

UPDATE – MAY 2017

Superintendent's Message

Finish Strong

While preparing for this article, I took a quick look over my [Twitter feed](#) as it provides a quick review of the major and also daily events happening throughout the District. As I did, I was struck by the vast array of activities offered in the District's comprehensive programs. I was thankful to see all of the partnerships that were recognized in both the cities of La Verne and San Dimas and proud to see all of the award-winning accomplishments.

I am indeed celebrating the successes of Bonita USD; however, I am reminded of an advertisement put out by Nike, "It's not how you start, it's how you finish." As we finish the last six weeks of the school year, let's take a moment to reflect on the following steps that can help us finish strong.

Lead by Example

We are often reminded that students are more likely to model what we do, not do as we say. That is true not for only our actions, but also our mindsets. If we, as adults talk about how much we can't wait for school to be out, students will quickly adopt that same mindset, which makes it difficult for students to finish well. Continue to encourage them to put forth their best effort no matter the assignment, regardless how beautiful it is outside or how close we are to vacation.

Set Reasonable Goals to Finish Strong

Goals are a great way to stay motivated and inspired to complete anything. Consider using the following questions to set some goals for students or yourself:

- What are three things you can do to help finish the school year strong academically and behaviorally?
- What is the one thing you can do to help a student finish the year strong academically and behaviorally?

Celebrate and Reflect

Be sure to take time to celebrate the successes and reflect on what could be different about the next school year. Whether you are a student, employee, or a community member, it is not only important to celebrate the milestones, but also to reflect on where we have been so we can plan better for where we want to go.

Let's finish 2016-17 strong together in Bonita Unified School District.

Sincerely,

Christina (Christy) Goennier, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Twitter: [@BUSD4kids](#)

English Language Learners Move Toward Mastery

On May 3, 2017, Bonita Unified will be honoring over 300 students learning English as their second language. Sixty-two students in grades 4 through 12 have improved their skills from “English Learner” levels to “Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP).” RFEP students are those with a primary language other than English who were initially classified as English Learners, but who have subsequently met the criteria for English language proficiency.

Two hundred thirty-six students achieved growth in the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), which is given annually to all English Learner students. That is 51 more students than last year. The CELDT assesses reading, writing, listening, and speaking English.

“Our English Learners work very hard to improve their English skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking,” Coordinator School Age Care & State and Federal Programs Nancy Sifter said. “They are invested in the task of mastering English and we are so proud of them!”

WASC Praises Chap/Vista High Schools in Mid-Cycle Visit

The Western Association of Colleges and Schools (WASC) made their mid-cycle campus visit to the Ed Jones Educational Center in March and gave a glowing report of the Chaparral and Vista High Schools’ achievements. The final section of the WASC Committee’s report includes commendations and recommendations for improvement.

“WASC teams engage in a comprehensive evaluation of school sites,” Assistant Superintendent of Education Nanette Hall said. “Typically, schools receive several suggestions of ways to improve. We are so incredibly proud of Christine Black and the team at Chaparral and Vista High Schools because the WASC committee recognized the many outstanding programs and systems the school has implemented to better serve their students.”

WASC is responsible for evaluating the quality of programs, faculty, facilities, and administration in order to assure the community that a school is meeting high standards of educational quality. This mid-cycle report is required to evaluate progress toward goals set at the beginning of the six-year accreditation cycle which began in February 2014.

The report outlines the impact of 17 significant additions or changes since the WASC committee’s first visit in 2014. The school’s Positive Behavior Interventions and Support System (PBIS) tops

the list for reducing suspensions by more than 30%. PBIS celebrates and rewards positive behavior and exemplary contributions.

The committee praised the school's one-to-one ratio of students to devices and the teachers' effective use of technology. The report highlighted how teachers deliver instruction, check for understanding, increase student engagement, enhance students' computer skills, improve research and evaluation of internet resources of information, produce multi-layered and higher-level projects and performance tasks and learn digital citizenship. The visiting team wrote, "Not only has the use of technology increased students' motivation and engagement in classes, it has also improved overall student classroom behaviors and better prepared them for success in their future college or career."

