2017–18

Mountain Heights Academy

ANNUAL REPORT
To Our Stakeholders

School Highlights

Founded in 2009, Mountain Heights Academy is Utah’s premier online school, known for unparalleled teacher interaction and personalized instruction. Schoolwork is divided into weekly modules, which empowers students with the freedom to complete their assignments when and where they choose, within each week.

Mountain Heights Academy is an award-winning, full-service virtual school that is home to 620 full-time and 330 part-time 7th–12th graders. Part-time students attending their district schools are eligible to take up to four credits online from various providers. Mountain Heights Academy has the highest Statewide Online Education Program passing rate in the state, at 88%.
**Academic Highlights**

Mountain Heights Academy maintains its position as the highest-rated online school in Utah, based on graduation percentages, state test scores and completion rates, due to data-driven instruction, teacher interaction and a customizable, open educational resource curriculum that can be tailored to meet the needs of every student.

**Program Highlights**

At Mountain Heights Academy, a laptop computer is provided to each student, along with cutting-edge applications, programs and collaboration tools. Students learn to use real-world, 21st century technology in their competency-based Technology Tools course and are able to leverage these tools to showcase stellar work throughout their high school experience.

**Administration and Faculty Highlights**

Mountain Heights Academy employs 70 teachers, the equivalent of 57.5 certified faculty from all over the state of Utah, from Perry to Santa Clara. Twenty-one of these highly decorated faculty members and administrators have advanced degrees in addition to their bachelors degrees.

*We never forget what’s at stake here. Young, malleable minds. Creative thinkers. Tomorrow’s leaders.*
Mountain Heights Academy’s student population varies from year to year. Students come because they value the flexibility of fitting school in around their own schedule, and the unparalleled interaction they enjoy with their teachers.

**Student and Parent Preferences**
- Flexibility and the ability to work anywhere, any time
- Individualized teacher interaction between teachers and students
- Teacher and administrative responsiveness
- Social activities and leadership opportunities
- Customizable curriculum
- Use of a school laptop for full-time students

Students have been involved in the Chill Foundation Leadership development program while snowboarding on our beautiful mountains. One was selected as a Presidential Scholar Finalist, and another earned over a million hits with her social media activism. One student won a STEMi award, designed to recognize and reward individuals who excel in, and contribute to, STEM learning and achievement. Multiple students competed in rodeos across the Midwest, received scholarships to attend a prestigious University of Utah math summer camp, and danced with Ballet West. There have also been many students who have overcome and managed significant physical and mental health challenges with grace and determination. Our last class of graduating seniors received over $425,000 in valuable scholarships to schools, including state and national universities. We are excited to see all of our Mountain Heights Trailblazers forge new trails.

**Parent and Student Surveys**

Parent and student surveys reveal between 94% and 97% satisfaction ratings for curriculum, teacher and administrator responsiveness and overall satisfaction. There were 142 surveys returned for families, and 339 surveys returned for students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>Parent Satisfaction</th>
<th>Student Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Demographics

Mountain Heights is uniquely positioned to serve the needs of all students because of the customized learning pathway each student experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>620</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi Race</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students choose Mountain Heights Academy for many reasons—each as individual as they are.
Service Learning

Mountain Heights Academy is a service learning school. Students and faculty were recipients of individual President’s Volunteer Service Awards and one individual received a Lifetime Service Awards, recognizing over 4000 hours of individual service. To date, Mountain Heights has provided a cumulative total of over 105,500 hours of service. In its ninth year, Mountain Heights students, faculty, board members and parents logged 16,300 hours, providing service in various areas, including:

- Ronald McDonald Adopt-a-Meal
- Youth Detention Treat Bags
- Utah Food Bank
- Asian Association of Utah Refugees
- Road Home
- Community Action Centers Food Bank
- National Reading Day

Social Activities

Students have opportunities for face-to-face social activities outside of school. Students enjoy their Mountain Heights experience and are the school’s primary advocates. Often commenting that they are friends with people they otherwise would never have met, students value the social opportunities. Mountain Heights Academy provides:

- Boondocks School Birthday Party
- Back to School Barbeque
- Lagoon Frightmares
- Classic Skate
- STEM Fest
- ACT Prep Bootcamp
- Prom at the Capitol
- End of Year Gala
- Spirit Week
- #YouAreAwesome Week
- Applied Technology Tours
- Suicide Awareness & Prevention Week
- College Campus Tours
- Girl Talk
- History Fair/Competition
- Leonardo Museum
- Club Activities
- Student Success Groups
- Anxiety Busters Groups
Leadership Opportunities

At Mountain Heights Academy, students have many opportunities for leadership, including National Honor and Junior Honor Society Chapters, Class Senators, Student Body Officers, and Peer Mentors. Additionally, there are a variety of clubs–Art Club, Chess Club, Health and Fitness Club, World Language Club, History Club, Math Club, Music Club, FCCLA and Creativity Club–that students enjoy participating in through service activities and leadership.

Parental Involvement

All parents belong to the Mountain Heights Academy Parent Organization and many volunteer their time to assist with fundraising and monthly school activities such as fieldtrips, social outings, and extra-curricular events throughout the school year.
**Academic Highlights**

**School Accountability**

Mountain Heights Academy has continued a path of an upward trajectory for the last three years in the number of points earned for school accountability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Accountability points earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SAGE Test Scores**

Utah students take assessment tests each spring. Mountain Heights Academy students have traditionally performed well on state tests, and the school is consistently the top-ranked online school in the state. In 2018, 71% of students opted out of the test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>MHA</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>MHA</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>MHA</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>MHA</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>MHA</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Course Passing Rates**

Mountain Heights Academy implements a high-touch, high-tech teaching model by employing full-time certified teachers to work individually with students when they ask for help, and to reach out to struggling students to offer assistance, which translates to more students passing their courses.

