

UPDATE – JANUARY 2017

Superintendent's Message

Commitment to a Culture of Continuous Learning

Welcome to 2017! A year for commitments. As we move forward with the transformation of learning, we explicitly want to renew our commitment to a culture of continuous learning. The commitment to a culture of continuous learning for Bonita Unified School District is expressed through our mission statement.

For the students in our care, and in partnership with the community, we will create a safe, challenging and comprehensive learning environment that will shape character, nurture intellect and build skills for success in an ever-changing world.

Our mission is a commitment from our Board of Education and me to build an organizational culture that puts people—students, staff and community—first. As we move forward on our journey towards Personalized Learning it is imperative to stay true to our mission.

To create a culture of continuous learning, we look to the collegiality amongst our staff, parents and students as we work together to learn new strategies. We have classroom environments that allow for innovation and risk-taking because we have a high level of trust and confidence in our staff. Technology is a tool to help with instruction, although it does not replace good instruction. Learning how to incorporate technology into instruction takes time and requires a level of risk-taking for students and teachers. There will be some strategies that are more successful than others. We commit to always reviewing and evaluating the success of our technology and instructional strategies implementations and adjusting appropriately.

Organizations often forget to appreciate and recognize the small successes along the way. This can lead to burnout, frustration and turn the course of the journey down a wayward road. In Bonita Unified, we want the opposite. We believe it is not about making a mistake, but rather how we handle a mistake or a misstep. To obtain new knowledge and to conquer a new learning environment, there comes a time when each one of us will need to reach out and ask for help from a colleague, look with a fresh set of eyes, and reexamine results. We need to be prepared to laugh and cry together as we work together on this journey of Personalized Learning.

Finally, it bears repeating, we need to be sure we keep the instructional strategies we know are successful to be the source of student learning. Technology is meant to enhance, not replace good teaching. We want to honor the traditions of our past as we move into our future. Honest and open communication will be key to the success of the transition.

Here at Bonita Unified School District, we are committed to the ongoing learning for our staff, students and community. Thank you for joining us on our journey to Personalized Learning.

Sincerely,

Christina (Christy) Goennier, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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

Handmade Dolls Raise Funds for Foster Youth

Bonita Unified School District Resident Diane Warner sewed 65 dolls and sold them on Facebook, raising \$1,000, which she donated to the Foster and Homeless Youth Support Program in Bonita Unified School District.

“This was a labor of love for Diane, whose heart for youth at-risk blossomed through her own experience mentoring, fostering and eventually adopting a young lady who had been placed at the David and Margaret Home,” Senior Director Student Services, Mark Rodgers said. “Diane’s daughter is now married with children of her own – a story that serves as a beautiful testament to the power of involvement in the life of a young person.”

The money donated will be available for needs that emerge for students and families over the course of the year. Needs range from a gift card for medicine, to supplies for a special project, to rental fees for a suit because a girl “said yes” to the dance. The availability of funds like this allows the Foster and Homeless Youth Support Program to respond quickly to the youth the District serves.

“I love to sew, and I love dolls!” Warner said. “So I took my talents and put them to good use for a great cause.” Warner started the project in February 2016. She made one doll from a Butterick pattern and posted it on Facebook. From there, people expressed interest in buying the dolls and supporting the cause. “I’ve sold dolls as far away as Florida and Australia just through connections on Facebook,” Warner said. “Literally the dolls have gone worldwide.”



Photos 1 & 2: District resident Diane Warner sold 65 hand sewn dolls to raise money for Bonita Unified’s Foster and Homeless Youth Support Program.

Bonita USD Changes Election Cycle from Odd to Even Years, Likely Extending Terms for Board Members

The Bonita Unified School District passed a resolution in November to change the election cycle from odd years to even years. This shifts the next school board election from 2017 to 2018 and will extend the current board members' term by one year.

The resolution is in line with Senate Bill 415 that mandates state, county, municipal, district, and school district elections be consolidated with a statewide election if voter turnout in odd years is at least 25 percent less than the average voter turnout for the previous four statewide general elections, which occur in even years. The District is awaiting confirmation of formal approval of this change by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors at a public meeting.

