

SPRING ISD EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT

This Spring ISD Early College High School Interlocal Agreement (the "Agreement") between Lone Star College System District, a Texas public junior college (the "College") and the Spring Independent School District, a Texas independent school district ("SISD") is effective on the date of final signature below. This Agreement is a contract between two local government entities under the Texas Interlocal Cooperation Act, Texas Government Code, Section 791.001, *et seq.*

The College and SISD want to operate the Early College High School, called Spring Early College Academy (the "ECHS") located at Lone Star College-North Harris, 2700 W.W. Thorne Dr., Houston, Texas 77073.

The ECHS is a Texas Education Agency Early College High School initiative serving grades 9-12 that provides dual enrollment for academic dual credit college courses for high school students.

The ECHS offers students an opportunity to complete a high school diploma and earn transferable college credits of 60 hours or more towards an associate or baccalaureate degree at no cost. The ECHS provides ECHS students a seamless pathway from high school to college. The ECHS also allows high school students to gradually integrate into college course work through a traditional high school degree plan plus dual enrollment. Once students complete the ECHS graduation requirements, they may enroll at the College as a full-time student at their own expense.

The ECHS' mission is for students to achieve their dreams by mastering college-level work through a nurturing environment with rigorous academic standards. The ECHS is dedicated to helping young people progress toward the education and experience they need to succeed in life and a family-supporting career.

The ECHS' goals shall be aligned with and supportive of the early college high school core principles: (1) engage students in meaningful work that rewards performance with access to the rigor, depth, and intensity of credit-bearing college work while in high school; (2) make higher education more accessible, affordable, and attractive by bridging the divide between high school and college; (3) prepare students early for college-level academic and social expectations; (4) eliminate time wasted during junior and senior years of high school and facilitate the transition of motivated students to higher education; (5) provide needed guidance, support, and remediation services for both high school and college curricula; and (6) demonstrate new ways of integrating levels of schooling to better serve the intellectual and developmental needs of young people.

The parties therefore agree as follows:

Article 1 Definitions

In this Agreement, the following definitions apply:

"Academic Year" means September 1st through August 31st.

"College" means Lone Star College System District.

"ECHS" means Early College High School, and more specifically, the Spring Early College Academy.

"FERPA" means Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

"GPA" means grade point average.

"SACS" means Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

"SISD" means the Spring Independent School District.

"TAC" means Texas Administrative Code.

"TEA" means Texas Education Agency.

"TEC" means Texas Education Code.

"THECB" means Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

"TSIA" means Texas Success Initiative Assessment

Article 2

Approvals and Evaluations

2.1 **TEA Approval.** The SISD shall continually apply for the TEA ECHS approval as required by the TEC and TAC.

2.2 **Advisory Committee.** The parties shall create an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee, consisting of a College President and the SISD Superintendent, shall evaluate curriculum, instruction, and program activities annually. The Advisory Committee shall also make recommendations regarding effective coordination between the parties.

2.3 **ECHS Evaluation.** SISD shall—every Academic Year—conduct an evaluation process to determine ECHS effectiveness satisfying federal and state education evaluation guidelines. SISD shall comply with the TEA/SISD Accountability System. SISD shall report the results of that evaluation process at the end of the Academic Year to the College and any required agency.

Article 3

ECHS Composition

3.1 **Recruitment.** The parties shall recruit students within SISD boundaries. SISD shall define the target population to meet all state TEA expectations. The parties shall ensure recruitment, marketing, and admissions processes satisfy the Public Education Information Management System TEA expectations. The parties shall neither discourage nor exclude at-risk student subpopulations from admission or enrollment. The parties acknowledge that at-risk students are those with limited English proficiency or who have failed a state administered assessment.

3.2 **Admission.** SISD shall consider all interested high school students residing in the SISD boundaries. SISD's student selection shall reflect SISD's diversity and ensure equitable representation from each feeder pattern.

3.3 **Staffing.** SISD acknowledges that all ECHS employees shall be SISD employees. The ECHS faculty shall be selected by the SISD based upon their previous experience and teaching success. SISD shall ensure that the ECHS employees meet all state and federal certification requirements as well as Texas state certification requirements in the subject areas they teach.

(a) **Dual Credit Staffing.** SISD shall provide the College the dual-credit instructor credentials documentation that satisfies SACS and THECB requirements. The College may assign qualified dual-credit instructors for dual credit courses. The ECHS shall annually assess

dual-credit staffing needs and report those to the parties.

