



# News Release

Orange County Department of Education • City of Westminster



## Westminster to Host Dedication Ceremony for the Mendez Freedom Trail

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

April 9, 2026

### **OCDE CONTACT**

Ian Hanigan  
ihanigan@ocde.us  
714-966-4008

### **WESTMINSTER CONTACT**

Christine Cordon  
ccordon@westminster-ca.gov  
714-548-3178

WESTMINSTER, Calif. – The City of Westminster and the Orange County Department of Education are proud to celebrate the dedication of the Mendez Freedom Trail, marking the completion of a multi-year effort to deliver projects to the community that honor the landmark *Mendez v. Westminster* civil rights court case.

In 1947, the case was decided in favor of five families who successfully challenged forced school segregation in California and helped pave the way for the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

Located along Hoover Street, the two-mile interpretive trail offers a one-of-a-kind educational experience featuring interactive stations and augmented reality panels with narration in three languages: English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

The dedication ceremony to be held on April 14 not only celebrates the completion of the Freedom Trail, but also the full realization of the Mendez Tribute Monument Park and Freedom Trail projects.

“This trail transforms a historic moment into a living classroom and reminds us that progress is not a single moment, but a path,” said Dr. Stefan Bean, Orange County Superintendent of Schools. “Through our partnership with the City of Westminster, we’ve worked to develop content and curriculum that bring the story of *Mendez v. Westminster* to life in meaningful ways. The Mendez Tribute Monument Park and Freedom Trail give students the chance to engage with history not just as something that happened, but as something that continues to shape their lives and the future they are helping to build.”

The quarter-acre Mendez Tribute Monument Park, located at the corner of Westminster Boulevard and Olive Street and completed in December 2022, established a permanent space to recognize the legacy of Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez and the five families who challenged



# News Release

Orange County Department of Education • City of Westminster



school segregation in California. Bronze statues of Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez, along with children walking toward a bright future, are prominently featured and were designed by world-renowned sculptor Ignacio Gomez. A protected bikeway connects the park and trail to city trail networks, expanding access to this important historical resource. Features along the trail and at the park encourage all who visit to learn about *Mendez v. Westminster*.

“My family is honored to be part of this project,” Sylvia Mendez, daughter of Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez, shared. “My parents fought for the rights of all students everywhere to attend school in a safe environment so they can learn and grow, and to build a better future for every child. They succeeded, and I’m thrilled that their legacy will be taught in schools and available to everyone who visits.”

The project has been a community effort which originated as a vision by Westminster City Councilman Sergio Contreras and supported by the City Council. The City partnered with the Orange County Department of Education to develop the educational components of the sites and incorporate modern technology for an immersive learning experience. Fundraising efforts led by Sylvia Mendez along with funds provided by California State Parks and Senator Tom Umberg, California District 34, allowed the City to expand its vision for the site. The completion of the Mendez Tribute Monument Park and Freedom Trail represents the culmination of the City’s broader vision to honor an important event in local history.

“This park and trail are a testament to the power of ordinary people who stand up for what is right and change the course of history,” said Westminster City Manager Christine Cordon. “We are thrilled to highlight Westminster’s place in civil rights history by providing an experience that will educate generations of students.”

The dedication ceremony will feature regional and local dignitaries to provide remarks, including Sylvia Mendez, Westminster Mayor Chi Charlie Nguyen, and Orange County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Stefan Bean.

**What:** Dedication for the Mendez Freedom Trail (culmination of the Mendez Tribute Monument Park and Freedom Trail projects)

**When:** Tuesday, April 14, 10 a.m.

**Location:** Hoover Street Bikeway, north of Main Street (across from Webber Elementary School)

Learn more about the Mendez Tribute Monument Park and Freedom Trail at [westminster-ca.gov/our-city/projects/mendez](https://westminster-ca.gov/our-city/projects/mendez). Learn more about the City of Westminster at [westminster-ca.gov](https://westminster-ca.gov).

###