

# UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2017

## Superintendent's Message

During this time of rapid change and increased technological advances, we are often doing more than we have ever done before, and at a faster pace. With the speed of rapid changes, let's not neglect our relationships that connects us all.

November brings such a busy time, but it also reminds us to pause and give thanks to those individuals who bring us joy, put up with us on our good and bad days, and push us to better ourselves. Throughout the year, we celebrate milestones of life, such as birthdays, when a child achieves, winning a sporting event, learning to drive, graduations, and the list goes on. We also feel sad and have occasions to support each other. Some moments may seem unbearable as we watch children grow up and experience disappointment, when someone moves away, or unfortunately, as we shared the horrific pain of the Las Vegas shooting. Let's take a moment to be thankful to the individuals who walk with us through our day-to-day experiences and say thank you.

I, myself, have been blessed with many individuals who made a difference in my life. When I thanked them, they humbly say they were just doing their jobs. I don't believe that for one moment. They were doing more than their jobs. They were planting, watering, weeding and growing. You too are not just doing your jobs, when you place a Band-Aid on a skinned knee, cook a meal, clean up after a child, you are growing and nurturing, tending to children. They are becoming caring human beings who will continue to pass along those attributes to a future generation.

I want to take this moment and thank all Bonita Unified parents and staff members. Your hard work is appreciated, and it does not go unnoticed.

Sincerely,

Christina (Christy) Goennier, Ed.D.

Superintendent

[Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)

# **Bonita Unified Students Post Big Gains on 2017 State Tests**

Bonita Unified students continued their trend of high achievement and significant growth on the 2017 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress. The statewide standardized testing program provides scores in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. In ELA, 68 percent of Bonita students met state standards, up 5 points from 2016. In math, 54 percent of students met state standards, up 6 points from last year.

Bonita students scored significantly higher than state averages and posted higher gains. Forty-nine percent of students across the state met the ELA state standards, down half a point from 2016. While 38% of students across the state met the math standards, up half point from last year.

Bonita Unified Superintendent, Dr. Christy Goennier, was pleased with Bonita's performance. "We've continued to focus on the standards and have been intentional with our instruction," she stated. "The gains that we had from last year are a testament to the incredible teachers, staff, and students in Bonita Unified." Dr. Goennier also credited personalized learning as a significant factor in increasing the test scores. "A major focus area in our district is on personalized learning. We know that a key to success is meeting students where they are and creating learning experiences that allow for growth," Goennier said. With an eye toward the future, Dr. Goennier sees great things ahead. "We are on the right path. We'll continue to hone our instructional program and with our staff and our students, the sky is the limit."

## **Bonita Unified on Solid Financial Footing**

Through careful financial management and prudent budgeting, the Bonita Unified School District has reported another positive year for the District's finances. As reported in the District's Unaudited Actuals Financial Report, BUSD ended the 2016-17 school year with net income in the Unrestricted General Fund. This resulted in an excess of unrestricted revenues over expenditures of \$3.3 million, and an Unrestricted Ending Fund Balance (equivalent to our "retained earnings" in a for-profit company) of \$13.6 million.

The District's General Fund Budget totals \$110 million. The primary source of revenue is State funding, through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). LCFF funding for 2016-17 totaled \$83 million.

LCFF was enacted in 2013-14, replacing the previous K-12 school financing system, which had been in existence for roughly 40 years. One of the goals of the LCFF is to simplify how state

funding is provided to local educational agencies (LEAs). Under the old funding system, each school district was funded based on a unique revenue limit, multiplied by its average daily attendance (ADA). In addition, districts received restricted funding for over 50 categorical programs, which were designed to provide targeted services based on the demographics and needs of the students in each district.

Under the LCFF funding system, revenue limits and most state categorical programs have been eliminated. The LCFF creates funding targets based on student characteristics and provides greater flexibility to use these funds to improve student outcomes. For school districts, the LCFF funding targets consist of grade span-specific base grants plus supplemental and concentration grants that are calculated based on student demographic factors.

Due to the improving economy which has provided substantial increases in the District's LCFF, the District's financial situation improved over the last three years, while at the same time, the BUSD Board of Trustees was able to adopt budgets that included significant new investment into programs and site budgets. Through the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) process, the District identified areas of need for new spending. Major increases have been added for Common Core implementation, site-based programs and expenses, and various program enhancements.

For detailed information regarding the District's finances, please see the [Bonita USD website](#) or contact the Business Services Department.

## **Schools in the Spotlight**

### ***Grace Miller Elementary***

#### **New Staff**

There are many exciting changes at Grace Miller Elementary this year, beginning with the addition of new staff members. After 15 years at Grace Miller, Principal Deanne Spencer retired, and Tomeika Carter, who previously served as an assistant principal at Roynon Elementary, was selected to take over the reins as Grace Miller's new principal. In addition to new leadership, Grace Miller welcomed many new certificated and classified staff members. Joining the teaching staff are second-grade teacher Steve Alba; Specialized Services teacher, Veronica Amaral; first/second-grade teacher Amy Benson; preschool teacher Tony Garza; kindergarten/first-grade SDC teacher Laura Graham; and first/second-grade SDC teacher Jackie Rodriguez. Assisting teachers in classrooms are new paraeducators, Sara Cochran and Kathleen Martinez. Also new to Grace Miller is Julie Comaianni who provides clerical support at the front office. Grace Miller is thrilled to

