable Participation



## Student Experience

Integrated Work-Based  
Learning Experiences



Sequenced Set of College Courses  
(Minimum of 12 Credit Hours)

Embedded College  
& Career Advising



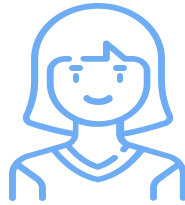
# Equitable Design

## Examples of accelerated pathways models from around the country



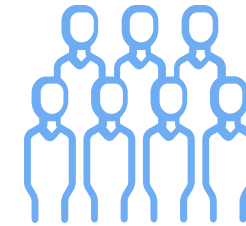
### Whole School

**San Antonio ISD's** Urban Assembly School for Emergency Management is structured so all high school students work toward an associates degree in Paramedicine.



### Individual Acceleration

**New Orleans's** Next Level NOLA is open to any public high school graduate wanting to continue independently in college courses in Nursing, Software Development, or Business Services.

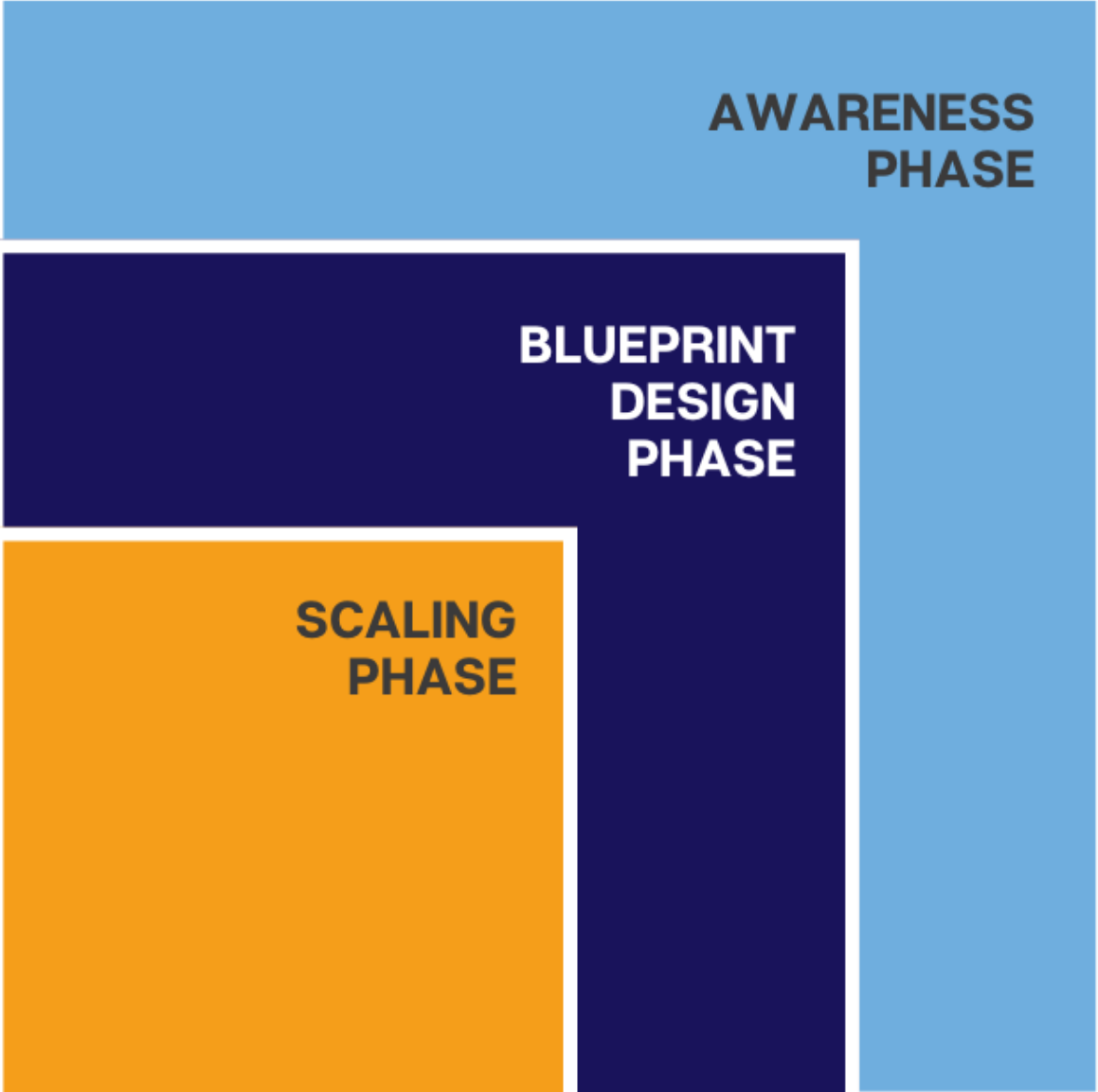


### Cohort Acceleration

In **Illinois**, schools offering Advanced Model Pathways in Information Technology provide a cohort of learners within a high school with a set of career-connected IT experiences and college courses leading to IT degrees.

