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## **Bonita High School Choirs Dominate San Diego Heritage Festival, Take Home 8 Awards**

**SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE** – Bonita High School’s Concert Choir and Chamber Singers were emotional as they sang through their pieces during the final dress rehearsal for the San Diego Heritage Festival – reflecting on the past nine years in the District’s choral program, and the significance in sharing one last formal show together.

For many of the students, their journey in Bonita Unified’s choral program started in elementary school, allowing them to forge lasting bonds as they grew through song and as individuals. The Bearcats took their poise and energy to the stage on March 22, and on March 23 at the awards ceremony, they swept the competition with eight accolades for their performances.

More than 25 ensemble performances from schools across the country were split across the two days, with performances taking place on Friday and Saturday, and concluding with the awards ceremony on Saturday evening at SeaWorld.

“It’s just a wonderful feeling to know that we’re continuing our legacy of creating award-winning choirs,” Bonita High School Choir Director Ryan Yoder said. “I’m so proud that the students are keeping up with the rigor and taking their talents to the next level. Most schools would be happy to receive one award at a festival like this, but to walk away with eight awards and trophies – it was truly a life-changing moment for these students.”

Heritage Festivals are judged by nationally acclaimed adjudicators and the competitions are held in more than 20 cities across North America for middle and high school choral and instrumental groups. After performing, students can learn from the judges’ feedback and receive a live clinic on stage.

Bonita High’s Concert Choir and Chamber Singers have competed in multiple Heritage Festivals; though they have earned a reputation for bringing home wins, this year’s eight trophies in one competition marks a new program record. Seventy BHS juniors and seniors performed, including 49 singers in the Concert Choir and 28 in the elite Chamber Singers.

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## NEWS RELEASE

Performances are judged on how well the students perform, as well as musicianship, stage presentation, and the quality of music. For the ratings, groups are awarded either gold, silver, or bronze. Awards earned from the San Diego Heritage Festival include:

- “Sweepstake for Choral Program” (School with highest combined scores in the entire choral competition)
- “Outstanding Choral Group” (Top scoring choir out of every choir at the competition): BHS Chamber Singers
- “Adjudicator Award” (Choral ensembles with a score of 95-100): BHS Chamber Singers
- “First Place Division 3A” (All choral ensembles from high schools with more than 1,201 enrollment): BHS Chamber Singers
- Gold Rating (Choir whose average score from the judging panel is 90-100): BHS Concert Choir
- Gold Rating (Choir whose average score from the judging panel is 90-100): BHS Chamber Singers
- “Maestro Award” (Individual performers who stood out to the panel of judges): Bridget Brennan
- “Maestro Award” (Individual performers who stood out to the panel of judges): Julia Argueta

“When ensembles like ours earn so many accolades, it is a testament to the District’s prioritization of quality music education from elementary through high school,” Yoder said. “I consider myself beyond blessed to be working at Bonita Unified and I am grateful to uphold the tradition.”

Bonita High School’s five choirs are preparing for their annual Pop Show, with students performing an array of songs from the fifties and through the eighties for the year’s culminating celebration. More than 220 voices in BHS’s choral program will present musical numbers alongside a live band, complete with choreography and costumes, at the Bonita Center for the Arts on Tuesday, May 21, and Wednesday, May 22.

“Bonita Unified School District places a high priority on ensuring students have access to Visual and Performing Arts Programs at all stages of their educational journey,” Bonita Unified Superintendent Matt Wien said. “Thank you to Bonita High School educators and staff for creating a culture of excellence and helping guide students to success.”

### PHOTOS:

**BUSD\_BHS\_CHOIR\_FESTIVAL1:** Bonita High School’s Concert Choir and Chamber Singers celebrate their success at the San Diego Heritage Festival, sweeping the competition with eight accolades.

**BUSD\_BHS\_CHOIR\_FESTIVAL2:** Bonita High School singers received the “Maestro Award” on March 23 at the San Diego Heritage Festival.

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