

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Sunrise Academy
65 North 1150 West
Hurricane, Utah 84737**

November 9, 2012



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

Sunrise Academy
65 North 1150 West
Hurricane, UT 84737

November 9, 2012

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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FOREWORD

The purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase the quality of instruction and student achievement. In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes in a three-step evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, November 9, 2012, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Sunrise Academy is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Katherine Whittekiend is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Sunrise Academy and for their professional attitude, which made it possible for them to see weaknesses and strengths and to suggest procedures for improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is most important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Sunrise Academy.

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of Public Instruction

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*Board of Regents Appointments

*** CMAC Representative Appointment

*****Charter School Representative Appointment

**UCAT Representative

****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment

SUNRISE RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER (RTC)

OWNERSHIP

Owner of Record..... InnerChange

DIRECTORS

David Prior..... Executive Director
Corey Hickman..... Residential Life Director
Jack Hinman..... Clinical Director
Emily Phillips..... Admissions Director

SUNRISE ACADEMY

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Katherine Whittekind, Principal

Support Staff

Kim Smith
Heather Black

Faculty

Jacob Grimm
Elizabeth Hess
Krista Nugent

SUNRISE RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER

MISSION STATEMENT

At Sunrise Academy, our mission is:

- to provide each student a diverse education that facilitates lasting change in girls and their families in a safe, supportive environment;
- to serve the unique academic needs of students who are in a special and critical period of their lives; and
- to assist the students in developing skills to become independent and self-sufficient adults who will succeed and contribute responsibly in a global community.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

At Sunrise Academy, the teachers, administrators, and other personnel believe that:

- Every student has a right to learn;
- Students share the responsibility of their learning;
- Individual learning styles are addressed so that all may experience success;
- An emotionally safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

1. Thinking and Reasoning
2. Social and Civic Responsibility
3. Learning-to-Learn

Date of visit: November 9, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Robert Stillwell, Consultant, Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), Team
Chair

Joette Hayden, Academic Director, Falcon Ridge RTC, Virgin, UT

Kathleen Wagner, Counselor, Millcreek High School, Washington School District

Reeve Knighton, Assistant Principal, Diamond Ranch Academy, Hurricane, UT

VISITING TEAM REPORT

SUNRISE ACADEMY

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Sunrise Academy is the educational component of Sunrise Residential Treatment Center in Hurricane, Utah. The center serves girls ages twelve through eighteen. The girls are placed in Sunrise for treatment of emotional and behavioral disorders. The center has been in operation since 2002 and currently is licensed for 36 residents.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The school has progressed in defining its desired results for student learning. The addition of a separate school building has enhanced the school environment.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

The school profile for the 2012 self-study was more thorough than for the 2010 self-study. There is still room for improvement in developing school-wide assessments.

c) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The 2012 self-study was honest and complete.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

See Recommendations below.

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION (NORTHWEST) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs):

a) *To what degree were the school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs developed and/or revised collaboratively by the school community to define a compelling purpose and vision for the school and to support student achievement?*

In speaking with the academic staff at Sunrise, it is clear that an effort has been made to involve input from teachers and administrators within the facility. Input was obtained through surveys and staff collaboration. DRSLs for social and civic

responsibility, thinking and reasoning and life-long learning were chosen to be areas of focus.

- b) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's DRSLs?*

The school's mission and beliefs were reviewed over the past year, and they show a commitment to student learning and achievement. The belief statements focus on student responsibility, cooperation, communication within the school community, and the continuous improvement of staff and instruction.

- c) *Describe the indicators (measures) that have been developed to assess the school's progress in assessing the DRSLs.*

There is good information in the school profile. Other sections of the self-study describe measures used to monitor progress and growth. Assessments are school-wide.

- d) *To what extent do the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school, and appear evident in the culture of the school?*

The school's mission, beliefs and DRSLs have been used to develop a comprehensive school improvement plan. Evidence is provided throughout the self-study that goals are being met.

Curriculum:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards, the Utah Core Curriculum, reflecting the Utah Life Skills: A Guide to Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Success?*

Sunrise Academy demonstrated alignment with Utah Core Curriculum. A full range of courses reflect the requirements and standards based on each core area. There is a good balance of direct instruction and independent study.

- b) *To what extent does the curriculum engage all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills?*

The curriculum is engaging and requires problem solving and higher-order thinking skills. It is notable that additional learning activities such as field trips and community service are provided.

- c) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's DRSLs?*

Ample collaboration was evident among school staff. DRSL progress is correlated with exit surveys. More data should be collected on student progress. Additional

testing is advised. The sense of caring and concern for each student is clear. A longitudinal study could provide evidence of the program's long-term success.