(b) **Evaluations.** SISD shall annually evaluate ECHS faculty according to SISD's policies and procedures—except that SISD will not evaluate the College's employees. The College shall annually evaluate its employees under the College's Policies and Chancellor's Procedures. SISD shall allow designated College personnel to evaluate dual-credit instructors as required under the learning outcomes.

(c) **Employee Salaries.** SISD shall pay the salary and benefits of the ECHS employees. The College shall pay the salary and benefits of College employees and instructors provided by the College supplied to teach college courses at the ECHS.

(d) **Professional Development.** The parties shall implement an annual assessment to determine topics or areas for professional development opportunities. The parties shall ensure ECHS employees and applicable College employees participate in collaborative planning and professional development sessions throughout the Academic Year.

3.4 **Compliance.** SISD shall ensure all ECHS faculty, employees, and administration comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Article 4 Financial

4.1 **Financial Considerations.** The parties may assist each other in obtaining necessary funds from local, state, federal, and private sources to successfully operate the ECHS program.

(a) **SISD Budget Commitments.** SISD shall develop an ECHS budget. SISD shall fund the ECHS's day-to-day instructional costs such as employee salaries and benefits, transportation, and other school-related expenditures.

(b) **Fiscal Agent.** The parties designate SISD as this Agreement's fiscal agent. SISD shall be the recipient of ECHS funds and shall act as the ECHS intermediary.

(c) **College Support.** The College may provide administrative, instructional, and support services.

Article 5 Facilities

5.1 **Facility Use and Parking.** The ECHS will operate on the Lone Star College-North Harris campus, and the parties shall separately execute a Lease Agreement (LMC0010080) ("Lease Agreement") contemporaneously with the execution of this Agreement. ECHS students and employees will have access to campus facilities as described in the Lease Agreement. Only ECHS students and employees are permitted in the leased space unless written permission is obtained from the College by SISD.

5.2 **Students on College Campuses.** SISD shall assign a staff member to serve as a contact person and supervisor on the College campus when students under the age of 16 years old are attending class outside of the ECHS.

5.3 **Governing Policy.** SISD shall follow the College's Board Policy and Chancellor's Procedures as applicable to the College's facilities.

Article 6
Emergencies

6.1 **Accident or Sudden Illness.** If an ECHS student, instructor, employee, or administrator should experience an accident or sudden illness on the College's premises, the College's proposed response controls.

6.2 **Emergency Closures.** SISD hereby designates the employee specified below as the responsible employee for emergency closures (that employee, the "SISD Emergency Designee"). SISD shall ensure the SISD Emergency Designee is responsible for ECHS student welfare during emergency closures. SISD shall also ensure the SISD Emergency Designee arranges timely transportation for the students away from the closed or closing facility. The SISD Emergency Designee shall answer all phone calls from College personnel during an emergency closure.

SISD Emergency Designee

Name: Kristine Guidry

Title: Principal

Phone Number: 281-891-6883

Alternate Number: 281-638-1676

Email: ksalinas@springisd.org

Article 7
Degrees and Curriculum

7.1 **Degree Plan and Filing.**

(a) **Student Degree Plan.** The parties shall ensure that ECHS students enter the ECHS after those students complete the Distinguished Level of Achievement Graduation Plan or the Foundation High School Program. SISD shall ensure that students begin with an educational plan reflecting an associate degree or 60 or more transferable hours towards a baccalaureate degree.

(b) **Filing.** The parties shall file a degree plan for each ECHS student as required by the TEC, TEA, and THECB.

7.2 **Curriculum.**

(a) **Curriculum Verification.** The parties shall verify alignment between college and high school curricula as required by THECB, TEA, and other state, regional, or national agencies. The verification includes an annual review of course crosswalk alignments, co-curriculum changes, and updates to accreditation standards.

(b) **Learning Outcomes.** The College shall be responsible for ensuring that ECHS faculty understand the necessary learning outcomes for dual credit courses. SISD shall require ECHS faculty to attend the College's dual credit learning outcomes training. The College shall designate personnel to monitor instructional quality to ensure compliance with applicable course articulation agreements and the standards the state, SACS, the College, and SISD establish. SISD shall be responsible for ensuring that ECHS faculty understand the necessary learning outcomes for high-school-level courses.

(c) **Course Rigor.** The parties shall provide rigorous college readiness instruction

according to the THECB rules regarding the list of aligned high school and college courses, dual credit, and technical credit. SISD shall ensure the high school credit courses meet all TEC requirements. The College shall ensure college credit courses meet all THECB requirements.

