



# Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

*To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...*

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Aug. 25, 2020    **CONTACT:** Juliette Funes, William Diepenbrock    **PHONE:** 909-445-1001

## Whittier Union Kicks Off Virtual 2020-21 School Year with Resources and Support

**WHITTIER** – Whittier Union launched the 2020-21 school year on Aug. 12, welcoming 10,500 new and returning scholars virtually and providing support to students and families as they transition to the remote learning instructional model – which has seen nearly 100% of students actively participating.

District leaders have spent the last several months developing an extensive four-phase strategic learning plan to educate students in a virtual learning environment, providing teachers, staff, parents and students with the trainings, tools and resources to ensure a successful start to the school year.

“The launch of our unconventional school year has been nothing short of spectacular, with nearly 100% of students actively participating, turning in assignments and engaging with our teachers on a daily basis,” Superintendent Martin Plourde said. “We’re off to a better start than any of us could have hoped for and we will continue our goal of closing the achievement gap and ensuring our students have the support and resources to succeed, even in the face of a global pandemic.”

For the fall semester, students are taking three online classes in each of the two nine-week periods. Each day includes live interaction with teachers and peers, as well as virtual office hours, student support and independent class time.

To ensure an effective online learning experience, schools distributed Chromebooks and hotspots to students in need, hosted back-to-school town hall meetings to answer frequently asked questions, created online videos to explain class schedules and what remote learning entails, and developed student technology and parent portal assistance websites. Administrators are also reaching out to students who are not yet online and providing them the resources necessary to ensure their continued education. The District is also distributing lunch and breakfast through its [grab-and-go meal](#) program.

District educators have been working collaboratively to develop robust curriculum and common assessments that can seamlessly transition between online and in-person instruction for when schools are allowed to physically re-open. The District may transition to Stage 2, which includes some in-person support/office hours, at some point during the semester should health conditions improve.

Teachers had the opportunity to interact with their first set of students during virtual Freshman First Day activities held for the Class of 2024 on Aug. 11.

Hosted by upperclassmen student leaders – called Link Crew and Senators – Freshman First Day serves as the District’s new student orientation program, where freshmen meet their classmates, learn about

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the academic and extracurricular opportunities available, meet their teachers and attend abbreviated class sessions where they learn the expectations. The program – held virtually for the first time – is now in its 16th year.

“It took a collective effort to be ready to launch, and our teachers and staff have been working so hard to ensure a seamless educational experience for our students,” Plourde said. “One of the hallmarks we are most proud of at Whittier Union is doing the impossible exceedingly well. This will be a challenging year, but I want to thank our team for their service and dedication to our students and community.”

The Whittier Union Adult School has launched a parent education class to assist parents in supporting their students with remote learning. Call (562) 698-8121, ext. 1300 for more information.

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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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