

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Whittier Parents Graduate from Education Program

Children look on as parents celebrate accomplishment

SOUTH WHITTIER – More than 40 South Whittier School District parents who have been actively involved in the District's Parent Education Program since the beginning of the school year were celebrated during a culminating graduation ceremony – a first for many of the Spanish-speaking parents – on March 9.

"We are so proud of these parents and their commitment to being engaged in the child's education, as well as their own self-motivation to be involved in our schools," said Francisco Meza, Director of School/Community Relations and Program Compliance who oversees parent engagement programs.

"Many of these parents are immigrants and they are integral part of our community who are helping to shape the next generation of leaders.

The Parent Education Program is operated in conjunction with Take Note Institute, a Whittier-based coaching and leadership consulting agency that focuses on biliteracy and teaching parents to support and get involved in their children's learning through a series of workshops and other parent engagement opportunities.

A commemorative video was played during the ceremony, showcasing the various activities and workshops in which parents have participated. Children celebrated their parents as they were awarded for perfect attendance, participation and completion of the program during the festive ceremony held at Graves Middle School.

"Getting involved is one of the biggest things we can do in our lives," said parent Clemente Villarreal, who, along with his wife Theresa, has attended Take Note workshops to support their five children. "Our kids are much happier now that we're involved and are there for them and their future."

Take Note Institute trains, educates and assists South Whittier parents so that they can be active participants in their schools, working as equal partners toward their children's education. Parents are encouraged to create a strong network of support between student, home, school and community to help students achieve academic success.

The organization has coordinated 12 parent workshops since the beginning of the school year. Topics included positive discipline, nutrition, volunteer opportunities, bullying, homework help, new student assessments and California Standards, and job skills.

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"I have learned a lot through these workshops – discipline, leadership and how to communicate with my kids," Carmela Elementary School parent Myrna Vasquez said. "I am so thankful to Take Note and South Whittier for helping me to learn about the district's programs and giving me the tools to apply the strategies I've learned at home."

Parents are also encouraged to visit the District parent center, where they can tap into valuable resources and participate in nutrition classes, parent counseling classes, and field trips to local colleges.

"I want to congratulate this wonderful group of parents for being involved and helping us help their children thrive in and outside of the classroom," Superintendent Gail Baxter said. "Parents are the most powerful influence our students have, and this graduation, a rite of passage that many of our parents have not personally experienced before, demonstrates to their students that steady commitment can and will lead to success in the future."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

031717_SWSD_PARENTGRAD1: South Whittier School District parent Claudia Hernandez Cipres celebrates her completion of the Parent Education Program with her son looking on during a graduation ceremony held at Graves Middle School on March 9. More than 40 parents who have been actively involved in the program since the beginning of the school year were recognized with certificates.

031717_SWSD_PARENTGRAD2: More than 40 South Whittier School District parents who have been actively involved in the District's Parent Education Program since the beginning of the school year were celebrated during a culminating graduation ceremony on March 9.

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MISSION/VISION: The South Whittier School District holds students and staff to rigorous standards in order to prepare every scholar for 21st Century success in college and the workforce, within a safe and supportive environment. Our students are challenged to reach their full potential and develop their curiosity and thirst for discovery. Our district celebrates our families' diverse traditions, cultures, and languages as foundations for learning.