

EMES is located in a master planned community in Goodyear, AZ where “**We are building intelligent and compassionate leaders.**” This branding statement, developed by staff and faculty, is a true snapshot of Estrella.

Our more formal Mission statement incorporates the tenets of the International Baccalaureate® (IB) philosophy as well as the core beliefs and values of the faculty and staff, which assisted with their development. Each year, at the beginning of year professional development, Mrs. Marine introduces the theme and goals for the year, and asks teachers to reflect on and revisit the mission statement for continued applicability and recommitment.

Estrella Mountain’s Mission is to nurture tomorrow’s leaders as inquiring, knowledgeable and caring individuals who embrace intercultural awareness.

Both an accomplishment and a strength is that we are an International Baccalaureate® (IB) World School – one of only two schools in Arizona authorized to offer both the International Baccalaureate® (IB) Primary Years Program (K-5) and the Middle Years Program (6-8). We accomplished this after three years of rigorous preparation. All teachers completed professional development and learned the IB philosophy, including a voluntary trip to Colorado Springs by six teachers, the principal and the District Superintendent to visit other authorized IB schools. We received authority to teach both International Baccalaureate® programs following the culminating event of the process: a multi-day visit from outside IB evaluators who reviewed documentation and spoke with teachers, students, parents and community members. New teachers receive IB training to ensure consistency of the program.

While becoming one of the 4,000 IB schools worldwide is an accomplishment, the IB program itself is a unique strength of EMES. IB is rooted in the IB Learner Profiles - introduced at EMES in Kindergarten and applied through grade eight. These profiles provide a context to support students in becoming true interdisciplinary learners who strive to be:

Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-Minded, Caring, Risk-Takers, Balanced, and Reflective

These profiles and their corresponding attitudes of: **appreciation, commitment, confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect, and tolerance** are visible in each classroom, referenced by teachers and embedded in the curriculum, where you might find a sixth grade teacher asking her students to reflect on how characters in their independent reading book demonstrates one of the IB attitudes. Mrs. Johnson, a Kindergarten teacher shared recently that after discussing the attitude of independence, it is now common to hear a child who previously requested to be “pushed” on the swings instead excitedly proclaiming, “Look, Look! I’m being independent! I can do it myself!”

Another area of strength and uniqueness is our varied school programs. Our Science Olympiad took second place in the state competition in 2015-2016; EMES was the only public school in the top four, competing against an Intel-sponsored school, and two private STEM schools.

Our sports teams are consistently district champions or runners up in every sport, with coaches and teachers focused on keeping students **balanced**, including a homework club to ensure academics are completed before practices and games.

Our music program coordinated with the intercultural Arizona Aloha Festival, who, after a campus visit donated 30 ukuleles and invited the students to perform at the annual Aloha Festival in Tempe in 2014.

Two past challenges were the lack of funding available for public education in Arizona, and the implementation of the Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards (AZCCRS). We overcame these challenges using our IB Learner profiles.

We are Open-minded. By collaborating with parents and the community, we developed a best-practice, first-in-district volunteer program, the Cougar Community Volunteers (CCV). Each volunteer is fingerprinted and attends a 2 hour training session with the volunteer coordinator. Volunteers dedicate on average 33 hours each school day assisting in classrooms - the equivalent of over 4.5 Full Time position hours.

We are Knowledgeable Thinkers and Communicators. When funding for counselors and librarians was slashed in 2015, the community established a Go Fund Me account, raising the \$20,000 goal in 21 days and creating national media awareness of the funding plight for Arizona schools.

We are Knowledgeable Risk-Takers. In 2015 the Liberty District adopted a new math curriculum, Eureka Math, to meet the rigorous demands of the AZCCRS. We embraced the adoption and implemented it with fidelity. The same is true with the new ELA curriculum implemented this year. One MYP teacher stated that "Having a new curriculum to meet the demands of the AZCCRS has allowed me to develop more engaging IB units".

Recognizing the declining school-age population in our boundaries, and the growing interest in liberal-arts based charter schools, the district school board approved an expansion of our IB program for 6-8 into a newly branded "IB Academy at Estrella".

This expanded program enabled us to hire additional IB-focused teaching staff, building on the IB philosophy base to develop a richer curriculum of fine and performing arts and other electives. This was extremely successful, as our enrollment increased from 485 to 580 students, with 71 new students (74% of total) enrolled in the IB Academy this year.

We still face challenges ahead. This year we will undergo a review to retain our IB World School designation for the elementary grades (PYP), with the MYP (6-8) evaluation in 2019. The Liberty District School Board approved the expansion of the IB Academy last year. However, we have experienced significant turnover on the School Board in the past eight months. Therefore we are diligently working to communicate the benefits of IB to the School Board as well as exploring fundraising to reduce the cost of the IB Program to the District.

EMES is an excellent place for students to learn, grow, and thrive. Guided by the learner profiles, we challenge ourselves to be principled, caring and reasonable risk-takers. We reflect on how we can do better through goal setting and open communication. We are focused on developing the whole person, a bilingual student who will build a better world through intercultural understanding and respect. **At Estrella Mountain Elementary, we are building intelligent and compassionate leaders.**

Two indicators of success are soaring enrollment rates and the AzMerit scores reflected in our “Highly Performing” School rating; we missed the “Excellent” (A) rating by just 4 points! Although a little disappointed to narrowly miss an “A”, we are proud of our achievement and anticipate growth score improvements in 2017-2018 based on data-driven analysis and other interventions we are taking this year. Our total enrollment increased 20% this year, and open enrollment is now 34%. Sixty-nine percent of Open Enrollment students are district residents. Liberty Elementary District values choice in education, providing free transportation to any school in the district, and although we were not the top-scoring school in the district last year 136 students (25%) of all district resident open enrollments selected Estrella over their own home school and/or the A-graded school. We believe this is because, as the State Board of Education recommends, people should not make a decision solely on the State’s grades, but also consider qualitative factors by visiting the school and the principal and talking to parents and others. Mrs. Marine calls our teachers “the dream team” - and when visitors came to campus last year for the Kindergarten Roundup or the launch of the IB Academy - they felt that excitement and passion. The result - 95 new students in 2017-2018 - a key measure of success!

One way our test data demonstrates excellence is to look progressively at a “class” and inquire if we see the students progress year over year as they approach 8th grade graduation. With three years of AzMerit data, we can see evidence of success in many indicators. For example, 52% of last year’s 8th graders (future HS class of 2021) achieved a passing grade on the AzMerit test. One may not think that is cause for celebration - but we would strongly disagree! First, across the state, the passing percentage was twenty-eight. Additionally, as 7th graders only 37% of this class passed and in 6th grade only 29%! The Class of 2021’s ELA scores are similar, with 41% passing as 6th graders, to 47% as 7th graders, and 60% as 8th graders. Our current 8th grade class (future graduating class of 2022) boasts similar ELA improvement: 47% passing as 5th graders in 2015 to 43% as 6th graders in 2017 and 62% passing as 7th graders in 2017.