(d) **Courses of Study.** The parties shall collaborate to provide the ECHS an integrated four-year curriculum providing transition from grade level to grade level and allowing students to proceed to dual credit using course placement criteria according to the College's standards.

7.3 Dual Credit Enrollment.

(a) **Eligibility.** The College shall assess each ECHS student for college-level readiness prior to the student's dual credit enrollment.

(b) **Assessment.** The College shall administer the TSIA to ECHS students for proper placement in dual credit courses – except that the College shall honor regulatory exemptions.

(c) **Enrollment.** The College shall ensure dual credit enrollment criteria under state or accreditation requirements are met by ECHS students. The College and SISD may provide ECHS students academic assistance before a student enrolls in a dual credit curriculum based on the particular student's needs. The parties intend that academic assistance may include a bridge program that provides opportunities to strengthen academic skills necessary for high school and college readiness.

(d) **Dual Credit Course Rigor.** The parties shall ensure that all dual credit courses satisfy college-level content and assessments even where the course students may be all high school students. The College shall ensure that a dual-credit course offered at the ECHS or the College are equivalent with respect to curriculum, materials, instruction, and student evaluation method and rigor.

(e) **Contact Hours.** The College shall ensure the ECHS meets dual-credit contact hour requirements.

(f) **Tuition and Fees.** The College shall waive the tuition and fees for the ECHS students enrolled in spring, summer, or fall college-level courses except the College will not waive tuition and fees for any college-level courses an ECHS student attempts more than twice.

7.4 **Course Expectations for Students.** The parties shall ensure students complete all required learning outcomes and the associated assessments for their respective courses. SISD shall determine a suitable placement within SISD for ECHS students who fail to maintain the ECHS's minimum requirements.

7.5 **Statewide Instrument Administration.** SISD shall comply with the State Board of Education rules regarding administering high school assessment instruments. SISD shall administer all statewide assessment instruments in accordance with the TEC. SISD shall notify the College's instructors at least two weeks before SISD administers any assessment.

Article 8

Grading and Transcripts

8.1 **High School Credit Only Grading.** SISD shall report high school grades to students utilizing the district-developed grade reporting calendar. SISD shall comply with the SISD's current grading guidelines for high school credit-only courses.

8.2 **Dual Credit Grading.**

(a) **Syllabus.** The parties intend that the semester grades and grading policies be outlined in each dual-credit instructor's course syllabus.

(b) **Grade Reporting.** The parties shall report dual credit grades under the College's established grading periods.

(c) **Official Grade of Record.** The parties acknowledge that the letter grade recorded on the College transcript will be the official grade of record for dual credit courses.

(d) **Continued Eligibility.** The parties intend that ECHS students in dual-credit courses meet satisfactory academic performance—earning higher than a "C" in all dual credit courses. The parties intend that student-legal guardians and the parties approve continued eligibility every semester.

(e) **Dual Credit Probation.** ECHS dual credit students with college GPAs that fall below 2.0 shall be subjected to the College's probation policies. The parties intend that any student failing a dual-credit course be placed on probationary status restricting the student's enrollment to high school courses only.

8.3 **Two GPAs.** The parties intend that ECHS students earn two GPAs as follows: (1) College GPA based on their respective policies and reflected on the College transcript, and (2) SISD-weighted GPA based on its respective policies and reflected on the SISD transcript.

8.4 **Academic Probation.** The parties shall place ECHS students who fail to maintain an unweighted C average on "Early Alert" or "Scholastic Probation" respectively defined by the College's and SISD's policies.

8.5 **Grade Appeals.** The College shall administer college-grade appeals under the College's Board Policy and Chancellor's Procedures. SISD shall administer high school-grade appeals under SISD's standard procedures.

8.6 **Credit Transcription.**

(a) **SISD Transcription Responsibilities.** SISD shall transcribe high school credit and assessment results. SISD shall determine how the dual credit grades recorded on the high school transcript shall be calculated for GPA and class ranking purposes. SISD shall ensure the ECHS informs students and parents of SISD's decisions concerning high school transcripts.

(b) **College Transcription Responsibilities.** The College shall be responsible for the transcription of dual credit grades, college grades, and other approved placement or assessment scores. The College shall determine how information is recorded on the College transcript. The College acknowledges that the high school transcription requires that grades be converted between the two institutions.

8.7 **Withdrawal.** The parties intend that students who withdraw or drop from the ECHS follow the SISD's and College's guidelines and deadlines.

Article 9 Student Conduct

9.1 **Codes of Conduct.** The parties acknowledge that ECHS students will be required to adhere to the College's and SISD's applicable codes of conduct.

