



For Immediate Release

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Sunrise Mountain High School students win national aviation competition

Students will have the opportunity to work with engineers and technicians to build a plane

LAS VEGAS – Four Sunrise Mountain High School students, their teacher and two advisors will soon be winging their way to Washington state on an all-expense paid trip for two weeks to help build an airplane as a result of winning a nationwide STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) competition.

The contest was sponsored by the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) and other aerospace companies, and consisted of students building and flying a virtual airplane. In addition to being scored on their design and flying skills, students were also rated on how much payload their plane could carry, the fuel burn and flight time for a specific mission. The competition was narrowed down to a list of finalists from 79 high school teams representing 33 states and the District of Columbia.

The Sunrise Mountain High School's team "FORMULA-X" won first place in the competition by a wide margin.

In announcing the FORMULA-X as the winner, Steve Taylor, president of Boeing Business Jets and GAMA Chairman, said that the team's design was impressive and he also stated that one of the goals of the contest is to promote STEM education among high school students in the United States.

The winning team, consisting of Carlos Alvarado, Joshua Carlson, Kenny Ellis and Jose Rodriguez, along with their teacher, Thitiya Pathakkinang, and team advisor, Reza Karamooz, was watching the announcement via webcast in Principal Grant Hanevold's office. When the announcement was made the students were shocked, but then clapped, cheered and hugged each other as the reality of winning the contest set in.

"This was a well-deserved victory for countless hours spent after school and on weekends," said Hanevold. "The opportunity to work alongside engineers to build a plane will be a life-changing experience for these students. I am grateful for their advisors and I am beaming with pride for Sunrise Mountain High School.

The students and advisors put in countless hours after school working on their project according to Pathakkinang.

"Winning the competition means so much to us. Our two advisors, Karamooz, president of the Nevada Business Aviation Association, and John Kanuch, an United States Air Force F-16 test pilot, are both engineers and set the high goal of not only winning the competition, but winning by a big margin," said Pathakkinang. "I hope that this great accomplishment brings excitement and pride to the students involved and that it also inspires future students to participate in such competitions later on. I truly believe that the lives of these students have changed forever," she said.

To learn more about the Clark County School District, visit ccsd.net.

(Editor's note: The students will be making a presentation on Wednesday, May 21, beginning at 8 a.m. to the Nevada Business Aviation Association (NVBAA). At that time, there will be a surprise award presentation to the students and their teacher. The presentation is not open to the public, but members of the media are invited to attend and will have the opportunity for interviews with the students, teacher, NVBAA representatives and the school principal. The presentation will take place at the Aviation Institute of Maintenance, located at 5870 S. Eastern Avenue, Las Vegas. The on-site contact will be Sunrise Mountain High School Principal Grant Hanevold.)

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