



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education

Derek Bahmanou, President
Jim Elliot, Vice President
Brittany Allison, Clerk
Greg Palatto, Member
Chris Ann Horsley, Member
Matt Wien, Superintendent

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Aug. 21, 2026

CONTACT: Lauren Creiman, (909) 833 9853

Bonita Unified Kicks off 2026-27 School Year with Spirited Events, Expanded Learning Opportunities

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – From young learners exploring classrooms for the first time to seniors preparing for a strong finish to their high school journeys, Bonita Unified School District welcomed approximately 10,000 students and 1,100 teachers and staff back to campus for the 2026-27 school year on Aug. 17.

The celebrations began days prior, as schools held orientations for transitional kindergarten and kindergarten students along with back-to-school events, during which students met their teachers, began connecting with classmates, and participated in community-building activities. The festivities continued on the first day of school with senior sunrise activities, photo backdrops and colorful decorations across campuses, and welcome-back breakfasts.

"I feel really happy and nervous because it's my first day of senior year and my last year," said Bonita High senior Janna King, who plans to attend Mt. SAC and study real estate. "I'm looking forward to finishing high school and making new friends because it's never too late to make new friends. I want to have the best time I can because this might be the last year many of us are together before we all grow up."

As King looks to prepare for life beyond high school, Bonita Unified is expanding support for its youngest learners by extending class times. Beginning this year, transitional kindergarten will run from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and kindergarten from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., providing more time for early learners to build foundational skills and connections.

Bonita High School students will also benefit from expanded career technical education opportunities as the school formalizes its dance and jewelry classes into two new career technical education pathways, furthering opportunities to develop their creative and technical skills and leading to potential new careers.

Students also returned to campuses under the guidance of several new administrators, including Kendra Lewis, principal of Chaparral-Vista High School, and Kara Duros, principal of Ekstrand Elementary School. Bonita High School also welcomed assistant principals Lauren Choi and Kira Grund, who join the school's leadership team for the 2026–27 school year.

MORE



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education

Derek Bahmanou, President
Jim Elliot, Vice President
Brittany Allison, Clerk
Greg Palatto, Member
Chris Ann Horsley, Member
Matt Wien, Superintendent

NEWS RELEASE

“It is always special to welcome our students and families back, and this year’s first days have shown the strong sense of connection at the heart of Bonita Unified,” Superintendent Matt Wien said. “Whether students are entering a classroom for the first time or beginning their final year with us, we want each student to feel seen and excited about what lies ahead.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

BUSD_FIRSTDAY1: Bonita High School seniors return to campus ready to make new memories, explore their interests and begin a successful 2026–27 school year.

BUSD_FIRSTDAY2: La Verne Heights Elementary principal Nicole Grant connects with new students and families during the school’s TK/Kindergarten orientation.

BUSD_FIRSTDAY3: Gladstone Elementary School students connect with their peers on the first day of school.

BUSD_FIRSTDAY4: A Lone Hill Middle School Associated Student Body (ASB) member gets to know one of her peers during a classroom activity on the first day of school.

BUSD_FIRSTDAY5: San Dimas High School seniors return to campus with Saints pride as they reunite with friends and look ahead to the opportunities of the 2026–27 school year.

###