**Environmental
Charter Schools**

**Proposal for Charter School Replication and Expansion Project
Project Narrative Table of Contents**

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## Absolute Priority

*Absolute Priority 1-- Low-Income Demographic:*

Environmental Charter Schools (ECS) meets the Absolute Priority 1 of serving a low-income

student population that is greater than 60 percent. ECS serves the following percentages of

students who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program:

2015-16 School Year:

Environmental Charter High School - 80%

Environmental Charter Middle School-Gardena - 96%

Environmental Charter Middle School-Inglewood - 96%

Across all network schools - 88%

Source: www.ed-data.org. Data collected by the California Department of Education (CDE)

through the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS).

## Competitive Preference Priorities

Competitive Preference Priority 1—Promoting Diversity. (0 or 3 points)

Environmental Charter Schools will employ race-neutral approaches to promote diversity

and avoid racial isolation at its new school -- Environmental Charter High School - 2 (ECHS-2

will be renamed to reflect its location once that is determined).

ECHS-2 will make every effort to recruit students of various racial and ethnic groups to achieve a balance that is reflective of the general population residing within the neighborhoods surrounding the school and to increase opportunities for students who are representative of the local communities. To achieve racial diversity, ECHS-2 plans to situate its campus along the 110 corridor in Los Angeles County, between the 91 and 105 freeways. This area includes the

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ethnically and economically diverse communities of Gardena, West Rancho Dominguez, and Harbor Gateway North. This targeted area is also geographically situated between ECS' two middle schools, which are located in Gardena and Inglewood.

In order to serve a diverse population, ECHS-2 will target families in areas that are located within a two to five mile radius of the school. ECHS-2 will maintain an accurate accounting of the ethnic and racial balance of students who apply to and enroll in the school, along with documentation efforts that the school has made to recruit a student population with demographics that are within 5% of the local school ethnic make-up. To date, the schools governed by ECS have had an ethnic population very similar to that of the local comparison schools.

Based on the ethnic makeup of public high schools in the target area, we project that ECHS-2's ethnic composition will approximate the following:

    Hispanic/Latino - 66%

    Black/African-American - 24%

    Asian - 4%

    White - 2%

    Filipino - 2%

Information and orientation sessions will be advertised through direct mail to the parents of eligible students who attend middle schools in the priority communities using flyers printed in English and Spanish.  Flyers printed in English, Spanish, Japanese, and Korean will be distributed at local businesses and community organizations, youth organizations, social service providers, faith-based organizations, grocery stores, public libraries, and middle school

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campuses. School information/outreach sessions will be conducted in English and Spanish and will be held at different venues throughout the community.

<u>Annual Efforts to Achieve/Maintain Racial and Ethnic Balance</u>

Each year, ECHS-2 will conduct the outreach and recruitment efforts described above and also engage in the following additional outreach, recruitment and retention efforts:

- Conduct student-led tours for prospective students, parents, and interested community members
- Ensure availability of bilingual staff members
- Ensure our curriculum and community events honor our diverse school community
- Utilize the Tribes program to ensure that our campus is a welcoming place for all and that our students are taught skills for successfully navigating cultural differences
- Perform a community satisfaction survey
- Engage an Equity & Diversity Taskforce comprised of stakeholder groups to examine diversity, equity and inclusion data and propose ways to improve our practices.

If ECHS-2 fails to enroll a student population that is reflective of the local communities, ECHS-2 will conduct targeted outreach to ensure our racial and ethnic balance and diversity. Examples of targeted outreach might include:

- Offering additional school tours in another language

- Distributing translated brochures to community-based organizations serving the underrepresented population

- Placing advertisements in newspapers serving the underrepresented population

- Participating in and, when appropriate, presenting at events sponsored by community based organizations serving the underrepresented population

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Each year, ECS administration, faculty and parent council will examine our enrollment data, reflect upon the effectiveness of outreach efforts and develop new strategies as needed.

Competitive Preference Priority 3--Novice Applicant. (0 or 2 points).

Environmental Charter Schools meets the definition of a Novice Applicant, as described in the Federal Register. We have not received a previous grant from this competition, nor have we received a discretionary grant from any federal agency within the past five years.

## Selection Criteria

### (a) Quality of the eligible applicant

History and Accomplishments

Environmental Charter Schools (ECS) is requesting funds to open a new high school in 2019-2020 to: 1) replicate the successful program at Environmental Charter High School and 2) respond to a growing need for additional high school options in Inglewood, Gardena, and adjacent areas.

Founded in 2001, the ECS network is comprised of a high school and two middle schools, and serves more than 1,000 students. The mission of ECS is to create and deliver

vibrant, innovative, interdisciplinary learning opportunities using the environment to engage students and connect them to the wider world. Our vision is that students become equipped with the knowledge and skills to graduate from college, inspired to discover their own sense of purpose, and empowered to become quality stewards of their own communities. Since 2001, ECS has refined its best practice model – small community schools that use interdisciplinary curriculum and authentic assessment, environmental and experiential learning, and community partnerships to make learning meaningful and relevant to students. Environmental Charter High

School (ECHS) opened in 2001 with these best practices and a goal of serving students whose needs were not being addressed in their large neighborhood high schools. Our best practices inform every element of the ECS experience, and have contributed to our success.

By 2010, after converting an old elementary school campus into a lush urban oasis replete with fruit trees, gardens, livestock, a student-initiated school store and bike shop, our high school became a model. More than 500 visitors step onto our campus each year to learn about what we are doing. They marvel at how articulate, confident, and happy our students are. Moreover, our success caught the attention of our nation. The US Department of Education and White House recognized us for our success at ensuring our students' admission to college.

ECS received the inaugural **Green Ribbon Award** for our sustainable campus and integrated curriculum and was awarded a **Silver Medal** by US News and World report for our students' significant academic gains. This success is evidence we have created a different kind of school - a model others want to emulate and replicate. As our success grew, so did our waiting list. At our high school, we consistently receive nearly three times as many applications as available seats. With so much success at the high school level, the community demand for an

"ECHS-like" learning environment serving lower grade levels increased. We responded to the demand by opening Environmental Charter Middle School – Gardena in August 2010 and Environmental Charter Middle School – Inglewood in 2013.

Today, all three campuses are alive with a variety of green features including more than 100 varieties of fruits and vegetables, a living stream, school-wide composting, solar-powered greenhouses, garage doors that open up into patio spaces and a variety of other sustainable best practices that are integrated into the classroom learning environment. Our sites offer students and teachers a platform to explore campus-wide solutions to current real-world challenges, and the

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results are students who are prepared for college, motivated to continue learning, and poised to positively contribute to their community.

ECS is most proud that **99% of our high school graduates have completed the A-G coursework needed to seek college admission** and **97% of ECHS' last three graduating classes were accepted to a 4- year college or university**. Approximately 53% of our graduates enroll in 4-year universities after graduation, with another 25% enrolling in two-year colleges. 75% of our graduates remain in college past their first year.

*Why the ECS Approach?*

For underserved communities, low income, lack of information about the environment and poor environmental quality are strongly connected. Low-income communities are disproportionately impacted by environmental problems—superfund sites, poor air quality and lack of information on the environment. Therefore, it is vitally important that today's students have academic knowledge, technical skills, and environmental consciousness to think critically

and lead the next generation of problem-solvers. By using the environment as an integrating context for learning, we empower our students to apply the skills they learn in the classroom to the challenges they see in their communities. Our students come from the south Los Angeles communities of Lawndale, Hawthorne, Inglewood, Harbor Gateway North, and Gardena. These areas have crime rates twice that of the national average, low levels of educational attainment at large, crowded schools, and low-income levels. More than 88% of our students qualify for the federal free or reduced-price meals program for families at or living close to the poverty line. Despite experiencing economic challenges endemic to the communities we serve, ECS students succeed. ECS empowers underserved students by breaking down barriers that prevent them from

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growing and learning to their highest potential. Through experiential, service-based learning, ECS shows students how they can make an impact on the world around them and uplift their communities through leadership and civic engagement.
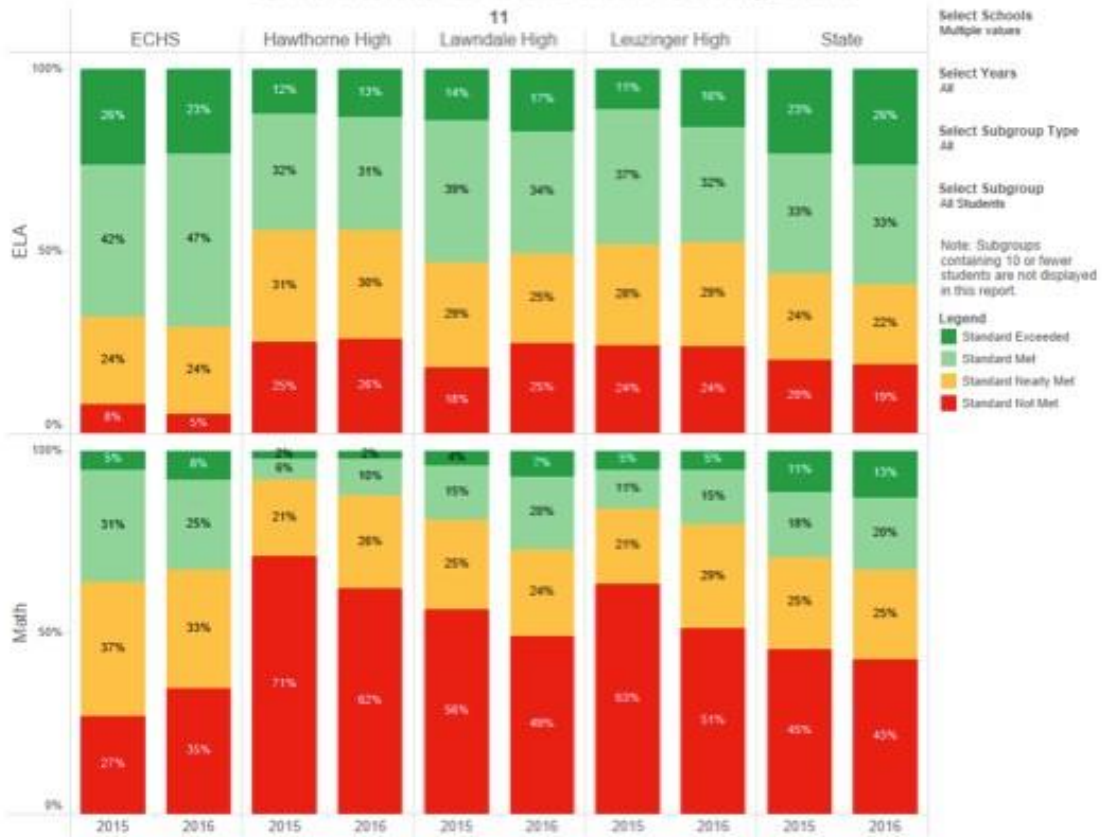
ECS seeks to build its capacity to serve a greater percentage of students in South Los Angeles. To that end, ECS' Strategic Plan formalized our organizational commitment to creating a sustainable ECS culture and infrastructure in preparation to reach more students by building an additional high school and two elementary schools. In recent years, we have focused on slowly and sustainably strengthening ECS' organizational capacity by increasing our operational excellence, securing the right facilities to support student growth, and mastering our best practices through teacher development and evaluation. We have built effective back office operations that improve efficiencies, maintain consistent culture across schools sites, and ensure our schools are focused on teaching and learning.