Another success story is 3rd grade Math, which is a difficult and foundational year for mathematics. Getting 3rd grade math right impacts future math scores for years. We successfully progressed from 45% of 3rd graders passing AzMerit Math in 2015 to 47% in 2016 and 65% in 2017. This year we are piloting a new community-based volunteer math intervention for third graders who are struggling with foundational math concepts.

Estrella utilizes DIBELS and Galileo throughout the year to monitor progress and develop formative assessments. Using DIBELS to inform approaches, over the past 5 years we have consistently achieved significant growth from the Beginning of Year to the End of Year % at benchmark for our newest learners, Kindergarteners. Most years EOY exceeds 80% of students at Benchmark. Tests indicated only 36% of our students were at Benchmark at the beginning of the year (the lowest ever); our Kindergarten Teachers aggressively developed a plan to serve the diverse needs of all students. Embracing the leveled readers provided by the new curriculum, they established small groups to enable all learners to grow. Then they leveraged Cougar Community Volunteers (CCV) to provide extra reading intervention time for struggling readers. As of mid-year, 69% of kindergartners achieved benchmark!

Data plays an integral role in decisions at all grade levels in order to meet the academic needs of all students. Staff believes all students can learn no matter what their circumstances. Formative ELA assessments guide small group instruction within the classroom, DIBELS scores are analyzed to form reading groups, and middle school students use Galileo pre-test and mid-year assessments to set their own personal goals.

For students who are experiencing classroom challenges, the Child Study Team (CST) gathers formal and informal information to give guidance to teachers regarding academics and behavior concerns. Grade level data meetings are scheduled every month to review data to improve instructional programs and groupings that are in place.

Teachers were introduced to the use of Common Core Aligned formative assessment when District adopted of Beyond Textbooks (BT) Resource from 2015-2017. This taught teachers the importance of readymade formatives and their benefits in forming reteach and enrich groups. Although the District no longer supports BT, professional development focused on Galileo and teacher-created formative assessments to continue to provide students with objective based tests to drive instruction. Teachers meet regularly with the instructional coach to analyze their DIBELS/Galileo data and to drive small group instruction. Progress monitoring is done in order to see if the small group instruction is effective. The small groups are fluid, changing based on the data collected.

In addition, the Instructional Coach meets bi-weekly with Mrs. Marine to identify areas for gathering “moment in time” data on 3-5 critical components which demonstrate alignment of vision, mission, strategy, professional development, or IB standards. For example, Mrs. Marine identified posting objectives as one of the “Big 5” areas for focus in 2017-2018. To collect data on this, one week Christy Sartiano will step into every classroom and see if the objective was posted. She summarizes data for Mrs. Marine - indicating 90% of teachers had objectives posted during her “moment in time” observation that week. Mrs. Marine uses the data to provide feedback or additional professional development to the teachers during weekly Wednesday development meetings.

Galileo testing is held three times a year; pre, mid, and post assessments given for all students from second grade to eighth grade. Scores from Galileo are used to drive instruction as teachers create two student goals for the year. These goals are revisited to make sure progress is being made. At the end of the year, teachers write a summary using data to support both their two student goals and their personal goal. They reflect on the data that was collected and how successful they were in attaining their goals. If the goals were not met, a reflection on why and how to meet their goals is written as well.

Students in all classrooms create goals for themselves. They regularly assess, monitor, and reflect on their own learning in order to be well-rounded and academically sound. Each teacher manages their student goals differently. In kindergarten it might be a clip chart on their progress in the writing process, while the upper grades may have a goal sheet that students review periodically.

Professional development provides the staff with training in the use of data, creating theme/concept based units across the grades and new technology. Learning opportunities have included data meetings, analyzing AzMerit results, reflecting on the ELA formative assessments that drive the classroom instruction. Training has been given on creating IB units of study and how to add them to the *ManageBac* technology based program in order to create efficiency. Each unit that the teachers teach must be reflected on within this program in order to meet the standards of IB.

Estrella Mountain students understand they are strengthening their own capacity to learn by reflecting on their own learning experience and behaviors. IB learners are taught the “action cycle” which teaches them to “reflect, choose and act”. “Reflective” is one of the IB Learner Profiles that is taught as part of the Learner profiles. Students in grades K-5 are required to reflect on each of the six themed units of study that they complete in their IB portfolio. This reflection includes a piece of work that the student is most proud of and shows IB elements that the unit incorporated. In grades 6-8 students reflect on their “Approaches to Learning” (ATL) skills. These skills include communication, social, self-management, research, and thinking skills. The ATL’s help students to develop skills that have relevance across the curriculum and that help them “learn how to learn”. These ATL’s provide a common language that students and teachers can use to reflect, and articulate on, the process of learning. In addition, older students learn to use rubrics as a self assessment tool, so that they know the expectations of completing an assignment with IB criterion. Parents/guardians also understand the importance of self-assessment and know it is only one of a variety of assessment strategies used.

Previously, our assessment challenge was technology related - requiring all technology to be tied up with assessments for three weeks three times a year. With our 1:1 technology acquisition for MYP, we no longer have this issue. We face two major challenges. First, significant changes in our School Board and district personnel, makes the available data analysis support, testing coordination, and budgeting and

administrative considerations more challenging. Second, we must secure the necessary assessments to achieve the IB World School designation renewal for the PYP in 2018 and the MYP in 2019.

Our principal, Sharon Marine demonstrated **visionary leadership** in leading the effort to establish Estrella as an International Baccalaureate® (IB) World School and fought to maintain this designation in the face of funding challenges. She collaborated with and empowered the IB coordinator to plan on-site visits to IB schools for Estrella faculty both in and out-of-state. Mrs. Marine engaged staff and faculty in securing the IB designation, enabling all stakeholders a collaborative part in earning this distinction.

Mrs. Marine challenges faculty, staff, parents and students to embrace and embed the IB philosophy into everyday thinking, actions, and reflections. She encourages a common message through development and adherence to our mission, vision and branding statement. Fifth grade teacher Mr. Kent Hegedus, created an Estrella Mountain student video promoting our IB theme. (Available on our website or at: <https://youtu.be/lloqcWaNxvo>.) Mrs. Marine leveraged consultant Hilary Bilbrey, who is also an Estrella parent, to facilitate the development of our brand “**We are building intelligent and compassionate leaders.**” The exercise was a professional development opportunity for staff, and the process facilitated teachers creating their *own personal brand* as well.

