



# Fontana Unified School District

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## NEWS RELEASE

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## Nine Fontana Unified Students to Showcase Talents in Tournament of Roses Honor Band and Color Guard

**FONTANA, CA** – Nine Fontana Unified School District students achieved one of the greatest feats high school musicians and color guard performers can obtain after being selected to showcase their talents on a national stage when they march down Colorado Boulevard in the 136th edition of the Rose Parade on New Year's Day.

Each year, hundreds of high school students from across Southern California audition for one of the coveted spots in the elite Pasadena City College (PCC) Tournament of Roses Honor Band and Color Guard, which has performed through the Rose Parade's six-mile trek since 1930. Eight Henry J. Kaiser High School students and a Jurupa Hills High student separated themselves from the rest and will represent Fontana Unified in PCC's prestigious group this year.

Kaiser High will be represented by seniors Alec Franco (Herald Snare) and Kimberly Gomez (color guard/banners) and juniors Anabelle Escobedo (flute), Maximo Franco (trumpet), Achilles Jauregui (trombone), Liliana Lobo (euphonium), Jhiana Magalong (bells/xylophone), and Marcos Perez (bass trombone) in the PCC Tournament of Roses Honor Band, along with Jurupa Hills High junior Diego Muro (clarinet).

All nine students continue Fontana Unified's legacy at the prestigious event, with this marking the second year in a row Lobo and Muro have been selected for the PCC Tournament of Roses Honor Band. Numerous students have represented the District in the PCC Honor Band over the years, including Kaiser Band Director Roberto Ronquillo and Jurupa Hills Band Director Bill Borjan when they were FUSD students.

"Performing in the Rose Parade was a pivotal moment in my life. Being accepted into the honor band is one of the few key moments that pushed me to consider music education as a career," said Ronquillo, who performed with the PCC Honor Band as a senior at A.B. Miller High School. "These students get to march in the largest parade in the country, so for them, it's a huge deal and I hope it shapes them into the professionals they want to become."

The eight Kaiser students represent the largest group of Cats ever selected to participate in the Rose Parade, not counting when Kaiser's entire Catamount Pride Band and Color Guard performed in 2019, Ronquillo said.

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Two Kaiser students are making even more school history, with Gomez being the first Cat selected for the Color Guard and Alec Franco being named the school's first Herald Snare, distinguishing him as the group's top snare percussionist. Alec Franco was chosen from 25 applicants and will lead the PCC Honor Band alongside the Herald Trumpets, a group formed by nine of the best trumpet players in the region.

"Alec started as a novice during freshman year and in four years has earned one of the most coveted spots and a first in the school's history," Ronquillo said. "I'm proud of all my students for understanding our philosophy to pursue musical excellence through exceptional music performance."

Borjan, who marched in the Rose Parade during his junior and senior years at Fontana High, said his goal when returning to the District as a teacher was to increase the number of students who auditioned for the Honor Band.

"It's always good to have students make any honor group. It gives students a sense of pride in their accomplishments and abilities, and it expands their horizons in terms of what they think is possible as professional musicians," said Borjan, who saw the first two students, including Muro, in Jurupa Hills High's history qualify for the PCC Honor Band last year.

Throughout November and December, the PCC Honor Band and Color Guard will rehearse every Sunday for the Rose Parade with practices ramping up almost daily over winter break.

Students are expected to not only perfect five pieces of music during the group and sectional rehearsals, but also train for the physical demands of the six-mile march with practice hikes around Dodger Stadium, using the inclines for special endurance practice.

"I am elated that Fontana Unified will be represented so strongly by so many talented students in this historical event. Thousands of people will crowd Colorado Boulevard to watch the Tournament of Roses Parade and thousands more will tune into the national broadcast," Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "Congratulations to the students and band directors from Kaiser and Jurupa Hills high schools for pursuing excellence and making their communities proud."

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**FUSD\_ROSES1:** Eight Henry J. Kaiser High students (from left to right): Liliana Lobo, Anabelle Escobedo, Achilles Jauregui, Alec Franco, Marcos Perez, Maximo Franco, Jhiana Magalong, and Kimberly Gomez were selected for the 2025 Pasadena City College Tournament of Roses Honor Band and Color Guard. It set a school record for selections in a single year.

**FUSD\_ROSES2:** For the second year in a row, Jurupa Hills High School junior Diego Muro was selected to join the Pasadena City College Tournament of Roses Honor Band. He is one of nine Fontana Unified students chosen to perform with the prestigious group in the iconic Rose Parade on New Year's Day.

**FUSD\_ROSES3:** Henry J. Kaiser High junior Liliana Lobo qualified for the Pasadena City College Tournament of Roses Honor Band for the second year in a row. She is one of eight Kaiser and nine Fontana Unified students to be selected to perform with the prestigious group this year.

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