State of East Mountain

Beginning of Year Report

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear East Mountain Community,

Welcome to a new school year, and to one of the most important chapters in East Mountain's history.

We are welcoming our first class of sixth-grade students, beginning our transition into a 6–12 school, expanding our staff, and watching a major construction project reshape our campus. These changes reflect years of planning and a commitment to the fact that more students in our community deserve access to an exceptional East Mountain education.

Growth of this scale is exciting, but growth alone is not the goal. We do not simply want to become a bigger school. We want to become a stronger, more coherent one, with clear systems, aligned instruction, shared expectations, and a learning experience that makes sense from classroom to classroom and year to year. Our students should not have to depend on luck to encounter great teaching. We want great learning to be the result of a great system.

Amid all this change, the most important parts of East Mountain remain the same.

Students will continue to be known, supported, and challenged. Our teachers will continue to create meaningful learning experiences and authentic relationships. We will remain a safe, innovative school committed to developing forward-thinking leaders.

We also enter this year from a position of strength. East Mountain continues to earn statewide and national recognition, attract significant family demand, and produce some of New Mexico's most promising academic results. Those accomplishments are worth celebrating. But a good school does not become great by admiring what it has already done. It gets there by asking what students need next, confronting where we fall short, and having the courage to improve.

That is the purpose of this State of East Mountain Report. Each quarter, we will share clear updates about student learning, enrollment, financial health, construction, fundraising, strategic priorities, and the challenges that require our attention. We want our community to understand not only what is happening, but why it matters and how each piece connects to the school we are building together.

Thank you to our students, families, staff, board members, donors, and community partners. You have helped build something rare. Now we have the opportunity to make it stronger, more coherent, and built to last.

With gratitude,
Dr. Trey Smith

DATA SNAPSHOT

When the new school designations are released in the coming weeks, East Mountain will be featured as a "Spotlight School," the highest possible designation given by the Public Education Dept. This designation ranks our school among the top ten percent of schools statewide. East Mountain was also recently named to *U.S. News & World Report's* Best High Schools in the United States list.

These designations includes data points:

Attendance Rate: 94%
Graduation Rate: 92%

STUDENT LEARNING

This level of recognition reflects the hard work of your students, the dedication of our staff, and the trust you place in us every day. We do not take any of it for granted.

Even as the top-ranked school in the state, 30% of our juniors are not yet reading and writing at the college-ready level, and 61% are not yet performing at the college-ready level in math. For our sophomores, 23% are not there yet in reading and 54% are not there yet in math.

We do not share this to alarm anyone. We are sharing it because we believe families and students are our most important partners in improving that.

Being the best school in New Mexico is something to be proud of. It is not the same as being ready for everything college (and life) will ask of your student.

Here is what we ask:

Talk with your student. Ask them what they know about where they stand in reading, writing, and math. Ask them what support they are using, and whether they need more.

Review their data together. Our administrators and counselors can walk you through exactly where they are and what growth looks like from here. Do not hesitate to reach out. If you cannot access PowerSchool to review assessment data and grades, please let us know.

Hold the goal with us. College readiness is not just a school goal. It is a family goal, a student goal, and a community goal. We are more powerful when we pursue it together.

STUDENT WELL-BEING

We believe that a student cannot fully learn, grow, or lead if they do not first feel safe, seen, and supported. Our mission calls us to create a safe, innovative environment where every student can engage in transformative experiences. That commitment is both academic and deeply personal.

We know that the teenage and pre-teen years bring real challenges, and we take seriously our responsibility to walk alongside students through them. Well-being is not a program we run on the side; it is woven into how we show up every day.

How We Support Students
Our approach to social-emotional support is intentional and layered:

- Dedicated support staff: Our Director of Student Success, College and Career Readiness Counselor, Director of Special Education, Social Worker, and Guidance team are available to students and families for attendance concerns and individualized planning, and more.
- Early intervention: Through our Early Warning System, we proactively identify students who may need additional support before challenges become crises.

- A culture of empathy: Our Core Values, including empathy, reflection, and collaboration, are not just words on a wall. They shape how staff and students treat one another every day.

