

UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2016

Superintendent's Message

Personalized Learning

As we move forward in the 21st Century, we are challenged with preparing students today for jobs that do not yet exist. Many of them will face problems that have never occurred before. This phenomenon can create a challenge to our educators and current school systems, especially as we venture forward with Personalized Learning.

Personalized Learning allows students to have choices about how and where they are learning and the ability to adjust the pace based upon student need. Instruction is adapted to the student's learning style to acquire information, collaborate with others, and choose the method of demonstrating mastery of a standard. Will it be a movie with a plot, sub plots, an essay, or even an art project with a speech explaining the same ideas?

So what are some potential challenges or complexities we might encounter as we pursue individualized learning? What can we anticipate as some of the bumps? How can we avoid pitfalls? One approach is to provide enough time, communication and clarity to make the transition to Personalized Learning.

Time is an important resource that is crucial in a successful implementation of change. We must provide adequate time to plan, have discussions with stakeholders, and follow up on what is working and what is not. There must be time for professional learning for staff, students, parents and the community. We must build in adequate time to take calculated risks and make periodic assessments during the transition to Personalized Learning.

Communication and clarity are key to any successful change implementation. “What” and “how” are important to know about a change implementation. However, more important is the “why” behind the change. If there is not clarity in the purpose of a strategic change, then there will be confusion and misinformation from the inception.

As we make this change to Personalized Learning, we will ensure we are not just adding one more thing to the already full plate of our educators. The change needs to be integrated into student learning. It is okay to be innovative, but not at the expense of sustained student learning. This transition is important to our students, but so are the proven instructional practices already in action in each of our classrooms. We will continue to teach students the skills they need to use as adults, while we expand the learning environments in which they will use them.

Sincerely,

Christina Goennier, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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

Bonita High School Hits Top 20 on California Standardized Testing

Bonita High School is celebrating big gains in school wide test scores on the [California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress \(CAASPP\)](#). In math, scores increased from 39% to 51% of students meeting or exceeding standards. In English Language Arts, the students made unprecedented improvement, moving from 71% to 88% of students meeting or exceeding standards.

“Bonita High School is very excited about our achievements in test scores over the past year. We look forward to continual improvement,” Principal Derek Bub said, “and we are happy with our progress in just the second year offering the Smarter Balanced test.”

BHS’s English Language Arts scores rank them in the top 20 of all comprehensive public schools taking the test in the state.

“Our teachers have carefully analyzed their practices as they have adapted their instruction to meet the new California Standards,” Bub said. “School wide, we held a ‘Got Grit’ campaign throughout our testing season to encourage students to persevere and commit to doing their best on these tests.”



Photo 1: Bonita High School teachers wore “Got Grit?” t-shirts throughout the school’s testing season as a reminder to students to persevere and give their best efforts on standardized testing.

Schools in the Spotlight

San Dimas High School

Sammy Saint Leads the Charge

The 2015 ASB administration and Cheer Squad at San Dimas High School established a new Mascot Team comprised of six San Dimas High School Students. Now the team has a mascot costume, developed conceptually by Coach Kim Lowary and Principal Michael Kelly and constructed by Maywell Mascots, Inc. In a few short months, Sammy Saint has won the hearts of the student body, parents, city officials, and the San Dimas community.

The 2016 Mascot Team includes Emily Basulto, Justin Grant, Asher Kocalis, Braidan Lowary, Kendra Rogers, and December Swift. Each member of the team and even guests sometimes dress as Sammy Saint at various events. The costume fits people of heights from 5’5” to 6’2” and has a fan inside the head to keep the mascot cool.

“It has been exciting to see the crowd react when Sammy appears at an event,” Coach Lowary said. “Kids love him! Most recently, Sammy appeared at the City of San Dimas Family Fitness event. He danced, posed for pictures, and ran alongside the toddler marathon.”