“Bonita Unified is fortunate in that we’ve had the whole board serve parents, students and staff well for many years creating continuity that has allowed us to move forward,” Superintendent Dr. Christina Goennier said. “The longevity of serving together has created a high level of trust between the members. They have intelligent, respectful discussions that help them find the best solutions for our District.”

With this change, Bonita Unified will conduct its next election in 2018; Glenn Creiman is the current Board President and Chuck Coyne is the current Vice President.

The La Verne / San Dimas Educational Foundation--How You Can Help

The La Verne / San Dimas Educational Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to supporting and celebrating student success in the Bonita Unified School District.

Since 1983, the La Verne / San Dimas Educational Foundation has been committed to enriching and enhancing educational opportunities for students in BUSD. In addition to the annual Perseverance Awards for students facing and overcoming personal adversity the Foundation also provides student scholarships, teacher mini-grants, grants to support the arts in each of the District’s thirteen schools, and administers the annual Ed Jones Act of Kindness Awards. The foundation raises funds with the annual Ed Jones Memorial Golf Tournament and through donations and grants.

Other than the expenses for the golf tournament, 100 percent of the donations go back to the students or teachers. The Foundation has no paid staff and Foundation volunteers pay any expenses they incur furthering the Foundation goals.

Significant budget reductions have resulted in local school districts being tasked to do much more with much less, and BUSD has not been exempt from these challenges. Through strong leadership, exceptional teachers, and dedicated staff members, the District has fought to achieve continuous improvement, and, as a result, has been recognized as one of the top performing districts in the state. All BUSD comprehensive schools have been recognized by the State as high performing schools, plus the District has one Blue Ribbon School, nine California Distinguished Schools and two Gold Ribbon Schools.

The La Verne – San Dimas Educational Foundation has always been committed to supporting BUSD in its pursuit of excellence. The Foundation is a 401(c) non-profit organization existing to reward outstanding effort by students and teachers through grants and scholarships.

If you recognize the value exceptional schools bring to our students and community and would like to assist the Foundation, please consider volunteering, making a donation, or becoming a sponsor.

You can join us at our next meeting on January 26 at 5:30 PM at the District Office located at 115 W. Allen Avenue in San Dimas.

Visit our Website at lvsdef.com and if you would like to make a donation, please visit lvsdef.com/www/donations/

Schools in the Spotlight

Ramona Middle School

Fire It Up!

Students in Brook Smith-Buchan's 6th Grade Science Class are constructing solar ovens. Students are learning how to harness the power of the sun in order to cook food and to use the sun as a valuable resource for gathering energy. Students also extended their knowledge to a global perspective, learning how different cultures throughout the world use solar ovens on a daily basis for a variety of reasons.



Photo 3: Ramona Middle School 6th graders Sierra Williams-Franklin and Kara Hill construct solar ovens in science class.

Challenge Accepted

Ramona Middle School has a rich history of challenging students to their fullest potential and the Ramona Middle School Challenge Course is certainly no exception. The Challenge Course was designed 1998 to

promote Problem Solving Skills in students as well as to serve as a Team Building Activity. Teacher Elaine Courey said, “The challenge course has been designed to be a “challenge by choice.”

