

UPDATE – DECEMBER 2016

Superintendent's Message

Vision Quest for Personalized Learning

As we enter December, we are about halfway through our school year. This is a great time for us to reflect on what we have accomplished this far on our journey and where we want to continue to go as we finish the 2016-17 school year strong. I have had a chance to meet with so many of our staff, students and community members. There is an excitement in the air of the possibility of what our students will be able to accomplish in the future. For example, a degree in computer science has expanded from just hardware and software to robotics, artificial intelligence, programming languages, numerical analysis and even gaming technology. Teaching to support students affected by this change will take a new kind of focus.

These past few months of our journey have allowed me to see the importance of not just having a vision, but setting both an individual and organizational vision quest. While vision sets direction, a vision quest recognizes the importance of the impact of the vision, not just on ourselves, but also on the world around us. It is an expression of hope, possibility and courage. A vision quest is not developed in isolation, but rather in collaboration as we all have a personal responsibility for translating the vision quest into action.

All of us are stakeholders in educating and preparing our students for the future, and as such need to define our personal mission for education and learning. Simon Sinek, describes this process finding your “Why?” What is your purpose; what gets you out of bed in the morning? Each child has unique needs, and it will take all of us to find a way put our vision into action to meet the needs of students.

We are on a quest for Personalized Learning for all students in Bonita Unified School District. The pathway is not linear; it is open-ended. We will continue to research and learn from schools and districts that have gone before us. However, there is no blueprint on how to manage the transition.

For some, change is natural in the progression of education, and for others, change can feel earth-shattering. To ensure a successful transition, we need to build a plan that encompasses many of the areas of concern that exist, such as how personalized learning will affect our curriculum, instruction and assessment, and expectations on students to demonstrate mastery. We will develop a rubric to measure the success of implementing Personalized Learning. This change is important as we prepare our students for the jobs of tomorrow, but it is also important to manage the transition for our staff, students and community.

Sincerely,

Christina (Christy) Goennier, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Twitter: [@BUSD4kids](https://twitter.com/BUSD4kids)

New Integrated 1 Math Course Launches Chromebook Pilot Program

Bonita Unified School District's secondary school math curriculum began a transition to an integrated pathway in the 2016-2017 school year. A traditional pathway teaches Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II in isolation over three years. The integrated pathway also takes three years to complete, but it teaches specific standards from all three disciplines in each year.

Integrated math focuses on algebraic and geometric concepts in the same year so that students see the connection of the two disciplines and can apply their algebraic skills to understand geometry. Integrated resources including the textbook offer many real world and cross-curricular connections to math.

Alecia McGill and Claire Verti, both District teachers, took on new roles as Math Coaches to assist with the transition. McGill and Verti spent the summer working with Senior Director of Curriculum and Instruction Kenny Ritchie to plan an instructional pacing guide for Integrated Math 1. This guide includes a variety of resources in addition to the adoption of a math textbook. The math coaches conduct monthly in-service trainings as a time for teachers to collaborate, plan and engage in learning instructional strategies for upcoming units.

At the middle school level, students in Integrated 1 began a pilot digital program in October and received a Chromebook that replaced their textbook. Students will utilize the Chromebooks daily in class as well as to complete assignments at home. Other course work may also be completed on the Chromebooks.

"Chromebooks will greatly benefit students in Integrated Math 1 because our math textbook includes a vast digital component that teachers will be able to utilize on a weekly basis," McGill said. "From videos, to digital assignments, to testing, the digital component will help students master the topics as well as prepare them to be a responsible, competent digital citizens."

The transition to a fully integrated math pathway will be completed over a three-year process. This will allow students currently in the traditional program to complete the traditional pathway without causing learning gaps or covering material twice in high school.

Special Education Adapts to a New Name: Specialized Services

Bonita Unified School District has renamed the Special Education department, now calling it Specialized Services, and is using first person language when speaking about students who receive specialized services in order to promote equality in education.

"The goal of Specialized Services is to integrate services into a singular education system with equal access and support for all students," Director of Specialized Services Carl Coles wrote in a recent memo to the Superintendent. "'Special education' implies there are two systems of education, 'regular education' and 'special education.' This mindset has led to two very different tracks of education throughout the state. We would like to change this mindset."

Specialized Services will continue to serve students ages 3-22 with Specialized Academic Instruction and related services such as speech and language, occupational/physical therapy, mental health, and adaptive physical education. The language shift is in line with Superintendent Dr. Christy Goennier’s focus on personalized learning.

