



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 1, 2022

CONTACT: Lauren Creiman

(909) 833-9853

Fontana Unified Alumna, Educator Oversees Increase in Advanced Placement Pass Rates

FONTANA, CA – When Summit High School Advanced Placement (AP) teacher Megan Perez graduated from Kaiser High School in 2008, she was certain that she had left Fontana Unified forever. While attending UCLA, Perez was determined to embark on a career as a lawyer, but the former valedictorian soon realized that her destiny was in the classroom and returned to teach history at Kaiser High in 2013.

In the years since, Perez has inspired hundreds of Kaiser High students to achieve at the highest levels, with pass rates for the AP classes she teaches – AP Capstone, AP Human Geography, AP Government and AP Psychology – well above the average in California and globally. Kaiser graduates taught by Perez have gone on to attend a number of elite universities, including MIT, Stanford, Johns Hopkins and Yale.

“Returning to Fontana to help guide the next generation of students gives me a lot of pride. I feel like I’m giving back to my community,” Perez said. “Many of my students come to me as freshmen taking the AP Human Geography class, which gives them a solid foundation to build on. It’s incredible to watch the students develop their skills over the years and prepare for their own journeys.”

A review of AP classes Perez has taught the past two years show pass rates more than 15 percentage points above the state and global average in AP Human Geography (the only AP class offered to freshmen) and AP Psychology, and 30 percentage points above the average in AP Government.

Kaiser High’s AP Capstone program debuted at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, with a cohort of 23 students. Under Perez’s guidance, the cohort managed a 100% pass rate for the first-year class, AP Seminar. The cohort completed their Capstone studies during the 2021-22 school year with a 91.3% pass rate for the second-year class, AP Research, nearly 10 percentage points above the state average.

Perez worked with Summit High School AP teacher Tom Prentiss to develop the AP Capstone curriculum, which has two sections: AP Seminar, a project-based course that focuses on developing analytical skills; and AP Research, where students work to complete a master thesis and make a 20-minute oral presentation, followed by a series of oral defense questions. Students receive an AP Capstone diploma if they pass Seminar and Research, and pass four additional AP exams.

Fontana Middle School principal Marco Garcia is a former assistant principal at Kaiser High and worked in an administrative capacity to develop the AP Capstone program for the District. Garcia, whose son was among the first Kaiser AP Capstone cohort, is not surprised by the success Perez has had with her students.

“Megan was the first teacher in the District to teach AP Human Geography and the first to teach AP Capstone. She has an incredible determination and drive and is always ready to tap into something new,” Garcia said. “I have respect for Megan as a colleague and also as a parent. I have seen firsthand how she is able to personally connect with and get the most out of her kids.”

As a Kaiser High student, Perez was a member of the Academic Decathlon team. When she returned to Kaiser as a teacher the program had been discontinued, but Perez worked to bring the team back and served as coach from 2016 to 2020, the year that the AP Capstone program debuted at Kaiser High.

“Being the Academic Decathlon coach was very serendipitous when it came to teaching AP Capstone, due to the overlap in skills required, especially with timed speeches,” Perez said. “I am grateful to have learned so much as a Kaiser student, working as an AVID tutor, taking AP classes, volunteering at local elementary schools. It really prepared me for what was to come later.”

For the 2022-23 school year, Perez has moved to Summit High School, where she will work alongside Prentiss and be reunited with principal Renee Castanon, who served as a Kaiser High assistant principal prior to becoming the head administrator for Summit High.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_AP_PEREZ1: Summit High School AP teacher Megan Perez graduated from Kaiser High School in 2008, returning to teach at her alma mater in 2013. During her tenure at Kaiser, Perez inspired hundreds of students to achieve at the highest levels, and the pass rates for the AP classes she taught were well above the average in the state. Perez has moved to Summit High for the 2022-23 school year.

FUSD_AP_PEREZ2: Summit High School AP teacher Megan Perez, seen here in her first year of teaching at Kaiser High School, helped develop the curriculum for Fontana Unified’s two-year AP Capstone Diploma program. Her first Capstone cohort at Kaiser showed a pass rate of 91.3%, well above the average in California. Perez has moved to Summit High for the 2022-23 school year.