1. Success in increasing academic achievement for all students and subgroups.

*Environmental Charter High School*

Environmental Charter High School (ECHS) has experienced consistently high student achievement on CAASPP in both ELA and Math since the first administration of the new test in 2014-15. In 2015-16, 70% of ECHS students met or exceeded the ELA standards, which far exceeds the percentage of students meeting or exceeding ELA standards at neighboring district high schools and those across California. Also in 2015-16, 33% of ECHS students met or exceeded the math standards, which matched math achievement across the state and exceeded that of students at local public high schools.

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# ECHS Performance Distribution and Comparisons



# ECHS Percent Proficient and Comparisons
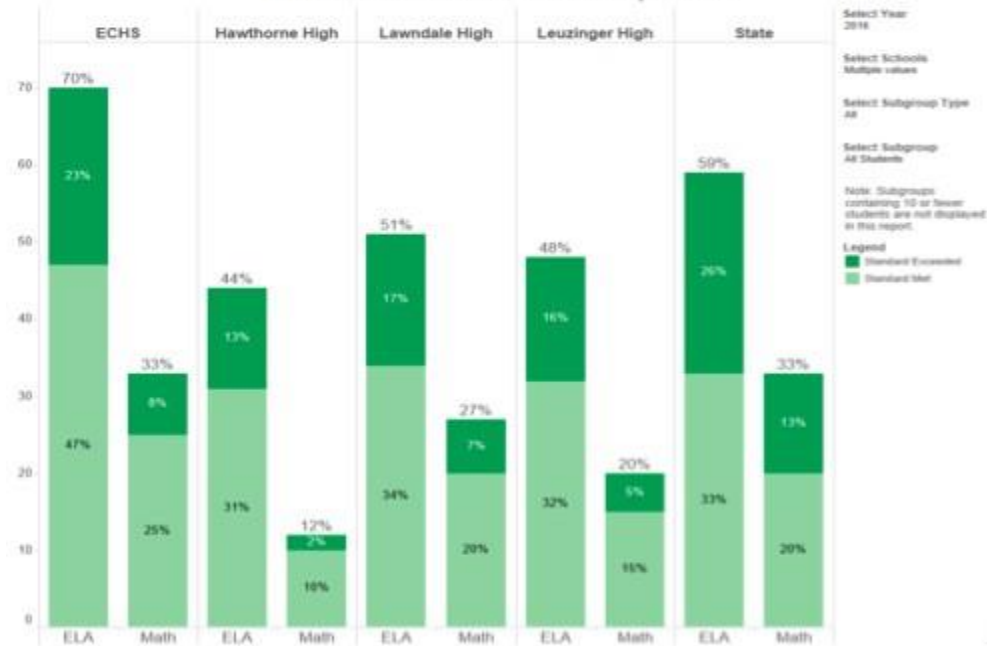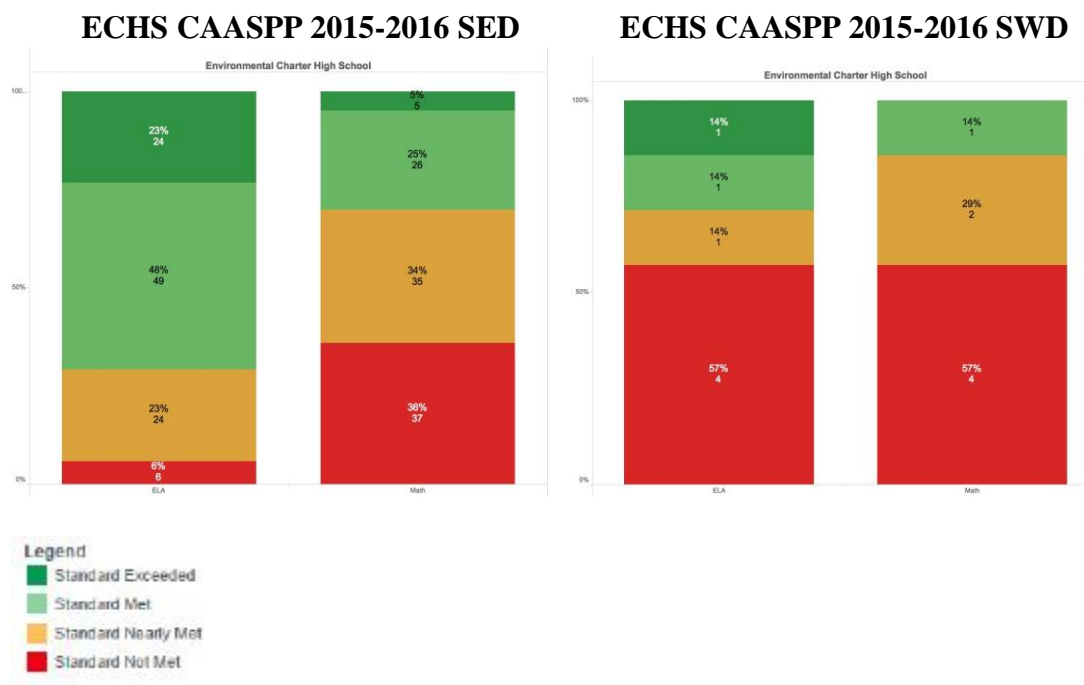
## ECHS CAASPP 2015-2016 SED

Environmental Charter High School



## ECHS CAASPP 2015-2016 SWD

Environmental Charter High School



Legend
- ■ Standard Exceeded
- ■ Standard Met
- ■ Standard Nearly Met
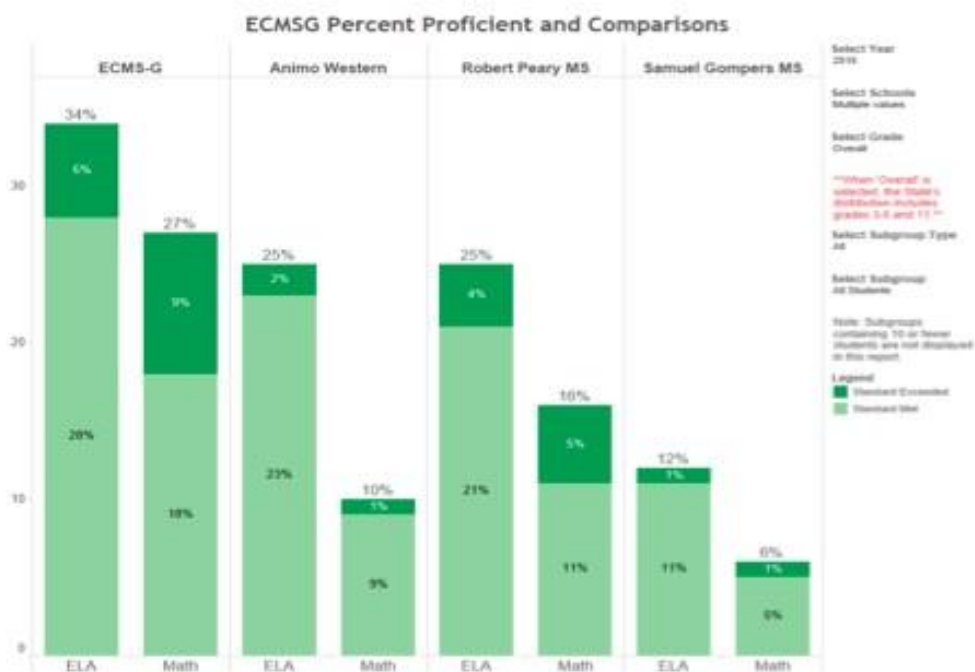- ■ Standard Not Met

*Environmental Charter Middle School-Gardena*

Environmental Charter Middle School-Gardena (ECMS-G) saw marked improvement in CAASPP scores in both ELA and math since the first administration of the new state test in 2014-15. In ELA, we saw a 9 point increase in the percentage of students who met/exceeded the standards in 2016 than in 2015. In math, we saw a 12 point increase in the percentage of students who met/exceeded the standards in 2016 versus 2015. Furthermore, ECMS-G student performance on CAASPP is consistently higher than that of comparable schools:

- In 2015-16, 34% of ECMS-G students met/exceeded the ELA standards compared to 12-25% of students meeting/exceeding the ELA standards at nearby charter/district schools.

- In 2015-16, 27% of ECMS-G students met/exceeded the math standards compared to 6-16% of students meeting/exceeding the math standards at nearby charter/district schools.

**ECMSG Percent Proficient and Comparisons**



**ECMS-G CAASPP 2015-2016 BY ETHNICITY**

**Proficiency Distribution Comparison by Ethinicty**
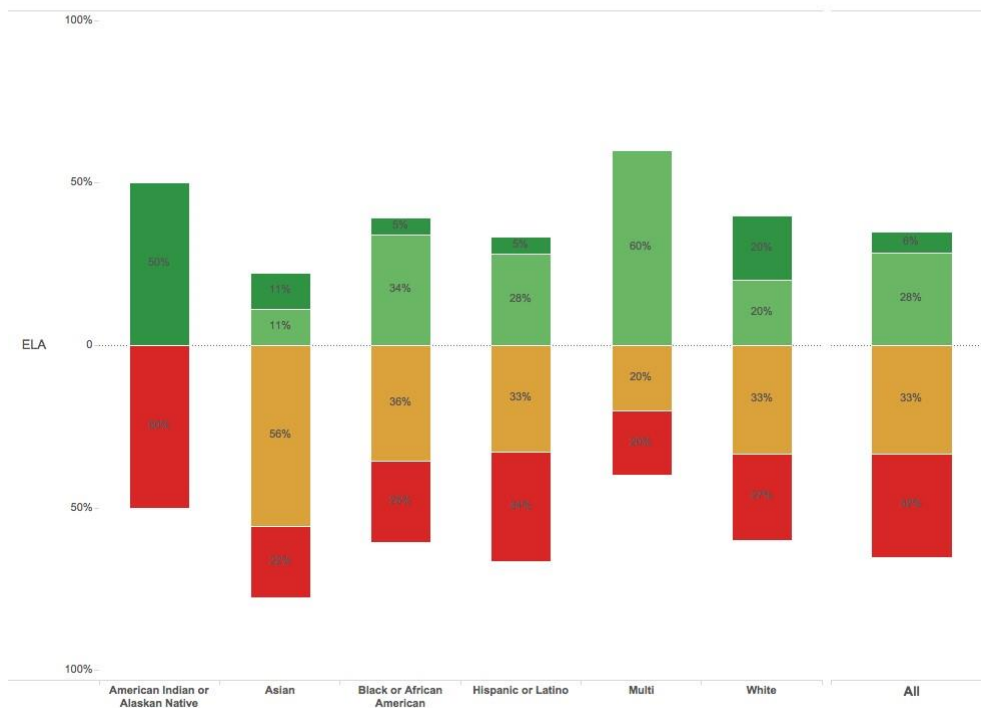
## ECMS-G CAASPP 2015-2016 SED