“Personalized learning accommodates individualized unique learning needs so all students have equal access and appropriate support in all components of school,” Coles’ memo continues. The use of first person language also supports this cultural direction. For example, instead of using “Special Education Student,” the faculty and staff are encouraged to say, “Student with an IEP.”

Specific changes in line with the department name change include the addition of five co-teaching sections, which include both a core content instructor and a specialized academic instructor, social groups that include students of all abilities, and 21st Century learning furniture that promote movement and collaboration.

A Strike for Camaraderie at Second Annual Smudgepin

Bonita High School and San Dimas High School students in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the Functional and Academic Skills Training (FAST) classes gathered at Chaparral Lanes for a friendly competition in September. Like the District’s annual rivalry football game, Smudgepot, the Smudgepin encourages community, friendship, and personal growth. Bowling teams included students from both schools and each school left with a trophy.

“The Smudgepin is a great way for students to have fun and learn a sport that they can carry into adulthood,” San Dimas Principal Michael Kelly said.



Photo 1: Bonita and San Dimas High Schools gathered for a friendly bowling competition for the annual Smudgepin. Both schools left with a trophy.

Schools in the Spotlight

Ramona Middle School

Keeping Track of Your Marbles

Math teachers Dustin Delfin, Regina Hwang, and Colin Campbell are involving 6th grade math students in real-world application as they build marble tracks and graph average times that marbles take to run down each track. The project is part of a unit on rates and ratios.

“I like how students are able to put math into a context that is out of the realm of a textbook,” Delfin said. “Most students like rollercoasters and this activity allows them to build one, yet apply the mathematics.”



Photo 2: Students in 6th grade build a marble track and graph the average times that marbles take to run down each track.

DUDE, Be Nice!

Julie Pocino and the 8th grade students from the Where Everybody Belongs (WEB) class launched a “DUDE, Be Nice” campaign in an assembly last month. The purpose is to encourage the growing culture of kindness and anti-bullying on campus. Teachers and staff wore “DUDE, Be Nice” shirts and WEB students wrote the names of all 1,400 Ramona students on posters, which were hung around the school.

“DUDE, Be Nice” CEO Brent Camalich spoke at the assembly about the importance of being kind to other people. He told stories about his life and highlighted two students who have a reputation for being kind to others, Logan Corthell and Jenna Smith. The rest of the week 8th grade WEB leaders organized activities to promote kindness.



Photo 3: DUDE. Be Nice CEO Brent Camalich spoke at an assembly at Ramona Middle School to promote kindness on campus.

Raspberry Pi -- Programming Tiny Computers

Students in Chris Alertas' 8th Grade Engineering and Technology class are learning to program computers the size of credit cards. About as strong as the original Xbox, these little computers have been turned into radios, media centers, drones, robots, self-driving toy cars, and even super computers made by attaching multiple pieces to one another.

Although the Raspberry Pi Foundation's original intent was to create an inexpensive tool with which to teach basic computer science in developing countries, the \$35 price point has made the product an affordable way of teaching computer science in any classroom. Ramona Middle School is one of a small, but growing number of classrooms in the UK and the US using the tool.

"Students are still at a point of learning how to program," Alertas said. "Programming is as challenging as learning a new language, so a great deal of focus is on learning how to code. As we get closer to the midway point of the school year, the types of projects students want to create are overwhelming. Some are wanting to make remote controlled cars, drones, arcade cabinets, language translators, 3D printers, and much more."

Raspberry Pis are completely re-programmable, so they will be used again next year. Students are encouraged to purchase a clean memory card at the end of the school year to replace the one they have been programming.

Intramural Competitions

Roughly 80 6th graders are competing in intramural football and volleyball at Ramona Middle School this fall. Several 8th grade athletes volunteer their time to referee the games for the 6th graders. Competitions occur twice a week for about 6 weeks total on the Ramona fields with dozens of parents coming out to watch.

"This friendly competition among Ramona students will help to prepare these student-athletes to compete against regional schools next year when they become 7th graders," Assistant Principal Greg Noyes said. "It is an excellent opportunity for these 8th grade student-athletes to demonstrate maturity, responsibility, etc. as they interact positively with 6th graders."

Ed Jones Educational Center

On October 4th, Chaparral High School held its first Senior Sunrise as a day of reflection for students to take a break from what they were doing and ask, “What do I want from my senior year? What steps am I going to take to achieve my goals?”

