



Sunrise Mountain High School

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(702) 799-7207 FAX (702) 799-7212

Julia T. Llapur - Principal

August 2018

Greetings,

My name is Julia Llapur and I am the principal of Sunrise Mountain High School (SMHS). As we begin the 2018-2019 school year, I want you to be assured that I am even more committed to giving the students at SMHS every opportunity to succeed. I have assembled a committed staff that truly cares about our students. I have selected a positive and supportive administrative team, and I have tapped every possible resource to provide the needed academic and athletic supplies, textbooks, and technology needs.

I would like to share a brief history of the struggles Sunrise Mountain has faced over the past several years. When we began the Turnaround journey 6 years ago, SMHS was looking at being labeled the lowest performing high school in the state of Nevada. Our graduation data showed that we had only graduated 47% of our students in 2013. The culture of our school was less than positive. Students were not engaged in learning, did not feel a connection or pride in their school, and the overall attitude of the school was one of hopelessness. That is no longer the case at Sunrise Mountain High School. In the past five years, we have shown amazing growth. This growth, that I always knew was possible, occurred because we focused on what needed to be done. Therefore, it is my task, as principal, to ensure that this growth continues.

School Improvement can be broken down into four areas of critical importance. A school must create and sustain a focus on student learning, a focus on continual school improvement, building productive relationships, and finally, structures. Our primary focus during our first year of Turnaround, was to build effective structures and positive, productive relationships. Structures needed to be put in place to deal with student discipline, teacher/staff behavior and effectiveness, use of time, supervision (both classroom and extra-curricular), curricular offerings and expectations, and working with ELL students. During the past five years, our focus was to sustain those positive structures and supports, while continuing to build relationships, and to focus on student learning and continuous improvement. This year's focus is not only to sustain all of those elements that proved to have a positive effect on our school but to continue to examine our practices so that we can go from a good school to a great school!



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In just five years, the graduation rate has gone from 47% to 61% to 67% to 76% to 91% and preliminary data indicates that our graduation rate for the 2017-2018 school year is well over 90%! To continue on this positive trajectory, it is essential the administration, teachers, and staff continue to focus on continuous school improvement. To me this comes down to a focus on three things in particular. Early intervention and remediation is needed for the 9th and 10th grade students. This year, all students enrolled in English 10, Algebra I, Geometry, and Biology will have to take an End of Course exam in these subjects as a graduation requirement. Too often we wait until students fail these exams before we intervene. We need to be better at looking at the middle school data to determine the students in need of remediation before they enter high school. Second, we need to focus on continuous improvement of instruction. Teachers will be engaged in professional development, collaboration, and mentoring to ensure that your child is receiving the highest quality of instruction. Lastly, students who are credit deficient must be given opportunities during the school day to make up credits. The district has a variety of ways to make this happen. We have chosen at SMHS to implement our own credit retrieval program – enabling students to “catch up” during the school day. Students make up credits during a scheduled lab period. This is critical to keeping students on track for graduation – too much time is spent playing catch up during a student’s junior and senior year. Early, specific, and prescriptive interventions are critical.

I have seen amazing results these past five years. There is clearly a sense of urgency that had been lacking. We are focused on staff and community buy-in, a redefined vision and focus on learning. I am convinced this school will continue to show dramatic improvement and be the pride of our east-side community.

With the help of committed parents, we can reach our goals more quickly and efficiently. I ask that you support the work being done on behalf of your children at Sunrise Mountain HS. Together – Administrators, Teachers, Staff, Parents, and Community – we can do great things for the students at SMHS.

Sincerely,

Julia T. Llapur