



PRESS RELEASE

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Two El Monte Union Schools Earn National Honors as America's Healthiest Schools

EL MONTE – Fernando R. Ledesma High School (FRLHS) and Mountain View High School (MVHS) have been named among the 2026 America's Healthiest Schools by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, earning national recognition for their efforts to create healthier, more supportive environments that promote the well-being of students, staff, and families.

The annual program recognized 1,376 schools across 35 states and the District of Columbia for implementing best practices that advance whole-child health. Schools are evaluated across up to nine areas, including physical activity, nutrition and food access, school health services, social-emotional health and learning, staff well-being, and family and community engagement.

FRLHS earned honors in three areas: Physical Education & Activity, Social-Emotional Health & Learning, and Family & Community Engagement. MVHS was recognized for its work in Staff Well-Being.

"This national recognition reflects the meaningful work taking place across El Monte Union," Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. "Fernando R. Ledesma and Mountain View high schools have demonstrated a strong commitment to building healthy school communities, and their accomplishments are a testament to the dedication of their staff, students, families, and partners. We are proud to see their efforts recognized on a national level and grateful to everyone who continues to advance wellness across our District."

El Monte Union's participation in the initiative was facilitated through the District Wellness Committee, with leadership and coordination from Suzy Sayre, director of nutrition services, and support from Maryam Shayegh, nutrition and wellness coordinator with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). Together, the Wellness Committee and its partners helped guide the District's assessment, planning, and implementation of practices designed to strengthen healthy school environments.

"Recognition in Physical Education & Activity, Social-Emotional Health, and Family & Community Engagement reflects the holistic approach we take to supporting every student. At Fernando R. Ledesma, we know students thrive when their academic, emotional, and physical needs are met and their families are engaged in their success," FRLHS Principal Freddy Arteaga said. "This honor celebrates our dedicated staff, resilient students, and incredible families, while highlighting El Monte Union's efforts to ensure our at-risk students have the resources they need to succeed. My vision is to build a culture of wellness where our entire school community can flourish."

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The initiative was supported through LACOE's Kaiser Permanente-funded Thriving Schools Project, which provides participating school districts with funding, training, and technical assistance to assess wellness needs, establish priorities, develop action plans, and strengthen practices that promote the health and well-being of school communities.

Schools earn America's Healthiest Schools recognition through an assessment and application process that requires them to demonstrate the implementation of qualifying health and wellness practices. Schools may be recognized in one or more areas, while those meeting criteria across all nine areas receive the program's All-Star distinction.

"As principal, I believe prioritizing educator well-being is essential to creating a healthy and supportive school environment," MVHS Principal Jose Bañas said. "When school staff are supported physically, socially, emotionally, and professionally, they are better equipped to help students succeed and contribute to a positive, sustainable school culture."

[View the official list of America's Healthiest Schools 2026.](#)

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

EMUHSD HEALTHIEST SCHOOLS 1: A Fernando R. Ledesma High School Class of 2026 graduate smiles as he walks the red carpet at his commencement ceremony on June 4. The school is recognized as a 2026 America's Healthiest School by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation for its efforts to create healthier, more supportive environments that promote the well-being of students, staff, and families.

EMUHSD HEALTHIEST SCHOOLS 2: Two Mountain View High School graduates from the Class of 2026 beam with excitement before their commencement ceremony on June 4. The school is recognized as a 2026 America's Healthiest School by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation for its commitment to supporting staff well-being.

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The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.