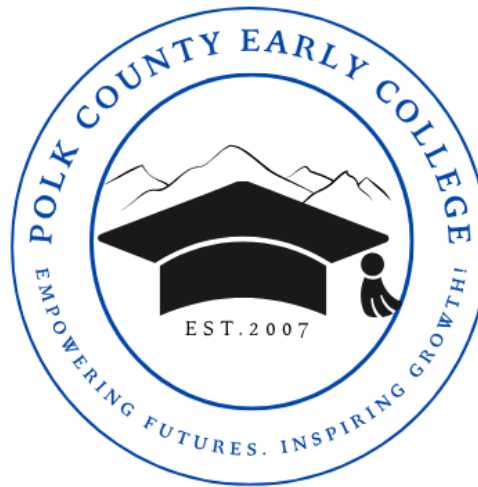


Polk County Early College

School Improvement Plan

2026-2027



1545 NC-108
Columbus, NC 28722

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Polk County Schools

Vision Statement

Every student is inspired, prepared, and empowered for a future of lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

Mission Statement

In partnership with families and our community, Polk County Schools prepares each student to thrive in a diverse, dynamic world by fostering academic excellence, personal growth, and the development of critical life skills.

Core Values

- ***Relationships*** – *Trusting, respectful connections among students, staff, families, and the broader community are essential for success.*
- ***Opportunity for All*** – *Every student deserves access to opportunities that support their highest potential.*
- ***Community*** – *Strong collaboration with families and local partners enhances learning and school improvement.*
- ***Integrity*** – *We act in the best interests of our students and uphold high ethical standards.*
- ***Innovation*** – *We embrace creativity, adaptability, and continuous improvement in teaching and learning.*

Polk County Early College

Mission Statement

Polk County Early College empowers students through rigorous, inclusive education, fostering academic excellence, critical thinking, and readiness for college, careers, and civic life. Through personalized learning and community partnerships, we equip students for higher education, service, or meaningful employment.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to cultivate a community of lifelong learners who are resilient, innovative, and socially responsible. Polk County Early College aims to be a model of educational excellence, fostering a culture where every student is inspired to reach their full potential and contribute positively to the global society.

Core Beliefs

- **Student-Centered Learning:** *We believe that each student is unique and deserves personalized educational experiences that cater to their individual strengths and aspirations.*
- **Academic Excellence:** *We are committed to maintaining high academic standards and providing challenging curricula that prepare students for post-secondary success.*
- **Community Engagement:** *We value strong partnerships with families, local organizations, and the broader community to support student growth and development.*
- **Equity and Inclusion:** *We are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated, and all students have equitable access to opportunities.*
- **Lifelong Learning:** *We foster a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom, encouraging students to be curious, reflective, and adaptable in a rapidly changing world.*

Isothermal Community College's Mission Statement:

As an integral community partner, Isothermal Community College exists to improve life through learning by providing innovative, affordable educational programs and inclusive opportunities for personal, professional, economic, and cultural development.

Goal 1

Polk County Early College will continue to meet growth in academic measures for tested subjects, including Math 1 & 3, English 2, and Biology, through academic rigor and personalized education, along with keeping a proficiency average at 85% or higher.

Evidence of Need	Action Steps	Evidence of Progress	Timeline for Completion
Math - Data for freshmen entering PCEC in the Fall of 2026 illustrates a lack of proficiency in Math 8 skills. Analysis of 8th Grade Math EOG scores indicates severe deficits in math proficiency and mastery that will potentially have adverse effects on student success at the early college, secondary level.	- Using Spiral reviews and an increase in interventions, the math instructor will assess individual student needs of basic math skills that are less than proficient and design instruction to address those needs while still addressing the pacing required for Math 1 & 3. - PCEC will add Math 4 in place of Pre-Calculus at the high school level. Math 4 is observed as a bridge course to the collegiate course offered through ICC in Calculus and/or Trigonometry and will add an additional layer of support for students upon completion.	- Increase in score averages on both formative and summative assessments prior to corrections - Proficient scores on NC Check-Ins with a minimum 2% increase - Higher success rates in the collegiate course students are taking at the junior and senior levels at the early college.	- Daily review and interventions - October & March Check-In data collection - December & May EOC completion for Math 1 & Math 3

English - Freshman data shows a lack of general proficiency in reading comprehension and writing skills.	• The English instructor will review sentence structure and parts of speech to increase basic writing skills. • The instructor will use reading comprehension strategies, including guided discussion, to increase basic comprehension skills. • English 1 curriculum will be enhanced to focus on the reading-writing connection with emphasis on procedural writing in better preparation for the advanced writing courses that come in the sophomore year.	• Decrease in grammatical errors in essay responses • Cohesive sentence structures • Essay responses that address the given prompts with outlines • Socratic seminar participation • Annotations when reading • NC Check-In scores reflective of proficiency and/or mastery of comprehension for grade-level text • Higher proficiency rate in ENG 111 and 112 at the sophomore level. • Higher transferable skill rate in writing in other courses/subjects	• Weekly writing practice • Spring ENG 2 Check-Ins as EOC predictor • ENG 2 EOC May 2027
Biology - Biology EOC scores have consistently met growth. However, with reading and math scores for the district trending down in proficiency, it is imperative that non-fiction texts, such as those presented in science classes, be a source of rigor for students.	• The instructor will use rigorous texts to support hands-on learning and lab experiences to support the English standards. • The instructor will require an in-depth written analysis of topics to support the English standards.	• Improved written lab analysis • Continued proficient and mastery scores on NC Check-Ins and EOCs	• Weekly written analysis assignments • Weekly rigorous text use • Supported hands-on learning

Goal 2

Polk County Early College will provide a collaborative atmosphere with social-emotional learning support to increase student resiliency and promote productive citizenship.

