

2017-18 Evaluation of Early College High Schools

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At-a-Glance

An Early College High School (ECHS) is a school designated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) that enables students who might not otherwise go to college the opportunity to earn dual credit and earn an associate's degree or up to 60 hours of tuition-free college credit by the time of high school graduation. Since 2016, Dallas Independent School District (ISD) has expanded these opportunities for its students with a partnership with the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). In addition to the five traditional ECHS that already existed, 18 new ECHS have opened since 2016 bringing the total to 23. All 23 high schools obtained the designation from TEA as Early College High Schools in 2017-18. The district plans to open two more ECHSs at Skyline and North Lake and 2018-19 is slotted to be a planning year for these openings.

Table 1: 2017-18 Dallas ISD Early College High Schools and Education Partners

Early College High Schools	Higher Education Partner
Trinidad Garza	Mountain View College
Kathlyn Joy Gilliam	Cedar Valley College
Dr. Wright L. Lassiter Jr.	El Centro College
W.W. Samuell	Eastfield College
H. Grady Spruce	Eastfield College
David W. Carter	Cedar Valley College
Emmett J. Conrad	Richland College
Thomas Jefferson	Brookhaven College
Seagoville	Eastfield College
South Oak Cliff	Mountain View College
James Madison	El Centro College
L.G. Pinkston	El Centro College
Franklin D. Roosevelt	El Centro College
Bryan Adams	Eastfield College
W.H. Adamson	El Centro College
Hillcrest	Richland College
Justin F. Kimball	Mountain View College
Lincoln	El Centro College & University of N. Texas-Dallas
Moisés Molina	Mountain View College
North Dallas	Brookhaven College
Sunset	Mountain View College & University of N. Texas-Dallas
Wilmer-Hutchins	North Lake College
W.T. White	Brookhaven College

Source: ECHS program documents

Four campuses (Seagoville, Pinkston, South Oak Cliff, and Wilmer-Hutchins) have obtained the Pathways to Technology Early College High School (ECHS P-TECH) designation while the remaining 14 new ECHSs are expected to receive their P-TECH designation by the 2018-19 school year. At P-TECHs, in addition to the potential to earn an associate's degree, students choose a career pathway and take courses that provide the technical and workplace skills and earn industry certificates in their selected career

pathways. Additionally, partnership with industry partners provides P-TECH students with essential mentoring, internship opportunities, and other support to prepare them to enter the workforce career-ready with the possibility of job placement after graduation. The 2017-18 ECHS program was supported by \$16,904,989 in bond and general operating funds.

Purpose and Methods of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the implementation of the 2017-18 ECHS program based on outlined program goals and objectives. The evaluation examined the source and amount of funding for the program, outlined the context and components of the program, examined ECHS student demographic characteristics and analyzed short-term academic outcomes. The evaluation team reviewed program documents and conducted informal interviews with program staff to provide data for the context and components of the ECHS program. The evaluator conducted frequency and crosstab analyses to examine the various short-term academic outcomes.

Program Components

School Design

Three of the 23 ECHSs are designed as "stand alone", and solely educate ECHS students (Garza, Gilliam, and Lassiter). The remaining 20 schools are designed as a "school within a school" facility and are housed on comprehensive high school campuses. ECHS students spend ninth and tenth grade taking core courses in a dedicated wing while attending classes for fine arts, health, physical education, and foreign languages at the comprehensive high school. The district provided transportation to and from college partner campuses, as needed. ECHS students from these 20 campuses are expected to spend 11th and 12th grade on their DCCCD partner campus.

Student Applications

Dallas ISD has a recruitment/enrollment goal of approximately 100 to 125 students per campus per year. The district begins accepting online applications starting at the beginning of December till the end of January of each school year from grade eight students who expect to be promoted to the ninth grade the following school year. Students from across the district can select their top three choices among the district's ECHSs. All students who apply participate in an interview. Acceptance letters are sent to applicants in March.

Campus Staffing

Dedicated ECHS staff include one assistant principal to serve as campus administrator, one workplace learning coordinator, one dedicated counselor, and one dedicated clerk¹.

Pathways and Industry Partners

ECHS P-TECH students select pathways to guide their progress from grade nine toward a specialized field. To supplement education related to selected pathways, industry partners provided students with related hands-on learning experiences. Partnership with industry partners provides students with essential mentoring, internship opportunities, and other support to prepare them to enter the workforce career-ready. The career pathways available to students range from health sciences, information technology and cyber security to culinary arts, animal sciences, law enforcement, and others.

Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA)

To be eligible for dual credit coursework, ECHS students were required to demonstrate college readiness by achieving the minimum passing standard on The Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA).² Results of the TSIA indicate whether students were ready for college-level course work in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. In spring 2017, Dallas ISD successfully negotiated a license for the district to administer TSIA tests, and ECHSs became designated TSIA test centers. The goal for ECHS students was to meet the minimum standard on the TSIA by the end of grade ten.

