NEW MEXICO
Public Education Department

Early College High School (ECHS) Designation Quick Guide & Checklist

Section I: Introduction

☐ Understand the ECHS-NM designation purpose: implementing the Early College High School model with fidelity and ensuring equitable access to college-level coursework and workforce-aligned pathways.

☐ Application Deadline: Submit applications no later than July 1 each year for consideration for a fall program launch in the same calendar year.

☐ Engage district leaders, postsecondary partners, workforce representatives, and community stakeholders before submission.

Section II: Basic Information

☐ ECHS School Name, School District, and District Superintendent

☐ School Mailing and Physical Address, City, State, Zip Code, and County

☐ Primary Application Contact (Name, Title, Email, Phone)

Section III: Impact Statement

☐ Describe the ECHS purpose, mission, and long-term vision.

☐ Describe expected impact on students, families, and the community, including college readiness, equitable access, and workforce preparation.

☐ Explain how stakeholders contributed to shaping the ECHS vision.

Section IV: ECHS Design Overview and Program Overview

☐ ECHS model: Identify proposed model (Freestanding or Academy)

☐ Projected enrollment: Provide projected student enrollment by grade for Years 1–3.

☐ Postsecondary Partnership: Identify primary postsecondary partners and confirm an MOU is in place or will be executed before student enrollment.

☐ Proposed Postsecondary Outcomes: Identify proposed industry-recognized certificates, associate degrees, and pathways aligned with 12 or more college credits toward a bachelor's degree.

☐ Program Design: Describe location and rationale, hours, schedule, wraparound services, staffing and qualifications, dual credit assignments, adjunct arrangements, work-based learning integration, and use of the Next Step Plan for advising and postsecondary planning.

☐ Equitable Access and Barriers: Explain how outreach, admissions, and program design promote equitable access and identify and reduce barriers such as transportation, fees, scheduling, and eligibility requirements.

☐ Regulatory Alignment**:** Describe alignment with Administrative Rule 6.30.13.

Section V: College and Career Pathway Design

☐ Pathway Plan: Submit a completed plan for at least one full pathway, including high school and college courses and codes, sequencing, prerequisites, credits, and credential or degree outcomes.

☐ Pathway Alignment: Demonstrate connections to postsecondary credentials or degrees and regional workforce needs.

☐ Enrollment and Feasibility: Estimate pathway enrollment and address postsecondary and workforce partner capacity.

☐ Required Attestations**:** Confirm dual credit begins no later than grade 10, the pathway aligns with the Next Step Plan process, students can meet high school graduation requirements, and successful pathway completion provides at least 12 college credits.

☐ Dual Credit Core Alignment: Complete the separate attestation for dual credit courses designated as core replacement courses.

Section VI: Outreach, Recruitment, and Student Data Tracking

☐ Outreach and Recruitment: Describe equitable outreach to historically underrepresented students, including economically disadvantaged, Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students, English learners, students with disabilities, and first-generation college-going students.

☐ Open-Access Admissions: Confirm an open-access, barrier-free admissions process.

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☐ Identifying and Reducing Barriers: Describe how barriers to participation, such as transportation, fees, scheduling, and eligibility criteria, will be identified and reduced.
☐ Data-Informed Recruitment: Describe how demographic and participation data will inform equitable recruitment and admissions.
☐ KPI Tracking and Reporting: Identify responsible staff, explain how data will guide program improvement, and plan to track:
- Students earning workforce-recognized credentials and total credentials awarded
- Students earning postsecondary credit and total credit hours earned
- Students participating in work-based learning and total participation hours
- Total enrollment, enrollment by pathway, and low-income student enrollment

☐ **Annual Reporting:** Confirm the school's responsibility for annual KPI reporting to NMPED.

Section VII: Workforce Partnerships

☐ Identify workforce partners aligned to pathways (up to 10)
☐ Describe how each partner is connected to specific pathways and credentials
☐ Confirm an MOU with at least one workforce partner is in place or will be executed before student enrollment.

Section VIII: Budget, Sustainability Plan, and Governance Documentation

☐ Three-Year Budget: Provide anticipated expenditures, revenue, and funding sources for the first three years.
☐ Sustainability Plan: Describe how the ECHS model will be sustained beyond initial funding or start-up years, including anticipated local, state, federal, and partner contributions.
☐ Governance Approval and Documentation: Submit initial documentation of governance approval or formal feedback; maintain records of decisions and approvals for monitoring and annual reporting.
☐ Tribal Consultation Plan (if applicable): Describe the annual consultation plan in alignment with the Indian Education Act (IEA), 22-23A NMSA 1978, Article 23A. Submit initial consultation documentation and maintain records for monitoring and annual reporting.

Section IX: Assurances and Signatures

☐ Accuracy and Completeness: Affirm the accuracy and completeness of application information.
☐ Required Agreements and Approvals: Affirm that required postsecondary and workforce MOUs and governance approvals will be in place before enrollment or program implementation, as applicable.
☐ Transferable Dual Credit: Affirm that transferable dual credit courses will transfer to New Mexico public higher education institutions, pursuant to Sections 21-18-1 through 21-18-6 NMSA 1978.
☐ Program Requirements and Reporting: Affirm commitment to ECHS requirements, annual KPI reporting, and post-designation monitoring.
☐ Required Signatures: Obtain signatures from the superintendent or authorized designee and the principal or site-level leader.

Section X: Documentation Attachments

Please submit the following documents with your application:

☐ Course catalog or course listing
☐ Student handbook or policy handbook
☐ Early College High School marketing or recruitment materials
☐ Signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with postsecondary partners
☐ Signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with workforce partners
☐ Governance and/or Tribal consultation documentation of initial program approval and budget, as applicable

Note: *Applicants may include additional supporting documentation if desired.*

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Review Process:

Applications are reviewed and scored using the standardized evaluation tool located here: NM-ECHS Designation Application Evaluation Tool. Designation is contingent upon meeting minimum thresholds across all categories. As part of the review process, applicants may be asked to provide clarifications or revisions before a final designation determination is made. Applications that meet all guiding principles, statutory requirements, and evaluation criteria may be designated as Early College High Schools.

Application Contacts:

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