

Ruidoso Early College Academy

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Early College High School

Application for ECHS Designation

1. Overview of ECHS Design

The Ruidoso Early College Academy will operate as an academy within the Ruidoso High School comprehensive high school campus. The Ruidoso Early College Academy will align with degree and certificate programs offered through Eastern New Mexico University - Ruidoso.

Because the Ruidoso Early College Academy follows an academy model, the college instructors are primarily employees of ENMU-Ruidoso. The college classes that are attended by our students are made up of both traditional students and academy students. The typical college class ratio is 1 instructor to 20 students, although that can vary based on the particular class.

The Ruidoso Academy is able to [provide wrap-around supports to the](#) students in their pursuits and assist in the scaffolded learning by providing a full-time, certified instructor who not only teaches the introductory college classes during the 10th grade year, but runs a learning lab to assist students in taking their Blackboard-based classes which provides a place for group-studying and tutoring needs. This structure allows the students to have success in their pathway as they have daily support in navigating their college classes, both academic and vocational, as well as a solid foundation starting their sophomore year in how to be a successful college student. The instructor is certified as adjunct faculty through ENMU-Ruidoso and meets the Higher Learning Commission guidelines for instructors.

Other wrap-around supports the Academy offers are a dedicated College Advisor from ENMU-Ruidoso and a licensed Guidance Counselor at Ruidoso High School. The two work closely together with the students to monitor graduation progress, establish degree plans, and register students for classes each semester. The guidance counselor meets annually with families to evaluate pathway progress and determine future needs. The Next Step Plan is updated annually at these individual meetings and any changes to pathways are discussed and implemented as needed to best support student's post-secondary plans. The guidance counselor also meets regularly with the high school principal to discuss needs of the Academy. Strategic planning meetings are held at least twice a year with college administrators to determine course offerings as well as future plans for program offerings and student needs.

The Ruidoso Early College Academy operates within the regular school day of the comprehensive Ruidoso High School. The Academy has worked with the ENMU-Ruidoso administration to provide live college classes at times that are suited to both traditional and high school students. These live class offerings are offered during daytime hours that often correspond to typical high school operating hours as a way to support students who are not only in high school but are also working or participating in clubs, sports, or internship opportunities.

The typical day for 9th-11th grade students is 8:45-4:02 which is the schedule of the Ruidoso High School. The typical day for senior students begins at 8:30 and ends at 2:15 to allow for time to complete workplace experiences as well as internships and service opportunities.

As an Academy set up on the comprehensive Ruidoso High School campus, the existing Ruidoso High School building will be used by all Academy students. The students will also be attending some live classes at the ENMU-Ruidoso campus located approximately 3 miles from the high school. The Ruidoso High School campus is an accessible facility that provides all needed classroom space, storage space, and lunch space required by the Public Education Department. Within the Ruidoso High School campus, the college instructor who teaches the 10th grade course, and serves as a learning lab location, will have classroom space at the high school with storage and office space as needed to secure college information and materials. The classroom will be outfitted with computers that are capable of supporting the technical needs of the college classes. The Academy guidance counselor will also have office and storage space within the counseling center of Ruidoso High School in order to have easy access to the students and their files and will also have adequate meeting space to facilitate meetings with families and program administrators and coordinators.

College exploration is an important part of the Academy program. Students who are interested in education after high school, whether through a large university or trade school, need to have an idea of what is available to them to assist in making their college decisions. In an effort to help students begin their college exploration program, students are enrolled into a Freshmen Seminar college class during their sophomore year to begin to learn how to explore options on the computer while getting initial basic information relating to cost of attendance, admission requirements, and academic options. The class also provides the

students with a career exploration activity that helps them to determine what career path they should consider and then what education requirements are needed for that pathway.

Living in rural New Mexico, the Academy understands the difficulty for students to visit many different campuses that are far away so the Guidance Counselor has worked with colleges in other states to provide visits to the high school campus to meet with students and begin the exploration process. The high school also hosts a College Fair with more than 20 trade schools and colleges in attendance to allow students an opportunity to speak with a college admissions advisor and begin to narrow down their choices.

