From Great to Greater: Expanding Strong ECHSs in Texas

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Today’s Session:

**Section 1:**
- TEA Strategic Priorities & Texas Education Code
- ECHS Designation prior to redesign
- Rationale for redesign
- Major changes

**Section 2:**
- Redesign process
- Stakeholder engagement

**Section 3:**
- New designation process
Laying the Foundation
What are Early College High Schools?

- Innovative high schools that allow students least likely to attend college an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and up to 60 college credit hours;
- provide dual credit at no cost to students;
- offer rigorous instruction and accelerated courses;
- provide academic and social support services to help students succeed;
- increase college readiness; and
- reduce barriers to college access.
What are the requirements of an ECHS program?

- Serve students who are at risk of dropping out of school
- Provide an associate degree or up to 60 hours toward a baccalaureate degree
- Do not require students to pay for tuition, fees, or required textbooks
- Comply with all assurances
- Adhere to the ECHS Blueprint
ECHS Blueprint

Benchmarks:

1. Target Population
2. Partnership Agreement
3. P-16 Leadership Initiatives
4. Curriculum and Support
5. Academic Rigor and Readiness
6. School Design
ECHS history in Texas

- 2004 - First ECHS in Texas
- 2006 - TEA issues first creation and expansion ECHS grants (8 initial grantees)
- 2006-2010 - TEA issues ECHS grants with various focus areas (small/rural)
- 2009-2010 - TEA first designates campuses as ECHS
- 2017 - TEA redesigns the ECHS Blueprint and Designation requirements
- 2018-2019 - Redesigned ECHS Blueprint and Designation requirements implemented
- 2006-present-TEA provides technical assistance to grantees/designees
Today:

198 Designated ECHS for 2017-2018
Why Redesign?
One Mission. One Strategy.

Every child, prepared for success in college, a career or the military.

**Strategic priorities**
- Recruit, support, and retain teachers and principals
- Build a foundation of reading and math
- Connect high school to career and college
- Improve low-performing schools

**Enablers**
- Increase transparency, fairness and rigor in district and campus academic and financial performance
- Ensure compliance, effectively implement legislation and inform policymakers
- Strengthen organizational foundations (resource efficiency, culture, capabilities, partnerships)

TEA Strategic Priorities
Early College Education Program (TEC 29.908)

- Serve students who are at risk of dropping out of school or who wish to accelerate completion of the high school program.

- Provide for a course of study that enables a participating student to combine high school courses and college-level courses during grades 9 through 12;

- Allow a participating student to complete high school and, on or before the fifth anniversary of the date of the student's first day of high school, receive a high school diploma and either:
  - an associate’s degree; or
  - at least 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree;
Early College Education Program (TEC 29.908)

- Include articulation agreements with colleges, universities, and technical schools in this state to provide a participating student access to postsecondary educational and training opportunities at a college, university, or technical school; and

- Provide a participating student flexibility in class scheduling and academic mentoring.
Rationale for Change

- Current ECHS Blueprint/Designation requirements have not changed substantively for 10 years
  - Largely compliance-based, focused on inputs (narrative)
  - Focused on growing new academic model, but ECHS is no longer “new”
  - Feedback: compliance with some blueprint requirements were onerous and did not acknowledge differences in regional and local needs
- Growth in new types of ECHSs (e.g., Industry Cluster Innovative Academies, P-TECH)
- Changes in dual credit policies
Vision for Redesign

- Statutory requirements provide basis of definition for ECHS model and will remain in place

- Texas Administrative Code (Commissioner’s Rules) will be amended to reflect an updated outcomes-based approach
  - Focus on providing ECHSs more flexibility in “how” they choose to manage their programs to successful outcomes
Redesign Benefits-Designation

- Designation status and recognition based on evidence-based outcome measures, not just inputs or compliance exercises
- Clearly defined goals for outcomes combined with greater flexibility for how different ECHSs meet these goals
- Abbreviated designation application (early spring 2018)
Redesign Benefits-Implementation

- Broader recognition and supports for high-quality programs and what they provide Texas students
- Better reflect the current and diverse state of the ECHS field, including general education, CTE, and innovation models
- Acknowledge the differences in regional and local needs
- Reduce the burden of some onerous blueprint requirements and provide greater flexibility in implementation
Redesign Benefits-Support