## ECMS-G CAASPP 2015-2016 SWD



Environmental Charter Middle School Gardena



Environmental Charter Middle School Gardena

## ECMS-G CAASPP 2015-2016 EL



Environmental Charter Middle School Gardena
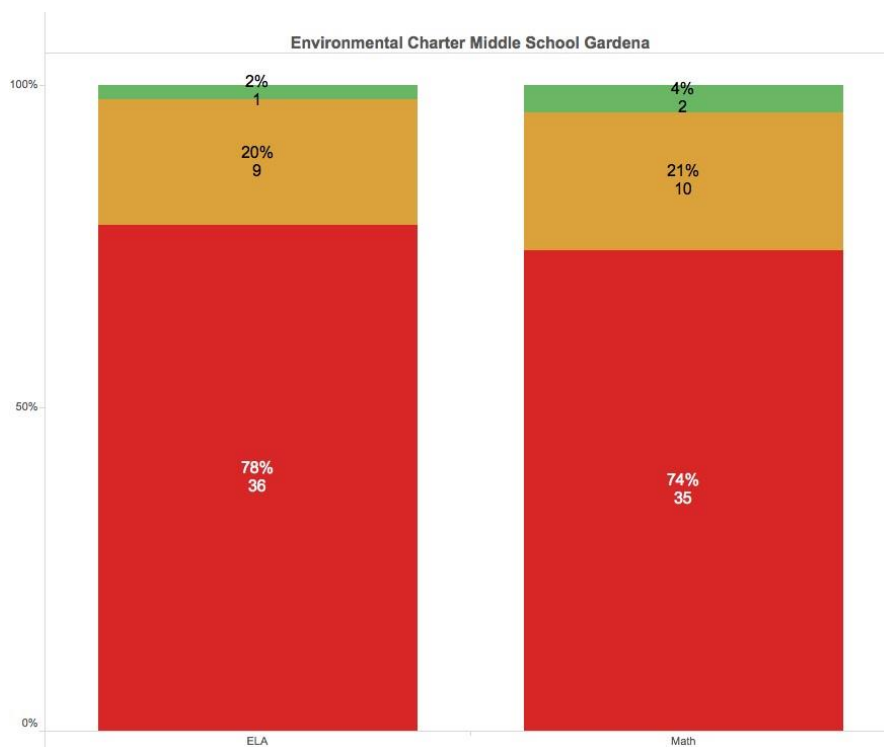
*Environmental Charter Middle School-Inglewood*

Environmental Charter Middle School-Inglewood (ECMS-I), our newest campus (established in 2013-14), also experienced improvement in CAASPP scores in both ELA and Math since the first administration of the new state test in 2014-15. The percentage of ECMS-I students meeting/exceeding the standards in ELA increased 8 percentage points from 2015 to 2016. In math, the percentage of ECMS-I students' meeting/exceeding the standard increased 4 percentage points from 2015 to 2016.

ECMS-I student performance on CAASPP is higher than that of comparable schools in ELA and in Math:

- In 2015-16, 46% of ECMS-I students met/exceeded the ELA standards compared to 2536% of students meeting/exceeding the ELA standards at neighboring charter/district schools.

- In 2014-15, 18% of ECMS-I students met the math standards compared to 9-16% of students meeting/exceeding the math standards at neighboring charter/district schools.
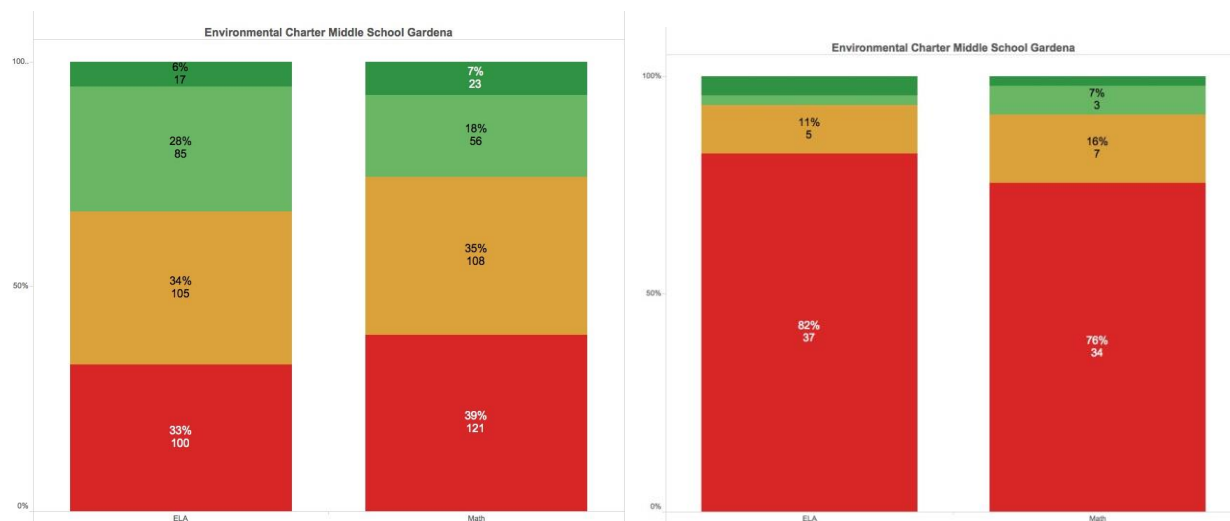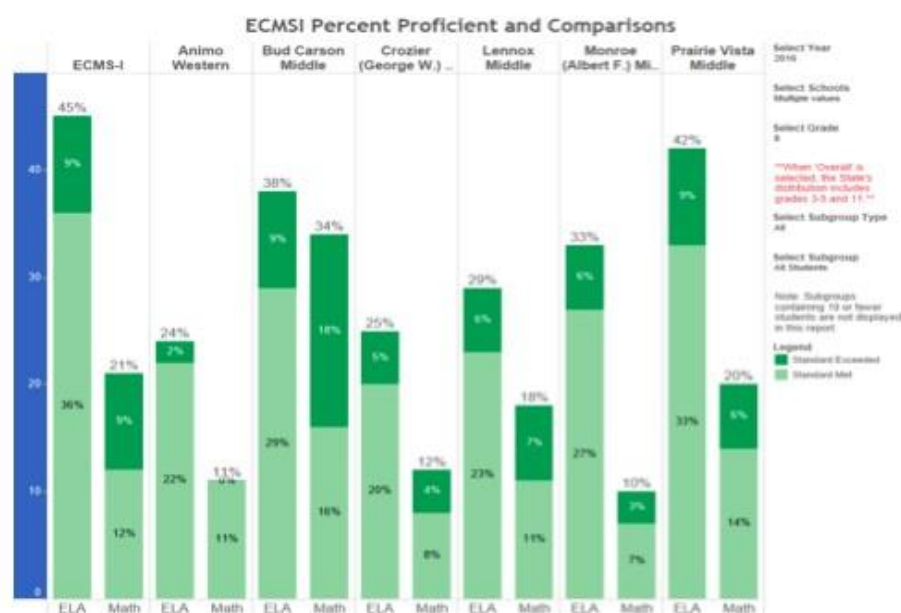


ECMSI Percent Proficient and Comparisons

# ECMS-I CAASPP 2015-2016 EL

**Environmental Charter Middle School Inglewood**



## ECMS-I CAASPP 2015-2016 SED

**Environmental Charter Middle School Inglewood**



## ECMS-I CAASPP 2015-2016 SWD

**Environmental Charter Middle School Inglewood**
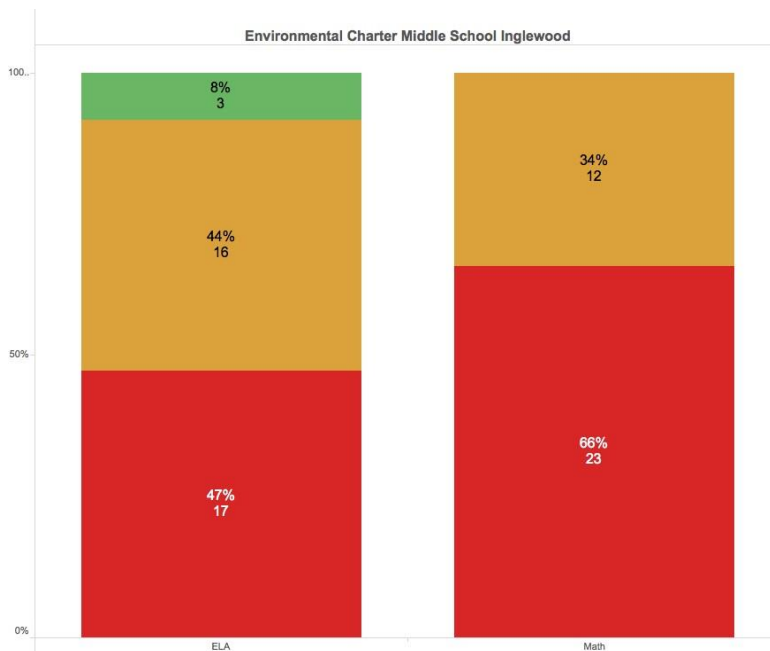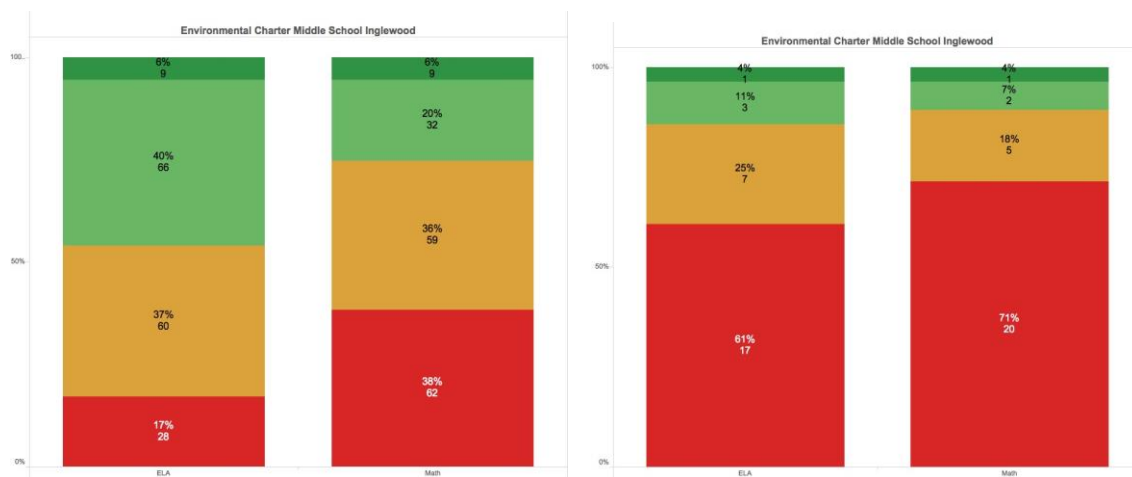
**ECMS-I CAASPP 2015-2016 ALL ETHNICITIES**