"We are ecstatic the visiting team was able to get a clear picture of the high quality of instruction and programs we provide at Chaparral-Vista," Principal Christine Black said. "In the two-day visit to our campus, the team was able to observe and validate the positive, personalized learning environment we've created for our students. Our staff is committed to ongoing school improvement and is always looking for innovative ways to ensure our students are college and career ready."

District Names Employees of the Year

Each spring, schools in the Bonita Unified District select certificated and classified employees to be considered for District Employees of the Year. Nominating committees cited the following achievements in their selection of the District Employees of the Year:

Certificated Employee of the Year: Brad Smith

As one of Ramona Middle School's Physical Education teachers, athletic coaches, and ASB teachers, Brad Smith is making a difference in the lives of the students he teaches as well as the greater educational community. Smith's P.E. department is run efficiently, with great assessment data and work ethic. As a result, not only are students moving from unhealthy to healthy physical zones, but student teachers from the University of La Verne and P.E. programs from around the state come to observe Smith in action. As an ASB teacher, Smith teaches life skills. "Brad promotes social development and growth in responsibility," the school's nominating committee said.

Classified Employee of the Year: Mayra Duarte-Galvez

Mayra Duarte-Galvez is a Level II Aide in the FAST (Functional Academic Skills Training) class at Bonita High School. "Mayra is by far the most compassionate, flexible, empathetic classroom aide," the nominating committee said. Duarte-Galvez believes that all students have strengths, and where she sees unrealized potential, she makes it her mission to help students unlock skills and passions. She supports the entire school community, beyond her assigned classroom, beyond her assigned hours. "Many on this campus, students and staff alike, have benefited from her kind words, never-ending energy, and unconditional commitment to our school," the committee wrote.

Management Employee of the Year: Carl Coles

Sr. Director of Specialized Services Carl Coles is the type of leader who always thinks of students and what is best for them. He supports teachers at each school site as they provide specialized services to students. “He allows each school site to own their own positions,” the nominating committee wrote. “He gives teachers the freedom to make the programs work for the students.” Coles also supports parents. This year he organized the Second Annual Parent Partnership Academy, an all-day workshop for parents in the District.

Site Employees of the Year

The following employees were selected by their peers at their school site and were eligible to be selected as a District Employee of the Year.

Certificated (Teachers)

Angela Cox – Allen Avenue Elementary
Kelsey Bermudez – Ekstrand Elementary
Melissa Marquez – Gladstone Elementary
Megan Flores – La Verne Heights Elementary
April Maidens – Grace Miller Elementary
Tim Marshall – Roynon Elementary
Amber Peterson – Shull Elementary
Linda Hand – Oak Mesa Elementary
Brad Smith – Ramona Middle School
Donna Heinemann – Lone Hill Middle School
Adam Archibald – Bonita High School
Greg Distaso – San Dimas High School
Dave Wommack – Chaparral/Vista High Schools

Classified (Administrative & Support Staff)

Jackie Rheingans – Allen Avenue Elementary
Jannette Kalar – Ekstrand Elementary
Fidel Zabalza – Gladstone Elementary
Chris Wellington – La Verne Heights Elementary
Tracy Stubblefield – Grace Miller Elementary
Robin Vasquez – Roynon Elementary
Kelly Ngo – Shull Elementary
Rae Jean Caldarone – Oak Mesa Elementary
Myra Espino – Ramona Middle School
Cyndy Starkey – Lone Hill Middle School
Mayra Duarte-Galvez – Bonita High School
Kim Lowary – San Dimas High School
Michael Lopez – Chaparral/Vista High School
Jim Spiotto – Maintenance & Operations
Julie Harris – Transportation

Schools in the Spotlight

Ekstrand Elementary School

Pop Your Top and Read

For over 20 years, Ekstrand students from Transitional Kindergarten to 5th grade have enjoyed the Pop Your Top and Read event in March. This is especially true for the 5th graders who know this will be their last year to gather with the entire student body, each with a book, a carbonated drink, and blanket in hand. The students spread out around campus to celebrate the love of reading. It's quite a moment when over 500 students simultaneously pop the top of their drink to kick off the event.



