



NEWS

Texas
Education
Agency

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TEA announces \$80,000 planning grants to develop Early College High Schools in small and rural districts

AUSTIN – Early College High School (ECHS) is a promising high school reform model that allows students who may not otherwise consider attending college an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and two years of college credit free of charge.

The target population includes first-generation college-goers, low-income students, minority students and English language learners. In Texas, there are currently 20 Early College High Schools in operation. The majority of these schools are located in districts with an enrollment of 5,000 or more students. However, the concept of Early College High School is one that can benefit students across the state.

In July, the Texas Education Agency will make a total of approximately \$480,000 available for funding through ECHS Small and Rural District Planning Grants during the December 1, 2008 to May 3, 2009 project period. The program will support the planning of approximately four to six new schools. Each recipient is eligible for a grant of \$80,000.

According to the Early College High School Initiative, ECHS requires rethinking traditional curriculum sequences, finding creative ways to align and connect high school and college experiences, and providing the academic and social supports students need to succeed in an intensive early college program of study.

The grant application may be accessed through TEA's website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/grants.html> by clicking on the "TEA Grant Opportunities" link and selecting the Small and Rural District Planning Grant link from the dropdown menu.

To provide additional details about the ECHS Small and Rural District Planning Grant, the Texas Education Agency will host an information session on Wednesday July 9 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at all 20 Education Service Centers across the state. The session will be hosted through a closed circuit television network. To attend the session, contact the local Education Service Center and ask to participate in Event #31405. Education Service Centers may be located through the following link: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ESC>

Early College High Schools are one of the key initiatives under the Texas High School Project (THSP), a more than \$300 million public-private initiative committed to increasing graduation and college enrollment rates in Texas. THSP organizations include the Office of the Governor, the Texas Education Agency, the Communities Foundation of Texas, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, and others.