



SAN GABRIEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Aug. 16, 2018

CONTACT: Lauren Creiman

William Diepenbrock

(909) 833-9853

San Gabriel Unified Middle School Peer Mentors Welcome New Students for 2018-19 Year

SAN GABRIEL, CA – Incoming Jefferson Middle School sixth-grade student Sophia Garcia knows exactly what she wants from middle school – straight A’s on her report card. After spending Aug. 13 with Jefferson’s Where Everybody Belongs (WEB) peer mentors, Garcia says she is in the right place to achieve her goal.

“I was kind of nervous, but my WEB mentors made me feel welcome,” Garcia said. “They’re really cool. I already know all of their names.”

Garcia was one of nearly 400 sixth-graders greeted with banners and cheers by volunteer eighth-grade Jefferson WEB mentors, who wore blue shirts with the words “Service Lead Inspire” written on the back, during the school’s annual WEB Orientation. The event was held one week before the first day of the school year, which begins Aug. 20.

Led by Jefferson Assistant Principal Darci Coppolo, the leadership team conducted a series of ice-breaking activities to help kick off the school year on a positive note.

“Middle school is a huge step up; there are new students, teachers and rules, and the expectations are higher,” Coppolo said. “Our WEB mentors are here to show their support and build trust. I am so proud of our mentors, who have made a commitment to helping the sixth-graders for the entire year. We have one goal, and that is to be successful.”

More than 100 WEB mentors welcomed their new classmates in the Jefferson gym, helped them find their name tags and led them in a balloon-popping game. After students separated into small groups, WEB mentors divided their time between team-building exercises and sharing their personal experiences at school. At the end of the event, the students shared a pizza lunch.

MORE

GOVERNING BOARD

CRISTINA ALVARADO
PRESIDENT

ANDREW L. AMMON
BOARD MEMBER

CHERYL A. SHELLHART
VICE PRESIDENT

DR. GARY THOMAS SCOTT
BOARD MEMBER

KEN K. TCHENG
CLERK

DR. JOHN W. PAPPALARDO
SUPERINTENDENT



SAN GABRIEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

“We want our students to know that there are three keys to success at Jefferson: work hard, have fun and be nice,” Principal Matt Arnold said. “We want our kids to participate, to set long-term goals, and that’s why the WEB mentors are so important. We want the new students to evolve into those leaders as they progress in school.”

This is the fourth year that Jefferson has used the WEB peer mentoring program developed by The Boomerang Project. Before the start of each school year, the school’s incoming eighth-graders take three days of training to learn the program’s activities and problem-solving techniques to prepare them for a year’s worth of interactions.

Once the school year begins, the school’s volunteer leaders hold monthly 45-minute meetings with their sixth-grade cohort. These meetings allow eighth-graders to further bond with their classmates while addressing a wide range of topics, including domestic problems, bullying, teamwork, conflict resolution and responsibility.

“When students volunteer to be WEB mentors, they take a pivotal step to becoming lifelong learners and future leaders,” SGUSD Superintendent Dr. John Pappalardo said. “Student leadership is an essential component of a successful school. Thank you to Matt Arnold and his staff for nurturing a trusting learning environment at Jefferson.”

###

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

081618_SANGAB_JEFFERSON_WEB1: Jefferson Middle School eighth-grade Where Everybody Belongs (WEB) student mentors lead incoming sixth-graders in a team-building activity on Aug. 13 after welcoming the new students on their first day of school. WEB student mentors spent the day sharing their school experiences and preparing their peers for the coming school year.

081618_SANGAB_JEFFERSON_WEB2: Incoming Jefferson Middle School sixth-graders are welcomed to their first day of school on Aug. 13 by eighth-grade WEB mentors, who greeted them with cheers. The WEB mentors conducted a series of ice-breaking activities to help kick off the year on a positive note.

GOVERNING BOARD

CRISTINA ALVARADO
PRESIDENT

ANDREW L. AMMON
BOARD MEMBER

CHERYL A. SHELLHART
VICE PRESIDENT

DR. GARY THOMAS SCOTT
BOARD MEMBER

KEN K. TCHENG
CLERK

DR. JOHN W. PAPPALARDO
SUPERINTENDENT