

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet[X] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. David Martinez
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Early College High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2990 Mesa Verde Drive E.
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Costa Mesa State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 92626-3636

County Orange

Telephone (714) 424-7990 Fax (714) 424-4789

Web site/URL https://earlycollege.nmusd.us E-mail dmartinez@nmusd.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Wesley Smith E-mail superintendent@nmusd.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Newport Mesa Unified Tel. (714) 424-5000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Ms. Ashley Anderson
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 22 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 6 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 33 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- ☐ Urban (city or town)
☒ Suburban
☐ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	43
10	53
11	53
12 or higher	52
Total Students	201

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 11.1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 53.5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 30.8 % White
 - 2.1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 7%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	15
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	213
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Farsi, Japanese, Khmer, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %

4 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 60 %

Total number students who qualify: 121

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 1 %
Total number of students served 3

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 9 %
Total number of students served: 18

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 8

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	11
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	97%	99%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	100%	97%	98%	100%	100%

14. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2022.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	44
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	64%
Enrolled in a community college	18%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	5%
Other	9%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Early College High School (ECHS) genuinely engages a wide spectrum of students by offering a complete and rigorous curriculum, supported by technology and aligned to student interests and educational standards. Flexible and innovative coursework with an applied learning focus is provided in a challenging and supportive environment where ECHS students will earn a high school diploma and transferable general education college credits, enabling them to attend college and pursue a career path.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

https://web.nmusd.us/pf4/cms2/view_page?d=x&group_id=1518855658556&vdid=i15a1sier7hb

18. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

ECHS is a choice school option in the school district. ECHS is specifically designed to attract interested 8th grade students at both the district feeder schools and children who reside in Costa Mesa or Newport Beach who attend non-NMUSD schools. ECHS holds information nights for families and interested students throughout the school year, starting as early as October and continuing through the summer before the start of a school year.

Since Newport-Mesa Unified School District is a basic aid district in the state of California, only students who reside in the communities of Costa Mesa or Newport Beach are eligible to attend ECHS. All interested students must apply to the school to be considered. The school application is available as early as the fall and is reviewed by an application committee starting in November. ECHS will also consider high school students who are interested in being considered high school transfer students at the beginning of each semester.

Applicants are recommended for acceptance based on a 2.5 or higher GPA, attendance records, discipline records from the last two school years, current reading levels, and the responses to the 4 open-ended prompts on the application. On a case-by-case basis, ECHS also considers EL student applicants who are

making progress towards reclassification and any special education applicants whose IEPs can be supported at ECHS given there are no special education teachers or support staff at the site.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

School Description:

Early College High School (ECHS), established in 2006, is a college preparatory educational program strategically designed to fulfill and exceed University of California "a-g" admission requirements. ECHS is based on the principle that academic rigor, combined with the opportunity to save time and money, is a powerful motivator for students to work hard and meet serious intellectual challenges. A climate of high expectations and a strong college bound culture prepares the graduates to be competitively eligible for admission to the University of California, California State University, and other reputable institutions of higher learning.

Beliefs:

ECHS is founded on the principles of facilitating Rigor, Relevance and Relationships.

Rigor - Offering students a challenging, yet focused and accessible, curriculum that promotes critical thinking as well as content knowledge.

Relevance - Providing students with interesting learning experiences that are applicable to their personal life or are connected to real-world contexts.

Relationships - The positive connections between students, their peers, teachers, and school staff that create a safe learning environment of trust and support.

Vision Statement:

ECHS is a collaborative effort between the Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) and Coastline College. The program is structured to provide successful, challenging, and meaningful experiences for all students. ECHS is an academic program intended to enable students to pursue postsecondary education and a career path. Students are offered the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and meet university entrance requirements. Students also take college courses for which they receive college units through dual enrollment.

Key Strategies:

The top instructional focus for the 2021-22 school year in NMUSD and ECHS is Eliciting and Responding to Student Thinking. This focus was introduced in response to the pandemic interruption and the return to 100% in-person instruction.

The AVID Coordinator became the site's Instructional Coach and facilitated workshops for the staff on November 1, 2021. These workshops continued throughout the 2021-22 school year during selected Staff PLC sessions and continued into the 2022-23 school year. Three strategies were covered: Stronger & Clearer; Critique, Clarify & Correct; Compare & Connect. A more intentional use of Socratic Seminars was also encouraged. These strategies are designed to promote student engagement and enhance student agency leading to mastery of the content as reflected in their academic achievement over time.

