



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified School District Counseling Teams Earn National Honors for Student Connection and Support

FONTANA, CA - From helping newcomer students navigate life in a new country to teaching middle schoolers how to manage stress, resolve conflict, and build confidence, counseling teams across Fontana Unified School District are supporting students in feeling connected to their school communities, earning them national recognition.

Fontana High School and Harry S. Truman Middle School received the Recognized American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Model Program (RAMP) designation on July 13, honoring their counseling teams for implementing data-driven, comprehensive counseling programs that support the whole student.

At Fontana High, counselors analyzed student survey data to identify students who felt less connected to the campus and referred them to programs like Breakfast Club and El Clúb, where they built friendships and participated in activities designed to ease their adjustment to a new school community and language.

Breakfast Club students saw improvements in their academics and well-being, with the rate of students asking teachers for help increasing by 88.2%. El Clúb students reported a 25.9% increase in feeling their identity was valued and a 22.7% increase in feeling connected to the school community.

For Class of 2026 graduate Erily Balle, who transferred to Fontana High after arriving in the United States, the support from the counseling team and programs like El Clúb helped transform what initially felt like an intimidating transition into a sense of community and purpose.

"The counseling team gave me the tools to figure out my future and how to achieve my goals and dreams," Balle said. "They not only give us wings, they teach us how to fly, and I felt absolutely loved here. I feel like this is my second home."

Balle found connection through cheerleading, rallies, campus activities, and El Clúb, which she described as a place where students from different countries could share experiences, build friendships, and receive support as they adjusted to a new school, language, and community. In the fall, Balle will continue her education at California Baptist University to pursue nursing.

At Truman, counselors used behavioral and referral data to identify students who could benefit from additional conflict resolution and emotional support services. The counseling team implemented small-

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group interventions focused on anger management, social skills, academic success, and conflict resolution, including Spanish-language sessions designed to improve access for English learner students.

Truman's counseling team set an ASCA goal to strengthen positive student behavior and reduce referrals by 15%. The team exceeded that goal, reducing referrals by 21.6%.

Eighth-grader Ashley Fernandez said Truman counselors have helped her manage stress and anxiety through coping strategies, such as box breathing, while encouraging her involvement in advanced math, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), and basketball.

"They supported me a lot," Fernandez said. "They're always the first ones to reach out to me and ask me if I'm okay. If it wasn't for them, I would not be nearly as involved as I am now."

Truman counselors said those supports are part of a larger effort to help students build strong relationships with adults on campus, learn how to resolve conflict peacefully, and feel comfortable seeking help when they need it.

"Every student deserves to feel that they belong and know there are caring adults ready to support them," Fontana Unified Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "The work of our counseling teams at Fontana High and Truman Middle School shows how thoughtful support can help students build confidence and find their place within the school community."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_RAMP_RECOGNITION1: Fontana High School's counseling team was honored in New Orleans on July 13 with a Recognized American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Model Program (RAMP) designation, highlighting their data-driven efforts to support students academically, socially, and emotionally.

FUSD_RAMP_RECOGNITION2: Harry S. Truman Middle School's counseling team was also recognized with a RAMP designation from ASCA for using behavioral and referral data to identify students who could benefit from additional conflict resolution and emotional support services.

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