- Identify and address needs for technical assistance where they are needed most and support continuous improvement.
- Provide new ECHS campuses time to plan for implementation with targeted technical assistance.
- Develop resources and training for ECHS leaders, counselors, and educators.
- Provide formative feedback during implementation.
Overarching Changes

Design Elements

- Revised to allow for more flexibility
- Reduce burden of onerous requirements
- Better reflect ECHS field

Outcomes-Based Measures (OBMs)

- Meet yearly targets across access, achievement, and attainment indicators
  *TEA will use PEIMS reported data*
- Qualify for designation categories
- Identify which ECHSs need improvement
Implementation Timeline

- **Transition year: 2017-2018**
  - Operate under existing ECHS Blueprint
  - Prepare for implementation of OBMs
    - PEIMS Indicator
    - Collaboration with dual credit partner
  - 2018-2019 Designation application will reflect redesigned Blueprint (released January 2018)

- **Implementation year: 2018-2019**
  - All redesigned Blueprint design elements are required to be met
  - Outcomes-Based Measures (OBMs) phase in beginning with 9th grade
New Look and Feel
TEA Support

- New resources on TEA website posted throughout the 2017-18 school year
- Support ECHSs to adjust to the new designation design elements and outcomes-based measures
  - Understand that change takes time
  - Phase-in process
  - Evaluate new process and make necessary adjustments
## Redesign Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>• Review/analyze relevant research/papers on dual credit and ECHS</td>
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<td>• Review/analyze previous designation/grant applications</td>
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<td>• Review/analyze ECHS performance data</td>
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<td>Stakeholder input</td>
<td>• Webinar and statewide survey</td>
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<td>• Interviews/focus groups</td>
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<td>• Public comment</td>
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<td>• Working group</td>
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<td>• South Texas ECHS Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Recommendations</td>
<td>• First draft recommendations</td>
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<td>• Revisions/edits incorporating public comment</td>
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<td>• Second draft recommendations</td>
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<td>• Revisions/edits incorporating public comment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Final draft recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commissioner Approval</td>
<td>• Commissioner final approval of Blueprint and Outcomes-Based Measures</td>
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<td>Redesigned ECHS Blueprint</td>
<td>• ECHS Best Practices Summit</td>
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## Redesign Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2017-February 2017</td>
<td>Study (designation applications, national best practices, data review)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March –June 2017</td>
<td>Stakeholder Input-Interviews, Focus Groups (in-person, WebEx)</td>
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<td>March 9, 2017</td>
<td>ECHS Redesign Webinar</td>
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<td>April 13, 2017</td>
<td>ECHS Working Group input session</td>
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<td>April 17, 2017</td>
<td>Draft Recommendations published</td>
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<td>April 17-28, 2017</td>
<td>Public Comment round 1</td>
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<td>April 24-25, 2017</td>
<td>South Texas ECHS Conference-Focus Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1 –May 13, 2017</td>
<td>Revisions incorporating round 1 public comment</td>
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<td>May 15-19, 2017</td>
<td>Public Comment round 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 22-June 1, 2017</td>
<td>Revisions incorporating round 2 public comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10,2017</td>
<td>Final recommendations to Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2, 2017</td>
<td>2018-2019 ECHS Blueprint released</td>
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</table>
Jan – Feb 2017: Study

March – June 2017:
- Interviews and focus groups

April – June 2017:
- Analyzed data to set OBM year targets

April 2017:
- First draft of recommendations, working group mtg., & public comment

May 2017:
- Second draft of recommendations, working group mtg., & public comment

July 2017:
- Redesign approved by TEA Commissioner

August 2, 2017:
- Redesigned ECHS process and blueprint released
## Stakeholder Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Stakeholders Reached</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Survey</td>
<td>201 responses</td>
<td>March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>47 interviews</td>
<td>March-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>15 members</td>
<td>April-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Comment Periods</td>
<td>33 responses</td>
<td>April-June</td>
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<tr>
<td>WebEx Focus Groups</td>
<td>19 participants</td>
<td>May-June</td>
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Interviews

- JFF interviewed 47 practitioners from both high schools and colleges
- Each practitioner answered questions about:
  - Their ECHS background and target population
  - The curriculum, supports, rigor, and academic readiness of their program
  - The strength of their partnerships and P-16 leadership initiatives
  - Their opinions about the current TEA early college blueprint and designation
  - Most surprising or challenging aspect about implementation
  - Goals for improving their ECHS
Themes from Interviews

- One of the most challenging aspects of ECHS implementation is building a strong relationship between the district and the IHE. The Blueprint should speak to the shared roles and responsibilities of both partners.

