

UPDATE – AUGUST 2016

Superintendent's Message



Leading Through Transitions

When I entered the field of education over 22 years ago, it was because I believed that education can transform an individual, a family, an organization and, ultimately, an entire nation. I still believe this today, even more than ever, as we educators are currently transforming our methods and curriculum in response to the changes we encounter in the world around us. Because of changes in technology, social norms, and politics, we are in the middle of one of the most significant transitions schools have encountered in many decades.

Author William Bridges wrote, “Genuine beginnings begin within us, even when they are brought to our attention by external opportunities.” As administrators, teachers, classified staff, and parents, these “external opportunities” are stretching us. Our history, our training, our paradigms, our preferences—these are all being challenged as we continue to put student’s needs first. Our goal is to build upon the strong education provided by Bonita Unified School District and ensure the education provided continues to prepare students to be College and Career Ready. Our students must be equipped to not just observe, but to be leaders in the 21st Century.

As Superintendent of the Bonita Unified School District, I am pleased to lead through these transitions with a team of staff who embrace change. I am grateful for a Board of Education who values excellence, innovation and the education of all students. I am honored to join the communities of San Dimas and La Verne who care so deeply about the value of education they provide to the youth of their cities. In the coming weeks, I look forward to getting to know teachers, parents, and students. My point of focus will be to guide the District through the leadership transition, the transition into a new school year, and the educational transitions we will encounter together.

Sincerely,

Christina (Christy) Goennier, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Christina Goennier Selected as New Superintendent, Seven Selected for Key Administrative Positions

At their July 6 meeting, the Board of Education announced Dr. Christina Goennier, as the new Superintendent of Schools for the Bonita Unified School District. A graduate of Cal State San Bernardino and the University of La Verne, Goennier spent four years as the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services at Beaumont Unified School District, with a total of 22 years of experience in education.

“This is a place I want to be; this is a place I want to lead,” Goennier said, citing the Board’s desire to have leadership work as a team, the District’s strong history with educational results, and the value of an organization where good people want to stay.

Board President Jim Elliot made the official announcement to a crowd of teachers, administrators, and Goennier’s family and friends. “What impressed us the most was her career seems to be in preparation for becoming our superintendent,” he said. “We believe you are the right fit for this District that we all hold so dearly.”

The Board reviewed 29 applications and made four rounds of interviews before selecting Goennier. Elliot thanked the Bonita Unified community for their patience and trust as the Board made this selection.

Filling key administrative positions around the District, the Board also selected two administrators from the Bonita family and six who are new to the District to fill open positions at the District Office, Lone Hill and Ramona Middle Schools and Oak Mesa Elementary School.

New Principal and Assistant Principal at Lone Hill Middle School

After two years as Principal at Oak Mesa Elementary School, Jason Coss is the new Principal at Lone Hill Middle School. Coss brings significant leadership experience to Lone Hill. Prior to Oak Mesa, he was the Assistant Principal at Michael G. Wickman Elementary School in the Chino Valley Unified School District. He has served as a Special Education coordinator, GATE coordinator, English Language Learner coordinator, and as a teacher in the Bonita Unified School District for six years. Prior to his career in education, Coss was a deputy sheriff with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department.

“One of the things that attracted me to BUSD several years ago is that this District truly attends to the whole child,” Coss said. “The social, emotional, and physical developments of our students are just as important as their academic growth. At Lone Hill this year, we will focus on character education initiatives, 21st Century skills, fostering a nurturing and safe environment for children, using data to inform instruction, implementing direct

instruction strategies to increase student achievement, and providing exciting and challenging enrichment opportunities for all students.”

Jeff Stevens was selected as the new Assistant Principal at Lone Hill Middle School. Stevens has served Chino Hills High School since 2005 as athletic director, Work Experience coordinator, Renaissance coordinator, social science teacher, and football and baseball coach. Stevens began his career at Mayfair High School as a special education and social science teacher.

“I am extremely honored to be part of BUSD and Lone Hill Middle School as their new Assistant Principal,” Stevens said. “BUSD has a wonderful reputation as an outstanding District that puts students first and provides a first-class education to all its students. I am excited to get started, and I am looking forward to working with our students, parents and staff to continue the great tradition of success that has been built at Lone Hill.”

New Principal at Oak Mesa Elementary School

Steven Patterson, former assistant principal at Ramona Middle School, is the new Principal at Oak Mesa Middle School. Prior to his role at Ramona, Patterson was an assistant principal of Student Services at Claremont High School, an assistant principal at El Roble Intermediate School, and mathematics department chair at Vernon Middle School. With a Bachelor of Science in accounting, Patterson started his professional career as a staff auditor at Vavrinek, Trine and Day & Co. in Rancho Cucamonga.

“Having served the community as assistant principal at Ramona Middle School, I have witnessed the extraordinary gains in academic achievement and personal connections that students have made with the Oak Mesa staff,” Patterson said. “As principal, I am excited to guide and learn from such an amazing team while building upon the successes at Oak Mesa.”

New Assistant Principal at Ramona Middle School

Joel Hudec has been selected as the new Assistant Principal at Ramona Middle School. Hudec has been at Bonita High School since 2012 as athletic director, water polo coach, and a science teacher. Prior to Bonita HS, Hudec taught at Norte Vista High School and substitute taught in the Etiwanda School District and the Colton Joint Unified School District. Hudec’s leadership on campus has ranged from site co-chairperson for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation process, science department lead teacher and a varsity boys’ water polo coach.

New Technology and Health Administrators

Kong Tan is the new Database Administrator for BUSD. Prior to this role, he was a system architect at a software company working with supply chain management. “I was looking for an opportunity to work in the public sector and give back to the community,” Tan said. “I see many opportunities to automate processes, which would free up resources to allow [the District] to focus even more on the education of students.”

