



Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 07, 2021 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-273-9840

Two Whittier Union Schools Recognized as 2021 California Distinguished Schools

WHITTIER – Whittier Union’s Pioneer High School and La Serna High School have been recognized as 2021 California Distinguished Schools, earning the designation from the California Department of Education (CDE). Pioneer has received the honor for the first time in school history, while La Serna has received the designation for the fifth time.

The California Distinguished School award is the state’s top honor for high-achieving schools, celebrating successes in boosting student achievement, attaining strong graduation rates and fostering college and career resources. Given to 241 middle and high schools this year, the award recognizes schools for their excellent work in achieving exceptional student performance.

“I cannot say enough about the tremendous work Pioneer and La Serna are doing, providing the high-quality instruction our community demands,” Superintendent Martin J. Plourde said. “Congratulations to both schools for their recognition by the CDE. These schools inspire us and set a standard of high expectations.”

Pioneer and La Serna boast graduation rates of 94.6% and 93.2%, respectively, and serve their students through rigorous college and career readiness programs and robust intervention policies.

Pioneer and La Serna both provide an Expanded Horizons program, which offers students advice on how to acquire financial aid, fill out a college application, sharpen computer skills and complete A-G requirements, working with District partners such as Rio Hondo College, Tri-City ROP and Cal State Long Beach’s Cal-SOAP.

Expanded Horizons also provides English learners with resources to boost their academic performance and to assist them in preparing for the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) exam.

Pioneer is an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) National Demonstration School, an honor accorded to only 3% of all AVID programs nationwide. AVID focuses on ensuring underrepresented students have a pathway to higher education.

– MORE –

“We are thrilled to receive this honor. Today we are proud Titans,” Pioneer High Principal Lilia Bozighian said. “Being named a California Distinguished School is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the entire Pioneer family. We are laser-focused on ensuring all students receive equity in education, enabling them to achieve at the highest levels.”

La Serna’s Puente Program is a University of California-sponsored academic program that combines writing, counseling, and mentoring and an interdisciplinary, multicultural curriculum to help students become college eligible.

La Serna offers several career technical education pathways, including the Green and Clean Academy for small business entrepreneurs, the Film and Media Academy for aspiring filmmakers, and the Sports Career Academy for students headed toward sports-oriented career paths.

La Serna’s student leadership component includes the OASIS and HAVEN programs, which assist struggling sophomores and juniors by teaming them with student mentors. Stressing core values such as accountability, respect, and compassion, OASIS and HAVEN have helped improve the lives of La Serna students.

La Serna’s expanded its Leadership activities during the 2019-20 school year by creating two additional ASB classes. Lancer Spirit is an ASB course for sophomore and Lancer Pride is an additional course for juniors and seniors, providing opportunity for school-wide events and campaigns.

“La Serna has a proud tradition of achievement and a strong commitment to providing our Lancers with a pathway to success,” La Serna Principal Griselda Castro said. “This honor recognizes the contributions of La Serna’s amazing faculty and staff, who are proud to serve the Whittier community and help our children to achieve their goals.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

WUHS_PIONEER1: For the first time in school history, Whittier Union’s Pioneer High School been recognized as a 2021 California Distinguished School from the California Department of Education.

WUHS_LASERNA1: Whittier Union’s La Serna High School has been recognized as a 2021 California Distinguished High School, receiving the honor from the California Department of Education for the fifth time.

###

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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Dr. Ralph S. Pacheco
President

Jeff Baird
Clerk

Jaime Lopez
Member

Dr. Russell Castañeda-Calleros
Vice President

Leighton Anderson
Member

Martin Plourde
Superintendent