



# Bonita Unified

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

### NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## Bonita Unified Culinary Students Win California ProStart Cup, Advance to National Competition

**SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE** - San Dimas High School ProStart restaurant management students punched their tickets to Washington, D.C. after their idea for an unapologetically delicious, fast-casual restaurant specializing in guilty pleasure entrees won first place in the California Restaurant Foundation's 2023 ProStart Cup.

Following their victory at the state competition in March, the winning students will now advance to the nation's capital to compete in the National ProStart Invitational in early May. This is the second time in San Dimas High School history that ProStart culinary students have won the California competition, but the first time that they will make the trip to nationals.

The first-place victory was the caper in a historic day for the Bonita Unified ProStart culinary program, with five San Dimas High and Bonita High teams placing in the top five in both the culinary and restaurant management categories, and more than a dozen students winning a total of \$80,000 in scholarships. Of over 200 schools with ProStart curriculum in California, only 29 culinary teams and 11 management teams were selected to compete at the state level.

"The Bonita Unified schools were definitely the teams that everyone was talking about," San Dimas High ProStart instructor Nick Brandler said. "San Dimas and Bonita went to competition together as one big family and supported each other the whole way through. We competed against each other, but also supported each other. All my kids worked really hard for months and their countless hours of work paid off. This is such a huge accomplishment."

"Cheat Day" is the name of a proposed restaurant that caters to a youthful, tech-savvy customer base with a catchphrase of "because you deserve it." Employing brightly colored word bubbles with funny phrases, and a zany menu loaded with cleverly-named comfort foods such as "Love Me Tenders" and "Whole Dang Pizza," the restaurant encourages patrons to treat themselves to an indulgent yet affordably priced meal. The team was captained by San Dimas senior Wilson Chen.

"We could not have had this amazing success without the help from the whole team. I am very grateful," Chen said.

The San Dimas High culinary team came within mere points of joining their classmates at the national level, settling for a third-place finish with a menu that impressed the judges but lost crucial points for a minor infraction that cost them the title.

Bonita High's ProStart program fielded three teams in both the culinary and management competitions. Team Cleik, led by captain Isiah Greene, took fourth place in state with a delectable menu of butter-basted scallops, pan-seared duck breast and a crème brulee doughnut. Greene was one of six Bonita High students to participate in both the culinary and management competitions.

**MORE**

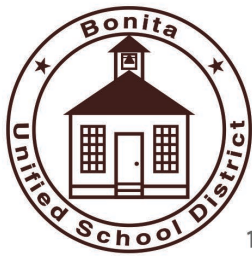


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“The ProStart competition gave me a glimpse into the future, and overall, greatly impacted my perspective of the hospitality industry,” Bonita High senior Isiah Greene said. “By doing both the management and culinary competition, it pushed me into leadership, time management, professionalism and team work. It has provided me a true appreciation for the different aspects of the industry.”

Greene teamed with classmate Kendra Warner to take fourth place in the management competition with their idea for a southern-styled comfort food restaurant, named Mama’s Home, with entrees like chicken and sausage jambalaya and crawfish mac-n-cheese. Bonita management teams also placed fifth and ninth in the competition.

The Bonita Unified ProStart culinary program is helmed by Nick and Laurie Brandler, who teach the nationally recognized program at San Dimas High and Bonita High, respectively. The 2023 ProStart Cup will hold fond memories for the Brandlers not just for the peak performances and scholarship money, but also because it was the first competition to include their son, Bonita High senior Ethan Brandler, who was a member of Team Cleik.

“My students were amazing to watch. They absolutely crushed it, and I am so proud. This is the highest Bonita culinary has placed,” Laurie Brandler said. “This year also holds a special place in my heart since our son Ethan competed for the first time and did so well. I’m a proud mom and a proud teacher.”

ProStart is an industry-backed culinary arts and restaurant management program for high school students coordinated by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. Students who meet the competencies of the program receive a work-ready certificate and a \$5,000 scholarship to Cal Poly Pomona’s Collins College of Hospitality Management.

“The Bonita Unified ProStart program continues to raise the bar for success, with our San Dimas and Bonita High students combining their creative talents, technical skills and marketing savvy to create culinary magic,” Superintendent Matt Wien said. “Congratulations to our San Dimas Saint state champions and best of luck to them in Washington D.C. They are truly living their purpose.”

### PHOTOS:

**BUSD\_PROSTART1:** (From left to right) San Dimas High School ProStart restaurant management students Gabriel Costa, Alec Joseph, Joshua Wong, Wilson Chen and Christina Jones celebrate their first-place finish at the California ProStart Cup with instructor Nick Brandler. The team will compete in the National ProStart Invitational in early May.

**BUSD\_PROSTART2:** (From left to right) Bonita High School ProStart students Sarae Gordon, Danielle Gutierrez, Kendra Warner and Isiah Greene showcased their skills in both the restaurant management and culinary competitions at the 2023 California ProStart Cup in March.

**BUSD\_PROSTART3:** Culinary instructors Nick and Laurie Brandler – the husband/wife duo who helm the ProStart program at San Dimas and Bonita high schools, respectively – embrace as they celebrate San Dimas High School’s first-place finish in the restaurant management competition at the California ProStart Cup.

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