



WHITTIER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 22, 2026 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Santa Fe High School Campus Leaders Named CIF Student-Athletes of the Year

WHITTIER – Santa Fe High School seniors Benjamin Zamora and Itzel Iniguez have both been named 2026 CIF Southern Section-Ford (CIF-SS-Ford) Student-Athletes of the Year, reflecting their commitment to excellence on the playing field and the classroom, and upholding the school’s mission to become effective communicators, critical thinkers, and responsible citizens.

Zamora and Iniguez are captains of the cross country and cheer teams, respectively, and both have maintained a 4.0 GPA during their time at Santa Fe High.

“It’s been such an honor to watch Benjamin and Itzel grow over the course of four years,” Santa Fe athletic director Jennifer Hughes said. “To see them mature as athletes and campus leaders has been wonderful. They represent what Santa Fe is all about.”

Zamora has been a member of the Santa Fe cross country and track & field teams since he was a freshman and has helped lead his team to the CIF playoffs. Zamora also participated in the CIF-SS-Ford cross country Div. 3 finals in November 2025. For the Chiefs, the speedy Zamora is on the starting blocks for the 3-mile run, 1600 meters, 800 meters, and 4x4 1600-meter relays.

In the classroom, Zamora has taken numerous Advanced Placement (AP) courses, including AP Government and Economics and AP Statistics. Looking to major in public health, Zamora has committed to Cal State University, San Marcos, where he will continue his passion for running as a member of the cross country and track teams, while studying to become a nurse practitioner.

“It sounds hard to balance out the athletics and academics, but I keep everything well maintained. It can get tough if I have a lot of homework after practice. Coach [Erik] Mallory has played a big part in helping me become better,” Zamora said. “My favorite moments are the big races...the night races. It’s a great atmosphere, with everybody rooting for you, including teammates and family.”

Iniguez is a Posse Foundation scholar who has committed to Pepperdine University, where she plans to study biology. Commuting to Santa Fe High from her home in South Gate, Iniguez has never hesitated to challenge herself. Joining the cheer team as a freshman, Iniguez has developed into one of the school’s top cheerleaders. After serving as STUNT captain in her junior year, Iniguez was named Varsity cheer captain her senior year.

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Iniguez also keeps a full schedule of AP courses, including AP Human Anatomy, AP Calculus, and AP English Literature. As a four-year member of the college prep elective, Advancement Via Individual Determination, and president of Santa Fe’s Interact Club, Iniguez successfully balances schoolwork, athletics, and home life. She also received an Award of Merit from the Whittier Union Board of Trustees in March.

“It’s a big honor to be named a student-athlete of the year. I never did cheer before I came to Santa Fe, but I love the athleticism and the opportunity to switch from cheer to STUNT,” Iniguez said. “More than anything, I love going to the football games and hanging out with my friends. If you put yourself out there and try new things, you will always be on the path to learning.”

The CIF-SS-Ford academic award program recognizes high schools and individual scholar-athletes for their hard work and dedication to excelling in academics and sports.

“Congratulations to Benjamin and Itzel for being selected to represent Santa Fe High and our outstanding scholar-athletes,” Santa Fe principal Craig Campbell said. “Both Benjamin and Itzel came to Santa Fe with purpose, and it has been a joy to watch them develop into academic and campus leaders.”

PHOTO CAPTION

WUHSD_ATHLETES1: Santa Fe High School seniors Benjamin Zamora and Itzel Iniguez were both recognized as CIF-SS-Ford 2026 Student-Athletes of the Year, reflecting their commitment to excellence on the playing field and the classroom.

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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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