

The **5** Guiding Principles of Early College High School

Early College High School (ECHS) programs are designed to dismantle academic barriers, cultivate a college-going culture within marginalized communities, and transition learners into high-value career pathways. Here are the five principles that guide educators in realizing those goals.

1

Equitable Access

ECHS programs prioritize the open-access recruitment and enrollment of students who may not see themselves as "college material" due to economic, racial, or social barriers. Instead of expecting students to adhere to pre-set ideals, ECHS programs expose students to academically rigorous challenges that are specifically designed for their grade level and needs.

Guided Academic Pathways

Educators lead ECHS students down clear academic pathways, connecting daily coursework and co-curricular experiences to the twelve (or more) college credits they'll earn by high school graduation. Those credits then further connect to a post-secondary academic pathway, such as computer technology, liberal arts, or health sciences programs at local community colleges.

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Enhanced Student Support

Personalized support helps close achievement gaps and gives every ECHS student a fairer shot at success. Rather than requiring students to schedule meetings or visit external locations, support services (such as academic advising, career counseling, college application guidance, and peer mentorship) are built around a student's existing school day.

Connections to Careers

ECHS programs go beyond encouraging students to meet short-term goals. By connecting learners to career exploration and immersion activities (such as career fairs, internships, job shadowing, skills-building workshops, and mentorship programs), they help students build the resilience and skills they need to succeed long-term, in line with current employment and economic trends.

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Effective Partnerships

Each ECHS has at least one local post-secondary institution (typically a community college) as a deeply committed partner. Partners meet regularly to plan program advocacy initiatives, career exploration opportunities, and community workplace assessments. Additionally, both partners continually adapt their academic programs and requirements to better address the evolving needs of ECHS scholars.

Contact a P2C ECHS expert to get started, or learn more at p2c.org.