

BENCHMARKS FOR EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS

The Early College High School Initiative represents a bold idea: that places where high school and college meet can provide the personalized, coherent education and meaningful credentials that set young people on a path to success in work, college, and life. The initiative targets students who are under-represented in higher education—students who have not had access to the academic preparation needed to meet college readiness standards, students for whom the cost of college is prohibitive, students of color, and English language learners. The focus of early college high schools is to develop “college-going aspirations” in their students and a “college-going culture” in the school.

The initiative is based upon a “theory of change”: by changing the structure of the high school years, compressing the number of years to a college degree, and removing financial and other barriers to college, early college high schools have the potential to improve high school and college graduation rates and better prepare traditionally underserved students for family-supporting careers.

This document has been developed collaboratively by the early college intermediary organizations—Antioch University Seattle, City University of New York, Communities Foundation of Texas, Foundation for California Community Colleges, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Middle College National Consortium at LaGuardia Community College, National Council of La Raza, Portland Community College, Public School Forum of North Carolina, SECME, Inc., Utah Partnership Foundation, and Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation—and Jobs for the Future. Its benchmarks establish a set of ideals to which all early college high schools strive, and the document serves as a planning, improvement, and teaching tool—one that can help intermediaries, school leaders, and postsecondary partners guide an early college high school’s growth. As early college high schools develop in different ways, the document’s benchmarks are guidelines that can be adjusted to fit the unique context of each partnership.

The seven benchmarks identified do not represent distinct, stand-alone categories. They are aspects of a set of conditions required to fulfill the goals of the Early College High School Initiative. The three phases included in each benchmark—*beginning*, *implementing* and *realizing*¹, represent a framework for a continuum of indicators of school progress and success. There isn’t an absolute distinction between each of the phases. For example, during each, schools will most likely need to work on establishing and institutionalizing community engagement and building and strengthening secondary/postsecondary partnerships as environmental conditions and relationships change and new staff and leadership enter the early college partnership. The benchmarks incorporate an awareness of the dynamics of school development and the varying time frames required to establish an effective school. Their major value is in providing a set of standards to guide continuous development and improvement in key areas.

¹ The beginning phase is the pre-implementation planning, which occurs prior to school opening. The implementing phase is the intermediate school development phase prior to the school’s first graduating class, e.g., one to four years after opening. The realizing phase is the period of full school implementation, once a school has reached its full planned enrollment and has graduated its first class. The time frame for the final phase will vary depending upon the grades/levels served by the school, e.g., 6-14, 7-14, 9-13.

Seven Early College High School Benchmarks

#1 – *Students completing early college high schools graduate with a high school diploma and up to two years of college credit. Areas benchmarked are:*

- A. Student attendance
- B. Student persistence
- C. Graduation rates
- D. College credit and degrees

#2 – *Early college high schools establish the enabling conditions necessary to prepare students for success in a rigorous, well-structured academic program leading to high school graduation and up to two years of college credit. Areas benchmarked are:*

- A. Mission
- B. Leadership
- C. School culture and design
- D. Location
- E. Student recruitment and selection
- F. Teacher retention

#3 – *Early college high schools provide comprehensive student supports based on students' academic and social needs. Areas benchmarked are:*

- A. Personalization
- B. Respect, responsibility, and safety
- C. Transfer and articulation plans

#4 – *Early college high schools demonstrate effective instructional practices. Areas benchmarked are:*

- A. Curriculum and instruction
- B. Student assessment
- C. Continuous improvement
- D. Professional development

#5 – Early college high schools establish and institutionalize strong secondary/ postsecondary partnerships to ensure student success.

Areas benchmarked are:

- A. Collaborative leadership
- B. Agreements
- C. Planning and coordination

#6 – Early college high schools engage students, parents, community, business, and public agencies in developing and sustaining the schools. *Areas benchmarked are:*

- A. Leadership
- B. Outreach and recruitment
- C. Parent/family involvement
- D. Community engagement

#7 – Early college high schools develop plans for sustainability. *Areas benchmarked are:*