- Rural ECHSs struggle significantly with meeting certain requirements – e.g., providing students with at least six visits to the IHE’s campus, fulfilling staffing requirements of a dedicated principal, cohort-only courses.

- The Blueprint should allow and provide applicable guidance for multiple dual enrollment delivery models – on a college campus, on a high school campus taught by a college faculty, on a high school campus taught by a qualified high school teacher, etc.

- The field wants more technical assistance, particularly from engaging in more networking opportunities, both regionally and statewide. Additionally, technical assistance should be provided earlier in the planning and implementation of the ECHS.
Working Group

15 members representing:
- Alief ISD
- Austin Community College
- Education Service Center, Region 13
- Frank L. Madla ECHS
- Harold T. Branch Academy
- North Houston ECHS
- Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ESD
- Roscoe Collegiate High School
- South Texas College
- Texas A/M International University Laredo
- Texas Association of Community Colleges
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Texas State Technical College
- Trinidad Garza ECHS @ Mountain View College
- Valle Verde ECHS

Objectives:
- Discuss the feasibility of the recommendations
- Identify any unintended barriers
- Think through the best metrics to measure the success of ECHSs
Data Analysis

- Targets for outcomes-based measures (OBMs) were set by analyzing available PEIMS data.

![Graph 1: ECHS Percentage of Econ. Disadvantaged Students](image1)

![Graph 2: ECHS Percentage of African American Students](image2)
Five Changes to Designation

1. Require **one year of planning** for new ECHS candidates and work with a technical assistance provider – funded by TEA – to achieve all requirements in the Blueprint.

2. Review **outcomes-based measures** (OBMs) annually, and designate ECHS status accordingly (see #3). The OBMs fall into three categories – access, achievement, and attainment.

3. Use **three differentiated ECHS designation categories** – Provisional Early College, Early College, Distinguished Early College. At any time, if an ECHS doesn’t meet the OBMs, the ECHS may be categorized as **needs improvement** and will receive targeted technical assistance and have no more than two years to meet the OBMs or no longer receive designation.
Five Changes to Designation

4. The OBM$s will be integrated into the Blueprint and all ECHS$s will be required to implement and accomplish all of the design elements and OBM$s. Other changes to the Blueprint will include collapsing the three levels of implementation – initiating, implementing, and exemplar – and requiring all ECHS$s to implement the same design elements.

5. TEA will phase-in implementation of meeting OBM$s over the next four years.
ECHS Blueprint & Designation Process
Topics

- Differentiated process for new and existing ECHSs
- Changes to Blueprint design elements
- Addition of outcomes-based measures (OBMs)
- Phased-in implementation
Texas Early College High School

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 OBM targets 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 OBM targets. For public purposes, campuses are identified as Early College.

EARLY COLLEGE

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

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 OBM targets.

Needs Improvement

At any time, if an ECHS doesn’t meet the OBM targets, the ECHS may be categorized as needs improvement and will receive targeted technical assistance and has no more than two years to meet the OBM targets or no longer receive designation. If a Distinguished Early College doesn’t meet the OBM targets, the ECHS will be designated as an Early College, given that they meet the Early College OBM targets.
The Revised Blueprint

- New look and feel.
- Collapsed the three levels of implementation – initiating, implementing, and exemplar. All ECHSs are required to meet all of the design elements.
- Integrated the outcomes-based measures (OBMs).
- All products are required and must be posted on the ECHS’s website.
- Some design elements are revised to provide ECHSs more flexibility in implementation.
## Changes to Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Target Population</td>
<td>• Added access OBMs;</td>
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<td>• Included students with disabilities under subpopulations.</td>
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<td>2: Partnership Agreement</td>
<td>• Reordered MOU components;</td>
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<td>• Campuses must submit their final signed MOU to TEA when initially applying for designation;</td>
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<td>• 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);</td>
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<td>• Campuses in needs improvement may be required to resubmit their MOU to TEA.</td>
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# Changes to Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Changes</th>
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| 3: P-16 Leadership Initiatives| • Leaders from the district and IHE can determine the composition of their leadership team;  
• TEA provides more recommendations for roles that may be included in the leadership team;  
• Leadership team meetings may be in-person or held virtually;  
• Leadership team assumes shared responsibility (between the school district and the IHE) for meeting annual outcomes-based measures. |
| 4: Curriculum and Support     | • Added attainment OBMs;  
• The crosswalk must provide pathways to a certification, an associate’s degree, or a baccalaureate degree;  
• Campuses may implement multiple dual enrollment delivery models.                                                                 |
| 5: Academic Rigor and Readiness| • Added achievement OBMs                                                                                                                                                                               |
## Changes to Benchmarks

