



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Whittier Union to Expand Summer School Courses, Create Academic English Course Under LCAP

WHITTIER, CA – Whittier Union High School District plans to invest \$15 million to expand summer school courses, broaden student mental health services, strengthen technology support and implement a unique Academic English course that will directly support English learner students as part of its 2015-18 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

The plan, a requirement of the state's school funding system, guides District efforts to improve student learning. It identifies goals for each year, strategies to achieve those goals and funding sources. Some programs target all students, while others focus on the state's three high-needs groups: economically disadvantaged students, foster children and English learners.

The Board of Trustees will vote on the LCAP and 2015-16 budget at 7 p.m. **Tuesday, June 23.**

"It is imperative that we continue to enrich our efforts to support all our kids, including enhancing our services for our English learner students, and implement tangible measures that will allow us to close the achievement gap," Whittier Union High School District Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson said. "Through the expansion of accessible tutoring services, the reduction of class sizes and the extension of after-school computer lab and library hours, we expect to experience even more impressive results."

The 2015-18 LCAP pledges to continue programs that met or exceeded 2014-15 goals, including hiring highly qualified teachers, providing teacher training hours, reducing class size, encouraging further Advanced Placement participation and maintaining strong attendance with a current rate of 96.27 percent and graduation rates presently at 96 percent.

"We have seen remarkable increases in our student achievement data at every school over the past decade, which has been strengthened by our 'Whatever It Takes' initiative and our efforts to continue the high rate of achievement among all students at Whittier Union," Thorstenson said. "We remain committed to those efforts and because of our quality and dedicated staff we are confident that we will continue to see positive outcomes."

The review of data also showed marked success in decreasing dropouts among the District's English learner students, dropping from 14 percent in 2010 to a current rate of 7 percent. The current dropout rate of English learners in Los Angeles County is 22.8 percent and 20.9 percent in California. However,

achievement challenges for English learners remain, and as such, a unique Academic English course developed in coordination with Whittier College will be implemented for the 2015-16 year.

The many programs and services being planned that will significantly assist students include:

- Expanded summer school course offerings
- Reduced class sizes
- Additional counselors
- New computers
- After school library/computer lab hours
- Additional tutoring services
- Additional support classes in English, Guided Study
- Field experiences/college visits to students and parents
- Additional after-school courses for credit recovery, math and science support, Advanced Placement preparation
- Expanded student mental health services
- Funding for Horizons Program to support English learners, socio-economically disadvantaged students and foster youth

Whittier Union's development process for the LCAP included the creation of a LCAP Task Force, which provided a wide representation of teacher leaders, counselors and classified representatives from every school.

The Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), School Site Council, English Learner Parent Advisory Council, School Student Congress and District Student Advisory Committee each met monthly to discuss the process and provide input. Moreover, electronic surveys solicited extensive input from parents, students, teachers and staff. In addition, four District LCAP Advisory Committee meetings comprised of parents, students, teachers, classified staff and community members were held throughout the year to obtain further feedback on the development of the LCAP before its presentation to the Board of Trustees in May.

The plan also provides a review of efforts made during the 2014-15 school year, the first year California districts adopted LCAPs to guide their plans for improving student performance.

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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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