

The Early College High School Blueprint

Initiating	Implementing	Exemplar
<p>Initiating campuses are interested in applying for designation and are working towards fully implementing the ECHS model. They are generally already offering dual credit to their students, working with an IHE partner, and offering student supports.</p>	<p>Implementing campuses have received designation because they have demonstrated that they can implement all of the Benchmarks.</p>	<p>Exemplar campuses have been designated for at least four years, and have reached the “exemplar level” in three of the categories, including Benchmark 4.</p>

Benchmark 1: Target Population—The Early College High School shall serve, or include plans to scale up to serve, students in grades 9 through 12 and shall target and enroll students who are at risk of dropping out of school as defined by the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and who might not otherwise go to college.

Products		Sources of Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written admission policy and enrollment application Written recruitment plan including a timeline of recruitment and enrollment events, and recruitment materials for distribution at feeder schools and other appropriate locations in the community Brochures and marketing in Spanish, English, and/or relevant second language(s) Written communication plan for targeting identified audiences, parents, community members, school board, higher education personnel, etc. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longitudinal student enrollment data Sign-in sheets from parent events Recruitment schedule, locations (schools, churches, community centers, etc.), and support services (transportation, child care, etc.) Survey data (community input, enrollment trends, etc.) Needs assessment
Initiating	Implementing	Exemplar
<p>The initiating campus shall create a coherent schedule of tasks, activities, and accomplishment of interim benchmarks that culminate in achievement of Exemplar targets within a logical and reasonable timeframe.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The ECHS shall meet all the Initiating criteria. The ECHS recruitment and enrollment processes and requirements shall not exclude or discourage the enrollment of any of the subpopulations of at-risk students (as defined by PEIMS), including, but not limited to, students who are of limited English proficiency or who have failed a state administered assessment. Enrollment decisions shall not be based on state assessment scores, discipline history, teacher recommendation, or minimum grade point average (GPA). The ECHS shall identify, recruit, and enroll subpopulations (in addition to those who are at risk as defined by PEIMS) that are historically underrepresented in college courses (e.g., first generation college goers, students of low socioeconomic status, African American, Hispanic.) The ECHS shall clearly document recruitment and enrollment policies and practices, refining and improving them annually based on data reviews. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The ECHS shall make available to TEA their annual recruitment and enrollment policies and data. Recruitment and enrollment processes (including marketing and recruitment plans, materials, and timelines) shall include input from key stakeholders; target appropriate student populations; and include regular activities to educate students, counselors, principals, parents, and school board and community members. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The ECHS shall meet all of the Implementing criteria. The ECHS shall use either a performance-blind, open-access lottery system that encourages and considers applications from all students (all students have an equal opportunity for acceptance, regardless of background or academic performance) or a weighted lottery that favors students who are at risk or who are part of the targeted subpopulations for the ECHS.

Benchmark 2: Partnership Agreement

The Early College High School shall have a current, signed Memorandum of Understanding that:

- defines the partnership between the school district(s) and the institute(s) of higher education (IHE) and addresses topics including, but not limited to, the ECHS location; the allocation of costs for tuition, fees, and textbooks; and student transportation;
- states that the school district or charter in which the student is enrolled shall pay for tuition (for all dual credit courses, including retakes), fees (including TSI administration fees), and required textbooks to the extent those charges are not waived by the partner IHE;
- defines an active partnership between the school district(s) and the IHE(s), which shall include joint decision-making procedures that allow for the planning and implementation of a coherent program across institutions; and
- includes provisions and processes for collecting, sharing, and reviewing program and student data to assess the progress of the ECHS.

Products		Sources of Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU • Annual strategic/improvement plan • Data analysis reports 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership meeting agendas • Teacher qualification data • PEIMS data • AEIS data • GPA data • IHE articulation data • TSI data • Completion rates
Initiating	Implementing	Exemplar
<p>The initiating campus shall create a coherent schedule of tasks, activities, and accomplishment of interim benchmarks that culminate in achievement of Exemplar targets within a logical and reasonable timeframe</p> <p>The initiating campus shall have or build a dual-credit relationship with an IHE, supported by an MOU or interlocal agreement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all the Initiating criteria. 2. MOU shall include the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location, costs and fees, transportation • Administration of statewide instruments under TEC Subchapter B, Chapter 39 • Grading periods and policies • Courses of study • Curriculum alignment • Instructional materials • Instructional calendar • Policies regarding eligibility of ECHS students for financial assistance from the higher education partner(s), specifically, waivers for tuition and fees • Student enrollment and attendance policies • Provisions for discontinuing ECHS operation • Provisions for collecting and reviewing the following disaggregated data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of credit hours taken and earned ○ GPAs ○ State assessment results ○ SAT/ACT, PSAT scores ○ TSI readiness by grade level ○ Qualifications of ECHS staff ○ Location(s) where courses are taught 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all of the Implementing criteria. 2. MOU shall include the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECHS students access to the IHE facilities, services and resources • Professional development for ECHS faculty (including both district and IHE faculty/staff) • Provisions for collecting and sharing student and teacher data • Policy for advising students on the transferability of all college credit offered and earned • Policy to ensure the IHE transcripts college credit earned through dual credit in the same semester that credit is earned. • Provisions for implementing program improvements based on the collection and review of the following data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Articulation of high school students in four-year colleges/universities and level of entry ○ Enrollment/retention rates, leaver codes, and attrition rates, by grade level ○ Student participation in activities at IHE

