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Georgia Students Celebrating National Early College Awareness Week

ATLANTA — (March 26) – National Early College Awareness Week runs March 26 through March 30. As part of the events happening across the nation, Georgia high schools and public colleges and universities have planned a number of activities to raise awareness of the program – which puts high school students from underrepresented groups into the college classroom on an accelerated schedule.

National Early College Awareness Week activities will include assemblies with community leaders and students who will share individual success stories with the program. Outstanding students, community leaders and higher education partners will also be honored at these events. As part of the weeklong celebration, officials from participating Early College high schools throughout the state will reach out to local legislators to update them on the program and its goals for students.

In Georgia, the Early College program provides students with the opportunity to earn a high school diploma as well as one to two years of transferable college credit towards a bachelor's degree. Many Early College students receive Associates Degrees before receiving their high school diploma. The program targets students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education – low-income minority students, and first-generation college students. Currently, Georgia has 11 partnerships between local K-12 school districts and postsecondary institutions. Since Georgia's program began in 2005, the graduation rate is 90%. In addition, 92% of the students earned college credit in FY2011 and 90% of Early College graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution after graduation.

Georgia's program (posted at www.gaearycollege.org) is coordinated and supported by the University System's Early College Initiative and Jobs for the Future and has received start up funding from public and private sources. For more information on the national initiative, please visit www.earlycolleges.org.

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