Sharon Marine is practical in her application of visionary concepts, introducing an annual theme to promote a positive school climate/relationship among the teachers and staff. Since learning happens when you are having fun, she frequently picks a whimsical theme. Last year budgetary cuts were leading to the net loss of six staff members for 2016-2017. At Estrella, where on average teachers had twelve years of service, these were more than just colleagues, these were family members. Recognizing the impact, and seeing the “whole person” in her staff, Mrs. Marine selected a theme from one of her own professional development opportunities where she’d read The Happiness Advantage. She saw the opportunity to move beyond a common curriculum and educational goals, and encouraged her staff to start a Happiness Journal. According to the book’s research, focusing on the good; good not only improves your mood and perspective, it increases learning and success as well. To bring the happiness advantage “home” Mrs. Marine introduced a smiling Emoji pillow. Teachers nominate a colleague who has brought happiness or lightened the load of another. The happy Emoji recipient keeps the Emoji until the following monthly staff meeting. Mrs. Marine’s weekly newsletter for the past few years has been dubbed the Happiness Herald and includes expectations for the following week; meetings, testing dates and performances.

As an **instructional leader**, Mrs. Marine works hand-in-hand with staff to build an educational community that fosters positive experiences. She is known for listening and providing feedback and fosters an open-door policy. She consistently shares learning from her professional development with staff and teachers. She allocates collaborative time, so teachers can work together to implement training, even offering to cover classes herself when teachers request to observe other teachers on campus.

As a **leader learner**, Mrs. Marine leads by example, attending trainings and providing learning experiences needed to build a strong educational program. She researched and explored the IB Programs and philosophy, before seeking to establish Estrella as

an IB World School. She learned Depth of Knowledge concepts herself to help increase utilization within Estrella and attends conferences (ex. Conference of Middle Schools, AZ IB Quarterly meetings/conferences)

Mrs. Marine encourages teachers and staff to become involved in a form of leadership that leverages their strengths, offering recognition for those who go above and beyond.

Estrella's staff leads through participation on stakeholder committees serving the needs of our community through various activities: **Site Council** is the primary leadership structure; it is comprised of teachers, parents and community volunteers. Members with a vested interest and past volunteerism are invited by Mrs. Marine to be part of the Council. Mrs. Marine seeks input from the Council on all major decisions. For instance, the Council voted on pursuing the IB program when that was first considered. When budget cuts required staff reductions, Mrs. Marine sought the council's insight on where teaching staff is most vital. If class sizes had to increase, what grade would most likely handle the increases? In a very concrete way, the Site Council is directly involved in the school-based decision making process and implementation of initiatives. The **Child Study Team** is a team of teachers who meet to help other teachers with students who are at risk, but have not been identified as exceptional learners. The team reviews student behavior, data, strategies and intervention options to help develop the best plan to meet each student's needs. Finally, the **Student Success Meeting** was established by Mrs. Marine following the 2015-2016 A+ application visit feedback, this group of student representatives (grades 3-8) meets monthly with Mrs. Marine to engage in joint inquiry on student needs and perceptions in a positive and pro-active environment.

Student representatives, who have been chosen by teachers to represent a diverse student population, report back to their classes. Teachers select new representatives each trimester. When asked what they learned from student success meetings students comments were that they felt that the issues they brought up were being listened to and that students were considered in the decision making process.

Mrs. Marine sets high standards for all teachers and staff members and ensures a focus on teaching, learning and building student/teacher relationships through several ongoing activities for example our mission and vision was developed as a staff which guides Estrella's focus on teaching, learning and student needs. The mission and vision are visible in each classroom as well as the administrative offices and kept at the forefront of development choices. The IB Learner Profiles are both a program and a resource for teaching, learning, and meeting student needs. In particular, the program is based on the action cycle which includes "Inquire Act and Reflect;" this concept is embedded in the teaching and learning and is used for students as well as teachers to drive learning and instruction. The IB Coordinators lead monthly professional development on IB methods, approaches, and resources to deepen everyone's IB teaching methods. Finally, ongoing reflection ensures Estrella Mountain meets the needs of the diverse students. For example, the Student Success Meetings (above) and "big 5" (below) resulted from reflection on feedback offered in the 2015-2016 A+ site visit.

Our strategic plan is to meet the rigorous criteria of maintaining our IB World School designation. This includes maintaining all the standards and practices for the PYP and MYP programs. The IB requires a self-study for each program, which is headed up by the IB Coordinators. In meeting the standards and practices for Teaching and Learning Mrs. Marine identifies key areas of focus for all to be aware of and follow as an expectation at all times. Feedback is provided from district personnel when walkthroughs are conducted to ensure fidelity. The **IB** bulletin boards and language used in the classroom continue to be a focus, the idea is that anyone walking into a classroom would know that IB is our teaching approach and philosophy. **Depth of Knowledge (DOK)** is a big 5 for teachers to ensure use of deeper inquiry, pushing teachers to achieve level three and four in the higher grades. **Using data analysis** has been moved to the forefront as teachers are creating their own formative assessments to drive instruction with the non-renewal of the Beyond Textbooks resources that were available last year. **Objectives are to be posted** in each classroom, so that students know the learning target and objective for the lesson. And finally **student engagement**, with the feedback of the A+ site visit (15-16) stating that our students were compliant, but not engaged led us to take a look at student engagement within our classrooms and make changes through professional development of research based strategies.

Each teacher is required to set two quantitative student achievement goals and one professional goal at the start of the year. Professional goals must be aligned with the focus areas and approved by Mrs. Marine. Teachers review goals throughout the year and review progress with Mrs. Marine at mid-year. At the end of the year time is set aside to reflect and learn from both the unsuccessful and successful experiences and achievements.

As part of both the IB Primary Years Program (K-5) and the Middle Years Program (6-8), teachers of each grade level are required to reflect on each of the IB units studied to review which practices were most successful. The reflection component is built directly into the units the teachers write and include a review and follow-up with the IB Coordinator. Goal setting and reflection are also part of the IB program for students as well. In the **Middle Years Program (6-8)** the teachers help guide students in 21st century skills to become better learners by establishing "Approaches To Learning" (ATL) goals based on the IB ATL skills which include: self-management, communication, social, thinking and research. In the **Primary Years Program (K-5)** students in K-5, reflect on their learning units, placing a culminating assignment in their IB Portfolio.

EMES's leadership teams are comprised of the Principal, IB Coordinators (PYP & MYP) IB Leadership Teams (including instructional coach) as well as Site Council (including teachers, parents and volunteers). All stakeholders are involved in delivering the mission of nurturing tomorrow's leaders as inquiring, knowledgeable and caring individuals who embrace intercultural awareness. The International Baccalaureate as our signature program has research available and processes in place to ensure the fidelity of the IB program that inform policies and practices. These standards and practices provide EMES with priorities for self-evaluation and reflection to work on within a strategic plan. EMES knows that it has the support of parents and community based on the results of a survey taken in the Fall of 2017. Parents answered the question "The

signature program makes a difference in my children's education." with a 90% approval. We know that our IB program is valued within our school community.

