



**News**

**Release**

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## **West Covina Educators to Visit Baldwin Park Unified to Learn about Mental Health Programs**

**BALDWIN PARK** – A group of 10 educators from West Covina Unified School District will visit Baldwin Park High School’s National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) student club from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Monday, April 23 as the district considers creating a similar program.

Baldwin Park Unified is a pioneer in opening student NAMI clubs, launching the first one in the East San Gabriel Valley in 2016-17 at Sierra Vista High School. Clubs have since been created at Baldwin Park High School and North Park Continuation High School.

Students in the clubs, where membership can top 60, explore mental health fields and combat stigmas that can prevent people from accessing necessary mental health services.

Mental health advocates estimate that one in five children and youths have mental health challenges, but only 20 percent of them receive care.

“We are excited to be hosting our colleagues from West Covina,” said Dr. Sue Coats, a school psychologist who oversees mental health and social-emotional programs at Baldwin Park Unified. “These clubs tackle critically important topics, benefitting not only their members but all our students.”

The visit comes as students at all three Baldwin Park Unified high school campuses are gearing up for Mental Health Awareness Month in May.

So far, programs for the month include panels of mental health professionals on May 1 at Baldwin Park High and on May 2 at Sierra Vista. The panels, which will be moderated by student club members, feature school counselors, school psychologists, licensed marriage and family therapists, clinical social workers, and clinical psychologists.

“People often don’t understand the differences between mental health professions and the valuable services they offer to students and families,” Coats said. “Panels like these can help them see the resources available to them on our campuses and in our community, as well as inform students about potential mental health career fields.”

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