Summer Bridge Program

Dallas ISD ECHS partnered with DCCCD to offer a summer bridge program. The goal of this two-week long program was to prepare incoming grade nine students to meet TSIA requirements. The summer bridge program focused on four dimensions: 1) contextual skills and awareness; 2) academic behaviors; 3) key content knowledge; and 4) key cognitive strategies. The summer bridge program in 2017-18 consisted of four sessions.

Student Demographics

The 2017-18 ninth grade ECHS cohort consisted of 2,466 students enrolled at 23 campuses, bringing the total number of ECHS students in the district to 4,410³. As shown in Table 2, slightly over two-thirds (71%) of the 2017-18 ECHS cohort were Hispanic, which was

identical to the proportion of Hispanic students at the district level. There were slightly more ECHS female students (55%) than male (45%). Most students were economically disadvantaged (88%) and at risk (59%). Although ECHS student demographics were generally similar to the Dallas ISD high school students, overall, the 2017-18 ECHS students were more likely than district high school students to be African American (26% ECHS; 22% district), more likely to be female (55% ECHS; 49% district), more likely to be socioeconomically disadvantaged (88% ECHS; 82% district), less likely to be enrolled in special education (3% ECHS; 9% district), less likely to be at-risk (59% ECHS; 70% district), and less likely to be ELL (34% ECHS; 40% district).

Table 2: 2017-18 Ninth Grade ECHS School and District Student Demographic Characteristics

	ECHS		Dallas ISD High Schools	
	n	%	n	%
Ethnicity				
African American	634	26	2,640	22
Hispanic	1,748	71	8,444	71
White	38	2	506	4
Asian	26	1	172	1
Other	20	1	131	1
Gender				
Female	1,346	55	5,772	49
Male	1,120	45	6,121	52
Socioeconomic Status				
Eco Dis	2,159	88	9,695	82
English Language Learner				
ELL	834	34	4,773	40
Special Education				
SPED	83	3	1,075	9
At Risk				
At Risk	1,463	59	8,272	70

Source: District demographic files dated 10/30/2017

Note: ECHS = Early College High School, Eco dis = economically disadvantaged, ELL = English language learner, SPED = special education. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Early College High School Short-Term Outcomes

Dual Credit Courses

In fall 2017, 1,122 students attempted dual credit courses with a 95 percent success rate. Out of the 1,122 students, 80 percent were enrolled in a single dual credit course while the remaining 20 percent attempted two dual credit courses. In spring 2018, 1,289 students attempted dual credit courses for a 99 percent success rate. Out of the 1,289 students, 73

¹ While the eight ECHSs that opened in 2016-17 had dedicated program teachers, the program no longer employs teachers assigned to teach ECHS students solely.

² In addition, students were required to have completed any prerequisite coursework.

³ There were 1,217 ECHS students in the 10th grade, 416 in the 11th grade, and 311 in the 12th grade in 2017-18.

percent were enrolled in a single dual credit course, 24 percent were enrolled in two dual credit courses, while the remaining three percent attempted three dual credit courses during the 2018 spring semester.

Attendance

Overall attendance rates for ECHS students in 2017-18 exceeded attendance rates for non-ECHS students at all individual campuses and overall (96% ECHS versus 92% non-ECHS). Attendance rates for ECHS campuses ranged between 94 percent (Roosevelt and South Oak Cliff) and 99 percent (Garza). Although ECHS students in Roosevelt and South Oak Cliff had the lowest attendance rate compared to ECHS students on other campuses, they also showed a greater attendance rate difference compared to their non-ECHS student counterparts on the same campuses (8 percentage point difference).

Student Retention

Rates of retention were calculated for the 13 ECHS campuses that were in operation during or before the 2016-17 school year. Retention rates ranged from 77 percent (Madison) to 96 percent (Garza). Overall, 1,158 of 1,315 or 88 percent of the 2016-17 ninth grade cohort remained at an ECHS in 2017-18. Retention rate for ECHS students was greater compared to their non-ECHS counterparts in the same campuses during the same timeframe (88% versus 77%, respectively). Compared to non-ECHS students, ECHS students at Pinkston had the largest retention rate difference (22 percentage point) followed by Jefferson (16 percentage point) and Samuell (15 percentage point).

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness End-of-Course (STAAR EOC)

Overall, compared to the district rate, a higher percentage of ECHS students met or exceeded the Approaches+ and Meets+ performance standards on all STAAR EOC subjects (Tables 3 & 4). The percentage of ECHS students meeting or exceeding the Approaches+ performance standard on STAAR EOC was greater than those of the district for Algebra I (93% versus 76%), Biology I (94% versus 83%), English I (74% versus 53%), English II (83% versus 65%), and US History (95% versus 86%). At all but one of the 23 campuses, rates for Approaches+ performance standard for ECHS students met or exceeded the district rate for Algebra I, Biology, and English I. Additionally, ECHS students at all campuses with more than 10 students tested exceeded the district rate for English II and US History.

