



Bellflower Unified School District

Media Release

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Bellflower Unified Launches Early Education Program for Families of Children Ages 0-5

BELLFLOWER – Bellflower Unified will hold a pair of teddy bear picnics this week to launch an interactive learning program with an array of language, literacy and school readiness classes designed to help children ages 0 to 5 and their families prepare for public school.

Bellflower Early Learning Link (BELL) will feature classes in music and motion, a story hour and hands-on crafts on Mondays and Wednesdays at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, 10027 Rose St., and on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Washington Elementary School, 9725 Jefferson St.

To launch the program, a Teddy Bear Picnic will be held from 8:45 to 10:45 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 15 at Jefferson Elementary and from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 16 at Washington Elementary. Families can arrive at any time during the two-hour window, with their teddy bears, enjoy a snack and learn about the BELL program.

“Our goal is to support the families in our community with a resource that will enable their children to arrive at school ready to learn, whether they are entering our preschool, transitional kindergarten or kindergarten programs,” Superintendent Dr. Brian Jacobs said. “We recognize that parents are a child’s first and primary teachers, and we want to do everything we can to help them on their journeys.”

The BELL program will run from 8:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. and include drop-in programs featuring dramatic play, dress-up centers, puzzles and one-on-one reading time. Parents or caregivers can attend an entire day’s program, or pick just the classes that appeal to them. Most sessions have a capacity of about 25 families.

“We are hoping to serve several hundred families in our community in this first year,” said Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Stacey Larson-Everson, who developed the program based on previous experiences with successful, research-based family engagement programs.

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Bellflower Unified School District provides a pathway for all students to attain the expertise and develop skills of academic excellence that will empower them to become lifelong active learners, demonstrate respect for themselves and others in a dynamic, diverse and global society, become responsible, informed, productive, independent and contributing citizens, and perform successfully in their chosen field and in society.



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A side benefit of the program is that families will become acquainted with Bellflower Unified staff and schools, and learn about the District's many resources for helping students succeed, Everson said.

Bellflower Unified also operates a highly successful preschool program for preparing children ages 3 to 5 for school. This year, the District shifted from the federal Head Start Program to a State Preschool Program, boosting enrollment capacity, adding afternoon sessions, expanding family eligibility and customizing curriculum to align more cohesively with TK/K-12 instruction.

As of September, enrollment has approached 240 students at six schools, including about 40 attending a new dual-language immersion preschool program. The remaining spaces are filling quickly.

"It is critical for our children to form a strong foundation as they begin school," said Board of Education President Dr. Paul Helzer. "These days, we ask so much of our students from the very first day. Outreach programs like this one, along with our preschool and transitional kindergarten program, can help parents in their efforts to minimize challenges and ensure their children begin school on an even playing field."

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