



Abbreviated Application for ECHS Designation

**ECHS Academy: Hector J. Garcia Early College High School @
TAMIU**

(Previously Designated)

2017-2018

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Part 1: Provisions and Assurances

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.

1.1 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 students, and Hispanic students). ☒
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. ☒

1.2 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. ☒

1.3 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 publicly available. ☒

1.4 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 associate's 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 associate's 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. ☒

1.5 Academic Rigor and Readiness:

The Early College High School shall administer a Texas Success Initiative (TSI) college placement exam (as defined by TAC §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 associate's 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. ☒
 - 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. ☒
 - The ECHS shall report to TEA the dates the TSI is administered. ☒
 - 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. ☒

1.6 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; ☒
 - 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. ☒

Part 2: Contact Information

2.1 ECHS Academy

ECHS Academy Name:

Hector J. Garcia Early College High
School @ TAMIU

County District Campus Number:

240901008

**County District Campus Number
2:**

**County District Campus Number
3:**

This CDC number:

Belongs to only the ECHS

**What is the 2016-2017 ECHS
designation status of your
campus?:**

Full: Operating beyond the 3 year
provisional designation status

Mailing Address - Line 1:

5241 university Blvd

Mailing Address - Line 2:

City:

Laredo, TX

State:

Tx

Zip Code:

78041

2.2 School District

School District Name

Laredo ISD

Mailing Address - Line 1:

1702 Houston St.

Mailing Address - Line 2:

Mailing City:

Laredo

State:

Tx

Mailing Zip Code:

78040

2.2.a School District 2

School District Name:

Mailing Address - Line 1:

Mailing Address - Line 2:

Mailing City:

State:

Tx

Mailing Zip Code:

2.2.b School District 3

School District Name:

Mailing Address - Line 1:

Mailing Address - Line 2:

Mailing City:

State:

Tx

Mailing Zip Code:

2.3 Primary Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Partner

Partner Name:	How many ECHS does this IHE partner with?	
Texas A&M International University	2	
Mailing Address - Line 1:	Mailing Address - Line 2:	
5201 University Blvd		
Mailing City:	State:	Mailing Zip Code:
laredo	Tx	78041

2.3.a Secondary Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Partner

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

2.3.b Additional Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Partner

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

2.4 Education Service Center Region

Education Service Center Region: 01

2.5 Person Completing this Application

Title:	
Principal	
First Name:	Last Name:
Israel	Castilla
Phone:	Email:
956-2737700	icastilla@laredoisd.org

Part 2.a: School District Contact Information

2.6 ECHS Principal/Director

Title:

Principal

First Name:

Israel

Phone:

956-273-7701

Last Name:

Castilla

Email:

icastilla@laredoisd.org

2.7 Superintendent (District 1)

Title:

Superintendent

First Name:

Dr. Al Marcus

Phone:

956-273-1600

Last Name:

Nelson

Email:

amnelson@laredoisd.org

2.7.a Superintendent (District 2)

Title:

First Name:

Phone:

Last Name:

Email:

2.7.b Superintendent (District 3)

Title:

First Name:

Phone:

Last Name:

Email:

Part 2.b: Institution of Higher Education Contact Information

2.8 Institution of Higher Education Liaison

Title:

Associate Provost

First Name:

Dr. Kevin

Phone Number:

956-326-2601

Last Name:

Lindberg

Email:

klindberg@tamiu.edu

2.8.a Institution of Higher Education Liaison (complete when there are two IHE partners)

Title:

First Name:

Last Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

2.8.b Institution of Higher Education Liaison (complete when there are three IHE partners)

Title:

First Name:

Last Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

2.9 Authorized Institution of Higher Education Official

Title:

TAMIU President

First Name:

Dr. Pablo

Phone Number:

956-326-2240

Last Name:

Arenaz

Email:

pablo.arenaz@tamiu.edu

2.9.a Authorized Institution of Higher Education Official (complete when there are two IHE partners)

Title:

First Name:

Last Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

2.9.b Authorized Institution of Higher Education Official (complete when there are three IHE partners)

Title:

First Name:

Last Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Part 3: Benchmarks

Benchmark 1 - Target Population

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, put 0 (zero).

