



Superintendent's Message



Dear Bonita Unified Community,

The fall season is always an exciting time in Bonita Unified, and this year is no different. In just a few months, we have already earned another National Blue Ribbon School Award, seen our high schools earn stellar rankings among the

"Best High Schools" in the state and county, and watched our vocal and instrumental music programs celebrate milestone achievements.

In addition, many of our fall athletic teams are advancing to CIF play, bringing their reputation as talented student-athletes with incredible sportsmanship to a higher level of competition. We wish them the best of luck as they pursue CIF titles for their schools.

Of our many accomplishments this fall, one of the most exciting is the news that Bonita Unified School District achieved its highest-ever scores in English language arts and second-highest scores in math on the spring 2023 state assessments. These outstanding scores indicate that our efforts to overcome the academic learning loss from the COVID-19 pandemic have been successful.

We also know that these hard-earned accolades are only one example of what sets this district apart from others. Bonita Unified is also an incredible district because of our community partners, who together provide students in need with school clothing; our administrators, teachers and staff, who are brainstorming new opportunities to educate our students and celebrate their success; and our students, who fearlessly embrace challenges and inspire us with their dedication to learning.

Thank you all for the role you play in making Bonita Unified School District an exceptional place to learn and work. I look forward to celebrating even more successes with you in the future.

Sincerely,
Matt Wien
Superintendent

District News

Soroptimist of San Dimas/ La Verne Treats Students to Clothing During Annual Bonita Children's Shopping Day

La Verne Police Detective Janessa Gonzalez and La Verne Firefighter/Paramedic Tristan Janeway trailed behind eager Bonita Unified elementary students at Target La Verne, taking note and filling handbaskets with each child's choice of brightly patterned jackets, stylish shoes and other clothing essentials during the annual Bonita Children's Shopping Day on September 14.

This is the first year Gonzalez and Janeway had the opportunity to participate in the shopping experience, a collaboration between Bonita Unified School District and Soroptimist International of San Dimas/La Verne that provided nearly 70 students in need from the District's eight elementary schools with a \$75 budget to pick out new school clothing basics.

The event recruits retired educators and volunteers from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the La Verne police and fire departments, and the Knights of Columbus to assist the students, providing guidance and ensuring the correct sizes and items are selected.



Board of Education Welcomes 2023-24 Student Representatives

Bonita High School senior Andrew Watson, Chaparral-Vista High School senior Rylie Koscielski and San Dimas High School senior Beatrice See stepped up to the podium – and into new leadership roles – before the Bonita Unified Board of Education on October 4, receiving applause and cheers of encouragement as they took the oath of office to serve as the Board’s student representatives for the 2023-24 school year.

Andrew, Rylie and Beatrice will serve as the voices and advocates of their peers throughout the school year, attending all regular monthly Board meetings to provide school reports and share feedback and concerns.

“It’s an amazing opportunity to take on leadership roles and be the voice for my fellow peers while also forming a stronger bond and respect with the staff,” Rylie said. “I’m most looking forward to having the chance to meet and get to know more people and make new friendships. I’m already very happy with my role at school and I’m so incredibly excited to see what the rest of the year has in store for me.” [Read more.](#)



San Dimas High School Announces New Principal

On October 4, the Bonita Unified Board of Education appointed Omar Mayen as the new principal of San Dimas High School. Mr. Mayen is an experienced high school educator, who prior to coming to San Dimas High, spent six years as an assistant principal and an additional 12 years as a high school special education teacher in Corona-Norco Unified School District.

He also serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Redlands, teaching inclusive practices to credential and master’s degree candidates.

Mr. Mayen holds a Bachelor of Arts in sociology from Cal State Long Beach, a well as a master’s degree in special education from National University.

EXCELLENCE in the **FOUR As**

At Bonita Unified, we emphasize the **four As**: **Academics, Athletics, Arts and Activities**. Below are some recent examples of how BUSD students, teachers and staff are demonstrating excellence in these areas.

ACADEMICS

BUSD Schools Honored in 2023-24 'Best High Schools' Rankings



Bonita High School and San Dimas High School have once again been recognized in the Best High Schools rankings by U.S. News & World Report! Each school's strong academic achievement, graduation rates and college readiness programs have earned them rankings among the top 15 percent of public high schools in the country. [Read more.](#)

BUSD Celebrates Second National Blue Ribbon School Award



Grace Miller Elementary School is one of just 33 schools in California to receive this prestigious award this year. Congratulations, Roadrunners!

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ACADEMICS

Bonita High School Students Partner with LVTV-3 to Create 'Local Lens' Show

Bonita High School students are diving into the world of video production through their partnership with LVTV-3 and the University of La Verne to produce Local Lens, a magazine show that highlights interesting people, stories and events in the community.