9.2 **Student Attendance.** The parties acknowledge that ECHS students will adhere to the

parties' attendance policies. The parties intend that ECHS students not be penalized for an absence in any College course because of state-mandated testing.

9.3 **Calendar.** The parties intend that ECHS shall follow the College's common instructional and facility-use calendar allowing for the same holidays, breaks, and professional development.

Article 10

Resources

10.1 **Educational Resources.** The parties may use free or low-cost open education resources in courses offered. SISD shall be responsible for purchasing all required student textbooks, supplemental materials, supplies, and operational equipment.

10.2 **College Resources.** The parties intend that ECHS students be permitted to access the College's facilities, services, and resources according to College Policy and Chancellor's Procedures. Academic and student support services normally offered to College students shall be offered to ECHS-enrolled students.

10.3 **Advising.**

(a) **Strategy.** The parties shall establish common advising strategies and terminology related to dual-credit and college readiness under the TEC. The parties shall provide for the alignment of endorsements offered by the SISD and dual-credit courses offered that apply towards those endorsements. The parties shall identify tools such as those developed by the TEA, the THECB, or the Texas Workforce Commission, to assist ECHS counselors, students, and families in selecting endorsements offered by SISD and dual credit courses offered under this Agreement.

(b) **ECHS Advising.** The ECHS shall have advising staff that consists of both the high school counselor and access to the College's Student Services staff. SISD shall be responsible for advising students concerning academic progress in high school courses. The parties shall be responsible for advising students concerning academic progress in dual credit courses. Dual credit students are eligible to utilize the same or comparable academic and instructional support services that are afforded College students.

10.4 **Accommodations.** The parties shall recognize and support the principles set forth in federal and state laws designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. The parties shall ensure that qualified students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations. SISD acknowledges that disability laws apply differently in dual credit and college courses than they do in K-12. The parties acknowledge that reasonable accommodation available to ECHS students will depend on whether a course is dual credit (college-level) or high school credit only (high school level). SISD also acknowledges that accommodations available in K-12 may be different or unavailable in college-level courses.

(a) **High School-level Accommodations.** The parties intend for ECHS students enrolled in a high school credit only course to receive K-12 accommodations as required under SISD's policies and procedures. SISD shall provide and fund accommodations for high school credit only courses.

(b) **Dual Credit and College-level Course Accommodations.** The parties intend for ECHS students enrolled in dual credit or college courses to be considered College students for accommodation purposes. The parties intend for ECHS students requiring disability

accommodations to request accommodations under College Policy and Chancellor’s Procedures. The College shall be responsible for providing the dual credit or college course accommodation—except that SISD shall share the costs incurred in providing dual credit or college course accommodations to ECHS students with the College.

10.5 **Student Ambassadors.** SISD shall provide one leadership training academy for selected ECHS students (10 per year) to cultivate new ambassadors to serve the ECHS until graduation.

Article 11

Additional Terms and Conditions

11.1 **Term.** This Agreement’s term runs from the last date of signature through July 31, 2023.

11.2 **Termination.**

(a) **Termination for TEA nonrenewal.** If the TEA does not grant ECHS renewal authority to the parties, then either party may promptly terminate this Agreement with written notice to the other party.

(b) **Termination for convenience.** Either party may terminate this Agreement for convenience at any time and for any reason, except that the terminating party must provide the other party a written termination notice 60 days before the end of any Academic Year. The termination shall be effective at the end of the Academic Year. The parties shall use reasonable efforts to comply with all of the following until the termination is effective: (1) continue to adhere to the TEA ECHS Design Elements; (2) suspend new student enrollment; (3) transition the ECHS freshmen, sophomore, and junior cohorts at the time of termination to high schools SISD designates; and (4) continue to serve the ECHS until the ECHS senior cohort at the time of termination graduates.

(c) **Termination for Lease Agreement.** If the Lease Agreement is terminated, this Agreement will terminate unless the duly authorized representatives of the parties mutually agree otherwise in writing.

11.3 **Notices.** The parties shall give notices required under this Agreement by registered or certified mail, postage prepaid with return receipt requested. The addresses in this paragraph are accurate for this purpose.

Superintendent
Spring Independent School District
16717 Ella Blvd
Houston, Texas 77090

Office of the General Counsel
Lone Star College System
5000 Research Forest Drive
The Woodlands, Texas 77381

11.4 **Insurance.** The parties shall maintain—at their own cost—any one or more insurance policies legally required by public or contract law.

