

Whittier

UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE



REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Sandra Thorstenson
Superintendent

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to present the Whittier Union High School District report to the community for 2011-12. Whittier Union continues to grow as a healthy, resilient learning organization that provides our students with an excellent comprehensive education in preparation for college and 21st century careers. Our goal is to create avid lifelong learners who are ready and able to achieve their personal and professional potential in a rapidly changing world.

As the data in this report will demonstrate, our focused efforts to implement our "Whatever It Takes" initiative to increase student achievement have brought tremendous outcomes.

The initiative involved creating Professional Learning Communities, where teachers frequently work together to develop common assessments. They then share the data based on student learning to determine what teaching strategies work best in order to improve classroom instruction and ensure that our students are achieving and mastering the standards.

In addition, each school provides comprehensive student support services and uses an alternative bell schedule to allow for embedded support during the school day and common teacher collaboration time.

As a result, students at all five of our comprehensive high schools have demonstrated progress year after year, in multiple measures, attaining higher levels of academic proficiency. Whittier Union's impressive gains have garnered the attention of local, state and national leaders in education. The District's success has been chronicled in *Leading Change in Your School*, by Dr. Doug Reeves; and in *Raising the Bar, Closing the Gap*, by Dr. Rick DuFour. More than 1,000 teachers and school administrators from all over the state and beyond have visited Whittier Union over the past five years to learn how we have attained and sustained academic success.

We have achieved the same focus and high level of effectiveness in our facility improvement projects funded by voter-approved Measure C and Measure W. While our work continues thanks to our communities' support, we have come a long way in creating quality learning environments at each campus.

And yet, just like all of you, our District continues to face significant financial challenges as a result of the economic crisis. Since 2007, Whittier Union has had to cut \$17 million from its budget due to state funding reductions. However, I am proud to report that the District remains fiscally solvent due to the dedicated efforts of our experienced Board of Trustees who, together with our teachers, staff and administrators, have worked collaboratively to cope with our budget limitations.

Through it all, Whittier Union has made it a priority to maintain performing and visual arts courses and athletic programs because our District values both as being essential to our students' overall development and education. Extracurricular offerings also continue to flourish, providing students with a wide variety of activities in which to become involved.

We also remain committed to providing our students with career technical education through the Career Academies we offer at each of our comprehensive high schools. Whittier Union has one of the largest career technical programs in the state with a total of 14 Career Academies. With five academies, California High School has been a model for the District and earned the California Department of Education's Exemplary Career Technical Program award in 2007.

Under the able leadership of our Board of Trustees, Whittier Union continues to be a remarkable place of learning, where students directly benefit from a highly skilled, collegial, and dedicated team of certificated and classified staff. Whittier Union has nurtured a culture of trust where quality people develop effective working relationships which have created a healthy environment in which to learn and work.

Our faculty and staff at Whittier Union are passionate about preparing our students for a bright future and keep our students' well-being and learning as our highest priorities.

— MISSION STATEMENT —

It is the mission of the Whittier Union High School District to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

— VISION STATEMENT —

The Whittier Union High School District will provide all students with an engaging, quality, standards-driven instructional program by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Whittier Union Students Achieving Academic Excellence

Recognized by education leaders as a model of excellent secondary instruction, the Whittier Union High School District continues to focus on its mission to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

The District serves approximately 13,700 students at five comprehensive high schools, a continuation school, an independent study program and an adult school with more than 10,000 students.

Whittier Union High School District is one of few school districts in California to have attained and sustained substantial academic progress over several years across numerous measures.

The District's continued academic improvement is directly related to the efforts of its exemplary Board of Trustees, teachers and staff, to improve every facet of a student's learning experience. Through the "Whatever It Takes" initiative, teachers have formed Professional Learning Communities in order to create and implement common assessments for the purpose of improving instructional practices. A Pyramid of Interventions provides targeted student support. That support begins in ninth grade with extensive ori-

entation, counseling and student mentors. Services to all students include daily tutorials, special support classes, counselors, psychologists and Special Education.

In recent years, California, La Serna and Santa Fe high schools have been recognized as California Distinguished Schools. Also, California, Pioneer, La Serna, Santa Fe and Whittier high schools have each received the California School Board Association's Golden Bell Award for excellence.

