The Monroe County Community School Corporation’s Early College initiative has given teachers the opportunity to become involved in creating a curricular program at Bloomington High School South. Although much of the direction has come from the district’s Early College Team, South teachers have had the opportunity to become a part of creating this new program. At the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, South teachers formed eight committees focused on school improvement. The Early College Committee is composed of 20 teachers dedicated to making Early College a successful part of Bloomington High School South.

The first work of the committee was to learn about Early College and then inform to other teachers in the building about the wonderful opportunities of an Early College High School. Teachers have become involved by attending Early College Network Meetings in Greenwood to learn about other schools’ experiences with Early College. These meetings have allowed our teachers to become more familiar with Early College as well as discuss their questions and concerns with representatives from other schools that currently offer Early College within their school or at stand alone sites. Teachers have also had the opportunity to attend a workshop on differentiated instruction by Dr. Carolyn Coil. This was a great experience for the group of teachers who attended. These teachers will be sharing the information they learned from the workshop at a faculty meeting in April. They will also be working within departments to create and share lessons/units for each content area using Carolyn Coil’s differentiated instruction techniques.

The most significant work of the South Early College Committee has been student recruitment. Teachers worked together to contact families eligible for 21st Century Scholars and met with the families face-to-face to inform them about 21st Century Scholars and Early College. Committee members met with 116 families and were able to enroll 84 students in 21st Century Scholars and 74 in Early College. We currently have 86 students enrolled in the entry level Ivy 120 [Early College Seminar] course.

The committee is now continuing its work by investigating the Early College curriculum that will earn dual credit through Ivy Tech and Indiana University Bloomington. The first course that students will take is Ivy 120 [Early College Seminar]. The curriculum of the course is basic skills, study skills, and high school/college orientation class and a mathematics and language arts lab. The basic skills, study skills, and high school/college orientation portion of this class will be on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for a sixty-seven minute period. This course will follow the syllabus of Ivy Tech’s IVY 120 course and provide students with a strong foundation of study skills and basic life skills. The mathematics and language arts lab section of the course will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays and offer students a resource to receive extra assistance in their other courses. The lab portion of the course will be differentiated based upon student ability and need. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, tutors from Indiana University will work with the students to provide extra one-on-one and/or small group instruction to those students who need
additional support. Tutors will also be available after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays to provide academic instruction to Early College students.

Department chairs are currently working with Dr. Lovejoy to select courses that BHSS will be offering for dual credit as part of the Early College High School experience. Dr. Lovejoy is working with Ivy Tech and the IUB faculty to select the most appropriate classes to be offered to students for dual credit. Currently, BHSS offers four IUB courses for dual credit that are made available to all students. The courses currently offered are all mathematics and English courses. Teachers are looking forward to exploring additional dual credit opportunities for students in mathematics, English and other content areas.

A strong foundation of support is necessary for any Early College High School student to succeed. These students will be expected to complete college level work in high school, and it is critical to provide these students with academic support and the opportunity to experience a college campus and its culture. Ivy 120 [Early College Seminar] will provide students with strategies to help prepare them for success in high school and college. After this introductory course, sophomores, juniors, and seniors enrolled in Early College will receive additional academic support through the AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) program. AVID will provide students with additional support for their rigorous course of study as sophomores, juniors, and seniors.