



BONITA UNIFIED

SCHOOL DISTRICT

115 W. Allen Ave. • San Dimas, CA 91773 • [f](#) [t](#) [BonitaUSD](#)

FALL 2018

Bonita Unified Students Make Gains on Standardized Tests

For the third consecutive year, Bonita Unified School District students improved their performance in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics on statewide standardized tests, according to state data released in October.

The 2018 state test scores show that 71 percent of District students met or exceeded state standards in ELA, up 3 percentage points from 2017, and 56 percent met or exceeded standards in mathematics, up 2 percentage points.

Bonita Unified students who are economically disadvantaged also posted significant improvements, with 59 percent of students meeting or exceeding standards in ELA – rising nearly 6 percentage points from 2017 – and 44 percent meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics – increasing nearly 4 percentage points.

English learners also made gains, with students testing nearly 4 percentage points higher in ELA and nearly 6 percentage points higher in math.

Compared with state and Los Angeles County averages, the District performed nearly 20 percentage points higher in ELA and nearly 15 percentage points higher in math.

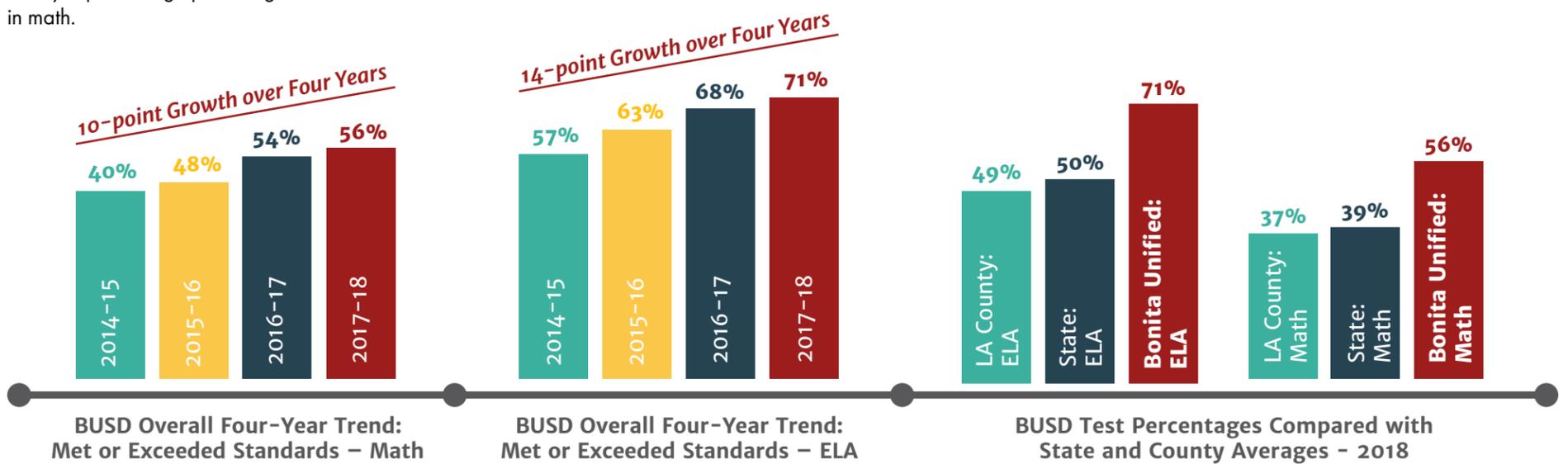
Developed by the multi-state Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, the computer-adaptive tests are the centerpiece of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).

The tests are administered to students in grades three through eight and grade 11; they are aligned with California Standards adopted in 2010 and required in school instruction as of 2014-15. The standards challenge students to apply the knowledge and skills they are learning in the classroom, including writing, critical thinking and problem-solving.

Bonita Unified will use the data to enhance plans for professional development, curriculum and instructional technology.



Bonita Unified students improved their performance on state standardized tests for the third year in a row.



