



WHITTIER UNION

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

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Whittier Union Celebrates Start of Performing Arts Center Construction with Groundbreaking

WHITTIER – Whittier Union High School District is one step closer to bringing its much-anticipated Performing Arts Center (PAC) to life, celebrating the beginning of construction of its vibrant, 450-seat, state-of-the-art theater with a community groundbreaking on Nov. 10. Construction is set to begin shortly, with a completion date of fall 2027.

The PAC, created to spotlight Whittier Union's visual and performing arts (VAPA) students and programs, was meticulously designed by SoCal-based LPA Design Studios. The firm collaborated closely with a wide range of stakeholders to create a space that is both visually striking and highly functional, while honoring the history and spirit of Whittier Union's VAPA community.

"We are extremely proud of our many talented VAPA students," Whittier Union Director of Business Operations Steven Rodriguez said. "The PAC is designed to honor their artistic expression with a venue that will not only provide an enjoyable experience for the community, but also supports all the technical aspects needed to run a theater."

In planning the design, the District and LPA reached out to students, teachers, cabinet members, community members, maintenance workers, landscapers, and others, creating a design plan that incorporates input from each group, including exterior art representing theater, dance, choir, and band, and interior corridors that accentuate the thrill and excitement of performance.

"Collaboration can take time, but it leads to better outcomes. We brought together the right people to provide their input and share their expertise, ensuring a successful process," Rodriguez said. "We want the PAC to be a testament to this collaborative effort, with as much care to every design detail."

The design process is best exemplified by the efforts made by the District to include student voices. Dozens of VAPA students met for an experiential exercise, where they selected keywords that most reflected their preferred vision for the PAC.

Students also provided input to a series of art-related questions – such as "Why celebrate the arts?" and "What is your favorite memory of the arts?" – by placing Post-it notes on whiteboards with their recommendations and comments. These comments were used to form word clouds that informed the final design.

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At \$56 million, the PAC is the largest project to be funded through the District’s \$183.5 Measure AA facilities bond, passed by voters in 2020. Set to be built on the northwest side of the United Sierra Education Center, the PAC will feature a full fly loft and a convertible orchestra pit, individual teaching and workshop spaces, and expansive lobby and outdoor gathering areas.

“Thank you to all the stakeholders who provided crucial input into the design of the PAC,” Superintendent Dr. Monica Oviedo said. “The PAC is a place where a student’s dreams of performing will come true, where teachers will inspire, and the community will come together to celebrate the arts. This is a very exciting time in Whittier Union.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

WUHSD_PAC1: Whittier Union High School District celebrates the groundbreaking of its state-of-the-art 450-seat Performing Arts Center during a ceremony held Nov. 10.

WUHSD_PAC2: From left to right: Whittier Union Board Member Jaime López, Vice President Irma Rodríguez Moisa, and President Dr. Russell Castañeda Calleros celebrate the official groundbreaking of the District’s much-anticipated Performing Arts Center during a ceremony on Nov. 10.

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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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