



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Honors More than 2,800 Class of 2024 Students with Eight Festive Graduation Ceremonies

FONTANA, CA – More than 2,800 students in Fontana Unified School District’s Class of 2024 commemorated their milestone achievement of graduation with a myriad of unique, dynamic celebrations, from fist pumps, selfies on stage, shouts into the crowd, and dances, after they walked across the stage to accept their diplomas during their respective commencements.

Over three days, Fontana Unified hosted eight graduations for its seven high schools and its adult school on May 21 at the Ontario Convention Center and May 22-23 at the Toyota Arena. Each ceremony featured heartfelt speeches on the diversity, perseverance, and capacity for greatness of their schools’ graduates.

The District’s newest class of graduates includes high-achieving students who will further their educations at some of the most prestigious colleges and universities across the country, including UCLA, Cal Berkeley, Stanford, UC Irvine, UC Riverside, Long Beach State, and more. Others will go on to join the armed forces or enter the workforce, pursuing lucrative careers with a head start over many of their peers, thanks to the District’s robust 34 career technical education (CTE) pathways.

"These ceremonies mark the end of a great journey for our FUSD scholars, and I believe in the potential of each one of our graduates," Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "The Class of 2024 has shown extraordinary resilience, dedication, and talent. Their achievements today are just the beginning of what they will accomplish in the future."

Fontana Adult School

Graduations began with Fontana Adult School’s ceremony on May 21 – one that was filled with emotion as four students – Kyle Alarcon, Francisco Salazar, Arlene Villatoro, and Craig Vassell – delivered emotional speeches recounting their journeys of perseverance and determination while celebrating the collective commitment to self-improvement of its graduates.

"Remember this sentiment as you embark on your own journey, your path does not define your future. With the right mindset and the willingness to overcome obstacles you can achieve greatness," said Vassell, who emigrated to the United States from Jamaica and acquired his GED at Fontana Adult School as he pursues a career in cybersecurity. "Let’s carry forward with the lessons learned, the friendships forged, and the dreams that have fueled our aspirations."

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Eric Birch High School

For Eric Birch High, the Class of 2024 proved to be historic, serving as the inaugural class to graduate under the school's first-ever designation as a Model Continuation School, which was earned in February, during its May 21 ceremony.

Graduates Krista Wong, Breisly Gonzalez, and Eric Dubose-Duren expressed gratitude to school staff, friends, and family for their support in their speeches and inspired their fellow Barons for the journey awaiting them.

"Go forth Class of 2024 and shine brightly, the world is waiting for your brilliance, your creativity, and your unique perspective," Dubose-Duren said. "May you find joy in your pursuit of your passions, fulfillment in making a difference, and love in the connections you form along the way."

Citrus High School

Family and friends packed the Ontario Convention Center for Citrus High School's ceremony on May 21. The room was filled with raucous cheers from the crowd, unique celebrations on stage, and emotional speeches from graduates Kaylee Judkins, Delayna Muniz, and Jordi Rubio.

All three speakers focused on how the Jaguars' graduating class overcame obstacles on their path to graduation and encouraged them to persevere in this next stage of life, as well.

"As we each step forward into the unknown, let's do so with the confidence that comes from overcoming," Muniz said. "Let's commit to applying the same level of hard work that got us here today, knowing it will propel us through whatever lies ahead. Go out there and show the world what you're made of."

A.B. Miller High School

A.B. Miller celebrated its collective Rebel spirit in the school's first graduation ceremony with its new Rebel mascot, which was revealed in February, on May 22. Family and friends in attendance came wearing custom clothing or cutouts proudly displaying their graduates.

Valedictorian Emily Montenegro and salutatorian Jason Martinez gave speeches celebrating the milestone achievement of their class. Montenegro will attend Claremont McKenna College to study government, while Martinez will major in electrical engineering at UC Riverside.

"Today we have achieved a remarkable milestone. Tomorrow marks the beginning of our new venture but we have the opportunity and responsibility to create change for the better," Montenegro said. "Wherever life takes you next, always make sure to carry that Rebel spirit in your heart."

Jurupa Hills High School

The camaraderie between Jurupa Hills High's 370-plus graduates and its school's staff and teachers was evident on May 22. Students stopped to high-five, hug, and pose for selfies with their beloved classmates and teachers as they made their way off stage with diplomas in hand.

The Spartans' Class of 2024 included 94 students set to graduate with at least a 3.5 GPA, along with 12 International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma candidates, including valedictorian Diego Cervantes Franco and



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salutatorian Leslie Bravo. IB's globally focused curriculum is designed to support a smooth transition to post-secondary education and is highly regarded by prestigious colleges and universities worldwide.

