



Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 22, 2024 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Santa Fe High School Senior Overcomes Adversity, Receives Award of Merit Recognition

WHITTIER – Santa Fe High School senior Ezra Tetteh learned how to advocate for herself at an early age. Born in Gabon, Africa, Tetteh moved with her family to the United States in 2015, settling in Houston, Texas. As a native French speaker with no English language skills, Tetteh realized that she would need to stay focused if she wanted to earn an education, as her family continually relocated over the next several years.

Coming to Santa Fe High as a freshman, Tetteh began taking classes designed for English learners, quickly moving on to Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in her sophomore year. With a 3.31 GPA, Tetteh is on track to complete her A-G course requirements and attend a four-year university in the fall.

Tetteh has had continual academic success while at Santa Fe High, where she has relied on her school family, especially social worker Sofia Lupian-Hernandez and counselor Melanie Lopez, to encourage her and see her through the hard times.

For her resilience and ability to overcome adversity, Tetteh was presented with an Award of Merit by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees during its Jan. 16 meeting.

“Through the efforts of Mrs. Lopez, Mrs. Lupian-Hernandez and many wonderful people at Santa Fe High, I was able to keep going at a time when I felt as though I would never escape,” Tetteh said. “The Santa Fe community has done nothing but welcome me and treat me with fondness. There is a tremendous culture at Santa Fe, one that makes you feel welcomed, at home, secure and, most importantly, loved.”

Tetteh has fully immersed herself in Chieftain campus life as a member of the dance team, French club and track & field squad. Tetteh is also known for her humor and work ethic, with strong interests in anthropology and fashion design.

Santa Fe High principal Craig Campbell presented Tetteh to the Board of Trustees, and shared statements from Santa Fe faculty and staff that praised Tetteh’s resolve and classroom achievements.

French teacher Isabelle Teraoka met Tetteh when she was a middle school student attending Little Lake City School District, excited to take a French class.

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“Ezra struck me then because she was already advocating for herself and showing how eager she was to learn,” Teraoka said in a statement. “She is a natural leader, is among the first to volunteer, and brings a lot of quirky playfulness and energy to the class. I am truly grateful for her contributions.”

Lupian-Hernandez praised Tetteh for not letting hardships at home keep her from realizing her academic goals. Tetteh also cares for and advocates for her three younger siblings.

“Ezra, take pride in how far you have come. You have transformed your experiences into strength, resilience, empathy and wisdom within you,” Lupian-Hernandez said in a statement. “Your perseverance and resilience are inspirational. Even in the most challenging times, you uplift others with your optimism and humor. Keep pursuing your best, while staying true to who you are.”

Tetteh said she hopes to attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Cal State University, Long Beach or Cal State University, Fullerton and major in anthropology to learn more about evolution and biological anthropology. Tetteh said she also wants to continue to develop as a dancer and work someday as a dance instructor or back-up dancer.

“Ezra’s passion and perseverance set her apart as a leader destined for greatness,” Campbell said. “Her time at Santa Fe has shaped the capable, well-rounded and driven woman we celebrate today. As she spreads her wings to new horizons, we know that her character and spirit have prepared her to soar. Congratulations on all you have achieved so far, Ezra.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

WUHSD_AWARD1: Santa Fe High School senior Ezra Tetteh moved with her family from Gabon, Africa to the United States when she was a child. As a native French speaker with no English language skills, Tetteh has overcome adversity at home to become a top scholar at Santa Fe. Tetteh received an Award of Merit from the Whittier Union Board of Trustees during a Jan. 16 Board meeting.

WUHSD_AWARD2: Santa Fe High School senior Ezra Tetteh celebrates with Santa Fe Principal Craig Campbell during the Jan. 16 Whittier Union Board meeting after receiving an Award of Merit from the Board, commending her resilience and passion for advocacy. Tetteh has a 3.31 GPA and hopes to study anthropology at a Cal State University.

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OUR MISSION:

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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