As students begin to narrow down their choices of post-secondary options, field trips are provided to students to see university campuses as well as trade school campuses to explore what is available in different areas. The College Board website states “A campus visit is your opportunity to get a firsthand view of a college. A college catalog, brochure or website can only show you so much. To really get a feel for the college, you need to walk around the quad, sit in on a class and visit the dorms.” The Academy understands the importance of students getting a live experience at a college campus to assist them in making important decisions for after high school.

In addition to college and trade school exploration enrichment activities, students in the Academy will be involved in a variety of community and work place experiences as described in the Workforce Development section of this narrative

2. Proposed Pathway Description

Students enrolled in the academy will have the opportunity to pursue a variety of programs within the Academy. [All programs that are offered have been vertically aligned with ENMU-Ruidoso and align with the degree plans offered by that college.](#) Students who are interested in pursuing a career technical program will have available programs such as Welding Technology, Wildland Fire, Emergency Medical Technician, Information Systems, and other programs as developed through ENMU-Ruidoso ([please see the ENMU degree plans associated with these pathways in the Next Step Plan appendix section](#)). Strategic planning has begun with the administration of ENMU-Ruidoso and Ruidoso ECHS to discuss needs of the community, resources available, and pathways that can be developed to help the Lincoln County Area. An example of this is the Wildland Fire program that has been established at ENMU-Ruidoso. Living in Lincoln County and serving the Mescalero Apache Reservation, the need for trained fire fighters and hot shot crew members is great and the pathway provides the opportunity to have trained individuals living in our area prepared to fight the forest fire risk that we have, as well as support the state's need for help when large fires arise.

Students may also pursue an Associate's Degree pathway or Common Core Certificate pathway that lead to a variety of transfer options so that students wishing to transfer to a larger university upon graduation will be ready and able to pursue careers that require a Bachelor's degree for entry ([please see the ENMU degree plans associated with these pathways in the Next Step Plan appendix](#)

section). Students spend a great deal of time with the RHS Counselor and ENMU-Ruidoso advisor planning their transfer pathway into their four year university. Students, together with the advisors, decide which college(s) they plan to attend and then study the degree plans and common core requirements for those universities. This information helps guide class choices in both elective options and core requirements so that the courses taken while in high school align with the university's degree plans so that students are not taking classes which do not benefit their future degree plan. In the past several years, students who have graduated from RHS and have taken college classes have successfully transferred to every in-state university as well as universities in Colorado, Texas, and California. (see Next Step Plan samples and list of course and STARS codes in Appendix)

The proposed pathway for the Academy also offers work based learning and wrap around supports to help the students succeed in their chosen pathway. Work based learning opportunities are provided to the student through several ways. Although these ways are not listed on the master schedule as they are tailored to each student based on individual needs and opportunities, they are available to students throughout their time in the program. Students begin by participating in the mentorship and getting to know members of the community who are in the various career fields of interest to the student. As junior and senior year approach, students work with the college advisor from ENMU-Ruidoso and the RHS guidance counselor to create an internship or work experience in the field of their choice. In the past, students have had internships

at the hospital, been placed medical offices, helped in consulting firms, worked with the forestry and Ecoservants programs, and assisted in classrooms throughout the district, etc, as a way to help them gain experience in their career field and be better prepared for work and education after high school. These opportunities are tracked by students earning credit for work based learning and that credit appears on the transcript. Students submit reflections to the RHS counselor about their experiences and are also placed in their portfolio for use after graduation. The students also receive letters of recommendation from their mentor describing their performance and activities during the program.

Wrap around supports are part of what makes the Ruidoso Early College Academy stand out and support good outcomes for the students. From the full time staff member mentioned above that teaches introductory college classes and then supports the students through the learning lab to the high school counselor and college advisor mentioned above, the students in the Academy are fully supported in making decisions about their post-secondary plans as well as succeeding in their classes.