- A. Policy
- B. Financing
- C. Long-term school sustainability

#1 – Students completing early college high schools graduate with a high school diploma and up to two years of college credit.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
A. Student attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders develop a strategy to motivate student attendance, e.g., student engagement in learning, early intervention strategies, counseling, and parent/family outreach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders track and quantify attendance of students in high school and college. School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders adjust and refine their strategy in order to improve student attendance rate in each subsequent year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School consistently has attendance rate of 95% or better.
B. Student persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders develop a strategy to encourage persistence, e.g., parent/family outreach, early intervention strategies, mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and other supports for academic and socio-emotional growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders track and quantify data on persistence of students. School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders adjust and refine their strategy to improve the retention rate of each cohort in subsequent years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School has an annual retention rate of 95% with some exceptions². 5% or fewer of 9th grade students drop out prior to graduation.
C. Graduation rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School develops well-structured plan for all students to complete high school graduation requirements in a timely manner (based on school design). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School annually tracks cohorts to ensure that students are on schedule to graduate. School utilizes and adjusts plan to continually increase the number of students who are on schedule to graduate in each subsequent year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% or better of entering 9th grade cohorts consistently graduate in a timely manner (based on school design).
D. College credit and degrees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders develop a well-structured plan for all students to complete a course of study that satisfies high school requirements and provides up to two years of transferable college credits or an Associate's degree³. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School utilizes and adjusts plan to continually ensure that students are on schedule to graduate with up to two years of college credit or an Associate's degree. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of students graduate with up to two years of college credit or an Associate's degree. 90% of early college graduates receive a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner.

² Exceptions include students transferring to another program, moving out of district, leaving due to approved medical conditions or cultural factors, e.g., parental withdrawal at 16.

³ The focus of the initiative is on the achievement of a baccalaureate degree. However, it is up to the discretion of the intermediary as to whether it will allow certification in a technical field if it is a high need for the community.

#2 – Early college high schools establish the enabling conditions necessary to prepare students for success in a rigorous, well-structured academic program leading to high school graduation and up to two years of college credit.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
A. Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders⁴ develop a mission consistent with ECHS Core Principles and a strategy for establishing a shared mission with parents/guardians, students, faculty, and staff. ▪ Conversion schools plan process to develop and share mission with all stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School revisits mission annually with parents/guardians, students, high school and postsecondary faculty, and community members to renew, adjust, and reinforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents/guardians, students, high school and postsecondary faculty, and community members model the mission daily.
B. Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader, staff, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders believe all students will achieve and reaffirm that belief in written materials on the school. ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders understand depth and breadth of preparing targeted population for college expectations. ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and staff use student data, recording strengths and weaknesses, to plan targeted strategies for academic progress. ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, local district, and key stakeholders develop a school design plan that ensures that the school has autonomy over key factors to its success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders make explicit the goal of up to two years of college credit and how to accomplish that goal. ▪ School leader and partners share and use research-based information on underprepared students. ▪ School leader and partners collect, analyze, and share data on improved student performance. ▪ School has the necessary autonomies, e.g., it controls budget, staffing, curriculum, schedule, student data, and professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders analyze data and refine their plan to ensure that all students stay on track for completion of up to two years of college credit by high school graduation. ▪ School leader and postsecondary partner use common planning time for staff to share strategies to improve student weaknesses, build strengths, and track progress in college classes. ▪ Use of data is embedded in the workings of the school to demonstrate progress and to ensure sustainability.
C. School culture and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders collaborate to develop a school design plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Structure the school day; ○ Address state, district, and college requirements; ○ Define path to achieve up to two years of college credit; ○ Involve middle grades; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders implement school design plan, with full regard to school's mission and the seven attributes of early college high schools. ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders assess effectiveness of and refine components of school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders assess and refine school design plan to consistently improve student performance in subsequent years. ▪ School and postsecondary partner document students' success in entering a college or university.