Proficiency Distribution Comparison by Ethinicty
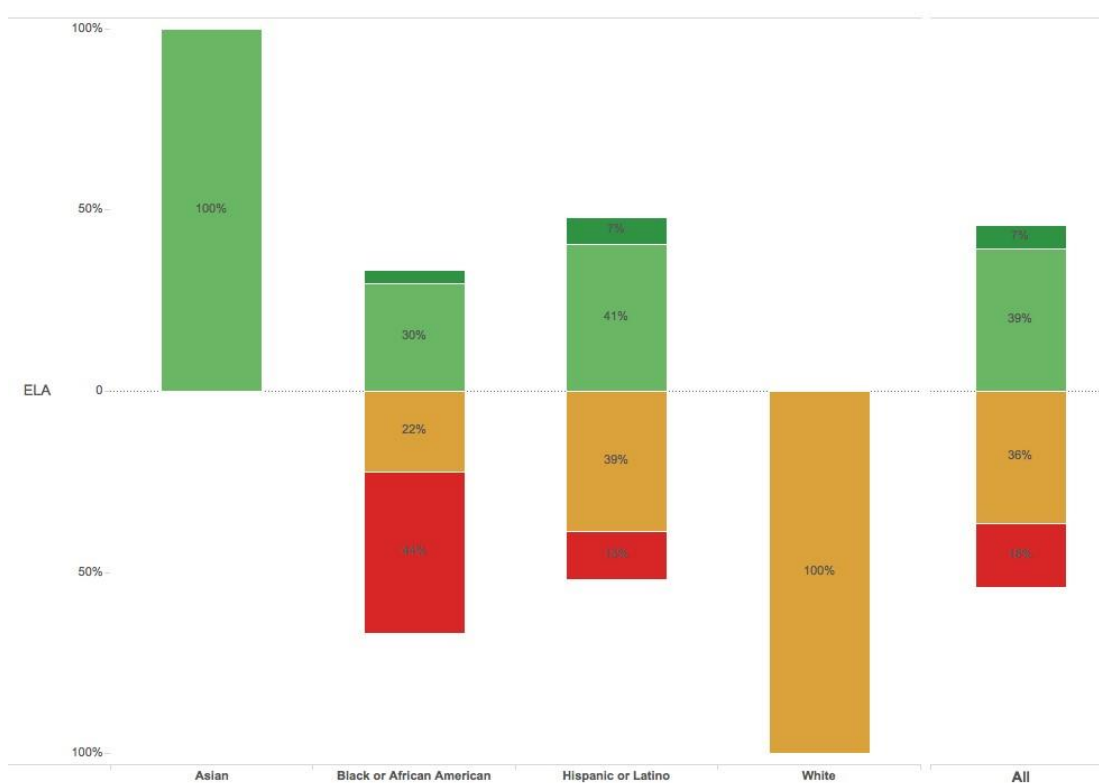


2. <u>Academic achievement results for educationally disadvantaged students.</u>

In addition to our students out-performing their peers at local schools, both of ECS' middle

schools have demonstrated a cohort growth rate higher than that of the state for nearly every

subgroup, including socioeconomically disadvantaged students, from 2015 to 2016.

**Cohort Growth Rates on CAASPP (2015 to 2016)**

| METRIC | | ECS | STATE AVERAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average growth rate of students* with **low socioeconomic status** from 2014-15 to 2015-16<br><br>*From grades 6 to 7 and 7 to 8 only. ECHS does not have cohort data as only 11th grade students take CAASPP. | CAASPP ELA | ECMS-G: 11.5%<br>ECMS-I: 16.5 | State of CA: 5.5% |
| | CAASPP Math | ECMS-G: 19.5%<br>ECMS-I: 1% | State of CA: 4% |
| Average growth rate of **Hispanic/Latino** students* from 2014-15 to 2015-16<br><br>*From grades 6 to 7 and 7 to 8 only. ECHS does not have cohort data as only 11th grade students take CAASPP. | CAASPP ELA | ECMS-G: 9.5% ECMS-I: 19.5% | State of CA: 5.5% |
| | CAASPP Math | ECMS-G: 19.5%<br>ECMS-I: 1% | State of CA: 3.5% |
| Average growth rate of **Black / African-American** students* from 2014-15 to 2015-16<br><br>*From grades 6 to 7 and 7 to 8 only. ECHS does not have cohort data as only 11th grade students take CAASPP. | CAASPP ELA | ECHS: N/A<br>ECMS-G: 23.5%<br>ECMS-I: 14% | State of CA: 4% |
| | CAASPP Math | ECHS: N/A<br>ECMS-G: 16%<br>ECMS-I: 8% | State of CA: 1.5% |

*Graduation, College Readiness, College Persistence, and Attendance*

| | | SUBGROUPS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **METRIC** | ALL STUDENTS | LATINO | AFRICAN AMERICAN | SED | EL | SPED |
| Cohort Graduation Rate 2014-2015* | 90.2% CA: 82.3% | 88.9% CA: 78.5% | 84.6% CA: 70.8% | 90% CA: 77.7% | 88.2% CA: 69.4% | 60% CA: 64.5% |
| Cohort Graduation Rate 2015-2016** | 96.6% | 96.4% | 100% | 93.3% | 90.9% | 96.3% |
| A-G Completion Rate* 2014-2015 | 100% CA: 43.4% | 100% CA: 34.6% | 100% CA: 32.7% | 100% CA: 34.2% | 100% CA: 9.2% | 100% CA: N/A |
| College Acceptance Rate | 97% | 99% | 87% | 98% | 100% | 56% |
| College Enrollment | 78% | | | | | |
| College Persistence Rate | 75% | | | | | |
| Attendance Rates | ECHS 98% ECMS-G 99% ECMS-I 97% | | | | | |

\*As reported on CDE DataQuest
\*\*As reported by CALPADS (California comparison data not yet available)

3. Fiscal and Operational Responsibility

      Environmental Charter Schools has never had a school closed, a charter revoked, or a charter not renewed.  ESC conducts an independent audit each year. To date, with more than 15 years of audits, ECS has received clean audits year after year; there have been no significant issues in the area of fiscal responsibility found. There also have not been any significant

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problems with statutory or regulatory compliance or significant issues with respect to student safety.

**(b) Contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students**

1.  ECS effectively serves educationally disadvantaged students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.

      As demonstrated by the Enrollment Data chart below, ECS schools serve educationally disadvantaged students at rates generally comparable to their surrounding public schools.

| ENROLLMENT DATA<br>Source:  Ed-data.org | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **METRIC** | | **2015-2016** | **Comparison Schools** | **2015-2016** |
| **Number of students** | ECHS | 515 | Leuzinger HS<br>Lawndale HS | 1,829<br>2,219 |
| | ECMS-Gardena | 354 | Peary (Robert E.) MS | 1,332 |
| | ECMS-Inglewood | 182 | Monroe (Albert F) MS | 601 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **% Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch** | ECHS | 80% | Leuzinger HS<br>Lawndale HS | 79%<br>80% | |
| | ECMS-Gardena | 96% | Peary (Robert E.) MS | 80% | |
| | ECMS-Inglewood | 96% | Monroe (Albert F) MS | 80% | |
| **% ELL** | ECHS | 8% | Leuzinger HS<br>Lawndale HS | 19%<br>11% | |
| | ECMS-Gardena | 17% | Peary (Robert E.) MS | 14% | |
| | ECMS-Inglewood | 29% | Monroe (Albert F.) MS | 32% | |
| **% Students with Disabilities** (Source: LCFF State Priority Snapshots for 2014-15) | ECHS | 7% | Leuzinger HS<br>Lawndale HS Peary | 12%<br>11% | |
| | ECMS-Gardena | 14% | Peary (Robert E.) MS | 15% | |
| | ECMS-Inglewood | 16% | Monroe (Albert F.) MS | 9% | |

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*Data collected by the California Department of Education (CDE) through the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS).

2. ECS' plan to ensure that ECHS-2 will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students

ECS has demonstrated a history of successfully recruiting, enrolling, and retaining educationally disadvantaged students at a rate that is comparable to the surrounding public schools. ECS' plan to ensure that ECHS-2 will similarly enroll educationally disadvantaged students is focused on our established best practices for successfully recruiting and serving students with special learning needs, such as students with disabilities and English Learners. ECS engages with the special education and English language coordinators from feeder public schools to recruit students and to articulate transition plans for students who enroll at ECS schools.

<u>Differentiated Instruction</u>

ECHS-2 will utilize differentiated instruction and personalized learning practices to assist all students -- and especially educationally disadvantaged students -- in mastering State academic content standards and State student achievement standards.

Differentiated Instruction is a teaching method based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms.   ECHS-2 will serve a diverse population of learners, including students with disabilities, advanced learners, gifted students, English Language Learners, and a large percentage of students who are below grade level in the key subject areas.  Based on this knowledge, ECHS-2 teachers will apply differentiation to teaching and learning so that students have multiple opportunities for processing content, developing skills, and applying ideas. The model of differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching

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and to adjust the curriculum and presentation of information to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum. Classroom teaching is a blend of whole-class, group, and individual instruction. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is, and assisting in the learning process[1].  ECHS-2 seeks to hire teachers who are experienced at effective

[1] Hall, T. (2002). *Differentiated instruction.* Wakefield, MA: National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum. Retrieved 10/23/08 from

http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_diffinstruc.html

differentiation practice in their classrooms and will engage in ongoing professional development and training opportunities for teachers.

In order to create a classroom-learning environment that is effective for all learners, the following guidelines will be practiced and modeled at ECHS-2:

- Diversified learning as a positive experience for students.

- Students from a variety of educational, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds enhance the learning climate for all students.

- An atmosphere of cooperation (and not competition) must be established for both students and staff.

- Teachers must utilize all available resources to support learning activities. This requires individualizing learning for each student by arranging the classroom and the entire school for small-group, large-group, and independent learning[2].

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[2] Norlund, M. (2003). *Differentiated instruction: Meeting the educational needs of all students in your classroom.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.

Differentiation is recognized to be a compilation of many theories and practices. The principles and guidelines are rooted in years of educational theory and research. Other practices noted as central to differentiation have been validated in the effective teaching research conducted from the mid 1980's to the present. These practices include effective management procedures, grouping students for instruction, and engaging learners[3].

English Language Learners

ECHS-2 will meet all requirements of federal and state law addressing equal access to the curriculum for students who are English Language Learners (ELLs).  The goal is to develop high quality instructional programs and services for ELLs that allow them to achieve the same challenging grade level and graduation standards, in the same proportions, as native-English speaking students.  The Principal will be responsible for overseeing the identification, assessment, monitoring, and reclassification of English Language Learners with support from the ELL Coordinator.

ECHS-2 will provide two options for English Language Learners: Structured English Immersion (SEI) and English Mainstream (EM).  Students receiving overall CELDT scores of Levels I & II will participate in our SEI program, and students receiving overall CELDT scores of Levels III, IV & V will participate in our EM program. In both programs, teachers qualified in second language pedagogy use teaching, learning, and assessment strategies appropriate to

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[3] Ellis, E. S. and Worthington, L. A. (1994**).** *Research synthesis on effective teaching principles and the design of quality tools for educators*. University of Oregon: Technical Report No. 5 National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators.

students' CELDT level. Students also receive daily explicit and systematic ELD instruction at their assessed stage of English acquisition.

ECHS-2 will support ELLs through[4]:

- A teaching staff qualified in second language pedagogy and strategies

- After-school and summer school programs with a strong language literacy focus

- Supportive instructional practices

- Additional bilingual teacher's aides in the classroom to assist ELLs in English intensive classes

- Additional after or before school ELD classes, as deemed necessary

- Bilingual peer tutors

ECHS-2 will offer the core content areas in a sheltered English environment for students who are not proficient in English. Sheltered content classes are subject matter courses with instructional content designed especially for ELL students. The curriculum content for the ELL students will be the same curriculum delivered to English only students. ELL students for whom sheltered

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[4] Vanderwood, Mike. *Best Practices in Assessment and Intervention for ELL*.

http://www.slideshare.net/schoolpsychology/using-response-to-intervention-with-englishlanguage-learners

instruction is not sufficient will be identified through the Response to Intervention process. For these students, additional services will be provided that may include an ELD class (either during the school day or as an additional period), after-school tutoring, an in-class aide, or in-class peer tutor.

ECHS-2 teachers will be trained to use the state English Language Development standards. Teachers will attend appropriate training offered through the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), as well as other research-based workshops offered throughout the

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county or region. This will allow these teachers to become qualified to train other teachers during ECHS-2's in-service professional development.