3. Workforce Recognized Credentials

The Ruidoso Early College Academy will partner with ENMU-Ruidoso to offer pathways to workforce recognized credentials. Some students will pursue the academic transfer pathway which leads to either an Associates Degree or Common Core Certificate (please see the ENMU degree plans associated with these pathways in the Next Step Plan appendix section). Both of these credentials are important to the student who plans to pursue a Bachelor's Degree

at a university after high school. Four year degrees such as engineering, biology, physical therapy, math, etc. require students to meet general education requirements before entering into the degree field courses. These credentials allow students to begin degree field courses sooner and building confidence and success while in high school which helps the transition into college go smoother.

[In addition to these degree programs, the Academy offers stackable credentials](#) in the Career Technical Education programs offered through ENMU-Ruidoso. These credentials include the Certified Nursing Assistant, Emergency Medical Technician-Basic, Computer and Network Security Certification Program, and Welding Technology. These credentials allow students an opportunity for job placement upon completion. These [credentials](#) also encourage students to pursue higher education in these areas by creating a strong foundation in fundamental skills and giving confidence to pursue more training and education in these fields.

Students are monitored by the Guidance Counselor throughout their time on the pathway. Meetings with both students and parents are held regularly to monitor progress and adjust Next Step Plans as needed. When students are in their last semester of coursework, they submit applications for graduation to ENMU-Ruidoso and are allowed to participate in both the college and high school graduation ceremonies. Students are recorded in the STARS system of Ruidoso High School, Banner system of ENMU-Ruidoso, as well as monitored on the internal tracking forms of the guidance counselor.

4. Students Served

For the 2018-2019 school year,

The 9th grade cohort (Class of 2022) - 45 successful applicants

The 10th grade cohort (Class of 2021) - 29 successful applicants

The 11th grade cohort (Class of 2020) - 31 successful applicants

The 12th grade cohort (Class of 2019) - 35 successful applicants

Graduating class of 2018 - 18 completed credentials, 17 students completing 12+ credits in a pathway.

Each typical graduating class at the comprehensive high school (Ruidoso High School) averages 125 students total.

Examples of demographics of students in ECHS:

	Class of 2018	Class of 2019
Free/Reduced Lunch	13/35	17/35
Native American	3/35	6/35
Hispanic	18/35	15/35
Asian	1/35	1/35
Caucasian	13/35	13/35

5. Outreach and Recruitment Process

Ruidoso High School and ENMU-Ruidoso have partnered together to provide the Early College Academy opportunity to all students who are interested in the opportunity of the program with no caps to enrollment. As long as students are actively pursuing a supported pathway in the program, students are able to be a part of the Academy without worry about the Academy being full.

Students are recruited initially from the entire 8th grade class of students.

Students at all grade levels starting with 8th grade are given the information concerning the program each year during the registration process and listen to a discussion about high school and programmatic expectations. Students and their parents then come to the high school for an informational meeting to describe the 4 year program and to get more information about policies and procedures relating to participation in an early college academy. After the informational parent meeting, where bilingual interpreters are available for additional family support, students and families complete an application for admission into the Academy. While most students begin this process at the end of the 8th grade year, students can begin the process after that initial year and then work with the RHS counselor and ENMU advisor to create a plan that aligns with post-secondary goals as well as length of time still in high school. The application consists of a student and parent letter of interest discussing post-secondary goals and strengths of the student. Students also get two letters of recommendation from current teachers to inform the high school staff of student's strengths and weaknesses in an effort to best support students in their transition to high school.

After the application process, students and families meet with the Academy counselor to plan for freshman year classes. Students begin the Academy in 9th grade, although college credited classes do not begin until 10th grade. The pathway that a student follows [provides wrap-around support that](#) allows for a scaffolded learning experience where students on the college transfer pathway take honors classes in a variety of subjects to help them get accustomed to high academic expectations. Students [wanting stackable credentials](#) begin taking introductory classes in their chosen field as a way to learn basic skills that will be needed throughout their pathway.