There is a significant overlap between the AVID WICOR-based strategies and the Eliciting and Responding to Student Thinking strategies covered in the workshops. All teachers, the counselor and principal took part in a 3-day 2022 AVID Digital XP experience, connections were made to support teachers with these strategies in classes.

Creative/Innovative Programs:

ECHS started the 2020-21 school year with 100% distance learning. The regular bell schedule addressed

three major components:

1. Avoid conflict with Coastline College's remote and synchronous course schedule.
2. Allow for an extended lunch break to support students and families who needed to go to a local school site to pick up a free "grab and go" meal.
3. Limit the number of total minutes (240) a student would potentially be on Zoom daily through synchronous instruction while abiding by the attendance and weekly engagement parameters established by the California Department of Education for the 2020-21 school year.

ECHS remained in 100% distance learning until early April 2021. After Spring Break, ECHS was allowed to implement hybrid instruction for high school classes only for three weeks, and to finish out the school year with 100% in-person learning 4 days/week for high school classes only (no in-person college classes) until the end of the school year.

During the 2020-21 school year, the staff learned using remote platforms to support the following areas:

- * Academic assistance and tutoring.
- * Family and student engagement in virtual events hosted by our ASB and PTSA.
- * Bi-weekly Zoom Chats with the Principal to allow updates to be shared with families.
- * Student mental health and social-emotional needs.

All the above activities that included parents were conducted in both English and Spanish which raised the level of family engagement and participation. The schoolwide GPA showed improvement over the course of the school year whereby students registered a 3.10 GPA for the Fall 2020 Semester and 3.22 GPA for the Spring 2021 Semester. Since returning to 100% in-person instruction students have registered a 3.30 GPA for all three semesters combined.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

English classes offer a wide range of literature that reflects diversity. Students have choices within the traditional canon and can supplement the canon with novels and nonfiction titles that may be more relevant to their lives, circumstances, and reading abilities. Students have opportunities to make choices in their reading and writing, to increase interest and motivation with the goal of creating a culture of literacy. Writing choices allow student writing to be more personal and creative, while maintaining the state and college standards and expectations of their college classes. Reading choice provides opportunities for extended discussion, energizing student reading. Choice develops better reading skills and deeper analysis of texts, encouraging students to read more and read more broadly. Explicit instruction focuses on shared reading experiences within the unit theme, through articles, short stories, and essays. Each month focuses on a different thematic unit with book choices and supplemental readings that address the theme.

The Composition Literature 1, 2, 3 & 4 curriculum meets Common Core Standards and best practices for grades 9-12. Teachers present the information in organized units based on pacing plans and keep the curriculum relevant and engaging. This is done by connecting the curriculum to current events, other academic subjects (history, math, science, art), to future goals and real-world tasks, allowing students to choose novels within theme-based units, creating opportunities for students to write for an authentic audience, and reflecting a diversity of authors and experiences. In all grade levels, students learn and practice the academic skills needed for college success. These include daily and unit texts, focused annotating, organized notetaking, digital organization, the writing process (outlines, first drafts, revisions, reflections,) MLA formatting, academic language, small group collaboration, collaborative projects, formal presentations, and use of resources beyond the classroom (Paper, tutors). Student writing meets the three types of writing defined by Common Core standards.

Teachers encourage students to exhibit the schoolwide learner goals, to be thoughtful and engaged citizens, critical thinkers, empathetic citizens who lead with kindness, to exhibit resiliency, and to be self-reflective. Students participate in small groups and/or whole class discussion every class period. Protocols to encourage small group discussion (Socratic Seminar, Stronger and Clearer, Philosophical Chairs) are used along with randomly selecting student responses. Students use technology to support their learning through using Digital writer's notebooks, evaluating online sources, and conducting research on a variety of topics including topics of their choosing and presenting findings through writing, discussion, and/or presentations. Students receive regular and timely feedback from teachers on their outlines, first drafts and final drafts to guide their learning. Rubrics define expectations and areas for improvement. Teachers provide exemplar samples, so students clearly understand the objectives of the assignment.

1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

In the area of Mathematics, students work collaboratively to solve problems, develop new skills, and make sense of the new material and why it is important. This is typically done within a group structure in the classroom, using the guided workbook accompanying the textbook with technology integrated by way of the one-to-one Chromebooks, while the teacher serves as facilitator. Homework is provided by Illustrative Mathematics and is administered through the McGraw-Hill online platform.

In Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 students follow the Illustrative Mathematic Curriculum through McGraw Hill. Newport-Mesa Unified School District adopted this curriculum a couple of years ago for 6th grade through Algebra 2. Precalculus uses Sullivan 9th Edition through Pearson. These curriculums are aligned with the Common Core Standards for Mathematics. Beyond Algebra 2 or Precalculus depending on student's college plans, students can access college courses through the Coast Community College District. On site, ECHS has offered College Precalculus and Calculus 1 courses. Currently, College Statistics has been an annual offering for Juniors and Seniors.

All high school math classes at Early College High School follow a consistent structure. Class begins with a Warm-Up, followed by the lesson(s) for the day, and concludes with a Cool Down (ticket-out-the-door). Homework is completed through the online platform to provide immediate feedback. The math classrooms utilize group seating of 4 students per group to facilitate the student-centered learning structure of the Illustrative lessons. The lessons are discovery-based, requiring students to collaborate while the teacher serves as facilitator. This often looks like individual work time, followed by a small group discussion, and then large group analysis. While this takes place, the teacher is using a variety of checking-for-understanding strategies to guide the lesson and student learning. This includes the use of whiteboards, random selection, think-pair-share, choral response, thumbs up/down, etc. At the end of the lesson, the students independently complete a Cool Down which is aligned to the day's learning objective. This allows the teacher to collect data as the students are leaving for the day to assess who has achieved the objective. Students are formally assessed through weekly quizzes and unit exams. Technology is incorporated into the lessons through Desmos Graphing Calculator, Geogebra, Blooket, and the online textbook within McGraw Hill. During distance learning, the math teachers created interactive Desmos Activities for the lessons that included embedded explanation videos. These activities and videos are still utilized as supplemental material to support student learning.

1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The focus on the scientific process and how the scientific community works is the main emphasis in science classes. Technology is used to simulate labs on Phet and Gizmos. Materials are provided to students to do simple projects and labs. Teachers have added more articles and discussions about the science happening worldwide. The curriculum focuses on deeper learning. Students are given additional attempts to improve their work on homework assignments and opportunities to retake tests and quizzes.

The curriculum content follows the NGSS using phenomenon-based learning units. Units are designed as a storyline that progresses from one phenomenon to another as students find evidence based on current data to explain each phenomenon. It is a holistic approach to learning science where students behave as scientists and conduct research and analyze data to come to their own conclusions about the natural laws of the world.

Instruction focuses on inquiry methods where students discuss, and research as they figure out the science. Instruction is commonly group based so students engage in collaborative tasks. Students take on specific roles and are responsible for moving the group along during inquiry processing activities and laboratory work. Students conduct a major research project for each science class. In Biology students work in groups on a specific topic, write an individual paper, combine the papers to make a 10-page paper, then conduct scientific research or present a proposal to the community. Chemistry students create a product and write a paper to explain the chemicals in common use products such as soap and lotion and how their products are better alternatives. Physics students design, build, and test large projects combining data analysis and engineering principles. Students collect data, use it to inform changes, test, and present their projects during performance tasks.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Instruction in the Social Science courses is direct, with modeling and short live demonstrations are designed into the lesson. Instruction is visually enhanced (and a little more like a lecture) with slideshows that explain project directions and virtual (rather than actual) examples to accompany the instructional process. Instruction is 'chunked' to ensure content is understood before moving on. Digital resources have been created for students, including videos, links to websites, and rubrics on Google Slides for constant reference.

Ninth graders are not placed in history/social science courses. Standards-based social science content for grades 10 (World History), 11 (United States History), and 12 (American Democracy and Economics) is offered at ECHS. The content is covered stressing relevancy with what students are experiencing in today's world, and what they can predict for the future.

Instruction is guided by inquiry and collaboration to explore and evaluate different perspectives. The intent

is to connect and bridge history's past with the present by incorporating support strategies to help students develop civic skills, encourage collaboration, and develop critical thinking skills in evaluating historical, political, and social issues. As with instruction and student directed learning, appropriate scaffolding such as practical experiences, close reading and chunking are used to ensure content is accessible to all students. Instruction for bridge building skills that encourage collaboration across different perspectives include, but are not limited to:

- * Research (AI, Blogs, seminars, etc.))
- * Civic engagement projects
- * Debates
- * Field trips (virtual and live)
- * Personal interviews
- * Case studies (Harvard Business School, Mock Trials)
- * "Hands on" activities and experiences
- * Discussions [Socratic seminar, Clearer, Stronger (AVID) strategies, etc.]

