



# Bellflower Unified School District

## Media Release

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## Families Flock to Bellflower Unified's Redesigned Preschool Program

**BELLFLOWER** – More than 240 families have signed up for Bellflower Unified's redesigned preschool program, which this year has added afternoon sessions, dual immersion, capacity for more children, expanded family eligibility and customized curriculum to align with TK/K-12 instruction.

The changes were made possible when Bellflower Unified switched operations from the federal Head Start program to the State Preschool Program, which offers districts more flexibility in designing programs.

Some 200 students have enrolled in the general preschool program, which is free to eligible families, and 40-plus have enrolled in the District's ground-breaking dual-language immersion preschool program.

"We are pleased and excited by the response from the community to our preschool program adjustments, which are designed to give our local children as much preparation as possible for entering transitional kindergarten or kindergarten," Superintendent Dr. Brian Jacobs said.

Bellflower had long provided high-quality preschool programming under the federal Head Start program through a partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, Jacobs said. But the District decided to shift to the state preschool program because it offered a chance for greater local control.

The new system allowed the District, which had provided morning sessions at six schools, to add afternoon sessions at each campus and expand capacity from 216 students to more than 240. The District also more than doubled the maximum-allowed family income for cost-free services to about \$53,000 for a family of four.

The changes allowed Bellflower Unified to shape services, such as nutrition and mental health counseling, to meet the specific needs of its students, rather than following a one-size-fits-all model.

**MORE**

## Standard of Excellence - Nothing Less

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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Already, the program is running near capacity as applications flood in for the few remaining slots.

The final component of this year's preschool changes is the addition of a dual-language immersion preschool, which starts children on a pathway to biliteracy in English and Spanish. The program complements an elementary school dual-immersion program launched by the District several years ago.

Preschool immersion students can transition directly into the elementary program, which spans kindergarten to grade three and adds a grade level annually.

"Our new preschool program offers parents an extraordinary opportunity to establish a firm educational foundation for their children in a secure, nurturing environment," Board of Education President Dr. Paul Helzer said.

For more information on the preschool program, call Early Childhood Education Program Director Cristina Blevins at 562-461-2227.

## PHOTO

**091516\_BUSD\_Preschool1:** Student Haylee Brandsgard works on a puzzle as part of Bellflower Unified's recently redesigned preschool program, which already has drawn more than 240 families. The program operates morning and afternoon sessions at six campuses.

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