

Denver Early College High School Letter of Intent

Proposed School Name	DPS Exemplar Early College High School
Grade Configuration	Grades 9 through 12 with possible 5th and 6th year (grades 13-14) enrollment
Model or Focus	Early College High School
Primary Contact Person	Antonio Esquibel Executive Director of Early College, Office of Postsecondary Readiness
Phone	720-387-0051
Email	antonio_esquibel@dpsk12.org
Region and Neighborhood	TBD
Proposed Leader (if known)	TBD
Replication	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
Contract with ESP / EMO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO

Enrollment Projections and Target Student Demographics

DPS Exemplar Early College High School shall scale up to serve, with equity, students in grades nine through twelve and shall provide all students with the option to enroll for an additional one to two years in order to obtain credits leading toward or culminating in an Associate's Degree. The school shall target and enroll students who are historically underrepresented in higher education. DPS Exemplar Early College High School will open one year after regional and facility assignment, during which time further design will occur with consideration for regional context, community collaboration, and operational planning. The school will open with ninth grade students and grow one grade level per year.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
9	150	150	150	150	150	150
10	-	150	150	150	150	150
11	-	-	150	150	150	150
12	-	-	-	150	150	150
13	-	-	-	-	50	50
14	-	-	-	-	-	50
Total # students	150	300	450	600	650	700

	FRL%	ELA%	African American%	Hispanic Latino %	White %	Other%
Student Demographics (Target demographics. Actuals will vary by region).	90%	70%	5%	85%	5%	5%

Vision: DPS Exemplar Early College High School is *developing leaders for college, career, and our community*.

Mission: DPS Exemplar Early College High School is a proud and inclusive community of students, families, educators, and partners. We are raising expectations, opening new doors, and providing equitable access to authentic learning and comprehensive supports so that each and every student has the opportunity to earn an Associate’s Degree or up to sixty college credits and graduates ready for college and career.

Brief Overview of the Educational Program: As a district-sponsored application, the DPS Exemplar Early College High School application represents the district’s intentional effort to design one or more new secondary schools that reflect best practice in college and career readiness. In culture, instruction, leadership, supports, and governance, the DPS Exemplar Early College High School application models practices proven to result in better and more equitable outcomes for students who are historically underrepresented in higher education. This effort supports DPS toward its goals of having *Great Schools in Every Neighborhood* and ensuring every student is *Ready for College and Career*.

Plan Overview: The DPS Exemplar Early College High School application is developed collaboratively by multiple DPS departments and subject matter experts throughout the nation. We have gathered input in all areas of the School Quality Framework (SQF) and consulted national experts with subject matter expertise in Early College High School design and leadership, including school leaders, district leaders, and technical support providers. There is no single ideal high school model for all Denver students and families, and the district does not intend to dictate what high school “should” look like. Rather, we aspire to ensure that all communities have access to quality high school options and to empower communities with opportunities to participate in designing schools that reflect their preferences and needs. Therefore, DPS aspires to expand the number of Early College High Schools in Denver to ensure that students in every region can access one if they choose. This application will be tailored to reflect the unique needs of any or all regions that choose to open an Early College High School. Through collaborative participatory design processes, communities can use this application as an initial blueprint for a high quality Early College High School. Throughout the application we will describe best practice, identify specific areas where community input is needed, and describe recommended actions for community engagement.

Educational Program Overview: To ensure *every student succeeds*, Denver Public Schools is committed to providing great schools in every neighborhood and ensuring that every student is ready for college and career. In spite of significant progress including steady improvement in college graduation rates, significant opportunity and achievement gaps persist. Denver Exemplar Early College High School is being designed with the specific purpose of addressing these opportunity and achievement gaps. Denver Exemplar Early College High School will ensure that *all students*:

1. Receive a high school diploma and complete the DPS graduation requirements AND
2. Graduate having attained free, transferable college credit:
 - a. An Associate’s Degree that can transfer toward a Baccalaureate Degree,
 - b. At least twelve and up to sixty college credits that can transfer toward a Baccalaureate Degree, OR
 - c. A Career or Industry Certificate that can transfer toward an Associate’s or a Baccalaureate Degree.

To ensure these outcomes, the Denver Exemplar Early College High School aligns to Early College Implementation Guidelines and Benchmarks from research based best practices. Based on this framework, DPS Exemplar Early College High School will:

1. Scale up to serve students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education;
2. Create a school design and culture that foster an inclusive, enriching, supportive educational experience for all students and families;
3. Partner with an institute of higher education to provide all students free, rigorous college and career experiences;
4. Provide a rigorous course of study that enables all students to successfully master DPS graduation requirements and graduate with free, transferable college credit; and
5. Promote effective rigorous professional practice grounded in data-rich to ensure each student is supported on a pathway to graduation.

Student population - Denver Exemplar Early College High School will target and enroll, with equity, **students who are historically underrepresented in higher education**. Research shows that Early College High Schools are most effective for the following students.

- First generation college students
- Students of color
- Students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch
- Non-native english speakers
- Student with special needs
- Students at risk of dropping out of high school

School Design and Culture - Denver Exemplar Early College High School will proactively cultivate a **design and culture** that promotes success for all students.

- Close learning communities promote strong relationships between students, teachers, and families
- College and career culture mitigates the psychological and systemic barriers for students and families
- Culture of advisement helps students navigate personalized pathways to graduation
- Supports for social, emotional, and positive cultural identity development
- Cultural responsiveness, pride, and inclusion

Institute of Higher Education Partner(s) - Denver Exemplar Early College High School will partner with one or more **institutes of higher education (IHE)**.

- Partnership with IHE(s) that have a track record of successful K-12 partnership
- Identification of IHE(s) based on region(s) and postsecondary pathways selected
- Memorandum of understanding clarifies resources, transportation, credit transfer, governance, and data sharing
- Leadership and governance structures bridge the Early College High School and IHE

Rigorous Course of Study - Denver Exemplar Early College High School will offer an **educational program** that promotes college and career access and attainment.

- Multiple pathways to graduation and toward / to an Associate's Degree
- Multiple opportunities for students to transfer between pathways
- Data-driven instruction and support personalizes instruction and targets support for all students
- College and work-based learning through dual-enrollment, internships, residencies, and other opportunities

- Enrichment and elective learning maintains high levels of student engagement

Professional Practice - Denver Exemplar Early College High School will create a **professional culture and community** that ensure educators and leaders have support and are accountable for ensuring all students succeed.

- Common standards for rigorous instruction shared between the Early College High School and IHD
- Collaborative professional practice including Early College High School and with the IHE(s) staff
- Distributed leadership structures, including leadership focused on IHE partnership
- Data-driven instruction, continuous improvement, and student supports
- Professional learning and coaching for all teachers and staff focused on priority instructional strategies

We are pleased to provide this letter of intent as a commitment to the students and families of Denver.

Respectfully,

Antonio Esquibel, Director of Early College, Office of Postsecondary Readiness, Denver Public Schools