The activities kicked off with teacher Cristina Cortez explaining the connection between a sunrise and senior year. Students were reminded that a sunrise is the beginning of a new day, where people begin their rituals and routines to get ready for what is to come. The students recognized the symbolism and were asked, “What rituals and routines are you performing to get ready for what is to come?”

Teacher Michael Cormick acknowledged that senior year is filled with a wide range of emotions, expectations, and plans, and that it is a time for students to look ahead to new adventures of work or college to figure out who they are and where they want to go. Teacher Jannet Valdez asked students to reflect during the activities and find something that inspires them, something that gives them hope or an idea for their future. Teacher Zachary Gross reminded students to be positive, respectful and focused while participating in the morning’s activities.

Students learned about the different phases students go through their senior year. They identified which category they fit into and what they could do to become “The Worker” senior. Students discussed what qualities and traits it takes to become or continue being “The Worker” senior.

In the “Letter Writing” activity students wrote a letter to themselves that they will open on their last day at Chaparral High School. Students were prompted with self-reflection questions as they wrote their letter. Students sealed the letter in an envelope and signed their name across the seal.

Students watched videos of the 2016 graduating seniors giving advice and a former graduate, Hunter Haro, was invited to speak to the seniors. Hunter spoke to the students about his senior year, his obstacles, and fears. He told them what he wished he had known, what he wish he had done differently and what steps he took to achieve his goal of graduating.

Students learned that it is important to start off the school year, especially their senior year, with goals. They learned that goals help them keep structure, stay focused, and improve their character. Students set five goals, one in each of the following areas: academic, character, behavioral, social and personal. When their stars were finished they posted them on a large poster, which was displayed in the quad.

One senior said, “It was actually intriguing because the staff here actually cares about its students graduating. I didn’t know there were adults that really cared.”

Gladstone Elementary School

What an arm!

Gladstone third grader Derek Galeazzi won first place in the softball throw at the San Dimas City Track Meet in March 2016. Since then, he has competed at San Gabriel Valley Track Meet and a 255 city regional meet, winning 1st place both times. In July, Derek won first place in shot put at the state competition in San Diego. Congratulations, Derek!!



Photo 4: Gladstone’s third grader Derek Galeazzi has taken 1st place in three softball throws and 1st place in a state shot put competition!

Pride Stride raises record level donations

Gladstone’s annual Pride Stride Walk-a-Thon fundraiser raised more than \$57,000 for the Gladstone PTA – setting another school record. More than \$16,000 was collected from local businesses in support of our school. The rest came from donations from the student body and families. The money raised will be used to fund assemblies and field trips and to support classrooms, helping teachers provide what students need for optimal learning. There will also be some money used for technology at the school. The Pride Stride had a Star Wars Theme this year: “May the Force Run with You.”

Students won hundreds of raffle prizes at the final assembly. Top earners enjoyed an hour at Rock-N-Jump, Golden Spoon frozen yogurt, and Krispy Kreme parties for their efforts. The school will have a Star Wars dress up day as a reward for the great deal of effort they put into raising money for Pride Stride.

Special thanks to parents Maria Sanderson and Jen Eicher for coordinating the event.



Photo 5: Parents and teachers take a moment to gather at the annual Pride Stride fundraiser, which had a Star Wars theme this year. The event raised over \$57,000 for the school.

Shull Elementary School

Robotics Comes To Shull Elementary

With the help of Makerspace/STEAMbox lessons on a District blog, 1st and 3rd grade students at Shull Elementary School built “Brushbots” and “Drawbots,” or simple robots to motorize toothbrushes and markers. First grade teacher Kim Schneider and third grade teacher Teresa Hugar teamed up to create a joint learning opportunity for their students using this simple robotics lesson. The objective of the lesson was for students to utilize creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, communication, science, and math to design, build, and test two different types of bots.

Before the students built the robots, both teachers conducted a mini lesson on circuits. Then the building began. The brushbot included a toothbrush, motor, and battery...and lots of tape. The drawbot included a Dixie cup, markers, a motor, battery pack, and batteries...and again, lots of tape.

The 3rd grade students helped the 1st grade students with difficult parts of the construction of the “bots.” Some of the bots worked on the first try, and some students had to use their scientific skills to troubleshoot to get their bot to function properly. In the end, all the groups were able to successfully build two bots over the two-day time span.



Photo 6: From left to right, third grader Brandon Meredith, first grader Romeo Martinez, and third grader Marcelo Romero worked together to make “drawbot,” or a simple robot with markers attached to it. The activity was part of a Makerspace/STEAMbox lesson taught by Shull Elementary School teachers.