Students with Disabilities

Since 2001, ECHS has operated an innovative and successful special education program. As a member of the Southwest SELPA, ECHS has been selected to serve as a model for other charter schools in the SELPA and received a grant to pilot a "Response to Intervention" model. ECHS has operated its innovative program while maintaining complete compliance with SELPA policies, state and federal laws, and without a single formal complaint. Therefore, ECHS-2's special education program will be based on ECHS' program. In addition, ECS's Special Education Coordinator is available for consultation and advising of ECHS-2's general and special education staff. The Principal will be responsible for overseeing the identification,

assessment, monitoring, and servicing of Special Education students, with the assistance of the Special Education Coordinator.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47641, by the terms of this Charter, ECHS-2 will provide its authorizing school district with verifiable, written assurances that it shall continue to participate as a local educational agency for the purposes of compliance with federal law (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, "IDEIA") and for eligibility for federal and state special education funds. As such, ECHS-2 shall be solely responsible for the provision of special education services in compliance with the IDEIA to ECHS-2 students and the authorizing district shall have no such responsibility.

ECHS-2 will comply with all state and federal laws and SELPA policies and procedures regarding the identification, assessment, and provision of services to students with disabilities. It

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is understood that all children will have access to ECHS-2, and no student shall be denied admission based solely on disability status.

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students

ECS recognizes that economic circumstances faced by low-income families can add to the pressures already experienced by many adolescents, and will put in place several programs at ECHS-2 to help support the needs of these students. ECHS-2 will provide a Free and Reduced Lunch program to ensure that students from low-income families have the opportunity to eat an organic lunch that includes fresh fruit, salad and fresh vegetables, and entrees that are low-fat, low-

sugar, and low-salt. ECHS-2 will reinforce healthy lifestyle choices through its afterschool program, which will includes many athletic and exercise-oriented course options. This regular physical exercise in combination with healthy food offerings and nutrition education is intended to reduce student obesity and the risks of diabetes and heart problems.

ECHS-2's advisory program will support the needs of low income and educationally disadvantaged students. The program is designed to facilitate communication between home and school and to foster close and mutually respectful relationships. Students will have the same advisor throughout their four years, giving advisors time to develop strong communication ties to families. Each day the advisor will recap important events of the day, check binders and agendas, and engage in reflection, team building, and goal setting. This advisory period allows teachers another opportunity to check in with each student. Each student's advisor coordinates family communication, including teacher conferences. Advisors strive to meet with every child's family at least three times each year. At ECHS, there is a high rate of parent attendance (90%+)

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at the parent/teacher conferences. Advisors will also serve as facilitators connecting students to other resources available at school and in the community. The school counselor will maintain a database of available services in the community, and advisors can access this resource and make referrals as requested or indicated by their advisees.

When the components described above are not sufficient, the ECHS-2 Response to Intervention program will be utilized to respond to student needs. This program addresses the educational needs of students within the general education classroom prior to referral to special education and utilizes classroom-based and school-wide interventions such as tutoring, counseling, enrichment programs, instructional modifications, and parental participation to respond to the

needs of the student.  Advisor teachers will review the grades, standardized test scores, and NWEA MAP scores of their students and initiate the Response to Intervention process when necessary.

To support the social-emotional needs of students, ECHS-2 will schedule regular parent conferences, refer students to the student responsibility center, recommend individual and group counseling services, and, if needed, make referrals to outside therapy services with Antioch Counseling Center and LMU Counseling Interns, all of which will be provided on campus.  Parents will also have access to resources through parent education workshops that are held at least once each month. ECHS-2 will collaborate with community partners to focus on the challenges families are facing every day, such as alcohol/drug awareness, age-appropriate sex education, and the importance of preparing for the college transition.

## (c) Evaluation Plan

Evaluator

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ECS will contract with education consultant and researcher, Rachel Ruffalo.  Ms. Ruffalo holds a B.A. degree in History and an M.A. in Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership Studies from Stanford University, and an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from Harvard University.  She has over twenty years of experience in education including as a teacher, new school developer, school leader, education consultant, and as a researcher.  Most recently, Ms. Ruffalo has conducted quantitative and qualitative research projects for Schoolzilla, an education data and technology public benefit corporation.

General Features of the Evaluation Design

The project evaluation plan will include both formative and summative components, based on key evaluation questions aligned with the stated outputs and outcomes of the project's Logic Model (see part d in Application Requirements). The evaluator will work with ECS staff to develop a Theory of Change that articulates the mechanisms of change that translate the project activities into the desired outcomes. Phase one of the evaluation will focus on the extent to which the project has been implemented as intended (implementation fidelity). Phase two will focus on the extent to which the project outcomes have been met. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and analyzed and when feasible, a quasi experimental method will be used to determine the relative impact of the project activities on the intended outcomes.

The evaluator will provide an annual report to the leadership and board of ECS detailing annual benchmark data and findings for each of the relevant evaluation questions, as well as a final comprehensive report at the end of the project term. ECS will conduct annual study sessions, based on the annual findings from the evaluation to continue to refine its programs and practices at each of its schools.

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To determine attribution of the outcomes to the program, the evaluator will utilize two approaches:

1) Quasi-experimental Design:

    a. Analysis of comparison data (for each student) -- comparing student assessment data before enrolling in ECS schools and after each year of enrollment

      b.   Analysis of comparison data (for comparable groups of students) -- comparing

student assessment data of demographically similar students to ECS students

(including students at local district and charter schools) with ECS students

2)  Tracking data from the interim markers of progress, as indicated by the determinants in

the Theory of Change.  By collecting and analyzing this interim data, the evaluator will

be able to determine to track implementation fidelity and changes in the key metrics

associated with the project outcomes.

<u>Pre-Program Phase</u>

In Year 1, the evaluator will collect pre-program data from ECS sites in order to evaluate

the program with the most accurate and applicable baseline data possible.

<u>Phase 1:  Process Improvement and Assessment</u>

During Phase 1 (approximately years 1-2), the evaluator will gather data in order to

understand how the ECS model is currently being implemented at ECS sites and will conduct an

assessment of the implementation process to determine its fidelity to the model design. During

this phase, the evaluator will also identify and gather baseline outcome data for ECS students as

well as for the comparison groups.  The evaluator will utilize evaluation questions and data

sources (like the following samples), as well as others indicated by stakeholders:

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| Guiding Question:  What is the ECS model and to what extent is it being implemented according to design? | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Evaluation Questions** | **Quantitative Data** | **Qualitative Data** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| What are the core elements of the ECS model that are consistent across all network schools and which elements are flexible, based on local context? | ● Data on ECS student demographics | ● Interviews with school and CMO leaders<br>● Focus groups with teachers and students<br>● Classroom observations<br>● Document review |
| What are the desired instructional practices and mindsets of candidates sought by ECS? To what extent does ECS recruitment efforts yield candidates that exhibit these practices and mindsets? | ● Data from applications | ● Review of job descriptions and recruitment literature |
| To what extent do ECHS-2 student recruitment practices reflect the student recruitment plan outlined in its charter petition? | ● Data on direct mailings<br>● Data from website traffic<br>● Data on demographics of attendees at events | ● Review of recruitment materials<br>● Observations of recruitment events |
| To what extent do ECHS-2 community outreach practices reflect the outreach plan outlined in the project description? | ● Review of quantitative data on community needs/strengths | ● Interview with Community Liaison<br>● Review of correspondence with community organizations |
| To what extent is the charter petition being implemented according to plan, timeline, and budget? | ● Analysis of budget year-to- date totals | ● Interviews with CMO leaders and planning principal |

Phase 2:  Outcome Improvement and Assessment

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During Phase 2 (approximately years 2-4), the evaluator will gather and analyze data on the interim markers of progress towards the outcomes, as indicated in the ECS Theory of Change. Since many of these markers are constructs, the evaluator will identify valid and reliable instruments to measure those constructs, including the development of new survey instruments and observation protocols. During this phase, the evaluator will also assess the outcomes and determine if the outcomes can be attributed to the project activities.

In addition to addressing the question of attribution, the evaluator will also seek to determine how the different components of the ECS model may interact with each other. This analysis will be particularly helpful for school and CMO staff to understand which combination of components (statistical model) may account for the greatest variance in outcome data or be most predictive of better outcomes. Evaluation questions will guide the process as described in the table below:

| Guiding Questions: What are the interim markers of progress towards outcomes? What are the outcomes and can they be attributed to the project activities? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Questions** | **Quantitative Data** | **Qualitative Data** |
| To what extent do hired ECHS-2 staff members meet the desired qualifications and mindsets identified in the recruitment process? | ● Data from interview processes comparing selected candidates to the candidate pool | ● Review of candidate resumes |
| To what extent do ECHS-2 leaders and teachers demonstrate measurable growth on professional development plans? | ● Data from performance evaluations | ● Classroom observations |
| To what extent do ECHS-2 teachers demonstrate effective implementation of ECS best instructional practices? | ● Data from performance evaluations<br>● Student performance data on classroom, school, and | ● Classroom observations |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| | standardized assessments | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ● Statistical correlations between best practices and student achievement | |
| To what extent does the ECHS-2 campus meet the safety, capacity, and learning needs of its students? | ● Safety features audit<br>● Capacity standards | ● Qualitative review of experiential learning features |
| To what extent does ECHS-2 meet its student recruitment goals? | ● Data on student applications, public lottery, enrollment, retention, and graduation<br>● Student demographics, including subgroups compared to those of local comparison schools | |
| To what extent does ECHS-2 have community partnerships that provide real-world learning opportunities and community engagement? | ● Number of partnership MOUs<br>● Percent of students engaged in community learning experiences<br>● Correlation of community learning experiences with achievement data | ● Qualitative review of MOUs and other program documents |

### (d) Management Plan and Personnel

Quality of the management plan and personnel

Environmental Charter Schools utilizes a common management and governance structure to leverage resources and expertise across each of our campuses. All our schools are governed by Environmental Charter Schools, a California non-profit corporation, led by a highly qualified Board of Directors that includes a diverse array of community leaders. In accordance with California's Brown Act, all Board meetings are open public meetings, with notice provided in advance to the public and agendas published on the schools' websites. The Board meets

bimonthly, with an annual retreat. Additionally, the current leadership team has extensive

experience in organizational development and growth.

