

*2024 PCSNM Newsletter, September 30, 2024*

## **Expanding Charter School Opportunities: PCSNM Awards \$7 Million to Four Schools Across New Mexico**

Public Charter Schools of New Mexico (PCSNM) is thrilled to announce a total of \$7 million in funding to four high-performing and new charter schools across the state. The funding will be distributed as subgrants from the [Charter School Program \(CSP\) grant](#), awarded to PCSNM by the U.S. Department of Education in 2023.

Two established schools, Solare Collegiate Charter School in southwest Albuquerque and East Mountain High School in Sandia Park, will each receive \$1.5 million to support their expansion, and two new schools, Sacramento School of Engineering and Science (SSES) in Alamogordo and Equip Academy of New Mexico in Albuquerque, will each receive \$2 million to help launch their innovative programs.

**Support for Established Schools:** Solare Collegiate Charter School and East Mountain High School are known for their excellence in education, and this funding will allow them to grow and serve more students:

[Solare Collegiate Charter School](#) has been a pillar of excellence within its community, known for its innovative educational approach and strong academic outcomes. The expansion supported by this subaward will allow Solare Collegiate to reach and serve more families who seek a rigorous and supportive learning environment for their children. “I am proud of our school and our scholars,” said Rachael Sowards, Founder & Head of School. “This is a wonderful opportunity to help expand our school community to serve even more students, including elementary grades in the 2025-2026 school year.”

For 25 years, [East Mountain High School](#) (EMHS) has consistently demonstrated outstanding results in preparing students for college and careers. The resources provided by this grant will help EMHS extend its impact, offering more students the opportunity to benefit from its successful educational model. “We are grateful and energized by this opportunity to deepen our impact in the community,” said Trey Smith, Executive Director of EMHS. “This grant will allow us to create a seamless 6-12 education pathway on par with some of the best schools in the nation and world.”

**Investing in New Schools:** PCSNM is also supporting the launch of two promising new charter schools:

[Sacramento School of Engineering and Science](#) (SSES) will be the first public charter school in Alamogordo, bringing a strong emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and

math (STEM) education. Supported by this subaward, SSES will serve grades 9-12 and aims to meet the growing demand for skilled workers at Holloman Air Force Base by offering specialized concentrations in fields such as robotics, computer science, aeronautical and aerospace engineering, industrial engineering, and biomedical engineering. “I’m thrilled to bring this educational opportunity to Alamogordo,” said Cindy Stong, Founding Governing Council Member. “This school will not only challenge students to reach their full potential, but also equip them with workforce-ready skills in high-demand STEM careers.”

[Equip Academy of New Mexico](#) will offer a dynamic learning experience for kindergarten through 5th grade students with a focus on blending high academic standards and culturally responsive teaching. “At Equip Academy, our vision is to empower every child with the tools to unlock their full potential,” said Mercy Herrera, Founder. “We are committed to equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to dream boldly, engage meaningfully, and pursue lives filled with purpose.” The school's core mission includes a strong dedication to culturally responsive education, ensuring that every student feels valued and supported as they grow academically and personally, regardless of background.

“These grants demonstrate our confidence in all four schools to deliver on their promise to students and families,” said Matthew Pahl, Executive Director of PCSNM. “By supporting both established and new charter schools, we’re working to expand educational opportunities for students across the state, particularly in communities where high-quality options are limited.”

**Looking Ahead:** The funding awarded to these schools will be used to enhance educational programs, expand facilities, and increase student enrollment, ensuring that more students have access to a high-quality charter school education. The impact of these grants will not only benefit individual students but also contribute to community development and the future workforce of New Mexico.

Stay tuned for further updates on the growth and success of these incredible schools as they continue to serve and inspire students across the state!

This is an exciting time for New Mexico's charter school movement, as PCSNM continues to support the creation and expansion of schools that prioritize academic excellence and innovation.