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Collaboration time is designated weekly for each grade level team to meet and plan using the IB elements. Examples of how EMES is meeting the rigorous standards and practices of the IB are through the many ways we have implemented aspects of the IB program. At EMES all students K-8 are involved in creating and monitoring academic goals. In the PYP (K-5) students may graph their reading fluency or math facts to keep track of goals. In the MYP (6-8) students establish "Approaches To Learning" (ATL) goals based on ATL skills which include: self-management, communication, social, and research. In addition, each student also sets their own individualized academic achievement goal based on their pre-assessment Galileo test scores.

At EMES, we believe that building strong leaders in our schools will have a positive effect school-wide and community-wide, in addition to the individual student benefits. Examples of consistent leadership opportunities in our school is within our National Junior Honor Society, which seeks to identify and raise awareness regarding relevant issues and community needs, leading to projects like cleaning the parks, running the school recycling program, and a canned food drive. This year the NJHS has been actively involved in establishing a Google classroom in order to support the service hours required for NJHS. The hope is that students will build a database for all students to pull from in order to meet the needs of community service hours.

Our community service program, which is a requirement at the IB Academy, includes all students in the MYP (6-8). Grade six students are required to earn six hours of community service within the school year and grades seven and eight have a requirement of eight hours. As this is our first year tracking hours for community service within the MYP, EMES has provided multiple leadership opportunities for students to earn their hours. Opportunities such as volunteering at carnival, winter festival such as Cookies, Cocoa, and Caroling, and athletic events. Once we have a database built, students will have more sources to draw from in the future.

The culminating Eighth Grade Community Project is based on the IB requirements.

EMES supports students in researching an area they would like to have an impact on. Students are challenged to engage in the Action Cycle – reflect-choose-act - independently identifying a school or community need through inquiry, collaboratively developing a resolution-based action, and, finally, reflecting on the results. Some examples of projects students have completed in the past are: a team of students determined improvement needs for our school ball fields, as the bases were coming undone during ball games. The students researched materials and methods to fix the

ball fields and took action to make it safer for the student body. They replaced the bases and dug the holes that would secure them. Another team of students held a cultural event at the local community residence center to increase cultural awareness and community connection. The team presented on their own cultures using PowerPoint slides and pictures of their homeland. They demonstrated risk-taking by inviting not only students from Estrella Mountain, but also community members.

As a culminating event for the PYP, fifth graders at EMES participate in the Fifth Grade Exhibition Project. Exhibition is a culminating project in which students in the fifth grade engage in a long-term inquiry, using the action cycle reflect-choose-act. This project promotes all the elements of the IB and asks students to exhibit what they have learned in the PYP. This past year students took action by raising money for a local animal rescue and promoting a recycling at the school level. These actions follow students into their MYP years as topics discussed in class are connected to their exhibition project. One six grade class discussing animal intelligence was linked to an exhibition project that students were able to reference in their essays.

At EMES, data drives our practice. Benchmark assessments are given three times each school year, at the beginning of the first trimester, the end of the second trimester, and toward the end of the third trimester. The formative and summative assessment data from DIBELS (K-3), Galileo (1-8), AzMerit (3-8) and ongoing test assessments from teacher created assessments using Galileo (2-8) allow teachers to drive instructional needs in their classrooms. Each teacher is responsible for delivering the best possible instruction to his/her classroom based on the data collected. Data meetings are scheduled by the Instructional coach where teachers discuss their data within their grade levels for PYP or content areas for MYP.

With the help of the instructional coach teachers and administrators analyze pre-assessment data to develop two quantifiable student achievement growth goals, which are included in each teacher's evaluation document. Data is attached with action steps that will help students achieve this goal. The Galileo post-test is administered in grade two through eight toward the end of the final trimester, and the data is analyzed to determine if student growth goals were met. Teachers prepare a written summary of progress against the student achievement goals. When goals were not met, the teacher provides an individual student-by-student assessment of the factors preventing each student from achieving their goal. Mrs. Marine reviews these assessments in detail.

DIBELS is a benchmark reading test that is administered in grades K-3 three times a year. Results are analyzed by teachers and data is used to help students set goals as well as setting up small groups. Goals in ORF (oral reading fluency) and accuracy are discussed. Research states that benchmark goals in the DIBELS tests are indicators of reading success. Progress/Monitoring using DIBELS is also used to monitor students' growth. Progress is graphed and updated to show growth and monitored by our instructional coach who provides assistance to teachers, she also meets with K-3 teachers to analyze DIBELS data and make sure that teachers have the needed resources for reading success. At EMES we realize the importance of progress/monitoring students and providing early interventions to students in need. This year under the leadership of our instructional coach Christy Sartiano, our progress

monitoring in reading has had a revival. With a team of volunteers who have been trained to progress/monitor, and under her guidance to provide basic interventions we are breathing new life into our tier two intervention program. The Reading Coach's classroom is a data center where she monitors all students in K-3. Students who score in bottom 25% are progress monitored weekly, students at 50% are progressed monitored biweekly and benchmark students are progressed monitored monthly to ensure no one slips through the cracks.

As an IB World School, we are also able to take advantage of the research and resources available through the IB Program. In their research, Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick show that reflecting on work enhances its meaning and reflecting on experiences encourages insight and complex learning. Intentionally reflecting on the success of an effort, is the basis for the "Inquire, Act, Reflect" approach within the IB Program. It is also the reason for the built-in reflection time during each of the IB units, to inquire reflect on the effectiveness, and make necessary changes to ensure the most effective approaches for learning. Another resource for students is the Parent/Student Portal, this resource promotes self-management, Regular use enables students as well as stakeholder parents to consistently engage in review of individualized student achievement data to assess and address their strengths and weaknesses.

EMES' school values and beliefs lie in the culture of the school and the IB attributes that make up our character program. Teachers and staff members focus on IB practices and embed them into the school culture. The culture of EMES is linked to the IB programs Learner Profiles, Attitudes and Approaches to Learning Skills beginning with teachers and volunteers greeting students as they walk onto campus, the curbside valet service for kinder-third grade at drop-off to the morning announcements, and Mrs. Marine's Learner Profile or Attitude of the day. The students and teachers live the learner profiles. You can also see students in the MYP earning "positives" on their communication card demonstrating positive behaviors or kindergarten holding a morning meeting where an attitude is applied to daily living. Students know that living the learner profiles is what we do at EMES. The IB elements are visible in every classroom and students know that their goal is to "live the Learner Profile". Students may not be able to name all ten profiles or twelve attitudes upon request, but the understanding that the traits are positive is school-wide.

The IB culture is communicated to stakeholders in the PYP through teacher's newsletters, and classroom events. In the MYP, communication starts with the syllabi at the beginning of the year and a monthly communication card throughout the year.

