



Union Public Schools
8506 E. 61st Street
Tulsa, OK 74133

918-357-4321

www.unionps.org/edge



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UNION2TCC

EDGE: EARN A DEGREE, GRADUATE EARLY



TULSA
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

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Union Public Schools and **Tulsa Community College** have embarked on a joint venture to create **EDGE - Earn a Degree, Graduate Early**, formerly called Early College High School, a program that is among the first of its kind in the state.

EDGE provides eligible Union High School students the opportunity to earn **60 college credits** concurrently while attending Union High School; students who complete the program will receive both an **associate degree** and a **high school diploma** upon graduation.

While Union has offered concurrent college classes to all eligible students for several years, this program will present a cohort of 50-60 students with a unique Early College High School experience. TCC instructors will teach rigorous college-level courses on-site at Union High School. The courses offered at Union and TCC will include the general education requirements many local universities require in the initial two years of post-secondary education. Students qualifying for the program will have the opportunity to earn 60 hours of college credit and an associate degree in a Liberal Arts field.

Expectations are high . . . for students and the EDGE program. Through the cooperative and shared use of resources, personnel, and facilities, TCC and Union Public Schools will provide access to higher education while reducing the barriers to college completion.

This program will set the stage for how Early College High School is implemented in Oklahoma. The State Regents for Higher Education is committed to helping **improve college graduation rates** in Oklahoma, as well as helping to **create more first-generation college students**. EDGE is a direct response to Oklahoma's workforce needs, as employers struggle to find enough qualified employees to fill positions in high-growth industries.



"There are several challenges that first-generation students face. One is they can't call their parents and say, 'What did you do when you hit this bump in the road in college?' College completion is a nationwide issue, so providing additional support to students when they hit those bumps is necessary and it's anticipatory. I believe Early College High School at Union will greatly improve college persistence rates."

– **Stacy Schusterman, Co-Chair, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation**



"Many students are unsure whether they have the ability to be successful in college. The best Early College programs that I've seen start early in building up that confidence. They prepare students by teaching them study skills. They raise the rigor in high school courses so that students are well prepared to do the college work, so they see success after success. Then they feel good about going off to college when they're finished with high school."

– **Mary Cantrell, Associate Professor of English/George Kaiser Family Foundation Faculty Endowed Chair of Concurrent Enrollment, TCC**



Testimonials



"In the 21st century, a broader range of [employee] skillsets are needed. We are moving into an era where creativity and intellectual capital are more valuable than they've ever been in our history. So having a program at Union that is preparing high school students for success on a collegiate level is a tremendous step forward for us as a city, for having a workforce that can help companies grow."

– **Mayor G.T. Bynum, City of Tulsa**



"We are excited to create EDGE, an Early College High School pilot program at Union Public Schools with a strategic emphasis on recruiting 'first generation' college students. TCC has been a terrific partner in offering concurrent enrollment opportunities at Union Collegiate Academy, and this is the next step in the evolution of that program. By offering high school students the chance to earn an associate degree, I believe we can grow the pipeline for students entering college and improve Oklahoma's graduation rates. Ultimately, it is our hope that this pilot program will become the model for how Early College is implemented across the state."

– **Dr. Kirt Hartzler, Superintendent, Union Public Schools**



"As the leader in Oklahoma with nearly 2,000 concurrent students, we believe this pilot will serve as a statewide model for how students can complete high school and college. We know from TCC's numbers that students who take college courses while still in high school are more likely to graduate high school and earn a college degree. This is the first pilot of its kind in size and scope in Oklahoma, and it involves the third largest college and the sixth largest high school in the state. We are very excited about what this means for our students, our community and our ability to produce high school and college graduates ready for the workforce."

– **Leigh Goodson, Ph.D., TCC President & CEO**

Breaking Down the Barriers to College

EDGE at Union Public Schools will target first-generation college students, those who come from families who have had no experience with college or expectation that their children will attend a university.

By putting students on-track for college before they leave high school, we plan to change the life trajectory for many young people. Ultimately, we hope to improve college graduation rates in Oklahoma, while better preparing students for a successful career in high-demand fields with potentially higher salaries.



FAQs

Q: Is there a cost for Union's EDGE program?