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

The ECHS curriculum supports college and career readiness in several contexts. The dual enrollment courses offered to the students are primarily foundational courses students need to earn an IGETC (Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum) certificate upon completing high school. There is a rising trend occurring at ECHS in the number of students earning at least one Associate Degree from Coastline College, the college partner, while simultaneously graduating from high school. For the past 7 years, the data shows ECHS students are passing courses at a higher success rate than the general college student population. ECHS offers opportunities for students to earn the State Seal of Biliteracy by successfully completing a 3-year college course sequence in the students' language of choice.

All letter-grade assigned high school courses, excluding physical education, are college prep courses at ECHS. All AVID elective courses are now college prep classes and approximately two-thirds of the students schoolwide are enrolled in AVID. The WICOR approach to instruction occurs in all high school classes and 100% of the teaching staff have been AVID trained by either participating in the AVID Summer Institutes, AVID strand training, or professional development offered at the school site.

In 2018, ECHS added STEM-based courses such as MESA (Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement) and ECS (Exploring Computer Science) as part of its regular master schedule. ECHS students have access to after school CTE courses offered through the Coastline Regional Occupational Program (CROP). ECHS is one of only five Orange County high schools to be a UCI CampMed high school, a program designed to offer students experiences and access to professionals in the health and medical sciences. ECHS has a Work Experience program for students to learn skills in resume building, creating cover letters and completing assignments related to the workplace environment.

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Art 1 is an introductory-level art course for all students regardless of their past art experience. The curriculum focuses on the basics of creating studio art, which are called the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design. Students learn beginning and intermediate art skills and experiment with various art media, such as graphite and colored pencil, tempera paint, oil pastels, ink, watercolor paint, and collage. The course offers options in terms of subject matter, concept, size, and medium within a project's parameters to ensure each student has access to the curriculum. In addition to creating art projects, students learn about art history, social impact, critiquing artwork, self-reflection, and creative problem-solving.

ECHS's Art 1 curriculum provides students with a range of skills and knowledge essential for success in life. Students explore and apply their creativity and imagination in unique and innovative ways. The course requires students to think critically about their work, evaluate the effectiveness of their skills, and consider alternative approaches to problem-solving. Students improve communication skills by learning to articulate their ideas clearly. Students analyze their own work, evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for improvement through self-reflection.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Physical Education courses held 3 days/week, are mostly 9th and 10th graders fulfilling the 2-year California P.E. graduation requirement. Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate knowledge in the three core P.E. standards. The health education requirement can be met in several ways (online during the school year with our Health Education teacher, online during the summer through NMUSD or by taking Health C100 at a local community college). The curriculum examines personal, community, and global health issues/problems while providing basic information for healthful living, stressing positive health behavior and personal responsibility. Areas of emphasis include life cycle changes, emotional and sexual adjustment, disease prevention and control, personal fitness, nutrition, stress, substance use and abuse, environmental and consumer health.

The Physical Education courses utilize the WICOR instructional strategies as part of covering the curriculum along with the motor skills and physical fitness standards. Students collaborate on certain assignments and either complete oral presentations or produce videos indicating content mastery. This school year, Health Education is entirely online through a high school teacher. The curriculum used is the same online curriculum adopted by the school district for both summer and regular school year courses.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

The only foreign language offered in-person at ECHS is Spanish. Most students begin in either the high school Spanish 1 (non-Native and Native Speakers sections) that meets 3 days/week before students progress into the Coastline College course sequence within the regular bell schedule, two days/week. Yearlong courses in Spanish C180 (Elementary Spanish 1), Spanish C185 (Elementary Spanish 2) and Spanish C280 (Intermediate Spanish 1) are offered through 12th grade. Students who wish to take other languages may do so through accessing the community college courses offered off site.

Spanish courses focus on developing the four elemental skill sets for language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the process of language acquisition students also develop their technical understanding of language. Students are introduced to basic concepts of grammar, syntax, phonology as it pertains not just to the Spanish language but to the universal understanding of language. In Spanish courses, the study of Spanish speaking cultures is also a point of emphasis. Cultural aspects such as music, food, traditions, geography, the arts and much more, are introduced and explored by the students to promote cultural knowledge of cultures abroad but also Latin cultural heritage in the U.S as well.

