



**2016-2017**

**Application for ECHS Designation**

ECHS Applicant: Mercedes Early College Academy

Application ID: 885011054

The following benchmarks are the minimum required components that must be demonstrated through this application in order to be designated as an Early College High School. Please check the box by each requirement to indicate that the ECHS understands and will comply with the requirement. Application information that contradicts these assurances, or evaluation information that indicates that the required provisions are not being met, could result in a campus being denied designation.

### I. Target Population:

The Early College High School shall serve, or include plans to scale up to serve, students in grades 9 through 12 and shall target and enroll students who are at risk of dropping out of school as defined by the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and who might not otherwise go to college.

1. The ECHS recruitment and enrollment processes and requirements shall not exclude or discourage the enrollment of any of the subpopulations of at-risk students (as defined by PEIMS), including, but not limited to, students who are of limited English proficiency or who have failed a state administered assessment. Enrollment decisions shall not be based on state assessment scores, discipline history, teacher recommendations, or minimum grade point average (GPA).
2. The ECHS shall identify, recruit, and enroll subpopulations (in addition to those who are at risk as defined by PEIMS) that are historically underrepresented in college courses (e.g., first generation college goers, students of low socioeconomic status, African American, Hispanic.)
3. The ECHS shall clearly document recruitment and enrollment policies and practices, refining and improving them annually based on data reviews.
  - a. The ECHS shall make available to TEA their annual recruitment and enrollment policies and data.
  - b. Recruitment and enrollment processes (including marketing and recruitment plans, materials, and timelines) shall include input from key stakeholders; target appropriate student populations; and include regular activities to educate students, counselors, principals, parents, and school board and community members.

### II. Partnership Agreement:

The ECHS must have a current, signed MOU that:

1. defines the partnership between the school district(s) and the IHE(s) and addresses topics including, but not limited to, the ECHS location; the allocation of costs for tuition, fees, textbooks; and student transportation,
2. states that the school district or charter in which the student is enrolled shall pay for 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;
3. defines an active partnership between the school district or charter and the IHE, which shall include joint decision-making procedures that allow for the planning and implementation of a coherent program across institutions; and
4. includes provisions and processes for collecting, sharing, and reviewing program and student data to assess the progress of the ECHS.

### III. P-16 Leadership Initiatives:

The school district and institute of higher education (IHE) partners shall develop and maintain a leadership team that meets regularly to address issues of design and sustainability. Membership should include the Early College High School principal/director and individuals with decision-making authority from the district(s) and IHE(s).

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:
  - Identifying the 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
  - Reviewing the MOU for necessary revisions
  - Sharing responsibility (between the school district and the IHE) for developing annual reports to district and IHE boards that provide data, highlight successes, and outline plan for improvement
2. Meeting minutes and agendas shall be publically available.

### IV. Curriculum and Support:

The Early College High School (ECHS) shall provide a rigorous course of study that enables a participating student to receive a high school diploma and an associates degree or 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.

1. The ECHS shall provide a course of study that enables participating students to complete high school graduation requirements and either an associates degree or at least 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. An academic plan must be in place showing how students will progress toward this goal. The academic plan must provide pathways to a baccalaureate degree (core curriculum) and must follow the courses and fields of study listed in the THECB Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual. The ECHS is required to support students in their course of study.
2. The ECHS shall monitor student progress and report the number of hours completed per student, disaggregated by student groups.
3. The ECHS shall provide students with academic, social, and emotional support in their course of study.

### V. Academic Rigor and Readiness:

The Early College High School shall administer a Texas Success Initiative (TSI) college placement exam (as defined by TAC Â§4.53) to all accepted students to assess college readiness, design individual instructional plans, and enable students to begin college courses based on their performance.

1. The ECHS shall provide a course of study that enables participating students to complete high school graduation requirements and either an associates degree or at least 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. An academic plan must be in place showing how students will progress toward this goal. The academic plan must provide pathways to a baccalaureate degree (core curriculum) and must follow the courses and fields of study listed in the THECB Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual. The ECHS is required to support students in their course of study.
  - a. The ECHS shall implement a plan for TSI success, including academic preparation classes for accepted students, academic interventions for students who do not pass TSI, and assessments fee waivers for all administrations of the TSI test.
  - b. The ECHS shall report to TEA the dates the TSI is administered.
  - c. The ECH shall report to TEA the number of students who have currently passed each section of the TSI assessment, including a breakdown of TSI testing data for subpopulations of targeted students.

