



## Challenge Early College High School A School of Opportunity!

5601 West Loop, Houston, TX 77081  
Phone: 713-664-9712  
Fax: 713-664-9780

[www.houstonisd.org/challengeechs](http://www.houstonisd.org/challengeechs)

School Profile: 2024-2025

Principal: Santos, Jose R  
[JSANTOS1@houstonisd.org](mailto:JSANTOS1@houstonisd.org)  
Assistant Principal: Celestine, Tracy B  
[Tracy.Celestine@houstonisd.org](mailto:Tracy.Celestine@houstonisd.org)  
Assistant Principal: Saikin, Christopher W  
[CSAIKIN@houstonisd.org](mailto:CSAIKIN@houstonisd.org)  
Assistant Principal: Joseph, Preeti  
[PJOSEPH4@houstonisd.org](mailto:PJOSEPH4@houstonisd.org)  
Counselor: Graur, Sara G  
[SGRAUR@houstonisd.org](mailto:SGRAUR@houstonisd.org)  
Magnet Coordinator: Del Rio, Laura O  
[LDELRIO@houstonisd.org](mailto:LDELRIO@houstonisd.org)  
AVID / College Access Coordinator: Salazar, Esther E  
[ESALAZA4@houstonisd.org](mailto:ESALAZA4@houstonisd.org)

### CHALLENGE EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL MISSION

Challenge Early College High School was established in the Fall of 2003. As partners in the Early College High School Initiative, Houston Independent School District (HISD) and Houston Community College System (HCCS) opened Challenge Early College (CECHS) and is accredited by the Texas Education Agency. The rigorous curriculum allows the high school students to integrate the Distinguished Diploma requirements with HCC college credits to ensure college success. Students who graduate from CECHS will have an advanced high school diploma, as well as the opportunity to accumulate an Associates degree or up to 60 college credits. The Challenge Early College High School mission is to graduate confident, ethically responsible, lifelong learners who are prepared to succeed in higher education and be productive citizens in our world.

### STUDENT BODY

Our 488 current students come from every area of the Houston Independent School District. Challenge's overall demographics breakdown is as follows:

- African American 9%
- Asian 5%
- Caucasian 6%
- Latino and Hispanic 78%
- Other 2%

### COLLEGE PLACEMENT OF GRADUATES

- 93% matriculated at 4-year colleges or universities
- 5% matriculated at 2-year colleges
- >1% matriculated at vocational training
- >1% matriculated in the military
- >1% matriculated in other/undecided

### SCHOOL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon, 2018, 2011
- U.S. News and World Report Best High Schools in the USA
- The Washington Post, America's Most Challenging High Schools
- Ranked 5 School in the Greater Houston Area by the Houston Chronicle and Children at Risk
- Newsweek's Top High School List
- TEA High Performing School
- TEA High Progress School

### GRADING SYSTEM AND STUDENT RANKING

Seniors receive preliminary ranks in October and final ranks in February. A student's grade point average is computed on a 4.0 weighted scale. The theoretical maximum GPA is above 3.86 on a 4.0 weighted scale, reflecting the number of required unweighted regular courses as well as Pre-AP, AP, and Dual credit courses, which carry an additional grade point. The cumulative GPA includes all courses except high school courses taken in middle school.

Letter grades and grade points are assigned according to the following scale:

### GRADE POINT ASSIGNMENT

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Pre-AP, AP, Dual Credit	Regular Courses
A	90-100	5	4
B	80-89	4	3
C	75-79	3	2
D	70-74	2	1
F	Below 70	0	0

### CURRICULUM

The curriculum at Challenge Early College High School integrates dual credit courses with Houston Community College, UT OnRamps, and Advanced Placement (AP) classes. We offer only Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in core subjects such as English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Each course meets or exceeds state and district standards, providing a rigorous academic experience.

Students at Challenge typically complete at least six AP courses before graduation, including AP English Language and Composition, AP English Literature, AP Human Geography, AP World History, AP U.S. History, AP Statistics, and one AP science course. All students enrolled in an AP course are required to take the AP exam in May, with the cost of the exams covered by the district.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A minimum of 26 credits are required for graduation. The required credits include:

- 4 years of English that include AP English Language and AP English Literature
- 4 years of Social Studies that include 3 AP courses
- 4 years of Science that include Biology, Chemistry, and Physics
- 4 years of Mathematics that include Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2/Math 1314
- 2 years or more of one Foreign Language
- 1 year of Fine Arts
- 1.5 years of Physical and Health Education
- 5.5 years or more of Electives

### ADVANCED PLACEMENT DATA

Students at Challenge take the following AP courses and AP exams:

- Freshmen take AP Human Geography
- Sophomores take AP World History
- Juniors take AP US History
- Seniors take one AP science course

## AP COURSES OFFERED

- Art History
- Computer Science Principles
- Drawing
- English Language & Composition
- Environmental Science
- Human Geography
- Seminar
- Spanish Language & Culture
- Statistics
- Precalculus
- United States History
- World History

## UT OnRamps

Challenge Early College High School is proud to partner with the University of Texas OnRamps program to offer College Algebra and Chemistry for the 2024-25 school year. UT OnRamps is a dual enrollment program that provides high school students the opportunity to experience rigorous, college-level coursework and earn both high school and university credit. Through this partnership, students gain exposure to college expectations while receiving support from their high school teachers, preparing them for future academic success in higher education.