There is also a wealth of information about the learner profile and attitudes using Face book, and Twitter that reach out within the community. We know that our social media outreaches are hitting the community target because in a parent survey conducted in the Fall of 2017 92% of parents survey respondents stated that "My school's website and social media pages helps keep me informed about important events at school". In the MYP students use a communication card in which they keep track of behaviors, missing assignments and "positives" earned throughout the day using the Learner Profiles. In the PYP teachers use email as a form of communication between home and

school, to keep track of events, homework or assigned reading. In the MYP parents keep track of their child's efforts at school by signing the communication card each week in sixth and seventh grades. In eighth grade the gradual release of responsibility is used and parents do not need to sign to give students a sense of independence. This also allows students to practice their self-management skill in preparation for High School. Another form of communication is in the way teachers are able to nominate students for showing the attributes of the learner profiles, attitudes or approaches to learning skills.

Teachers nominate students to be honored using the profiles and attitudes on the announcements and then parents are invited to attend the quarterly P.T.O. meetings and see their child recognized within the community. In a student survey taken in the Fall of 2017 students in grades 4-8th grades answered with a 97% approval that their teachers care about them and 95% approval that their teachers treat them with respect.

In building up the IB culture at EMES, events are established to promote the school and to inform new perspective parents of our program. Events such as our "showcase night" is scheduled for our PYP and includes kinder roundup as well as our MYP, which this last year launched the IB Academy. In the Spring of 2017 EMES advertised the launch of the IB Academy where presentations were given to standing room only crowds coming to check out the new concept for our middle school students. The presentations included information on concept-based learning, difference between traditional learning and learning at an IB school. Students who were enrolled the previous year took ownership in this event and were present to guide parents to different presentations, man booths to show the extra-curricular activities as well as clean-up. It was calculated that students donated over 60 hours during the two hour event in promoting their school, this was up from the year before by 50%! The opening was well received and student enrollment for our school has increased by over 20% this year.

EMES has various celebrations that are put in place to build positive relations with the community. Our big fundraiser is the annual Carnival, this is a yearly celebration that has grown in attendance, and is supported by staff members, students, community members, volunteers (CCV) and our P.T.O. This past year it was decided to move our annual carnival to the fall and celebrate with a Halloween theme. EMES pre-sold over 150 tickets which was up from the previous year by 25%. Actual attendance was over 300 and the P.T.O. cleared over \$4000.00 to support the financial needs of the school. This again was supported by students who volunteered over 100 hours to help their school and earn community service hours.

Two major events and celebration for our IB programs to demonstrate our culture are our fifth grade exhibition, and our eighth grade community service projects. At the end of our PYP program, fifth graders participate in a group project in which they develop a unit of study using one of the themes from the IB. This year the theme was "Sharing the Planet" and students researched and prepared presentations on environmental interests and concerns. This project ends our fifth graders year with a community presentation, in which they celebrate their knowledge, using performances, tri-folds, power points or

videos. We desired to engage more students in the exhibition and build excitement for the IB projects. We successfully grew attendance at this event when, three years ago, we combined it with a staple activity at EMES for 10 years - our Student Treasures Authors event and ice cream social. Student Treasures is a K-5 project in which students K-2 create a class book and students in 3-5 author an individual book. The student authors can pick up their book at the ice cream social; K-2 students are asked to purchase a book and 3-5 receive one free book with an option to purchase more. In most cases the student's Student Treasure book is linked to their IB unit for that year. In kinder their "All about Me" book is linked to their IB unit "Who We Are". In first grade the students author a class book about animals to add to their "Sharing the Planet" unit. In third grade students write individual books as a final project for their Biome's unit. In addition, the ice cream social is a fundraiser and the money raised at this event is used to cover the cost of a professional author presentation; this year it was Dow Kump. We enjoy finding opportunities to deepen and incorporate our mission and IB values into knowledge sharing social events that build community like this one. This event has become a staple for promoting literacy and bringing the community together for our fifth grade exhibition event.

The eighth grade community service project is a year-long endeavor by our eighth grade students and culminates their learning at EMES. Using what they learned from their fifth grade exhibition experience students make connections in inquiring, acting and reflecting. Students are assigned a mentor teacher from another grade level to work with on this project and in the process relationships are built with MYP students. Middle School is a difficult age for some students and having an adult that they can trust is an important factor for students. Students in the middle school not only have the teachers they work with each day they also have another teacher who they know is there for them on campus working with them on their community service project. Many of these relationships extend beyond middle school. At EMES teachers building relationships with students is a way in which they live the learner profile; before and after school you will see students and teachers engaged in conversation. This is evident all over campus, teachers take the time to get to know their students. Nowhere else is this more evident than at the culminating event for eighth where eighth grade teachers create speeches and present their speech at the eighth grade promotion. This is unique to EMES because in those speeches each student is named individually for an attribute they showed throughout their eighth grade school year. These relationships extend after the students leave EMES and this is shown in the large number of students who return to visit their MYP teachers. Based on the visitor sign-in logs just this past year over 25 students have come to visit Mr. Daugherty as an example of important relationships that are built at EMES. Students come for various reasons, help with high school letters of recommendation, tutoring with high school essays, editing for college entrance essays, or just to hand out and play a board game on a Friday. Whatever their reasons it is evident that students have built important relationships during their time at EMES and value their experience here.

The focus on our mission to nurture tomorrow's leaders as inquiring, knowledgeable and caring individuals who embrace intercultural awareness creates an environment

conducive to learning and, when lived authentically, we believe moves us beyond just eliminating undesirable behavior. By pairing our mission with the IB Learner profiles across the grade levels, and especially creating space and opportunity for both students and teachers to engage in the cycle of REFLECT - CHOOSE - ACT, we are continuing to monitor and sustain a collaborative and safe environment.

As an example, we reviewed feedback from the A+ site review for our 2015-2016 application and reflected on student feedback that there was an environment of disrespect. It would have been easy to be dismissive and make excuses about a particularly challenging class of students who may have swayed the feedback that year (their test scores reflected similar challenges). Instead, we embraced our mission statement. We spent time reflecting on the feedback from both the students and the A+ committee. We thought about possible ways to address these challenges and developed several changes to promote a more collaborative environment.

First, Mrs. Marine established the Student Success Meetings. Once a month every teacher selects a class to meet as a group with Mrs. Marine for a collaborative discussion of what they like and what could be improved at Estrella; Mrs. Marine intentionally asks the teachers to pick students who are struggling or disengaged. Not surprising, undirected the conversation can easily devolve to the lunch menu, but we think that it is good news if lunch menu is the most frequent area identified for improvement - it means more systemic and detrimental concerns are not at the forefront of our students minds. To increase meaningful feedback, Mrs. Marine introduces some guiding questions to get student's perspectives about school climate at a level deeper than their bellies. Topics have included: What is IB? How are the Communication Cards working in upper grades, campus clean-up, how do students feel about the rotating schedule. *In one meeting, students expressed frustration that restroom light switches could be turned off when someone was using the restroom. Mrs. Marine reflected on the concern and was able to address it through a programming option, disabling the ability to turn off the lights locally.* Our Professional development always includes a quick debrief by Mrs. Marine as to what students are saying so teachers can reflect on ways to impact the culture. Our PD's include a "spotlight" on IB, where teachers share positive interactions with students, or lessons where connections were made. This year our PD includes the "Big 5" as well as our self-study for the IB evaluation and reflecting on the standards and practices of the IB and how we can improve those standards and practices.

