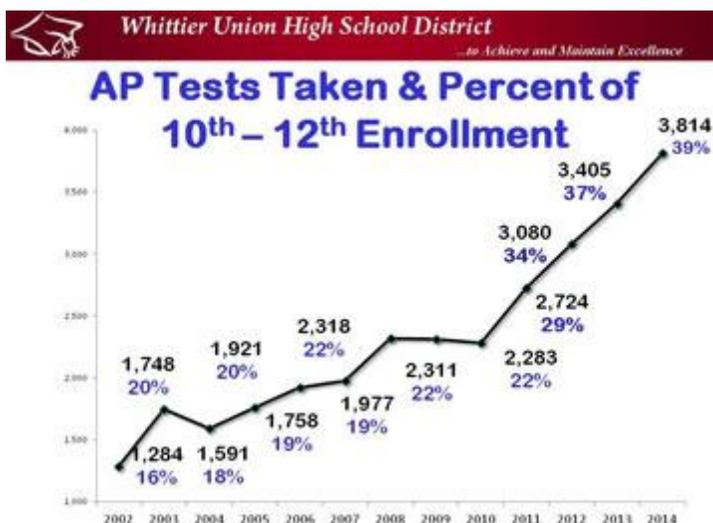


Whittier Union High School District

Serving the communities of Whittier, Santa Fe Springs and portions of Norwalk, La Mirada, and La Habra Heights

October 2014

A Legacy of Excellence



Whittier Union's Academic Achievement Continues to Rise

Students at the Whittier Union High School District continue to raise the bar for college- and career-readiness, with the latest state data showing more students than ever taking Advanced Placement exams, passing the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) and narrowing the achievement gap.

Students in grades 10 through 12 took a record-breaking 3,814 AP exams in 2013–14, according to the latest District figures. That's up 12 percent in just one year and almost double the number in 2008.

Similarly remarkable advances were made by 10th-graders taking the CAHSEE, where 87 percent passed in English language arts and 91 percent passed in math – handily topping Los Angeles County and statewide averages. CAHSEE scores also demonstrate a steady closing of the achievement gap at Whittier Union.

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Note to Readers

Whittier Union High School District is committed to ongoing communication with its parents, community, and staff. E-newsletters such as this provide an efficient and cost-effective means of sharing news about our District. Each e-newsletter will also be posted on the District web site: www.wuhsd.org/newsletter. We hope you enjoy the newsletter and we welcome your feedback. You can email your comments and feedback to comments@wuhsd.org.

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Superintendent's Message



We have completed the first quarter of the 2014–15 school year, and, as you will read about in this newsletter, we have already celebrated milestones and successes that reflect the Whittier Union High School District's commitment to providing high-quality programs and an academically rigorous

education for our students.

The California Department of Education recently released the latest academic achievement data for Whittier Union, and I'm pleased to tell you that our students' test scores on the California High School Exit Exam have continued to make remarkable advances over the years and this year was no exception.

Additionally, we have further narrowed the achievement gap, increased the number of students taking Advanced Placement exams and ensured that students are on target for graduation.

There is no doubt that our teachers, staff and administrators have played a vital role in sustaining our students' outstanding academic growth for the past 12 years. This year we celebrated one of our District's cornerstone programs responsible for our longtime tradition of student achievement: the Horizons program.

On September 16, we commemorated the 50th anniversary of Horizons, which has served to help our students in the way of academic support and college preparedness, and honored the man responsible for its creation, Dr. Henry M. Ramirez.

We also welcomed fresh new faces for Freshman First Day at all of our comprehensive high schools, had an impressive turnout at our annual WUHSD College Fair, with more than 2,000 students attending eager to prepare for college, and welcomed back one of our beloved students, Mason Tellez, who is doing remarkably well despite the long recovery he has ahead.

While we have experienced some thrilling highlights at Whittier Union thus far, we have much work ahead of us.

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As you know, last year the Board of Trustees adopted our Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), a three-year spending plan that has enabled us to create several programs and add teaching and counseling positions that are consistent with our vision of improving student learning and providing increased support to our students.

