



# BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## NEWS RELEASE

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## Bonita Unified Culinary Team Wins Second Consecutive California ProStart Cup, Heads to Nationals to Defend Title

**SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE** – The Bonita Unified ProStart Culinary program made history once again when the San Dimas High School culinary team was crowned the California ProStart Cup champion for the second consecutive year, giving the student chefs an opportunity to defend their title at the National ProStart Invitational, to be held in Baltimore in April. San Dimas High School is the first back-to-back California ProStart Cup champion since 2010-11.

Following closely behind in second place was 2024 California ProStart Cup champion Bonita High School, giving the District its first-ever one-two placement at the Cup, adding another successful chapter in the District's storied history in the competition. For the third consecutive year, Bonita Unified will represent California in one of the country's most popular and challenging amateur culinary competitions.

Bonita High's ProStart Management team also recorded a second-place finish for its Proven Theory concept, while San Dimas' Management team took third place with its Hole in the Wall concept. It is the first year that both Bonita Unified schools finished in the top three of both categories. In total, 14 BUSD students also received scholarships at the ProStart Cup.

"This has been an incredible past couple of years," San Dimas ProStart teacher Nick Brandler said. "I never thought it would be possible to win state for culinary even one time, let alone back-to-back years. Our team worked hard all season, and all the long days and late nights paid off. They truly deserve this."

The San Dimas ProStart Culinary team, led by senior captain Kyle Yamate, once again dazzled the judges with a three-course gourmet meal that employed a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and delicacies – including ikura (Japanese cured salmon roe), pomegranate seeds, and a pickled-shallot yuzu mustard vinaigrette to produce a menu consisting of a hamachi, salmon, and tuna crudo starter; a duck breast entrée; and a banana mousse dessert.

"Going into this year, I knew that I wanted to win. Not just for the title, but to prove to myself that last year was not a fluke," Yamate said. "We've had so many challenges through this journey, and I'm so proud that my team's hard work paid off. Through this achievement, we were able to highlight each of my teammates' talents, and show what we are capable of. With hard work, anything is possible."

**MORE**



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Yamate was joined on his team by classmates Julian Rozier, Alexa Aguilera, Ella Carranza, and Salvador Renteria. San Dimas' Management team consisted of Lilly Homyak, Sophie Atalla, and Maile Carranza.

Bonita High's ProStart Culinary and Management teams – both led by junior captain Abby Brandler – came the closest to stealing San Dimas' thunder, placing second in the culinary competition with a starter of pan-fried halibut, sauteed baby bok choy, and batonne daikon; an entrée of crispy duck breast; and a dessert of miso panna cotta and small diced cherry plum.

"I love Management but I jumped at the chance to manage the Culinary team. It was one of the best choices I've ever made," Abby Brandler said. "I've gotten so much out of both sides, from strong relationships that will last a lifetime, to connections made throughout the industry. It requires different skills with an extreme level of drive. To help Bonita place second in both competitions is truly an honor."

Abby was joined by Cynthia Hernandez-Cabrera, Sam Stout, Ethan Sandoval, and Briana Solis-Mendoza on the Culinary team, and Lucy Hunter on the Management team. Additionally, Abby was one of just two students from California to receive a California Restaurant Foundation (CRF) yearlong mentorship, where she will be paired with Castaway Burbank general manager Cindy Kwan.

Hernandez-Cabrera also took home a first-place award for the California Restaurant Foundation's California Almonds Throwdown competition, held last November, while Bonita High senior Jenna Barada won first place in the ProStart Cup's Burger Battle competition, then was asked to showcase her burger at The Habit Burger's R&D headquarters.

"Our success in the ProStart Cup is a tribute to our student-chefs, who are greatly talented, ambitious, innovative, and graceful under pressure," Bonita High ProStart culinary teacher Laurie Brandler said. "Nick and I have been blessed with tremendous support from the District to pursue these competitions, and it is so wonderful to see everyone's hard work and dedication pay off."

### PHOTOS:

**BUSD\_PROSTARTCUP\_2026\_1:** The San Dimas High School ProStart Culinary team captured its second consecutive CA ProStart Cup championship, and will look to defend their national title at the National ProStart Invitational, to be held in Baltimore in April. San Dimas High School is the first back-to-back California ProStart Cup champion since 2010.

**BUSD\_PROSTARTCUP\_2026\_2:** Bonita High School's ProStart Culinary team earned a second-place finish in the CA ProStart Cup, giving Bonita Unified its first-ever one-two finish in the popular culinary competition.