

NEWS RELEASE

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Covina-Valley Unified Sends Off the Class of 2026 with Inspiring Commencement Celebrations

COVINA, CA – Covina-Valley Unified School District celebrated nearly 1,200 graduates during commencement ceremonies held June 1-4, honoring the many achievements, perseverance, and future aspirations of the Class of 2026.

Families and friends gathered at the District Field to cheer on graduates from Covina, Northview, South Hills, and Fairvalley high schools, as well as the Covina-Valley Learning Options Academy (C-VLOA) and Tri-Community Adult Education. Many Class of 2026 graduates will be continuing their academic journeys at prestigious universities, including UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC San Diego, the University of Southern California, the University of Oregon, Cornell University, and more. Others will enter the workforce, pursue career training, or serve in the Armed Forces.

The festivities began on June 1 with Covina High, where 288 graduates crossed the stage. Among the graduates, 98 students earned the Seal of Biliteracy, 121 scored a 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam, and 123 earned college credit through dual enrollment courses.

“Nobody got here by accident. We showed up on days when we didn't feel like coming, turned in work we stayed up late to finish, and kept going,” Covina High Valedictorian Keeff Matondo said. “That is not a small thing...that is what success looks like.”

Matondo immigrated to the United States from the Pacific Island of Rota at age 11. Throughout high school, he battled Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, enduring chemotherapy treatments, remission, medical appointments, and ongoing health challenges. Graduating from Covina High at just 16 years old, Matondo will attend UCLA this fall to study biology with the goal of becoming a doctor.

Northview High celebrated its 314 graduates on June 2, including 20 valedictorians, each earning a 4.0 GPA, and 81 Seals of Biliteracy recipients. Northview High seniors also received prestigious scholarships, including the Edison Scholarship and ACE Mentor Scholarship.

“For the last four years, we've been writing the story of our high school journey,” Northview Valedictorian Wesley Sanglimsuwan said. “Just like a book, each of our stories that brought us to this present day is unique. As we step into the world and its story, I hope we do so boldly...with the resilience of our mind and the quiet bravery of our hearts.”

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Fairvalley High and C-VLOA graduates were honored on June 3 in a ceremony that celebrated the inspirational stories and resiliency of the Class of 2026.

“Today is not about looking back, but forward. The future holds endless possibilities for each and every one of us,” Fairvalley graduate Ana Licon-Ortega said. “No matter what you choose or where you go, chase your dreams and make a difference in the world.”

Licon-Ortega plans to continue her education abroad, with aspirations of attending a university in London and pursuing a degree in business management.

South Hills High continued the celebrations on June 3, honoring its 414 graduates, including 34 valedictorians with a 4.0 GPA. The Class of 2026 also included 84 Seals of Biliteracy recipients, 27 AP Scholars, 17 AP Scholars with Distinction, 20 AP Scholars with Honors, and nine International Baccalaureate diploma recipients.

“To my classmates, congratulations! We are about to close this chapter of our lives and write a new one,” South Hills Valedictorian Tina Tram said. “These hills and valleys were our second home, filled with countless memories and lessons that will follow us into the future. We may be done with this chapter, but we can create our own greater legacies in the next chapter.”

The celebrations concluded on June 4, as Tri-Community honored nearly 80 graduates. Graduate Mauhelotu Folau shared her journey of growing up in New Zealand, relocating to the United States, leaving school due to family hardships, and ultimately returning to complete her education.

“Failure is not falling down; it is staying down,” Folau said “We must use our setbacks as stepping stones. Everyone reaches their goals at a different pace, and a delayed journey is never a failed one.”

Folau plans to return to Tri-Community to enroll in the Certified Nursing Assistant program.

“Congratulations to the remarkable Class of 2026,” Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Blackmore said. “Your stories of resilience, determination, and achievement are truly inspiring. We know you will continue to accomplish great things, and we wish you every success as you embark on this next chapter.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

CVUSD_GRADUATIONS1: Covina High celebrated 288 graduates, including 123 students who earned college credit through dual enrollment courses, at a lively commencement ceremony on June 1.

CVUSD_GRADUATIONS2: Northview High honored 314 graduates, including 20 valedictorians with 4.0 GPAs, on June 2.

CVUSD_GRADUATIONS3: Fairvalley High and Covina-Valley Learning Options Academy graduates were honored on June 3 in a ceremony that celebrated their resiliency.

CVUSD_GRADUATIONS4: South Hills High cheered on 414 graduates, including nine who earned the International Baccalaureate diploma, at a commencement ceremony on June 3.

CVUSD_GRADUATIONS5: Tri-Community Adult Education celebrated 80 graduates and their inspirational stories on June 4.