



# Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

*To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...*

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Oct. 18, 2023    **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia    **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

## **Whittier Union High Schools Placed on Advanced Placement Honor Roll by College Board**

**WHITTIER** – Three Whittier Union high schools were recognized by the College Board as Advanced Placement Honor Roll schools, reflecting a commitment to increasing a college-going culture on campus and providing opportunities for students to earn college credit and maximize college readiness, based on data compiled from the schools’ Class of 2023 graduates.

La Serna High School earned a Silver Award, while Pioneer and Santa Fe high schools were honored with Bronze Awards. Additionally, La Serna and Santa Fe each earned the AP Access Award, recognizing the schools for providing underrepresented students access to advanced coursework.

“It is a tremendous distinction for Whittier Union to have three schools placed on the AP Honor Roll and is a testament to all schools throughout the District encouraging their students to challenge themselves academically,” Superintendent Dr. Monica Oviedo said. “We are proud of our school sites for continuing to pave the way for more student success.”

The College Board places schools on its Honor Roll after evaluating three separate data sets representing college culture (students taking at least one AP exam), college credit (students scoring a “3” or higher on an AP exam) and college optimization (students taking five or more AP exams).

Of the three Honor Roll data sets, Whittier Union schools scored the most impressive marks in college optimization, with La Serna and Pioneer earning platinum status and Santa Fe gold status. Additionally, La Serna earned gold status in college credit while Santa Fe earned silver status.

“Our goal is to remove AP barriers and encourage more students to take exams,” La Serna Principal Griselda Castro said. “We are very proud of the access award. It validates our efforts to increase student participation in our AP and Honors classes. It’s very exciting for us.”

As part of its initiative to increase AP participation, La Serna provides all students who are not able to secure an AP exam fee waiver a \$20 stipend to defray the cost of the exam. Pioneer students unable to afford the cost of the exam can participate in a community service project with staff on campus to receive free access to the exam.

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La Serna, Pioneer and Santa Fe all hold Course Fairs and AP Fairs, where students can learn about AP courses directly from the teachers. Santa Fe’s first AP Fair was held just before the pandemic.

“Santa Fe held its fair right before spring registration and it was a huge success. Giving students the ability to learn and ask questions with the actual AP teacher has helped increase AP participation,” Santa Fe Principal Craig Campbell said. “We are committed to providing a college-going atmosphere and excited to receive the Bronze Award distinction.”

Pioneer High debuted its AP Computer Science Principles course during the 2022-23 school year, which proved popular, with Pioneer students eagerly connecting with the materials.

“We are continuously looking at ways we can enroll more students into AP by having open access to our AP courses while maintaining strong achievement on AP exams,” Pioneer Principal Mary Chapman said. “I am grateful to our instructors who teach the challenging AP classes and to our students embracing these opportunities. The recognition validates our commitment to academic rigor, student success and college preparedness.”

In qualifying for the AP Honor Roll, all three schools had 40% of its graduates taking at least one AP exam, 25% of graduates scoring a “3” or higher on an AP exam and 2% of its graduates taking five or more AP exams.

The AP Access Award is given to schools where the percentage of AP exam takers who are underrepresented and/or low-income students mirrors the overall school demographic. If 50% of a school’s student body is low-income, then 50% of AP exam takers must also be low-income for a school to receive the AP Access Award.

“Congratulations to our schools for this wonderful achievement,” Board President Jaime López said. “This recognition is a testament to the hard work Whittier Union is doing every day to ensure our students continue ‘To Achieve and Maintain Excellence.’ Thank you to our administrators and educators for always prioritizing the success of all of our students.”

## PHOTO CAPTIONS

**WUHSD\_APHONORROLL1:** La Serna High School was recognized by the College Board with an Advanced Placement Honor Roll Silver Award, as well as the AP Access Award, for its commitment to increasing a college-going culture on campus.

**WUHSD\_APHONORROLL2:** The College Board recognized Santa Fe High School with an Advanced Placement Honor Roll Bronze Award, as well as the AP Access Award, for increasing the college-going culture throughout campus.

**WUHSD\_APHONORROLL3:** Pioneer High School was recognized by the College Board with an Advanced Placement Honor Roll Bronze Award for enhancing the college-going culture on campus.

### 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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