# ESG Support for Communities to Build Accelerated Pathways

ESG has coached 20 intermediaries across the country through Blueprint Design Sprints, builds awareness in new communities, and provides additional supports to sites that are now scaling programs - including many that are scaling without direct investment by the Gates Foundation.



# Assessing Enabling Conditions

## *Core Questions to Understand the Strength of the Ecosystem*



### Policy

Does the state **define or have incentives** to support accelerated pathway models? Does dual enrollment policy encourage courses in **career fields of study** in addition to general education courses? Do **transfer and articulation agreements** include blocks of credit in a field of study?



### Funding

Does the state provide **public funding** to build and sustain pathway programs? Does the funding model **incentivize colleges** to offer dual enrollment, particularly in career & technical subjects? Is there funding for colleges to provide **college and career advising** to high school students?



### Data

Does the state have the **infrastructure for a longitudinal data system**? Does the state capture and **publicly report** on career and technical dual enrollment? Do state data collection systems effectively capture a range of **work-based learning activities**?



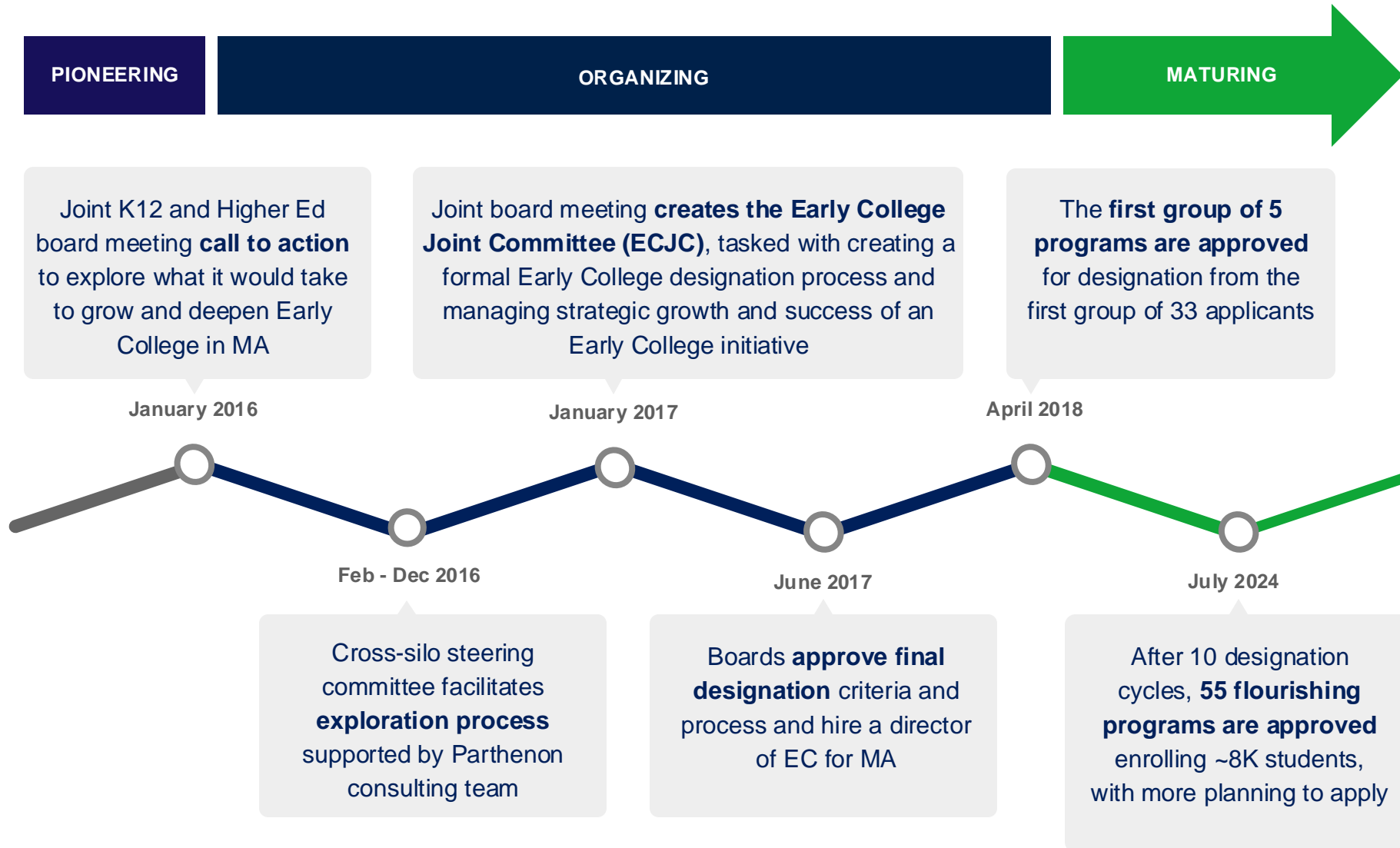
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# Early College has evolved from rapidly from a strategic launch in 2017 to a scaling initiative in 2024



