



Fontana Unified School District

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NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Scholars Earn AP Capstone Diplomas, College Credit for Rigorous Academic Achievements

FONTANA, CA – Fontana Unified School District is celebrating the success of their Advanced Placement (AP) Capstone program students, with 34 scholars earning the prestigious AP Capstone diploma during the 2024-25 school year, and six receiving an AP Seminar and Research Certificate.

AP Capstone graduates demonstrate exceptional research, writing, and critical thinking skills by completing a two-year, college-level program that includes AP Seminar, AP Research, and four additional AP courses of their choice. This achievement signals to colleges and universities that these students are well prepared for rigorous, interdisciplinary work and are highly motivated scholars. Certificates are awarded to students who successfully complete AP Seminar and AP Research courses without taking the additional exams.

“The AP Capstone program has allowed me to venture into topics and issues I have never dealt with before, making the class a worthwhile experience to learn about college research and practice writing college-level papers,” Kaiser High Senior Ryan Amoranto said.

The rigorous pathway program is available at Henry J. Kaiser and Summit high schools. Students also earn college credit with a passing AP exam grade level of 3 or higher, giving them a higher standing in universities and saving money. FUSD graduates who have earned AP Capstone diplomas now attend elite universities including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Yale, Stanford, University of California, Berkeley, and University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

“AP Capstone is for any student looking to continue their education at an elite university,” Summit High School AP Seminar Teacher Tom Prentiss said. “Especially for top-level universities, they are looking for students with superior research skills. AP Capstone gives our students a huge head start, teaching students the skills to write and defend a research paper at the college level.”

AP Capstone students develop researching skills their first year in a seminar course, where they learn how to analyze text, gather sources, view an issue from multiple perspectives, and defend their paper in an oral argument.

Students take what they have learned in their seminar course and apply it in their research course during their last year in the program, where they dedicate their skills to a yearlong research project, aiming to develop new ideas and innovations to fill gaps in their topic.

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“At Kaiser High, our students feel confident in researching and presenting on topics that will make an impact in society,” Kaiser AP Capstone Research teacher Matt Johnson said. “We have seen research projects range from developing a new language based on computer algorithms and examining disaster routes in California, to proposing a change to philosophical representation of morality in science fiction novels and the impact of cultural bias on perspectives regarding societal beauty standards.”

Summit High School Class of 2024 graduate Brianna Biswas, who earned the AP Capstone diploma, conducted research on how students react to different stimuli, building on a UCLA study and working closely with a UCLA professor. Not only was Biswas’ research included as part of that study, she was also invited by University of California, Riverside, to conduct further research at their lab while still attending Summit High. Biswas’ findings were published by the American Psychological Association.

“Students build on existing research by identifying what aspects haven’t yet been explored, and their job is to fill in that gap,” Summit AP Research Teacher Megan Prentiss said. “Like Brianna, they are adding to the conversation rather than rehashing what has already been published – they call it the scholarly conversation.”

The rigor of the AP Capstone pathway is not just limited to students. Professional development and learning are required of potential teachers, who must attend a four-day AP Summer Institute. Each winter, teachers must complete 10 hours of additional online training.

“We proudly recognize the achievements of students who participated in the AP Capstone Diploma program,” Fontana Unified Assistant Director of College Readiness MarLan Parker said. “Guided by our committed teachers, our AP Capstone students have engaged in in-depth research and pursued their academic interests through a rigorous, multi-level program. This valuable college readiness experience will benefit them long after high school.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_APCAPSTONE: Summit High School Class of 2025 graduates Damien Muschamp (left) and Carlos Flores (right) display their green AP Capstone stoles during Summit’s commencement ceremony in May. Muschamp and Flores, who served as Summit’s salutatorian and valedictorian, respectively, were among 34 Summit and Henry J. Kaiser high school students to receive an AP Capstone diploma during the 2024-25 school year. The two-year AP Capstone program is considered to be the most challenging AP course. Muschamp is currently attending Stanford University, while Flores is attending UCLA.