



Benchmark 2: Partnership Agreement

The Early College High School shall have a current, signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 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 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 provisions and processes for collecting, sharing, and reviewing program and student data to assess the progress of the ECHS.

Design Elements

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

- Courses of study, which enables a student to combine high school courses and college-level courses to earn either an associate's degree or at least 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree
- Curriculum alignment
- 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
- 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 associates degree to a bachelor's degree and beyond in their chosen field)
- ECHS students access to the IHE facilities, services and resources
- Policies regarding eligibility of ECHS students for financial assistance from the higher education partner(s), specifically, waivers for tuition and fees
- Professional development for ECHS faculty (including both district and IHE faculty/staff)
- Data sharing agreement that includes provisions for:
 - Teacher data such as qualifications
 - Student level data such as credit hours taken and earned; GPA, formative data to assess if student is on track to be successful in college level courses
- Administration of statewide instruments under TEC Subchapter B, Chapter 39
- Transportation costs and fees
- Grading periods and policies
- Instructional materials
- Instructional calendar including location of each course that will be offered
- Student enrollment and attendance policies
- Provisions for discontinuing ECHS operation and the ensure students previously enrolled will have opportunity to complete their course of study

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.
- Campuses must submit their final signed MOU 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 to TEA.

Products:

- Final, signed, and executed MOU