

# El Monte Union High School District

*Community Committed to College and Career*



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **El Monte Union Multi-Purpose Building Renamed to Honor Legacy of Brothers, Former Board President**

**EL MONTE** – The El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD) will honor the legacies of two brothers and a former EMUHSD Board of Trustees President after voting to rename the newly renovated Fernando R. Ledesma High School (FRLHS) multi-purpose building and gymnasium to the Freddy and Bernie Arteaga and Frank Ogaz Center.

The Freddy and Bernie Arteaga and Frank Ogaz Center is the culmination of a shared vision that began decades ago. The Arteaga brothers, who immigrated from Mexico in the 1970s, met with Ogaz, a former EMUHSD Board President, and longtime administrator Fernando R. Ledesma to lay the groundwork for FRLHS, a high school that would go on to help at-promise youths overcome educational obstacles and put them on the path to becoming lifelong learners.

Freddy and Bernie Arteaga have dedicated more than 30 years to Fernando R. Ledesma High School, starting when it was known as Valle Lindo Continuation School. Freddy, who spent 13 years as a teacher and counselor, has served as principal since 2006, while Bernie has been a counselor at the school for three decades. Valle Lindo was renamed in 2005 to honor Fernando R. Ledesma, who served the District for nearly 40 years.

“Being honored by the District in this way means the world to us,” Freddy Arteaga said. “We came from humble beginnings and we were fortunate to make our way to El Monte, which played a big role in our lives. We are appreciative of the opportunities that this community has provided for us. It is special because the community has trusted us to help its at-promise youth realize their potential.”

Raised by a single mother caring for six children, the Arteagas’ came to El Monte in 1975, with Freddy and Bernie immersing themselves in little league baseball and cross country running. Eventually, the brothers both joined the Arroyo High School cross country and track teams, where they helped the school earn CIF and State championships.

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After attending Cal Poly Pomona and Azusa Pacific University together, the brothers began teaching in EMUHSD in the early 1990s and quickly forged close relationships with Ogaz and Ledesma, who was then the District's assistant superintendent of adult and alternative education. Both shared the brothers' passion for providing opportunities for at-risk youth.

Ogaz was a prominent El Monte businessman who worked for more than 30 years at Security Pacific Bank and engaged in a host of civic activities, including serving 27 years on the L.A. County Office of Education's Community School District Organization Board, 18 years on the California School Board Association, 18 years on the EMUHSD Board of Trustees, and serving as an outreach consultant for the El Monte City School District.

Together, the Arteaga brothers, Ogaz, and Ledesma, joined by former Valle Lindo Principal John Morris and Assistant Principal Joel Kyne, conceived a plan to rebuild Valle Lindo and transform the campus into a hub for rigorous, supportive programs aimed at empowering at-risk youth for generations to come.

"Frank was the driving force behind our early success, giving Mr. Ledesma all the support he needed to keep my brother and I working together at Valle Lindo so that we could execute our long-term plan and vision," Bernie said. "Frank Ogaz had a huge impact on our lives, and his vision and commitment to student achievement still resonates across the District today."

Fernando R. Ledesma High has achieved numerous accolades over the years, including being named a California Department of Education Model Continuation High School four times. Four FRLHS teachers have had the distinction of being named an El Monte Union Teacher of the Year, including Freddy in 2002.

In 2013, Bernie Arteaga was presented with the prestigious Bobby Salcedo Esperanza Award by the El Monte Coalition of Latino Professionals and the El Monte Promise Foundation. The award is given to outstanding educators who exemplify the commitment to education that Salcedo, a former EMUHSD teacher and administrator, was known for.

In September, the Arteaga brothers met with Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga and Board of Trustees member Qui Nguyen to brainstorm possible names for the renovated multi-purpose building, with additional input coming from the FRLHS staff and leadership team. The group recommended renaming the room in honor of Ogaz, who died in 2022.

After hearing stakeholder recommendations during the Nov. 6 Board meeting, Board of Trustees President Ricardo Padilla moved to add Freddy and Bernie Arteaga's names to the Center, citing their decades of leadership and commitment to their school and community. The Board passed the motion unanimously.

"For more than 30 years, Freddy and Bernie Arteaga have worked tirelessly to bring the visions of Frank Ogaz and Fernando Ledesma into fruition, and create a high school that truly represents its community," Padilla said. "Now, with the Freddy and Bernie Arteaga and Frank Ogaz Center at FRLHS, these outstanding leaders will be forever linked with the great work they have done at Fernando R. Ledesma High School."

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**EMUHSD FRLHS RENAMING 1:** Fernando R. Ledesma High School Principal Freddy Arteaga (right) and Guidance Counselor Bernie Arteaga (center) share heartfelt words with the community upon learning the school's multi-purpose building and gymnasium will be renamed in their honor, along with former El Monte Union Board President Frank Ogaz. The announcement was made during the District's Pozole with the Board event, hosted by Board President Ricardo Padilla (left), on Dec. 2.

**EMUHSD FRLHS RENAMING 2:** Former El Monte Union Board of Trustees President Frank Ogaz, who died in 2022, will be honored alongside the Arteaga brothers with the renaming of Fernando R. Ledesma High School's newly renovated multi-purpose building and gymnasium to the Freddy and Bernie Arteaga and Frank Ogaz Center.

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*The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.*