# Enabling Policy: Early College Designation

Designation criteria and the designation application are organized around the 5 Design Principles

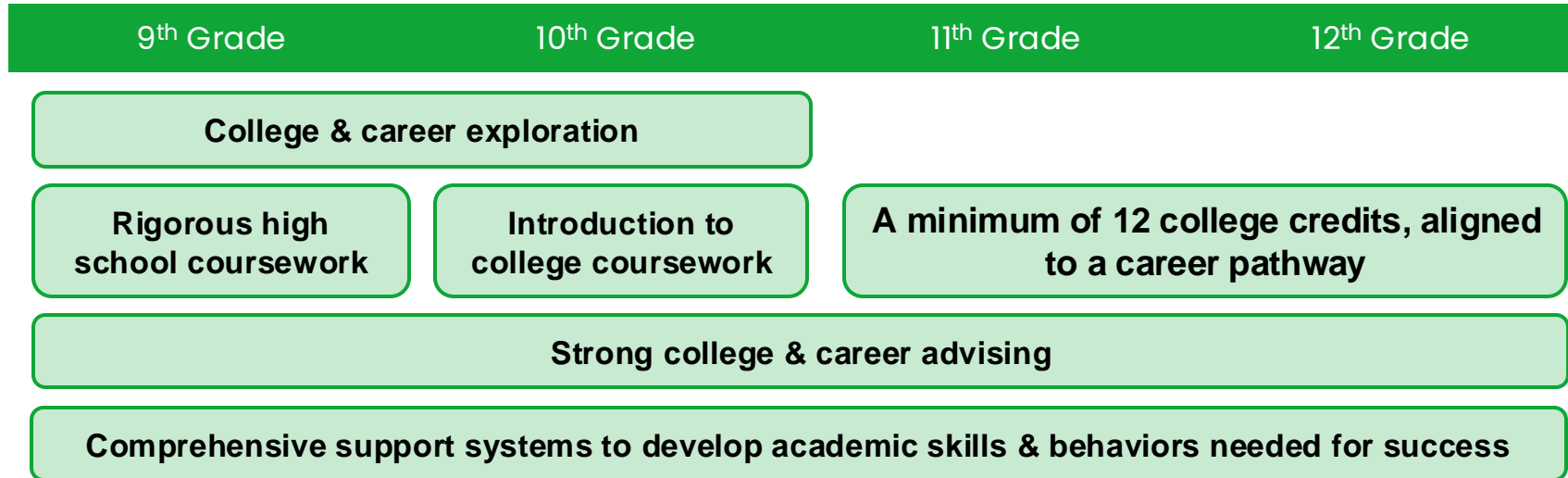
Preconditions: Free to all students; provides open access to all students, regardless of academic performance; scheduled during the school day

Principle	Description
 <b>Equitable Access</b>	Prioritization of underrepresented students; elimination of barriers (e.g., tuition-free, open enrollment without regard to prior academic performance, sufficient supports to promote success, scalability, multiple entry points)
 <b>Guided Academic Pathways</b>	Exposure to authentic postsecondary education experiences and career opportunities in high-demand fields, allowing students to make informed decisions, and provide clear and detailed pathways on coursework, sequencing, and experiences beyond the classroom
 <b>Enhanced Student Support</b>	Services to promote academic success and completion, taking into consideration the needs of diverse populations of students
 <b>Connections to Career</b>	Exposure to diverse career opportunities, career development skills, counseling, and experiential and workplace learning
 <b>Effective Partnerships</b>	Must include at least 1 higher education partner institution and 1 secondary school and/or district; may include 1 or more employers; require evidence of consistency re: performance measurements and governance, budget, sustainability, and scheduling responsibilities



# Early College in Massachusetts

The majority of Early College programs exist within large, comprehensive district high schools. While exact program design varies, below are common design elements.