### VI. School Design:

The ECHS must provide a full-day program (i.e., full day as defined in PEIMS) at an autonomous high school (i.e., a high school with a principal or program coordinator assigned 100 percent to ECHS responsibilities who has scheduling, hiring, and budget authority), an IHE liaison with decision-making authority, and a highly qualified staff with support and training.

1. The ECHS location shall be:
  - on a college or university campus, or

- in a stand-alone high school campus or in a smaller learning community within a larger high school.
  - ECHS campuses not located on a college or university campus must provide students with regular use (at least six times per school year) of college academic facilities.
  - ECHS campuses located in a smaller learning community within a larger high school must disaggregate required ECHS student data.
- 2. ECHS required staffing include:
  - a principal, or program director who has scheduling, hiring, and budget autonomy;
  - an IHE liaison with decision-making authority who interacts directly and frequently with ECHS staff and administrators; and
  - highly qualified ECHS teachers who within four years will be reporting only to the ECHS principal/director and teaching only ECHS students in all core courses.
- 3. The ECHS students shall be enrolled in ECHS-only sections for core classes.
- 4. ECHS shall implement an annual professional development plan based on needs assessment of student data.

# Contacts

Mercedes Early College Academy - 885011054

## 1.1 ECHS Applying for Designation

ECHS Campus Name	Mercedes Early College Academy	County District Campus Number	108907006
County District Campus Number 2		County District Campus Number 3	
CDC Number Use	<input type="radio"/> Shared With a Comprehensive Campus <input checked="" type="radio"/> Belongs only to the ECHS		
Years Designated	8		
Application Status	Renewal: applying to renew designation on behalf of a fully designated ECHS.		
Mailing Address - Line 1	837 S. Ohio	Mailing Address - Line 2	
Mailing City	Mercedes	Mailing Zip Code	78570

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## 1.2 School District

District Name	Mercedes ISD		
Mailing Address - Line 1	206 E 6th Street	Mailing Address - Line 2	P O Box 419
Mailing City	Mercedes	Mailing Zip Code	78570

### 1.2.a Second School District

District Name			
Mailing Address - Line 1			
Mailing City		Mailing Zip Code	

### 1.2.b Third School District

District Name			
Mailing Address - Line 1		Mailing Address - Line 2	
Mailing City		Mailing Zip Code	

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## 1.3 Primary Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Partner

Partner Name	South Texas College		
Mailing Address - Line 1	3201 W Pecan	Mailing Address - Line 2	
Mailing City	McAllen	Mailing Zip Code	78501
How many ECHS does this IHE partner with?	30		

## 1.3 Second Primary Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Partner

Partner Name			
Mailing Address - Line 1		Mailing Address - Line 2	
Mailing City		Mailing Zip Code	
How many ECHS does this IHE partner with?	30		

## 1.3 Third Primary Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Partner

Partner Name			
Mailing Address - Line 1		Mailing Address - Line 2	
Mailing City		Mailing Zip Code	
How many ECHS does this IHE partner with?			

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## 1.4 Education Service Center Region

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## 1.5 Person Completing this Application

Title	Mrs.	First Name	Jeanne	Last Name	Venecia
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# Contacts

Mercedes Early College Academy - 885011054

Phone (956)825-5180

Email jeanne.venecia@misdtx.net

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## 1.6 ECHS Principal/Director

Title Mrs. First Name Jeanne

Last Name Venecia

Phone (956)825-5180

Email jeanne.venecia@misdtx.net

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## 1.7 Superintendent

First Name Daniel

Last Name Trevino

Phone (956)514-2022

Email daniel.trevino@misdtx.net

### 1.7.a Superintendent (District 2)

First Name Daniel

Last Name Trevino

Phone (956)514-2022

Email daniel.trevino@misdtx.net

### 1.7.b Superintendent (District 3)

First Name

Last Name

Phone

Email

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## 1.8 Institution of Higher Education Liaison

First Name Maria

Last Name De Leon

Phone (956)872-2600

Email medeleon@southtexascollege.edu

### 1.8.a Second Institution of Higher Education Liaison

First Name

Last Name

Phone

Email

### 1.8.b Third Institution of Higher Education Liaison

First Name

Last Name

Phone

Email

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## 1.9 Authorized Institution of Higher Education Official

First Name Shirley

Last Name Reed

Phone (956)872-8366

Email sareed@southtexascollege.edu

### 1.9.a Second Authorized Institution of Higher Education Official

First Name

Last Name

Phone

Email

### 1.9.b Third Authorized Institution of Higher Education Official

First Name

Last Name

Phone

Email

# Benchmark 1 - Target Population

Mercedes Early College Academy - 885011054

**ECHS Projected Enrollment: Show how the school has scaled up or will scale up by filling out the table below to indicate projected enrollment growth by year and grade level. If a grade level is not served, input 0 (zero).**