11.5 **Indemnification.** To the extent authorized by Texas law and without waiver of governmental immunity by the College, each party shall indemnify and hold harmless the other party and the other party’s agents, servants, and employees from and against all claims and liabilities from any acts or omissions of the other party, its agents, servants, or employees, in the performance of this Agreement—except that neither party shall indemnify the other for claims or liabilities arising solely from the negligence, act, or omission of the other party.

11.6 **Independent Contractors.** SISD and the College acknowledge each is an independent

contractor.

11.7 Governing Law. The parties acknowledge that this Agreement, the interpretation of its terms, and disputes arising from it, shall be governed by the laws of the State of Texas. The parties hereby consent to the exclusive jurisdiction and venue in the state and federal courts for Montgomery County, Texas for disputes regarding this Agreement.

11.8 FERPA and Data Sharing. The parties may disclose ECHS student education records under FERPA as required or as needed for this Agreement's purposes. The parties intend to honor their respective FERPA obligations. SISD shall acknowledge the application of FERPA's post-secondary rules regarding ECHS students enrolled in dual credit or college credit only courses.

11.9 Publicity. The parties shall not use the other party's name, logo, or likeness in any written or electronic medium without receiving each other's prior written approval.

11.10 ECHS Handbook. The parties agree to the provisions in the 2020 Lone Star College Early College High School Handbook, attached as Exhibit A to this Agreement and incorporated by reference herein. The parties also agree that this Agreement shall take precedence over Exhibit A and if there is any conflict or contradiction between the provisions of this Agreement and Exhibit A, this Agreement will control and both parties waive any claim to the contrary.

11.11 Severability. The parties intend that if any one or more of the provisions contained in this Agreement is held invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, this Agreement's balance will survive.

11.12 Waiver. Any waiver claim responsive to an Agreement violation shall be void—except that a written waiver that specifically cites the term, provision, or condition waived shall be valid. The parties acknowledge that waiving a term, provision, or condition once does not bind the waiving party in subsequent instances—except that a written waiver that specifically cites the waiver as perpetual or ongoing shall be valid.

11.13 Authority to Contract. Each person signing this Agreement states that they have the authority to execute this Agreement.

11.14 Survival. Provisions in this Agreement which are expressed to operate or to have effect after termination shall remain in effect after termination.

11.15 Integration and Amendment. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement regarding this Agreement's subject matter between the parties. The parties acknowledge that this Agreement shall not be amended, modified, or supplemented except in writing and signed by each party's authorized representative. If the THECB or TEA adopts new ECHS program guidelines during this Agreement's term, then the parties shall accordingly amend this Agreement.

11.16 Limit of Liability. The parties shall not be liable under this Agreement for indirect, incidental, special, or consequential damages of the other party resulting from that party's breach of this Agreement.

11.17 Limitations on Authority. The parties acknowledge that there are constitutional and statutory limitations on the College's authority, a state agency in some respects, to enter into certain contractual terms and conditions such as those relating to liens on College property; disclaimers and limitations of warranties; disclaimers and limitations of liability for damages; waivers, disclaimers and limitations of legal rights, remedies, requirements and processes;

limitations of periods to bring legal action; granting control of litigation or settlement to another party; liability for acts or omissions of third parties; payment of attorney's fees; dispute resolution; indemnities; and confidentiality (collectively, the "Limitations"), and terms and conditions related to the Limitations shall not bind the College except to the extent authorized by the laws and Constitution of the State of Texas.

11.18 **Legality.** This Agreement shall be subject to all present and future valid laws, orders, rules, and regulations of the United States of America, the State of Texas, and any other regulatory body thereof having jurisdiction.

11.19 **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in counterparts, and signatures may be exchanged by email or other electronic means.


[SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS]

SPRING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

By: Rhonda Newhouse Date: 2/9/21
Rhonda Newhouse, President, SISD Board of Trustees

By: Rodney E. Watson Date: 1/26/2021
Rodney E. Watson, Ph.D., Superintendent of SISD

LONE STAR COLLEGE SYSTEM DISTRICT

By:  Date: 02/12/2021
[Stephen Head \(Feb 12, 2021 08:54 CST\)](#)
Stephen C. Head, Ph.D., Chancellor

REVIEWED BY:
Mario K. Castillo
[Mario K. Castillo \(Feb 11, 2021 08:03 CST\)](#)
MARIO K. CASTILLO 02/11/2021
GENERAL COUNSEL
LONE STAR COLLEGE

Exhibit A

2020 Lone Star College Early College High School Handbook