⁴ Depending on the model, key stakeholders may include parents, guardians, students, teachers, postsecondary faculty, district leadership, community-based organizations, community-based agencies, teachers' union, tribal governments, business partners, and/or local policymakers.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define academic and social supports. ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders design school to meet the attributes of early college high schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Common focus on research-based goals and intellectual mission; ○ Shared, clear, high expectations and standards, with all students completing a coherent, rigorous course of study; ○ Small, personalized learning environments with no more than 400 students per high school (Early college high school may also link with feeder elementary and middle schools); ○ Respect and responsibility among students, among teachers, and between students and teachers; ○ Time for teachers/staff to collaborate and for the inclusion of parents and the community in an education partnership; ○ Emphasis on performance, with students promoted based on demonstrated competency; and ○ Technology used as a tool for designing and delivering engaging and imaginative curricula. ▪ Whether site is on or off campus, the school, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders promote college-going culture in school and college-going aspirations in students, e.g., orientation activities, college IDs, access to facilities, seminars on campus, mentoring or tutoring programs. 	<p>design plan to ensure improved student performance in subsequent years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School and postsecondary partner continue to promote a college-going culture through a variety of activities on campus, assess the activities' effectiveness, and refine them to ensure an increase in the number of graduates who enter college. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SIS will track students' persistence and receipt of baccalaureate degree in contracted postsecondary institutions.
D. Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and intermediary identify classroom and administrative space on college campus. ▪ If site is off campus, school, intermediary, and postsecondary partner ensure that separate and adequate classroom and administrative facilities are provided on campus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School and postsecondary partner (with intermediary, if necessary) regularly review and negotiate space needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School and postsecondary partner (with intermediary, if necessary) continually negotiate adequate classroom space and facilities to meet the academic and safety needs of students.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
E. Student recruitment and selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders develop a recruitment plan that identifies district or other parameters, is specific and appropriate to reach targeted students as described in the ECHS Core Principles, identifies selection criteria to be communicated to the community, and involves middle school counselors, community organizations, and other key stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders collect and analyze data on student population and regularly refine recruitment plan to ensure fidelity with ECHS Core Principles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student enrollment consistently reflects targeted population identified in ECHS Core Principles.
F. Teacher retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders articulate a strategy to recruit and retain teachers that incorporates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Job descriptions and requirements, e.g., extensive content knowledge, demonstrated success with target population; ○ Peer mentoring program; ○ Professional learning community, e.g., common planning time; and ○ Professional development opportunities. ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders recruit highly qualified secondary and postsecondary faculty who possess extensive subject knowledge and who have demonstrated success working with the target population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders collect data on teacher recruitment and retention, assess the effectiveness of their strategy, and refine it as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders consistently recruit and retain highly qualified secondary and postsecondary faculty. • Average annual retention rate of secondary and postsecondary faculty is 85 percent.

#3 – Early college high schools provide comprehensive student supports based on students’ academic and social needs.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
<p>A. Personalization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school, postsecondary partner, and key community stakeholders articulate a student support strategy that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Academic supports based on quantitative and qualitative data, e.g., faculty support, mentoring, tutoring, summer bridge programs; ○ Advising supports based on qualitative and quantitative data, e.g., advisories, guidance and counseling, individual learning plan. ▪ The student support strategy specifies how each student will be known well by faculty and staff. ▪ School leader, partner, and key stakeholders identify agencies that provide services to students that are unavailable in the school, e.g., health clinic, DSS, DYS, DMH. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader and teachers identify students and families in need of service, refer them to services, and track effectiveness of those services. ▪ Faculty and staff continuously improve student support through assessment of formative data, student outcomes, and data from annual surveys of stakeholders. ▪ School, partner, and key stakeholders regularly review and refine the student support strategy to ensure that the needs of students and families are met effectively. ▪ The school has the capacity to address students’ needs and interests. ▪ Each student receives customized academic support and advising to achieve college goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School ensures that families receive needed supports, both inside and outside of the school. ▪ High school and postsecondary faculty follow students for multiple years and know students’ personal strengths, challenges, and goals. ▪ High school and postsecondary faculty continuously improve student support through assessment of formative data, student outcomes, and results from annual surveys of stakeholders. ▪ Students consistently receive support to accomplish higher-level work.
<p>B. Respect, responsibility, and safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School involves all stakeholders in developing a culture of respect and responsibility that involves older students as mentors for entering students. ▪ School community develops a handbook with clear discipline policies and consequences to distribute and discuss with students, staff, and families. ▪ The school develops a process for hearing and responding to student voice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader and faculty identify and share effective classroom management strategies. ▪ Discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions are tracked and recorded, and are considerably lower than district average. ▪ School leader, high school and postsecondary faculty, and students revise handbook to reflect college policies and expectations. ▪ Student voice informs culture, e.g., student organizations, forums, presentations, mentoring, advising. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Older students, both high school and college, continue to mentor entering students and speak to stakeholder groups about significance of school. ▪ Incidents of infractions identified in handbook consistently decrease in the high school, and discipline referrals are continually lower than the district rate. ▪ Students understand roles and responsibilities of being a college student and act accordingly, e.g., classroom norms, work expectations. ▪ Student voice continually informs school culture.
<p>C. Transfer and articulation plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, in concert with postsecondary partner and key stakeholders, develops a plan for a smooth transition from high school to college that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identification of transferable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School develops a post-graduation plan for each student that includes continuing education, and school and postsecondary faculty assist student and family to complete applications and financial aid forms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School and postsecondary partner adjust and refine their plan for a smooth transition based on quantitative and qualitative data, e.g., how many courses transferred, how many students applied and enrolled.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
	<p>courses, articulation options, and requirements to enter public postsecondary institutions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Methods to assist students and families to complete college applications, apply for financial aid (FAFSA); ○ Preparation of students for college-entrance exams, e.g., SAT, ACT, Accuplacer; ○ Strategies to acclimate students to the support services available at college. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School staff, students, and families have a clear understanding of transfer policies and requirements for the state's public postsecondary institutions. ▪ College identifies a counselor for high school students, who works with high school faculty and guidance counselors, to ensure a smooth transition. ▪ School arranges/encourages visits to different colleges and debriefs visits with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School tracks student acceptance to and enrollment in postsecondary institutions. ▪ Students receive assistance from the college career center to develop and follow post-graduation plans. ▪ SIS tracks students' persistence and receipt of baccalaureate degree in contracted postsecondary institutions.

