



Press Release

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New School Year Begins at Whittier Union

Nearly 3,000 freshmen sample high school life during Freshman First Day

WHITTIER, CA – The Whittier Union High School District kicked off the 2015-16 school year on Aug. 11, giving nearly 3,000 members of the Class of 2019 a preview of what student life is like on its campuses. Students were treated to opening pep rallies with colorful balloons, spirited music and displays of Condor, Lancer, Titan, Chieftain and Cardinal pride, eliminating any first-day jitters before the official start of school on Aug. 12.

As part of the Freshman First Day program, incoming ninth-graders tour their respective schools, attend abbreviated class sessions, meet their teachers and classmates, and participate in fun and interactive orientation activities unique to each campus, including signing up for two co-curricular activities in a club rush, before upperclassmen arrive the next day.

Now in its 11th year, the program successfully transitions students from middle school to high school.

“Our teachers, staff and administrators work diligently every year to improve our students’ well-being and academic performance. One of the ways we do that is with our Freshman First Day program, which was put in place to warmly welcome our kids and instill in them confidence to succeed in high school,” Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson said. “We know the transition from middle school to high school can be a tough one, so by introducing our freshmen to their teachers and new classmates and uniting them with our seasoned student leaders, this program ensures that each student’s high school experience is a positive one.”

At Whittier High School, 536 freshmen were greeted by more than 250 student leaders, including Associated Student Body (ASB) members, band and pep team members, and Link Crew juniors and seniors, called Senators, who will serve as mentors to the freshmen during their first year.

Sophomore Griselda Alarcon, who helped coordinate activities and hopes to be a Senator next year, said Freshman First Day helped ease her nerves when she began attending Whittier High.

“It helped me feel comfortable with school, and I met new friends and knew them on the first day of school, and I’ve joined a lot of school activities,” Alarcon said. “I enjoy helping the new freshmen. They’re not doing this alone. They have someone by their side.”

Students met the iconic Cardinal mascot and participated in a “Clap Your Hands” group dance, a balloon pop challenge and other team-building exercises. They also took part in a Cardinal lunch with Whittier High students, teachers and staff.

“Freshman jitters can be all too real for our new students, but we want them to know that high school is an exciting time and provides them with an excellent opportunity to make connections, build their futures and reach their personal and academic goals,” Whittier High School Principal Lori Eshilian said. “I know that this new class of Cardinals will make me and the rest of the Whittier High community proud.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FRESHMEN1: Whittier High School sophomores Griselda Alarcon, left, and Genesis Romero were part of a large group of student leaders who helped coordinate the Aug. 11 Freshman First Day program, a tradition at Whittier Union that helps transition students from middle school to high school.

FRESHMEN2: More than 250 student leaders at Whittier High School welcomed 536 freshmen to their campus with a pep rally, spirited music other interactive activities as part of the Freshman First Day program on Aug. 11.

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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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