Mountain Heights Academy is dedicated to providing an academically rich experience for all of its students.
Devoted, accredited teachers create a custom learning environment tailored to allow each student to succeed. Teachers design lessons that students can complete throughout the week in order to absorb the lesson at their own pace, fast or slow. From there, students complete their weekly work with personal teacher interactions available via video chat, email, text, live study sessions, or phone as needed.


Eligible high school juniors and seniors can participate in concurrent enrollment to earn both university and high school credit through Weber State University and Salt Lake Community College.

Because of Mountain Heights Academy’s groundbreaking approach to personalized learning, the school frequently hosts visitors from across the country and around the world. To date, Mountain Heights has hosted international guests from 31 countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>100-90%</th>
<th>89-80%</th>
<th>79-70%</th>
<th>69-60%</th>
<th>59-0%</th>
<th>Pass Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health / PE</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Averages</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We Believe

• That all students should have an education tailored to their specific needs, regardless of ability or disability.

• That we will prepare our students for the modern, technology-driven world.

• That service learning, ethics, and community involvement are vital to student achievement.

• That students, parents, and teachers are all part of the educational team.

• In a flexible, constantly evolving curriculum based on best practices and current research.

• In personal responsibility and self-advocacy.

• In sharing our open education resources with students, parents, and teachers alike across the world.
Testimonials

Preparation for life

Since starting Mountain Heights Academy, I now have a lot more time to do the things I love most like spending time with my family and cooking. I also love the flexibility I have with Mountain Heights because it holds me responsible for what I do with my time, which will help me greatly when I am an adult.

He finally found success

My son was struggling in Middle School. The environment was bad, the teachers didn't seem to care, and his grades showed it. Halfway through the year, desperate for another option, I moved my son to Mountain Heights Academy. In the 6 months he has been with Mountain Heights, his grades have come from C's, D's and F's to straight A's. He is happier. He is more confident. And he is learning more than he was in his previous school. Seeing him succeed tells me we made the right choice.

Finding counselors who care

My counselor has been a life-saver. She is so understanding, intelligent, efficient, and comprehensive. Mountain Heights Academy makes online learning more effective with a user-friendly online software and learning environments.

The flexibility has helped students enjoy school

I like that I can do my school work anywhere and any time of day. It has been helpful to go at my own pace. I can take a break if I need to and I can also go back and review things I need to remember. One of the best things has been keeping track of my school work online. I never lose an assignment and it is easy to see what is missing or where I need to raise my grade. Last of all, my teachers have been awesome. They are always there to chat or answer questions. They are very encouraging. I feel like I have learned a lot this year and I have enjoyed school too!

Student became more responsible

I wanted to take a minute and say thank you to the wonderful teachers and staff of Mountain Heights. My child spent two years with you becoming a better student and learning to be responsible for his own education. Thank you so much for investing in him and maintaining an amazing commitment to your students.

Student finds caring teachers at Mountain Heights Academy

I don't even know where to begin. The two little words of thank you are not big enough. When we left the office a couple weeks ago, he told me, 'Mom, this is the first time I have ever felt like a school or my teachers have really cared about me'.
Administration and Faculty

2018

SETDA Student Voices Winner

Best of State, K-12 Online School

eCybermission, 1st, 2nd Place Utah

Sara Layton, National Humanities Center Teacher Advisory Council

Open Pedagogy Award, Open Education Global Consortium

2017

Jenni Klein, Drive2Teach Fellowship

Madison Kingsford, USDLA, Excellence in Distance Learning Teaching Award

Sara Layton, Utah’s PBS Digital Innovator

eCybermission, 2nd Place Utah Team

Best of State, K-12 Online School, Curriculum

2016

Jenna Ellis, USDLA, Best Teaching Practices Platinum Award

Crystal VanAusdal, Utah Coalition of Education Technology, Outstanding Educator

Best of State – K-12 Online School, Charter School, Curriculum Development

Open Education Consortium International Award of Excellence – Outstanding Course

2015

Carrie Jones, USDLA, Excellence in Distance Learning Teaching Gold Award

Best of State – K-12 Online School

Open Education Consortium International Award of Excellence – Outstanding Course and Website

Board of Directors – Utah Association of Public Charter Schools “Board of the Year” Award
2014

DeLaina Tonks, Best of State – Principal, Utah Business's “30 Women to Watch” Award

Annie Swinton, Math for America Fellowship Winner, USDLA, Excellence in Distance Learning Teaching Bronze Award

Sara Layton, Utah Charter School Teacher of the Year

Melissa Hesterman, LearnZillion DreamTeam Winner

Ashley Webb, USDLA, Excellence in Distance Learning Teaching Silver Award

Amy Pace, National PBS Learning Media Digital Innovators Award

2013

Ashley Webb, Utah Coalition of Education Technology, Outstanding Young Educator Award

Sara Layton, Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education, Fellow

Ashley Webb, one of six International Society for Technology in Education Emerging Leader Award

Sara Layton, American Board Certification for Teacher Education, Utah Teacher of the Year

2012

Emily Andersen, Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education, Fellow

DeLaina Tonks, Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education, Fellow

Amy Pace, Governor's Medal of STEM Excellence Winner

2011

Laura Bishop, USDLA, Excellence in Distance Learning Teaching Silver Award

Amy Pace, Top Five Online Teachers in the nation

2010

Amy Pace, Presidential STEM Award Winner

Sarah Weston, Charter Educator of the Year, the first online instructor to receive this award
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Mountain Heights Academy

It works for me.
We use innovative technology, service learning, student-centered instruction, and personal responsibility to empower students to succeed.