



# Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

*To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...*

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Oct. 26, 2020    **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia, William Diepenbrock    **PHONE:** 909-445-1001

## **Santa Fe High School Senior Receives Award of Merit for Academic Excellence and Leadership**

**WHITTIER** – When new students arrive to enroll at Santa Fe High School, quite often the first person they see in the guidance office is senior Isabella Padilla. Known to family and friends as Bella, Padilla’s smile and sweet nature, emblematic of her enthusiasm and school spirit, is the prospective students’ first impression of the Santa Fe campus.

Padilla, an academic and athletic standout at Santa Fe, maintains a 4.30 GPA, having completed 32 semesters of AP and Honors classes, providing leadership and character as a member of the Santa Fe soccer and track teams.

For her exceptional contributions to the Santa Fe High community, Padilla was recognized by the Whittier Union Board of Trustees with an Award of Merit during a virtual board meeting on Oct. 13.

“I am grateful for all who have supported me through my educational journey. I will always treasure the memories and experiences at Santa Fe High,” Padilla said. “I would like to thank my mom, who inspires me, my counselor Mrs. Martinez-Lopez and my coach Ms. Meza, for encouraging me to grow academically and attain many accomplishments.”

Padilla credits the Santa Fe High culture with helping her break out of her shell when she arrived as a freshman from a small private school in Santa Fe Springs. Immersing herself in her studies, Padilla quickly became an academic leader on campus, with perennial placement on the school’s Top 100 student list.

Padilla is active on campus as a Link Crew mentor, Academic Affairs ASB commissioner and as a member of film club and Black and Gold Nation. Through a strong connection with her counselor, Belen Martinez-Lopez, Padilla has volunteered over 100 hours in the guidance office.

“Bella is an absolute ray of sunshine on campus,” Martinez-Lopez said. “Bella is kind, thoughtful, conscientious and always willing to assist student life in any way she can.”

Padilla is a mainstay on Santa Fe’s soccer and track teams, inspired by her soccer coach Freissy Meza, who has pushed Padilla to excel both on the field and in the classroom. Athletics and school spirit have been central to Padilla’s Santa Fe experience, with her best memories originating on the soccer pitch, going to football games and attending night pep rallies.

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Home life is important to Padilla, beginning with the enduring bond she shares with her mother, who has raised Padilla as a single parent, providing her with a strong foundation to support her academic achievement. Padilla also receives encouragement from her grandparents and helps to care for an uncle with Down syndrome, even while she is online for distance learning.

Padilla is a semi-finalist for a Posse Foundation full-tuition leadership scholarship to Tulane University. If she is not selected for a Posse scholarship, Padilla would love to attend Harvey Mudd College and study to be a doctor with an interest in women’s health.

“It has been my distinct pleasure and honor to know Bella, who has impacted Santa Fe staff and her fellow students by being bright, enthusiastic, organized, determined, compassionate and helpful,” Santa Fe Principal Craig Campbell said. “Bella has been a tremendous contributor to the Santa Fe campus and is equipped academically and socially to represent Santa Fe and Whittier Union in any future endeavor.”

### PHOTO CAPTION

**WUHSD\_102620\_PADILLA:** Santa Fe High School senior Isabella Padilla is often the first person prospective students see when they arrive on campus. Padilla recently received an Award of Merit from the Whittier Union High School District for her academic and athletic achievements, school spirit and campus leadership.

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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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