



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 28, 2014

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Whittier High School Celebrates Opening of Full-Time Integrated School Health Center

WHITTIER, CA – Whittier High School, in partnership with The Whole Child, recently held a celebration for the opening of its newly-established mental health services office that is centrally located on campus, helping to restore children’s emotional health and support Whittier Union’s efforts to initiate a Student Well-Being program across all schools.

Dubbed “The Gallery,” the integrated school health center operated by the Whittier-based nonprofit, The Whole Child, will now offer services on a full-time basis to Whittier High School students and their families.

“It’s wonderful to have a comprehensive mental health services office on the Whittier High School campus to help support and address our students’ emotional needs at the moment they need it,” said Whittier Union High School District Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson. “We are thankful to The Whole Child for partnering with us and helping us launch our Student Well-Being program across all of our campuses, which is a critical step to ensuring the well-being and success for all students at Whittier Union.”

This is the beginning of the third year The Whole Child is partnering with Whittier High to provide behavioral health services to students on campus, developing a client base of more than 70 and building on its 15-year history of offering mental health services to Whittier Union students.

The expanded partnership between the District and The Whole Child is made possible with funding provided under the Mental Health Service Act (Prevention and Early Intervention – Proposition 63) from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Services.

The additional funding will increase access to behavioral health services by allowing therapists to be on campus full-time, five days a week and be available to students beyond the academic school year and during breaks. Therapists will also support students after-hours with comprehensive services such as individual, family and group therapy, psychological testing, case management, medication assessment and management.

Charlene Dimas-Peinado, chief executive officer of The Whole Child, said integrating mental health professionals into school services at Whittier High provides an avenue to promote mental wellness with prevention strategies, as well as to immediately identify at-risk behaviors.

“Whether it is a minor emotional issue that requires basic support or a more complicated mental health issue requiring a more intensive intervention, The Whole Child is on campus to assist with the emotional well-being and safety of the student,” Dimas Peinado said.

Since the program’s inception at Whittier High, therapists Dana Slay and Brenda Pulido have developed a positive presence on campus by presenting in classrooms and attending parent events, said Principal Lori Eshilian.

“It’s been a great partnership from the very beginning, with The Whole Child providing direct access to behavioral health services to our students and creating a welcoming and comforting environment with The Gallery,” Eshilian said. “This expansion of The Whole Child’s services is a great opportunity for our students and families, and it is my hope that it continues throughout Whittier Union.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

WHOLECHILD1: Whittier High School, in partnership with The Whole Child, holds a ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of an integrated school health center, dubbed “The Gallery,” on campus on Aug. 21. The ceremony included Whittier Union High School District Board President Russell Castañeda-Calleros, Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson, local chambers and keynote speaker, Congresswoman Linda Sanchez.

WHOLECHILD2: Whittier High School students and guests tour the mental health service facility, dubbed “The Gallery,” which is centrally located on campus and provides safe spaces for students and families.

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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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