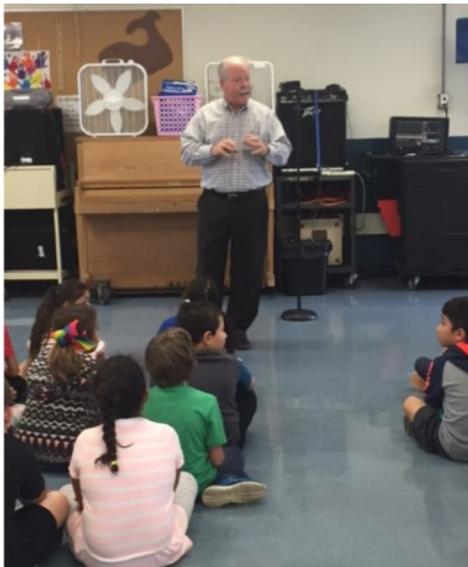
welcome these new members to their already fantastic staff and together they look forward to a phenomenal school year!



**Photo: New teachers Alba, Amaral, Benson, Garza, Graham, Rodriguez surround Principal Carter**

### **Special Guests**

Grace Miller commemorated Constitution Week, which is celebrated annually September 17-23, by welcoming a special guest to their campus. Second-grade students had the honor of having City of La Verne Mayor, Don Kendrick, speak with them about government. Students had the opportunity to ask Mayor Kendrick questions about governing and what it's like to be Mayor. It was an illuminating educational experience.



**Photo 1: City of La Verne Mayor Kendrick speaking with second-graders**

Grace Miller also had the pleasure of having children's author Aaron Reynolds on campus for a special presentation. Reynolds is a New York Times Bestselling Author and has written many highly acclaimed books for children, including *President Squid*, *Nerdy Birdy*, *Creepy Carrots!*, *Carnivores*, and the *Joey Fly*, *Private Eye* series. He captivated students with a read of his new book, *Creepy Pair of Underwear*. Students and staff alike, oohed and ahhhed. It was a memorable day for all!



**Photo 2: Grace Miller welcomed Author Aaron Reynolds**

## **Fall Festival**

Each year Grace Miller's PTA hosts the community for a Fall Festival, and this year, the Festival was on Friday, October 20, and is one of the school's most important fundraisers that provided a fun way for family members, students, and staff to come together to support Grace Miller. The large crowd turned out to enjoy the children's music, games, crafts, and ghoulish food from local vendors. It was a huge success that celebrated the fall season. The festival was kicked off with students dressed in their favorite Halloween costumes lined up by grade and then paraded. This event has proven to be one of the most fun and highest grossing fundraisers. Last year, they raised over \$20,000, which went towards the purchase of technology for students.

## ***Bonita High School***

### **Smudgepin**

On Friday September 29th, Bonita High held the annual "Smudgepin" bowling competition between their FAST class and the FAST class from San Dimas High School. This event happens at Chaparral Lanes in San Dimas and is one of the highlights of each school year. Each year the entire class gets to bowl two games and they are provided lunch and bowling shirts! To see the

excitement on each of their faces, and to see them helping one another, truly brings excitement and joy to all participating. Teacher Sheri Dill coordinates this great event and we cannot thank her enough for the time and effort she and her whole team put in to make this event possible for Bonita HS students. Ahh Yeah Bearcats!



**Photo 3: Principal Ritchie supports BHS bowling team**

### **Dig Pink**

On Wednesday, October 4th, Bonita High held their Dig Pink event where the volleyball team raised money for breast cancer. Volleyball Coach Leila Low headed up the event and worked extremely hard to organize it. On this day, Bonita High was a sea of pink with staff and students wearing pink to show support. There was a “Cut Out Cancer” event where numerous students and one staff member cut and donated their hair to the cause. In all, ten feet of hair was donated to make wigs for cancer patients. That night the gym was decorated all pink for the volleyball game and many gift baskets were auctioned off to raise money. It was a great event and students raised a significant amount of money to help beat breast cancer.



**Photo 4: BHS students wear pink at their recent “Cut Out Cancer” event**

### **Active Shooter Training**

Over the past three months, Bonita High School and the La Verne Police Department have been coordinating a staff development training focused on an active shooter on campus. This exercise took place on a pupil-free day, October 6, with 100 people in attendance including La Verne Police Explorers who had the opportunity to participate and learn what to do in this type of an emergency. LVPD and Bonita High administration reviewed safety plans and the “Run, Hide, Fight” philosophy. Then, a live demonstration of police procedures was rehearsed. The session ended with Officer Martin Weinreb describing his personal experience with an “Active Shooter” at the recent Las Vegas Concert. While this training comes at a time when there is heightened sensitivity due to the tragic event in Las Vegas, the police and staff felt it imperative to continue to train for these types of scenarios to ensure a safe environment to all students and faculty. District office staff were invited to observe, and Assistant Superintendent Susan Cross Hume commented, “I was impressed, and believe it is a very worthwhile exercise and a model for other schools to follow.” Principal Ritchie said, “Anytime an organization does this type of drill, we can identify areas that can be strengthened to increase student and staff safety. The La Verne Police Department and Bonita High School have a great partnership, and we will continue to work together to support students. When everyone works together, great things are accomplished.”