



## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Whittier Union Partnerships Boost Parent Engagement for Successful Student Outcomes

**WHITTIER** – For the last 17 years, Whittier Union High School District has partnered with the Hispanic Outreach Taskforce (HOT) to provide students with financial, emotional and academic support to reach their goals, while engaging and empowering parents to support their children throughout their journeys.

HOT, founded in 1990, provides many needed resources to Whittier-area students and their parents by collaborating with community agencies and local school districts to organize backpack giveaways, cultural performances, workshops and fundraisers to support scholarship opportunities. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for the Whittier community through programs that promote education, health, economic development, financial literacy and the cultural arts.

Most recently, it held its 17th annual Parent Education Conference, a daylong event that hosted more than 300 parents from across its K-12 school district partners, including Whittier Union.

“As educators and community members, we aim to create an environment that is safe, nurturing and educational so that our families have the best resources available,” said Lilia Torres-Cooper, Whittier Union’s director of federal and state categorical programs. “We want our students and their parents to know where they can receive academic and social/emotional support to succeed in school, graduate, and compete in college and careers.”

In collaboration with Whittier Union, Whittier City, East Whittier, South Whittier, Little Lake City, El Rancho and Montebello unified school districts, HOT provides parents with information on college admissions, financial aid, bullying, philanthropy, academic success and strong parent-child relationships.

The Parent Education Conference, held in October, featured English and Spanish-language workshops on dual language education, understanding adolescent development, the new California Dashboard accountability system, college preparation programs for students, financial aid, nutrition and more.

“As partner districts, we have promoted parent engagement long before it became a state priority because we know how critical parents are to their child’s success,” said Torres-Cooper, who sits on the HOT Board of Directors. “We work collaboratively year-round and are fortunate to have partners in Whittier College and Rio Hondo College, who are just as passionate about helping parents and students navigate what is sometimes perceived as the intimidating world of higher education.”

Torres-Cooper said the District's collaboration efforts with other school districts, college and nonprofit organizations are essential to helping students become well-rounded and informed, while ensuring parents have the tools to approach difficult topics such as drug abuse or behavioral issues.

"Whittier Union has long been dedicated to engaging parents in their child's education and supporting their efforts to understand what might be impacting their success," Superintendent Martin Plourde said. "Our innovative partnership with our area school districts, colleges and the Hispanic Outreach Taskforce ensures that students and parents have the resources they need to succeed."

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**121917\_WUHSD\_HOT1:** Students from the Whittier City School District's Phelan Language Academy perform at the Hispanic Outreach Taskforce's 17th annual Parent Education Conference in October. These students are poised to be future Seal of Biliteracy Award recipients at the Whittier Union High School District, demonstrating their preparation and skills as dual language students.

**121917\_WUHSD\_HOT2:** Whittier Union's Victoria Cuevas, director of Expanded Horizons at Pioneer High School, discusses college admissions during a parent workshop at the Hispanic Outreach Taskforce's 17th annual Parent Education Conference, which gathered more than 300 parents from several area school districts to learn how to help their children succeed.

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*The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.*

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