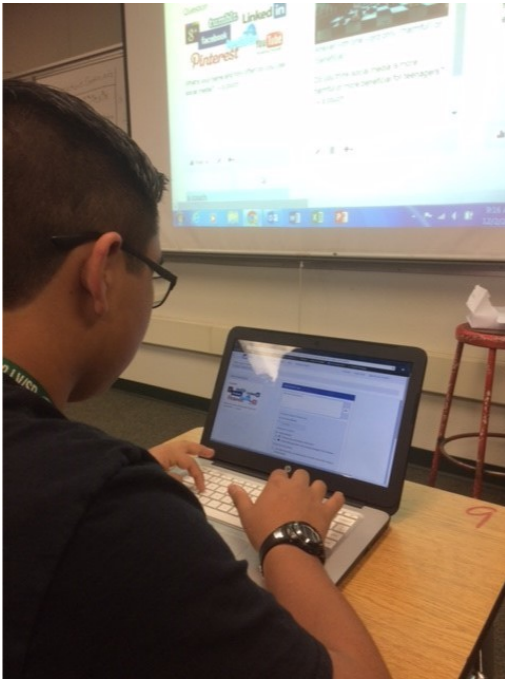


Photo 4: Tiffany Peltekci takes to the high ropes on Ramona Middle School’s Challenge Course.

The SKIES the Limit

Is social media harmful or beneficial for teens? Eighth graders in Sarah Couch, Carrie Coss, and Jason Galvan’s English classes used the SKIES Learning app to debate that question. To prepare, the students first analyzed ten sources, such as videos, articles, and the school’s student survey, that showed the pros/cons of teens using social media. Considering the evidence from these sources, students then chose a side to argue in a silent debate using the SKIES Learning app. Students were able to support their own argument/counter the opposition by adding evidence in a collective forum that they could refer back to when it came time to writing their essay.

“To our surprise, most students, even the ones who use social media argued that it is harmful,” Carrie Coss said. “The picture below shows some of the conversations that took place during the debate as well as some students respectfully correcting each other’s grammar! As an added bonus, students were able to meet one of the creators of SKIES from CalTech, hopefully inspiring a few to think about a future career in tech.”



Photos 5 & 6: Ramona Middle School 8th grader Jonathan Saldivar participates in a silent debate on the value of social media using the SKIES Learning app. Each frame in the second picture shows a student's comments during the course of the debate.

Allen Avenue Elementary School

The “Fab Lab Friday” after school club provides an opportunity for students in grades 4 and 5 to work on special projects, such as how to build a marker robot or a wobble bot. “For today’s generation it is very important that they have creative problem solving skills,” teacher Casie DeSalvio said. “Thus, it is important that we provide opportunities for these skills to be further developed.” DeSalvio wanted to start program after attending a couple of CUE events with the District and after starting her Master’s degree last year in Educational Multimedia at Cal Poly Pomona.

Some projects will have a specific, prescribed design, while others will allow students to work with an assortment of supplies to create anything that they want.

“It is amazing to see how much fun they have with their creativity and how much support they give one another with their ideas. I truly enjoyed watching them share with one another their ideas, their struggles, and their final products,” DeSalvio continued.

Teachers Lynn DeAlmeida, Renee Garcia, Debbie Valderrama, and Jennifer Courtice help DeSalvio each month..



Photos 7, 8 & 9: Students at Allen Avenue gather at Fab Lab Friday to build robots and other creative and technological projects.

Grace Miller Elementary School

Cultural Arts Partnership

The Cultural Arts Society of Hillcrest Homes has partnered with Grace Miller Elementary to promote the arts at the school. Students recently learned about Rosa Bonheur and her realistic wildlife art. Teachers coached students through an art lesson designed to produce pastel pictures of animals that look real. The training is provided by the PTA, but the supplies for this and other art projects are paid for through a donation from the Cultural Arts Society. The Society is displaying some of the student art in a portion of the art gallery at Hillcrest Homes during the holidays to showcase the work. The Cultural Arts Society also provides a venue for Grace Miller Elementary for its annual Imagination Machine Assembly in June to present student stories in fun and creative ways. Students walk the few blocks to the large meeting room at Hillcrest and enjoy the assemblies along with the residents.

Students Dive into Dictionaries

Every year, the Duarte Elks #1427 supply dictionaries for the 3rd graders in the District. In November, representatives from the Duarte Elks talked to Grace Miller students about the importance of being lifelong learners and how keeping free of drugs will help to accomplish that goal. The Elks then presented each student with a copy of a dictionary personalized with every student's name. The resource section of the dictionary includes the longest English word (over 1,000 letters), summaries of the biographies of each president of the United States, the text of the Constitution of the United States, charts, graphs, and other interesting information. Donna McIntyre challenged the students to learn one new word from the dictionary each day to increase and improve their vocabularies. Students couldn't wait to dive in to check out the words and the resources of this great gift from another of our wonderful partners.

