



BUENA PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

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PRESS RELEASE

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Buena Park School District Welcomes NFL Hopeful, Alumnus to Whitaker

BUENA PARK, CA – Whitaker School students had the opportunity to interview Buena Park School District alumnus and University of Virginia offensive lineman Ryan Nelson on Feb. 18 to learn about his journey as a scholar athlete and how his teachers, family and education paved the way for his success.

Whitaker School student council members Porscha S., Andres S. and Kenjie B. asked Nelson about his favorite Whitaker teachers, his college experience and his favorite sports stars during an interview that was shared with the school's classrooms via Zoom. The interview was part of the school's Communications and Media Arts program. Nelson then had a chance to get reacquainted with some of his former teachers.

Nelson, a 22-year-old former student of Whitaker School and Buena Park Middle School (formerly Buena Park Junior High School), credited the District with teaching him good study habits and fostering his love of sports, paving the way for him to attend the University of Virginia on a full athletic scholarship and participate in the 2022 NFL draft.

Nelson also discussed the importance of planning ahead and putting academics first – noting that only a small percentage of student athletes become professional players.

“Knowing which college I wanted to go to was difficult at first – because I had 25 scholarship offers and I had to decide which school I wanted to spend my life at,” Nelson said. “While it’s cool to play football in college, football is only half of your life in college. You have to learn how to survive. Grades are always important – make sure you worry about your grades.”

Nelson currently holds a Bachelor of Arts in history and religious studies and aims to finish his master’s degree in education psychology (social foundations) in May.

“Ryan Nelson always was a scholar athlete – he was always the kid that wanted to play every sport, but school was the most important thing to him,” Whitaker School Principal Stephanie Williamson said. “It’s great to see that he accomplished all the things that we hoped for him.”

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Nelson said his dream is to play in the Super Bowl and then retire to become a teacher and football coach, inspiring the next generation of scholar athletes.

“We’re very proud to have given Ryan Nelson a strong educational foundation during his time at Whitaker School and Buena Park Middle School,” Superintendent Dr. Ramon Miramontes said. “We hope that our students can see his success and learn that a good education and passion can help you accomplish your dreams.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

NFLVISIT1: Buena Park School District alumnus and NFL hopeful Ryan Nelson meets with Whitaker School student council members Porscha S., Andres S. and Kenjie B. to answer questions about his educational journey and what it takes to be a successful student-athlete. Nelson, who attended Whitaker School and Buena Park Middle School, will be graduating from the University of Virginia in May and entering the 2022 NFL draft.

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