- d) *How does the staff use assessments to drive curriculum to ensure that all students can reach the intended learning outcomes?*

Teacher assessments of progress in coursework are strong. There has been no trend data collected to look at long-term growth.

Instruction:

- a) *To what extent do teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning?*

A variety of strategies were observed. Small group instruction, direct teaching, independent study time and group discussion are used by all teachers.

- b) *To what extent have the school and the staff developed strategies for instruction that build the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom?*

Each department has discussed and developed strategies for instruction that support the DRSLs. There is a direct link between the DRSLs and the program's level system, which encourages responsibility and accountability for individual student work.

- c) *To what extent is the school's professional development program guided by identified instructional needs, and how does it provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies that support student learning?*

A formal professional development plan was not observed. Individual teachers have obtained professional development to facilitate licensing needs and enhance their teaching. Effective classroom management and organization strategies are used to maximize students' engaged academic time. This has created a positive academic learning climate.

- d) *To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?*

The school has made an ongoing commitment to assure all teachers are properly licensed. Quality instruction was seen in all classrooms. Varied instructional approaches designed to meet the individual needs of students were observed.

- e) *To what extent does the school effectively implement a well-defined plan for the integration of technology into its curriculum, instruction, and assessments?*

The school has a functional student computer lab that is used for individual student learning activities and classroom instruction. Computer availability is currently

adequate. Further integration of technology into the classroom is encouraged and could be incorporated in the professional development plan.

Assessment:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments with performance standards based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

No formalized assessment or testing is in place to monitor students' academic learning. ACT and SAT prep and testing are available to students when appropriate. There is an adequate level of mastery learning expected, and students have extra time for re-learning as needed.

- b) *To what extent does the school have a process to fairly and equitably assess school-wide and individual progress in achieving academic expectations?*

Some data was presented from PSAT, ACT and SAT testing. The grading expectations for classes are clearly stated. The school has yet to analyze performance data to drive achievement or increase effective teaching.

- c) *To what extent does the professional staff use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its academic expectations?*

The faculty is devoted to the success of the school and the success of each student. There is room for improvement in their use of data.

- d) *To what extent does the school's professional development program allow for opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies?*

Teachers at Sunrise participate in some individual professional development but are not working from a plan for the staff as a whole. It will be useful for the school to develop a plan for ongoing professional development to allow teachers time for collaboration and discussion of school-wide assessments.

- e) *To what extent is there organizational agreement on the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess the identified DRSL?*

Progress has been made since the last visit. The school has shown positive growth in its tracking and assessing DRSLs. Discussion is underway to find and agree upon scoring tools.

CHAPTER 3: NORTHWEST SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate that actively supports teaching and learning?*

Sunrise Academy operates school in a newly remodeled building that provides ample comfortable learning space for the four core areas of math, science, English, and history, in addition to a few electives. Each teacher has a designated room, in addition to a common room that is used as a study hall/multi-purpose room. The setting is comfortable and relaxed. The student-teacher interactions are nonthreatening and friendly. And while there is a certain level of necessary formality, because it is independent study, there is also room for informal teaching. Students are given the opportunity to learn through direct instruction, listening exercises, projects, and community service. The environment is well suited to both the teacher and the learner.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative to monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness?*

Sunrise Academy includes its lifelong learning principles as part of its overall level system. As students progress through the levels, they are expected to master the principles of lifelong learning. The leadership of Sunrise Academy has measured the data for student progress through the levels, and has noted a significant majority of students being able to “display and model” the lifelong learning principles at a proficient or mastery level. The administration has been careful to include other stakeholders in the planning and execution of curricular goals. Teachers are able to design instruction, and note a high level of collaboration for learning. Teachers are also encouraged to be lifelong learners by continuing their own education through classes, workshops, and collaboration.

- c) *To what extent does the leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and allocation and use of resources at the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment which aligns with the school goals, DRSLs, and school improvement?*

The Sunrise Academy leadership has carefully designed an environment that is safe, friendly, and conducive to learning. Students are empowered, through the setting and the staff, to engage in the learning process. The desired results for student learning are posted prominently in multiple locations throughout the learning environment, including in every classroom. Teachers demonstrate that they are knowledgeable regarding the school’s goals and objectives, and it appears that they have taken an active role in ensuring that students work within the framework of the DRSLs.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the entire school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning through meaningful roles in the decision-making process?*

The inclusion of administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and students in the school improvement process demonstrates a commitment to shared responsibility for student progress at Sunrise Academy. Each core teacher/department appears to play a significant role in the collaborative, creative process of the school. The administration and faculty demonstrate mutual respect and cohesion throughout the school day.

