

# **Bard College** Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Bard College Applauds Governor Cuomo's Reform Commission Recommendation to Fund and Expand Early Colleges**

ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, N.Y. — In its recently released report, *Putting Students First*, Governor Cuomo's Education Reform Commission recommends the expansion and funding of early college programs in New York State. Bard College, which has run public early college high schools in New York City since 2001, and has been a leading champion of the model, applauds the Commission's recognition of the importance of early colleges in increasing college access and success, particularly for underserved students. As the Commission's report states, early colleges prepare students for college and reduce the cost of degree completion.

“The Governor's Education Reform Commission makes an important statement of support for early colleges, recognizing the role of these innovative programs in helping students get to and through college, in less time, and with less debt. The Commission correctly acknowledges the need for public funding for early colleges, which is critical to their sustainability and growth,” said Leon Botstein, president of Bard College and founder of Bard High School Early College. BHSEC, New York's first early college program that grants a two-year college degree to students for college work completed during what would otherwise be 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades of high school, operates in partnership with the New York City Department of Education. “Early Colleges, such as the Bard High School Early College Schools, also serve an important function in allowing promising students to achieve their full intellectual potential by combining the excellence of New York's colleges and universities with the promise of equity of opportunity underlying New York's public schools. Early colleges can play a significant role in improving employment opportunities for our students and enabling them to contribute to New York's innovation economy. ”

Bard College, an independent liberal arts college in Annandale, New York, runs two early college programs in New York City — Bard High School Early College Manhattan and Bard High School Early College Queens. Bard’s early colleges embed a college program in the liberal arts and sciences within public high school, allowing students to earn college credits up to an associate’s degree from Bard concurrently with a high school diploma. As a public high school, no tuition can be charged for the college credits and associate degree. These public-private partnerships save money for students — up to two years of college tuition and associated costs — and have a strong record of success. Since the founding of its first early college high school in 2001, Bard has awarded nearly 1,300 associate’s degrees. Over 90% of students earn their associate’s degrees in the program and almost all earn their bachelor’s degrees following graduation from the Bard schools, compared to only 58% nationally.

Bard High School Early Colleges serve a diverse population of students, representing the five boroughs of New York City, including a large number of low income and immigrant students who go on to graduate schools and successful careers. Thirty percent of Bard High School Early College graduates complete degrees in STEM subjects or major in STEM subjects at the four year colleges to which they transfer upon completion of the Bard early college program. As Juan Osorio, a member of BHSEC’s first graduating class and about to achieve his Ph.D. in chemical engineering, testified at one of the Commission’s hearings, “My experiences at Bard High School Early College made it possible for me to afford an engineering degree and prepared me to be successful in obtaining great jobs in science and engineering. ... This great opportunity [to attend] BHSEC changed my life.”

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