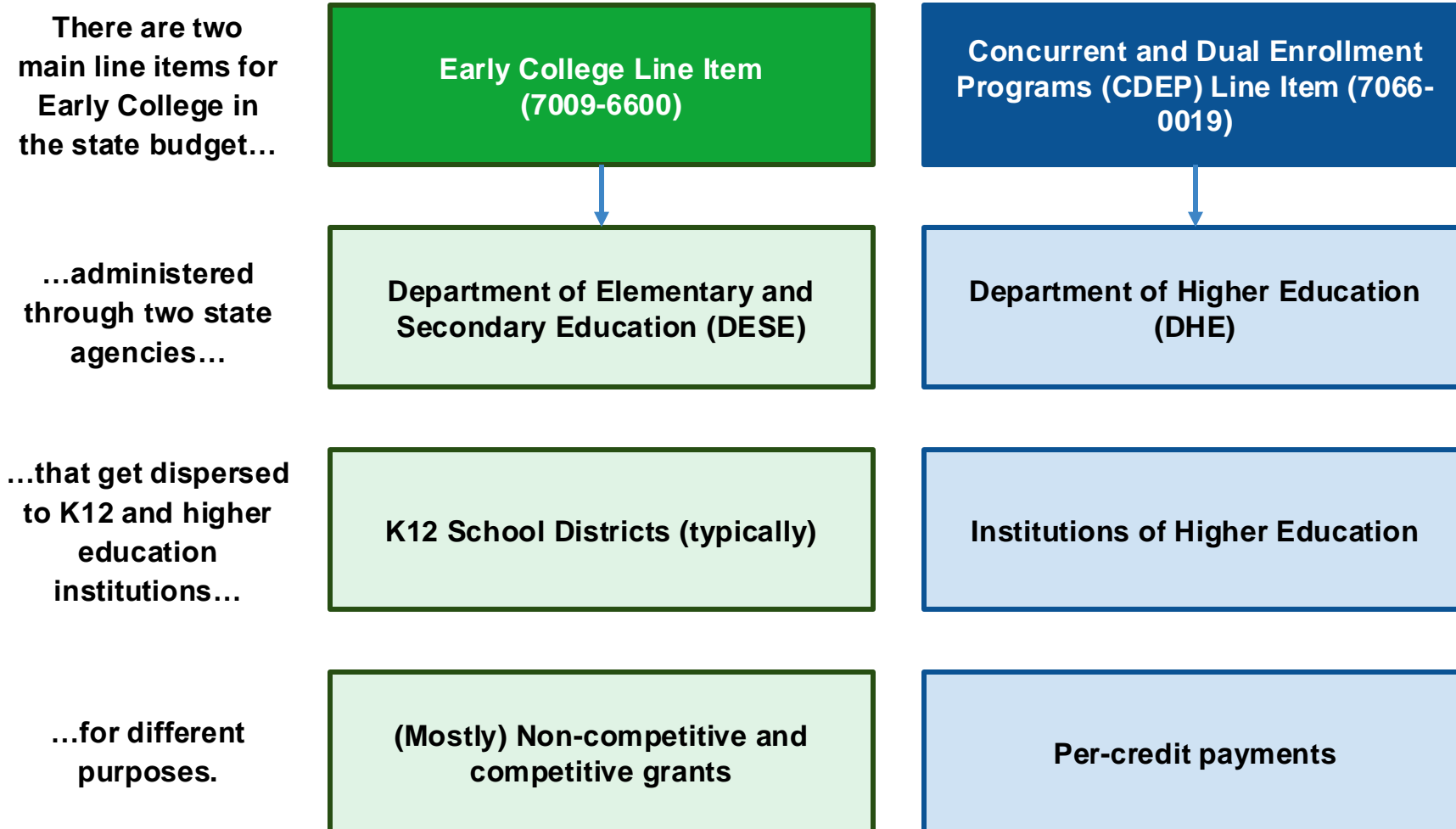
Viana Singh  
Worcester, MA

Earned 12 credits before senior year at Quinsigamond CC and Worcester State University

*“Early College is helping me realize **how capable I am**. Early College helped me learn a lot about **different career paths** and which ones interest me more than others. College is a lot less intimidating because I’m there **experiencing it instead of hearing about it.**”*

# Enabling Funding: Public Funding for Early College

Public funding for Early College has grown from ~\$1m in FY18 to ~\$28.25m in FY25



