

UPDATE – OCTOBER 2017

Superintendent's Message

The month of October means fall is upon us. For a school district, this means we are in the middle of our Friday Night Lights football season, and many other fall sports and visual and performing arts productions our schools showcase at the Bonita Center for the Arts. Activities are occurring on all campuses, and most importantly, students are busy learning.

Our teachers, co-educational staff, and administrators provide a supportive environment that is conducive to learning. The recent release of our California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) scores demonstrates we are going in the right direction as a school district. The scores also identify areas in which we need to increase our focus. District test scores are anticipated to be released to the public from the California Department of Education by the end of September. You can view them at <http://caaspp.cde.ca.gov/>.

The focus for 2017-18 is increasing our communication to our stakeholders. We received over 200 responses to our recent survey. Our next step is to establish a committee consisting of parents, teachers, administrators, and students to review the results and work together to develop a district-wide communications plan to meet the needs of our school community. Just a reminder, we made a few additions to increase communications by adding Instagram and Facebook accounts to my already existing Twitter account. You can follow any of these accounts by searching for the user name @busd4kids. We also have a District blog using Blogger (formerly Blog Spot) that can be accessed at <https://bonitausd.blogspot.com/>. This blog-publishing service parents and community members can access by entering your email to subscribe to our District blog and receive email notifications.

Sincerely,

Christina (Christy) Goennier, Ed.D.

Superintendent

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

Bonita USD Board Member Elliot to Retire



Bonita Unified School District fourteen-year Board veteran, Jim Elliot, announced his upcoming retirement plans last week. During the September 6 Board meeting, Elliot said, “As I look to the future, and as I explore new ways to serve my community, I want to thank my Board colleagues, staff, parents, and community members for their support, confidence, and for the high-privilege of allowing me to serve as a Board member for the past 14 years.”

Elliot served 3-1/2 terms having been first elected in 2003 and ran unopposed in the last 2015 election. He with his wife Susie have been San Dimas residents since 1988, and both of their children, Steven and Lisa, attended Bonita USD schools.

The Board will convene their next regularly scheduled meeting on October 11 to discuss options to fill Elliot’s vacancy.

September was Attendance Awareness Month

Bonita USD joined with school districts across the country and celebrated September as Attendance Awareness Month.

As students start back to school in the fall, it’s important to remind parents and our community how important regular attendance is for our kids. Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student’s academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. When our schools, parents and community join together to promote consistent, on-time attendance for students of all ages, our students will be on the road to success!

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. But, we also know that when students miss too much school— regardless of the reason – it can cause them to fall behind academically. A child is less likely to succeed if he or she is chronically absent— which means missing 18 or more days over the course of an entire school year. Research shows:

- Children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade are less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence is a proven early warning sign for students at risk for dropping out of school.
- By 9th grade good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8th grade test scores.

Being on time is also important. Children can miss crucial parts of the school day if they are late. Late-arriving students are also disruptive to class routines. Start a lifelong habit of arriving at school on time.

Here are a few practical tips to help families support regular attendance:

- Make sure your children keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Ensure your children go to school every day unless they are truly sick
- Avoid scheduling vacations or doctor's appointments when school is in session.
- Talk to teachers and counselors for advice if your children feel anxious about going to school.
- Develop back up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.

We hope to see your child on time, every day at school. Attendance counts!

More tips for families and communities can be found at www.attendanceworks.org.

Schools in the Spotlight

Ramona Middle School

Students at the LA County Fair

Ramona students were excited to be part of La Verne Day at the Fair on Sept 13th. Members of ASB and our WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) programs rode floats and showed their school spirit in the city parade. The Ramona band took the stage in the community performance hall with a wonderful set performing a medley celebrating our armed forces.

Ramona has 9 New Teachers and a New Principal

Ramona welcomed nine new teachers and a new principal in the 2017-18 school year. The science department has added John Madunich, Matt Pogan, and Jessica Wade. We have two new PE teachers with Rachel Powers and Cynthia Acedo. Our Specialized Services Department welcomes Shan Abkarian, Alma Amado, and Julie McKissick. Cuyler McDonald has taken over the Ramona Band. We have also had a change in school leadership with James Ellis as the new principal at Ramona, who took over after Anne Neal's ten-year tenure at RMS when she moved to the Bonita USD District Office as a Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Congratulations to all of the new Viking Staff!



