



Bellflower Unified School District

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 14, 2016

CONTACT: Valerie Martinez, William Diepenbrock 909-445-1001

Bellflower High's Top Seniors Pursue Dreams of Becoming Pediatricians

BELLFLOWER – Bellflower High School's 2015-16 valedictorian and salutatorian tackled advanced classes, volunteered in campus groups and trained in health-themed internships as they pursued acceptance to top-notch colleges en route to careers as pediatricians.

Their exemplary achievements are echoed by those of 352 classmates in the Class of 2016, which holds commencement exercises at 6 p.m. **Thursday, June 16** at Ron Yary Stadium at Bellflower High School, 15301 McNab Ave., Bellflower.

Seventy students will receive a Golden State Seal Merit Diploma, which recognizes mastery of curriculum in English language arts, mathematics, science, U.S. history and two other subjects. Thirty-five students will receive the State Seal of Biliteracy, recognizing proficiency in in two or more languages. Nineteen students earned weighted GPAs 4.0 or higher.

Students will attend 40 top U.S. universities, including UC Berkeley, UCLA, University of Washington, Chapman University, Texas A & M University and a host of other UC and California State University campuses.

“Bellflower Unified’s seniors are graduating with excellent academic skills that will empower them to become lifelong active learners.” Bellflower Unified Superintendent Dr. Brian Jacobs said. “Our goal is for every student to grow into a responsible, informed, productive, independent and contributing citizen.”

This year's valedictorian, Anika Flores, has been a Bellflower Unified student since was 4 years old. In sixth grade, she joined the GATE program; by seventh grade, she was studying algebra and taking other advanced classes. In high school, she has taken nine Advanced Placement classes, including five in her junior year, when she attained the No. 1 rank in her class. Flores is graduating with a 4.45 GPA. She will attend UC Irvine with plans to become a pediatrician.

MORE

Standard of Excellence - Nothing Less

Bellflower Unified School District provides a pathway for all students to attain the expertise and develop skills of academic excellence that will empower them to become lifelong active learners, demonstrate respect for themselves and others in a dynamic, diverse and global society, become responsible, informed, productive, independent and contributing citizens, and perform successfully in their chosen field and in society.



Bellflower Unified School District

This year's salutatorian, Andrea Medina, entered high school with high expectations after being named Student of the Year and earning the highest GPA in her eighth-grade class. While keeping up with a demanding class schedule, Medina played flute and marimba in the school marching band and worked with the Roots and Shoots Club to educate her peers on the environment.

During her senior year, Medina doubled down on campus involvement, serving as vice president of the National Honor Society, secretary of the Women's Liberation Club, treasurer of the California Scholarship Federation and as a Link Crew mentor for ninth-graders. She is also involved off-campus as a yearlong volunteer at a local Kaiser Permanente Hospital and a six-year member of a mariachi group at her local parish.

Medina is graduating with a 4.43 GPA. She will attend UCLA, where she plans to major in molecular, cell and developmental biology.

Students also shared in scholarships.

Elaine Yan received a \$12,500 scholarship from the Kiwanis Club and graduated with the highest academic honors, indicating she earned a cumulative weighted GPA of 4.0 or greater. Three other scholarship winners also earned highest academic honors: Monica Beltran and Daniel Ramirez, who received \$1,000 scholarships from the Kiwanis, and Celeste Villareal, who landed a \$500 scholarship from the Long Beach Schools Federal Credit Union.

Other students who graduated with highest honors are Rogina Gerges, Pathum Kanagasunderam, Neha Karan, Madeline Leon, Patricia Marin, Manda Meach, Valeria Paredes, Kevin Pena, Micaela Pena, Guadalupe Perez, Angelica Ramirez, Bianca Roman and Natalie Soto.

Katherine Gonzales received a \$1,000 Kiwanis scholarship and Stephanie Yanez was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the local Rotary Club. They are among 44 students who received high academic honors, indicating they earned weighted GPAs between 3.5 and 3.99

"We have an incredibly bright and well-rounded group of seniors graduating this year and I couldn't be prouder of all the work they have done to push themselves academically," Bellflower Unified Board President Dr. Paul Helzer said. "Their success is also a testament to the incredible dedication of our talented staff of educators."

###

Standard of Excellence - Nothing Less

Bellflower Unified School District provides a pathway for all students to attain the expertise and develop skills of academic excellence that will empower them to become lifelong active learners, demonstrate respect for themselves and others in a dynamic, diverse and global society, become responsible, informed, productive, independent and contributing citizens, and perform successfully in their chosen field and in society.