*In addition to these two main funding sources for Early College, there is also currently funding via DESE's federal ESSER funds (FY23 and FY24 only) and through a third line "Pathways" line item from the Fair Share income surtax.*



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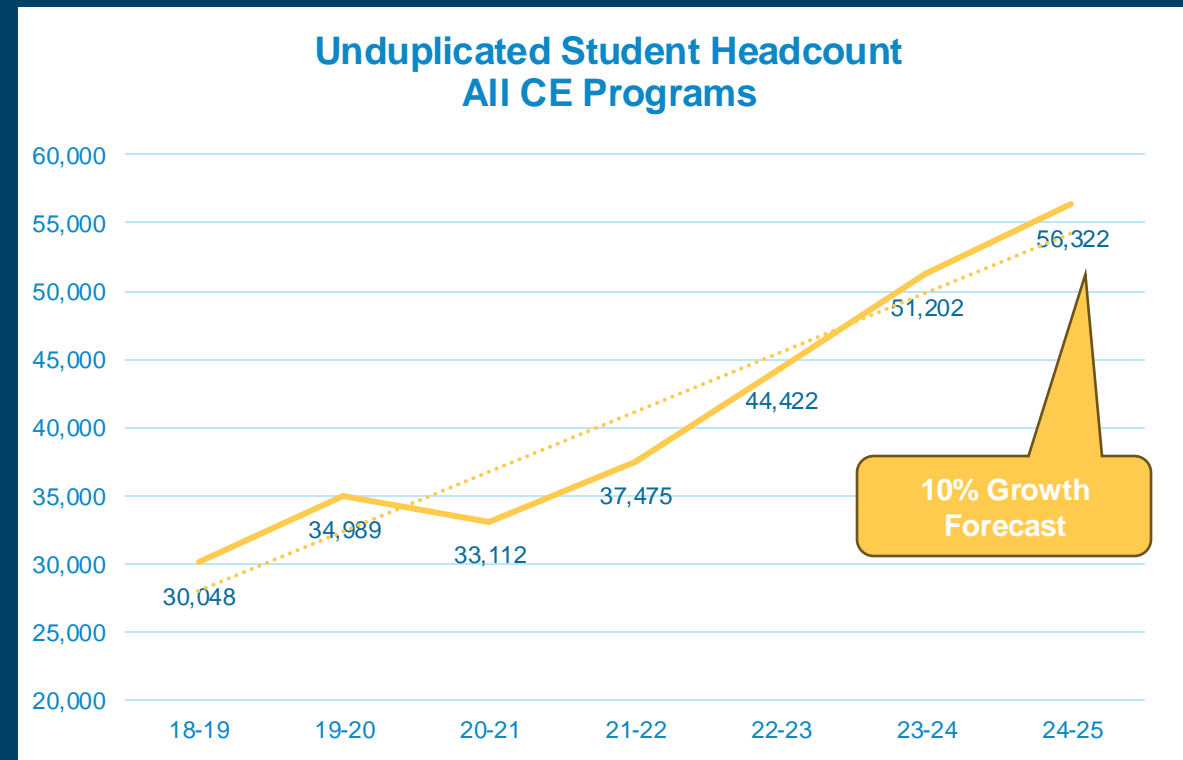
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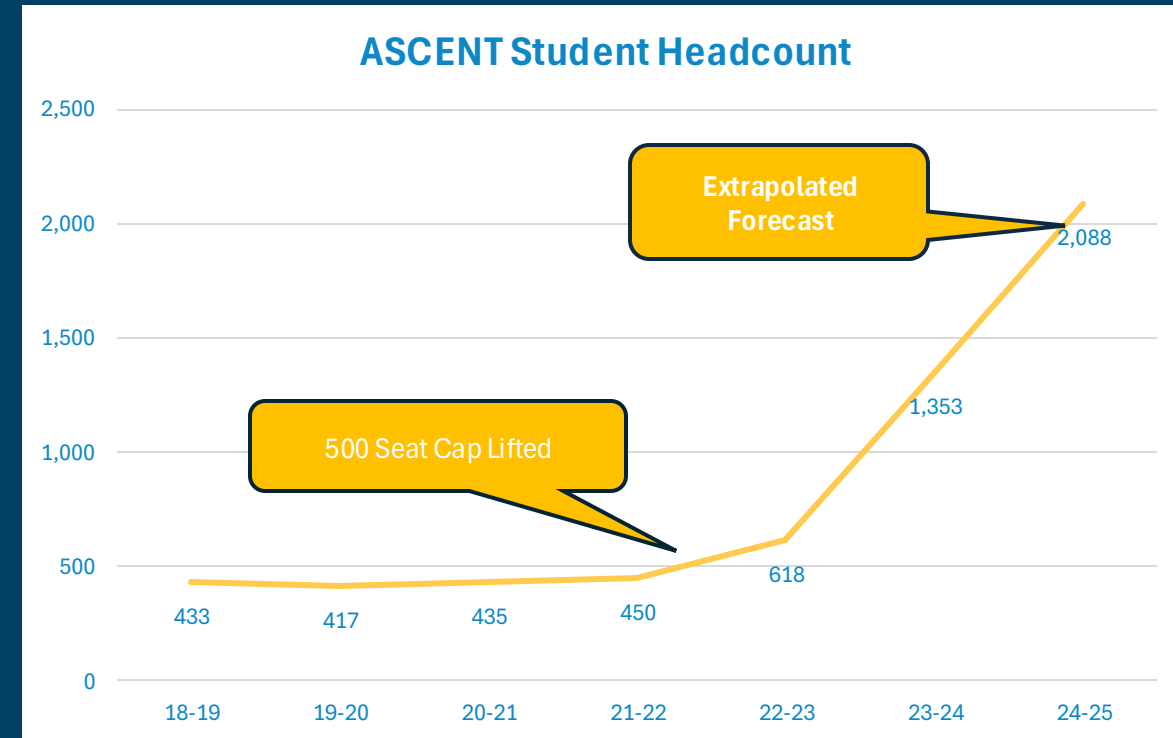
# Concurrent Enrollment Landscape in Colorado

