



Fontana Unified School District

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NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Emphasizes College Readiness, Access with Annual High School College Application Days

FONTANA, CA – It was far from an ordinary day at Fontana High School (FOHI) as a large portion of campus was carved out for the school’s annual, award-winning College Application Day on Nov. 14, which promotes college readiness throughout the community and dates back to 2014.

Hundreds of FOHI seniors, with many surrounded by family members, patiently waited for their opportunity to take a large step toward their goal of postsecondary education during the seven-plus hour event. Students collectively submitted more than 2,450 applications to four-year colleges and universities – an event record.

Fontana High seniors Ana Porras and Iris Martinez said they had looked forward to the day for years after their older siblings took part in the event.

“This event helps give students motivation and prepares them for life after high school,” said Porras, who submitted applications to Cal State San Bernardino and Sacramento State. “It makes the process feel less scary than it would be otherwise.”

All five comprehensive high schools in the Fontana Unified School District, including FOHI, host College Application Days in November as part of the District’s commitment to promoting college readiness for all students. The District covers the cost of two applications (one University of California and one California State University) for students who do not qualify for fee waivers, a key step to removing barriers to higher education for students, FOHI assistant principal Marissa Beitler said.

“For many families, it’s the first time they see someone in their family submit a college application – it’s a deeply special experience. FOHI’s College Application Day reflects our strong support for our Steelers and our dedication to their success,” Beitler said. “This day has become our signature event, celebrating the hard work and determination our students put into applying to four-year universities.”

FOHI earned the Riverside Inyo Mono San Bernardino (RIMS) Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Impact Award for the annual event at an Oct. 29 ceremony. The school first launched its College Application Day in 2014 as part of the school’s AVID classes.

Fontana High, which offers 22 AVID courses, was redesignated as an AVID National Demonstration School during the 2023-24 school year for its work to narrow the achievement gap between students and ensure more students attend four-year colleges.

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Over the seven-plus hour event, Fontana High seniors and families whisked through several stops on campus for College Application Day, first meeting with a school counselor to discuss the process and submit as many college applications as they wanted, with cheers erupting once each student completed their applications.

The celebration was far from over, as students made their way to the library to mark the number of applications they submitted on a large thermometer tracking the school's progress toward its goal of 1,900 total applications for the day. From there, students celebrated with their family members as they collected free giveaways, including a FOHI-branded t-shirt, college banner, wristband, and ice cream. They also paused at photo booths and proudly displayed banners of the colleges and universities they applied to, with family members photographing their students each step of the way.

Just a few steps away, representatives from seven colleges and universities were on hand to meet with students, answer their questions on the transition to higher education, and even offer on-the-spot admissions.

Martinez was all smiles after starting her day receiving on-the-spot admission from California Baptist University in Riverside.

"I feel relieved, all day yesterday I was nervous and I feel like I can breathe now," said Martinez, who applied to 10 colleges and universities on the day, including UCLA, UC Berkeley, Cal State Fullerton, and Cal Poly Pomona, with FOHI covering the associated fees. "I think this event gets people excited and ready for college, it is nerve-wracking but at the same time it helps to see all your different college options."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_APPLY1: Fontana High School senior Daniel Benitez celebrates after submitting applications to four-year colleges and universities during the school's annual, award-winning College Application Day on Nov. 14.

FUSD_APPLY2: Hundreds of Fontana High School seniors submitted more than 2,450 applications to four-year colleges and universities with the help of school counselors during the school's College Application Day on Nov. 14. All five comprehensive Fontana Unified high schools host College Application Days in November.

FUSD_APPLY3: Fontana High School senior Eva Barrales (center) celebrates with her family at her school's College Application Day on Nov. 14. Barrales submitted four applications on the day, contributing to the school's day-of record of more than 2,450 submissions at the annual event.

FUSD_APPLY4: Fontana High School senior Iris Martinez received on-the-spot admission from California Baptist University to begin College Application Day on Nov. 14. Martinez applied to 10 colleges and universities on the day, including UCLA, UC Berkeley, Cal State Fullerton, and Cal Poly Pomona, with FOHI covering the associated fees.

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