



## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Assistant Superintendent Martin Plourde to Lead as Whittier Union's Next Superintendent

**WHITTIER, CA** – The Whittier Union High School District Board of Trustees on Feb. 9 selected Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Martin Plourde, who has served the District in various leadership capacities for 15 years, as its next Superintendent.

The selection follows extensive discussions by the Board of Trustees and widespread outreach to solicit input on the qualities, skills and abilities most valued in a superintendent, which included being collaborative and student-centered – tenets Whittier Union has long embraced.

“Throughout his 15 years of service to Whittier Union, Martin has consistently demonstrated the character and qualities that stakeholders stated were most important to them,” Board of Trustees President Leighton Anderson said. “Martin has proven himself to be the perfect person to lead our District, providing the experience, consistency and stability that are vital to continuing the successes we have achieved together. We know that he will do an incredible job.”

Plourde will succeed Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson, who will retire in June after 39 years as an educator and administrative leader in the District, including 14 years as superintendent.

“I am extremely humbled to be considered for this position, where I will continue to be driven by the collaboration of a deeply committed staff in making student-centered decisions and proving that demographics do not determine destiny,” Plourde said. “I want to thank the Board of Trustees for having confidence in me. I am committed to working every day to live up to the high expectations of our school community and carrying on the Whittier Union legacy.”

Before making its decision, the Board of Trustees held four sessions to discuss the process and selection of a successor to Thorstenson, including a Jan. 9 board study session, a Jan. 12 closed-session meeting, a Feb. 2 special board closed-session meeting and a Feb. 9 closed-session meeting.

The Board hired consultant Leadership Associates to advise and facilitate the process. The Board also solicited input through an online survey, which garnered 557 responses that overwhelmingly supported a leader who would continue Whittier Union's deeply rooted positive culture. A Feb. 2 stakeholder input session gathered additional feedback from 20 participants.

“Our exemplary Board approached this process with the determination to make an informed decision and listen to those who would be impacted by the change, and their leadership on this matter has been impeccable,” Thorstenson said.

“The quality and dedicated staff across Whittier Union embraces and values our healthy organizational culture and has clearly expressed that they yearn to continue cultivating this precious culture,” Thorstenson said. “Martin Plourde, whom I have worked with side by side for 15 years, has been steeped in and fully embraces the inclusive environment that Whittier Union treasures. I know that Martin will ensure our thriving District is well cared for.”

Plourde’s 34-year career in education began at Junipero Serra High School, where he was a basketball coach and English teacher. He was then a teacher and counselor at Paramount High School before beginning his tenure at Whittier Union in 1991, when he was hired as assistant principal of guidance at Santa Fe High School. He was subsequently appointed Santa Fe’s assistant principal of curriculum, serving under Thorstenson, who was principal at the time.

He was then principal of Arcadia High School for 10 years before returning to Whittier Union in 2005 as principal of La Serna High School, where he served for four years. Plourde was then appointed assistant superintendent of personnel services, a post he held for five years. He has been assistant superintendent of business services since 2014.

“In every position he has held, Plourde has been highly successful, demonstrating a student-centered, customer service approach,” Anderson said. “As assistant superintendent, Plourde has developed technical expertise in critically vital areas, has been immersed in the instructional focus of the District, and has earned the confidence of staff, students, parents and community members.”

Plourde has a master’s degree in counseling and guidance from Loyola Marymount University and Professional Administrative Services Credential from University of California, Riverside. He is a member of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and the California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO).

**PHOTO CAPTION:**

**PLOURDE:** Whittier Union Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Martin Plourde was selected to serve as the District’s next superintendent. Plourde will succeed Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson, who will retire in June.

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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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