Grades of students to be served	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total Enrollment
2016-2017 enrollment	0	0	0	120	110	106	94	430
2017-2018 projected enrollment	0	0	0	120	120	110	106	456

Instructions:

- In the “Percent of High School Students in District” column, use PEIMS data to indicate the percent of students for each demographic category currently enrolled in the district or charter school.
- If the ECHS is not currently in operation, complete the district column and place a zero in each row in the ECHS column. This information will be submitted by provisional designation finalists to TEA in the spring.

Demographics	Percent of High School Students in District (from PEIMS)	Percent of High School Students in District (if multi-district) (from PEIMS)	Percent of High School Students in District (if multi-district) (from PEIMS)	Percent of All Students Enrolled in ECHS
Economically Disadvantaged	92.7%	0	0	78.6%
At-Risk	77.4%	0	0	21.6%
LEP	58.1%	0	0	6%
White	0.6%	0	0	1.2%
Hispanic or Latino	99.1%	0	0	98.8%
Black or African-American	0.2%	0	0	0%
First Generation College-Goers	N/A	N/A	N/A	95%
Other	0.1	0	0	0

Please indicate the subpopulations (in addition to those who are at risk as defined by PEIMS) that are historically underrepresented in college courses that your ECHS has identified to recruit and enroll.

First generation college-goer	☒
Hispanic or Latino	☒
Black or African-American	☒
Economically Disadvantaged	☒
Other:	

Please describe the recruitment and enrollment processes and requirements used by the ECHS. Please address how these processes and requirements facilitate the recruitment and enrollment of students who are at risk (as defined by PEIMS) or who are in the identified under-represented subpopulations.

GECHS has an ongoing recruitment program throughout the year. As per district policy, the targeted population is students who are identified as at-risk in any of the 13 indicators as defined by PEIMS, economically disadvantaged, and first generation college going students. We are always looking into new and innovative ways to reach out to all students, parents, and community with information on the availability for families with low resources to pay for students college. We have done and will continue to do live interviews with KLDO morning news and use written media which includes pamphlets, flyers, and local newspaper.

We have parent informational nights in the summer as well as during the school year. The information is provided in English and Spanish. We promote school accomplishments and student recognition's throughout the school year through written, and electronic social media to bring awareness of the program and the population it serves. The application becomes available in early December and the deadline for submission of a complete application is in March.

Parent meetings are scheduled at each middle school in the evenings. Parents are provided with written information in the form of flyers and a copy of the presentation in English and Spanish. The requirements are clearly explained at these meetings, and a 30-minute time slot after each meeting is given for questions on the program.

Applications are submitted to their respective eighth-grade counselor. The counselor together with an administrator verifies the information and provides students demographics as per PEIMS. Once all information is complete, the applications are turned in to GECHS and the use of the weighted lottery is used as per the rubric approved by the board of trustees and superintendent of schools.

The requirements for applying to attend GECHS are as follows. All students attending GECHS must reside within Laredo I. S. D. boundaries. Any student interested in attending GECHS must complete an application and attach a five hundred word essay with his or her aspirations. The application must be submitted to the 8th-grade counselor to verify and complete student demographics as recorded on PEIMS. The application must be signed by the applicant's campus administrator and counselor verifying the information to be correct. After application deadline has passed, applications are submitted to GECHS counselor and administration. The registrar verifies student residency and all other documents submitted. All applicants are scheduled for a 15-minute interview with the GECHS Interview Committee comprised of the counselor, administrator, and teachers. The interviews are held after school and on Saturdays through scheduled appointments and by the interviewing committee. Students are then ranked according to the weighted point system that is used by GECHS using the approved rubric by the district. The first one-hundred twenty students receive a letter of invitation to attend GECHS after the final approval of the superintendent and board. The remaining applicants become part of the waiting list. As spaces become available due to denials by selected students, the next student on the waiting list is called.

All students invited to attend GECHS must attend a four-week bridge program. During this program, students attend an intense TSIA academy that focuses on Reading, Writing, and Math. At the end of the academy, all students are administered the TSIA. Individual student results are used to create and assign intervention TSIA classes to help them achieve the passing standard in each area.

Please describe the how the recruitment and enrollment processes and requirements were developed and how they are analyzed, reviewed, and refined.

The Hector J. Garcia Early College High School recruitment and enrollment processes were developed by the GECHS Advisory Board.