Benchmark 3: P-16 Leadership Initiatives

The school district and institute of higher education (IHE) partners shall develop and maintain a leadership team that meets regularly to address issues of design and sustainability. Membership should include the Early College High School principal/director and individuals with decision-making authority from the district(s) and IHE(s).

Products		Sources of Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU • Leadership meeting agendas and minutes • School board and board of regents presentations • Description of each member and role in committee 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEIMS data • AEIS data • GPA data • IHE articulation data • TSI data • Completion rates • Agendas • Leadership meeting notes
Initiating	Implementing	Exemplar
<p>The initiating campus must create a coherent schedule of tasks, activities, and accomplishment of interim benchmarks that culminate in achievement of Exemplar targets within a logical and reasonable timeframe</p> <p>The initiating campus should establish a design team that meets monthly for the purpose of ECHS planning. The design team should include high-level personnel with decision-making authority.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all the Initiating criteria. 2. The ECHS shall establish a leadership team that includes high-level personnel with decision-making authority who meet regularly and report to each organization. Regularly scheduled meetings must address the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the members and the role each member will play in the design, governance, operations, accountability, curriculum development, professional development, outreach, sustainability, and continuous monitoring and improvement of the ECHS • Reviewing the MOU for necessary revisions • Sharing responsibility (between the school district and the IHE) for developing annual reports to district and IHE boards that provide data, highlight successes, and outline plan for improvement 3. Meeting minutes and agendas shall be publically available. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all the Implementing criteria. 2. The leadership team shall include or meet regularly with the following leaders from the district and IHE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Superintendent ○ Assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, or equivalent position ○ ECHS principal or director • IHE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University president ○ Provost ○ Dean of college of education ○ ECHS liaison 3. Sustainability structures shall be identified and implemented to address and minimize the challenges of staff turnover.

Benchmark 4: Curriculum and Support

The Early College High School (ECHS) shall provide a rigorous course of study that enables a participating student to receive a high school diploma and complete the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) core curriculum (as defined by the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §4.28) or an associate's degree or at least 60 credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree during grades 9-12. The ECHS shall provide students with academic, social, and emotional support in their course of study.

Products		Sources of Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU • Reports of student course taking • Training or professional development plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student transcripts • State assessment data • Professional Learning Community agendas and notes • Calendar of family outreach events • Student-level performance data and intervention plans • Tutoring schedules and participation data • Advisory/study skills curriculum material • Master schedules
Initiating	Implementing	Exemplar
<p>The initiating campus shall create a coherent schedule of tasks, activities, and accomplishment of interim benchmarks that culminate in achievement of Exemplar targets within a logical and reasonable timeframe</p> <p>The initiating campus shall have or build an existing course of study that allows all students to graduate with at least six and up to 24 semester credit hours towards a baccalaureate degree.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all the Initiating criteria. 2. The ECHS shall provide a course of study that enables participating students to complete high school graduation requirements and an associate's degree or at least 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. A plan must be in place showing how students will progress toward this goal. This plan must provide pathways to a baccalaureate degree and must follow the courses and fields of study listed in the THECB Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual. 3. The ECHS shall monitor student progress and report the number of hours completed per student, disaggregated by student groups. 4. The ECHS shall support students in their course of study. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. ECHS shall provide academic support to the students by personalizing the learning environment in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a plan for ongoing academic support, • providing tutoring or Saturday school for identified students, • providing advisory and/or college readiness and support time built into the program of study, and • establishing a mentorship program b. ECHS shall provide social and emotional support to the students, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections to social services • Parent outreach and involvement opportunities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all the Implementing criteria. 2. The ECHS shall graduate most of its students with an associate's degree, 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree, or the entire THECB core curriculum completed; and the ECHS graduates all students with at least 30 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. 3. The ECHS shall implement in each term a structured data review processes designed to identify student strengths and weaknesses and develop individual instructional plans. 4. The ECHS shall support students in their course of study through enrichment opportunities. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The ECHS shall implement a structured program of community service to promote community involvement. b. The ECHS shall partner with community businesses to expose students to a variety of potential career options and possible internship opportunities. c. The ECHS shall provide college awareness to current and prospective students and families, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application assistance, • Financial aid counseling, and • College and career counseling.

