Explanations/Definitions and Goals for Three Cohort Groups of Students in Grades 9 and 10

Cohort I: These students entering Grade 9 cannot demonstrate proficiency (based on SREB criteria) in at least 75 percent of the comparable competencies developed in the following publications of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), 592 10th St., N.W., Atlanta, GA 30318 (404) 875 9211 www.sreb.org

Getting Students Ready for College-preparatory/Honors English: What Middle Grades Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do (13 competencies). Note: If students cannot read at least at a 5th grade level, it is recommended that those students be placed in a high quality reading program before enrolling in this course which we call Power English in our schedules.

Getting Students Ready for Algebra I: What Middle Grades Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do (12 competencies). Note: In our schedules for students in Grades 9 and 10, the course for developing these competencies is labeled Power Algebra; however, some students may need preliminary work in basic mathematical skills before enrolling in the Power Algebra course.

Getting Students Ready for College-preparatory/Honors Science: What Middle Grades Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do (14 competencies).

Goals for Cohort I Students: With intensive mentoring and academic interventions in Grades 9 and 10, it is hoped these students will acquire the skills to do successful high school work by the end of Grade 10, AND that they will have sufficient credits to graduate with their class, which varies among schools and states, depending upon graduation requirements and the type of schedule available to them. The scheduling goal is to use various types of intensive scheduling strategies (1) to reduce the amount of failing time for students in core classes, and (2) to capitalize on prevention strategies rather than the typical "take course/fail course/repeat course" and/or fail required state accountability exams, and then spend 50 percent of their time in Grade 11 in remediation courses geared to helping students pass exams they previously failed. Following this 'fail/remediation' plan often keeps students out of electives and career/technical programs, which may contribute to their leaving school early. We believe it is much wiser and cost efficient to plan support programs (including tutorials and mentoring) that increase the chances of mastering necessary skills early in the high school grades, and, hopefully, reducing the amount of time and money schools are spending in remediation after some students have spent an excessive amount of time failing courses, failing state tests and losing four or more needed credits in their early years of high school.

In well designed and student supported programs, it is anticipated that the majority of Cohort I students can (1) graduate 'on time' with their class; (2) complete at least one career certification program if career/technical programs are available to them, and (3) have sufficient credits and mastery of critical skills to be able to gain entrance, as a minimum, to a community college program.

Cohort II: These students entering Grade 9 cannot demonstrate proficiency (based on SREB criteria) in at least 50 percent of the comparable competencies developed in the SREB publications listed for Cohort I students. They have a reading level of at least sixth grade level, and they should be capable of completing Algebra I and Algebra II (geometry if sequenced before Algebra II) within four or five school years of a traditional high school schedule; however, depending on accountability and testing mandates that vary among school districts and states, these students need to be enrolled in intensive scheduling models which allow them to earn these two math credits before they enter Semester 2 of Grade 11. This scheduling format is essential for students in states that require four credits in mathematics if the lowest math credit that counts toward graduation is Algebra I.

Goals for Cohort II Students: With student support (tutorials and mentoring), student engagement and application, it is anticipated that Cohort II students can (1) graduate on time with their class; (2) complete at least two career/technical certification programs, and (3) have sufficient credits and mastery of academic skills to gain entrance to most community college programs and to selected four-year colleges.

Cohort III: These students demonstrate proficiency (based on SREB criteria) in all the comparable competencies developed in the SREB publications listed for Cohort I students. They will not need to enroll in pre-English 9 and or pre-algebra programs offered Cohort I and II students. A few Cohort III students may need to be enrolled in English 9 and possibly Algebra I over an extended period of time OR during Semester I of Grade 9 receive a tutorial or computer lab work to remedy any identified competency deficits based on diagnostic performance test data given in Grade 8. Most Cohort III students should be expected to complete at least two AP or comparable courses during Grades 11 and 12. To increase the chances of success in advanced placement courses, Cohort III students may need to be considered either Tier I or Tier II students. Tier I students are those who have been prepared and expected throughout their school years to take advanced courses. They typically are the only students who have been enrolled, or in some schools allowed to enroll, in advanced courses. Tier II students are those students who have no major attendance problems, generally complete assignments on time, and can succeed in various advanced courses if the courses are not designed to be "speed courses" and, for some Tier II students, if they can participate in an AP seminar in addition to the AP class(es). For most Tier II students, the AP seminar needs to include intensive help in

writing and analyzing with the rigor that AP classes require. In the AP seminar, Tier II students also may need to develop their skills in dealing with "cause and effect," deductive and inductive types of questions.

Goals for Cohort III Students: With proper guidance and counseling, Cohort III students not only should graduate with their class on time, but many of them should be expected to earn 6-12 college credits through advanced placement courses, dual enrollment courses and/or distance learning/on-line courses) during their four years of high school. In school districts/states where permitted, at least 50 per cent of Cohort III students could complete all required high school credits in six or seven semesters and begin specialized training or college work during their traditional senior year. In addition to their preparation for college entrance, these students also should be able to complete at least one career/technical certification program before graduating.

Visit www.schoolschedulingassociates.com/canady.html for additional information and to view schedules. The following materials may be helpful to school personnel planning and scheduling the various Cohort groups described in this document:

Bliss, P. (May 25, 2008) *Overrated: College Diploma.* Retrieved June 6, 2008, from The Dallas Morning News. Website:http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/opinion/points/stories/DN-nemko_25edi.ART0.State.Edition1.465abff.html

Canady, Robert Lynn. "Data needed to guide school personnel in building schedules based on student needs – especially students who may be potential dropouts."

Canady, Robert Lynn. "Various ways to schedule advanced placement (AP) courses in schools with the 4/4, accelerated block schedule."

Vol. 65, No. 8, May, 2008, issue of Educational Leadership with the theme "Reshaping High Schools." The following articles from this issue are particularly recommended:

Darling-Hammond, Linda & Diane Friedlaender. "Creating Excellent and Equitable Schools." Pages 14-20.

Donegan, Billie. "The Linchpin Year." Pages 54-56.

Quint, Janet. "Lessons From Leading Models: What can we learn from Talent Development, First Things First, and Career Academies?" Pages 64-68.

Samuels, Christina. (May 27, 2008) *ACT Test-Prep Backfiring in Chicago, Study Finds,* Education Week [Online] Available: http://www.edweek.org [2008, June 1]