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Bonita Unified Families,

Bonita Unified School District's newsletter is designed to keep families and community members updated on what is happening with our students. We will be using this biannual newsletter to share some of our amazing accomplishments with the community and to keep families updated on what is going in our classrooms, our services and our student success.

This newsletter is part of an array of tools Bonita Unified is using to connect with its community, from parents and children now attending, to those who will be among our future students, as well as stakeholders who partner to support our schools. We also provide information via social media – including Facebook and Twitter – where you can receive up-to-the-minute news about campus happenings.

It is no secret that our Bonita Unified students excel, but it is also important to highlight their successes so that others see what is possible. We are fortunate to have highly skilled and talented teachers, support staff and administrators who are dedicated to the success of our students. The District's academic, athletic, art and activity programs are flourishing and continue to improve every day.

On behalf of all of us at Bonita Unified, thank you to our community for entrusting your children to our care. It is our responsibility to deliver on that trust by preparing them to live their purpose.



Carl J. Coles
Superintendent

District, Soroptimist Clubs Partner for Children's Shopping Day

Bonita Unified School District administrators partnered with the San Dimas and La Verne Soroptimist Clubs to host the 22nd annual Children's Shopping Day in September, providing 70 Bonita Unified elementary school students with a shopping spree at Target in La Verne.

District officials, Soroptimist Club members and volunteers from local fire and law enforcement agencies helped students pick out new clothing, shoes, school supplies and backpacks.

Students from the District's eight elementary schools participated in the event, accompanied by the school principals.

Thank you to the Soroptimist Clubs for the continued support and investment in the well-being of Bonita Unified students.



La Verne Heights Elementary Principal Patrick McKee helps a student pick out a new shirt during the 22nd annual Children's Shopping Day in September.



Bonita Unified School District began major renovations to the Bonita High School stadium in August as part of the final project funded under the \$97.1 million Measure AB bond.

District Approves High School Stadium Upgrade

Bonita Unified School District has started major renovations to the Bonita High School stadium – the final project funded under the \$97.1 million Measure AB bond.

The \$7.2 million renovation, expected to be completed by June 2019, received a generous contribution of \$437,000 from the City of La Verne during Bonita Unified's Board of Education meeting on Aug. 1.

As part of the renovations, the Bonita Bearcats home side will be relocated to the south end of the field, wooden benches will be replaced with aluminum bleachers, and improvements will be made to the turf, restroom and accessibility.

The 3,026-seat stadium will be upgraded by Telacu Construction Management, Inc. The local contractor began preparing the space in August. Football, soccer, field hockey, track and field, band practices and events will be hosted at alternate sites during construction.

Measure AB was overwhelmingly passed by the community in November 2008.

Previous projects include the Bonita Center for the Arts, a gym expansion, all-weather track and stadium modernization at San Dimas High School, gym modernization at Bonita High School, Ramona Middle School's shade and lunch shelter, District-wide solar panels and gymnasiums at Ramona and Lone Hill middle schools.

"The District is grateful to its community for voting to support bond funding to keep our facilities updated, modernized and safe," Superintendent Carl J. Coles said.

San Dimas, Bonita High Schools Vie for Smudge Pot

Bonita High School and San Dimas High School students, staff and community members bedecked themselves in school colors to cheer on their football teams during the annual Smudge Pot game. The game, held Sept. 8 at Covina District Field, marked the 46th anniversary of the friendly football rivalry and celebration of school pride.

In 1972, both high schools first competed for the silver Smudge Pot, an oil-burning tool used to shield fruit trees from frost and a symbol of the two cities' roots in the region's citrus industry.

The Bonita Bearcats pushed past the San Dimas Saints to take home a 28-14 victory and the trophy. The Saints won the game the two previous years.

Congratulations to both teams for an exciting match and to Bonita High School's Bearcats for capturing the trophy!



Bonita High School and San Dimas High School football teams compete for the annual Smudge Pot game.



