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NEWS RELEASE

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Covina-Valley Unified Marching Bands Earn Top Honors at Competitions

COVINA, CA – Marching bands and color guard teams from all three Covina-Valley Unified comprehensive high schools have achieved first-place wins in recent competitions, highlighting the strength and excellence of the District's music programs.

At the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association (SCSBOA) Valencia Field Tournament on Oct. 10, all three high schools placed first in their respective divisions. Northview High competed in Class 2A, Covina High in 3A, and South Hills in 5A.

The achievement adds to a standout season for Covina High School, whose marching band and color guard also earned the 2026 Bands of America Class 2A title at the Arizona Regional Championships on Sept. 26. The win marked the 14th time the program has earned the title.

"Our band program is one of the most consistent programs at Covina High, and to be among the best schools in California and nationwide is truly special," Covina High Director of Bands Daniel Franco said. "Our kids are so motivated and hardworking, always wanting to put in the extra practice time. I'm very proud of them."

In addition to directing the marching band and color guard, Franco oversees the school's concert, jazz, and Latin bands, as well as the musical orchestra. His passion for music and teaching has extended to his daughter, Melody Franco, a Covina High Class of 2018 graduate who now serves as the program's visual instructor and assistant band director, as well as an American Sign Language teacher at Covina High.

"Music has always been a part of my heart, and I always told myself that I'd never be a high school teacher unless it was here at Covina High," Melody said. "As a student who was in the program, I can say that it really changed me for the better. I started off as a shy kid who hated public speaking and really turned into a leader who became a drum major and was giving motivational speeches to my classmates."

Daniel has been working in the program for 27 years, with both his sons and Melody going through the program as students. While in high school, Melody helped her dad with tasks such as coordinating the opening visuals for performances. The two have now worked together to lead the program for the past four years.

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"We're very passionate about this – we're here every day for the students and for our community," Daniel said. "We love this school and our District, and we try to do our best every day to showcase that pride and tradition."

Students at Traweek Middle School are also involved in the program, with schedules allowing students from both schools to come together for practices.

The band's field show, "The Entity," follows a student who sneaks into a haunted house, with sound effects, props, costumes, and choreography bringing the eight-minute production to life.

"What really stood out to me about our students' performance this year was their confidence," Daniel said. "We really try to focus on building for the future and developing life skills. I get to see these students grow from a young age all the way through graduation, and they really motivate me."

Beyond building their musical skills, Daniel said band students develop character and leadership skills while learning responsibility, time management, teamwork, adaptability, and more.

"Congratulations to all of our high school band and color guard programs for this incredible achievement," Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Blackmore said. "Covina-Valley Unified is proud to offer arts and music opportunities that allow our students to discover their passions, embrace their creativity, and develop skills that will serve them well beyond the classroom."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

CVUSD_BAND1: The Covina High School marching band and color guard were named 2026 Bands of America Class 2A Champions at the Arizona Regional Championships on Sept. 26 and finished first in Class 3A at the SCSBOA Valencia Field Tournament on Oct. 10.

CVUSD_BAND2: Northview High School's marching band and color guard finished first in Class 2A at the SCSBOA Valencia Field Tournament on Oct. 10, highlighting the strength of the District's music programs.

CVUSD_BAND3: The South Hills High School marching band and color guard placed first in Class 5A at the SCSBOA Valencia Field Tournament on Oct. 10, showcasing their hard work and dedication.

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