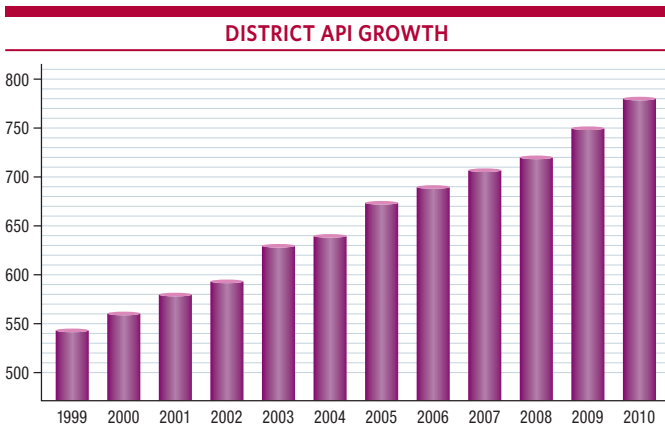
The District's Expanded Horizons Program is nationally recognized for assisting under-represented students enroll in higher education. And Santa Fe High School was recently revalidated as a National Demonstration School for AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a college-readiness system designed to increase the number of students who enroll in four-year colleges.

Today, more than 92% of Whittier Union seniors are graduating. In addition, more than 44% of seniors are completing all courses required for entrance into four-year colleges and universities and 95% of seniors are going on to higher education or trade schools.



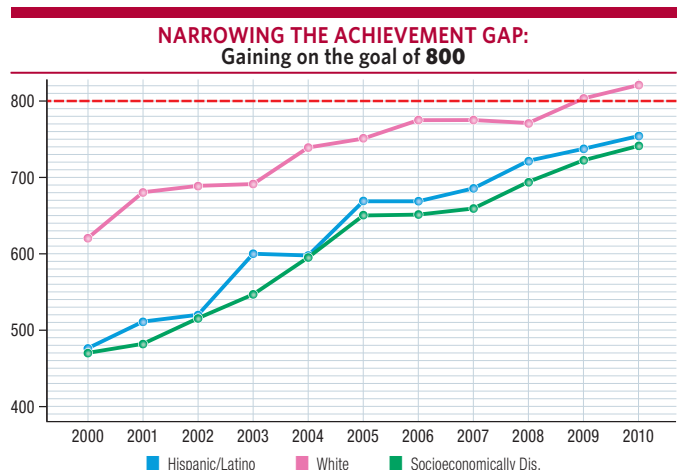
District API Growth

Whittier Union students' state test scores continued to soar in 2009-10. The District's scores on the California State Academic Performance Index (API) have increased steadily by 143 points over the last six years to 765, which is well over the state average of 59 growth points. In addition, out of 987 comprehensive high schools in California, all five of Whittier Union's comprehensive schools are in the 91st to 98th percentiles for API growth.



Narrowing the Achievement Gap

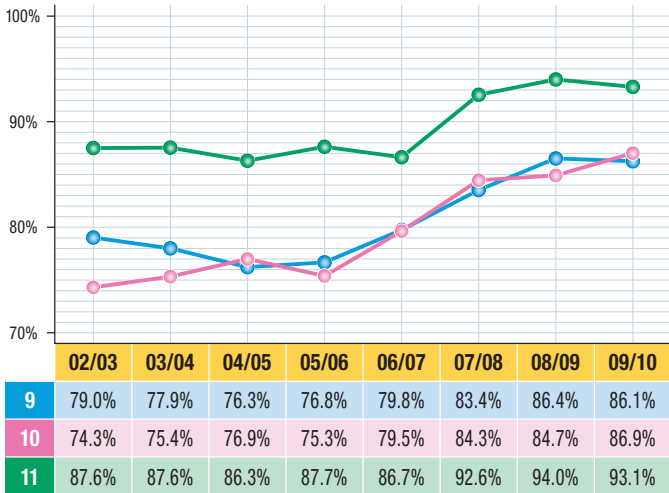
Whittier Union is one of a small number of districts in California to have significantly narrowed the achievement gap. Currently, there is only a 10 percent difference between the highest and lowest performing students.



On Target For Graduation Rate

More Whittier Union students than ever before are earning the credits they need to graduate on time, earning among the highest on-target to graduate rates in District history.

