



# Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

*To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...*

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** June 04, 2021    **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia    **PHONE:** 909-273-9840

## Whittier Union Honors Class of 2021 with In-Person Commencement Ceremonies

**WHITTIER** – Nearly 2,800 Whittier Union High School District students made their way across the graduation stage during in-person graduation ceremonies held June 1-3, marking their milestone achievement through an unprecedented school year with emotional speeches, musical performances and tears of joy.

The socially distanced ceremonies looked vastly different than years past, but provided a sense of normalcy to students, families and staff. Students maintained their distance from each other as they were escorted onto the field and seated six feet apart. Families remained socially distanced in the stands through fixed seating, implemented to ensure compliance with county and state regulations.

Santa Fe, Frontier and Sierra Vista high schools and Whittier Adult School celebrated graduates on June 1, followed by California and Whittier high schools on June 2. Pioneer and La Serna high schools concluded the festivities with ceremonies on June 3.

“We are the first class to have survived the challenges of a global pandemic,” Santa Fe High School graduate Savanna Aguayo said. “Sitting here today is a testament that each and every one of us will never give up on our dreams.”

During the commencement ceremonies, the valedictorians and salutatorians from all five comprehensive high schools were presented with the Trustee Award by members of the Whittier Union High School District Board of Trustees.

The accolade honored the high-achieving students for taking challenging honors and Advanced Placement courses while earning all A’s, with no more than one B grade, in their high school careers.

“We did not lose a year of high school; we gained a year of high school. We gained a year’s worth of creativity, we gained a year’s worth of perspective, and we gained a year’s worth of strength – and that is a year worth celebrating,” Whittier High School salutatorian Alejandra Santiago said. “As we celebrate our commencement into society after high school and our country opening up post-pandemic, I dare you to unleash that years’ worth of curiosity and no longer move in silence – but to make your presence known and to celebrate proudly.”

– MORE –

Many Whittier Union Class of 2021 graduates are headed to four-year universities and prestigious higher education institutions, including UCLA, USC, University of Chicago, Pepperdine University and UC Berkeley. Students have been awarded thousands of dollars in local and national scholarships, including the College Board Opportunity Scholarship, and many students have also been awarded full-ride athletic scholarships.

“We are extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to celebrate the Class of 2021 with in-person graduations, celebrating their success – even during an incredibly challenging year,” Superintendent Martin Plourde said. “We are so proud of our students for their achievements, and know that they are on the path to a bright future – whether that be attending a four-year university, community college, trade school or enlisting in the military – we have no doubt that the quality education they have received at Whittier Union has prepared them with the tools and resources they need for life after high school.”

### PHOTO CAPTIONS

**WUHSD\_GRAD1:** Frontier High School, Sierra Vista High School and the Whittier Adult School held a joint commencement ceremony on June 1, during which 264 students were recognized.

**WUHSD\_GRAD2:** Santa Fe High School graduated 494 seniors during its commencement ceremony on June 1.

**WUHSD\_GRAD3:** Whittier High School graduated 392 seniors during its graduation ceremony on June 2.

**WUHSD\_GRAD4:** California High School held its commencement ceremony on June 1, during which 598 seniors were celebrated.

**WUHSD\_GRAD5:** La Serna High School graduated 615 seniors during its June 3 graduation ceremony.

**WUHSD\_GRAD6:** Pioneer High School celebrated the graduation of 300 seniors during its commencement ceremony on June 3.

###

#### 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*

Dr. Russell Castañeda-Calleros  
*Vice President*

Jeff Baird  
*Clerk*

Leighton Anderson  
*Member*

Jaime Lopez  
*Member*

Martin Plourde  
*Superintendent*