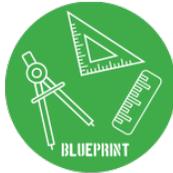


The Early College High School Blueprint For 2020-21 and Beyond

Design Elements



All designated ECHSs (Provisional, Early College, Distinguished Early College) are required to meet all of the design elements for each benchmark annually.

Outcomes-Based Measures (OBMs)



All designated ECHSs (Provisional, Early College, Distinguished Early College) are required to meet OBMs on data indicators related to access, achievement, and attainment.



PROVISIONAL EARLY COLLEGE

Provisional Early Colleges are new ECHSs that demonstrate they can implement all the design elements for each benchmark and meet the Provisional Early College OBMs. For public purposes, campuses are identified as Early College.



EARLY COLLEGE

Early College designees maintain designation by demonstrating they can implement all of the design elements for each benchmark and meet the Early College OBMs.



DISTINGUISHED EARLY COLLEGE ★★★★★

Distinguished Early Colleges have been designated as Early Colleges for at least five years, and demonstrate that they can implement all of the design elements for each benchmark and meet the Distinguished Early College OBMs.

Fidelity of Implementation



TEA provides technical assistance to promote implementation of the ECHS model with fidelity. Upon the completion of the Provisional period, a campus must meet the state's Designated OBM criteria. Campuses that meet the Distinguished OBM criteria for all three categories of access, attainment, and achievement will receive Distinguished status. OBMs will be phased in for all ECHSs through 2020-21. Thereafter, OBMs will phase in for opening Provisional ECHSs as the entering cohort of 9th graders advance through graduation.





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 statute (Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.908) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and who might not otherwise go to college.

Design Elements

All ECHSs must implement and meet the following requirements:

1. The ECHS recruitment and enrollment processes shall identify, recruit, and enroll the subpopulations of at-risk students (as defined by statute and PEIMS), including, but not limited to, students who are of limited English proficiency, students with disabilities, or students who have failed a state administered assessment. Enrollment decisions shall not be based on state assessment scores, discipline history, teacher recommendations, parent or student essays, minimum grade point average (GPA), or other criteria that create barriers for student enrollment.
2. 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. The ECHS and higher education partner(s) shall coordinate activities with feeder middle school(s) to target promotional efforts at priority populations. Enrollment of target student populations should be representative of a district's demographic make-up.
3. The ECHS shall clearly document recruitment and enrollment policies and practices, refining and improving them annually based on data reviews.
4. Recruitment and enrollment processes (including marketing and recruitment plans, materials, and timelines) shall include input from key stakeholders (e.g., parents, community members, higher education partners) and target student populations as described in 1 and 2 above and shall include regular activities to educate students, counselors, principals, parents, and school board and community members.
5. For admissions, 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. Districts are encouraged to standardize lottery practices across campuses implementing the College and Career Readiness School Models.

Required Activities and Products

Activities:

- All products shall be published on the ECHS's website and be made available to TEA upon request.
- All products shall be maintained in accordance with the local records retention policy.

Products:

- Written lottery procedures (district-level or campus-level)
- Written admission policy and enrollment application
- Written recruitment plan, including a timeline of recruitment and enrollment events, and recruitment materials for distribution at feeder middle schools and other appropriate locations in the community

- Brochures and marketing in Spanish, English, and/or other relevant language(s)
- Written communication plan for targeting identified audiences (e.g., parents, community members, school boards, higher education personnel, etc.)

Benchmark 2: Partnership Agreement



The Early College High School shall have a current, signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) or similar written agreement for each school year that:

- Defines the partnership between the school district(s) and the institution(s) of higher education (IHE) and addresses topics including, but not limited to, the ECHS location; transferability and applicability of college credit between a 2-year and 4-year institution; 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 college 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 a data-sharing agreement that promotes collaborative interventions with processes for collecting, sharing, and reviewing program and student data to assess the progress of students served by the ECHS.

Design Elements

All ECHSs shall develop, sign, and execute an MOU or similar agreement that includes the following components (at a minimum):

1. Components that enhance pathway development, including:

- A description of how the goals of the dual credit program align with the statewide goals
- Courses of study, which enables a student to combine high school courses and college-level courses to complete the Texas Core Curriculum and earn either an associate degree or at least 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree
- Curriculum alignment for each degree plan with a course equivalency crosswalk equating high school courses with college courses and the number of credits that may be earned for each course completed through the dual credit program
- A policy to ensure the IHE transcripts college credit earned through dual credit in the same semester that credit is earned
- A policy for advising students on the transferability of all college credit offered and earned to promote transfer success to a four-year institution
- A policy regarding advising students as to the transferability and applicability to baccalaureate degree plans for all college credit offered and earned (college credits earned during high school should allow students to progress from an associate degree to a bachelor's degree and beyond in their chosen field)