1. Management Plan

| Year 1 (17-18) | Year 2 (18-19) | Year 3 (19-20) First Year of Operation | Year 4 (20-21) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Charter Petition** | | | |
| Begin draft of new charter school petition (Dir. of Strategic Initiatives, Charter Consultant) | | | |
| Meet with attorneys for legal review (Dir. of Strategic Initiatives) | | | |
| Secure community and family support for charter submission (Dir. Of Strategic Initiatives) | | | |
| Submit charter to local school board to obtain authorizer approval; revise as needed (Dir. of Strategic Initiatives) | | | |
| | Secure Approval (Dir. of Strategic Initiatives) | | |
| **Recruitment and Development of Staff** | | | |
| Year 1 (17-18) | Year 2 (18-19) | Year 3 (19-20) First Year of Operation | Year 4 (20-21) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Recruit Director of Human Capital (Executive Director) | | | |
| Recruit start-up school staff and Principal (Dir of Human Capital) | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | Recruit first year teachers (Dir of Human Capital and Principal) | Recruit second year teachers (Dir of Human Capital and Principal) | Recruit third year teachers (Dir of Human Capital and Principal) |
| | Develop and provide PD for teachers and support staff – ongoing, with intensive training for new staff each August (Dir of Curriculum & Instruction; Executive Director; Principal) | | |
| **Curriculum Replication** | | | |
| | Collaborative planning sessions with existing and new school staff – Beginning in year before opening, continuing each year as school adds a new grade level (Dir of Curriculum & Instruction, Principal) | | |
| | Identify and procure instructional materials, replicating materials at ECHS #1 (Dir of Curr & Instruction, Principal) | | |
| | | Apply for Initial WASC Accreditation (Principal, Dir of Strategic Initiatives) | |
| | | Obtain Univ of CA A-G course approval (Dir of Curriculum & Instruction, Dir of Strategic Initiatives) | |
| **Facility Acquisition and Preparation** | | | |
| **Year 1 (17-18)** | **Year 2 (18-19)** | **Year 3 (19-20) First Year of Operation** | **Year 4 (20-21)** |
| Launch search of short and long term facility options (Executive Director; Facilities Consultant) | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluate feasibility of site options including financing for both short and long term (Executive Director; Facilities Consultant) | | | |
| Identify necessary construction and permitting needs (Executive Director; Facilities Consultant) | | | |
| | Execute agreement for appropriate facility within geographic target area (Executive Director) | | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | Conduct necessary renovations (Executive Director; Facilities Consultant) | | |
| | Furnish and equip facility and campus to accommodate the instructional program (Site Engineer; Facilities Consultant; CMO staff) | | |
| **Student Recruitment** | | | |
| | Host community-wide informational sessions - Starting 12 months before school's opening; 6-9 months before each school year (Director of Strategic Initiative, Principal, Counselor/Community Liaison) | | |
| | Meet with feeder schools to recruit students, begin articulation process - 6-12 months before opening and before each new school year (Principal; Counselor/Community Liaison) | | |
| | Conduct enrollment process, including Public Lottery -- Spring before each school year (Principal; Asst. Principal; Counselor/Community Liaison, Office Manager) | | |
| **Communications/Outreach** | | | |
| Update website and social media presence and update/develop brochures (Development Manager; Marketing Consultant) | | | |

| | | Continue to regularly post announcements to the new school's website (Development Manager; Marketing Consultant) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Develop partnerships with community organizations to expand learning opportunities for students (Counselor/Community Liaison; Development Manager) | |
| **Project Evaluation** | | | |
| **Year 1 (17-18)** | **Year 2 (18-19)** | **Year 3 (19-20) First Year of Operation** | **Year 4  (20-21)** |
| Revise evaluation plan as needed (Dir of Strategic Initiatives; Evaluator) | | | |
| Develop Theory of Change for ECS Model (Dir of Strategic Initiatives; Evaluator) | | | |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Gather and analyze data - ongoing throughout grant term (Evaluator) | |
| | Develop written evaluation of the implementation of the project activities and progress towards outcomes (Evaluator) |
| | Hold annual study sessions to discuss evaluation findings (Executive Director; Dir of Strategic Initiatives) |

2.  Qualifications and experience of key project personnel

The Environmental Charter Schools executive leadership team will be responsible for the

execution and implementation of the grant program.

*Alison Diaz, Founder & Executive Director* - With a dynamic team and under the leadership of Alison Diaz, ECS has flourished from only 100 students and four classrooms in 2001 to three award-winning schools serving more than 1,000 students annually. Alison holds a Bachelor of Science in Business from the State University of New York, Albany, and Juris Doctorate from Temple University Law School. After earning her teaching credential from California State University, Dominguez Hills, Ms. Diaz taught for eight years as she developed the blueprint for what would become Environmental Charter Schools. Ms. Diaz was named 2011 Woman of the Year by the State of California Assembly. She serves on the Board of Directors for The Green Schools National Network, is an Advisory Board Member for the Antioch Teacher Education Program and is a Senior Fellow for the City Scholars Foundation.

*Tracy Bondi, Director of Finance & Operations* - Tracy Bondi has worked with charter school finance and operations for over 10 years. Prior to ECS, Tracy was the Chief Operations Officer at Flexfirm Products and VP of Client Relations at EdTec. Ms. Bondi monitors and evaluates financial performance and operations, and spearheads efficient and effective process

implementations and continuous improvements. She has worked in operations for both for-profit and not-for profit organizations for 16 years, and earned her MBA from the UCLA Anderson School of Management.

*Kami Cotler, Director of Strategic Initiatives* - In her role, Ms. Cotler  is responsible for developing policy for and ensuring the implementation of pupil, parent, and stakeholder engagement programs. In addition, she is a key player in developing and monitoring the ECS strategic plans (ECS Strategic Plan, LCAPs & SPSAs) and implementing new initiatives across campuses. Active in the charter school movement since 2003, Ms. Cotler began her education career in an interdisciplinary, alternative program for at-risk high school students in Virginia.

She was the founding co-director of Ocean Charter School, a K-8 arts-integrated charter and has

consulted with start-up charters including the Goethe International Charter School. Ms. Cotler

was the founding principal of Environmental Charter Middle School-Gardena.

*Danielle Kelsick, Director of Curriculum & Instruction* - In her role, Ms. Kelsick

oversees curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional  development, and teacher evaluation

at ECS. She previously served as the Assistant Principal of Environmental Charter Middle

School - Inglewood. Before becoming an administrator, Danielle taught English at ECHS and at

South Bronx Community School for Social Justice in New York. Originally from Atlanta,

Danielle attended Amherst College in Massachusetts and went on to earn her Master's at

Harvard Divinity School.

(3) ECS' ability to sustain the school beyond the grant

The launch of ECHS-2 requires approximately $500,000 in start-up grants available from

the California Department of Education and the $900,000 in Federal Replication funding.  Both

sources of funding will place ECHS-2 on a road to sustainability.  As demonstrated by the multi

year financial and operating model included, ECHS-2 will be able to sustain daily operational

costs through per pupil funding provided by the LCFF and other state and federal sources in year

one of operating with students.

If needed, ECHS-2 will seek the State of California revolving loan of approximately

$200,000 to help with start up cash flow needs as we grow to full enrollment.  Should the State's

Start up funds not be available, ECS will leverage contributions from both currently existing

funding partners and new funding sources from both the public and private sectors. ECS has a

history of successful fundraising leveraged from a variety of sources including foundation grants and state and federal funding. Each ECS school has received State Public Charter School Grant (PCSGP) funding (multiple years ranging from $35,000 to $650,000 in 2013). We also received PCSGP dissemination funding in 2007-2010 ($200,000) and Federal library funding in 2008 ($240,000). Private foundation funding has included Walton Foundation Start Up funds ($100,000 in 2000 and $200,000 in 2010), The Ahmanson Foundation ($200,000), and Weingart Foundation ($200,000).

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## Application Requirements

**(a) Demonstrate that the applicant currently operates or manages more than one charter school.**

| SCHOOLS CURRENTLY OPERATED BY APPLICANT: Environmental Charter Schools | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Name** | **Grade Levels** | **Address** | **Separate Charter** | **Charter Authorizer** |

| Environmental Charter High School | 9th to 12th | 16315 Grevillea Ave., Lawndale, CA 90260 | Yes | Lawndale Elementary School District |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Environmental Charter Middle School – Gardena | 6th to 8th | 812 W. 165th Place, Gardena, CA 90247 | Yes | Los Angeles County Office of Education |
| Environmental Charter Middle School - Inglewood | 6th to 8th | 3600 W. Imperial Highway, Inglewood CA 90303 | Yes | Los Angeles County Office of Education |

Please also reference **Appendix E** Schools Operated by Applicant for further detail.

**(b) Student achievement data for each charter school operated by ECS**

Please reference **Selection Criteria (a) Quality of the Eligible Applicant** for:

1.      Student assessment results for all students and for each subgroup of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB[2]

Please reference **Appendix G Student Academic Achievement** for:

2.      Attendance and student retention rates for the most recently completed school year and, if applicable, the most recent available four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates and extended year adjusted cohort graduation rates

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Please reference **Appendix I Additional Information** for:

3.      Suspension and expulsion rates for the past three years for each subgroup of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB

### c) Compliance and management issues

Environmental Charter Schools have not had any significant compliance issues, had any schools closed or charters revoked due to problems with statutory or regulatory compliance.

In 2012, shortly after opening our second school site, Lawndale Elementary School District (LESD), the authorizer of our first school, raised questions regarding our fiscal management. They sought to better understand how revenue and expenses were tracked for each school to insure the schools were not comingling funding received. In response to their queries, our financial policies were updated to reflect our recent growth and address concerns the authorizer raised. In addition, ECS also established separate bank accounts for each school so that money received and spent was clearly accounted within each school's accounts. Lastly, we developed a formula based on each school's average daily attendance for allocated shared employees and expenses. Since then, LESD has not raised any further concerns regarding our finances.

LESD is not only our authorizer but is also our landlord. As our landlord, our lease requires that all improvements to the property be approved by the District and by the Department of State Architecture (DSA). The portables ECS installed on the site in 2007 were 99% approved by the DSA inspector. Because the original plans for the portables were missing, ECS was never able to secure final sign off. In 2016, LESD raised the issue of our not having secured final sign off and asked us to resolve the issue. They also questioned other modifications we

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made to the property. We currently are working with our architects to resolve their concerns and secure final DSA sign off. We expect to resolve these issues by end of summer 2017.

## (d) Project Logic Model

Primary Project Objective: Replicate and open one additional charter high school, to serve 500 students in grades 9-12 at capacity, to increase the number of high school graduates who are prepared for success in college, career, and life.

| Resources (Including Personnel) | Activities | Outputs | Short-to Midterm Outcomes (1-4 years) | Long-term Outcomes (5+ years) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Charter Petition** | | | | |
| CMO Staff: Executive Director, Dir of Finance & Operations, Dir of Curriculum & Instruc, Dir of Strategic Initiatives<br><br>ECS model charter petitions | -Replicate charter petition, reflecting current laws and guidelines and target communities -Submit completed petition to local school board (likely LAUSD) -Engage in revision process, as needed -Submit appeal to LACOE, if necessary | -Completed charter petition - Approved charter petition | Charter petition is approved | -Charter school plan is implemented, according to charter, timeline, and budget - Goals outlined in charter petition are met |
| **Recruitment and Development of Staff** | | | | |
| Human Resources CMO staff<br><br>Staff recruitment, development, | -Recruitment of school development staff (Principal, Asst Principal, Counselor/Community Liaison, Office Manager) | -Job descriptions - Resumes of candidates -Data from interview processes and selection decisions | -Selection of highly qualified and missionaligned staff. -Measurable growth on PD plan goals | Quality implementation of ECS best instructional and operational practices. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| and evaluation systems. | -Recruitment of teachers<br>-Training of staff (both internal CMO and external)<br>-Ongoing staff evaluation and development | -Training session materials<br>-Data from staff evaluations -PD plans for all staff | | |
| **Curriculum Replication** | | | | |
| ECS Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Principal<br><br>Existing curriculum and resources at ECHS | -Curriculum replication and implementation - Collaborative planning sessions with existing and new school staff - Prepare for and gain WASC accreditation -Seek UC approval of A-G courses | -Curriculum plans<br>-Benchmark assessments<br>-Instructional materials - Course descriptions | Implementation and roll-out of interdisciplinary curriculum highlighting ECS best practices | Increase student achievement of state adopted standards and ECS learning goals (critical reasoners, collaborative communicators, and creative contributors). |
| **Facilities Acquisition and Preparation** | | | | |
| Facilities Manager and Dir of Finance and Operations | -Find appropriate facility within geographic target area<br>-Conduct necessary renovations -Furnish and equip facility and campus to accommodate the instructional program | -Report of potential school sites with pros and cons<br>-Renovation plans and budget - Permit applications, as needed<br>-Invoices/receipt for equipment and furnishings | Prepare safe and sufficient facilities to meet annual enrollment growth to a projected capacity of 500 students. | Prepare a missionaligned campus that facilitates hands-on experiential learning. |
| **Student Recruitment** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal<br><br>Marketing Consultant | -Revise existing recruitment plan, as needed -<br>Update | -Revised recruitment plan -<br>Recruitment materials (print & | Recruit at least 150% of available seats each year to participate in the | Enroll and retain a student population (at capacity or beyond) that is |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Existing recruitment plan and model recruitment materials. | communication and marketing tools, including website -Conduct information sessions, as described in the recruitment plan | digital)<br>-School website -<br>Information session presentations and print materials | lottery, to yield full enrollment that is reflective of the diversity in the surrounding communities. | reflective of the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the surrounding communities |
| **Communications/Outreach** | | | | |
| Counselor/ Community Liaison<br><br>Development Manager<br><br>Marketing Consultant | -Update communication and marketing tools, including website -Conduct outreach to local schools, community groups, businesses, and government agencies to learn about community needs and strengths, build support for school -Develop agreements with organizations for extended learning opportunities for students | -Community profile of existing resources, needs, strengths, and gaps<br>-Written MOUs with partnering organizations | -Identify strategic partnerships aligned with the goals of the strategic plan | Develop a core set of community partners to provide real-world learning opportunities and community resources for students. |
| **Project Evaluation** | | | | |

