



BUENA PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

6885 Orangethorpe Ave., Buena Park, CA 90620 • (714) 522-8412 • www.bpsd.us

PRESS RELEASE

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Buena Park Middle School Creates Aquatic Aficionados Through STEM Swimming Program

BUENA PARK, CA – Buena Park Middle School students are diving into learning proper swimming etiquette and safety while having fun at the Long Beach Yacht Club, thanks to the school's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) Sailing/Swimming program.

The STEM Sailing/Swimming program, which has been available to Buena Park Middle School students for six years through support from the Long Beach Yacht Club's Sailing Foundation, is held each spring, turning new and novice swimmers into naturals. This year, more than 30 students are participating in the program with help from four Long Beach Yacht Club volunteer swimming coaches on Mondays from March to May. Students join the District's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program.

"STEM Swimming allows our students to become water safety trained so that they can have that expertise and do water sports in high school and for fun," STEM Swimming program Advisor and Career Technical Educator Shelley Andros said. "The change has been dramatic – some are just honing their skills and others were afraid to get in the water at first. Now, nearly all of them can swim across the pool and it has helped them gain confidence."

During the program, students are taught front crawl and backstroke styles of swimming, how to tread water, breathing exercises, kicking, floating and keeping up their stamina.

"I joined the STEM Swimming program because I wanted to meet new people, I wanted to improve my swimming technique and I love the water," seventh-grader Kameran U. said. "I love it so much that now I'm thinking of joining the water polo team in high school."

After the eight-week program, students are tested by their coaches to showcase their swimming skills. Once the students pass, they are allowed to participate in a summer water sports camp event, held in association with the Boy Scouts of America.

Andros said her favorite STEM Swimming story starts with a student who refused to put his face in the water. Now, he is on the Buena Park High School water polo team.

"It's astounding to see how our students change from novices to near expert swimmers thanks to our STEM Swimming program," Interim Superintendent Dr. Yvette Cantu said. "While swimming might seem nonessential to some, Buena Park School District knows it is important to promote healthy lifestyles through physical activity."

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

SWIM1: Two Buena Park Middle School students ready themselves to practice the front crawl style of swimming during their school's STEM Swimming program, held at the Long Beach Yacht Club.

SWIM2: Buena Park Middle School seventh-grader Kameran U. has improved his ability to tread water, do the backstroke and dive – all thanks to his school's STEM Swimming program.

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