2. Components that articulate joint policies regarding:

- Respective roles and responsibilities for the campus/LEA and IHE in providing for and ensuring the quality and instructional rigor of the dual credit program
- ECHS students' access to the IHE facilities, services and resources
- Academic supports and guidance that will be provided to students participating in the dual credit program

- Student enrollment and attendance policies
- Grading periods and policies, including academic probation
- Instructional calendar including location of each course that will be offered
- Disability services available to students in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”).
- Teacher qualification processes, instructor availability, and course offerings
- Administration of statewide assessments of academic skills (TEC, Subchapter B, Chapter 39)
- Joint professional development for ECHS faculty and college and career advisors (including both district and IHE faculty/staff)
- Provisions for discontinuing ECHS operation and the ensure students previously enrolled will have opportunity to complete their course of study

3. Components that determine how costs will be shared:

- Sources of funding for dual credit courses offered through the program
- Instructional materials to be used and textbook adoption policies
- Transportation costs and fees
- Policies regarding eligibility of ECHS students for financial assistance from the higher education partner(s), specifically, waivers for tuition and fees

4. A data sharing agreement that includes provisions for student data provided by the college to the high school, and enables collaborative data sharing on a regular basis to promote student support interventions during the semester and that also includes:

- Teacher data such as qualifications
- Student level data such as credit hours taken and earned, GPA, course enrollment, course dropout, student academic progress, college and career readiness metrics (e.g., SAT/ACT/TSIA scores), and formative regularly updated or real-time data (e.g., 6-/9-week or mid-term grades, attendance)
- Policies for expanding access to student data, such as granting ECHS teachers full instructor access

Required Activities and Products

Activities:

- MOUs or similar agreements must be reviewed annually with the goal of improving programmatic supports and services for students and alignment to Texas' Statewide Dual Credit Goals.
- All products shall be published on the ECHS's website and be made available to TEA upon request.
- All products shall be maintained in accordance with the local records retention policy.
- Campuses must submit their final signed MOU or similar agreement to TEA when initially applying for early college designation or are Provisionally designated.
- ECHS Campuses that are designated early college or distinguished early college are not required to submit the MOU during the annual designation process (but must have it available upon TEA request).
- ECHS campuses in needs improvement may be required to resubmit their MOU or similar agreement to TEA.

Products:

- Final, signed, and executed MOU or similar agreement



Benchmark 3: P-16 Leadership Initiatives

The school district and institution(s) of higher education (IHE) partners shall develop and maintain a leadership team that meets regularly (e.g., quarterly or monthly) to address issues of design, implementation, ongoing implementation, and sustainability. Membership should include the Early College High School leader and individuals with decision-making authority from the district(s) and IHE(s).

Design Elements

All ECHSs must implement and meet the following requirements:

1. 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 (e.g., quarterly or monthly) scheduled meetings must address the following topics:
 - a. Identify 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
 - b. Assume shared responsibility (between the school district and the IHE) for annually reviewing the MOU or similar agreement for necessary revisions
 - c. Assume shared responsibility (between the school district and the IHE) for meeting annual outcomes-based measures and providing annual reports to their district and IHE boards, as well as to the public.
 - d. Monitor progress on meeting the Blueprint, including reviewing data to ensure the ECHS is on-track to meet outcomes-based measures
 - e. Guide mid-course corrections as needed
2. The leadership team shall develop long-term strategic priorities for the ECHS program along with a work plan for how to achieve programmatic goals. The leadership team shall include and meet regularly—in person and/or virtually—with the leaders from the district and IHE who have decision-making authority to execute changes toward this end:

District leaders (may include):

- Superintendent
- Assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, or equivalent position
- ECHS principal or director
- ECHS liaison
- CTE Director (if applicable to the ECHS model)
- Department Chairs
- School counselors
- School-business partners
- Parent representative

IHE leaders (may include):

- College or university president
- Provost
- Department Chairs for core academic disciplines
- ECHS liaison
- Advising directors
- Dual credit officers

3. Sustainability structures shall be identified and implemented to address and minimize the challenges of staff turnover and potential fluctuations in funding.

Required Activities and Products

Activities:

- All products shall be published on the ECHS’s website and be made available to TEA upon request.
- All products shall be maintained in accordance with the local records retention policy.

Products:

- ECHS/IHE leadership meeting agendas
- School board and board of regents’ presentations
- Description of each member and role in committee
- Documents outlining the strategic priorities for the current academic year and/or long-term priorities of the ECHS partnership



Benchmark 4: Curriculum and Support

The Early College High School 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 Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §4.28), obtain certifications, or earn an associate degree, or earn 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.