Local Lens is a student-produced show from start to finish – including writing, reporting, directing and editing. The first episode of Local Lens featured the La Verne Historical Society, local artists, summer entertainment opportunities and more. The second episode featured spotlights on a local martial arts academy that caters to students with special needs, a local punk rock band made up of Bonita High School alumni and the progress of the Metro "A" Line.

"Working on Local Lens helped us connect with interesting people in our community. It gave us a better feeling of what is going on in our own backyard," Bonita High senior Andrew Rolon said. "It was kind of nerve-wracking being in front of the camera but having our team there working with us allowed us to have fun on the set and out in the field."



ATHLETICS



Bonita High School Captures Fifth Consecutive Smudge Pot Victory

Bonita and San Dimas high schools faced off on the football field on September 9, seeking ultimate bragging rights in the 51st annual Smudge Pot football game at Citrus College Stadium.

The friendly rivalry, which began in 1972, has become a beloved District tradition and display of school spirit, athletic prowess, and awe-inspiring halftime shows performed by cheer, dance and marching band students. Bonita High School retained the iconic silver Smudge Pot trophy for the fifth year in a row. Watch the [Smudge Pot 2023 Highlights video](#) to revisit the exciting moments!

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San Dimas High Freshman Looks to Become Olympic-Level Athlete

San Dimas High School freshman Jacqueline Chen first displayed her diving prowess at nine years old during a trip to Cancun, Mexico with her family. Standing atop a cliff more than 15 feet above the water, Chen showed no fear when she suddenly leapt off, performing a perfect dive. Her parents quickly realized that Chen was a diving prodigy.

Now Chen is preparing to make another huge leap – from high school student to Olympic athlete. After years of participating and medaling in USA Diving Junior Olympic competitions, Chen will travel to the Philippines for the Asian Age Group Championship, to be held from December 3 to 6, trying to stamp her ticket to the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.

At San Dimas High School, Chen plays clarinet in the marching band and enjoys art class. Though diving and band practices take up much of her time, Chen has a challenging road to navigate academically, taking two Honors classes and one Advanced Placement class in her first semester. While San Dimas High does not have a diving team, Chen will represent the school in CIF meets when diving season begins in spring 2024. [Read more.](#)

Bonita High School Choir to Perform in Disneyland's Candlelight Processional

For the second year in a row, the Bonita High School Chamber Singers have been selected to sing in the mass choir during the Candlelight Processional at Disneyland Resort. The annual ceremony and processional is held on two evenings at Disneyland; this year, it will take place on December 2 and 3.

The Bearcat singers underwent a rigorous audition process and were selected from a pool of applicants that included high school, collegiate and community choirs across Southern California. The 45-minute show is a musical retelling of "The First Christmas" story through song and scripture, featuring the mass choir as the centerpiece of the show.



ARTS

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San Dimas Royal Corps Named Music Sweepstakes Winners

The San Dimas High School Royal Corps put on a spectacular performance at the Sound in Motion Competition on September 30, overcoming weather challenges and location changes to earn multiple awards. The field competition, held at Bonita High School, moved indoors last-minute due to rain, forcing the student musicians to adapt a full-field performance into one that worked within the confines of the Bonita High School gym. The Saints walked away with the Music Sweepstakes award, second place in percussion and second place overall. To watch their full performance of "Oasis," visit the San Dimas Royal Corps [Instagram page](#).

Allen Avenue Elementary Students Learn About Inclusion

The Specialized Services Team at Allen Avenue Elementary School spearheaded a pioneering initiative in September, which centered around a series of 20-minute grade-level sessions aimed at fostering inclusivity and acquainting students with the services and resources that are available to their peers with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

In one instance, speech language pathologists (SLPs) asked students how they would communicate with others if they could not talk. The SLPs and students then reviewed a variety of communication methods that do not involve talking – such as writing, facial expressions, body language, sign language, and Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) voice output devices – and students practiced communicating with each other using an AAC device.

Since the lessons, Allen Avenue staff has observed that general education students go out of their way to interact and communicate with students in special education classes more frequently and confidently.



ACTIVITIES

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Oak Mesa Elementary Hosts Student of the Month Barbecue

Oak Mesa Elementary has cooked up a new way of recognizing students for their achievement in and out of the classroom by establishing a Student of the Month Barbecue! September's honorees included one student from each second- through fifth-grade class, selected by their teacher to enjoy a barbecue lunch prepared by principal Scott Patterson. The qualifications for this recognition were up to teachers' discretion and included various academic and non-academic criteria. Oak Mesa Elementary plans to continue this recognition with a monthly BBQ throughout the school year.



Ramona Middle School Science Clubs Hosts Solar Eclipse Viewing

Ramona Middle School's Science Club hosted approximately 75 students, families and staff members on campus for a view of the annular solar eclipse on October 14.

Attendees safely witnessed the exciting scientific phenomenon using special glasses, as well as items such as colanders and cardboard with holes cut out, which cast the shadow of the moon as it covered the sun onto the ground. Eclipse-themed snacks and drinks were also sold at the event to raise funds for the student-run club.