Diversity is an important part of the overall culture at Ruidoso High School. The Academy also supports that vision through inclusive recruiting practices as well as providing support throughout the high school career of students. Through cooperation with ENMU-Ruidoso, the Academy is able to provide experiences for all students, whether they are interested in pursuing higher education at a large university or intend to complete a trade program that provides for work opportunities upon completion. Diversity in students is not only based on interests after high school but also in ethnic and socio-economic variety. The Academy provides enrollment to all students regardless of ethnicity or socio-economic status. Following the format set up that college classes are free to students (tuition and books) allows for all students to participate in the Academy regardless of their ability to pay. Also, providing services and information to all ethnic groups in our community has been an important part of the recruiting process. Translation is provided to our families who speak a language other than

English and the District Native American Liaisons are well-informed of the program and opportunities so that they can assist their students to complete their applications as needed.

The administration at the ECHS will semi-annually look at all demographics of students to help ensure that students are getting equitable access to the early college program. As the program is able to grow with the new designation, the staff will ensure that the same, equitable recruitment processes happen and will look at new ways to enlarge the population of students that participate in the program through strategic planning with the college.

6. Written Agreement with Postsecondary

The Ruidoso Early College Academy partners with Eastern New Mexico-Ruidoso to provide college classes in both career and trade programs as well as transferable core classes that align with 4 year universities. The Memorandum of Understanding with ENMU-Ruidoso is included in the appendix.

ENMU-Ruidoso provides wrap-around services that address graduation and retention for the ECHS students. The ENMU-Ruidoso college advisor utilizes the Banner system to monitor student's degree plans and any degree changes that are discussed by the student. The Banner system also tracks the credits earned by the student toward their degree. The college advisor uses this information to ensure that the students are on track and uses the credits earned reports with student, parent, and the high school guidance counselor each semester to help students stay on track toward their goals.

The ENMU-Ruidoso advisor also uses Drop Guard as a retention tool for the ECHS students. Drop Guard is an early alert system that monitors the student's attendance and grades. Drop Guard also allows instructors to list academic and emotional concerns that are then followed up by both the advisor from the high school and the college. This early alert system helps advisors to monitor how well students are doing so that issues such as background knowledge, illness, or emotional state can be caught and addressed early so that the student has a greater chance of success. ENMU-Ruidoso also provides tutoring services for all students on campus. ENMU-Ruidoso has extended evening and Saturday hours so that ECHS students who can not go to tutoring in the middle of the day because of high school classes can access these tutoring services after school or on the weekend. As stated on the website, "The Student Success Center of ENMU-Ruidoso provides services and resources dedicated to the personal development and academic achievement of all students. The Student Success Center collaborates with constituents in the greater Ruidoso learning community to support student success. The purpose of the Student Success Center is to guide students in the development and practice of academic skills to empower their independent learning." The Student Success Center provides a math and English learning lab, academic workshops, and student study lounges for those students who need a quiet and distraction-free place to study.

Advisors and guidance counselors work together to track the credits and pathways of the students. ENMU-Ruidoso provides transcripts at the end of each semester that are kept on file with the guidance counselor who tracks progress

on pathways and registers students in classes. The guidance counselor is included in information meetings with the college when changes to procedures happen. The guidance counselor works with the student services personnel each semester to enroll students in classes and meets semi-annually with college administration during the schedule planning time to ensure that classes are offered at times that are suited the student's high school schedule.

7. Written Agreement with Workforce Partner

The Ruidoso Early College Academy has a finalized agreement with the Lincoln County Medical Center (agreement in Appendix) to be a workforce partner. The partnership will provide multiple learning opportunities throughout the year for students to explore the medical profession and learn more about what requirements are needed for different medical professions. In order to accomplish this, the staff at Lincoln County Medical center will meet with the Academy students in a mentoring capacity during lunch group meetings at the high school as well as individual mentor meetings to answer questions and give basic career guidance and information about a variety of medical professions. The staff also gives guidance about the different levels of education needed within the medical community and can provide information to students relating to programs of study that last two years (such as Radiology Technicians and Respiratory Technicians) or programs that take twelve or more years (such as surgeons). The Lincoln County Medical Center also employs a variety of nurses in different levels of care (from LPN's to Nurse Practitioners and Nurse

Anesthetists) who can give career information and guidance to the students concerning the length and cost of programs while giving concrete advice on work responsibilities.