Second, the sixth grade teachers implemented a pilot program in 2016-2017 called "Responsible Behavior Cards" which aided students in living the learner profiles, uphold their integrity and learn and give respect. Students were recognized for demonstrating the Learner Profiles (principled, balanced, communicator, thinker, open-minded, inquirer, knowledgeable, risk-taker, caring and reflective) and the IB attitudes (appreciation, commitment, confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect, and tolerance). Our focus is not that the students memorize these lists of words, but that the context and fabric of their environment and the school culture causes them to recognize the profiles or attitudes in

action around them and by them. The card enables teachers to keep track of and identify negative character choices and behavioral infractions, and keep track of missing assignments or homework. The responsible behavior card was signed by student and teacher upon interaction and by a parent on a weekly basis. Upon reflection we changed the name to “Cougar Communication Cards” and made some additional changes before implementing it across 6-8 this year. Students in sixth grade continue to get their communication card signed on a weekly basis, but 7th and 8th graders get a gradual release of responsibility not having to get their cards signed unless they are in a tier two situation for behavior management. The students are rewarded for their actions and a “Cougar Pride Celebration” is planned each trimester. We intentionally discussed the impact of elevating and expanding the expectations of the 6-8 program by establishing the newly branded “IB Academy at Estrella Mountain”. Students were required to submit an essay and an application as part of their enrollment. We anticipated that they would see their own worth and value grow as our expectations of them grew. We believe this is happening because the number of students being given infractions has dropped from the previous year and the number of students who are able to participate in the Cougar Pride Celebration has increased vs the pilot last year.

Finally, as teachers continued to reflect and discuss culture, our kindergarten teachers made an important discovery. The kindergarteners have learned the Learner Profiles through song and dance over the past several years, but in their collaborative discussion, our teachers started to focus more on the IB Attitudes - things like independence, tolerance, empathy and appreciation. As Mrs. Johnson emphatically expresses, “The attitudes - when we started focusing on these - they became behavior GAME CHANGERS!” Each day at morning meeting her class selects an attitude they want to work on. When they pick one, Mrs. Johnson will prompt them. “Great, today we will work on tolerance. How might you have an opportunity to practice tolerance today? The answers from the five year olds are inspiring. “Today I will sit with someone I don’t usually like to sit with.” When Mrs. Riley asked her kindergarteners what IB attitude they would bring with them if they were making the journey on the Mayflower, she got some jaw-dropping answers. Among her favorites was, “I would need to bring commitment, so I would not give up on this hard trip.”

All classes in K-5 participate in a “Living the Learner Profiles Clip Chart” to reward positive behavior and discourage undesirable behavior, and it works reasonably well.

However, these charts are not a “game changer” as Mrs. Johnson described. We are just beginning to explore how by going deeper into the IB Attitudes, and especially instilling them in the younger grades, we have the power to positively impact the school culture over the long term.

The Learner Profiles and Attitudes are used for recognition as well. During our morning announcements students are recognized for their positive interactions on the campus as well as “called out” for how many positives they have earned. Students can be heard telling teachers “Can you believe I got 15 positives already?” or “ I am so close, I only need 2 more positives by the end of the week!” It has made a difference in the sixth and seventh grades and students are excited to share their accomplishments. Students are

also recognized at quarterly P.T.O. Meetings where parents are invited to share in their child's accomplishment in "Living the Learner Profile". Students are called up and given a certificate of recognition for their part in providing a positive culture on the EMES campus.

Non-certified staff members also have a positive impact and affect the school culture. Mrs. Morris, the school media specialist, has influenced students in many ways. Mrs. Morris facilitates our 6-8th grade electives, offering choices in technology. One of the classes that she offers is a study hall on Wednesdays, where students who need extra support/time are able to choose "study hall" as one of their electives. Teachers in 6-8 grade have chosen to give up their prep on Wednesday to support Mrs. Morris in helping students to get back on track by signing up for one Wednesday a month to support this class and students who need help. Another significant way she influences culture is through her book clubs which she rotates based on grade levels. This year students in grades 3-8 read the book "Wonder". They discussed the book and participated in activities to spread kindness. One activity was to paint rocks with positive messages and hide them on campus for students to find. The culminating activity was for students to attend a showing of the movie on a Saturday, where 15 students viewed the movie together. As the mother of a girl who had struggled with friendships over the past year tells the story, "My daughter was distraught and almost in tears when we arrived late to the theater. A seat was not open near the girl she had begun a friendship with, a friendship facilitated by this book club and this well-selected book. The seated girl saw my daughter, came over, grabbed her hand and said, 'The seats are big - you can share my seat with me.' Then, I was in tears. Thank you Mrs. Morris for picking this book and helping to **build intelligent compassionate leaders.**"

EMES is committed to providing its students with the tools needed to prepare them for high school graduation, college, and success in life. As part of the educational culture, all staff receives regular training in implementation of the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. English Language Arts and Math have been addressed with two similar, but separate means of delivering high quality teaching methods.

In order to ensure that all ELA Standards are taught with fidelity, the Liberty School District underwent an in-depth adoption process of an ELA Curriculum. This was a year long committee based adoption which included teachers from EMES. This ELA adoption was to replace the Beyond Textbooks calendar resource that was previously in use during the 15-16 and 16-17 school years.

The K-5 curriculum is Harcourt Wonders, and for the MYP (6-8) is the Collections Series. Training was offered for both Harcourt and Collections throughout the summer as well as during pre-service for all ELA teachers. Training was then again provided during an all day in-service in September after teachers were able to get into the curriculum and plan out a unit.

Harcourt Wonders (K-5) is theme-based and each unit starts with a big idea and essential question to guide student inquiry, which fits in with many of the already developed IB Units. Collections is also theme-based and each six-week collection's theme includes high interest topic such as 6th grade's Facing Fear and 7th grades Bold Actions. In each of these collections fiction and nonfiction texts are close read and embedded with College and Career Standards. The writing component includes assessment resources and workbooks that offer in-depth close reading opportunities for each student. There is also an electronic eBook which offers differentiation for students who need to listen to the audio version of the stories.

Specifically regarding math standards, EMES delivers math curriculum through two effective and research based tools. Both Math 20/20 and Eureka Math (also known as Engage New York) are able to provide spiraling math concepts and problem solving. Through Math 20/20, students receive task based lessons in critical thinking related to specific math goals. Students are encouraged to communicate their thinking through math discussions and justify their reasoning.