4 – Early college high schools demonstrate effective instructional practices.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
<p>A. Curriculum and instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, high school and college faculty, and key stakeholders understand college expectations, state and district performance standards, and the intermediary's benchmarks. ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty align their curricula. ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty identify effective instructional strategies based on research to meet a wide range of student needs, e.g., differentiated instruction, scaffolding, project-based learning, technology integration. ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty use student data and research to understand the challenges of preparing targeted students for success in a rigorous academic program, including college courses. • School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty define literacy and numeracy as school-wide initiatives and choose instructional strategies that reinforce that commitment, e.g., writing to learn, literacy across the content areas. • School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty determine how to appropriately integrate technology into instruction. • School leader, high school and postsecondary faculty, and key stakeholders identify appropriate culturally-sensitive materials for target population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school and postsecondary faculty, students, and key stakeholders are knowledgeable of college expectations, state and district performance standards, and intermediary's benchmarks. • High school and postsecondary faculty assess the alignment of high school and postsecondary curriculum and refine, when necessary. • School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty regularly review and discuss proven instructional practices that inform their teaching, analyze student outcome data, and adapt their practice as needed. • High school and postsecondary faculty use instructional strategies to simultaneously address basic needs and accelerate student learning, e.g., differentiated instruction. • Content area and postsecondary faculty include significant amounts of reading and writing in their classes. • All students have access to technology that supports and enhances learning. • High school and postsecondary faculty provide culturally-competent instruction and use culturally-sensitive materials that affirm and build on students' background. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High school and postsecondary faculty, students, and key stakeholders are proficient in their use of performance standards and assessments. ▪ Students' transition to college curriculum is seamless. ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty consistently review and embed research-based practices in their instruction to improve student performance. ▪ High school and postsecondary faculty engage in action research to assess the efficacy of their instructional practices. ▪ High school and postsecondary faculty consistently and effectively analyze student outcome data and use instructional practices that accelerate student learning. ▪ High school and postsecondary faculty realize significant gains in student literacy and numeracy skills. ▪ Students and faculty use technology effectively to increase student learning. ▪ High school and postsecondary instruction consistently incorporates projects and activities that connect content to students' lives.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
B. Student assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty develop procedures to use data on entering students to identify strengths and needs, plan programs, and design professional development. • School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty review variety of diagnostic and standardized assessments available and select one(s) to meet their needs. • School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty identify processes that enable students to assess their own learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools schedule specific times during the school day and year for faculty to meet to review and discuss evidence of improved student performance. • School uses multiple forms of assessment (teacher-made tests, standardized tests, performance based assessment, portfolios, exhibitions) to evaluate student progress and to target instruction. • Students have opportunities to assess their own learning and that of their peers using self-assessments and rubrics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools effectively use assessments to identify students' strengths and needs, plan programs, and design professional development to ensure improved student performance. • School and postsecondary partner use multiple forms of assessment to evaluate student progress, target instruction, and revise curriculum. • Students regularly have opportunities to assess their own learning and mentor others to do the same.
C. Continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty develop a process to gather and analyze performance data consistently and regularly across the school to inform instruction and professional development. ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty develop a process and structure to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment with college expectations. ▪ Schools select instruments to survey all stakeholders' satisfaction with school culture, student support, professional development, parent and community participation, and other aspects of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty refine their data-driven process to result in improved student performance and more targeted professional development. • School leader and high school and college faculty assess effectiveness of secondary/postsecondary alignment based on improved student performance. • School conducts annual surveys of all stakeholders and uses results to inform academic practices at the school. • School conducts ongoing research on the efficacy of school design using indicators including attendance, persistence, discipline, standardized test scores, course taking and credit attainment, quality and effectiveness of student supports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools and postsecondary partners consistently analyze data on student performance (including performance in high school and college classes, results on standardized tests/college entrance tests) and use that information to refine their curriculum, instruction, and assessment strategies and professional development plan. • School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty refine alignment based on data on student performance. • School leader, staff, and postsecondary partner review results of the annual surveys and ongoing research to improve academic practice in high school and college. ▪ Schools solicit feedback from graduates on the adequacy of academic preparation and satisfaction with their early college experience.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
D. Professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader, high school faculty, and postsecondary partner design a professional development plan, based on data on incoming students and needs of teachers that is embedded in the school, allows for ongoing collaborative learning, and provides ongoing support to teachers to implement effective, alternative instructional strategies. ▪ School develops a schedule that provides common planning time for teachers. ▪ School leader and intermediary identify professional development providers. ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty have a common professional development experience before school opens, e.g., establishing a common vision; developing curriculum that aligns high school and college expectations; identifying a range of student supports; addressing data analysis, research-based instructional strategies, and classroom management strategies; developing a common process for cross-classroom visitations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty annually refine the school's professional development plan based on student outcome data and teachers' needs. ▪ Common planning time during the day is used for embedded professional development for high school teachers and postsecondary faculty, e.g., looking at student work, sharing learning from workshops and conferences, discussing current research on teaching and learning. ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty identify professional development needs and suggest professional development opportunities or consultants to address those needs. ▪ Secondary and postsecondary faculty observe each other's classrooms, provide feedback, and share effective pedagogy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Targeted and embedded professional development continually improves instructional practice as evidenced by improved student performance. ▪ School leader and high school and postsecondary faculty have developed a shared vocabulary around instruction across content areas and across secondary and postsecondary, e.g., rubrics, read alouds, notetaking process, writing process. ▪ Secondary and postsecondary faculty continually influence each other's pedagogy, instruction, and assessment practices through observing in each other's classrooms, providing feedback, reviewing student work, co-teaching, and sharing effective pedagogy.