The Lincoln County Medical Center has also committed to providing an annual M.A.S.H. camp to the high school students in the Academy. The M.A.S.H. camp has been designed by the hospital administration to provide students a full day opportunity to explore the hospital setting and learn about various departments at the hospital. Three groups of 7 students are put on rotation in the hospital for a day. The groups rotate through different departments within the hospital, including the operating room. Students are given the opportunity to handle equipment and talk with staff in small groups so that they can get individualized attention and have a very hands-on, engaging activity throughout the day. The students are able to see the entire hospital and meet with medical professionals from all areas of hospital work - physicians, nurses, administrators, technicians, etc - in an effort to provide a comprehensive look into the medical world.

Lincoln County Medical Center is also piloting a paid internship summer opportunity to one highly motivated student who will work throughout the summer to learn more about the medical profession. The application and interview process was held in the spring and if successful will open the door for a continuation of the paid opportunity.

The Ruidoso Early College Academy is also in process of securing a written agreement with the Ruidoso Rotary Club to be a second workforce partner. Preliminary discussions and plans have been made but could not be finalized until the summer Rotary Board Meeting. The Rotary Club is comprised of active business people throughout the Ruidoso and Mescalero community. The business people range in fields from bankers and retail business owners to realtors, insurance agents, and restaurant owners. The support plan includes activities such as mentoring luncheons and meetings, job shadowing opportunities, and mock interviews to help students become aware of what work opportunities exist within our community. The partnership plan also includes working to develop a youth leadership club through Rotary called Interact. This Rotary supported club helps students develop leadership skills while providing service opportunities within the local community as well as the broader world.

8. Sustainability

The Ruidoso Municipal School District and ENMU-Ruidoso are both fully committed to providing an early college experience to students in the Ruidoso area. With this commitment comes the idea that the two schools will work closely together to provide sustainable classes and pathways for students that are not only of interest to the local area but will also support the post-secondary goals of the students to attend a university. The staff and administration at both schools will continue to meet together for training and strategic planning purposes to ensure the continuation of the high quality program that currently exists.

Ruidoso Rotary Club already supports RHS culinary by holding their local meetings in the RHS culinary foods restaurant (TePee Lounge) once a month. We are working with both Ruidoso Rotary and the local hospital to participate in a mentorship program through TePee lounge. The mentorship opportunities will once or twice a month depending on the field and the mentor. By working with the local workforce, mentors, internships, and shadowing opportunities will be available in a variety of career fields including, builders, bankers, medical professionals, insurance and real estate investors, and local retail business owners. These partnerships will conduct mock interviews to assist students on interview skills as well as informing them of the skills needed to be successful in that field of study.

To continue sustainability, RHS and ENMU-R, are meeting in late June to work on a strategic plan, to discuss what new course offerings are needed to reach the demographics of our community, both students and community businesses. Discussion will also center on staff that are highly qualified for teaching at both schools. As stated in attached MOU, both ENMU-R and RHS are focused on building a successful program and working together. With the partnership of ENMU-R, the ability to share instructional staff allows classes to be offered both at RHS and ENMU-R. This partnership also allows for ENMU-R to be able to fill their classes with both traditional college students and students from Ruidoso Early High School Academy.

9. Tribal Consultation Requirement

Ruidoso High School and the Ruidoso Municipal School District work closely with the Mescalero Apache Tribe to ensure students are able fully participate in all aspects of the school district, including the early college academy. The district meets regularly with tribal leaders to strategically plan for educational opportunities and to review success of students at all grade levels across the district. The district also employs several Native American Liaisons, with one being a full-time staff member at Ruidoso High School. The district administration submits the documentation of tribal consultation to the state annually to meet reporting requirements. Affirmation of Tribal Consultation located in the Appendix.

Appendix

1. Memorandum of Understanding with ENMU-Ruidoso
2. Agreement with Lincoln County Medical Center
3. Sample Next Step Plans
4. Course catalog - Dual credit and STARS code listing
5. RHS master schedule, ENMU-Ruidoso Fall schedule
6. Affirmation of Tribal Consultation