

Required Early College High School Design Elements

The following design elements are the minimum required components that must be demonstrated through this application in order to be designated as an Early College High School.

I. Target Population

- 1 The ECHS must serve grades 9 through 12 and *may* serve grades 6, 7, and 8.
- 2 The ECHS must target and enroll a majority of students who are at risk of dropping out of school (at-risk and English language-learners, as defined by PEIMS, as well as economically disadvantaged and first-generation college goers).
- 3 The ECHS must be small, serving no more than 100-125 students per grade level.

II. P-16 Partnership

- 4 The ECHS must have a current, signed MOU that defines the partnership between the school districts and the IHE and addresses topics including, but not limited to, the ECHS location, the allocation of costs for tuition, fees, textbooks, and student transportation.
- 5 Students enrolled in an ECHS course for both college and high school graduation credit shall not be required to pay for tuition, fees, or textbooks. The school district or charter in which the student is enrolled shall pay for tuition, fees, and required textbooks to the extent those charges are not waived by the partner IHE.
- 6 The ECHS must be supported by an active partnership between the school district or charter and the IHE, which shall include joint decision-making procedures that allow for the planning and implementation of a coherent program across institutions. The partnership and the MOU must include provisions and processes for collecting, sharing, and reviewing student data to assess the progress of the ECHS.
- 7 The partners must develop and maintain a group that meets regularly to address issues of design and sustainability. Membership should include the ECHS principal and individuals with decision-making authority from all partnering districts and IHE(s). The group should meet regularly and once every six months at a minimum (examples: advisory board, steering committee, or coordinating council).
- 8 The ECHS must provide opportunities for ECHS teachers and higher-education faculty to collaborate through planning, teaching, and professional development.

III. Curriculum and Academic Rigor

- 9 The ECHS must provide a course of study that enables a participating student to receive a high school diploma and either an associate's degree or 60 semester hours toward a baccalaureate degree during grades 9-12. An academic plan must be in place showing how students will progress toward this goal. The academic plan must provide pathways to a baccalaureate degree and must follow the courses and fields of study listed in the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual.
- 10 The ECHS must administer a Texas Success Initiative college placement exam (such as Texas Higher Education Assessment, Accuplacer, Compass, Asset etc.) to all incoming 9th-graders to assess college readiness and to enable students to begin college courses based on their performance—as soon as they are able, possibly as early as the 9th grade.

Required Early College High School Design Elements continued ...

IV. School Design

- 11 The ECHS must be an autonomous high school that meets one of the following criteria:
- (a) Is located on a college or university campus
 - (b) Is a stand-alone high school campus *near a college or university campus.
 - (c) Is a small learning community within a larger high school that is located *near a college or university campus. The ECHS small learning community must establish ECHS students as a separate cohort and be physically separated from the larger high school with its own teachers, leader, schedule, professional development, budget, and curriculum plan.
- *"Near a college or university campus"** is defined as close enough for district partners to transport students each day for a full-day program. Acceptable daily driving distance may vary based on the size of a district and the service area of the partnering institution(s) of higher education.
- 12 The ECHS must be a full-day program (i.e., full day as defined in Public Education Information Management System) in which all academic instruction and support services (academic, social, and emotional) are delivered to students at the designated ECHS campus. Students may not travel between two high school campuses in order to receive instruction or support services.

V. Support Structures

- 13 The ECHS must build into the program of study strategies and activities that create a distinct college-going culture and enable students to build skills and knowledge for college success (examples: bridge programs, participation in college extracurricular activities, professor review of student work, completing FAFSA, understanding college registration, GPAs, and transcripts).
- 14 The ECHS must provide a personalized learning environment, teach academic behaviors, and build into the program of study academic support services that maximize and ensure student success (examples: tutoring, mentoring, Saturday school, self directed learning, individual and group study skills, time management).
- 15 The ECHS must build into the program of study social and emotional support services to students, (examples: advisory structures, personalized learning communities, individual graduation plans, guidance and counseling).
- 16 The ECHS must build into the program of study opportunities for students to have regular access to IHE facilities, resources, and services (examples: access to university faculty; libraries; science labs; technology and writing centers; artistic, cultural, and sports facilities and activities; and extracurricular activities as appropriate).
- 17 The ECHS must demonstrate a commitment to substantial parental and community involvement in activities and use of strategies designed to encourage high school completion and success.

Required Early College High School Design Elements continued ...

VI. Staffing

- 18 The ECHS must demonstrate that teachers selected to participate in programs supported by this grant are highly qualified and have demonstrated the ability to provide accelerated instruction to students at risk of not graduating from high school.
- 19 The ECHS must provide common planning time for ECHS instructional faculty and other appropriate staff, including school leaders and, when possible, higher-education faculty.
- 20 The ECHS must provide teachers with support and guidance through teacher mentoring, professional development, and induction programs.
- 21 The ECHS must be led by a principal or director who is 100% dedicated to the school.
- 22 The IHE partner must identify a liaison to the ECHS who has the authority to make decisions and provide support and resources to develop and operate the ECHS.

Special Requirements for Two-District Partners

- 1 The two partnering districts must develop a shared services agreement (SSA) and/or an MOU that defines the roles and responsibilities of each district in areas including, but not limited to, hiring and selection of personnel, textbooks, tuition, transportation, school calendar, grading policies, student discipline procedures, and professional development.
- 2 In instances where partnering districts have different procedures, the partners must agree upon and adopt a uniform policy.