



Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 28, 2020 **CONTACT:** Juliette Funes, William Diepenbrock **PHONE:** 909-445-1001

Whittier Union Sends Off Class of 2020 with Cap and Gown Distribution, Virtual Recognitions

WHITTIER – As Whittier Union seniors approach the final days of their high school career, the District’s high schools are finding ways to safely recognize 2,800 members of the Class the 2020, their accomplishments over the last four years and their ability to persevere under the most unexpected circumstances.

Following social distancing guidelines and facial covering requirements, each school meticulously in May organized grab-and-go opportunities to provide seniors their graduation packages, which included caps and gowns, medals and yard signs, which were sponsored by the Whittier Union High School District Educational Foundation. Virtual awards shows were also held to celebrate students.

“Although our traditional celebrations couldn’t happen the way we had hoped, we want to provide students and their families the opportunity to recognize the incredible journey they’ve taken to reach this milestone,” Superintendent Martin J. Plourde said. “I want to thank our staff for organizing such well-planned and safe programs and our community for showing support to our seniors as they reach the finish line.”

Graduations have been postponed until late July to give seniors time to make up any classes necessary during summer school and allow extra time for public health restrictions to be eased. In the meantime, schools have found creative and safe ways to recognize students from a distance.

Whittier High School distributed graduation regalia on [May 18](#), followed by La Serna High School on [May 19](#), California High School on [May 20](#) and Santa Fe High School on [May 21](#). Pioneer High School, which distributed yard signs on [May 18](#), will issue caps and gowns on June 1. Frontier and Sierra Vista high schools and Whittier Union Adult School, which distributed yard signs [May 20-21](#), will issue caps and gowns in July.

Schools also recognized high academic achievers and scholarship winners during virtual Senior Awards Nights. [Pioneer](#) held its live program over Zoom, while [Santa Fe](#), [Whittier High](#) and California high schools posted their awards programs online. La Serna will distribute awards June 3.

This year, **Cal High** is expected to graduate 675 seniors, including valedictorians Caroline Schloss, who will attend UC Berkeley, UC Irvine-bound seniors Steven Leal and Patrocinio Ramirez, and salutatorian Agnes Cosico, who will attend UCLA or Cal State Fullerton.

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La Serna's Class of 2020, which includes 576 seniors, is led by Cole Aedo, who is attending Cal Tech; Samantha Lim, who is heading to UC Berkeley; Elizabeth Vazquez, who will attend Johns Hopkins University; Katelyn Nye and Isabela Angulo, both of whom are attending UCLA;

Pioneer will graduate 300 seniors, including valedictorians Eric Cerda and Mayeli Sarmiento, both of whom will attend UCLA, and salutatorian Benjamin Henriquez, who will attend UC Berkeley.

Whittier High will graduate 403 seniors, including valedictorians Julia Casas, who will attend Harvard; Lee Chu, who will attend UC Irvine; Cristian Rodriguez, who will attend UC Berkeley; Meghan Uyeda and Sydney Vigil, both of whom will attend UCLA; Matthew Almeida and Audrey Hollman. The salutatorians are Damaris Lozano, who will attend UC San Diego, and Melly Trejo, who will attend New York University.

Santa Fe will graduate 509 seniors, including valedictorian Griselda Chavez, who will attend Dartmouth University, and salutatorians Lizbeth Gonzalez and Evelyn Paniagua, both of whom plan to attend USC.

"These past four years have been filled with setbacks and accomplishments. Despite the mishaps, I've always been motivated with knowing that I could set my own limits and could only grow stronger from the obstacles," said Chavez, who plans to become an environmental lawyer. "I am thankful for the endless support of my friends and consider myself lucky to have been aided by a strong community of guidance counselors, educators and peers."

Sierra Vista is expected to celebrate 176 grads, with the class led by valedictorian Andrew Pilani and salutatorian Maia Lam. The school will graduate 10 students with honors, distribute 30 Spartan Awards, 12 ASB Awards and six Golden State Seals. **Frontier** is expected to graduate 80 seniors.

Whittier Union Adult School will award 24 students with diplomas and recognize 47 students who have completed their High School Equivalency exams and 27 students who have completed a Career Technology Certificate program.

Diplomas will be conferred when students have completed all requirements to be eligible to graduate.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

052820_WUHS_D_RECOGNITIONS1: Santa Fe High School teachers and staff congratulated Class of 2020 seniors as they picked up their caps and gowns and other graduation regalia on May 21.

052820_WUHS_D_RECOGNITIONS2: A California High School senior picks up his graduation regalia, including a Puente sash, during a socially distanced grab-and-go program on May 20.

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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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