

Fontana Unified School District

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WHITE HOUSE, LINE ONE: FOHI RECEIVES A CALL FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

FONTANA, CA – On March 1, the administration at Fontana High School received a telephone call from an unexpected source. “We received a call from the White House – that’s right, the White House – asking us what we did to get so many of our seniors, over 70%, to apply for FAFSA,” said Principal Ofelia Hinojosa.

FAFSA, Free Application for Federal Student Aid, is the form used to determine the amount of money a family is expected to contribute to the price of attending a college or university. The results of the FAFSA are used in determining student grants, work study, and loan amounts.

Greg Darnieder, a Senior Advisor on College Access at the U.S. Department of Education, called Fohi to find out the method they used to dramatically increase FAFSA submissions, so that he could share this information with the Presidential Advisory Committee.

“Apparently, we were one of the top ten high schools in the United States in the growth of FAFSA submission percentage,” said Assistant Principal Joe Malatesta. “Fontana High School is a National AVID Demonstration school and we have moved academically and philosophically toward AVID schoolwide. We apply the same expectations for AVID students to all students on campus.” That includes computer access and assistance to all seniors to help them complete their FAFSA applications.

“This achievement is a group effort of our counselors and other staff members, especially all the teachers who allowed the counselors to pull-out seniors from their classes to fill out their college and FAFSA applications,” continued Ms. Hinojosa. She also credits Mr. Malatesta who oversaw the process.

“That’s just one of the many great things that are going on at Fohi,” said Ms. Hinojosa proudly.

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