



# Whittier Union

## HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

*To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...*

### NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Nov. 21, 2023    **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia    **PHONE:** 909-447-2403

## **Whittier Union Senior Discovers Love of Writing, Receives Award of Merit for Resilience**

**WHITTIER** – Before Frontier High School senior David Arias could pursue an academic journey of self-realization and dedication, he had to confront his biggest nemesis – procrastination. Failure to follow through on his class assignments at his home school put Arias a full year behind his peers, jeopardizing his chances to graduate.

Transferring to Frontier as a sophomore, Arias found that the school’s smaller class sizes inspired him to work harder and more efficiently, and he earned more credits in his first semester at Frontier than he had in his first three semesters at his home school.

Establishing a positive connection with teachers, Arias found a love for writing and storytelling. In his junior year, Arias submitted an essay to the statewide California Continuation Education Association (CCEA) conference, earning second place in the state. Reading his essay before family, Frontier staff and educators from across California at the conference, Arias received a standing ovation.

The Whittier Union Board of Trustees recognized Arias for his self-discipline and resolve to take back his education with an Award of Merit during its Nov. 14 Board meeting.

“I want to say thank you to all my teachers at Frontier, especially Mrs. Silva and Mr. Menza, who made me realize that I liked English and writing,” Arias said. “I’d also like to thank my family, who have always been there for me, even if they didn’t support my decisions. My family taught me that when life is beating you down, you must get up and keep moving no matter what.”

While writing his CCEA essay, Arias’ storytelling skills emerged. Writing about one specific day that changed his life for the better, Arias’ original draft was seven pages long, well over the two-page limit for essays.

“There was so much of the story I wanted to tell, then I realized that the story never ends, because I’m consistently learning and developing as a character for the better,” Arias said. “Art and writing are creative skills that help me best express myself and what I’m feeling.”

At the end of his junior year, Arias had completely remediated his credits and was eligible to return to his home school for his senior year. Instead, Arias decided to remain at Frontier High.

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After earning an almost perfect score on his senior project on astronomy in October, Arias is on track to graduate in December, a full semester early.

"We have all been extremely touched and privileged to be a part of David's turnaround story," Frontier High Principal Dr. Margie Moriarty said. "David walks much taller now, he is more confident in himself as a student and as an individual. David is a tremendous student, outstanding writer and a campus leader. We wish him all the best in the future."

Arias is excited about his future and the prospect of attending college. He plans to attend Río Hondo College as a first step towards transferring to a university. In the meantime, Arias wants to find a job to help save money for tuition and buy a car.

"Congratulations to David Arias of Frontier High School for his remarkable determination and commitment to his education," Board President Jaime López said. "David's resilience and dedication to overcoming challenges are truly commendable. Whittier Union is proud to award him the prestigious Award of Merit, which recognizes students who exemplify excellence and emerge stronger in the face of adversity. We celebrate David's achievements and look forward to his continued success on the path to early graduation."

### PHOTO CAPTIONS

**WUHSD\_AWARD1:** Frontier High School senior David Arias celebrates alongside his family after receiving an Award of Merit from the Whittier Union Board of Trustees on Nov. 14.

**WUHSD\_AWARD2:** United Sierra Education Center's administrative team members join David Arias as he receives an Award of Merit from the Board during a meeting on Nov. 14.

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#### OUR MISSION:

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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