District Selects 2018-19 Student Board Representatives

Luke Melkesian from Bonita High School, Naomi Pearson from Chaparral High School and Erik Vargas from San Dimas High School will represent students on the Board of Education for the 2018-19 academic year.

Melkesian, a senior at Bonita High and Associated Student Body (ASB) president, has taken seven Advanced Placement (AP) courses over the last three years. He holds a 4.25 GPA.

Melkesian has been a member of Bonita High School's choir for four years and is now in The Chamber Singers – the school's advanced singing group. Additionally, Melkesian plays on the soccer, football and tennis teams and plans to add diving to his repertoire this year. Melkesian hopes to attend Claremont McKenna College to major in economics and minor in molecular gastronomy.

Pearson, a senior at Chaparral High, is dedicated to being a student leader. She is a member of

event planning classes and Renaissance, a student-led team that recognizes peers for educational achievements, attendance, behavior, citizenship and personal endeavors.

An avid reader and theater enthusiast, Pearson often can be found at the Bonita Center for Performing Arts, where she performs and assists in the school's theater department. Pearson plans to attend Citrus College to complete an esthetician certification program and pursue her dream of becoming a makeup artist.

Vargas, a senior from San Dimas High School, is passionate about helping his classmates excel and prides himself on being a servant leader. With a 3.8 GPA, Vargas is the school's ASB president, a chamber singer and is enrolled in AP Calculus and Honors Chemistry. Vargas has been a runner on the cross-country team for two years and has played on the tennis team since his freshman year.

District Celebrates Exemplary AP Scholars

The College Board has recognized 11 Bonita Unified Class of 2018 graduates and a current senior as National Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars, highlighting a successful year for the District's AP program as it continues to increase pass rates for AP exams and the number of students attending four-year universities.

Bonita High School's graduates named as National AP Scholars include: Stephen Brod, Rachel Cheung, Cynthia Dang, Garrett Palmer, Valerie Warner, Justin Woo and Monica Wu. San Dimas High School's students include: Cameryn Baker, Aidan Ferguson, Ahmed Hasan and Jonathan Tsai.

The National AP Scholar title is awarded to students who earn an average score of at least 4 on all AP exams and who score 4 or higher on eight or more exams.

Ferguson, a San Dimas High School senior who maintains a 4.64 GPA, hopes the prestigious title will help him on his path to Princeton, where he plans to study physics.

"AP is the top of the totem pole in education and this recognition shows that I worked my hardest to get this credit," Ferguson said. "I love the challenge of AP because the rigor and difficulty mean I can go 100 percent and push my limits."

The AP program offers several AP Scholar Awards, including the AP Scholar with Distinction award and the AP Scholar with Honor award.

In 2018, AP Scholar Awards went to 148 students from Bonita High School, with 37 being named with distinction and 35 earning the award with honors. At San Dimas High School, 93 students earned the award, with 28 recognized with distinction and 14 with honors.

Forty-two percent of Bonita High School's Class of 2018 grads were admitted to four-year universities. San Dimas High School showed that 31 percent of graduates were accepted to four-year institutions.

Bonita Unified's two comprehensive high schools offer more than 25 AP courses.



Eleven Bonita Unified Class of 2018 graduates and a senior were recognized as National Advanced Placement Scholars, highlighting a successful year for the District's Advanced Placement program.



Erik Vargas from San Dimas High School, Naomi Pearson from Chaparral High School and Luke Melkesian from Bonita High School will serve as Board of Education student representatives for the 2018-19 academic year.



Shull Elementary kindergarteners enjoy their first recess of the 2018-19 school year.

Bonita Unified Students Begin School Year

Bonita Unified School District welcomed more than 10,000 students for the 2018-19 school year, with teachers, staff and administrators from across the District's 13 elementary, middle and high schools preparing for another year of excellence.

This year, Ekstrand Elementary is implementing the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system, a multi-tiered discipline system that promotes a safe and positive learning environment on campus.