2d. Technology/library/media

ECHS does not have a library or media center on campus. There was a computer lab, and four laptop carts were shared among the teachers through 2017. In spring 2017, ECHS was selected as the first school in the

district to become 1-to-1 Chromebook-to-student. Students were assigned a district-issued Chromebook which they keep until graduation. The laptop carts were removed, and the computer lab eventually became a multi-purpose room used for housing the English courses' novel sets, a meeting room, and conference room for the part-time mental health personnel.

Chromebooks have led to more technology-based lessons in the classrooms and were instrumental in allowing the school to smoothly transition to distance learning in March 2020 through April 2021. Even now with 100% in-person instruction, all ECHS students are expected to come to school with their Chromebooks and use them in almost every class.

All desktop computers in all high school classrooms and offices were removed in 2021 and replaced with Dynabooks. This change allowed educators and front office personnel to bring these devices home during off hours and work remotely when needed.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

ECHS has been an Emerging AVID Schoolwide School since the 2021-22 school year. In 2016, ECHS was re-certified as an AVID high school. Since 2016, the AVID elective has existed in all grade levels and approximately 60% of the ECHS student body are AVID students. All teachers, the counselor, and principal (13 educators total) took part in the 2022 AVID Digital XP 3-day conference on August 2-4, 2022. Prior to 2022, all AVID elective teachers, 3 content area teachers and the principal had participated in at least one AVID Summer Institute as far back as 2016. The instructional practices utilized in all courses taught through the high school are based on WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading).

ECHS has a unique relationship with UC Irvine that allows students to participate in programs such as MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement), the in-person Urology Lab experience, and CampMed which is a 3-day/2-night hands-on experience in a myriad of medical disciplines held annually at the Pali Resort in Running Springs, California. ECHS is one of two high schools in the NMUSD to be part of MESA, and the only NMUSD high school to be able to participate in the latter two experiences mentioned.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

ECHS implements a variety of interventions at different tiers to help students become successful if they are struggling or performing below grade level in identified areas. ECHS's top academic priority is literacy. Since 2018, the staff has determined that a student's reading level can be a reliable indicator of how well the students will succeed in the college preparatory high school classes taken in addition to the college courses the student wishes to access while at ECHS.

All students in grades 9-11 are assessed in reading in September, January, and May with the STAR Assessment Reading Inventory. Students who show a scoring pattern significantly below their reading grade level (2 points or below) are assigned to Reading Plus as a supplemental online program under the supervision of one of the English Language Arts teachers. Beginning in 2022-23, any incoming student scoring below proficient for the lowest level of math offered at ECHS, Algebra 1 for 9th grade, is assigned to DreamBox Math as a supplemental online program under the supervision of the Algebra teacher.

ECHS offers academic support in several forms such as adding a period of Tutor Corps in the student's course schedule and/or the struggling student is paired with one of the National Honor Society tutors for help in a specific subject. Students have online Paper tutors available for tutoring and to give feedback on written work. Students who may need to remediate a course have the option to do so either through a credit recovery program provided by Edgenuity, retake the course in summer school or repeat the course in a subsequent school year. Fortunately, the passage rate (As, Bs and Cs) for all courses taken by ECHS students exceeded 95% in 2022.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

There are several cases where students are performing above grade level. This is evident when we accept students to ECHS as 9th graders who have skipped a grade prior to arriving at ECHS and may be graduating high school at the age of 16 years. All ECHS students still have 4 academic years to graduate and cannot graduate earlier than their scheduled graduation date from ECHS. If students wish to accelerate and graduate earlier than their scheduled date, they can transfer to the NMUSD independent study program and work towards completing the remainder of their high school graduation requirements prior to that date and can start as full-time college students earlier.

For those who stay with ECHS until their graduation date, there are a few different opportunities these students can access to meet their educational needs if they are performing above grade level. Although ECHS is not a school that has a tracking system within its college preparatory high school course offerings, students can access college courses not only leading to a completion of the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) certificate but can also complete one or more Associate Degrees by the time high school graduation occurs. This path usually requires taking courses outside of the ECHS campus among an older student population.

Lastly, there are opportunities where students can accelerate in certain content areas by taking courses during the summer for initial credit. This must be pre-approved, but it does put many students in a position to finish high school with 50-100 more credits than are needed to graduate with a high school diploma.