The members of the board include the Superintendent, Academic Chief Officer, University Provost, University President, Principal, and GECHS Counselor. Other members are invited depending on items of discussion. The principal and counselor oversee the application review committee. The committee is comprised of GECHS teachers, administration, and main office C&I deans. This process of the application and selection is communicated to the Superintendent and LISD board. The process and weight measure using the LISD developed rubric is explained and provided for final approval of the candidates selected. After the selection and admission process, the admittance committee meet in the summer to discuss and review any possible changes to the recruiting and application process. The GECHS Advisory Board reviews the process for possible changes focusing on the number of students that applied, as well as the demographics of the population which was accepted. All applicants are reviewed by the GECHS Advisory Board.

During this process, the GECHS Advisory committee compares trends from the past three years to ensure that the targeted populations are served as per district policy. The committee looks at college hours earned by cohort, and grade level. Grade analysis are held to ensure the support is being provided to students. TSIA data is analyzed by grade level and demographics. The committee also looks at possible obstacles and formulates a plan to avoid them.

For this benchmark, indicate the level at which your ECHS campus will operate in the 2017-2018 school year. Use the ECHS Blueprint as a guide.

STATUS: Exemplar

Please provide a brief description of how your ECHS program meets the criteria for Exemplar recognition for this benchmark. (300 word maximum)

The Hector J. Garcia Early College High School has a recruitment process that gives the opportunity to all LISD students to apply to attend GECHS. All material used for recruitment is provided in English and in Spanish. During the recruitment process, every eighth grader attending an LISD middle school attends a presentation where they are given information on GECHS. Parents meetings at each middle school are held by the Principal and counselor of GECHS where information about the school is presented and flyers and applications are distributed. GECHS also schedules live morning interviews with our local news channel where information on school goals, purpose, and requirements are discussed. The weighted lottery process is explained to ensure that all stakeholders with questions have an opportunity to get clarification.

In an effort to reach students and increase interest, the recruitment effort is extended to elementary students in the fifth grade. Elementary fifth-grade students are invited to visit GECHS and spend half day working on activities with GECHS students and explore TAMIU. Elementary students are given a tour of the university and participate in plan activities that would increase their interest in going to college.

A complete informational presentation is given to the board on the recruitment, admissions, and academic performance of GECHS students.

Benchmark 4: Curriculum and Support

Benchmark 4: Course Crosswalk

[View Uploaded Document](#)

Please indicate the endorsements that will be offered to students.

GECHS offers STEM and Multidisciplinary endorsements.

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

Students at GECHS will graduate with a minimum of 40 university hours but have the opportunity to achieve 60 or more university hours.

Please indicate the Level I and Level II certificates that will be offered to students.

N/A

Please indicate how the ECHS will monitor student progress and use student data to support success.

Student progress is evaluated every 4 weeks in GECHS courses and mid-term progress in university courses. The IHE provides GECHS with a mid-term grade report for each student. For dual enrollment classes, GECHS assigns support teachers that accompany the students to their university class. The support teacher closely monitors their progress and performance and provides the necessary additional support that may be needed. This process has proven to be very successful for student success.

The counselor and principal reviews student high school class grades and university class grades to ensure they are successful. Parent, student, and counselor meetings are held after review of student progress during the semester to discuss student performance. If a student is failing or struggling with maintaining a good academic standing, interventions are in place to provide the support for students to be successful. GECHS provides students with after-school intervention support classes for university and high school courses. Also, Saturday intervention classes for University courses are assigned to students if they are struggling in maintaining good academic performance.

For Dual enrolled courses, GECHS provides support classes within the scheduled day for all students. These courses include but are not limited to English, History, Government, Psychology, and Science.

TSI intervention classes are provided to prepare and help students pass all areas of TSI. Intervention classes by area are assigned during the school day, after school and Saturday. Before attempting an area of TSI students are assigned to a four-day after-school academy or a two day four-hour Saturday academy in the area to be tested. All TSI classes and Academies focus on objectives that students are weak on. The intervention is more personalized to a students' need.

Please indicate how the ECHS will provide academic support to the students by personalizing the learning environment.

At GECHS, all students are given a laptop. They are assigned a laptop for all four high school years. All GECHS required books are digital and students are required to use the laptop at all times. The school is equipped with high-speed internet access. Teachers are required to post assignments on their class page. The teachers also post assignments in Edmodo and students are required to submit their work or assignments via those applications.