A: There will be no cost to students enrolled in Union's EDGE program. Tuition, fees, and books will be covered by the partnership between Union Public Schools and Tulsa Community College. Students will be responsible for the cost of college admission exams. Fee waivers are available for the ACT and SAT for qualifying students.

Q: My student is enrolled in concurrent courses at Union. Can my student switch to the EDGE program?

A: No. Please see your student's academic counselor for guidance on maximizing the concurrent enrollment opportunities available for your student.

Q: Why is there a charge for concurrent college courses when there is not one for the new EDGE program?

A: The reason has to do with how the two programs are funded. Union Public Schools is paying TCC to offset the cost of the instructors for the EDGE program as part of this new pilot program. The EDGE program also has an entirely different focus - recruiting first-generation college students - while the concurrent enrollment program is open to all students.

Q: You say, "This program is not for everyone." What are the other options available to my student?

A: Union has multiple pathways for college and career success, whether it is concurrent enrollment, Advanced Placement, Union Virtual Learning Academy, the Career Connect Program, or EDGE. There is no "one size fits all." Our job is to help students identify the pathway that best suits them given their talents, career interests, and future life goals.

Student Supports

- Grade alerts for EDGE students in college courses will be generated every two weeks.
- Study sessions and tutoring will be required for all students.
- Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA to remain enrolled in college classes.
- Replacements into high school courses will be possible and may be necessary – to ensure students do not lose credits toward high school graduation.
- TCC advisors will conduct individual or group college advisement conferences, including degree audits, two times per year with all EDGE students. EDGE counselors will track credit requirements for the high school diploma.
- EDGE students will have access to the TCC Writing Lab, Math Lab, Library, and other college facilities and services available to other TCC students.
- During the regular academic year, transportation to TCC Southeast Campus during the school day will be provided by the district. Students may be responsible for their own transportation during the summer or evening classes at TCC.
- Many support sessions and TCC advisory sessions are scheduled on Fridays during the students normal college class hours. Every effort is made to give students ample notice of these dates each semester. Attendance is required.



Student Eligibility

- Each spring, Union eighth graders will be encouraged to apply for EDGE. 50-60 applications will be accepted per year. Students must apply in the spring of their eighth grade year to be considered for EDGE in order for the preparation work to be successful during a student's ninth grade year.
- Though the program is open to all students who are residents of Union Public Schools, it is specifically targeted to serve traditionally underrepresented students, including low-income, first generation college-goers and minority students.
- The demographics of each cohort group will mirror the district's makeup of free or reduced lunch, gender, and ethnic demographics reflective of the district.
- Students must meet college admission and course placement requirements to take college courses; they will be expected to maintain a 3.0 unweighted grade point average for their ninth grade year of high school.

Note: The EDGE program is not for everyone. If students are active in extracurricular activities that conflict with their schedule of college classes, this may present a problem. We will do our best to make accommodations; however, for this program to be successful, students need to be firmly committed to their college course load.

Student Recruitment and Selection

- Informational meetings will be held each spring and required for any student and their parent(s) who is interested in EDGE.
- Students will complete an application and two essay questions. Teacher recommendations may also be utilized by the district to make final student selections. Parents and students must agree to participate in key components of the program in order to qualify.



Class Schedule

- The EDGE program will begin with a college preparatory curriculum in the ninth grade; then, beginning in tenth grade, college courses will be added to the student schedule.
- College courses will be introduced on a graduated basis:
 - Sophomore year: 4 college courses
 - Junior year: 7 college courses
 - Senior year: 9 college courses
- Camp College/summer program: EDGE students will be expected to attend a summer “bridge experience” to orient them to college-level expectations, study, research, and time management skills, and to build relationships with fellow students.
- Tulsa Community College instructors will teach the courses, which will begin in August of the students’ sophomore year of high school.
- Students will be able to take up to 19 combined college credit hours and high school classes per semester, exempting co-curricular club or organization hours.
- EDGE classes will be held primarily at the Union Collegiate Academy (UCA), although labs and summer classes may be held at the TCC Southeast Campus. College classes will take place on a Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday schedule, with science labs and study classes on Fridays.
- During the students’ senior year, two of their four courses in the fall semester will be held at UHS and two will be held on the southeast campus of TCC. Only one college course will be offered on UHS’s campus in the spring semester, while the other three will be offered on TCC’s southeast campus.