- Anti-bullying and community safety: We maintain clear, community-wide expectations for respectful behavior and a culture of openness where students feel safe reporting concerns.

Where We Are Still Growing
We are honest that this work is never finished. We are committed to listening to students and families, learning from our data, and continuing to improve.

LEADERSHIP

We want every East Mountain student to be part of something bigger than the classroom. Extracurricular activities give students a place to belong, a chance to lead, and an opportunity to discover strengths they may not find during the regular school day. They are also crucial beyond high school: sustained involvement, leadership roles, competition, service, and achievement all help students build stronger college applications and resumes.

Operating a robust athletics program at the NMAA 3A level is no small task, but we have an outstanding group of coaches supporting nearly 200 student-athletes. East Mountain currently ranks in the top 20% of the division and ahead of many larger public and private school programs. Last year alone brought individual and team state championships, along with several state records.

Our activities programs are every bit as impressive. East Mountain students in robotics, Speech & Debate, Youth and Government, and Model UN have competed at tournaments and events across the country, while Student Council gives students direct responsibility for building school culture through spirit events and activities.

Whether a student finds their place on a field, behind a podium, building a robot, debating public policy, or planning the next school event, the goal is the same: every student should graduate having belonged to something, contributed to something, and learned how to lead something.

BUILT TO LAST

6th Grade Building
We are proud of our new 6th grade building which will be the permanent home of all future 6th grades. It allows those students the opportunity to begin the experience of changing classes without having to move between many buildings.

New Classroom Building
Our new 27,000 sq ft. construction is also on schedule. The utilities have been laid and the foundation will soon be poured. This building will be home to some common spaces for all students: a multi-purpose room, library, kitchen, and music room. It will also house classroom spaces for 7th and 8th grade.

Bernalillo County
East Mountain has long maintained a close relationship with Bernalillo County. When Roger Cox and Associates donated the land to build the school and the community center together, there was a vision to create shared resources for the local community. The school continues to provide substantial financial support of the gymnasium space and our coaches provide much of the ongoing maintenance of both the gym and surrounding fields. The County has been responsible for the re-design of the soccer field, and the school will obviously benefit greatly from this upgrade.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Expanding Our Enrichment Opportunities
Because of strong partnerships with community organizations, East Mountain now offers more enrichment opportunities than ever before. Students can participate in choir, drama, Nature Niños, Talking Talons, Learners Chess, guitar, orchestra ensemble, and other programs that give them new ways to explore interests, build confidence, and connect with peers beyond the traditional classroom.

Local and National Grant Support
This expansion has been made possible in part through grants and outside funding. State legislative funding for after-school programming is helping us grow student opportunities, while support from the Charter School Growth Fund has helped East Mountain invest in programs connected to our broader expansion and long-term growth.

Support from State and Local Leaders
East Mountain has also received significant public investment to support our campus expansion. State legislators and the Governor have provided substantial capital funding, helping us create the space and facilities needed to serve more students and offer a broader range of academic, extracurricular, and community programs.

Our Foundation and Building More Partnerships
None of this growth happens in isolation. Our East Mountain Foundation Board continues to seek businesses, nonprofits, community organizations, and individual supporters who want to invest in students and help us expand what is possible for young people in the East Mountain community. None of this work could happen without the tireless efforts of our school's Foundation board, a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to helping the school achieve its mission.

East Mountain Community Council: Get Involved

The East Mountain Community Council (EMCC) is a quarterly advisory group that brings together students, families, staff, and school leaders to review school data, identify themes from stakeholder feedback, elevate student and family experience, and help leadership prepare clear quarterly reports for the Governing Council and broader community. The EMCC holds equity at the center of its work, with special consideration for the most disadvantaged student populations.

We hope to include at least one student and one family member from each of these grade bands: 6th grade, 9-10th grade, 11-12th grade. Students and family members who enjoy thinking about school improvement, student experience, or equity are encouraged to apply through the interest form: https://forms.gle/gqiJPRsYponPkVgp9

EAST MOUNTAIN
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