



## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Whittier Union Celebrates More Than 3,000 Graduates

Pioneer High breaks in new Dick Torres Memorial Stadium with ceremony

**WHITTIER, CA** – More than 3,000 students from Whittier Union High School District's five comprehensive high schools, two alternative high schools, adult school and Transition program for special education students ages 18 to 22 capped their high school careers with commencement ceremonies this week, with Pioneer High School celebrating its graduation in the brand new 7,000-seat Dick Torres Memorial Stadium.

Frontier and Sierra Vista high schools, the Whittier Adult School and the Transition program held their ceremonies June 2. California, La Serna, Pioneer, Santa Fe and Whittier high schools held their graduations June 3.

Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson congratulated the Class of 2015 for their achievements and for persevering through challenges and accomplishing a major milestone in their lives: earning a high school diploma that will launch them toward their post-secondary endeavors, whether they pursue college, the military or careers.

"I am incredibly proud of these students' accomplishments and the dedication they have demonstrated to reach high levels of academic success both for themselves and their families," Thorstenson said. "This class is full of smart, talented and caring leaders who are ready to take on new challenges. I offer my heartfelt congratulations to them for their latest achievement. I know they will make Whittier Union proud."

Presiding over Pioneer's ceremony in the new stadium, Principal Monica Oviedo recalled Dick Torres, a long-time Whittier Union educator, as someone who relished the many success of every Pioneer alumnus.

"Tonight, we are so proud to celebrate and chronicle your success," Oviedo said. "As this chapter closes, please know that I am in awe of each of you for facing tremendous challenges with grace and remaining focused on your future. It has been our pleasure to have played a role in your lives and we all look forward to hearing about the ways in which you can and will positively influence our future."

**Pioneer's** valedictorian was James K. Elisaldez and salutatorian was Karina Jimenez. **Cal High's** valedictorians were Eduardo Gonzalez, Kathy Vo and Tanya Ittimeykin. **La Serna's** valedictorian was Timothy Nguyen. The salutatorians were Emi Eastman and Camryn Ching. **Sante Fe's** valedictorian was Kristopher Gastelum. The salutatorians were Alvaro Castellon and Jose Jarquin. **Whittier High School's**

valedictorians were Adriana Bustamante, Natasha Nerenberg and Michael Ontiveros. The salutatorian was Christine Gotts.

Ittimeykin, one of Cal High's three valedictorians, encouraged her peers to look to the future and explore their options as they prepare for the next chapter of their lives.

"Take advantage and pursue ambitions outside a set curriculum and controlled environment," she said. "Find your passion. This is your time to explore. This is your time to discover who you are and decide who you're going to be to the world."

The vast majority of the District's graduates are pursuing higher education, ranging from four-year universities and community colleges to technical education colleges. Some will also be entering military academies and military service.

Whittier Union's graduates will be attending state and national universities, including USC, UCLA, UC Berkeley, Whittier College, University of Michigan and most of the colleges within both the University of California and California State University systems.

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**CHS:** California High School Class of 2015.

**LSHS:** La Serna High School Class of 2015.

**PHS:** Pioneer High School Class of 2015.

**SFHS:** Santa Fe High School Class of 2015.

**WHS:** Whittier High School Class of 2015.

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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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