## ASSOCIATE'S DEGREES

Challenge is an Early College High School designated by the State of Texas. Students have the opportunity to earn up to 60 hours of college credit and earn an Associate Degree. This includes the Texas Core College Curriculum, which is 42 hours that are the foundation of all colleges and universities in the state of Texas. This can save our families money on the first two years of college.

**Associate in Arts (AA):** The Associate in Arts is intended primarily for students planning to receive a baccalaureate degree in the following areas: communication, business, social sciences, humanities, and fine arts.

**Associate in Science (AS):** The Associate in Science is intended primarily for students planning to receive a baccalaureate degree in the following areas: computer science, engineering, health and natural sciences, or mathematics.

## COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY MATRICULATION

- Agnes Scott College
- Arizona State University
- Austin College
- Baylor University
- Bryn Mawr College
- Carleton College
- Christian Brothers University
- Coe College
- Colby College
- Colorado School of Minds
- Duke University
- Harvard University
- Baptist University
- Lamar University
- Lehigh University
- Penn State University
- Pitzer College
- Prairie View A&M University
- Sam Houston State University
- Southwestern University
- Stephen F. Austin University
- St. Mary's University
- Texas A&M University
- Texas Tech University
- Texas Women's University
- Trinity College
- Union College
- United States Navy
- University of Houston
- University of Houston-Victoria
- University of Miami
- University of St. Thomas
- University of Texas-Austin
- University of Texas-San Antonio
- University of Texas-Tyler
- Wake Forest University
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Wellesley College
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- Xavier University-Louisiana
- Yale University



## SCHOLARSHIPS

Challenge students are required to take a Guidance course their Junior and Senior year. In this course, students prepare for the PSAT, SAT, write college essays, prepare their personal statements for college applications, and work on applications for colleges and scholarships.

## POSSE

The Posse Foundation is an American nonprofit organization that identifies, recruits, and trains student leaders from high schools to form multicultural teams called "Posses" of 10 Posse Scholars.

Challenge students currently holds 21 alumni who are Posse Scholars. Posse Scholars are offered full-tuition scholarships, weekly faculty mentoring, and other support.

## EMERGE

EMERGE empowers and prepares high performing students from underserved communities to attend and graduate from selective colleges and universities across the nation. Students in the EMERGE program benefit from extensive programming, individualized support and tailored resources from 10th to 12th grade.

## AVID

Challenge Early College High School proudly offers the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program across all grade levels, providing targeted support to ensure students are college-ready and equipped with essential skills for academic success.

**9th Grade:** AVID begins by focusing on foundational skills such as organization, time management, and note-taking strategies. Students are introduced to college-readiness activities and participate in peer tutorials to foster collaborative learning.

**10th Grade:** Sophomores build on these skills with a greater emphasis on critical thinking and inquiry. AVID supports them in setting academic goals and developing stronger writing, reading, and study habits to prepare for more rigorous coursework.

**11th Grade:** Junior year AVID centers around college exploration and preparation. Students engage in college research, application processes, SAT/ACT preparation, and college-level writing tasks. The program provides guidance in managing the demands of AP courses and dual credit classes.

**12th Grade:** AVID seniors receive hands-on support with college applications, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities. The program ensures that students are prepared to transition successfully into post-secondary education by honing their self-advocacy skills, critical thinking, and college-level academic strategies.

At each grade level, AVID plays a crucial role in helping students stay organized, engaged, and confident as they progress through their academic journey. By equipping students with lifelong skills, the AVID program helps ensure that every Challenge student is prepared to meet the challenges of college and beyond.

## CLUBS & EXTRACURRICULARS

Extracurricular activities at Challenge are based on students' interest. Students are given the opportunity each year to develop new clubs. The clubs and extracurriculars offered currently are:

- Aiming to Achieve Higher (A.I.M.) Club
- Amnesty International
- Archery Club
- Art Club
- Chess Club
- Civics Club
- Cheer / Spirit / Dance Club
- Cultural Appreciation Club
- Engineering Club
- Future Leaders Club
- Grow-On Club
- Math and Science Club
- Music Club
- Puzzle Club
- Red Cross / Community Service Club
- Robotics Club
- Soccer Club
- Travel Abroad Club
- UIL / Debate Club
- UNICEF Club
- Volleyball Club
- Weight Train / Indoor Fitness
- Video Game Club