#5 – Early college high schools establish and institutionalize strong secondary/postsecondary partnerships to ensure student success.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
A. Collaborative leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ University/college president and board identify early college high school's value to the university/college. ▪ Postsecondary partner (e.g., provost, deans, assistant to the president, faculty) is an integral part of the planning team for the early college high school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner continues to be a member on the decision-making body for the early college high school, e.g., is helping to determine direction of the school, continuing to support the partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Institution makes explicit that the early college high school is part of its mission and articulates its value to the college. ▪ Postsecondary partner continues membership in decision-making body and facilitates access to the university, e.g., courses, agreements, college credits.
B. Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intermediary facilitates a multi-year Memorandum of Understanding, charter, or agreement between secondary and postsecondary institutions that outlines essentials, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mission and goals based on the ECHS Core Principles; ○ Academic plan for achieving up to two years of college credit; ○ Roles and responsibilities of all entities; ○ Staffing; ○ Use of facilities; ○ Student support; ○ Professional development; ○ Pre-requisites for enrollment in college courses; ○ Payment of fees, tuition, books, liability, transportation, and food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secondary, postsecondary partner, and intermediary review periodically and renew commitment to an MOU, charter, or agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secondary, postsecondary partner, and intermediary periodically renew commitment to an MOU, charter, or agreement.
C. Planning and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School and postsecondary partner identify a person(s) to coordinate, plan, and scaffold activities to ensure a smooth transition for students. ▪ School leader and postsecondary partner introduce representatives of academic departments to the mission of the early college high school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ College liaison coordinates joint activities and is responsible, with high school and postsecondary faculty, for the social and academic transition of students to meet the challenges of college-level work. ▪ Postsecondary academic departments are encouraged to be engaged in ongoing curriculum and instruction planning with high school faculty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students, aided by the college liaison's efforts, have effectively navigated the transition process to complete up to two years of college credit and are pursuing their baccalaureate degree. ▪ High school and postsecondary faculty's co-involvement in curriculum and instruction planning results in accelerated learning as evidenced by student outcome data.

