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## **Six Early College High Schools Celebrate First-ever Graduating Classes**

*Unique schools, part of a nationwide initiative,  
provide second chances for many*

SACRAMENTO—The Foundation for California Community Colleges, a partner of 21 existing Early College High Schools throughout the state, congratulates the first graduating classes of six of these unique institutions, which provide many high school students with educational opportunities they might not otherwise have access to.

The Early College High Schools (ECHSs) celebrating their first-ever graduating classes this spring include Global Youth Charter High School in Sacramento, Valley Charter High School in Modesto, Alameda Science and Technology Institute, NOVA Academy in Santa Ana, the Met Sacramento, and Nuvview Bridge ECHS in Nuevo.

“The students graduating from these Early College High Schools demonstrate a heartwarming success story of perseverance and dedication,” said Paul Lanning, Ed.D., President and CEO of the Foundation for California Community Colleges. “Many of these students will be the first in their families to earn a college degree. All have shown a commitment to education and to a brighter future, and we wish them the best in their endeavors.”

ECHSs are partnerships between small high schools and postsecondary institutions that give underrepresented youth previously at risk of not attending college, such as low-income and minority students, the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and at least two years of college credit simultaneously. All of this is done in five years or less, at no cost to the students.

The Foundation has acted as an intermediary for California ECHSs since 2003, thanks to funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as part of the nationwide ECHS initiative. As an intermediary, the Foundation selects the community college–school district partnerships, assists in school planning, provides ongoing technical assistance, and coordinates and facilitates professional and partnership development. The program is currently underway at 21 operating sites, with two more planned.

Students enrolled in an Early College High School begin taking college-level courses on partner community college campuses as soon as they show they are ready, sometimes as early as ninth grade. Nationwide, more than 160 ECHSs in 24 states are serving more than 20,000 students. The Foundation’s 21 partner ECHSs serve more than 4,000 underrepresented youth.

Nationwide attendance rates at these schools average over 90 percent, as do grade-to-grade promotion rates. Of the first class of ECHS graduates nationwide in 2006, more than 60 percent were accepted to four-year colleges.

All ECHSs have similar characteristics:

- Students have the opportunity to earn an Associate's degree or up to two years of transferable college credit while in high school, compressing the years to a postsecondary degree.
- Schools provide academic and social supports that help students succeed in a challenging course of study.
- Learning takes place in small, personalized learning environments that provide extensive support systems. In California, most of the ECHSs have fewer than 400 students enrolled.

For more information about the Foundation's Early College High School partnerships, visit

[www.foundationccc.org/echs](http://www.foundationccc.org/echs).

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

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