- All LEAs must offer CE to students in grades 9-12
- Must be at zero tuition cost to students/families
- Courses must count for both college and high school credit
- Students must be admitted to the college and enrolled in the college courses
- LEAs and Colleges share costs



# ASCENT Program

- Extends CE to a 5<sup>th</sup> year of high school entirely on college campus
- Eligibility: 9 college credits
- Funded through school finance plus College Opportunity Fund stipend
- Allows any program of study at the college that leads to a credential



# Additional Policy Levers

- Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Board setting standards & best practices
- Financial incentives for in demand industry certifications
- Additional state grants for expansion and innovation
- Anticipated changes to school performance framework
- CTE programming growing more closely connected to annual Colorado Talent Pipeline report
- Short-term, zero cost credential programs for in demand workforce needs.

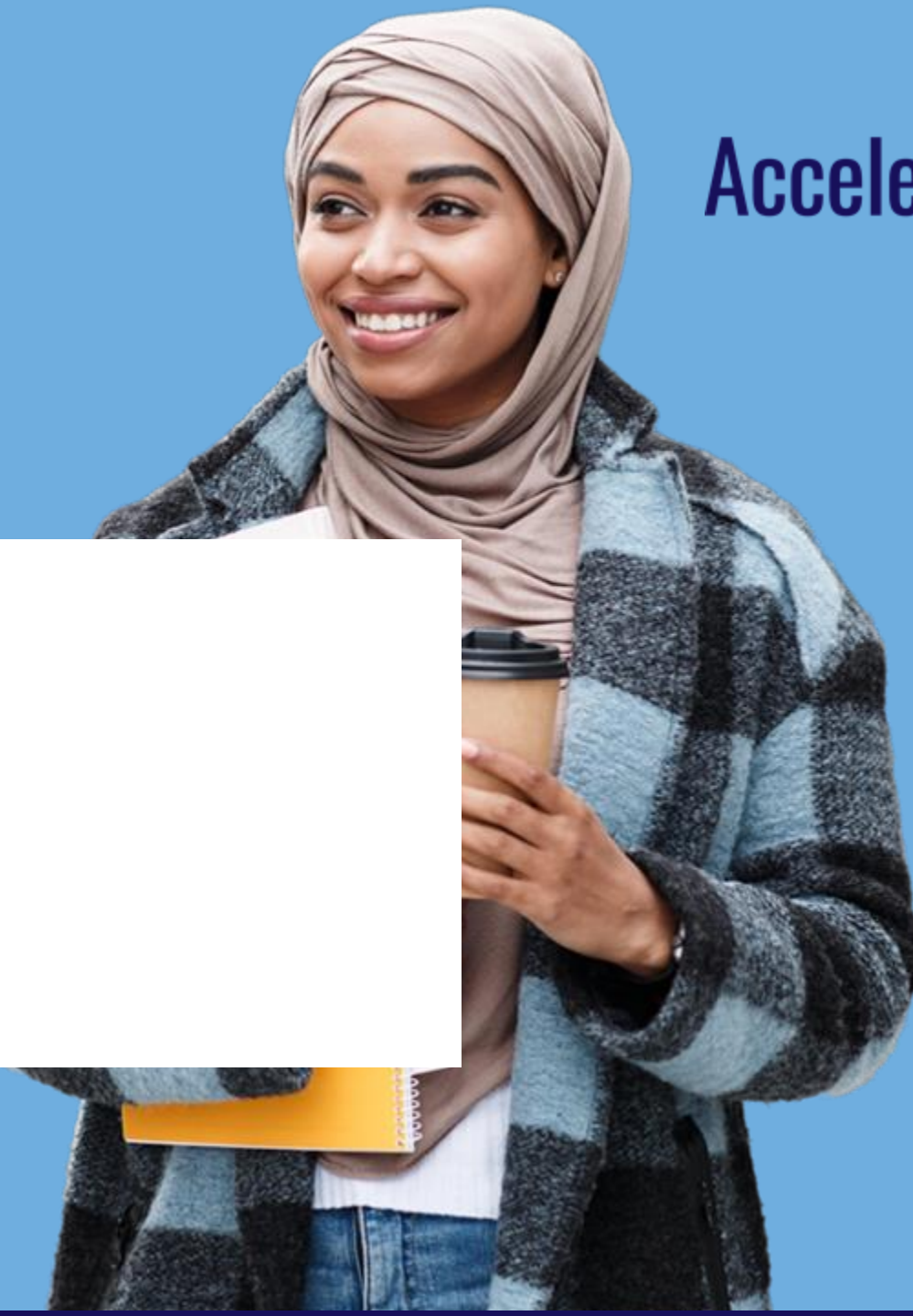




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# Vermont's enabling conditions for scaling accelerated pathways



**a single statewide community college.** The Community College of Vermont serves the greatest number of Vermonters of any college in the state via 12 locations and extensive learning options. 25% of CCV students are high school students.



**publicly funded Early College.** Through the Flexible Pathways bill of 2013, Vermont has a 10-year history of offering a free year of full-time college in lieu of a traditional 12th grade. Half of all Early College students enroll at CCV.



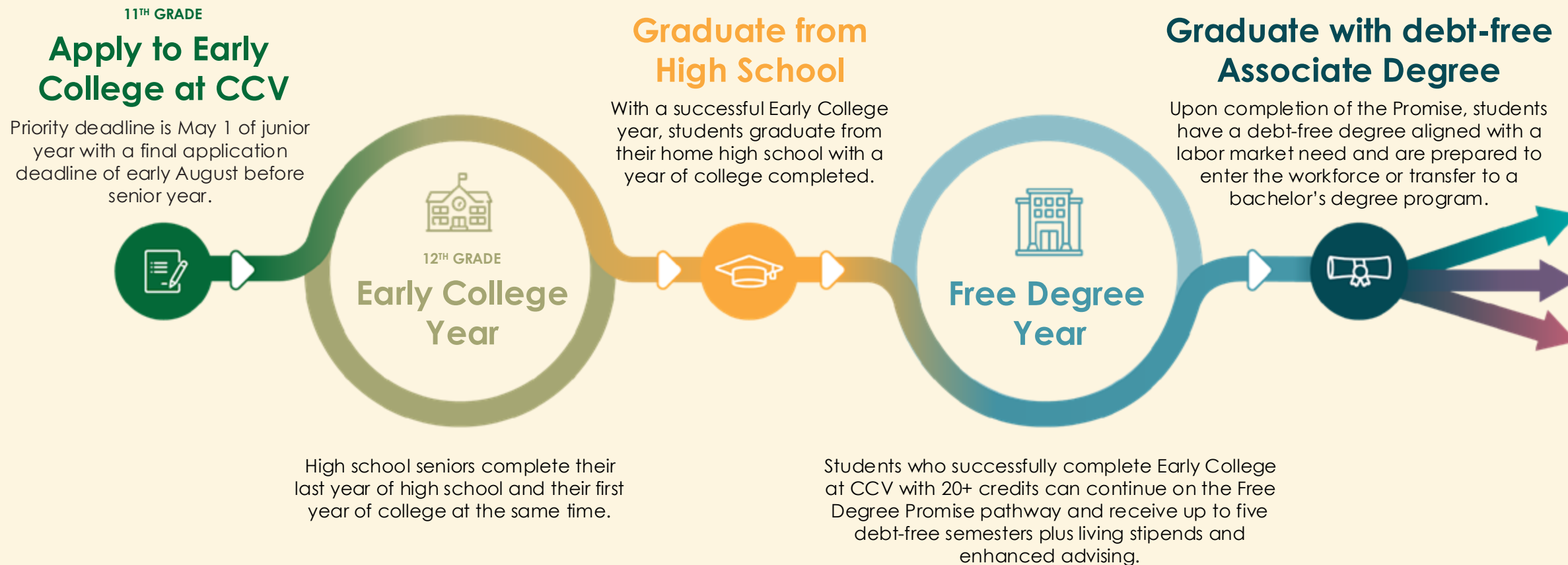
**established cross-sector partnerships.** The Early College Equity Working Group has spent years analyzing data and data systems, engaging proximate voice, exploring promising practices, and addressing barriers.