Grades of students to be served:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total Enrollment
2015-2016 enrollment	0	0	0	82	105	67	74	328
2016-2017 projected enrollment	0	0	0	100	82	105	67	354

The ECHS shall provide a course of study that enables participating students to complete high school graduation requirements and either an associate's degree or at least 60 semester credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. Please indicate how students will progress toward this goal by completing the course crosswalk below. (Important notice about summer school: The 60 college credit hour plan must be fulfilled during the school year unless the ECHS is a year-round school or provisions are made to provide all ECHS students with access to the summer courses. Courses offered during the summer must be supplemental or available at other times of the year.)

**\*note: For dual credit courses, please indicate whether the course is taught by someone who is primarily IHE staff or ISD staff and whether the course is taught primarily in person or via distance learning.**

**Please indicate the endorsements that will be offered to students. The endorsements include: STEM, Business, and Industry, Public Service, Arts and Humanities, and Multidisciplinary Studies.**

The following endorsements will be offered to students: Multidisciplinary Studies, Arts & Humanities, Public Service, STEM, and Business and Industry.

**Please indicate the associate's degrees that will be offered to students.**

The following associate's degrees will be offered to students: Interdisciplinary Studies, Biology, Engineering, Computer Science, Psychology, Social Work, Criminal Justice, and Business Management.

**Please indicate the Level 1 and Level 2 certificates that will be offered to students.**

None

**Do the answers to the questions for Benchmark 4 meet the criteria for exemplar recognition, and would you like the TEA to consider your ECHS for this?**

Yes  No

**Please provide additional information about the exemplar activities related to this benchmark below.**

Mercedes Early College Academy will graduate 59 out of 74 seniors in May 2016 with an Associate's Degree in the following areas: Interdisciplinary Studies, Biology, Social work, Engineering, Psychology, Criminal Justice, and Business. The remaining 15 students all have college hours but will need to continue in the summer and fall to attain an Associate's Degree.

The following are the supports that Mercedes Early College Academy provides to our students:

Social/Emotional Support - Individual Counseling, Summer Bridge Programs, Friday Class Meetings, Self-Manager Badge Program, Senior Mentors, Peer Mentors, South Texas College Counselor, MECA's Junior Ambassador Program - Friday Advisories, College Environment, Girl's Day/Boy's Day at STC.

MECA also provides a positive school culture: Have a common language, vision, and experience. School environment is positive - regular recognition for positive behavior. School environment is safe and consistent.

MECA has a parent outreach program: Recruitment meetings, STC Meetings, Meet the Teacher, FAFSA drive, Open House, Senior PTO. Parent Conferences, College Parent/Student Informational Workshops, Remind 101, Audio Skyward Phone Messaging System.

Intervention Supports - Remind 101, Academic Folder, ACT Prep Class, TSI Prep Classes, Friday Seminars, Flexible Fridays for re-teaching. Other interventions for instruction include: Intensive instruction class for end of course, Intensive instruction class for HB5 (college connections) for ELA & Math, advisories grouped by students instructional needs, scheduled mandatory tutoring, parent/teacher conferences(student contract set up), grade level team meetings to discuss students and student progress. Phase 2 interventions include: additional parent contacts, counselor-student advisement, counselor-student advisement at STC, administrator-parent-teacher-student meeting to set up academic contract and discuss educational options.

Students also do community service at City of Mercedes, Chamber of Commerce, Fire Department, Weslaco Knapp Hospital, Mercedes Doctors' Offices, Mercedes Public Library, El Tigre Adult Day Care, Edinburg Renaissance Hospital, Weslaco City Park, Veranda Retirement, Mercedes Elementary Schools and other individual businesses in the valley.

MECA staff and administration also provide: College Application Process for all seniors to include: college admissions essays, resume writing, writers workshop, personal statement writing, internship search, letter of recommendation, ACT registration, PSAT results, scholarship applications and college representatives. Financial aid counseling night to include: FAFSA drive, STC financial aid presentation to students and parents, STC counselor/student advisement, Friday class meetings, pre-registration advisement and recruitment parent/student meetings. College and Career counseling to include: 9th grade college and career survey, college success class, Friday class meetings, college representatives, Junior Ambassador Program, 11th & 12th grade college planning, senior mentors, pre registration advisement, counselor advisement, STC student audits, and TSI lab. Other activities include: engaging in highly effective instruction - common core implementation and professional growth plans, structured schedules and activities, and positive behavior/habits for a college environment.