Photo 2: From left to right, Assistant Principal Jack Nance, Assistant Principal Rita Kear, and Principal Michael Kelly pose with new San Dimas High School mascot Sammy Saint.

AP Students Use Twitter to Connect During Presidential Debates

San Dimas High School hosted live Twitter chats for the Presidential debates to help students engage in the political race and to provide a forum to share their thoughts. All faculty and staff of SDHS were invited to participate as well as the District Superintendent, Dr. Christy Goennier.

“What I found rewarding about the live tweet event was coming into class the next morning and hearing the students talk about how much fun they had,” AP Government teacher Bryan Wierzchucki said. “When you can get students engaged in learning and make it fun then it’s a win for everybody.”

Students used the hashtags [#SDHSAPGov](#) (for AP Government) and [#SDHSRhoKappa](#) (for the National Social Studies Honors Society) to connect their comments. Between the two hashtags there were over 600 comments posted by San Dimas students, staff and faculty during the first debate. Superintendent Goennier retweeted many of the student’s comments.

“Participating in a live chat with young people on real world issues that we all are affected by is the epitome of what learning is about,” AP US History Teacher and Rho Kappa advisor Leslie Leaming said. “Through the Twitter chat, I was able to learn more about who my students are politically and can cater my lessons and club discussions on those issues they care most deeply about. Hopefully, these experiences get students excited to participate in the democratic process and make positive choices for our future.”



Out of the mouth of our future.



Photo 3: Superintendent Christy Goennier retweets a student’s comment during a live Twitter chat during the first Presidential debate.

Community/Armed Forces Night at San Dimas High School

The Saints hosted representatives of the Armed Forces and city businesses on October 7 during the varsity football game against Rowland High School. Acting members of the military and veterans were admitted to the game free. During the pregame show, the high school choir sang the National Anthem and the band played a medley to honor members of the Armed Forces in attendance. Coaches and team captains from both Rowland High School and San Dimas High School presented a check for \$1,800 to the local chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). San Dimas High School students wore red, white, and blue to honor America.

During half time, the team’s sponsors and other San Dimas businesses were on site to promote the city’s economy. Honored guests included Better Home Financial, which has made contributions in time and donations to the school, New Song Church, which has partnered with the school for over 10 years, and RaeJean Snyder, who recently retired after 31 years in the District. Ms. Snyder has taken care of students and staff at SDHS for over 20 years.



Photos 4: San Dimas Saints honored active and veteran members of the military as well as community businesses, organizations, and individuals who have made a difference for the school at the game against Rowland High School on October 7.

Ekstrand Elementary School

Annual Walkathon Raises 50% More Funds

In October, Ekstrand Elementary School, with support from the PTA and community businesses, raised over \$12,000 at their annual walkathon, which is 50% more than what the school has raised in all previous years of the event. Funds raised this year support technology, Makerspace, and student after-school clubs.

In addition to the school's 450 students, teachers, and parents participating in the event, the Fire Department, the San Dimas Sheriff Department, San Dimas High School Cheerleaders and Drumline, and a DJ made the event bigger than ever.

Buddy Bench Makes a Mark on Friendship

Ekstrand's PTA presented the school with the gift of a Buddy Bench and Mayor Curt Morris came to the school for the ribbon cutting in October during National Bully Prevention month. The school first became acquainted with the Buddy Bench concept when former first grader Christian Bucks thought he was moving to Germany. Bucks didn't think he would have any friends to play with at his new home, so he introduced the special bench idea to Ekstrand.

At the dedication ceremony of the new bench, Student Council President Rylie Rodriguez told the history of the Buddy Bench. Second grade teacher Catherine Rojas led a chant to the students about being a good buddy and never letting anyone play alone.

"We want our students here at Ekstrand to always have a friend to play with and to feel welcomed," Newton continued. "We don't want anyone to be lonely."



Photo 5: Students recite a chant about friendship at the dedication of Ekstrand Elementary School's new Buddy Bench.

