



# BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

JULY & AUGUST 2022

## SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

### Superintendent's Message



Dear Bonita Unified School District Community,

I am proud to share that the 2022-23 school year is off to a strong start for our nearly 10,000 students, as well as our teachers and staff.

Guided by equity, mastery and a focus on results, our District will build on our past successes and ensure that the new year brings opportunities for students to explore their passions, discover their talents and live their purpose.

In addition to welcoming 384 transitional kindergarten students – our largest TK class to date – this month we also welcomed new staff members to our District and celebrated the promotion of dedicated educators and employees.

Bonita Unified prides itself on being a place where everyone can thrive, and we are thrilled to see our students and employees find a home in this District while achieving their full potential. Although the year has just begun, we are already seeing students excel in the four As – Academics, Athletics, Arts and Activities, all of which are celebrated below in this update.

I am honored to serve as the Interim Superintendent of this exceptional District, and thank you all for your support through this transition. I look forward to celebrating more successes with you in the coming months.

Sincerely,  
**Matt Wien**  
Interim Superintendent

### District News

#### Bonita Unified Voted 'Best School District' in 2022 SGV Readers Choice Awards

Bonita Unified School District has been recognized as the Best School District in the San Gabriel Valley, receiving a 2022 Readers Choice Award that reflects the District's commitment to fostering a nurturing environment full of learning opportunities that empower students to achieve their full potential.

The Readers Choice Awards is an

annual readers poll conducted by the Southern California News Group, which publishes the San Gabriel Valley Tribune, Pasadena Star News and the Whittier Daily News. Votes were tallied from ballots that ran in the group's newspapers and corresponding websites during March and April.



#### BUSD Welcomes New Principals, Administrators

Two Bonita Unified elementary schools began the 2022-23 school year with new principals, one of a series of administrative promotions and new hires that include two new assistant principals at Bonita High School, a new assistant superintendent of business services, and new senior directors of fiscal services and educational services.

The promotions include Nicole Grant as La Verne Heights Elementary

School principal, Joshua Richards as Bonita High assistant principal, Sonia Eckley as the assistant superintendent of business services and Dr. Jaymi Abusham as senior director of educational services. New to Bonita Unified are Gerard Granade as Ekstrand Elementary School principal, Rene Gonzalez as Bonita High assistant principal and Jazmin Ortega as senior director of fiscal services.

[Read more.](#)

#### Bonita Unified Students Begin 2022-23 School Year

Bonita Unified School District students descended upon cheerfully decorated campuses – bedecked with vibrant welcome signs and filled with cheers of encouragement – on Aug. 22, marking the start of a new school year that is focused on empowering students to live their purpose and ensuring new levels of achievement.

[Read the full recap on the start of the 2022-23 school year.](#)



# 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

### San Dimas High Achieves Highest AP Pass Rate in School History

San Dimas High School achieved a pass rate of 68.2% on Advanced Placement exams during the 2021-22 school year – the highest pass rate yet in the school's history. San Dimas High School offers 20 AP classes to provide students with rigorous courses of study that prepare them for success in higher education, as well as the opportunity to earn college credit.

## ATHLETICS



### Bonita Unified Celebrates 50 Years of Smudge Pot Rivalry

Bonita High School and San Dimas High School will face off in friendly rivalry on the football field during the 50th Smudge Pot game, which will be held at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 10 at Citrus College Stadium.

To honor the memories, sportsmanship and heroics of the Smudge Pot, which is one of the oldest continuous rivalries in southern California, the Smudge Pot's rich and colorful history was brought to life in a website created by Bonita High School students. Visit [smudgepotgame.com](http://smudgepotgame.com) to learn more about this spirited District tradition.

### SDHS Alumni Drafted by MLB Teams

For two San Dimas High School alumni, the dream of playing professional baseball is turning into a reality after being selected in the 2022 Major League Baseball draft.

Class of 2020 graduate D'Andre Smith was drafted by the New York Mets, and Class of 2019 graduate Zach Jacobs was drafted by the Cleveland Guardians. Both Smith and Jacobs were recognized as standout players during their years with the Saints baseball team.



# 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.



## Band Director to Perform in 2023 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade

Bonita Unified band director Kelly Leyva will yet again demonstrate to her students what it means to "Live Your Purpose" when she performs in the 2023 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade with the Band Directors Marching Band.

Leyva performed with the band during the 2022 Tournament of Roses Parade, then showcased her talents again during the 2022 Super Bowl halftime show.

**ARTS**

## Ramona Middle School Sixth-Graders Receive Warm Welcome

Ramona Middle School's Where Everybody Belongs (WEB) program held a welcome luau for the school's sixth-grade students on Aug. 26, featuring face painting, photo backdrops and props, and other engaging activities.

WEB aims to ease the transition from elementary to middle school by pairing sixth-graders with eighth-grade mentors, who provide support, social engagement and resources as students navigate their new school.



**ACTIVITIES**