Llona Mearig is the new District Nurse. Mearig has 12 years of experience in pediatric nursing, with 5 years at Rowland Unified School District. “My mission statement is to optimize student health and minimize health-related barriers so that children can come to school ready to learn,” Mearig said.

Agnes Akabogu has been selected as a new psychologist. Akabogu comes to Bonita from the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School and prior to her role as school psychologist, Akabogu managed a law firm as lead special education and mental health services attorney working primarily as an advocate of the special education rights of students with special needs.

Teachers Focus on Technology at Bonita USD Staff Development Day

In preparation for the coming school year, certificated and classified staff in the Bonita Unified School District will gather Thursday, August 18, 2016, for a technology-focused training at San Dimas High School.

“We are thrilled to have 39 of Bonita USD’s educational staff share their best practices for integrating technology into the classroom,” Director of Educational Technology Kris Boneman said. “They will share the educational technology innovations they have used with their students to help others kick-off the new school year. The talent right here in Bonita is remarkable, and their eagerness to share is inspiring.”

CUE enthusiast Jon Corippo will open the day with a keynote address at the Bonita Center for the Arts. CUE, which originally stood for Computer Using Educators, inspires innovative learners by fostering community, personalizing learning, infusing technology, developing leadership, and advocating educational opportunities for all.

“Bonita teachers have been participating in CUE conferences for several years,” Boneman said. “Corippo will be a great addition to our event, setting the tone with excitement for using technology to unlock teaching and learning in a 21st century classroom.”

Superintendent Christina Goennier will also address the staff with her support of instructional technology. This will be Goennier’s first address to the staff of Bonita Unified.

Teachers and other instructional support staff will then attend two 50-minute sessions from about 30 options. Session leaders are Bonita Unified teachers and support staff who have successfully implemented the methods they promote. Topics include using the Aeries gradebook, Hyperdocs, virtual fieldtrips, and other tools, protecting student/teacher privacy and maintaining digital security, managing Chromebooks, and more.

School Campuses Get a Summer Face Lift

The Maintenance & Operations Department has made repairs and upgrades at campuses throughout the District. As in previous summers, the staff undertook several annual projects including tree trimming, carpet cleaning, floor waxing, deep cleaning of the classrooms and restrooms, painting, and maintenance of the heating/ventilation/air conditioning systems (HVAC).

The construction of solar arrays is a new project this summer funded by a combination of Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBs) and Measure AB. Each solar array is mounted on top of another functional structure such as shade structures in parking lots and over playgrounds. Installation has occurred or is in progress at San Dimas and Bonita High Schools, Ramona Middle School, Oak Mesa, Ekstrand, and La Verne Heights. All of these systems are expected to be in service by late fall 2016.

New gymnasiums funded by Measure AB are under construction at both Ramona and Lone Hill Middle Schools. The gyms are uniquely designed for each campus featuring amenities such as basketball courts, volleyball courts, weight rooms, bleachers, and more. Both gyms are scheduled to be complete by late spring 2017.

The Facilities Department is painting the exterior of Shull and Ekstrand Elementary Schools. New asphalt was installed on the playgrounds at Oak Mesa and La Verne.



Photo 1: New solar arrays at San Dimas High School provide shade in the parking lot and help the District cut utility costs.



Photos 2 & 3: Gym construction continues at Lone Hill and Ramona Middle Schools thanks to Measure AB funds.



Photos 4 & 5: Bonita Unified's Facilities Department prepares campuses for the 2016-2017 school year with maintenance and repair projects throughout the summer.

Preschool Inclusion Program Integrates Special Needs Students and Typical Learners for Optimal Learning

Bonita Unified School District preschool program designed for Building Lifelong Academic Skills Together (BLAST) is open for registration for the second year. The program provides a language-rich instruction for students with special needs and typical learners, focusing on growth in the key areas of development: cognitive, physical, language, and social-emotional.

BLAST allows for self-esteem, social skills, speech and intellectual development to blossom in an inclusive environment using developmentally appropriate activities with all enrolled students. An early childhood special education teacher and two instructional aides provide instruction and differentiate curriculum to fit each student's needs through hands on activities, play and positive support.

Classes are hosted at Grace Miller Elementary School, Monday through Thursday, 8:00-11:00 am. Students identified for special education must be evaluated and meet specific eligibility criteria. Please contact the District's Special Education Department for more information. Typical learners are charged a fee of \$320 per month. Registration can be completed on the District's website at www.bonita.k12.ca.us.

Bonita Unified Accepting Enrollment at District Schools and Online

The Bonita Unified School District is accepting attendance permit applications for kindergarten and new student registrations for enrollment in the 2016-2017 school year. Families must register in person for grades 1-12 and may register online at for kindergarten and transitional kindergarten.

Parents may submit an inter-district permit to enroll a student who resides outside of the Bonita Unified School District attendance area, while intra-district permits grant permission for students who reside within the district attendance area to attend a school other than their home school. The Allen Bill provides enrollment rights to students whose parents are employed within the Bonita Unified School District boundaries, but who live elsewhere.

In order to register for kindergarten, students must turn five by September 1, 2016. Students who turn five between September 2, 2016, and December 1, 2016, are eligible to register for transitional kindergarten.

“Transitional kindergarten provides a way for younger students to experience the challenge they are ready for,” Assistant Superintendent of Education Nanette Hall said. This program focuses on developing social and emotional skills, phonemic awareness and mathematical concepts, and prepares students for success in the full-year kindergarten program.

Transitional kindergarten classes are available at Ekstrand, Grace Miller, and Allen Avenue Elementary Schools, from 8:15-11:15 AM for the morning session and 11:30-2:30 PM for the afternoon session. The 2016-2017 school year begins August 22.