



Press Release

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Whittier Union Kicks Off 2018-19 with Freshman First Day, Welcomes Thousands to Campuses

WHITTIER – Wearing bright crimson shirts showcasing their “Lancer Pride,” 175 La Serna High School Link Crew members formed a tunnel welcoming more than 600 incoming freshmen with cheers and high-fives as they entered the gymnasium, giving the new students a sneak preview of high school life as part of Freshman First Day activities on Aug. 14, one day ahead of the official first day of school.

The Freshman First Day program, now in its 14th year, encourages Whittier Union’s newest students to tour their respective high school campuses, attend abbreviated class sessions, meet their teachers and classmates, and participate in fun and interactive orientation activities. This year, Whittier Union is welcoming more than 2,750 freshmen and more than 11,400 students overall.

“Freshman First Day is a Whittier Union tradition that keeps getting better every year,” Whittier Union Superintendent Martin Plourde said. “School pride is a compelling force, and once you’ve caught the spirit it stays with you. I am so proud to see the commitment of our students and teachers in helping make the first day a special one. I am looking forward to another tremendous school year.”

La Serna senior and Link Crew leader Kyle Chen delighted in leading the freshmen class in a spirited call and response, inspiring classmates to wave their arms in the air and display their best dance moves.

“My Link Crew leaders were enthusiastic and helped me throughout my freshman year. If you were having a bad day, they would always be there to cheer you up,” Chen said. “Last year, I did mentoring for Algebra II and that helped prepare me to be a Link Crew leader this year. I want to help the new students transition from middle to high school.”

La Serna junior and Associated Student Body member Katie Nye is excited to be an adviser to the Freshman Class Council, where she will assist in preparing new students to participate in hosting school assemblies and other ASB events throughout the school year.

“I love to get the freshmen involved,” Nye said. “I am looking forward to spending time with them and getting them comfortable with leadership responsibilities. I’m excited because they are a good group.”

After the assembly, the freshmen followed their Link Crew leaders to classrooms, where they met their teachers. During the school year, La Serna Link Crew members will meet with the freshmen four times a week for study hall and team-building activities.

“The purpose of Link Crew is to make our new students feel welcome socially, emotionally and academically,” La Serna Spanish teacher and Link Crew coordinator Dama Flores said. “At La Serna, this leadership goes beyond the first day and encompasses the entire school year. For many freshmen, the experience is so rewarding that they are eager to join Link Crew when they get older.”

La Serna freshman Jordan Henderson is appreciative of the support from his new classmates.

“I was kind of nervous coming into the first day, but my sister is a Link Crew member, so I already have a sense of Lancer Pride,” Henderson said. “I have met a lot of my new classmates during volleyball and basketball camps. It’s helpful when you know you are not alone.”

La Serna Principal Ann Fitzgerald addressed the freshmen during the morning assembly, advising them that high school is hard work but that the magic moment will come when they decide to get involved in school activities, which will lead to new friendships and opportunities.

“We began our Link Crew program in 2006, and every year I am so proud of how our students step up to the challenge of being school leaders,” Fitzgerald said. “When you look around our campus, you see students and teachers who share the same goal, to have a rewarding and fulfilling school experience that will prepare them for college and career. That’s what Lancer Pride is all about.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

081718_WUHSD_FRESHMANFIRST1: La Serna High School Principal Ann Fitzgerald addresses students during a Freshman First Day assembly on Aug. 14. La Serna Link Crew members welcomed more than 600 incoming freshmen with cheers and high-fives, giving them a sneak preview of high school life ahead of the official first day of school on Aug. 15.

081718_WUHSD_FRESHMANFIRST2: La Serna freshmen share a fist bump during Freshman First Day activities on Aug. 14. The Whittier Union tradition, now in its 14th year, gives incoming freshmen an opportunity to meet their new teachers and classmates one day ahead of the first day of school. Whittier Union is welcoming more than 2,750 freshmen and more than 11,400 students overall for the 2018-19 school year.

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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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