Photo 1: Ekstrand Kindergarten teacher Chelsea Wyrick and Instructional Aide Elizabeth Preciado dress up for Pop Your Top and Read day.

Lessons with Gravity

Fourth and fifth-grade students at Ekstrand Elementary School, put all their eggs into one basket and had their teachers drop them from the roof of a classroom to learn how gravity and materials interact. The students were challenged to engineer and create a container to prevent a raw egg from breaking at the end of a 20-foot fall.

Some students wrapped their eggs in packaging, like bubble wrap, to absorb the shock of the impact. Other students designed balloons or parachutes to make use of air resistance to decelerate their egg's descent to the ground. And for many others, arrays of straws, popsicle sticks, and even rubber bands arranged in complex geometric configurations created shock absorbers.

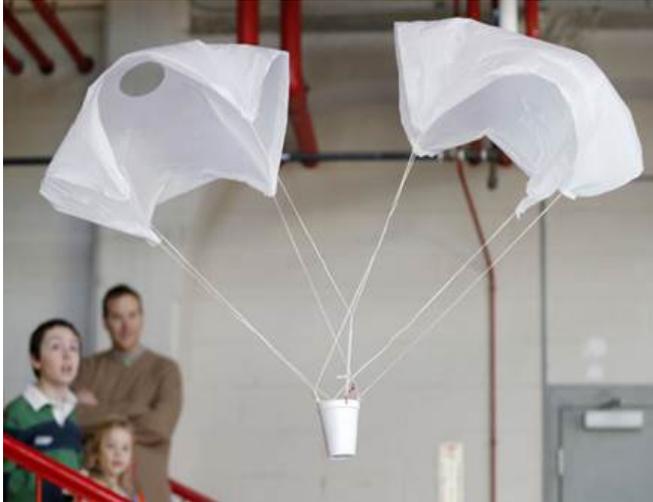


Photo 2: A raw egg lands safely after a 20 foot fall. With an egg cradled in a styrofoam cup attached to homemade parachutes, the student engineers at Ekstrand Elementary School learn that air resistance is a pretty good counter force to gravity.

Imagine This...Ekstrand Publishes Again

Fourth grade student Skylar Fredieu is Ekstrand Elementary School's most recently published author! The school participated in the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom's 2016-2017 Writing Contest called "Imagine This...Stories Inspired by Agriculture." Skylar's story, "Addison and Her Award Winning Artichoke," is one of eight student pieces selected for publication from contestants throughout the State.

Skylar's story has been printed with the other winning stories and sent out to schools all over California. It will to be used as a resource for younger children to learn how California-grown products are produced and get to market. Skylar flew to Sacramento to receive awards at a book dedication ceremony.

Skylar said that her favorite part of winning was meeting new people. "I met other authors and the illustrator for my story," she said.



Photo 3: Fourth grader Skylar Fredieu was honored in Sacramento for her story "Addison and Her Award Winning Artichoke" which has now been published thanks to the writing contest "Imagine This...Stories Inspired by Agriculture."

Lone Hill Middle School

Lone Hill Applied for State's Gold Ribbon Award

The California Gold Ribbon Schools Award was created to honor public schools while the California Distinguished Schools Program is on hiatus as California continues its transition to new assessment and accountability systems. Lone Hill applied for this prestigious award for the 2016-2017 school year for its PAW/Roar Intervention program and held a site validation visit in March. The site validation team consisted of three administrators from L.A. County schools who were impressed with Lone Hill's staff, students, and PAW/Roar program. The State announced that Lone Hill has been named a Gold Ribbon school for 2017.

