



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Whittier Union Launches PRIDE Program for Special Education Students

WHITTIER – To ensure that special education students receive high-quality services closer to home, Whittier Union this summer launched the PRIDE Santa Fe program, which will offer specialized instruction to students with emotional challenges who would otherwise have to attend private facilities.

Adjacent to the Santa Fe High School campus, the program serves students from throughout the District with emotional, social and behavioral challenges. Seven students have enrolled in the program this summer and school officials expect the program to grow over the 2016-17 school year, with a maximum of 24 spaces for students.

“We are very proud of the services we offer to our special education students and their families, both in terms of scope and quality,” Director of Special Education Jackie Leigh said. “PRIDE will give the District more oversight of students’ instruction while providing a local service to students and families.”

Before the launch of the PRIDE program, students who needed more personal attention than what is offered by the special education programs at their home high schools, or in the program for students with emotional challenges that is housed at Pioneer High School, were sent to private facilities funded by the District.

Whittier Union is able to offer PRIDE with the operational and financial support of the Whittier Area Cooperative Special Education Program (WACSEP), a joint powers authority consisting of seven local school districts that provides education for students with special needs.

“It’s this kind of collaboration with our local schools that allows local educators to develop healthy and enriching environments where our students with emotional challenges can succeed,” said Jimmy Templin, executive director for WACSEP. “We expect to see great results with this new program.”

While the District still offers non-public school placement, the PRIDE program will allow students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for emotional, social and behavioral needs to be served as close to home as possible.

Students in PRIDE will have the same school hours as any other student during the regular school year and summer school. The goal is that students enjoy a rigorous curriculum that earns them a high school diploma and prepares them for life after high school.

“We have amazing teachers who believe all students can learn and that higher expectations for our emotionally challenged kids will result in higher achievement,” said Ronda Brown, an education specialist who supervises the PRIDE program. “Every single student has the ability to pursue excellence, and we’re proud to be able to contribute to their long-term success.”

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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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