Photo 1 & 2: Ramona ASB and WEB students enjoyed La Verne Day at the Fair

New Ramona Gym

The month of October will go down in the record books for Ramona Middle School as the PE department and students are moving into our new gymnasium. The gymnasium is a result of Bonita Unified community support of Bond Measure AB that made our 10,000 square foot gym a reality. The gym boasts seating for nearly 1,400 and has two full-size regulation basketball courts. The gym is scheduled to be completed October 2017 with our volleyball team getting the honor of being our first team to compete! Go Vikings!



Photo 3: Ramona Middle School gymnasium a reality thanks to community support

Welcome Sixth Graders

Before the school year began, the Ramona WEB students welcomed our new sixth graders onto campus. Throughout the year, WEB leaders will work with their sixth-grade buddies to help them

acclimate to the middle school campus and connect them to school activities and resources. To kick things off right, sixth graders were invited to campus for fun games and activities that helped them learn more about the school. Our sixth-grade Vikings are already doing great in class, and we look forward to seeing what they can achieve over the year!



Photo 4: Ramona Middle School Sixth Graders

San Dimas High School

The San Dimas High School Saints Off to a Great Start

There were many exciting events to begin the 2017-2018 school year. A highlight was winning the Smudgepot football game 19-8 against rival, the Bonita Bearcats! The first week of school began with a spirit week for Smudgepot that had over 300 students and over 80 staff members participating. To promote school spirit, staff and students are using a new mobile device app called "5 Star" that helps track participation and students can receive notifications about school spirit points and activities. Many classes participated in activities related to the solar eclipse that occurred on the first day of school.



Photo 5: San Dimas band students warm up for Smudgepot

Curriculum Preparation

San Dimas math teachers received a new curriculum called CPM. It is an inquiry based math learning program where students are assigned roles in groups to practice solving real-life problems. Math teachers had several days of training and are receiving ongoing support from District math coaches. Math courses offered this school year are:

Integrated Math I	Integrated Math II
Algebra 2	Advanced Math
AP Calculus AB	AP Calculus BC
AP Statistics	

Social science teachers will receive training on writing strategies to support the California English Language Arts (ELA) Standards.

San Dimas High School English department is off to a strong start with both new faces and returning ones. Staff members continue to collaborate on units and common assessments to improve student learning. The department hopes to continue momentum from the 2016-17 surge in ELA test scores.

San Dimas High School science teachers were accepted into the Metropolitan Water District's Solar Boat competition and will be looking for team members and volunteers soon.

The social science department added a new AP Geography class that is going great, and this adds to the growing list of college-level courses offered at San Dimas High School.

Hands-on, practical, educational technology is increasingly becoming a commonplace in social science. Digital lessons are developed to be engaging, relevant, cross-curricular, and addresses the 4 Cs in order to help our kids be career-college ready.

Personalized Learning Communities (PLC) & Digital Collaboration (via Twitter & Google Classroom) have increased cohesiveness and effectiveness.

The continued and increasing use of Common Core elements blend English Language Arts historical skills: primary source writings, photographs, raw data, graphs/charts, etc. They are evaluated for reliability/legitimacy, analyzed, interpreted, and connected to our respective historical content.



Photo 6: SDHS Teacher Mrs. Luevand pictured left with science students on a lab.

The specialized services department has all graduation requirement classes offered in a co-teaching setting: English at each grade level, Integrated Math 1, Integrated Math 2, Biology, US History, World History and Government/Economics. Teachers collaborate through a quarterly “Think Tank” to ensure student support and learning. Additional study skills classes are being offered this year in the areas of English and math.

The third annual Smudgepin Bowling contest scheduled for Friday, September 29, features students from the FAST and ASDI classes competing against students from Bonita High School at Chaparral Lanes.

SDHS Media Center Modernization

The modernization of the SDHS Media Center is in full swing with the transformation of the Media Center into the focal center of campus where students want to go to for resources, to collaborate, and create.

The modernization process will be in phases based upon three designated spaces within the Media Center: A quiet/study zone, a collaboration and community zone, and a Commons area. The Commons area is an appealing space to welcome students with plenty of soft-seating, coffee tables, group tables, and chairs to provide an area for study and a place for students to meet. Changing the color scheme, purchasing a green screen, creating a giant chalkboard on a wall, and putting together a giant magnet word wall will be exciting additions to the new space.

Students enrolled in the new elective, Student Technology and Innovation, are helping with the modernization of the library. One of their first projects will be to create a book display with reviews using virtual reality. A main goal this year will be to explore different means of acquiring funding to make our vision a reality.



Photo 7: SDHS Media Center - a blank slate waiting to be transformed