One primary benefit of using a curriculum database such as Beyond Textbooks from 2015 to 2017 was the use of formative assessments that were written based on the AZCCRS. In the past school year this tool was to determine reteach/enrich groupings for a 30 minute period of dedicated time. With schedule changes and the adoption of new curriculum the reteach/enrich was not a viable option in 17-18. However, teachers were able to see the value of the formative assessments and the impact they had on student learning based on the AzMerit test scores. With the data that formative assessments could be used to help with small groups in classroom, planning and instruction, our instructional coach provided professional development on how teachers could use formatives using the Galileo web resource as a tool. This provided teachers with the ability to create a formative assessment of five questions as either a pretest to an upcoming standard, so that they could plan accordingly or to provide students with enrichment within their classrooms. Instructional time is protected with whole school assemblies kept to a minimum, and the closed campus policy strictly enforced. Each teacher in K-5 develops a schedule and in 6-8 student's individual schedule is kept at the front office to know where each student is at all times and minimize classroom disruptions looking for a student.

Students coming into EMES benefit from a positive relationship amongst feeder schools. Students are encouraged to feel like they belong at Estrella even before they arrive. Phoenix Children's Academy regularly targets skills needed to succeed from their Preschool into kindergarten programs. EMES hosts a kinder round up each year to extend a warm welcome to preschool aged children and their families within the community. Furthermore, during the end of year Moving Up ceremony, preschoolers carry the Estrella Mascot quilt as a symbolic acceptance into the school. The preschool aged students are able to take their rightful place in the kindergarten row of the amphitheater. When students feel important, they are more likely to build the self-esteem and confidence needed to succeed in their education and life beyond.

EMES uses assessment as an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the goals of our school's mission are being met. At the beginning of school year, teachers provide district Galileo pre-assessments in Math, ELA and Science to know student's performance base. DIBELS is also used to pre-assess the early literacy skills from K-3. Estrella uses intervention alert reports in Galileo and DIBELS beginning, middle to end scores that show students who need core, strategic or intensive support for benchmark goals in order to ensure growth in student achievement. A variety of formative assessments such as questioning, quizzes, think-pair-share, discussion, exit slips to mention a few are information used to adjust teaching and learning to help students achieve mastery of skills. Summative assessments are ongoing at the end of IB units, which incorporate many ELA standards and Engage New York math chapters or units. EMES ensures data from these assessments are analyzed, interpreted and used to develop student's instruction and learning; as this aligns to our mission for "knowledgeable" individuals.

One effective tool used to monitor response to intervention is our Cougar Community Volunteers reading program in the lower grades. This program has doubled in the last year. Under the direction of our instructional coach and our head volunteer, students identified with a need for intervention based on the data supplied from district assessments are assigned to reading groups with a Cougar Community Volunteer trained in reading intervention. For students that need additional support, individuals may be brought up for discussion during the Child Study Team to discuss data, identify effectiveness of interventions, brainstorm accommodations, and supply innovative teaching methods geared for student success.

At Estrella, we believe teachers; support staff, parents and community members share the responsibility of educating students. Our parents and community demonstrate their shared belief by supporting our school in many capacities.

EMES's branding statement summarizes the objective of the school. In our partnerships we strive "To work together to build intelligent and compassionate leaders." Joint and specific goals are communicated to wider sets of stakeholders through three primary means. First the Cougar Community Volunteers (CCV) program works jointly with the administration and teachers to identify areas where volunteers can best support the needs of the school including supervisory, administrative, and educational needs of the students. CCV submits articles for publication in both of the local monthly magazines published to serve our Master Planned Community: Life in Estrella, published by Newland Communities, and Up the Hill, published by residents of Estrella. Through the work of CCV and the cooperation of both magazines, EMES communicates goals, challenges, and successes to a large set of the student/family population.

Second, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) assists with fundraising for educational materials and extra-curricular activities to support the students. PTO holds meetings each trimester, sending electronic and paper newsletters to stakeholders to inform them of events and updates. A PTO Face book page assists with sharing information on events as well. Third EMES proactively communicates through a monthly "Coffee with the Principal" event sponsored by the PTO which encourages sharing of

information, goals, partnerships, and other general communication between Mrs. Marine and the parent community. The EMES Site Council leadership committee meets monthly, and provides direction in making strategic decisions; this committee is described in more detail in question 36.

Two key challenges in developing partnerships with parents and throughout the community are related to time/availability and clear communication. Many of our families have two working parents, which limits TIME for joint coordination, volunteerism, and interactions. We address this by hosting events at various times and encouraging ongoing and event-based volunteerism. We live in a large retirement community, so we proactively invite volunteerism from retirees who do not have students registered at Estrella Mountain. Second, like all schools and organizations we face communication challenges. We use email campaigns, newsletters, texts, PTO newsletters, Face book and Twitter to share information, as well as our local magazines, Up the Hill and Life in Estrella.

Mrs. Marine meets with members of the CCV, PTO and Site Council to discuss collaborative goals and the top needs at the beginning of the year and at touch points throughout the year.

CCV received its key areas for assistance and influence from these collaborative goals. Recognizing literacy as the foundation of all successful learning, the literacy program leverages two trained interventionists, along with many other dedicated community volunteers in a reading and comprehensions skills program for at-need readers to raise the student literacy level. This is our fifth year of the program and it now boasts of eleven reading support volunteers serving over fifty K-3 students twice a week. Teachers identify the students based on DIBELS assessments and provide grade-specific volunteers with material and focus areas by student weekly. With coordinated effort between the Kindergarten teachers and the CCV we went from only 36% of students at Benchmark at the beginning of the year to 69% at midyear. In addition two years ago a volunteer reading intervention specialist Gina Simmons, began serving struggling readers and an ESL reader in 4th and 5th grades - devoting four hours per week to work with 19 additional students.

CCV supports areas outside of the classroom. Due to state-wide budget cuts, Estrella Mountain has been without a dedicated school counselor on campus for the past four years. CCV sought to create a "Counselor in the Classroom" program, engaging a semi-retired professionally certified school counselor who was willing to donate 2 days per month to help fill the gap. To aid teachers in maximizing classroom preparation and instruction time, CCV volunteers dedicate thousands of hours a year to crosswalk monitoring, lunchtime cafeteria and recess monitoring, copying, and classroom and media center volunteering.

The EMES PTO provides critical stakeholder support by sponsoring events like the Fall Festival, a Color-Run, the Spring Move-A-Thon, and a Silent Auction at the Spring Carnival. This year we combined the Spring Carnival and the Fall Festival to maximize

attendance and fundraising efforts. It was a huge success with students volunteering service hours, over 150 tickets pre-sold, and \$4000 raised for the school. They are planning to open the Color Run as a community-wide 5K event in February 2018. The PTO seeks to incorporate Mrs. Marine's annual goals in their events, for example creating IB themes for projects like the 2016-2017 Color Run - where each day and each color highlighted a different IB learner profile. PTO funds raised support critical student and school needs. Major purchases include Chrome books, beautification of the junior high courtyard, the kindergarten school canopy, and school marquee. The PTO funds small teacher and student requests as well including classroom manipulatives, reimbursements to teachers for various classroom materials, and field trip scholarships for at-need students.