- e) *To what extent has the school established a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning?*

At Sunrise Academy, the power of personal relationships is displayed in the interaction of the faculty with the student population. Due to the unique size and framework of the school, teachers are enabled to really get to know their students. Aside from observation-based evidence, two vehicles that are systematically used to empower teachers' knowledge of their students are a learning styles inventory that is given to all students as part of their progressive level work and summaries of IEP documents for students with special needs. These tools are available to classroom teachers and provide valuable information about how to better reach and relate with the students so that meaningful connections can be made and relationships forged.

School Services:

This standard is dealt with in the school's NWAC Annual Report, which requires specific responses and information regarding student support services, guidance services, health services, library information services, special education services, and family and community services.

Facilities and Finances:

This standard is addressed in the school's annual report to Northwest, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

- a) *To what extent has the school developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using Collaborating for Student Achievement, the Utah*

accreditation/school improvement process, that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis?

Sunrise Academy has developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using *Collaborating for Student Achievement* that includes the school's mission and belief statements, a school profile, and a shared vision for student learning and united focus to improve academic excellence by incorporating the school's DRSLs in its "levels" requirement system. Sunrise Academy has updated its action plan to coordinate with each of the DRSLs, and added new indicators to focus further improvement. The school has included performance indicators that connect with each of the DRSLs, with measurements that can be displayed in the school's data collection.

b) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through an aligned and ongoing professional development plan focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Sunrise Academy has aligned its professional development in a variety of ways to focus on its goals for improvement. To address the variety of student learning needs, teachers receive ongoing training in the area of special education student needs so teachers understand how to work with students who have autism, ADHD, or other needs. Teachers are provided with student-specific IEP or Section 504 accommodations to meet the instructional needs of the student. The principal continually provides professional articles for teachers to read and learn from, and teachers feel that these have been a great help to them. Additionally, the principal keeps teachers informed of upcoming professional conferences and encourages them to participate and provides for their registration fees to attend. Examples of outside trainings have included "Choices Training," "Reading Across the Curriculum" and online options. The faculty meets weekly to collaborate as professionals. Teachers feel supported in the selection of professional development, since it is driven by teacher need. They are able to discuss the results of the different strategies they have researched and how each has affected student performance.

c) *To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

Sunrise Academy's action plan is integrated with each of its DRSLs, including student achievement. Goal statements are clear, indicators have been identified, and a thorough outline of specific plan steps has been made in each DRSL area, including evidence of need, timeline, responsible persons, resources needed and how assessment/evaluation will be completed to show what progress has been made. Some areas of the action plan have been part of the school focus since the last self-study evaluation and continue to be successful. Two new indicators have been added to focus on over the next years in the action plan. Specific classroom behaviors and self-evaluations by students will be emphasized.

- d) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

Sunrise Academy has created conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement. This can be seen through the development and implementation of the educational levels component as the school has focused more directly on teaching and measuring DRSLs. Rubrics have been developed in each DRSL area and identify indicators as well as how measurement/assessment will take place. Additionally, each department has completed an analysis using essential questions to demonstrate its efforts toward continuous improvement. Included in the analyses were each department's areas of strength and recommendations for growth.

- e) *What significant progress has been made in implementing the original action plan since the last full visit?*

The program opened a separate school location. This space was specifically designed to house the school component of Sunrise, and contains classrooms, a multi-purpose/dining area and offices. In addition to the positive physical changes, the school has also developed and is measuring student progress on desired results for student learning.

- f) *What significant progress has the school made in addressing the major recommendations of the previous Visiting Team and/or review team?*

The 2012 self-study was complete and contained appropriate data related to student learning. Specifically, teachers participated in departmental analyses.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

There is clear integration between the therapeutic and education aspects of the program. Success in treatment is not possible without cooperation and progress in school.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The students' behaviors and attitudes are monitored daily and teamed weekly.

- c) *To what extent has the school engaged the school community in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

Much progress has been noted in the three years since the last visit. The inclusion of the departmental analyses involved teachers in a meaningful way.

- d) *How are results of school improvement identified, documented, used, and communicated to all stakeholders?*

Parents are the main stakeholders outside the school who benefit from the nearly constant communication about how their children are progressing.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Sunrise Academy for the opening of the new education center. The design and construction provide a positive learning environment.
- The Visiting Team commends Sunrise Academy for the integration of the level system from the therapeutic program with progress in the school.
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty of Sunrise Academy for the care and commitment the school is providing each student.
- The Visiting Team commends Sunrise Academy for the educational leadership of Katherine Whittekind.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Sunrise Academy develop school-wide assessments to show student gains in academic levels. Some measure of academic proficiency pre- and post time in the school for each student is advised.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Sunrise Academy more fully develop the continuum of special education services it provides for its students who have need of such services.