



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 26, 2025

CONTACT: Lauren Creiman, (909) 833-9853

Bonita Unified Elementary School Celebrates Culture and Inclusion with Dance Festival

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE - Nearly 500 students filled the stage with energy and enthusiasm during La Verne Heights Elementary School's 14th annual Dance Festival, a schoolwide showcase celebrating the rich cultural diversity of the school community through music, movement, and tradition.

Students from transitional kindergarten (TK) through fifth grade performed in the festival, held in late May. Each grade level showcased a different style of dance, including an African-inspired routine, Ballet Folklórico, the Hawaiian Hukilau, a Scottish jig, a 1950s American square dance, traditional Chinese fan dance, and more.

"As a culturally diverse campus trying to build representation as a cornerstone of our school community, we want our students to feel like they truly belong here," La Verne Heights fifth-grade teacher Lauren Barnes said. "When families see their cultures are appreciated, it helps them feel welcomed and part of the La Verne Heights family."

To ensure the experience was inclusive for all, La Verne Heights provided accommodations for students with special needs, including noise-reducing headphones, teacher pairings, and a buddy system.

La Verne Heights Elementary collaborated with cultural consultants and a local professional choreographer specializing in traditional Chinese movement for the fan dance. Students incorporated traditional fans, lanterns, and dragons into the routine, using props sourced from small vendors in Los Angeles' Chinatown to ensure cultural accuracy. Fabric choices and attire also reflected traditional Chinese design, underscoring the school's commitment to honoring the cultures it represents in meaningful ways.

"This event reflects the kind of inclusive environment we strive to create every day on our campuses," Bonita Unified Superintendent Matt Wien said. "By uplifting diverse voices, we create opportunities for every student to feel heard, respected, and supported."

PHOTOS:

BUSD_LVHDANCE1 La Verne Heights kindergarteners perform a traditional Mexican Ballet Folklórico dance during the school's 14th annual Dance Festival.

BUSD_LVHDANCE2: La Verne Heights third graders showcase a 1950s-style "Sock Hop" routine during the school's 14th annual Dance Festival, a staple community event that celebrates cultural diversity through student performances.