



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jaime Escalante Legacy Permeates Whittier Union

Students celebrate completion of intensive summer math academy

WHITTIER – More than 600 Whittier-area middle and high school students celebrated their completion of a challenging six-week summer mathematics academy that prepares them for college-level math courses and propels them to the next course level for the 2017-18 school year.

The Jaime Escalante Summer Math Academy, now in its 27th year at Pioneer High School, concluded with a July 20 celebration with family and friends who cheered as the seventh- through 12th-grade students received certificates of completion. Those who received A's or Bs earned 10 credits that will be transferred to their transcripts, enabling them to advance one course level.

The enrichment program is inspired by famous math educator Jaime Escalante and was developed by East Los Angeles College to provide inner-city students and disadvantaged youth pre-collegiate math instruction.

“That certificate has their name, but it bears your last name,” Javier Gonzalez, math department chair and director of the summer academy, said to parents in attendance. “That means it’s a family accomplishment. You did this together. Everything your child accomplishes is because of their family support.”

The academy offered 15 classes covering Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Math Analysis and Calculus to students from Whittier Union’s five comprehensive high schools as well as Los Nietos, East Whittier, Granada and Hillview middle schools.

The accelerated program compresses a math class that is normally taught over an entire school year into 150 hours, or six weeks. Classes were taught by college professors and incorporated college- and high school-level tutors, including 15 former Pioneer High students who took advantage of the program and wanted to give back to the community.

“At Whittier Union, you are cousins and you help each other out,” said Fernando Fernandez, ELAC math professor and Escalante Math Academy program director. “I have to commend this community for fostering something very special and sharing it with others.”

Fernandez explained the importance of reaching students who demonstrate what Escalante described as “*ganas*” – the desire to learn, the ability to sacrifice and the wish to get ahead.

“My mission is to expand the support currently offered,” Fernandez said. “If somebody wants to do math, we’re going to be there to help.”

The academy has been a staple of Pioneer High School, where Gonzalez has led the program since its onset and partnered with ELAC to give Whittier’s young learners the opportunity to pursue college-level classes while in high school.

“This intensive program has really brought our community together and paved the way for our Whittier Union students and those who will be joining us in the future to take advantage of this wonderful resource that is available in their own backyard,” Principal Lilia Bozigian said. “The program’s leaders worked hard every day to ensure our students master the concepts and have the support they need to achieve their goals.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

080417_WUHSD_ESCALANTE1: More than 600 Whittier-area students from Whittier Union’s comprehensive high schools and local middle schools participated in the 27th annual Jaime Escalante Summer Math Academy. The program concluded with a celebration on July 20 at Pioneer High School.

080417_WUHSD_ESCALANTE2: Hundreds of seventh- through 12th-grade students participated in the Jaime Escalante Summer Math Academy. Those who received A’s or Bs earned 10 credits that will be transferred to their transcripts, enabling them to advance one course level.

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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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