A major example of collaborative goal development with stakeholders is from the spring of 2015. EMES faced a budget challenge that would eliminate the position of our media specialist. A staff member started a GOFUNDME account to raise funds for the position. The community rallied and spread the word of EMES's challenge. The Arizona Republic newspaper and Channel 12 News came to our school to report and inform the public about our campaign. This community partnership raised \$20,000, saved our Media Specialist position and showed our school that we are valued and respected in the process.

We also partner with local restaurants such as Papa John's, McDonalds, Chuck E Cheese, and Panda Express to host events in which a percentage of proceeds are donated to the school.

Family involvement and communication is of critical importance for student success. Estrella Mountain staff encourages an open dialogue with parents through many forms of communication. Each teacher uses their own unique positive reinforcement tool to monitor student behavior and communicate with parents. And, in addition to email, phone calls, and written notes, there is also the ongoing access parent and students have to the Parent Portal, a web-based site with grades and progress updated weekly. Teachers have autonomy and flexibility when it comes to their own forms of behavioral updates, but the majority of K-3 teachers use a daily calendar to communicate daily IB-based clip chart behavior results or agendas (4-5). The middle school leverages the Cougar Communication Cards, updated weekly, with intentionally less oversight in grade 8 as we release responsibility to the students for better transitional adjustment to high school. Teachers also use weekly newsletters and/or Teacher Web pages. Twice-yearly mandatory parent/teacher conferences (K-5) and others as needed are held to ensure communication is maintained on student academic and general behavioral progress. In the case of a serious behavioral problem that requires attention, parents are contacted immediately. Our goal is for parents to be partners in modifying behaviors. Parents are also included as members of the CST process.

We administer parent surveys to give parents a voice and provide Estrella with the feedback we need to both learn and make positive changes. We analyze the information, and consider the insights when making decisions that impact our students

and community. We also encourage parents to visit Great Schools.com to write a review about our school; this allows parents a voice and also gives us the feedback we need to learn and make positive changes.

We use Social Media for more general communication:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/estrellamountainelementary/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EstrellaElem>

School Website: <http://estrella.liberty.k12.az.us/>

Parent and community volunteers are recruited from front office materials, booths and classroom sign-up sheets at Meet the Teacher Night and word of mouth. CCV articles in *Life in Estrella* and *Up the Hill* magazines share the mission of the organization, the types of volunteer positions, why they are needed and how they benefit the school. The articles reach the entire Master Planned Community, provide contact information, and often prompt new members to join CCV.

Training CCVs is a big effort! The program is a huge success that enables volunteers to experience the school community as a whole, and not just a parent volunteer in their individual student's classroom (although that happens too!) All CCV volunteers attend a mandatory training with the CCV coordinator which covers topics such as student confidentiality, appropriate school behavior and expectations. They are given a tour of the campus and receive a photo ID to wear when they sign in at the front office. They are expected to have their fingerprints processed. Volunteers are placed within our campus as needed through a master schedule that is managed by the CCV coordinator. Literacy Program volunteers receive additional specialized training on reading comprehension.

EMES enjoys partnerships with many outside entities to provide extended learning.

Ballet Arizona has a partnership with third grade at EMES as part of their Class Act program. Each year for the past 5 years, two professional dancers meet with our third graders to prepare a performance for the *Ballet under the Stars*, a free Goodyear community event held each year in Estrella Mountain Ranch in the fall. The dancers provide the music and the guidance while the children actually choreograph the dance. The children perform on stage as one of the acts during the *Ballet under the Stars* performance.

EMES teachers have been invited to receive intensive training at the Biosphere near Tucson. A total of nine teachers, on separate occasions over the past several years, have had the opportunity to spend two weeks learning about the environment and conduct research during their training. They learn how to use technology to conduct experiments and how to bring back science to their classroom.

EMES partnered with the Aloha Festival to bring instruction to our students. Members from the Aloha Committee came and taught our students how to play the ukulele, and learned Polynesian dances, which they performed during a music night, and were

subsequently invited to perform on stage at the Aloha Festival in 2015. The Aloha Festival also donated 30 ukuleles to our school so we can continue this program.

The West Valley Arts Council supports Estrella Mountain teachers. Art and music teachers meet three to four times a year with this council to receive professional development in their content area.

Sue Larson, a private consultant has met with all K-8 math teachers to reinforce inquiry based math instruction. Mrs. Larson has also presented a parents math night covering those same concepts last January 10th, 2017.

Extended learning opportunities have indeed had a positive effect on relationships, learning and performance. As a result of a teacher's connection made during the summer training at the Biosphere, a teacher was able to coordinate with the Arizona Farm Bureau to teach second and third graders about the life cycle of a pumpkin.

Through literacy the students learned about the cycle a pumpkin grows through. After the story the students created a life cycle key chain. The Farm Bureau left a book for each classroom and a life cycle craft that was completed in the classroom.

Having maintained strong relationship with Dr. Rebecca Hsu, a parent whose students no longer attend EMES, Mrs. Berrelez provided her first grade class with an amazing extended learning opportunity called "Organ Day" as the culminating event of their study of the human body and how it works. Having secured the donation of a cow from a local meat distribution center, Mrs. Berrelez invited Dr. Hsu to present the cow's major organs to provide real life hands-on experience for what organs look like and how they function. The students engaged in inquiry and risk taking, touching the liver, heart, lungs, kidneys and hoof and handling the offending smells without (too much) drama.

Dr. Hsu did amazing interactive demonstrations like using a blow dryer to inflate the lungs to show lung functions. The exclamations of "COOL!" were priceless and innumerable.

Estrella Mountain hosts an annual star-gazing event in conjunction with "*Stargazing for Everyone, LLC*". The school as well as the local community is invited to hear an interactive, outdoor presentation on the stars and planets. Expert star-gazers with enormous telescopes allow the children and adults to hold a rock from a meteor shower and view the moon and stars "up close".

EMES is open to allowing various community uses of our facilities outside of regular school hours. The current primary use of our facilities is by the Estrella Youth Sports league, which uses our baseball field and grassy areas for baseball, football, soccer, and other tournaments and events. Public voting is also held in the media center during elections.

In recent years we have also supported the following activities at our facility, in response to community needs and requests:

- Sunday Services were held by a local church in our gym

- Gym has been available to community members in the evening hours
- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Chinese/Mandarin language clubs have all used our classrooms for meetings
- Local pre-schools have used the school gym for their end-of-year performances
- Estrella Youth Sports a non-profit sports organization uses fields, gym and concession stands for sporting practice and events.