Bravo and Franco will continue their educations at Stanford and UCLA, respectively. Bravo plans to major in political science and go on to a career as a corporate or human rights lawyer, while Franco will study mechanical and aerospace engineering.

In his speech, Franco shared details of his educational journey, which began in Mexico and continued with him becoming the first person in his family to attend high school, and preached about the power and importance of dreams.

"To anyone – whether you're an aspiring doctor, artist, mechanic, entrepreneur – being a dreamer is more than your past and your present, it's a tapestry of hope and passion among each of us that forms our future," Franco said. "Please stand tall and proud knowing that you have dreamed today and that you have dreamed every day since you walked into those classrooms."

Fontana High School

Dressed in maroon and white gowns, school spirit was proudly displayed during Fontana High's ceremony as chants to "live maroon" and calls to continue FOHI's legacy echoed through the Toyota Arena on May 22.

Fontana High's more than 550 graduates were addressed by salutatorian Lucia Otanez, who plans to attend USC on a \$40,000 Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship, and valedictorian Julissa Ordonez. Both of the top graduates' speeches included English and Spanish portions, with Otanez even delving into French, while Ordonez encouraged her class to keep their FOHI spirit throughout life.

"No matter where life takes you know that you will rise above because that's what a Steeler does. Life will present its challenges and there will be many times where you stumble and fall but I promise you will get back up," Ordonez said. "We are Steelers and we are unstoppable."

Henry J. Kaiser High School

Pomp and circumstance were on full display during Kaiser High's ceremony on May 23, as the school's Catamount Pride Band provided live performances and the Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps Saber Honor Guard, dressed in full regalia, welcomed the Wildcat graduates into the arena.

Kaiser High's valedictorian Michelle Reyes and salutatorian Wendy Phung will both pursue careers in the medical field. Reyes is set to study nursing at Cal State San Bernardino and Phung will major in biology at UCLA, with plans to attend medical school and become a surgeon. In their speeches, both Reyes and Phung encouraged their fellow Wildcats to stay strong and challenge themselves throughout life.

"With hard work and dedication, anyone can accomplish anything," Reyes said. "No matter the place, the people, or the situation you find yourself in, I know we are born with the skills to succeed we just have to know how to use them."

Summit High School

“Watch us soar, 2024” served as a rallying cry for the Summit High graduates during the District’s final graduation on May 23. Those in attendance were treated to a stirring rendition of the national anthem sung by Skyhawk graduate Caesar Morales.

Summit High’s graduating class includes valedictorian Julieta Gutiérrez Martín, who will pursue a degree in human biology at Stanford University and a career as a pediatrician, and salutatorian Sebastian Castro, who will attend UCLA and major in biochemistry in hopes of joining the medical field.

Martín’s term as Fontana Unified’s Board of Education student representative in 2023-24 came to an end as she paused on stage for a photo with the entire District Board after receiving her diploma. It came after she gave the final of a series of rousing student speeches of the week, inspiring her classmates to greatness.

“When you walk on this stage and head out on your journey, I want you to reflect on all the wonderful yet bittersweet memories you’ve made over these years,” Martín said. “As you walk down this stage, I want you to look forward and imagine your future with every step you take.”

A few minutes later, like many of the graduates before them, Summit High’s approximate 615 graduates sang the school’s alma mater one last time before turning their tassels and being greeted to life as a high school graduate with the festive explosion of streamer cannons packed with red and white streamers.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_2024GRAD1: Henry J. Kaiser High School students celebrate their graduation under an explosion of streamer cannons during the school’s commencement at the Toyota Arena on May 23.

FUSD_2024GRAD2: Jurupa Hills High School valedictorian Diego Cervantes Franco gave a stirring speech during the school’s graduation ceremony at the Toyota Arena on May 22. Franco shared details of his educational journey, which began in Mexico and continued with him becoming the first person in his family to attend high school, and preached about the power and importance of dreams.

FUSD_2024GRAD3: Two of Fontana High School’s more than 550 graduates celebrate before their commencement ceremony at the Toyota Arena on May 22.

FUSD_2024GRAD4: From left: Fontana Adult School’s Kyle Alarcon, Arlene Villatoro, Socorro Aguayo, and Francisco Salazar all delivered heartfelt speeches during the school’s graduation ceremony at the Ontario Convention Center on May 21.

FUSD_2024GRAD5: A.B. Miller High School students celebrate as they turn the tassels on their caps at their graduation ceremony at the Toyota Arena on May 23. Fontana Unified honored more than 2,800 graduates over eight festive ceremonies in three days.

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