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Bonita Unified Launches 2024-25 School Year with Lively Celebrations, New Courses

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Some 10,000 students returned to Bonita Unified School District campuses for the start of the 2024-25 school year on Aug. 19, which saw transitional kindergarten students sharing tearful hugs with their parents as they began their educational journeys and seniors taking selfies and watching the sun rise together on their final first day of high school.

Teachers at Ekstrand, La Verne Heights, and Shull elementary schools welcomed a new class of transitional kindergartners with enthusiastic hugs and high fives, while returning students wasted no time in greeting each other and delivering flower and candy gifts to their new teachers.

At Bonita High School, a large contingent from its Class of 2025 assembled bright and early for the school's annual Senior Sunrise celebration, held at Glenn Davis Stadium. Under a scoreboard displaying '2025,' friends reconnected, spread out on blankets, listened to music, and played games, all while catching the spirit for their final year of high school.

Adorned in gold cardstock crowns, San Dimas High School seniors gathered at Saints Stadium for their own festivities, enjoying breakfast together, posing with photo props created by the Associated Student Body, and discussing the new school year.

For senior Ash Sandmark, the 2024-25 school year is one of new opportunities, including the chance to compete in the inaugural season of CIF Southern Section girls flag football. Both San Dimas and Bonita high schools introduced the sport this fall and will face off in a friendly rivalry game on Monday, Sept. 9.

"I'm really excited to be part of this team and see how we do in our very first season," said Sandmark, whose sister, Breanna, is on Bonita High's flag football team. "It feels like history in the making. It will also be interesting to compete against my sister, on opposite teams, for the first time."

Bonita Unified students will benefit from new learning opportunities as the District introduces new high school courses into its expanding career technical education (CTE) programs.

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New additions include Auto Tech 4, Cybersecurity and Networking II, Yearbook Graphic Publications, and Catering and International Cuisine at Bonita High School; and IT and Cybersecurity I, Yearbook Graphic Publications, and CTE Graphic Publishing Yearbook at San Dimas High School.

The new courses are part of an ongoing effort to bolster work-based learning opportunities, led by CTE Coordinator Vanessa Tilford. During summer break, more than 100 BUSD students participated in programs at Cal Poly Pomona, Citrus College, Mt. SAC, and the Claremont Colleges, learning about engineering, architecture, theater, interior design, welding, mentoring, and waste management.

Bonita Unified also promoted and welcomed [new administrators](#) this year, including new principals at Gladstone, Oak Mesa, Roynon and Shull elementary schools, a new assistant principal at San Dimas High School, and new senior directors of specialized services and student services.

“It’s wonderful to see all of the smiling faces of our students, teachers, staff and administrators returning to our campuses for what we hope will be the most successful year yet in Bonita Unified School District,” Bonita Unified Superintendent Matt Wien said. “Guided by our core values of equity, mastery and a focus on results, we will remain committed to providing every Bonita Unified student with the resources, skills and confidence to achieve their potential.”

PHOTOS:

BUSD_2024_FIRSTDAY1: La Verne Heights Elementary School teacher Krista Ritchie greets a new student and takes a picture before they enter the classroom for the first day of the 2024-25 school year on Aug. 19.

BUSD_2024_FIRSTDAY2: San Dimas High School students kick back and relax at Saints Stadium for the Class of 2025’s Senior Sunrise celebration, held before school on Aug. 19.

BUSD_2024_FIRSTDAY3: Bonita High School students strike a pose against a colorful backdrop during the school’s Senior Sunrise event on Aug. 19.

BUSD_2024_FIRSTDAY4: An Ekstrand Elementary School parent commemorates her son’s first day of school with a photo.

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