Ramona Middle School is incorporating Center X, a curriculum designed by UCLA's science department, to improve the instructional delivery of Next Generation Science Standards by using inquiry-based lessons.

"As ASB president, I'm looking forward to increasing activities on campus and making a more creative environment," Ramona eighth-grader Grishm Sethi said. "My personal goals for the year are to get A's and to make the football and basketball teams."

Chaparral High and Vista schools are partnering with the Thaddeus Foundation, a local nonprofit organization, to provide students with group math tutoring opportunities. Chaparral and Vista will also host quarterly Renaissance assemblies to recognize academic achievement, attendance and behavior.

"We are off to a great start, with school-wide programs that support our students," Chaparral and Vista Principal Christine Black said. "We have some of the most dedicated staff and teachers who want to see our students succeed."

Three schools are also helped by new leaders: Allison Daniels is guiding Gladstone Elementary as its new principal, Ji Wang is leading Ekstrand Elementary and Scott Sparks is serving as San Dimas High School's new principal.

Daniels comes to Bonita Unified from Chino Valley Unified School District and holds a master's degree in instructional leadership. Wang has been in education for more than 21 years and comes to the District from Upland Unified. Sparks, a 10-year administrator, comes to Bonita Unified from Rialto Unified.

Reflections Program Honors Student Expression

Bonita Unified students wowed parents and staff with colorful artwork depicting inspirational figures for the 2018-19 National PTA Reflections Art Program: an orange cat that sees a ferocious lion in its reflection, a pair of firefighters battling an intense blaze, and a mom and dad dressed as superheroes.

The art pieces were among the several pieces on display at the Bonita Unified District Awards Ceremony, held Oct. 17 at the Bonita Center for the Arts. The ceremony celebrated student artists and their interpretations of the Reflections theme, "Heroes Around Me."

"I saw a need for the students' creative efforts to be exhibited and recognized, not only to their parents and families but also to our Board of Education members, who are attending the ceremony tonight," Reflections Art Chair Dr. Lisa Richey said. "It's just a great way to bring awareness to our District and show what our students are achieving."

For over 50 years, the National PTA's Reflections Art Program has provided public school students with the opportunity to submit original works of art in six categories: dance choreography, film, literature, music, photography and visual arts.

Bonita Unified's Award of Excellence winners will advance to the PTA's First District Competition in November. From there, student winners will advance to regional, state and national contests.

Rakshitha Akkala, a sixth-grader at Ramona Middle School, won Awards of Excellence in literature, music and photography.

Akkala submitted a creative essay titled "My Imagination," a piano piece titled "Heroes Around Me," and a photo titled "Babies are Heroes," which shows a pair of infants playing in a field.

"I think the hardest part of taking my photo was trying to get the babies to hold still," Akkala said. "I chose babies because they are just happy with what they have and they are inspiring and hopeful."

The ceremony featured Ekstrand Elementary Principal Ji Wang as the emcee, Lisa Richey as the PTA Reflections Chair, and musical performances by Ramona Middle School's Troubadour choir and the San Dimas High School Jazz Band.



Bonita Unified's PTA Reflections Award of Excellence winners are recognized by parents and staff at the Bonita Unified District Awards Ceremony on Oct. 17.

BUSD Athletic Teams Advance to CIF

Five fall sports teams from Bonita and San Dimas high schools advanced to the California Interscholastic Federation – Southern Section (CIF-SS).

Bonita High School's varsity girls field hockey team holds six league wins, two losses and two ties. Bonita

High's varsity football team sits with three league wins and two losses.

San Dimas High School's varsity girls volleyball team boasts 10 league wins and no losses. The school's varsity football team holds four league wins and one loss. San Dimas High's varsity

girls cross country team also advanced in the CIF-SS.

Congratulations to the Bonita and San Dimas high schools' student athletes for their hard work and perseverance.

Bonita High School's varsity girls field hockey team advanced to the California Interscholastic Federation – Southern Section.