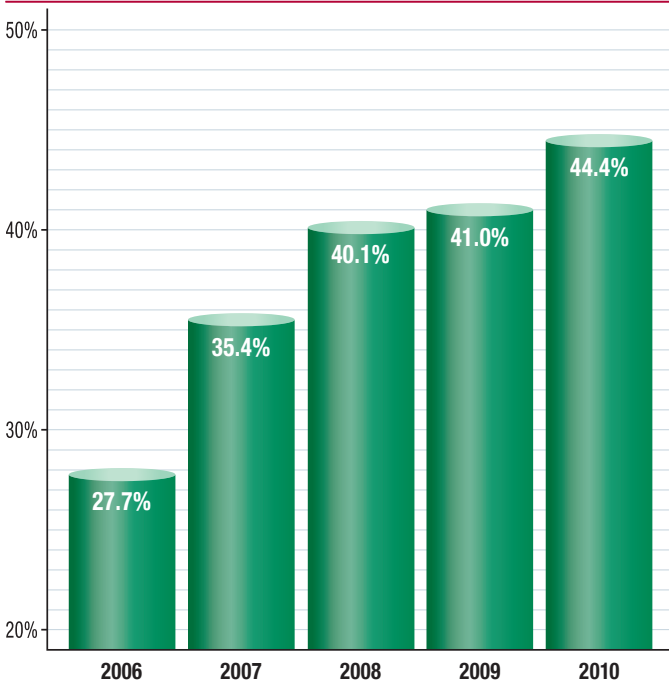
WUHS ON-TARGET:
2002-2009



A-G Course Completion Rate

Whittier Union is committed to creating a college-going culture on each of its campuses and has supported programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and Puente to provide students with the support they need to attend college. Currently, 44% of the District's students are completing all courses required for entrance into four-year universities, known as the A through G requirements.

COLLEGE ELIGIBILITY:
A-G Course Completion Rate



AP Tests Taken

In an effort to provide students with a rigorous curriculum that will prepare them for the demands of college-level coursework, each of Whittier Union's five comprehensive high schools provide students with a wide variety of Advanced Placement classes in subjects that include Math, Science, Social Science, Literature, History, Languages and more. Not only are an increasing number of students taking these classes but also many more are passing the AP exams. A high score on an AP exam can qualify students for college credit.

AP TESTS TAKEN AND PERCENT OF 10TH-12TH ENROLLMENT



California High School Exit Exam

Close to 100% of Whittier Union seniors are meeting the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) requirement for graduation and more sophomores are passing the state test the first time they take it.

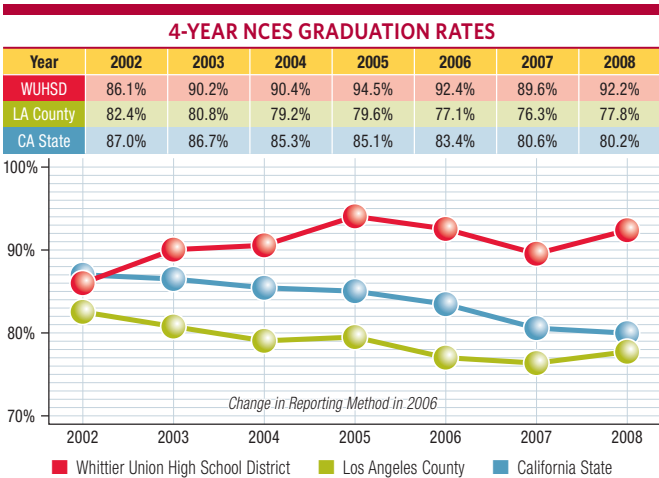
Of those Whittier Union sophomores who took the CAHSEE for the first time in March 2011, 86% passed the English Language Arts portion of the test, showing an improvement from 83% in 2010. The percentage of sophomores passing the math portion of the test grew by one percentage point to 89%.

In addition, a higher percentage of sophomores are scoring "proficient" or higher on the test, which is the standard that must be met for federal Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements.

CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAM
(CAHSEE) SENIOR PASS RATES

YEAR	ELA	MATH
2006	99.3%	99.7%
2007	99.8%	99.8%
2008	99.3%	99.5%
2009	99.6%	99.8%
2010	99.6%	99.8%
2011	99.8%	100.0%

Graduation Rate



A recent survey of the class of 2011 shows that 95% of Whittier Union graduates will be pursuing post-secondary education or training.

- ▶ 23% of graduates enter four-year colleges and universities
- ▶ 56% of graduates enter community colleges
- ▶ 16% of graduates attend technical education colleges
- ▶ Colleges attended by WUHSD graduates include: Stanford, Princeton, West Point, MIT, Harvard, Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins University, Notre Dame, Georgetown, Brown, USC, Harvey Mudd College, Pomona College, Loyola Marymount, Pepperdine, Whittier College and most of the colleges within both the University of California and California State University systems.
- ▶ Graduates of the class of 2011 were granted more than \$6.7 million in post-secondary scholarships.