#6 – Early college high schools engage students, parents, community, business, and public agencies in developing and sustaining the schools.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
<p>A. Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader includes all stakeholders in establishing vision and mission of the school. ▪ School leader designs and conducts informational meetings with postsecondary partner to make explicit the need/desire for community involvement. ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders encourage business partnerships and involvement of policymakers to ensure sustainability. ▪ School leader involves all necessary district/postsecondary partners in school design to ensure plan for completion of two years of college credit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School leader moves to distributed leadership to involve stakeholders in meaningful work with the school to improve student performance. ▪ Informational meetings become basis for continued involvement with the school and students. ▪ School leader works with postsecondary faculty to facilitate clear expectations for future work with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distributed leadership model is apparent in school setting and makes significant contribution to school culture. ▪ School partners involved in beginning informational meetings help to conduct yearly meetings and mentor others to become involved in school. ▪ Business partners feel an equal benefit to their companies by involving students in the work place, and influencing future work habits. ▪ Postsecondary faculty has met students before they enroll and has been involved in the process.
<p>B. Outreach and recruitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders develop postsecondary, family, and community outreach and student recruitment materials that clearly convey school mission, organization, and design. ▪ School, partner, and key stakeholders reach out to postsecondary community through forums, town meetings, and orientation sessions to communicate and develop buy-in related to school mission and goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partners, and key stakeholders use, assess effectiveness of, and refine community outreach and recruitment materials. ▪ School, postsecondary partners, and key stakeholders reinforce the school's mission and goals within the school and postsecondary institution through forums, open houses, orientation meetings, retreats, and school conferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders refine community outreach and recruitment materials to include student outcome and college-going data. ▪ School mission and goals are regularly reinforced, revisited, and refined, if needed, by school, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
C. Parental/ family involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders, develop a process for parental involvement including ways to introduce families and parents/guardians to the school and to provide ongoing opportunities for input regarding school development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders quantify the frequency and types of participation by parents/guardians, analyze data, and refine their process. ▪ Parents, families, and guardians are regularly engaged in meaningful academic tasks, such as reviewing and discussing student work, portfolios, and assessments. ▪ School offers opportunities for parents, guardians, and families to strengthen their role in promoting their student's academic and social success, e.g., conversations about college expectations, ways to help with homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School, postsecondary partners, and key stakeholders from governance group⁵ continue to use data to design more compelling, relevant activities to increase parental involvement. • School increases number of parents/guardians involved in meaningful academic tasks and offers some guidance in the process for those who are reluctant, e.g., parents co-lead with teachers.
D. Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School and postsecondary partner, in concert with key stakeholders, develop a process for community engagement to introduce community partners to the school and provide ongoing opportunities for input regarding school development, e.g., informational meetings, town meetings, forums. ▪ School leader, postsecondary partner, and key stakeholders encourage business partnerships and involvement of policymakers to ensure sustainability. ▪ Governance committee develops a process to gather data on the number and types of involvement of community members, business partners, and policymakers. ▪ Governance committee begins to design a report to stakeholders that includes data on student performance, attendance, persistence, and annual surveys of stakeholders' satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business and community organizations provide support to school, e.g., mentors, tutors, scholarships, career counseling, grants, and technology. ▪ School leader and high school faculty work with business partners and other stakeholders to design opportunities for students beyond the classroom walls, e.g., internships, community service, jobs. ▪ Governance committee tracks business and community involvement, e.g., types of involvement, levels of success. ▪ The governance committee regularly reports to business and other community stakeholders regarding school progress, expanded to ultimately include college-going data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business and community organizations play a key role in school sustainability, such as advocating for the school with public officials, establishing scholarship funds, creating a school foundation, and securing grants. ▪ Business partners feel an equal benefit to their institutions by involving students in the work place, and influencing future work habits. ▪ School and postsecondary partner use data on parental and community participation to design more compelling, relevant opportunities for community involvement. ▪ The governance committee regularly reports to business and other community stakeholders regarding the school's progress.