3c. Students with disabilities:

ECHS has never been staffed with Special Education teachers. However, there are cases where students with current IEPs, on a watch and consult basis with the case carrier manager assigned, can attend ECHS if the middle school IEP team feels the student can be academically successful at ECHS without daily direct services. The case carrier will schedule annual and triennial IEP meetings and oversee the progress of all students with IEPs. Typically, ECHS will have anywhere from 1-3% of its student population with an active IEP.

If there are students with physical disabilities, the counselor also serves as the 504 Plan Coordinator. A plan can be developed and/or created to address that student's needs so that he/she can still access all high school and college courses offered at ECHS.

ECHS can also access NMUSD personnel to provide direct services for students who may need additional assistance related to their disability as written in their IEP or 504 plans. Examples are Speech Therapy or Adaptive P.E. as outlined in the student's plan.

3d. English Language Learners:

ECHS typically has a small English Language Learner population typically comprising 2-4% of the entire student body annually. Since this subgroup is low in number, the EL students are not reported as a subgroup when compared to other significant subgroups as they relate to standardized test score performance measures. Furthermore, ECHS does not have the number necessary to have an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC).

ECHS has never had ELD instruction, so the EL students accepted to ECHS demonstrate progress with English Language acquisition and no longer need to be in ELD or sheltered classes. However, ECHS does have an EL Coordinator who monitors student progress and works with the staff to support these students. The goal is to have students reclassify as Fluent English Proficient students by the time they graduate from high school.

The Principal and EL Coordinator meet at the beginning of the school year to identify the new EL students and set up a meeting with the staff to discuss student needs and to review any returning EL students. ECHS distributes EL class rosters to all teachers, so teachers know who the EL students are, and teachers are made

aware of the most recent ELPAC levels. The EL Coordinator will raise awareness with each of the EL students when the ELPAC is administered (typically in February for ECHS EL students).

The Principal and EL Coordinator document monitoring of the EL students with staff. Our teachers understand they will be asked to provide information about interventions for struggling EL students twice during the school year. In addition, the Principal and EL Coordinator will team up with the English Department Chair and Counselor to review the EL students' progress.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

There is a strong sense of inclusiveness between the student, teacher, counselor, and principal, which builds a family atmosphere with close ties to the community through volunteer service projects, learning activities and outreach programs to assist younger students in this school district. Families want their children accepted to ECHS due to the small, supportive environment where classmates get to know each other and the staff over their 4 years at ECHS.

Since most of the students are in AVID, this course offers support for academic, social/emotional growth, and college/career readiness. Nearly 10% of the student body participates in the after-school SOY (Save Our Youth) program based in Costa Mesa which offers free tutoring, a career speaker series, college field trips and enrichment courses in the arts and physical activity. In this program, several ECHS students hold officer positions and serve as tutors.

PBIS makes behavior expectations clear, and stakeholders share the goal of student success. The PBIS matrix provides the framework for student conduct with each other, both on campus and in the community. GOTCHA Awards throughout the school year are unique to ECHS and focus on the six pillars of character that build competent citizens who are aware of social and cultural norms and standards to help them become upstanding members of their communities and workplaces. ECHS has been awarded the PBIS Platinum Award in 2019 and 2022.

The House Structure is also unique to ECHS. This is a design for students of all grade levels to be members of one of four houses which have their own mascot and house colors. The House Competitions are the school assemblies which are designed to promote fun, camaraderie, teamwork, and fair play.

ECHS ASB has 21 students across all grade levels. They are responsible for creating activities during school spirit weeks as well as hosting after-school events for students. Since 2022, ASB invites other NMUSD alternative high school programs to be guests at the Winter Formal and Prom.

Finally, we offer 1-on-1 Turning Point counseling, on Fridays, for students who seek mental and social-emotional wellness support. Over 10% of the student body takes advantage of this free service.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parents are an important part of the ECHS community. Since 2015, much with engaging families and building community partners has been a focus. Prior to 2015, most school communications were not bilingual, Spanish interpretation was not provided at school events/meetings, and the multiple community partnerships had not been cultivated. Today, the ECHS community receives weekly bilingual email updates on Saturdays from the Principal forecasting upcoming events at a two-week glance and the bell schedules to be run for that school week. A bilingual Principal's monthly newsletter is sent to families throughout the year, at the beginning of each month.

The 8-year-old PTSA has been instrumental in promoting parent and family engagement. Over the years, the PTSA has hosted financial literacy presentations, mental wellness workshops, family game nights, and an annual Spring Carnival.

