



Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Nov. 20, 2019 **CONTACT:** Juliette Funes, William Diepenbrock **PHONE:** 909-445-1001

La Serna Students Learn Challenges of Living on a Budget during Bite of Reality Simulation

WHITTIER – Close to 300 La Serna High School students were given the freedom to make their own financial decisions – and learn the unpleasant consequences of spending beyond their means – during Bite of Reality, an interactive simulation that tests students on real-world financial challenges.

Sponsored by the Credit Union of Southern California, the financial literacy event, held Nov. 14, assigned students in the school's Guided Studies, OASIS, HAVEN and Read 180 academic intervention programs, their mentors and consumer math students a fictional occupation, salary, spouse and family, student loan debt, credit card debt and medical insurance payments.

Each had to learn how to maintain a fixed monthly budget – not an easy task for students who were upsold luxury cars, oversized homes and extravagant vacations.

“This is a chance for our students to learn what awaits them after high school and the choices they will have to make on their own – decisions about the type of car they want, where they want to live and how much they can afford to spend on their wants and needs,” said teacher Ken LaVigne, director of the HAVEN and OASIS programs.

Teens visited various merchant tables where sellers – volunteers from the credit union and community – explained their options for groceries, transportation, entertainment, household items, child care, housing and utilities, clothing and personal care and other shopping needs.

Using the credit union's app, students shopped at each table, where pushy car salesmen and commission-based realtors lured them into spending more than they could afford and had to later return. Students were also presented with unexpected windfalls and expenses like auto or home repairs.

“I just realized a car is very expensive,” said senior and academic mentor Sintia Leal, a bank teller with a 5-year-old child and a spouse who was flight attendant. “I learned that I need to keep track of my purchases and really look at what I need.”

The game also included a credit union where volunteers provided students with much-needed assistance when they made poor financial decisions and overspent.

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“These money management skills are critical to their success as adults, and I want to thank our partners at the Credit Union of Southern California for their ongoing support of our programs and students and providing them a safe space in which to learn from their mistakes,” LaVigne said.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

112019_WUHSD_BITEOFREALITY1: La Serna High School students participate in Bite of Reality, an interactive game that simulates everyday financial challenges and situations on Nov. 14.

112019_WUHSD_BITEOFREALITY2: Assigned a career, family and debt, Bite of Reality participants use an app to purchase cars, housing and personal care items from pushy vendors as they learn to maintain a fixed monthly budget.

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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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