Design Elements

All ECHSs must implement and meet the following requirements:

1. The ECHS shall provide a course of study that enables participating students the opportunity to complete high school graduation requirements and earn an associate degree or at least 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. A four-year crosswalk must be in place detailing how students will progress toward this goal including alignment of high school and college level courses. This crosswalk must provide pathways to a Level 1 and/or Level 2 certificate, an associate degree, or a baccalaureate degree and must follow the courses and fields of study listed in the THECB Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) and/or the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM).
2. The campus may implement multiple dual enrollment delivery models, including:
 - a. College courses taught on the college campus by college faculty
 - b. College courses taught on the high school campus by college faculty
 - c. College courses taught on the high school campus by qualified high school faculty
 - d. College courses taught virtually, via distance/online/blended learning
3. The ECHS shall support students in their course of study.
 - a. The ECHS shall provide academic support to the students by personalizing the learning environment in the following ways:
 - Developing individualized student plans for ongoing academic support, filing a degree plan, and the attainment of long-term goals
 - Developing robust college advising systems to advance academic progress
 - Developing a process for collaboration to provide an academic bridge across two educational systems
 - Administering interventions as needed, monitoring academic progress with formative data
 - Providing tutoring and/or Saturday school for identified students in need of academic supports,
 - Providing advisory and/or college readiness and support time built into the program of study for all students, and
 - Establishing a mentorship program available to all students.
 - b. The ECHS shall provide social and emotional support to the students as needed, including:
 - connections to social services
 - parent outreach and involvement opportunities

- c. The ECHS shall provide enrichment opportunities, including:
- A structured program of community service to promote community involvement.
 - Partnering with community businesses to expose students to a variety of potential career options and possible internship opportunities.
 - Providing college awareness to current and prospective students and families, including:
 1. Application assistance,
 2. Financial aid counseling, and
 3. College and career counseling.
4. The ECHS shall provide a variety of opportunities for students to earn college credit (e.g., a portfolio approach may include dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), OnRamps, CLEP assessments, and local articulation agreements for specific courses in partnership with a local college).
5. The ECHS shall biannually implement structured data review processes designed to identify student strengths and weaknesses and develop individual instructional support plans. The ECHS shall develop a contingency plan for students off-track for success in the ECHS program. Support systems shall include infrastructure, resources, and personnel to enable every possibility to retain the student in the ECHS program.

Required Activities and Products

Activities:

- All products shall be published on the ECHS's website and be made available to TEA upon request.
- All products shall be maintained in accordance with the local records retention policy.

Products:

- 4-year/60 college credit hours crosswalk aligning high school and college courses
- Calendar of family outreach events
- Professional learning community agendas
- Advisory/study skills curriculum material
- Master schedules



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 ECHS students to assess college readiness, design individual instructional support plans, and enable students to begin college courses based on their performance on the exam.

Design Elements

All ECHSs must implement and meet the following requirements:

1. The ECHS shall provide a TSI assessment to accepted students as early as incoming 9th graders (however, not as a prerequisite for admissions to the ECHS).
 - 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 publish on their website the dates the TSI will be administered.
 - c. The ECHS shall review TSI testing data, particularly the number/percentage of students who have currently passed each section of the TSI assessment, to ensure the ECHS is on track to meeting outcomes-based measures (see below).
2. The ECHS is a TSI assessment site, or is in the process of becoming 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.
 - a. The ECHS shall provide unlimited opportunities to take the TSI assessment; and
 - b. The ECHS shall leverage diagnostic data to prescribe accelerated instruction to support students
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) to prepare students for TSI and provide academic interventions for those who do not pass TSI.

Required Activities and Products

Activities:

- All products shall be published on the ECHS's website and be made available to TEA upon request.
- All products shall be maintained in accordance with the local records retention policy.

Products:

- Calendar of TSI scheduled test administration dates and registration process
- Aggregate reports of TSI exam performance
- Tutoring and bridge program schedules
- Bridge program curriculum



Benchmark 6: School Design

The Early College High School 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 ECHS leader assigned 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.

Design Elements

All ECHSs must implement and meet the following:

1. The ECHS location shall be:
 - a. On a college or university campus, or
 - b. In a high school—as a standalone high school campus or in a smaller learning community within a larger high school.
2. ECHS staff shall include:
 - a. An ECHS leader who has autonomy for course and instructor scheduling, staff and faculty hiring, and budget development
 - b. An IHE liaison with decision-making authority who interacts directly and frequently (in-person or virtually) with the ECHS leader and the dual credit provider
 - c. Highly qualified ECHS teachers who work directly with the ECHS students, which may include adjunct high school faculty qualified to teach college-level courses
 - d. College advisor(s) who may be provided by, or shared with, the IHE partner who support the ECHS students, through activities, such as:
 - Coordinating with the IHE for registration
 - Monitoring of students' high school and college transcripts
 - Monitoring high school and college courses to ensure programmatic requirements for both the high school and the partnering institution are met
 - Providing layered social and emotional supports to students
3. The ECHS students shall be cohorted for core classes to the extent possible; this does not exclude non-ECHS students from enrolling in the same class.
4. ECHS shall implement an annual professional development plan for teachers and staff, focused on research-based instructional strategies that focus on rigor, build college- and career-readiness, is based on needs assessment of student data, and includes both high school and dual credit teachers. Professional development should include, but is not limited to:

