BENCHMARK 4: ACADEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The Early College High School (ECHS) must provide a rigorous course of study that allows students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and enable a student to combine high school courses and college-level courses with the goal of earning an associate degree or up to 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree.

Design Elements:

4.1 *Regional Need*

The ECHS shall work with the local workforce development board, local chamber of commerce, and/or local workforce industry representatives to identify and maintain a list of high-demand occupations. The ECHS shall explore how the ECHS academic plan and targeted postsecondary credentials connect with the local economic needs.

4.2 *Postsecondary Opportunities*

The ECHS program must provide a rigorous course of study that allows students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and enables a student to combine high school courses and college-level courses with the goal of earning an associate degree or up to 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree.

4.3 *Course Sequence*

The ECHS program shall offer a course of study that provides a detailed and relevant course sequence to the postsecondary opportunities aligned to the high school and college courses provided to the ECHS students. This crosswalk 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).

4.4 *Course Offerings*

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) with applicability of college credits in mind.

4.5 *Delivery of Courses*

The campus may implement multiple dual enrollment delivery models, including, but not limited to the following:

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

4.6 *Academic Performance in High School*

The ECHS shall implement a plan for End-of-Course (EOC) assessment success, including academic preparation classes for accepted students and academic interventions for students who do not pass EOC assessments.

4.7 *College Readiness*

The ECHS shall provide a TSI assessment to accepted students as early as incoming 9th graders (Note, this assessment may not be used as a prerequisite for admissions to the ECHS).

a. The ECHS shall publish on its website the dates, times, and location(s) for TSI administration
b. The ECHS shall provide assessment fee waivers for all administrations of the TSI test
c. The ECHS shall implement a plan for TSI success, including academic preparation classes for accepted students and shall provide academic interventions (e.g., tutorials, workshops, testing strategies, accelerated instruction) for students who do not pass the TSI before retesting
d. The ECHS shall review TSI testing data, particularly the number/percentage of students who have passed each section of the TSI assessment to prescribe accelerated instruction to support students
e. The ECHS shall explore alternative measures for students to meet college readiness standards

4.8 *Student Data Tracking*

The ECHS shall biannually implement structured data review processes to do the following:

a. Identify student strengths and areas of growth and develop individual instructional support plans.
b. Provide an assessment for measuring student progress to ensure students are on track to meet the Outcomes-Based Measures.
c. Provide an opportunity for the IHE to provide feedback on the value of the ECHS program.

4.9 *Student Persistence*

The ECHS shall create a 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 and promote program completion.

4.10 *Student Pathway Support*

The ECHS shall develop a plan to support direct-to-college student enrollment following high school graduation and a strategy to foster long-term workforce readiness.