Math Field Day

Lone Hill Middle School was the host for the 8th Annual Bonita Unified Math Field Day. Students in grades four through eight from across the District participated in three rounds from Conceptual Understanding, Problem Solving and Computation/Procedural tasks. The Lions swept first place for all contests in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade! They also competed at the LA County Office of Education (LACOE) Math Field Day on April 29th at Azusa Pacific University, although the outcome of the contest was not known at the time of this printing.



Photo 4: Lone Hill 6th, 7th, and 8th graders win first place in the Bonita Unified Math Field Day before competing at the county level.

Ed Jones Educational Center

Chaparral High School's Growing Art Program

“We know research shows that beyond the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills, the arts increase attendance rates and support academics,” Chaparral High School Art teacher Anthony Zavala said. “Chaparral recognizes the significance of art education and will continue to provide students with the opportunity to participate in creative and academic pursuits. I’m very excited that we will be offering a course on mixed media art next year. This will push students beyond the introductory level and allow them to participate in the field of design.”

Chaparral High School’s art program is designed to provide students with practical skills in creative and critical thinking relevant to a global setting. Students participate in projects that require a range of skills including research, writing, collaboration, and the production of student-centered artwork. The variety of lessons presented in class engage students with the technical use of charcoal, graphite, tempera paint, oil pastel, and watercolor. Art history is emphasized as a point of reference and provides students with a rationale behind the content of each lesson.

“Our students have connected to primary sources through several museum visits, including trips to the Getty Museum and the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena,” Zavala said. “These museum trips enhance class lessons and show the lasting effects of art education.” Chaparral plans to incorporate additional visits to further provide students with supplemental learning and opportunities to engage with the world of art.



Photos 5 and 6: Art students at Chaparral High School work with charcoal, graphite, tempera paint, oil pastel, and watercolor in the introductory art class provided. Students will have access to a new mixed media class next year.

San Dimas High School

Saints Baseball Coach Gets His 300th Win

Mike Regan, San Dimas High School's 18-year Head Baseball Coach, won his 300th game in March against Arcadia High School. Coach Regan has led his team to four Valle Vista League titles in a row with a total of six titles in his career. He has five CIF Quarter Final Appearances, three Semi-Final Appearances, and one CIF Championship. In 2015, Regan's Saints finished the season 31-1 and were ranked #1 in the country in USA Today.

Co-Head Coach Mark Chiappelli said, "He will say that it's not about him, it's about the players and his coaches on staff, but without his guidance, his trust in his coaches, his 'old-school' approach, his grind and desire to get every player better, his consistent coaching throughout every game we play, San Dimas wouldn't have the program it does today."

Congratulations, Coach Regan!



Photo 7: San Dimas High School Baseball Coach Mike Regan, pictured here with his wife Rosie Rand their son Rocco, is honored after his 300th win in March 2017.

College Night

Representatives from Cal Poly Pomona, UC Riverside, Azusa Pacific University, University of La Verne, and Kaplan gathered at San Dimas High School in March to present key details regarding college preparedness to freshman, sophomores, and juniors and their parents. Almost 150 parents and students attended the March event, a highlight of which was a presentation by San Dimas alumna Brittany Clarke who now attends Yale University.

Additional breakout topics included the University of California and California State University systems, the NCAA, financial aid, and SAT/ACT prep.

Ring the Bell for the 2017 Cheer Team!

San Dimas High School's Cheer Team has accomplished a pyramid of achievements this year!

- 1st Place at two USA Regional Championships
- 1st Cheer Pro State Competition
- 1st Cheer Pro Best of the West Competition
- Grand Champion at TSC Competitions (Highest score of the day)
- 1st at USA Nationals
- Went undefeated throughout the season

In the last four years, this team has won two titles and was runner up the other two years. Way to go!



Photo 8: The 2017 San Dimas Cheer Team rings the bell on campus, a Saints tradition for champions, to celebrate their winning season!