Since 2020, ECHS has been assigned a School Community Facilitator who creates connections with ECHS families and serves as an interpreter at both school events/meetings and parent/teacher conferences. The Principal holds monthly Zoom Chats with the Principal (English and Spanish) on selected evenings to help further connect families with the school to furnish information, speak on important topics, and answer parent questions.

Since 2015, partnerships with the Rotary Club of Newport-Balboa, Kiwanis Club-Costa Mesa, Save Our

Youth (SOY), Youth Employment Services (YES), and Girls Inc. of Orange County have been developed to support ECHS students.

- * SOY empowers the NMUSD youth to experience a variety of programs including academics (college field trips, test prep, tutoring) and activities (dance, art & music, health & fitness). Parent workshops and presentations are also provided.

- * YES provides job skills development workshops to help students prepare resumes, develop interview skills, and complete job searches. They also provide students with access to the job openings board.

- * Girls Inc. of Orange County was added in 2018 to provide workshops, programs, and opportunities for the female students (who typically comprise approximately 60% of the student body).

- * In 2016, a Community Service Club was started and is supported by both the Rotary Club of Newport-Balboa and Kiwanis Club of Costa Mesa. Representatives of each service club attend student meetings to raise community awareness.

ECHS is also supported by local community non-profit organizations such as Robyne's Nest, Cinderella's Closet, and the Assistance League. Families that either qualify as McKinney-Vento or need financial assistance with school supplies, toiletries, and clothing are connected to these organizations through both the School Community Facilitator and Counselor.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Early College High School environment is a unique and special place to work given the school's vision and mission. All the Certificated staff, except for one newly added teacher this 2022-23 school year, have been together since September 2017. Several teachers and the counselor have been at ECHS for 10+ years. It is a staff that has worked together in highly productive and synergistic ways, which was clearly an asset when we navigated the pandemic and the ECHS staff had to address families' challenges head-on.

During the 2022-23 school year, ECHS has been participating in the Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence program. This past March, ECHS had a two-day visit where teachers had the opportunity to share the following with the assessor about what it is like to work at ECHS:

- * The small community builds relationships and trust; very safe and communal
- * The staff senses each other's passion for the students
- * We build each other up
- * Staff cares about the students before we care about their grade
- * Staff can have specific conversations about the students' needs
- * Teachers can open and be vulnerable with each other
- * Staff feels they have built the culture and they set the tone and it impacts the students
- * There are systems of support in place at the school
- * ECHS staff has a shared belief that all students are going to go to college, or have that as an option after high school

When given the opportunity to share a word to describe the feeling at ECHS, teachers generated this list: community, unique, passion, value, culture, diverse, success, empathetic, exceptional, welcoming, listening, motivated, hardworking, committed, quirky, character, colorful, connection.

In recent years since coming back to in-person instruction in April 2021, more intentionality has been placed on creating the late start meeting calendar to facilitate the requests and needs of the teachers. Friday mornings are reserved for the late start meetings for the ECHS staff and the following model has been adopted: 25% - Staff PLC; 25% - Department Meeting Time; 25% - Student Wellness Discussions; 25% - WASC, AVID, District Business.

Before the start of each school year, three days are devoted to staff and professional development. In 2022, all three days were committed to all teachers, the counselor and principal participating in AVID Digital XP as a complement to the school district's ongoing top instructional focus, building on eliciting and responding to student thinking.

4. School Leadership:

ECHS has one sole administrator who serves as the site principal and has a philosophy of servant leadership. An administrative leadership team has been created to involve the Counselor, ASB/Activities Director, AVID Coordinator/Instructional Coach and Administrative Assistant. This team meets regularly, approximately every two weeks. The School Site Council is composed of eight members: the principal, two certificated staff members, a classified staff member, three parents and one student. The principal conducts staff meetings on a once/month basis to address policies, programs, relationships, and resources focused on student achievement.

Since 2015, the principal has worked with the school district to have ECHS designated a Title I school going into the 2016-17 school year, so additional funds could be made available to the school as part of its budget plan, targeted for academic intervention and support. The principal also served as the AVID District Director from 2015-21 whereby ECHS receives additional annual funds to build an AVID system that was once a two-year elective pathway for college bound Juniors and Seniors into the now 4-year AVID elective pathway accessible to all students. Since 2011, the principal has also served on Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation visiting committees serving as the chair since 2014.

