



Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 23, 2023 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-445-1001

Whittier Union High School District Implements New Policies Focused on Student Wellness and Inclusion for 2023-24 School Year

WHITTIER – Ahead of the 2023-24 school year, the Whittier Union High School District Board of Trustees has taken significant steps in prioritizing student wellness and educational inclusivity by unanimously approving a Land Use Acknowledgement policy and an Alcohol and Other Drugs policy during its June 13 Board meeting.

Strongly supported by Whittier Union teachers, staff and administrators, the newly adopted Land Use Acknowledgement policy actively recognizes and honors the rich history, art and culture of Native Americans. The policy is slated to be integrated into the District's comprehensive Ethnic Studies curriculum, further emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives and experiences and the statement will also be read at various District and school-specific events.

Under the new policy, the District recognizes that each high school campus is located on the traditional land of California tribes and establishes a Native American advisory committee that will offer guidance, advice, Native protocols and serve as a resource to the District and its school communities.

The District's Land Use Acknowledgement policy recognizes the presence in the traditional ancestral land of the Gabrieliño/Tongva peoples which includes the villages of Chokiishgna, now Santa Fe Springs; Sehat, now Los Nietos/Whittier; and the village of Sejatngna, now Whittier-San Gabriel River Area. To read the Land Use in full, community members are encouraged to visit bit.ly/WUHSD_LandUse.

In addition to the Land Use policy, the Board approved a revised Alcohol, Marijuana and Other Drugs policy, which updates District protocols for addressing alcohol and drug-related activities, acknowledging the detrimental effects that issues related to drug use have on the District community.

The policy emphasizes the development of comprehensive intervention programs and restorative activities that promote safe, healthy environments free from alcohol, marijuana and other drugs. The goal of the newly revised policy is to "minimize disruption to a student's academic program," by addressing the academic, physical and mental health needs of the individual student first.

The District will coordinate its prevention and intervention programs with other school and community-based services, promoting parental/guardian involvement and requiring students to actively engage in critical participatory action research. This approach aims to enhance students' understanding of the effects of drug use and its impact on both them and others.

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The revised Alcohol, Marijuana and Other Drugs policy still includes enforcement/discipline protocols, which state that students are not to possess, use or sell alcohol, marijuana or other drugs and related paraphernalia on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities.

Annually, or more frequently if requested by the Board, Superintendent Dr. Monica Oviedo will report to the Board on the effectiveness of the District's prevention and intervention programs. Visit bit.ly/Board_Policy for more information.

"Whittier Union is taking important steps to honor Native American history and culture through the adoption of the Land Use Acknowledgement, which will provide our students with a more comprehensive understanding of our diverse heritage," Board President Jaime López said. "Additionally, our commitment to student wellness and health is unwavering. By revisiting our drug policy, we are ensuring that programs are in place to support our students and acknowledge the importance of providing students with preventative support, rather than immediately moving to punitive action. The Board and the District will continue to do *Whatever it Takes* to ensure the overall success of our students and District community."

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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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