Career Academies Provide Rigorous Academics and Job Preparation

One of Whittier Union’s top priorities is to provide its students with a relevant educational experience that prepares them for successful, focused futures in college and in the workplace.

For that reason, Whittier Union has established one of the largest career technical education programs in the state with a total of 14 Career Academies, 11 of which are California Partnership Academies and



receive special state funding. There are multiple Academies at each comprehensive high school covering a wide range of careers.

Academies are smaller learning communities within the high schools that have a team of teachers who provide students with rigorous core academic curriculum with a focus on a particular career as well as job training and preparation for that career.

Career training courses are taught by instructors who are professionals in their respective fields from the Tri-Cities Regional Occupation Program. These courses also teach students specialized job skills, resume writing, and job interviewing techniques that can help lead them on a career path.

The Academies also include active involvement by local businesses that support the programs with student internships, mentors and job-shadowing opportunities.

With five academies, California High School has been a model for the District, and earned the California Department of Education’s Exemplary Career Technical Education Award in 2007. The school also garnered a CSBA Golden Bell Award in 2009 for its Health Academy and Culinary Arts Academy. Students from both academies get hands-on job experience at Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital in preparation for post-secondary education and careers.

Students can apply to enter an Academy sometimes as early as freshman year and, if accepted, they can remain in the Academy through their senior year. Academies provide students with practical career education, training and experience that allow them to discover the relevance of their high school education in real-world settings as they explore possible professions.

WHITTIER UNION CAREER ACADEMIES

CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL

- Architecture and Engineering Academy
- Automotive Technology Academy
- Business Academy
- Culinary Arts/Hospitality House Academy
- Health Academy

LA SERNA HIGH SCHOOL

- Green and Clean Business Academy
- Film Academy
- Sports Career Academy

PIONEER HIGH SCHOOL

- PACE Academy
- Public Service Academy

SANTA FE HIGH SCHOOL

- Architecture and Engineering Academy
- Business Academy

WHITTIER HIGH SCHOOL

- Cardinal Computer Academy
- Sports Medicine Academy



Visual and Performing Arts

Whittier Union believes that education in the visual and performing arts is an essential component of a well-rounded education and continues to support these programs. Each of Whittier's five comprehensive high schools offers beginning, intermediate and advanced visual arts classes, choral and instrumental music programs and theater arts courses.



Students have multiple performance opportunities throughout the year through theatrical productions, choral performances and festivals, concerts and band performances. Some school choirs have been selected to perform in local, regional and national competitions and have performed at Carnegie Hall and the Disney Concert Hall. Each year there is a District-wide choral festival as well as a marching band and cheer jamboree.

2011-2012 District Budget Overview

The District's financial health and future stability is directly dependent on the fiscal health of the state of California. The state's fiscal downturn has been significant and has resulted in the reduction of billions of dollars of state funding for services provided by the state, including education. During the past four years the District has lost more than \$17 million in state funding.

Recently, there have been indications of an improving state economy but unfortunately, the potential exists that further cuts may need to be made to education funding in 2011-2012. The 2011-2012 state budget includes a combination of spending reductions and revenue assumptions to address the state's \$25 billion deficit. If revenues fall short of projections, education funding may be reduced mid-year or near the beginning of the second semester.

One of Whittier Union's central shared goals is to maintain solvency and fiscal accountability. The Board of Trustees, District administration and professional associations have worked collaboratively over this difficult economic period to make methodical and responsible decisions that maintain the highest quality of instruction and support services to Whittier Union's students while ensuring the District's fiscal stability.

The Whittier Union Budget Review Committee, comprised of 50 employees from throughout the District, was convened four times in 2010-2011 to review the state funding picture, discuss the impact of proposals for K-12 education funding on the District budget and review proposals for cost savings and efficiency. This committee will continue to meet in 2011-2012 to provide input and assist in maintaining communication on this important topic throughout the District.

The 2011-2012 Whittier Union budget reflects the District's continued commitment to maintain fiscal solvency and accountability for the future. The budget is based on assumptions for K-12 public school funding contained in the recently adopted State of California Budget for 2011-2012

and local factors such as student enrollment and staffing assumptions.

The District provides a diverse and comprehensive educational experience to more than 13,700 students. The majority of the District's funding comes from the state. For the 2011-2012 fiscal year, it is anticipated that 73% of District funding will come from the state, 5% from federal revenue, with the remainder comprised of local revenue and the District's beginning balance. Total revenue for 2011-2012 is expected to be \$121,788,711.