| Dir of Strategic Initiatives and Evaluator<br><br>Evaluation Plan | -Revise evaluation plan as needed - Gather and analyze data (ongoing throughout grant term)<br>-Develop written evaluation of the implementation of the project activities and progress towards outcomes | -Evaluation Plan - Data (quantitative and qualitative) - Annual evaluation updates -Final evaluation report | Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of project activities, outputs, and outcomes that informs the implementation of the charter school plan and further replication of the school model. | Document evidence of the impact of best practices on student achievement for publication and further dissemination |
|---|---|---|---|---|

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**(e) Educational Program**

**1. How the program will enable all students to meet the State's challenging academic and performance standards**

ECS' Mission and Vision

ECS' vision is that all students become equipped with the knowledge and skills to graduate from college, inspired to discover their own sense of purpose, and empowered to become quality stewards of their communities.

Environmental Charter School campuses are vibrant places where real-world, hands-on learning builds students' intellectual curiosity and cultivates their passion to care about themselves and their futures, to support each other and their families, and to take action to sustain their communities. Teachers act as facilitators of inquiry, seeking real-world examples and unique, hands-on learning opportunities that bring the subject matter to life for their students. By creating

these learning experiences, teachers give students a bigger window to see what is possible for their future.

ECS' model engages students in meaningful and relevant learning experiences, which motivate students to work hard, go to college, and succeed so that they can play an important role in shaping their futures and that of their community. This virtuous cycle has inspired hundreds of ECS students to not only meet challenging standards, but to exceed them.

Our students find it particularly important that *they* become leaders because their communities are largely underrepresented in positions of formal power and their communities

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(and others like it) tend to be most detrimentally affected by environmental and social problems such as tainted water, carcinogenic air, and the health problems that derive from these problems. This fact adds a greater sense of purpose and motivation to our students who embrace these issues on a personal, intellectual, and moral level.

Self-Motivated, Competent, Lifelong Learning

ECHS-2's experiential approach facilitates multiple and diverse opportunities for students to engage in the process of authentic inquiry. This philosophy is promoted by a commitment to structured inquiry as a leading vehicle/pedagogical approach for learning. Inquiry is defined as a process initiated by the learner or the teacher who moves the learner from his or her current level of understanding to a new and deeper level of understanding. ECHS-2 recognizes many forms of inquiry based on teenagers' genuine curiosity and on their wanting and needing to know more about the world. These include: exploring, wondering and questioning, experimenting and playing with possibilities, researching and seeking information, collecting data and reporting findings, etc. This process of inquiry nurtures students' innate

curiosity and promotes a love of learning. It is authentically individualized and permits students

to develop deeper and more extensive projects according to their individual capacity.

**2. The grade levels or ages of students to be served  Projected**
**Student Enrollment**

| School Year | Grades Served | Total Enrollment |
|---|---|---|
| 2019-2020 | 9 | 125 |
| 2020-2021 | 9-10 | 250 |
| 2021-2022 | 9-11 | 375 |
| 2022-2023 | 9-12 | 500 |

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## 3.  Instructional practices

ECHS-2 will adapt and implement a set of well-researched, best instructional practices

that have been successfully implemented and refined at Environmental Charter High School

since 2001.  These include:  1) a small learning community; 2) interdisciplinary curriculum and

authentic assessment; 3) relevant, engaging instruction; 4) environmental and project-based

learning; and 5) collaboration with partners.

 1. Small Learning Community

ECHS-2 believes that small learning communities promote more personal and supportive

relationships between and among students, teachers, parents, and their communities. The benefits

of small schools, which are well documented in research, include:  improved student attitudes

towards school; lower incidences of negative social behavior such as truancy, classroom

disruption, vandalism, aggressive behavior, etc.; higher levels of extracurricular participation in a

greater variety of activities; higher attendance rates, especially for minority and low-SES students; improved retention rates; improved students' self-concepts and sense of belonging; and favorable interpersonal relationships among students[5].

ECHS-2 will be structured to nurture the students' transition from adolescence to young adulthood, providing a supportive learning environment where each student is known well by a small group of caring and skilled teachers. Teachers will work together on grade-level teams,

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sharing a common group of students. Additionally, all students will have an academic advisor, who will meet with them weekly during an advisory period, and stays with them for their four years at ECHS-2.

2. Interdisciplinary Curriculum & Assessment and 3. Relevant, Engaging Instruction

ECHS-2's curriculum will provide students with a unique learning model that utilizes authentic experiences and environmental service learning to inspire students to find meaning in their studies. Teachers work in departmental and interdisciplinary teams to create learning experiences that are standards-based, are relevant to the students, and that have a connection to solving real-world challenges. The curriculum includes: English/language arts, social

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[5] Cotton, Kathleen. *Review of Research on Class and School Size.* Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1996.

science/history, mathematics, science, Spanish, and art or drama, as well as the Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI) Curriculum.

Subject areas and disciplines of ECHS-2 will be integrated and interrelated in a richly networked curriculum organized around a thematic focus – the environment. The curriculum connects subject areas to central concepts or key ideas. Skills, activities, projects, and higher order processes are used to construct meaning, solve problems, and discover relationships. The thematic approach puts the teachers and students in charge of the curriculum and allows them to explore their interests. The interdisciplinary approach allows for students to engage with the content in a much deeper, more meaningful way, thereby increasing their motivation and comprehension. This is evidenced by student work, school-wide assessments, and standardized assessments.

In a comprehensive study of student performance in 40 schools that report using the environment as an integrating context, multiple cognitive and social-emotional benefits were evidenced. All nine of the comparative studies (100%) indicate that students taught using the

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environment as an integrating context demonstrate better behavior, attendance, and attitudes than traditional students[6].

4. Environmental & Project-Based Learning

ECHS-2 will strive to create a culture of purpose so that students have multiple opportunities to discover their passions and purpose. "Only when students discover personal

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[6] Lieberman, Gerald A. and Hoody, Linda. (1998). *Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning*. San Diego, CA.

meaning in their work do they apply their efforts with focus and imagination[7]."  To this end, students are presented with authentic challenges with real-world applications such as working with scientists to study the effects of pollution on the marine environment, teaching elementary students about environmental issues, and presenting research to local lawmakers and business owners.

Using environmental service as a context for learning has proven to be an effective learning methodology, especially for closing the achievement gap between traditionally underserved populations and traditionally higher achieving groups.  In particular, this methodology has resulted in: higher scores on standardized measures of academic achievement in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies; reduced discipline and classroom management problems; increased student engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and, greater pride and ownership in students' accomplishments[8].

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[7] Damon, William.  "The Moral North Star:  How do we help students understand that academic excellence can get them where they want to go?"  Educational Leadership. October 2008, pg. 10.

[8] Lieberman, Gerald A. and Hoody, Linda. (1998). *Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning*. San Diego, CA.

In meeting these challenges, students develop a sincere desire to learn and an opportunity to apply their understanding of standards from all disciplines. Solving real world issues allows students to examine the world from a variety of perspectives and, more importantly, practice life. Teachers use learning expeditions, projects, problem-based learning, thematic instruction, and service learning instructional strategies to teach the standards. The instructional pedagogy is consistent with developing students' higher order thinking skills.

5. Collaboration with Partners

Building on partnerships with businesses, universities and colleges, parents, and local community organizations, ECHS-2 will provide students with opportunities to participate in challenging and authentic projects and field-work. Partnerships help teachers harness the power of adventure and discovery in order to engage students in action, leading students to become active community participants.  Students at other ECS schools have presented their findings on waste reduction to the Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances, transformed their neighborhood with From Lot to Spot, shared fruit trees with neighbors with Common Vision, mentored middle school students in the design and construction of aquaponic systems with funding from State Farm Youth Advisory Board, and refurbished the trailheads with the Pacific Crest Trail Association, to name just a few of the many collaborations with partners. Parents and family members enhance the learning environment by providing authentic audiences for exhibitions of student work, providing a cultural context to learning activities, and partnering with teachers to support student learning and healthy development.

ECS' many community partnerships enable our students to take part in real-world work involving the same concepts and skills that they are studying in school through internships and

class-based projects. For example, 12<sup>th</sup> grade economics students participate in an apprenticeship program called In True Fashion, created and sponsored by JAMAH, a designer handbag company, and The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. In this semester-long program, students work on teams with professional mentors to create an authentic product, while receiving a hands-on education in all aspects of running a small business — design, sales, marketing, manufacturing, teamwork, and communications.

**f) How ECS operates its charter schools**

The ECS Charter Management Organization (CMO) supports the instructional and operational needs of our network of schools and oversees accountability.  The ECS CMO under the leadership of the Executive Director provides support, which includes:

| CMO Function | Support Provided | Key Positions Responsible |
|---|---|---|
| Finance & Operations | Oversees operations management, attendance data, facilities, maintenance, negotiation of vendor contracts for IT management and support, food service and instructional support providers in addition to back office accounting. Interim financial reporting, and financial reports will be completed by Edtec. | Director of Finance & Operations  Facilities & Sustainability Manager  Accounting & Payroll Coordinator  Edtec* |
| Facilities | Oversees the acquisition and improvement of facilities beyond $15, 000 | Director of Finance and Operations  Facilities Manager |
| Compliance & Accountability | Supports the streamlining of state reporting and manages assessment data; provides training in data systems to school leaders. | Director of Strategic Initiatives  Data Manager |

| Curriculum and Instruction | Oversees teacher development & evaluation framework, instructional leadership teams and implementation of the professional development plan. | Director of Curriculum & Instruction<br>Service Learning Coordinator/Green Ambassador |
|---|---|---|

| | | Institute coordinator<br>Math Coach shared between two schools |
|---|---|---|
| Human Resources | Supports teacher recruitment and retention, administers payroll | Director of Human Capital<br><br>Human Resource Generalist |
| Development | Supports sites in raising funds for general operations, additional programming, and capital costs.  Grow the ECS donor base via improved prospect identification and donor stewardship practices. Also supports general public relations and communication functions. Develop and submit successful grant applications and reports. Develop collateral materials. | Development Manager<br>Grant Writing Team<br>PR and Marketing consultants as needed. |

*Edtec is an experienced national back office business service provider that has delivered services to more than 200 developers and charter schools supporting over 40,000 students across 50 districts in over six states. Financial books shall be kept in accordance with State Accounting Procedures for Schools. An independent, certified auditor will be contracted by the Board of Directors to conduct an annual financial audit as required by the California Education Code.

