



## EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE



In 2003, the Foundation for California Community Colleges received the first of two grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to act as an intermediary in the nationwide Early College High School (ECHS) Initiative. ECHSs are partnerships between small high schools and postsecondary institutions that serve underrepresented youth previously at risk of not attending college, such as first-generation college-goers and those from low-income and minority backgrounds. Students have the chance to earn a high school diploma and up to two years of college credit in five years or less at no cost. The credit can be used to complete an associate's degree, transfer to a four-year institution, or certify in a vocation that provides a family-sustaining wage.

### **Innovative Education**

The program is designed to increase college access and affordability for students who may not have considered college previously. Students enrolled in an ECHS begin taking college-level courses on partner Community College campuses as soon as they show they

are ready, sometimes as early as ninth grade. By taking college courses for free through an ECHS, students cut down on the time needed to complete a bachelor's degree and can eliminate up to two years of tuition.

As an intermediary, the Foundation selects the college – high school district partnerships, assists in school planning, provides ongoing technical assistance, and coordinates and facilitates professional and partnership development activities.

### **Expanding Opportunities**

The Foundation opened its first ECHS in Modesto in September 2003. In 2007, the Foundation received a second grant to establish formal partnerships between eight existing Gates Foundation-funded high schools and local Community Colleges. In all, the Foundation sponsors 23 high schools from San Diego to Eureka, making it the largest ECHS intermediary in California and the second-largest nationwide.

From President Obama to national news programs, our ECHSs have been recognized as innovative, highly personalized, data-driven leaders in education. The Foundation's ECHS students consistently outperform other California students on key indicators such as the California High School Exit Exam, high school graduation rates, and A-G completion for college entrance. Our ECHSs also boast higher API scores than the average California high school.

### **Contact**

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### **Highlights**

- Developed 23 early college high school partnerships, which serve more than 5,000 students statewide.
- Six Foundation ECHSs recognized in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2010 Best High Schools.
- Four Foundation ECHSs recognized as 2009 California Distinguished High Schools

### **Partner Organizations**

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
- California Department of Education
- Center for Native Education
- Gateway to College
- Jobs for the Future
- KnowledgeWorks Foundation
- Middle College National Consortium
- National Council of La Raza
- SECME, Inc.
- Utah Partnership Foundation
- Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation

The Foundation for California Community Colleges is the official foundation to the California Community Colleges' Board of Governors and Chancellor's Office. The Foundation's mission is to benefit, support, and enhance the missions of the California Community College system, the largest higher education system in the nation. Incorporated in 1998, the Foundation works with Community Colleges and partner organizations to manage donations, grants, programs, and services that drive excellence in education while saving millions of dollars for colleges each year. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit corporation and receives no direct state or public support. *For more information, visit [www.foundationccc.org](http://www.foundationccc.org).*