



WHITTIER UNION

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 11, 2026 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

Whittier Union Music Program Hits All the Right Notes with Impressive 2025-26 Season

WHITTIER – The Whittier High School Cardinal Brigade music program earned a series of group and individual accolades in April, marking one of its most successful stretches in recent years during the 2025-26 season.

Led by second-year music instructor and band director Edward Mijares and his staff, Cardinal musicians are learning, growing, and becoming leaders on the field.

“It’s really exciting to see the students working so hard on their craft, and going above and beyond what is asked of them because they want to be part of something even bigger,” Mijares said. “Our musicians are motivated and passionate, and it has been a joy to see them work so well with our amazing staff.”

On New Year’s Day, three members of the Cardinal Brigade took their talents to the 2026 Tournament of Roses Parade. Whittier High senior Ramon Mendez (clarinet) and sophomore Darren Rico (trombone) joined the Pasadena City College Honor Band for the second consecutive year, while senior Phoenix Pint performed with the prestigious Bands of America (BOA) Honor Band, a 300-piece national ensemble representing schools from across the United States.

“My experience at the BOA Honor Band was fun but extremely difficult,” Pint said. “I only had two days to memorize three pieces of music and drills. I had never met a single person in my ensemble before that first day in Pasadena. It was a very rewarding experience and I couldn’t have asked to be with any other group.”

The Cardinal Brigade celebrated gold medal and silver medal performances in two separate Winter Guard Association of Southern California (WGASC) events, resulting in the first competition awards in years for both the Color Guard and Indoor Percussion Ensemble.

The Whittier High Color Guard received a gold medal at the WGASC Color Guard Championships in April at Marina High School, dominating the Scholastic AAA division and taking first place in all categories. The victory enabled the Color Guard to make an encore performance at UC Irvine’s Bren Center, alongside other competitive groups from across Southern California.

Whittier High’s Indoor Percussion Ensemble drumline received a silver medal after finishing in second place in the Scholastic Regional A division of the WGASC competition held at A.B. Miller High School in Fontana. The drumline earned first place points in the visual effects and music composition and performance categories.

– MORE –

"We have a team of great music coaches on our staff, and the relationships they are building with our students are bringing them great success," Mijares said. "Both sides are motivated to excel. We are very creative in the way we design shows and are bringing the right aesthetic to the performance. This has been a very productive, sentimental, and significant season for the Cardinal Brigade."

The Whittier High Festival Ensemble is a new music group created at the beginning of the 2025-26 school year. The Ensemble is an afterschool concert band that is open to all grades and musicians. The 30-member squad's debut season has seen the Ensemble receive a "Superior" rating at the Southern California School Band & Orchestra Association (SCSBOA) District Festival, earning them a chance to play at the SCSBOA Regional Festival in April.

"We have a lot of kids who enjoy concert band and want to do something away from the pressure of the classroom, so we started Festival Ensemble," Mijares said. "All musicians and all grades are welcome. Festival Ensemble is for the students who want to put in the work to achieve at a high level and enjoy the camaraderie of being in band."

Mijares is a former drumline teacher who has been playing music since he was in elementary school. Growing up locally, Mijares graduated from La Habra High School, then attended Fullerton College and Cal State Fullerton. Mijares still serves as a performer for Sidle Entertainment, which provides drumline performances for professional sports teams, including the Los Angeles Kings, Chargers, and Dodgers.

"Congratulations to Edward Mijares and the Cardinal Brigade for all that they have accomplished this year," Whittier High principal Andres Favela said. "We have so many talented musicians and performers and it's wonderful to see them reach their potential and, in many cases, go well beyond."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

WUHSD_WHSBAND1: Three members of the Whittier High School Cardinal Brigade took their talents to the 2026 Tournament of Roses Parade. Senior Phoenix Pint (left) performed with the prestigious Bands of America Honor Band, while sophomore Darren Rico (center left) and senior Ramon Mendez (right) were selected for the Pasadena City College Honor Band, both for the second consecutive year. The trio are seen here with WHS music teacher Edward Mijares (center right).

WUHSD_WHSBAND2: The Whittier High School Color Guard received a gold medal at the WGASC Color Guard Championships in April at Marina High School.

###

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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Irma Rodríguez Moisa
President

Josefina E. Canchola
Vice President

Jaime López
Clerk

Dr. Russell Castañeda-Calleros
Member

Armando Urteaga
Member

Dr. Monica Oviedo
Superintendent