- a. A mentoring and induction program for newly hired staff, providing them with the instructional and interpersonal skills and capacities needed for success in an ECHS.
 - b. Provide 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.
 - c. Develop ongoing opportunities for joint training among ECHS and higher-education college advisors and faculty (e.g., course requirements and addressing the social and emotional needs of students).
5. ECHS campuses not located on a college or university campus shall provide students with frequent use of IHE academic and support facilities, such as libraries, labs, advising center, career center, cultural facilities, and sports facilities.

Required Activities and Products

Activities:

- All products shall be published on the ECHS's website and be made available to TEA upon request.
- All products shall be maintained in accordance with the local records retention policy.

Products:

- Mentor/induction program plans
- Annual training or professional development plan with ECHS and IHE faculty
- ECHS leader/liaison meeting agendas and informational handouts

Access Outcomes-Based Measures

Data Indicators	Provisional Early College	Early College	Distinguished Early College
Requirements	Must serve at-risk incoming 9th graders	Must serve at-risk incoming 9th graders and economically disadvantaged students	Must serve at-risk incoming 9th graders, economically disadvantaged students and at least one additional target population of students
ECHS proportionate to or over-represents at-risk incoming 9th graders	No more than 20% points under district	No more than 15% points under district	No more than 10% points under district
ECHS proportionate to or over-represents economically disadvantaged students	No more than 10% points under district	No more than 5% points under district	Meets or over-represents district
ECHS proportionate to or over-represents English learners	Not taken into account for designation	Not taken into account for designation	No more than 5% points under district
ECHS proportionate to or over-represents students with disabilities	Not taken into account for designation	Not taken into account for designation	No more than 5% points under district

Data on the following populations historically under-represented in higher education will also be provided in your Outcomes-Based Measures Summary Report:

- African American
- Hispanic
- Male

These data are for informational purposes ONLY and are not used to determine an ECHS's designation status.

Attainment Outcomes-Based Measures

Data Indicators	Provisional Early College	Early College	Distinguished Early College
Requirements	Must meet college English, college math, and 15 college credit targets	Must meet targets on at least five attainment data indicators	Must meet targets on at least six attainment data indicators
Persistence of 9th grade students (and transfers) through ECHS program	Not taken into account for designation	Percentage of students enrolled in 9 grade (or who transfer in the program in grades 10 or 11) who remain at the ECHS campus (TBD)	Percentage of students enrolled in 9 grade (or who transfer in the program in grades 10 or 11) who remain at the ECHS campus (TBD)
Completing one college-level English course by end of 12th grade (any)	80% of students (by the fourth year of implementation)	90% of students	95% of students
Completing one college-level math course by end of 12th grade (any)	80% of students (by the fourth year of implementation)	90% of students	95% of students
Earning 15 college credits (any) by graduation	50% of students (by the fourth year of implementation)	80% of students	95% of students
Earning 30 college credits (any) by graduation	Not taken into account for designation	50% of students	65% of students
Earning postsecondary degree and/or credential by high school graduation OR 60+ college credits	Not taken into account for designation	30% of students	40% of students
Graduating high school in 4 years (4-year cohort graduation rate)	Not taken into account for designation	Meets the statewide 4-year graduation rate	Exceeds the statewide 4-year graduation rate
Direct-to-college enrollment into 4-year institution	Not taken into account for designation	50% of students	65% of students

Achievement Outcomes-Based Measures

Data Indicators	Provisional Early College	Early College	Distinguished Early College
Requirements	Must meet at least three TSI targets	Must meet at least four achievement data indicators	Must meet at least five achievement data indicators
TSI College Readiness Standards in reading by end of 11th grade	65% passing rate	70% passing rate	75% passing rate
TSI College Readiness Standards in writing by end of 11th grade	75% passing rate	80% passing rate	85% passing rate
TSI College Readiness Standards in math by end of 11th grade	50% passing rate	60% passing rate	75% passing rate
TSI College Readiness Standards in all 3 subjects by end of 11th grade	35% passing rate	40% passing rate	50% passing rate
Algebra I EOC assessment (grades 8-9)	Not taken into account for designation	90% of students achieve Meets Grade Level Performance	90% of students achieve Meets Grade Level Performance with 45% achieving Masters Grade Level Performance
English II EOC assessment (grades 9-11)	Not taken into account for designation	90% of students achieve Meets Grade Level Performance	90% of students achieve Meets Grade Level Performance with 45% achieving Masters Grade Level Performance