Evidence of Need	Action Steps	Evidence of Progress	Timeline for Completion
Many students have significant anxiety issues related to screen time, family issues, and social anxiety. There is an increased number of students seeing counselors, social workers, and therapists. There is a higher number of students receiving accommodations through 504 Plans for anxiety than in past years.	• Implementation of Character Strong through a grant with PCCF. • Encouraging students to participate in clubs such as SAVE, Key Club, and Unified Champions and community service through Student Council • Development of a “house system” within the early college to foster community • Implementation of the no cell phone policy • Interdisciplinary days every other Friday to include Character Strong lessons in house meetings.	• Fewer students need accommodations for anxiety • Fewer students in counseling (inside and outside agencies) • More students are participating in clubs and activities, showing a decrease in social anxiety issues.	• On-going efforts

Many students are actively seeking opportunities to gain mentorship in the community, leading to jobs for the future.	• BOLT Mentor Program • Job Shadowing • Community Service and Service Learning Opportunities as a requirement • Introduction of the digital portfolio process known as CAP	• Active participation in either of these opportunities by 50% or more of our students.	• On-going efforts
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Goal 3

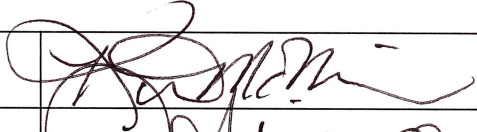
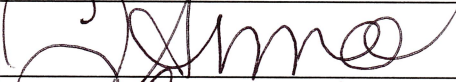
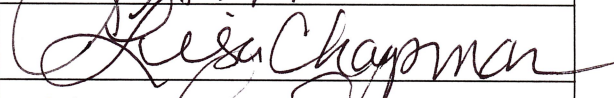
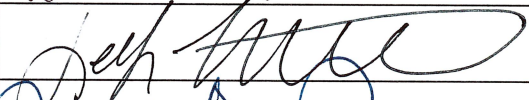
Polk County Early College will be dedicated to increasing enrollment by 10.8% each year over the course of the next three years by working to build a collaborative culture with all stakeholders, including Isothermal Community College, Polk County High School, Polk County Middle School, and community agencies.

Evidence of Need	Action Steps	Evidence of Progress	Timeline for Completion
PCEC had a 24% increase in enrollment this year and a 120% increase in applicants overall for this school year.	• PCEC will follow the prescribed guidelines for enrollment in early colleges, which include first-generation college students, economically disadvantaged, and/or those who desire accelerated learning with honors courses. • All applicants accepted will be screened using a new application process that is points-based with weighted areas for New	• Evidence of progress will include an increase in eligible applicants, preferably a 10.8% increase each year over the next three years. A new application process has been developed for the Spring of 2026. • Students are participating in high school events, including band, sports, ballgames, etc. • The early college staff	• Continuous efforts throughout the year • Enrollment increased to 75 or greater by Fall 2027/Spring 2028

	Century Scholars through ICC, honor roll, EOG scores, and listed factors presented by the Early College Network. • PCEC will offer more opportunities for Super senior participation (5th year opportunities based on academic need and support and/or certification programs) • PCEC will offer Senior Internships based on student interest (i.e. Teacher Cadet program)	is creating events for students and prospective students throughout the year. • The principal and teachers are completing outreach with the middle school students and teachers, including attending field trips with them, classroom visits, PCEC newsletters sent to 7th and 8th-grade students throughout the school year, and recruitment events scheduled for Fall and Spring of the current academic year. • Prospective student open house by invitation, based on ECN guidelines, is scheduled for the Spring. • Updated website & regular social media posts • Increased social media traffic • Partnership with PCS schools for cadet opportunities	
A continued deterrent to enrollment is the past lack of	• PCEC has modified its schedule to mirror the	• The CTE director is working on transcript	• Spring 2026 and Fall 2026 will be the first

collaborative efforts between the early college and the high school. Students who are interested in CTE classes have only been able to take classes offered at Isothermal and not at the high school. However, without transportation to the main ICC campus, CTE course offerings are limited.	high school schedule to allow PCEC students to participate in CTE courses that fit their programs of choice at the high school.	review with the PCEC principal for WorkKeys opportunities. • ICC liaison is working to establish paths on the ICC side for Seniors to get certificates that lead straight into the workforce.	schedules to be inclusive.
PCEC has increased opportunities for students to engage in clubs and community service, which has had a direct impact on college application and acceptance rates. Students must have the ability to prove they are well-rounded individuals with various experiences in their backgrounds that illustrate leadership and growth.	• PCEC will continue to offer clubs on-site and through efforts with PEAK Afterschool and in collaboration with the high school, more opportunities will exist at the high school's main campus also offering the PCEC campus as a meeting place.	• Progress will be determined by participation numbers and sustainability.	• Ongoing efforts

School Improvement Team Members & Voting Information

Kim McMinn	Principal	
Jessica Simo	Math/ SIT Chair	
Lisa Chapman	English	
Holly Stone	History	
Barry Feldman	Science	
Enmanuel Medrano	Spanish	
Leslie Rhinehart	Chemistry	
Cora Laurens	Counselor	
Leah Foster	Support Staff	
Jennifer Pittman	Parent	