



**PRESS  
RELEASE**

# Bassett Unified School District

on the move

904 North Willow Avenue ■ La Puente, CA 91746 ■ (626) 931-3000 ■ (626) 931-3020 ■ [www.bassettusd.org](http://www.bassettusd.org)

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## **Bassett Unified Students Compete in District Spelling Bee; Finalists Advance to Regionals**

**LA PUENTE** – A Don Julian Elementary second-grader, Joseph Valdez, battled 10 rounds as one of the last three contestants in the Bassett Unified Spelling Bee’s kindergarten through second-grade competition until just one thing stood between him and first place: The word “penalty.”

Valdez began to spell, paused, and restarted – sparking an immediate inquiry by the judges over contest protocol. Satisfied that his pause did not violate National Spelling Bee rules, they awarded him the coveted first-place prize.

“I was nervous, but it was fun!” Valdez said.

Valdez competed against 11 students from Don Julian Elementary, Sunkist Elementary, Van Wig Elementary, Edgewood Academy and Torch Middle School in the District Spelling Bee held January 24th at Torch Middle School’s Watanabe Center.

One competition was held for students in kindergarten through second grade and another for third through eighth grade.

In the second competition, fourth-grader Chelsea Xu took first place after getting to round 28 against two other opponents and spelling “leaflet” for the win. Xu will advance to the Los Angeles County Scripps Regional Spelling Bee at North Hollywood High School on Saturday, March 9th.

“It’s a great feeling, knowing that all of my practice and studying is what made it possible for me to win,” Xu said. “I am going to have to study a lot more for the next one.”

Xu will be joined by the first-place winners from each Bassett campus Bee held in December. (See lists of winners below.) Students who qualified for the District Spelling Bee were the first, second and third-place winners for their campus Bee.

Science Fair Coordinator Belinda Puente, an Early Literacy Specialist at Bassett Unified, said the competition brings out the best in students.

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**Bassett Unified School District Mission** - Working collaboratively with all stakeholders, the Bassett Unified School District will provide engaging and rigorous learning opportunities, using integrated technology in state-of-the-art learning environments, to graduate College and Career Ready students.

**Bassett Unified School District Vision** - We are a community committed to educating and empowering our students to think creatively, act responsibly, and communicate effectively in order to be successful members of society and make a positive impact on the lives of others.



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“Students develop their spelling skills, vocabulary knowledge and speaking skills through this event,” Puente said. “We are proud of the hard work the students, families, and teachers have invested in preparing for this event, and thankful to Bassett Unified for supporting our student’s achievements.”

“Bassett Unified is committed to empowering our students to be successful. We are proud of our students’ demonstration of perseverance and courage,” Superintendent Debra French said. “We thank both our staff and students for their dedication and wish them continued success as they compete at the next level.”

## PHOTOS:

**1-24-19\_BASSETT\_BEE\_1:** Don Julian Elementary second-grader Joseph Valdez (center), second-grade student Sergio Marquez (right) from Van Wig and first-grade student Riyana Shafeeq (left) from Van Wig receive their trophies and stand alongside their spelling bee competitors for a round of applause.

**1-24-19\_BASSETT\_BEE\_2:** Fourth-grade student Chelsea Xu from Van Wig (center) and fourth-grade student Edison Lee (right) from Sunkist will move on to the Los Angeles County Scripps Regional Spelling Bee in March.

## BASSETT UNIFIED SPELLING BEE WINNERS

### Kindergarten to second grade

- First place: Joseph Valdez, second grade, Don Julian
- Second place: Sergio Marquez, second grade, Van Wig
- Third place, Riyana Shafeeq, first grade, Van Wig

### Third through eighth grade

- First place: Chelsea Xu, fourth grade, Van Wig (also campus winner)
- Second place: Alesha Shafeeq, third grade, Van Wig
- Third place: Edison Lee, fourth grade, Sunkist (also campus winner)

### Additional campus first-place winners

- Pedro Rojas from Don Julian
- Stephanie Galvez from Torch
- John Barreto from Edgewood

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