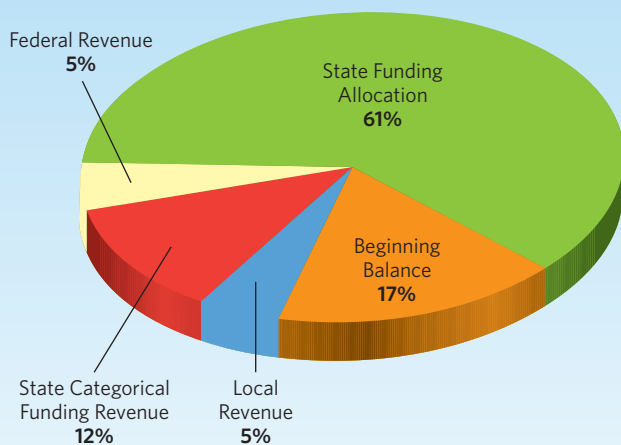
Flat funding, or the same level of funding, is anticipated between 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 based on the 2011-2012 State Budget. In the District's multi-year financial projection, flat funding is used to project the District's revenue from the state for the next three years.

The District is the Whittier area's second largest employer with more than 1,200 employees. Approximately 82% of the District's projected expenditures will be salary and benefits for the certificated staff, who provide instruction and counseling, and classified staff, who provide support services, for all of the District's students. Total expenditures for 2011-2012 are projected at \$120,040,441.

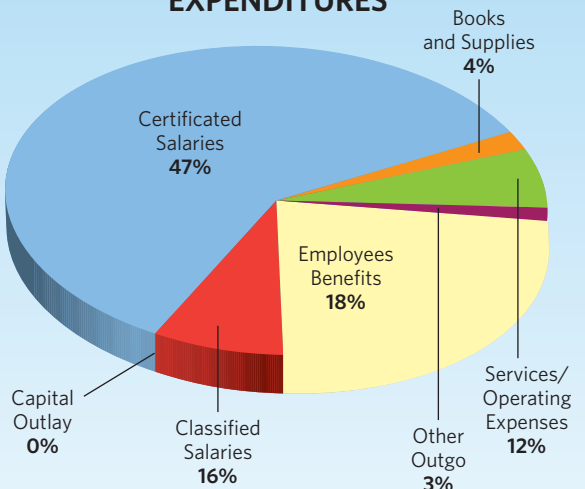
The District's ending balance has increased over the past two years due to significant reductions that have been made to the District's operating budget. The ending balance is the District's safety net for inflation and in the event that more state funding reductions are made in the next three years. Should additional funding cuts be imposed, the ending balance will provide the District with time to make proactive decisions about programs and staffing.

Because of uncertainty in the state's recovery from this prolonged recession, regular updates about the state and District budgets are posted on the Whittier Union website. These updates are intended to promote understanding and reduce confusion about the District's funding – visit www.wuhd.org

AVAILABLE RESOURCES



EXPENDITURES



Physical Education and Athletic Programs

Whittier Union is committed to educating the “whole” child which includes a commitment to providing students with an outstanding physical education program. As part of the school day, students participate in quality physical education courses. Students also have ample opportunities to participate in a wide range of athletic programs that include sports such as football, basketball, baseball, softball, soccer,



volleyball, cross country, golf, track and field, swimming, water polo, wrestling and tennis.

District teams compete locally in the Del Rio League and many teams have gone on to attain CIF championship titles throughout the years. In addition, many of Whittier Union’s student athletes have been ranked nationally and have garnered college scholarships for their athletic accomplishments at some of the best colleges and universities in the country.

Construction and Modernization at District Campuses

Creating Improved Learning Environments

Whittier Union is committed to its mission to achieve and maintain excellence in providing an outstanding comprehensive education for all students. The goal of its ongoing construction and modernization program begun in 1999 is to ensure that all students have the educational facilities they need to promote greater achievement and has resulted in greatly enhanced classrooms, campuses and facilities across the District.

A majority of the funds for these projects come from voter-approved bond measures – Measure C and Measure W. Measure C was passed by voters in 1999 and provided \$98 million in bond money. The District increased the amount to \$250 million by aggressively seeking a multitude of state and federal matching funds. Measure W was passed by voters in 2008 and is providing \$78 million, supplementing Measure C and other state and federal grant programs. Funding from Measure W has allowed the District to continue modernizing all five comprehensive high schools.