The three Directors (Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Finance and Operations, and Director of Strategic Initiatives) and the Executive Director meet on a weekly basis with school leadership to focus on key issues and to facilitate open communication, reflection, professional growth, and development.   The Directors also meet weekly as a team to

drive toward our strategic plan and site based strategic plans. Each Director meets with their department and or direct report weekly and as needed to move goals forward and resolve challenges.

The cost for CMO support, wages and benefits, is borne by all schools based on the average daily attendance. Shared expenses are similarly allocated based on ADA.

*Environmental Charter Schools Organizational Chart*
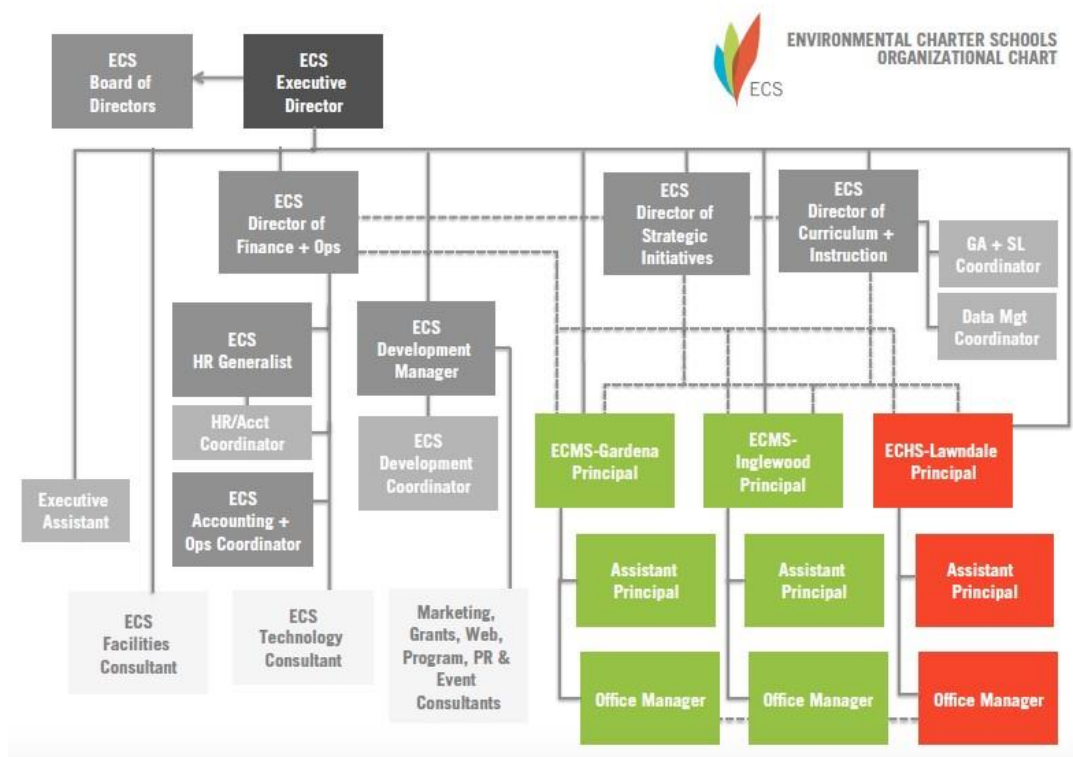


**(g) Multi-year financial and operating model**

Please reference **Appendix H Supplemental Organizational Budgets and Financial Information** for our multi-year budget summary for the grant period and beyond. Please

reference **Appendix C Letters of Support** which indicate our sound fiscal management and the deep support from the state charter association and national education community. Please reference **Appendix I Additional Information** for our 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.

**(h) Parent and Community Engagement**

ECS will conduct community outreach to potential parents and community members to learn about the needs and strengths of the community and to solicit input into the design and implementation of the replicated charter school.  ECS will hire a Principal for a planning year who will lead these efforts during the implementation period of the grant and will sustain this work after the grant period.

Once the school is in operation, ECHS-2 will encourage parents to participate at many levels—from helping students with homework to serving on and presenting to the Board of Directors.  Family involvement is a key component of student and school success.  Family involvement occurs at three levels:

1. Supporting a student's schooling by attending school functions and responding to school obligations (e.g. returning permission slips, attending parent-teacher conferences).

2. Being involved in a student's schoolwork—creating a time and place to do homework, encouraging and facilitating work at home on projects and reports, modeling behaviors that support achievement (reading, discussing current events), tutoring the student or monitoring homework.

3. Advocating for student's school—participating in school events, helping with plays, field trips or fundraising, participating in the school site council, advocating for schools at local, state or federal level.

Research indicates that the most successful parent participation efforts are those that "…offer parents a variety of roles in the context of a well-organized and long-lasting program. Parents will need to be able to choose from a range of activities which accommodate different

schedules, preferences, and capabilities[9]." Research further indicates that it is most effective to provide orientation and training for parents, but "…that intensive, long-lasting training is neither necessary nor feasible[10]." The ECHS-2 school/family partnership will feature the following elements:

1. Professional development for teachers underscoring the importance of family involvement and the many means of communication available at ECHS-2.

2. Parent orientation program on the first day of school to review the ECS handbook and educational program.

3. Parent-Teacher conferences, three times per school year to meet with their student's' advisor to review progress.

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[9] Cotton, Kathleen and Wikelund, Karen Reed. *Parent Involvement in Education*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. School Improvement Research Series Close Up #6, page 8 from http://www.nwrel.org/archive/sirs/3/cu6.html [10] Cotton, Kathleen. page 8.

4.  Providing parents with student information and progress reports weekly.

5.  Making parents aware of the ESSA and the Charter School's participation.

6.  Strategies to keep parents informed via Newsletters, Facebook, an automated phone system, Powerschool, and Parentlink.

7.  Invitations to many different types of school activities including: school performances, authentic assessments, and field trips

8.  Advisory Program with advising teachers staying with students from 9th through 12th grade, when feasible.

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ECHS-2's School Site Council is composed of parents, teachers, administrators and community partners as appropriate, and meets all requirements of state and federal law. The School Site Council exists to ensure all stakeholders have a voice in the decision-making process. The council identifies site-specific areas of concern, participates in a data gathering process, and makes recommendations to the ECS Board. The School Site Council's role is advisory and consultative. It has an important role in informing decision-making processes but it cannot make decisions on behalf of the Charter School.

**(i) Recruitment Plan and Public Lottery**

ECHS-2 shall admit all students who wish to attend ECHS-2 and who submit a timely application, unless the charter school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case, attendance, except for existing pupils of the charter school, shall be determined by public random drawing. Preference shall be extended to pupils currently attending the charter school. Other preferences may be permitted by the chartering authority on an individual school basis and only if consistent with the law. Except as required by Education Code Section 47605(d)(2), admission to the charter school shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or his or her parents within the State. [Ref. Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(A)-(C)]

ECHS-2 will be non-sectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations, shall not charge tuition, and shall not discriminate against any pupil on the basis of characteristics, whether actual or perceived, as listed in Education Code section 220, including, but not necessarily limited to the following: actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or

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any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics. ECHS-2 will not require any child to attend a charter school or any employee to work at a charter school.

ECHS-2 will send announcements about the school and admission procedures to neighboring groups and community members, such as

- traditional and charter public middle and high schools in the community

- Private schools in the community

- Local churches and community centers (e.g. YMCA, YWCA, Parks & Recreation, etc.)

ECHS-2 will be monitor enrollment to ensure that, to the fullest extent possible, students enrolled reflect the diversity of the community, including diversity as reflected by English learner status and students with disabilities. ECHS-2 will employ a targeted publicity campaign so our enrollment mirrors the community at the local schools where our students would otherwise attend. ECHS-2 student application deadline will be determined by the Board calendar, which is set annually. This deadline will be in the spring.

Public Random Drawing

If the number of students applying for admission exceeds the capacity of the school, (except for existing students of the charter school), admission to ECHS-2 will be determined by a public random drawing. Exemption from the public random drawing will be extended to students currently enrolled in the charter school. A preference in the drawing will be extended to siblings of students currently attending ECS schools and to children of ECS employees, as allowed by state and federal law.

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Students not randomly selected in the lottery for enrollment will be placed on a waiting list in order of the selection of their name during the lottery and in the order the application is received thereafter. Should the applications received at the time of the deadline not exceed space available, all applicants will be accepted for enrollment.

To ensure a fair random public drawing, all procedures will be publicized in the community. In addition, procedures and related materials will be made available to the authorizing school

district or county office of education. Authorizing district staff are welcome to observe the Random Public Drawing should one be necessary. By law, student enrollment will be open to all students in the state of CA.

Once the enrollment capacity is reached, as vacancies occur, ECHS-2 will continue to fill spaces available from the waiting list by grade level, on a first come, first served basis by the order the application was drawn if there was a lottery and otherwise by the date the application was received.

**(j) How eligible students with disabilities will receive a free appropriate public education**

Please reference **Selection Criteria (b) Contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students**

**(k) Assisting educationally disadvantaged students in mastering State academic content and achievement standards**

Please reference **Selection Criteria (b) Contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students**

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**(l) Planned activities and expenditures of Federal grant funds**

ECS' planned activities and expenditures of Federal grant funds are generally categorized into the seven categories identified in the project's Logic Model below. A more detailed description of proposed budget expenditures is available in the **budget narrative**.

1) Charter Petition

a) Replicate charter petition, reflecting current laws and guidelines and target

   communities

b) Submit completed petition to local school board (likely LAUSD)

c) Engage in revision process, as needed

d) Submit appeal to LACOE, if necessary

2) Recruitment of Staff

   a) Recruitment of school development staff (Principal, Asst Principal,

      Counselor/Community Liaison, Office Manager)

   b) Recruitment of teachers

   c) Training of staff (both internal CMO and external)

   d) Ongoing staff evaluation and development

3) Curriculum Development

   a) Curriculum replication and implementation

   b) Collaborative planning sessions with existing and new school staff

4) Facilities Preparation

   a) Find appropriate facility within geographic target area

   b) Conduct necessary renovations

   c) Furnish and equip facility and campus to accommodate the instructional program

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5) Student Recruitment

   a) Revise existing recruitment plan, as needed

   b) Update marketing and communication materials, including website

   c) Conduct information sessions, as described in the recruitment plan

6) Community Outreach

    a) Conduct outreach to local schools, community groups, businesses, and government agencies to learn about community needs and strengths, build support for school

    b) Develop agreements with organizations for extended learning opportunities for students

7) Project Evaluation

    a) Revise evaluation plan as needed

    b) Gather and analyze data (ongoing throughout grant term)

    c) Develop written evaluation of the implementation of the project activities and progress towards outcomes

**(m) Request and justification for any waivers of Federal statutory or regulatory requirements**

ECS does not plan to request any waivers of Federal statutory or regulatory requirements for the operation of ECHS-2.

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