



Bonita Unified

SCHOOL DISTRICT

115 W. Allen Ave. San Dimas, CA 91773 ★ (909) 971-8200 ★ do.bonita.k12.ca.us/

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 1, 2023

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Bonita Unified Adult Transition Students Welcomed at University of La Verne

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Bonita Unified Adult Transition Program students are entering a new phase in their lives, splitting time between the San Dimas High School campus and the University of La Verne (ULV) through a partnership that allows students ages 18 to 22 with moderate to severe disabilities to connect with students their own age as they work toward transitioning into adult life with full functionality.

The program, which debuted in mid-January, places the students at ULV for two days a week, then switches back to San Dimas High for the remainder of the school week. Bonita Unified Adult Transition students receive full access to ULV facilities, including the library, gym, campus center and dining hall.

“By partnering with the University of La Verne, we are allowing our Adult Transition students an opportunity to expand their horizons and create new experiences that can lead to richer and fuller lives,” Bonita Unified Senior Director of Specialized Services Danielle Walker said. “We have the same staff at each location, which helps with the transition. ULV has welcomed them with open arms, and their students and staff are eager to assist in their development.”

One student who is enjoying the transition is 18-year-old Dillon Paniagua, who has attended both Lone Hill Middle School and San Dimas High School. Although not technically a ULV student, Paniagua’s experience attending classes at the university has filled him with the college spirit, according to Dillon’s mother, Trisha Paniagua.

“Dillon is so proud to say he is going to college. It is a big step in his life,” Trisha said. “Dillon loves the routine and loves learning. Her regularly texts me about his day, telling me that he just worked out in the gym, had a salad for lunch or is hanging out with his friends. He gets excited about his lessons and enjoys going on field trips. We have numerous calendars and daily planners all over the house with his schedule. We love the program at Bonita Unified.”

The Adult Transition program has allowed students like Dillon, who works at a local bookstore, to find jobs in the community. The independence imbues students with a sense of purpose that they find liberating.

“The happiest day of the week for Dillon is when he gets paid,” Trisha said. “He is so proud, he literally whips out his paycheck from his back pocket and shows it to me. I would recommend the program to anyone who has a child with disabilities. I continue to see growth and maturity in Dillon. If he’s happy, then I’m happy!”

The goal of the Adult Transition Program is to prepare students with disabilities to lead fully functional, independent lives and be a part of the community. Bonita Unified staff help the students develop a number of life and work skills, including how to conduct a job interview, how to put together a resume, navigate public transportation, and go grocery shopping.

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“The Adult Transition program is a perfect example of students living their purpose at Bonita Unified,” Superintendent Matt Wien said. “The transition program is staffed and administered with thoughtfulness and care, and guided by the belief that every person can contribute to their community. We are extremely grateful for our partnership with the University of La Verne, whose collaboration provides another pathway to success for our students with disabilities.”

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