**new public investments in college affordability.** Facing a shrinking workforce and an economy with two job openings for every jobseeker, policymakers are committed to investing in talent, especially through community college (ex: 802 Opportunity Program).



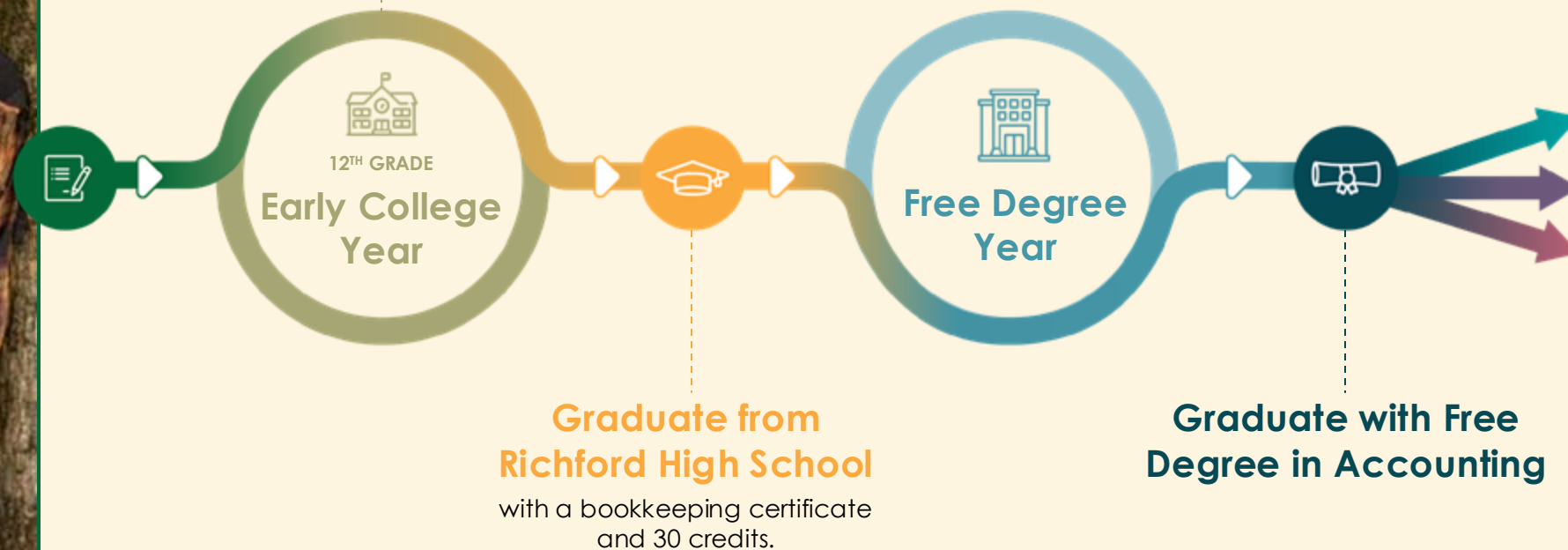
# Here's how the Free Degree Promise pathway works:



# Here's how the Free Degree Promise pathway works for Donovan:



Donovan blended full-time college courses with paid work at his town's only grocery store. Through one of his CCV courses, he is completing a 100-hour internship with the accounting team at the nonprofit organization that runs the grocery.



*"The thing I'm most excited about is being able to get into what I want to do at a young age.*

*With an associate degree, I could get a great accounting job at the age of 19. That feels like a really big win for me."*



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# Discussion

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# Thank You!

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Accelerate The logo for 'Accelerate ED' features the word 'Accelerate' in a dark blue font, followed by the letters 'ED' in a larger, bold, dark blue font. The 'ED' is enclosed in a white square frame with a small orange square in the top right corner.