The majority of the modernization work completed under Measure C involved replacing underground utility infrastructure, remodeling and updating classrooms with air conditioning, new furniture, storage space, internet access, new audio visual equipment, and large whiteboards.

Some of the work included new construction, such as the new library at California High School, a new two-story classroom building at La Serna High School and new classroom buildings at Santa Fe High School.

Major reconstruction of buildings has taken place and continues at all five comprehensive high schools. Whittier High School underwent significant renovation as a result of the District’s successful efforts to obtain and leverage FEMA funds to rebuild the campus’ historic buildings.

Other projects have included remodeling and modernizing existing

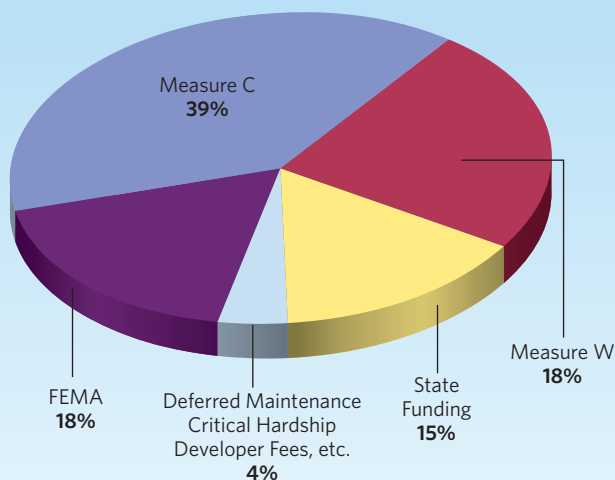
facilities such as the recent remodel of the main quads at Pioneer, Santa Fe, Whittier, La Serna and California high schools. Today, three high schools now benefit from modern cafeterias and kitchens with money-saving energy features and work is in progress to provide similar facilities at the remaining two campuses by the end of 2012.

A majority of current and future projects funded by Measure W will continue to focus on building or upgrading classrooms including vocational, career technical education classrooms, facilities and science labs. A new science building at Santa Fe is scheduled to open in 2012.

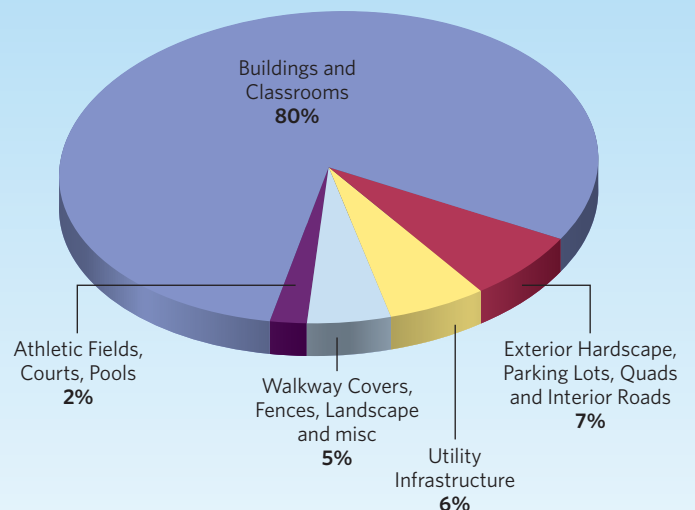
Other projects include: upgrading and improving heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and energy systems; upgrading security, safety lighting, landscaping, irrigation, and playing fields; improving handicapped access to school facilities; improving athletic facilities, including stadiums. Funds are also being used to furnish and equip school facilities; perform necessary site preparation/restoration in connection with new construction; renovation or deferred maintenance of school facilities; and addressing unforeseen conditions revealed by construction or emergency repairs.

Under state law, bond money can only be used for acquiring, constructing, or improving school facilities, and for furniture and equipment. Bond funds are deposited into a special account held and monitored by the Los Angeles County Treasurer to ensure proper fund allocation, and are subject to independent annual financial and performance audits. Also, a Citizens Oversight Committee assures the appropriate expenditure of Measure W funds. The use of Measure W funds for teacher and administrator salaries or operating expenses unrelated to bond measure projects is strictly prohibited.

FUNDING SOURCES



MODERNIZATION PROJECTS BY CATEGORY



Non Profit Org.
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Permit No. 218

Whittier Union High School District



to achieve and maintain excellence...

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WUHSD SCHOOLS

- California High School
- Frontier High School
- La Serna High School
- Pioneer High School
- Santa Fe High School
- Sierra Vista High School
- Whittier High School
- Whittier Adult School