ECHS uses its SPSA as its schoolwide action plan to target resources focused on student achievement as well as meeting those priorities paralleled in the school district's LCAP. The process for developing, implementing, and monitoring the schoolwide action/SPSA has been through the Cycle for Continuous Improvement (CCI) process. The SPSA aligns the schools' mission, vision, and schoolwide learning goals with the NMUSD LCAP so that consistency, accountability, and fidelity in the use of funds are verified. Within the SPSA, there are goals written to analyze the data quarterly, semi-annually, and annually depending on the goal written and what outcome is being measured/evaluated. Quarterly based data associated with the goals are shared with the staff through Staff Meetings allowing for responses to be made as a staff and/or by departments, and our PTSA (which has both parents and students in attendance with a Certificated member who serves as the PTSA liaison). Annually based data associated with those goals as written are shared with the staff at the initial Staff Meeting of the school year in August, as well as the initial School Site Council and PTSA Meetings of the school year.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

ECHS is an Emerging AVID Schoolwide high school. Culturally responsive teaching and learning is inherent within the AVID system which not only reveals itself in the AVID elective classes, but throughout all classrooms and school events. The reading and discussion of up-to-date and pertinent articles from the AVID Center that address topics of diversity in learning and education (such as first-generation college students and Affirmative Action) occur in the AVID classes.

ECHS departments ensure equity by setting classroom standards of respect in the syllabi patterned after the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports matrix the student body created in 2017. The AVID "Social Contract" serves as a baseline of expectations in all classes with norms for how to behave and respond in class. The staff models tolerance and mutual respect in classrooms and around campus. Students can express their ideas freely and work with each other in small groups to listen to the ideas of others that may be

different to their own.

ECCHS's Art classes address and support the diverse needs and backgrounds of our students and their families by providing multicultural and international Art History lessons, student choice in subject matter, and cultural context in various art-making projects.

Well over 50% of the student body take Spanish. The study of Spanish speaking cultures is emphasized. Cultural aspects are introduced and explored by the students to promote cultural knowledge of cultures abroad but also Latin cultural heritage in the U.S. At school dances, a mix of contemporary and popular music from all over the world can be heard.

All students in the 4-year English Language Arts curriculum are given a variety of book choices within most units covered that illustrate different cultures and ideas. Reading choices enhance student literacy and allow teachers to differentiate instruction, giving more challenging books to competent readers and easier books to struggling readers. Choices allow teachers to meet students where they are academically, emotionally, and culturally. Teachers can provide windows into other cultures and lifestyles and mirrors, so students can see their own values and interests reflected. When students read different books, they often encourage their classmates to read the same book.

The counselor secures enough fee waivers for SAT and ACT registration for all the AVID students regardless of socioeconomic status. The school community facilitator produces a weekly communication to all families on free community resources in their home language.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

For Early College High School, the ONE practice that serves as the underlying approach employed is the responsive communication with families that indicates the level of care for the students' ability to achieve. This was really put to the test when we had to pivot to 100% online instruction soon after March 13, 2020. If there was any positive from having the experience of being an emergency 100% online school for more than a calendar year it is that ECHS was able to enhance the existing family connection protocols and develop new protocols which are still in use today.

During online instruction, the front office staff intentionally checked in on the students as small student caseloads were assigned to each front office staff member. The staff used these opportunities to ask if students needed help with mental health (which students were able to continue remotely), technological needs, and awareness of food outlets before addressing any academic needs. This focus resulted in teachers holding office hours or setting up remote tutoring sessions.

From 2018 to the present, the school district's enrollment decreased approximately 20% (23,000 students to now under 19,000 with a virtual K-12 school implemented in 2020). ECHS enrollment increased by 10% during that period. NMUSD is a basic aid school district, so we can only draw students who reside within the district's attendance zone.

There are other areas that put the students in a position to experience excellence: having small class sizes where the staff gets to really know students, quickly scheduling SST meetings to address concerns, regularly communicating in English and Spanish to make families feel connected to the school. The staff is developing common academic language and instructional strategies that fall under AVID for eliciting and responding to student thinking approaches. Students state they feel a sense of belonging and community here. ECHS is a two-time PBIS Platinum Award School (2019 & 2022) that values students as individuals. The students' mental health is most important, so every effort is made to expediently connect students to the services they need. ECHS could not work and thrive without a genuine, caring staff committed to building tomorrow's leaders, today.