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
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<tr>
<td>6: School Design</td>
<td>• ECHS staff shall include,</td>
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<td>• an ECHS leader who has scheduling, hiring, and budget autonomy;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• An IHE liaison with decision-making authority and interacts directly</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and frequently (in-person or virtually) with ECHS the leader and</td>
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<td>the dual credit provider;</td>
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<td>• highly qualified ECHS teachers may include adjunct high school</td>
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<td>faculty capable of teaching college-level courses;</td>
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<td>• counseling staff who support the ECHS students, including activities</td>
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<td>such as: coordinating with the IHE for registration and monitor of</td>
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<td>students’ high school and college transcripts, monitoring high</td>
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<td>school and college courses to ensure both requirement are met;</td>
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<td>• ECHS core classes does not exclude non-ECHS students from enrolling</td>
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<td>in the same class;</td>
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<td>• ECHS campuses not located on a college or university campus shall</td>
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<td>provide students with frequent – not weekly – use of the IHE</td>
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<td>campus</td>
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Outcomes-Based Measures (OBMs)

The defined yearly targets will serve multiple purposes:

- Identify which ECHSs qualify for inclusion as part of their designation status (i.e., provisional early college, early college, and distinguished early college)
- Identify which ECHSs need improvement, and therefore are in need of targeted assistance and/or support
- Encourage the field to maximize access and maintain early college standards of excellence, identify and support the lowest performers, and recognize and reward the highest performers
ACCESS
Student enrollment in ECHS is proportionate to, or over-representative of, targeted subgroups in the entire district

ACHIEVEMENT
Student performance on various measures of college readiness while enrolled in ECHS

ATTAINMENT
Student completion of ECHS programming
Existing Early College High School Designation Process

Existing ECHS reapply to become designated for the 2018-2019 school year

Required to meet all design elements

Meet OBM for 9th grade cohort for 2018-2019 school year

Meet OBM for 9th & 10th grade cohorts for 2019-2020 school year

Meet OBM for 9th, 10th, & 11th grade cohorts for 2020-2021 school year

Meet OBM for 9th, 10th, 11th, & 12th grade cohorts for 2021-2022 school year

ALL OBM MET:
Redesignated as an Early College or Distinguished Early College

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT:
ECHS will receive targeted technical assistance

If OBM not met:
New Early College High School Designation Process

- District interested in opening new ECHS campus
  - Apply for a planning year
  - Apply to become a Provisional Early College
  - Meet all design elements and provisional outcomes year

- Once accepted into the planning year, engage in one year of planning with the TEA selected technical assistance provider and meet the planning year requirements
  - Engage TA Provider
  - 4 Years: 1234
  - Each year, the provisional ECHSs should be meeting design elements and targets.

- Once designated, spend the next four years growing cohorts, improving programming, and building strong partnerships
  - Grow
  - Improve
  - Build

- After first graduating cohort, district can apply to become an Early College

TEA Texas Education Agency
TEA Support for ECHSs

- New resources on TEA website posted throughout the 2017-2018 school year
  - Transition tools
  - Blueprint Toolkit
- Support ECHSs adjust to the new designation design elements and outcomes-based measures
  - Technical assistance based on need for existing ECHSs
Final Thoughts

- Designation status and recognition based on evidence-based outcome measures, not just inputs or compliance exercises

- Clearly defined outcomes reduce the burden of some onerous blueprint requirements and provide greater flexibility in implementation

- Support differences in regional and local needs

- Identify and address needs for technical assistance where they are needed most and support continuous improvement
Thank You!

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