Table 3: 2017-18 Percentage of ECHS and District Students at Approaches+ Standard on All STAAR EOC Exams

	Algebra I	Biology	English I	English II	US History
Adams	94	95	87	--	--
Adamson	97	98	93	--	--
Carter	92	95	75	84	99
Conrad	96	97	91	87	100
Garza	100	100	99	100	--
Gilliam	98	100	97	98	*
Hillcrest	95	97	75	*	--
Jefferson	100	99	83	82	95
Kimball	97	98	89	*	--
Lassiter	100	100	100	100	*
Lincoln	91	92	67	--	--
Madison	94	90	61	76	89
Molina	100	97	79	*	--
N. Dallas	75	93	75	*	--
Pinkston	100	100	93	93	100
Roosevelt	76	79	50	72	90
Samuell	94	97	78	89	--
Seagoville	85	95	65	90	96
SOC	88	90	60	77	93
Spruce	94	94	57	67	95
Sunset	95	94	75	*	--
White	92	96	80	*	--
W-Hutchins	94	84	53	--	--
All ECHS	93	94	74	83	95
District	76	83	53	65	86

Source: STAAR EOC data file dated 07/10/2018 and demographic file dated 10/30/2017.

Note: ECHS= Early College High School. SOC = South Oak Cliff. N. Dallas = North Dallas. W-Hutchins = Wilmer Hutchins. -- = no students took exam in this category. * = Less than 10 students took test in this category; their data was therefore masked for confidentiality purposes. Rates only include first time testers for the first and second administrations, excluding *Alternate 2* of STAAR EOC exams. District rates include ECHS students.

The percentage of ECHS students at the Meets+ performance standard on STAAR EOC was also greater than those of the district for Algebra I (67% versus 46%), Biology I (70% versus 54%), English I (53% versus 34%), English II (65% versus 48%), and US History (70% versus 62%). Rates of Meets+ performance standard for ECHS students met or exceeded the district rate at all but three of the 23 campuses for Algebra I and Biology. Additionally, ECHS students at all but two campuses with more than 10 students tested exceeded the district rate for English I and US History. ECHS students at all campuses with more than 10 students tested exceeded the district rate for English II.

Table 4: 2017-18 Percentage of ECHS and District Students at Meets+ Standard on All STAAR EOC Exams

	Algebra I	Biology	English I	English II	US History
Adams	82	86	72	--	--
Adamson	83	93	77	--	--
Carter	56	58	44	51	64
Conrad	73	89	78	80	93
Garza	95	93	92	100	--
Gilliam	74	85	89	89	*
Hillcrest	72	83	56	*	--
Jefferson	86	95	63	66	74
Kimball	80	75	71	*	--
Lassiter	90	88	98	98	*
Lincoln	57	67	51	--	--
Madison	55	45	40	49	49
Molina	94	77	64	*	--
N. Dallas	29	73	44	*	--
Pinkston	93	82	63	85	90
Roosevelt	38	34	24	49	63
Samuell	60	77	55	69	--
Seagoville	27	65	43	75	69
SOC	60	53	38	50	54
Spruce	92	54	34	48	73
Sunset	79	61	46	*	--
White	63	66	63	*	--
W-Hutchins	65	48	27	--	--
All ECHS	67	70	53	65	70
District	46	54	34	48	62

Source: STAAR EOC data file dated 07/10/2018 and demographic file dated 10/30/2017.

Note: ECHS= Early College High School. SOC = South Oak Cliff. N. Dallas = North Dallas. W-Hutchins = Wilmer Hutchins. -- = no students took exam in this category. * = Less than 10 students took test in this category; their data was therefore masked for confidentiality purposes. Rates only include first time testers for the first and second administrations, excluding *Alternate 2* of STAAR EOC exams. District rates include ECHS students.

Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)

Fall 2017 ACP passing rates for ECHS students slightly exceeded district rates for the social studies exam (65% ECHS versus 60% district), but lagged behind the district for English/language arts (61% ECHS versus 66% district), mathematics (58% ECHS versus 60% district), and science (56% ECHS versus 61% district).

Spring 2018 ACP passing rates for ECHS students lagged behind the district on mathematics (63% ECHS versus 68% district) and science (52% ECHS versus 65% district) but was identical to the district (63%) on social studies. ECHS students did not take English Language Arts ACP exam in spring 2018.

Recommendations

- **Investigate ways to increase the participation of more at-risk and ELL students in the program.** While ECHS student demographics were generally similar to overall Dallas ISD high school students, the program had smaller proportions of at-risk (59%

ECHS; 70% district) and ELL (34% ECHS; 40% district) students compared to overall high school students in the district.

- **Investigate ways to retain more students in the program.** The retention rate for the 2016-17 ninth grade ECHS cohort was 88%, which was higher than the non-ECHS counterparts and data showed that half of those who were not retained withdrew from the district. However, 40 percent of those 'not retained' were enrolled in participating campuses but no longer remained in the program. Follow up visits with these students may reveal opportunities to increase the retention rate of the program even higher.

References

Zhang, J. (August 2017). 2016-17 Evaluation of the Collegiate Academies. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

An electronic version of this report as well as the full 2017-18 report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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