Benchmark 5: Academic Rigor and Readiness

The Early College High School shall administer a Texas Success Initiative (TSI) college placement exam (as defined by TAC §4.53) to all accepted students to assess college readiness, design individual instructional plans, and enable students to begin college courses based on their performance.

Products		Sources of Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU • Data review plan and calendar • Reports of TSI exam performance • Individual instructional plans • Tutoring/support schedules • Bridge program curricula 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSI college placement exam data • College entrance exam preparation course schedules and data • Exam fee waivers • Calendar of family-focused events and participation data • Program records documenting nature and number of trips to college • Student-level performance data and intervention plans • Tutoring and bridge program schedules and participation data
Initiating	Implementing	Exemplar
<p>The initiating campus shall create a coherent schedule of tasks, activities, and accomplishment of interim benchmarks that culminate in achievement of Exemplar targets within a logical and reasonable timeframe</p> <p>The initiating campus shall have or build experience administering a TSI assessment and/or TSI-readiness supports to an entire grade level.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all the Initiating criteria. 2. The ECHS shall provide a TSI assessment to accepted students as early as possible (however, not as a prerequisite for admissions to the ECHS). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The ECHS shall implement a plan for TSI success, including academic preparation classes for accepted students, academic interventions for students who do not pass TSI, and assessments fee waivers for all administrations of the TSI test. b. The ECHS shall report to TEA the dates the TSI is administered. c. The ECHS shall report to TEA the number of students who have currently passed each section of the TSI assessment, including a breakdown of TSI testing data for subpopulations of targeted students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all the Implementing criteria 2. The ECHS is a TSI assessment site, allowing frequent testing and access to raw data that can be used to identify student weaknesses and create tailored interventions and individualized instructional plans to improve student readiness and success. 3. The ECHS provides a bridge program (an intensive academic preparation program that provides opportunities to strengthen academic skills necessary for high school and college readiness) before and after grade 9.

Benchmark 6: School Design

The ECHS must provide a full-day program (i.e., full day as defined in PEIMS) at an autonomous high school (i.e., a high school with a principal or program coordinator assigned 100 percent to ECHS responsibilities who has scheduling, hiring, and budget authority), an IHE liaison with decision-making authority, and a highly qualified staff with support and training.

Products		Sources of Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU • Staffing plans • Job descriptions • Professional development and support plans • Mentor/induction program plans • Schedules • Teacher assignments 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal/liaison meeting agendas and notes • Budgets • Teacher qualifications • Observation data • Training agendas, sign-in sheets, and notes
Initiating	Implementing	Exemplar
<p>The initiating campus shall create a coherent schedule of tasks, activities, and accomplishment of interim benchmarks that culminate in achievement of Exemplar targets within a logical and reasonable timeframe</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all the Initiating criteria. 2. The ECHS location shall be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on a college or university campus, or • in a stand-alone high school campus or in a smaller learning community within a larger high school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ECHS campuses not located on a college or university campus must provide students with regular use (at least six times per school year) of college academic facilities. ○ ECHS campuses located in a smaller learning community within a larger high school must disaggregate required ECHS student data. 3. ECHS staff shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a principal, or program director has scheduling, hiring, and budget autonomy; • an IHE liaison with decision-making authority who interacts directly and frequently with ECHS staff and administrators; • highly qualified ECHS teachers who within four years will be reporting only to the ECHS principal/director and teaching only ECHS students in all core courses. 4. The ECHS students shall be enrolled in ECHS-only sections for core classes. 5. ECHS shall implement an annual professional development plan based on needs assessment of student data. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ECHS shall meet all the Implementing criteria. 2. ECHS campuses not located on a college or university campus shall provide students with weekly use of IHE academic and support facilities, such as libraries, labs, advising enter, career center, eating facilities, cultural facilities, and sports facilities. 3. ECHS staff shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an IHE liaison who meets and/or works directly with the principal/director on, at least, a weekly basis • highly qualified teachers who report only to the ECHS principal/director and teach only ECHS students • counseling staff who report only to the ECHS principal/director and serve only ECHS students. 4. All ECHS students shall enroll in core and elective courses that include only ECHS students and/ or college students. 5. The ECHS shall implement the following staff support structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a mentoring and induction program for newly hired staff. • opportunities for ECHS teachers and higher-education faculty to receive extensive training and support through regularly scheduled formative peer observations and collaboration opportunities with IHE faculty.

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