



**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

For Immediate Release
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Bassett Unified Students Write, Illustrate Books for Read Across America Celebration

Torch Middle School eighth-grader Judith Rios sat in front of Sunkist Elementary School's transitional kindergarteners, turning the pages of her book to reveal hand-drawn characters of a rainbow whale and golden fish, and reading about the friendship that formed between the two.

"I enjoyed the writing project and I liked reading to the little kids," Rios said. "I also wanted to share a story about how bullying is bad."

Rios was one of 29 Torch Middle School Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) students who wrote and illustrated their own stories as part of their Pre-Advanced Placement Writing course. The middle school students joined administrators and community members to read to Bassett Unified elementary school students on Dr. Seuss' birthday, March 2, as part of Read Across America, a campaign launched in 1998 by the National Education Association to celebrate reading.

Rios and her peers spent three months creating storyboards and editing their books before reading to the elementary school students.

"I felt confident reading my story, and the students were very respectful," Torch eighth-grader Denise Perez said. "I wanted to write a story about how when you're little, it's okay to be yourself."

At Don Julian Elementary, school administrators and community members volunteered to read to students, and were surrounded with Dr. Seuss classroom activities, including Cat in the Hat artwork and personal notes wishing Dr. Seuss a happy birthday.

"Students learned about a well-known author and illustrator, and the lessons he conveyed through his books," Don Julian Principal Martha Arceo said. "Our community had the opportunity to contribute to our students' enthusiasm about reading."

Bassett Unified elementary schools participated in activities and themed days throughout the week, including dressing up as their favorite literary character and listening to guest readers.

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“One of our priorities is increasing literacy and critical thinking skills for all of our students,” Bassett Unified Superintendent Dr. Alex Rojas said. “Our teachers and administrators continue to implement new projects that challenge and motivate our students to stay excited about reading and writing.”

PHOTOS:

030317_BASSETT_READ1: Torch Middle School eighth-graders Judith Rios (left) and Denise Perez read their stories to Sunkist Elementary School transitional kindergarten students on Dr. Seuss’ birthday, March 2.

030317_BASSETT_READ2: Bassett Unified Assistant Superintendent and Chief Business Officer Antoine Hawkins reads *The Great Kapok Tree* to a group of Don Julian Elementary School students during Read Across America.

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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.