Students Learn CPR

Third grader Sophia Washburn explained in writing the four steps to administering CPR, which she learned at a special class at school: 1) ensure scene safety, 2) shake and shout, 3) call for help, and 4) chest compressions.

With regard to the second step, Washburn wrote, “You must shake a person to try to wake them up. If someone collapses during playground time, shake him or her hard and shout, ‘Hey are you awake?’ If they don’t get up, say yes, or tell you to stop, continue.”



Photo 6: Students at Ekstrand learn CPR.

Oak Mesa Elementary School

TNT Dunk Squad Visits Oak Mesa

In September, Oak Mesa students had a special visit from the world famous TNT Dunk Squad, which has performed spectacular slam dunks using trampolines at venues around the world. The two man duo have performed at Los Angeles Clippers and Lakers games, the NBA All Star Game, NCAA Final Four, and the Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Their special visit to Oak Mesa was to promote positive life choices and the message to persevere when faced with difficult challenges.



Photo 7: World famous TNT Dunk Squad visited Oak Mesa Elementary School with a trampoline-charged basketball dunking show and a great message about positive life choices.

Visit to the LA County Fair

Oak Mesa Elementary School students participated in La Verne Day at the LA County Fair on September 7. Students were able to pet farm animals, watch animal shows, and learn about dinosaurs that seemed to come to life. Later that evening, many Oak Mesa students and families enjoyed the parade that highlighted each of La Verne's amazing schools.



Photo 8: Oak Mesa Elementary School visited the LA County Fair on La Verne Day and found dinosaurs that appeared to come to life!

Soroptimist

Oak Mesa expresses thanks to the Target store in La Verne for including their school in a special philanthropic event. On September 14, La Verne/San Dimas Soroptimist donated funds for students who were in need of new clothes. Students were picked up at school by bus and greeted at Target by members of Soroptimist, several community volunteers, and Target employees. Each student worked with a personal shopper who assisted him or her in purchasing clothes. Students

left Target with a backpack full of new clothes that they were proud to wear. “Thank you La Verne/San Dimas Soroptimist and La Verne Target for your hospitality and giving back to our deserving students and families!” Principal Steven Patterson said.

First Annual Family Sports Night

Friday, September 30, Oak Mesa’s PTA hosted our first annual Family Sports Night. Students and parents were able to play wacky sports games along with other games students typically play at school. Families enjoyed tacos and quesadillas provided by Mauricio’s Mexican Food. With the help of PTA parents, PE teachers Linda Hand and instructional aide Sonia Smith, and several Bonita High School seniors, who volunteered as part of their senior project, Family Sports Night was a tremendous success!



Photo 9: Oak Mesa students gather on the field for a PTA sponsored Family Sports Night.

Roynon Elementary School

Back to School Bash

On September 9, 2016, the Roynon PTA hosted a Back to School Bash as a kick-off to the new school year. About 200 attendees enjoyed hot dogs and played carnival games. In Danger of Failing, a band made up of Bonita High School teachers and District personnel, entertained the crowd.

“Our PTA is outstanding. It was a great night to come out and celebrate the new school year,” Principal Matthew Wien said. The PTA recruited parent volunteers at the event. Many classroom and school wide events are funded and run by the parents of the PTA.

Roynon Beats 2015-2016 Reading Goal

Roynon began the new school year proud of their achievements of the last school year. “We had a school-wide goal of 80% of our students reading at grade level,” Wien said. “We ended at 81%!”

Over the last three years, the percentage of students reading at grade level has increased significantly. In 2014, 58% of the student body was reading at grade level. In 2015, that number jumped to 74%. Speaking of the 2016 achievement of 81%, Wien said, “I am so proud of our students and our teachers. Everyone worked extremely hard to achieve such a lofty goal. Reading is the foundation and we are continuing to build a program in which our students have the building blocks for future success.”



Photos 10 and 11: Roynon Elementary School students have improved from 58% reading at grade level to 81% in the last three years!