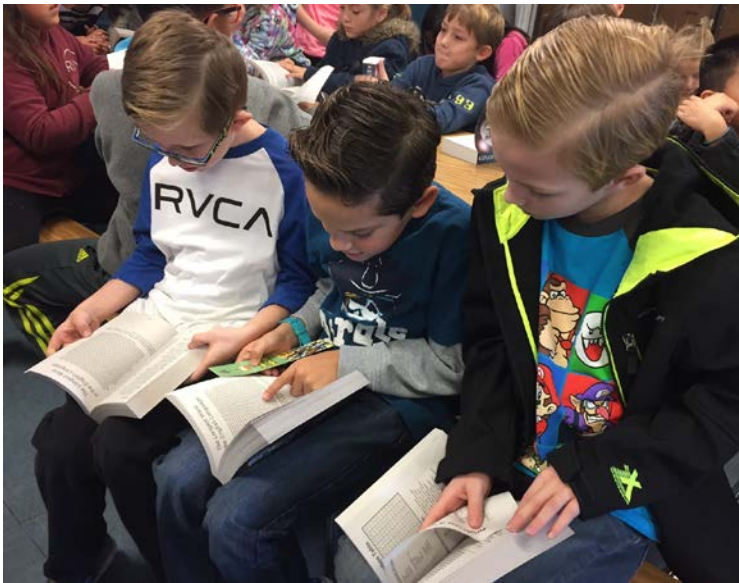


Photo 10: Grace Miller 3rd graders check out new dictionaries from the Duarte Elks.

Fall Festival

Our PTA sponsored a Fall Festival in October, which began with a costume parade up Park Street to the school. Over 1,000 attendees enjoyed a night of games, food, dancing, and fun! A silent auction was held with hundreds of donated items. Grace Miller families and community members enjoyed a beautiful fall evening and made \$13,327 that will go to field trips for the students and to several campus improvement projects.

Lone Hill Middle School

Elementary Youth Leadership Day

Lone Hill invited student leaders from its four feeder schools, Shull, Gladstone, Allen, and Ekstrand, for an awesome day of leadership training. Lone Hill's ASB students are trained by the California Association of Students Leaders (CASL), and in turn, they work with the elementary students by playing games and participating in bonding activities that involve leadership. "I think it's a neat opportunity for the elementary students to come to Lone Hill and see older role models making a difference," Abigail Ferguson said. Ferguson came to youth Leadership Day when she was a 5th grader at Shull and now is a member of the Lone Hill Associated Student Body leadership team. This is the third consecutive year that activities director Leslie Sandoval has put together this awesome event that included over 70 elementary students.



Photo 11: Student leaders from the four elementary schools in San Dimas attended Youth Leadership day at Lone Hill Middle School.

Thankful Staff Create a YouTube Video

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, the staff at Lone Hill Middle School made a YouTube video describing what makes them want to get out of bed everyday and come to work. The result was a heart-warming tribute to students. Each staff member was filmed telling a student how they make their day brighter and that they appreciate them. The smiles on both the staff and students' faces were priceless. The compiled video was shown to the entire school and also shared on social media and YouTube. We invite you to check out the Reasons We're Thankful - Lone Hill Middle School video <https://youtu.be/yyel0cXw5pQ>.

Grub for Grit

University of Pennsylvania psychologist Angela Duckworth defines grit as a child's "perseverance and passion for long-term goals," and has research showing grit is a better indicator of future earnings and happiness than either IQ or talent. As a result, Lone Hill has adopted the idea of instilling "grit" in their students, reminding them to believe in a growth mindset. Every month the staff chooses one student they feel has shown "grit" in their class and invites them to have lunch with them, hosted by ASB.



Photo 12: Grub for Grit: Students and staff gather for lunch as a reward for showing perseverance and passion for long term goals.