

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces: **La Sierra High School to Adopt Military-Style Program at Original Campus**

La Sierra, a charter high school administered by the Tulare County Office of Education, will convert its original campus on Houston Avenue in Visalia to a military-style school due to the tremendous student success in learning, discipline and motivation experienced at the La Sierra Military Academy located on Akers Avenue in Visalia. The change for the original Houston Avenue campus, which goes into effect this fall, comes as administrators noticed markedly better academic performance at the Military Academy. Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak notes: "The students at the Military Academy have scored significantly higher in their California High School Exit Examinations (CAHSEE)."

La Sierra High School was created in 1999. Since that time, the student body has increased from 30 students to almost 300 students this past school year with two campuses in Visalia and a third in Porterville. The Military Academy was started on Akers Avenue in 2002 with about 25

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students. It has grown to approximately 85 students and includes both males and females. The Academy is expecting over 100 students to register this fall.

La Sierra Administrator Dr. Lorene Valentino says of the program: “The Military Academy has demonstrated that many teenagers are looking for structure, physical training, and mutual respect from their peers. We are going to take our successful school model at the Military Academy and apply it to the Houston campus,” continues Dr. Valentino. “Our students are doing better in the classroom, they are doing better at home, and due to the daily strenuous physical training, they are healthier individuals.”

La Sierra students at the Military Academy are required to wear military uniforms, answer the teachers with a “Yes, Sir” or a “No, Sir,” and stand at attention when ordered. Each morning begins with one and one-half hours of physical training, participation in marching drills and a ropes/obstacle course activity during the day. Students also have six periods of core academic courses such as math, reading, writing, science and history. La Sierra High School curriculum is state approved and graduating students earn a high school diploma. This past June, a total of 47 La Sierra students from the two Visalia campuses and the Porterville campus earned their high school diplomas and celebrated with a graduation ceremony.

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“Not all students are right for a military-type environment,” says Lorene Valentino. “But for students who want to be challenged, possibly want to pursue a military career or like physical exercise and training, our school is the right choice,” concludes Dr. Valentino.

La Sierra High School is a public school and is free to any high school-age student. La Sierra will also open a campus in Pixley this fall. La Sierra High School is now accepting applications for the Fall Semester, which begins August 18, 2004. Parents or students wishing to visit the campus or receive information should call (559) 730-2737.

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