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 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/ILA 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 formative 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 in coordination with district and campus improvement planning. 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 to the IHE

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- 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 to the ECHS
- Advising or student support director
- Dual credit officer

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 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
- Document(s) outlining the strategic priorities for the current academic year and/or long-term priorities of the ECHS partnership

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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 postsecondary credentials, including Level 1 and/or Level 2 certificate, completion of the Texas Core Curriculum, 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 high school educators who meet faculty requirements
    d. College courses taught virtually, via distance/online/blended learning
3. The ECHS shall collaborate with their college partner(s) to 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 a process for collaboration to provide an academic bridge across two educational systems
        - Developing robust college advising systems to advance academic progress
        - 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 instructional sequence for all students

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