⁵ Depending on the model, the governance committee may include parents, guardians, students, teacher, postsecondary administrators/faculty, district leadership, community-based organizations, community-based agencies, teachers' union, tribal governments, business partners, and/or local policymakers.

#7 – Early college high schools develop plans for long-term sustainability.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
<p>A. Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders identify and engage key interest groups, lawmakers, and regulatory bodies to educate them about the promise of ECHS and its policy needs. ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders identify barriers, e.g., funding, teacher certification, college access, dual credit. ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders identify and begin to seek needed waivers and conduct negotiations with state and local entities/agencies. ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders cooperate with other ECHS intermediaries and networks working in the state, when applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders conduct ongoing education campaign of key policymakers and interest groups, e.g., invite policymakers to visit schools, meet with local legislative staff, and present at conferences. ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders generate and act on plans for overcoming identified barriers, e.g., seeking needed waivers and conducting negotiations with state and local entities/agencies. ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders develop and carry out advocacy strategies for meeting longer-term ECHS policy and financing needs. ▪ Schools, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders continue to cooperate with other ECHS intermediaries and networks working in the state, when applicable, to meet long-term ECHS policy and financing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relationships with constituent groups are maintained and used to negotiate barriers and to inform broader state policy discussions about practices and policies that can improve postsecondary attainment for targeted students. ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders successfully negotiate some barriers⁶. ▪ Student outcome data from early college high schools build the case for supportive policies. ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders consistently cooperate with other ECHS intermediaries and networks working in the state, when applicable, to continue to meet the long-term ECHS policy and financing needs.

⁶ Potential resolution to barriers:

- College courses can supplant high school courses and courses are identified that can be taken for both college and high school credit (dual credit).
- If state policy does not permit, then schools have obtained waivers from the district and/or state to authorize dual credit courses.
- Early college courses are transferable to and meet general education and academic major requirements for Associate’s and Bachelor’s degrees in state’s public two- and four-year institutions.
- Teacher certification is flexible. Qualifying high school faculty can teach college-level, credit bearing courses and college faculty can teach in the early college high schools.
- Eligibility requirements for college courses or waivers allow for assessment of academic readiness in each core subject area but do not exclude students from taking any college courses if they do not qualify in one area.

BENCHMARK	BEGINNING PHASE	IMPLEMENTING PHASE	REALIZING PHASE
B. Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secondary, postsecondary partners, intermediary, and key stakeholders develop five-year budget including start-up costs and projection of actual costs for items such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School planning; ○ Implementation of ECHS Core Principles and seven attributes of early college high schools; ○ Curriculum development; ○ Transportation; ○ Secondary/postsecondary collaboration; ○ Instructional design; ○ Staffing; ○ Supports to meet students' academic and personal needs; ○ Inclusion of two years of "free" college credits, fees, and books. ▪ Budget includes grants; local, state, and federal funding; revenue streams; and philanthropic donations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders review, revise, and identify issues and barriers⁷ in five-year budget based on actual costs and revenue, brainstorm options, and pursue most viable ones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders have identified viable funding streams for all ECHS costs. ▪ Budget accurately reflects costs and revenues and provides guidance for future financial and sustainability planning.
C. Long term school sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, and key stakeholders engage institutional partners, community, business, public officials, and others in investigating options and opportunities for financing the long-term costs of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, community, business, public officials, and others specify and implement plans for financing the long-term costs of the school, e.g., a scholarship fund, long-term agreements for free or discounted tuition and fees, use of per pupil allocations to pay for college and school cost, establishment of a foundation to support the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School, postsecondary partner, intermediary, community, business, public officials, and others continuously review efforts to provide long-term financing of the school and use school data and progress to recruit new community and business partners.

⁷ Potential issues and barriers:

- School identifies most costs and revenues but budget is insufficient to project the current and near-term actual cost needs of the early college.
- Funding policies do not provide incentives for postsecondary participation in the early college, e.g., state, district, and postsecondary institution have not developed agreements to allow for blending funding streams to allow a portion of per-pupil ADA to follow students to pay for college costs.