In our commitment to better serving our students, we will begin the process of revising our LCAP through a series of meetings with our parents, students, teachers and staff, and community members. Whittier Union's successes have been built on a foundation of an inclusive and collaborative culture. I encourage you all to attend these meetings and provide your much valued input.

The first LCAP Advisory Committee meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Oct. 22 in the District Board Room.

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Sandra Thorstenson
Superintendent

Loring Davies
Assistant Superintendent,
Educational Services

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Whittier Union Celebrates 50th Anniversary of the Horizons Program



In celebration of its longtime tradition of student achievement, the Whittier Union High School District commemorated the 50th anniversary of its esteemed Horizons program, founded in 1964 by educator Dr. Henry M. Ramirez in an effort to close the opportunity gap and catapult students to success.

Since its formation at Whittier High School 50 years ago, the Horizons program has offered academic support, career and college-preparatory

advisement, and numerous educational and enrichment services to students across the District to ensure they succeed and flourish in a 21st century world.

The District held an anniversary celebration for the pioneering program on Sept. 16.

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California High School Welcomes Freshmen with Song and Dance



California High School gave the new freshman class a cheerful welcome to their first day of high school when students debuted a music video inspired by the Pharrell Williams' song, "Happy," aimed at promoting the school's Condor PRIDE model and helping the nearly 750 incoming ninth-graders feel right at home.

Nearly 150 Cal High Condors helped create the video over the summer break and wrote lyrics encouraging students to embrace campus PRIDE. Students then staged an impromptu flash mob

performance of their song and dance in the campus quad.

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Whittier High School Welcomes Back Beloved Cross Country Student Mason Tellez



Whittier High School student Mason Tellez got a resounding Cardinal welcome from his peers, teachers and friends when he returned to the campus for the first time since recovering from a devastating health event that at one point left him unable to walk or talk.

With the help of his parents, chants and cheers from the audience, and a standing ovation from the more than 2,400 students and staff members at Whittier High, on Aug. 29, Mason walked across the stage of the Vic Lopez Auditorium on his own and gave a heartfelt "thank you" to his Cardinal

family.

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Frontier High School Teacher Denise Gimenez Honored as 2014–15 Teacher of the Year



From the time she began tutoring small children when she was just a fifth-grade student, Denise Gimenez knew she was meant to be an educator, eventually finding the place where she would build her passion at Whittier Union.

Gimenez has been teaching at the District for the last 30 years, excelling as a special education teacher at La Serna and Frontier high schools and various other teaching assignments.

The Frontier High School teacher's devotion and enthusiasm for educating has come full circle as she was named the Whittier Union High School District Teacher of the Year for 2014–15.

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Pioneer High Welcomes New Assistant Principal as 30 New Teachers Join Whittier Union



Pioneer High School has a new assistant principal of curriculum at the helm, Steve Rodriguez, a former administrator at El Rancho Unified with more than 15 years in education.

The addition of Rodriguez comes on the heels of the Whittier Union High School District hiring 30 new teachers – the largest number of educators the District has hired in a single school year since 2007, ensuring that it meets its commitment to reducing class sizes and adding more sections.

The additional staff members are a result of the District's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), a spending plan that calls for reduced class sizes and more counselors, among other programs.

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Santa Fe High School Students Enjoy New Classroom Building



Santa Fe High School students returned from their summer break to find a new addition to their campus: a new building comprised of three classrooms, a conference room and modern furniture that houses some of the programs and services available for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

The pre-fabricated building, located in the center of campus, replaced the former N building, which has been in place for more than 20 years.

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WUHSD College Fair at La Serna High Attracts More than 2,000 Students



More than 2,000 students and their parents attended the Whittier Union High School District's College Fair at La Serna High School, where they took advantage of the opportunity to meet with dozens of college representatives and get first-hand information about the college application process.

Colleges and universities present at the fair included Whittier College, UC Berkeley, Cal State Fullerton, Azusa Pacific University and USC, among others.

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District programs, activities and practices shall be free from discrimination based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, or genetic information; the perception of one or more of such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.