The learning environment at GECHS is constructed as a student-centered environment. Students are encouraged to work in groups when applicable and presentations are a common practice to evaluate student understanding. Project-based learning is promoted and required at our campus. Students actively participate in creating and analyzing content based projects to demonstrate understanding. Teachers promote a collaborative working environment by having students work in groups. Writing across the content areas is a common practice at GECHS.

Furthermore, students are held responsible by analyzing their learning patterns and to communicate them to the teacher. In turn, the student and teacher formulate a plan to better serve his or her needs such as but not limited to specific objectives in TSI. The use of Student planners improve organizational skills and keep students abreast of deadlines and project due dates. Students are required to keep all university class syllabi in their academic portfolio to ensure they keep track of all their due dates and class requirements.

Please indicate how the GECHS will provide social and emotional support to the students.

GECHS provides the academic as well as the social/emotional support that students need in order to make a seamless transition from middle school to high school, and college at the same time. Each student is assigned a mentor as they start with college courses at the university. The IHE, TAMIU, assigns a mentor to provide the guidance and support for student success. Together, the IHE and GECHS work to identify the need of individualized support for each student.

The GECHS counselor meets with students on a one to one basis or as a group to discuss and address concerns throughout the school year. Individualized counseling with parent and student is available on a need to basis.

GECHS teachers are also a key component in helping students make a seamless transition from High school to University. Teachers become the key mentors to provide students with the emotional and social transition. They can refer them to the stress center which is available to GECHS students at TAMIU. If they see that a student is still struggling after they provide the emotional/social support, the student is referred to the GECHS counselor or principal. The counselor then meets with the students to provide more specific interventions to help the student with the transition. This process is not just a one person responsibility at GECHS. It is a collaborative effort between teacher, counselor, administrator, and staff to help the students in all their emotional/social needs.

For this benchmark, indicate the level at which your ECHS campus will operate in the 2017-2018 school year. Use the ECHS Blueprint as a guide.

STATUS: Exemplar

Please provide a brief description of how your ECHS program meets the criteria for Exemplar recognition for this benchmark. (300 word maximum)

The Hector J. Garcia Early College High School has graduated students with as many as seventy-one university hours. Starting with the 2015-2016 cohort, GECHS graduated students with a minimum of thirty hours and as many as seventy university hours. We will continue to strive to get students to graduate with a minimum of forty university hours towards their major and core curriculum. We reviewed and aligned our courses to be able to provide the academic support that is needed to ensure success in their university classes. Through the use of Saturday and after school support classes, they have been able to perform at the academic level of rigor that is needed in university classes. GECHS has increased the participation of parents in meeting and learning opportunities. Parent informational sessions are scheduled on Saturdays with topics such as college awareness and requirements. They learn about FAFSA, and deadlines for applying. Sessions on student support on what is available from the campus, district, community, and TAMIU are held during the week. The sessions are provided throughout the school year to ensure the line of communication is open. College informational nights and recruitment night for universities are scheduled during school time and after school. University school representatives talk to students on the application process and requirements for acceptance. Parents and students are invited to attend the sessions. GECHS prides itself in promoting community involvement within our alumni. Students at GECHS are required to accumulate a total of five hundred community hours by the time they graduate. GECHS has a strong bond within the community service centers and to lend a helping hand when they need it. VITA, Animal Shelter, Food Bank, Bethany House, and numerous shelters open the doors to our students to volunteer their time during weekends and after school.

Part 4: Supporting Documents

Verify the Academy has the most current versions of each required attachments on file at the campus by checking the boxes below. If a required attachment doesn't cover the 2017-2018 school year, a version covering the 2016-2017 school year must be included in this application.

Memorandum of Understanding with Institution of Higher Learning (MUST COVER 2017-2018 School Year): The ECHS must have a current, signed MOU that defines the partnership between the school districts and the IHE by the start of the 2017 school year.

Attached	Status	Expected Date for Final (if draft)
View Uploaded Document	Draft	05/30/2017

ECHS recruitment and enrolment documents: Written policies, application and evaluation documents, etc.

Attached	Status	Expected Date for Final (if draft)
View Uploaded Document	Final	N/A

Other Supporting Document: The ECHS may upload one additional supporting document.

Attached	Status	Expected Date for Final (if draft)
View Uploaded Document	Submitted	N/A