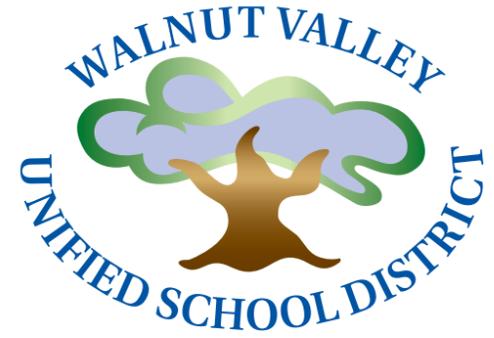


# Outlook



Issue 37 SUMMER 2017

## Message from the Superintendent



Dear Walnut Valley family,

*Wow ... and thank you!*

As I read through this latest edition of the Outlook, I am amazed and very thankful for the extraordinary experiences and achievements of our students and staff. In this edition alone, you will find highlights such as our two comprehensive

high schools recognized, once again, by the State of California and the U.S. News & World Report as two of the very best high schools in America; our student-athlete recognized at the State Capitol and many seniors receiving “white coats” to signify their completion of a bio-med program; our 5th grade musicians working with high school band mentors, drama programs winning awards, and our school district being nationally recognized as a 2017 Best Community for Music Education. I recently had the opportunity to hear a successful local businessman talk about his organization, its values, and its systems. He was asked by an audience member about being competitive and being the best. His response, “We don’t seek to be number one. We seek to be the only one like us ... the way we do it.” I think this philosophy fits our school district as well. Our students are succeeding at the highest levels in what we often refer to as the “Five A’s”: Academics, Athletics, Arts, Activities, and Access. I truly believe that we, Walnut Valley, are one of a kind! We are the only one like us ... I so appreciate the “Walnut Valley Way.”

Sincerely,  
Dr. Robert P. Taylor



## Creating Golden Opportunities

### Diamond Bar, Walnut High Win the State’s Highest Academic Honor

Diamond Bar and Walnut high schools have been recognized with 2017 California Gold Ribbon Awards for successfully embracing rigorous academic standards and showing others how to help foster student success.

Diamond Bar High also earned the Exemplary Program in Arts Education Award.

The 275 middle and high school state winners represent examples of excellent teaching, learning, and collaborating, as well as highly successful school climate efforts. Schools applied for the award based on a signature program that can be replicated by other schools.

Diamond Bar High submitted for consideration the school’s Wellness Center and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs.

“Diamond Bar High is the only high school in the state staffed by student wellness consultants who are trained in peer counseling and assisting student’s social and emotional needs for the entire school day. We are very proud of the support we are offering our students,” said Principal Reuben Jones.

Walnut High highlighted its IB Career-Related Program (IBCP)/Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Biomedical Science.

“We as a school community work hard each and every day to ensure that all of our programs are meeting the needs of all students. This prestigious award helps us remember that our collective efforts are appreciated by people within and outside of our community,” said Principal Brandon Dade.

Congratulations to the dedicated, creative, and talented staff, and the supportive school communities!



## America’s Best!

U.S. News & World Report has ranked Diamond Bar and Walnut among the nation’s top high schools in its “2017 America’s Best High Schools” report issued on April 25. Diamond Bar High School earned a gold medal, as it did last year, ranking 43rd in California and 277th in the United States. DBHS placed 105th in STEM high schools. Walnut High School earned a silver medal, ranking 95th in California and 557th in the United States. Both standout schools have been included in the report every year since the publication began its ‘Best High Schools’ search in 2009. Additionally, both schools are named among the “2017 America’s Most Challenging High Schools” by *The Washington Post*.



## UPDATE District of Choice

*New law continues program for 6 years*

**Your voice has been heard!** The future of the District of Choice (DOC) program is now secure in Walnut Valley. On June 27, Gov. Brown signed the extension trailer bill to be included in the state budget through the 2022-2023 fiscal year. The bill was passed in both the Assembly and Senate unanimously.

DOC has been in existence for 25 years and affects over 3,500 WVUSD students. In addition to bringing significant funding and creating financial stability, the new law will allow the District to continue offering world-class programs that families seek for their children.

DOC gives parents a choice of where to send their child to school no matter the income level or where they live. This simple choice increases school accountability and improves the public education system. Over the past year, WVUSD officials have worked to educate lawmakers and the general public about these benefits.

It has been an uncertain year after a routine extension bill died last summer in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. This outcome is the result of nearly a year of hard work and dedication by parents, staff, students, and community members.

Thank you for all your emails, phone calls, letters and support!



## WVUSD Dedicated to Music Education

Walnut Valley Unified School District has been honored with the 2017 Best Communities for Music Education designation from the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

A total of 476 districts and 92 schools from coast to coast received the prestigious award for successfully providing music access and education to all students. From elementary bands to choral singers and symphony orchestras, schools are creating a community of learners and showing what they’ve learned to a broader community.

“This is a wonderful reflection of the quality music programs that we offer students throughout our district,” said Superintendent Dr. Taylor. “We are proud to be recognized for setting the bar in offering students access to comprehensive music education!”

# SUPER STAR SENIORS

Over 1,400 seniors donned caps and gowns during commencement ceremonies held on May 26. We're proud to introduce eight of our stellar students!

## Diamond Bar High



Benjamin Chen • Jay Zhang • Leslie Sim • Rebecca Kimn

### Benjamin Chen

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 4.0 GPA**

Completed 12 AP Courses. Siemens Semifinalist, Eagle Scout, Math Olympiad Summer Program, Research Science Institute, Regeneron STS Top 300. Symphony Orchestra, Science Olympiad captain, Math Team president, and Science Bowl.

"In the plethora of clubs and activities available at DBHS, I found many opportunities for effective collaboration, including competing at the national level with our amazing Science Bowl team!"

### Jay Zhang

**Yale University, 4.00 GPA**

Completed 13 AP Courses. National Merit Finalist, AP scholar with distinction, Team Sprocket world championship quarter finalists. Robotics design lead, Calliope poetry treasurer, Chamber Elite choir.

"I became personally invested playing the role of Combeferre in *Les Misérables*. To see it succeed was an amazingly gratifying experience."

### Leslie Sim

**Yale University, 3.98 GPA**

Completed 12 AP Courses. National Merit Finalist, CATSA vice president, National Science Bowl team captain, American Cancer Society Club president, Brahma Tech STEM Academy president.

"Challenging myself to run the entire mile during 5th period P.E. taught me the importance of trying my best. It helped me form the mindset of giving 100% in everything I do!"

### Rebecca Kimn

**Cornell University, 3.98 GPA**

Completed 11 AP Courses. John Phillip Sousa Award, 1st Place Drum Major at Arcadia Festival of Bands for 3 years. NafME National Honor Symphony Orchestra, CBDA All-State Honor Ensemble, and Head Drum Major for 3 years.

"Claiming the title of top drum major for three consecutive years, while leading the band through sweepstakes victories will always be my favorite memory."

## Walnut High



Anabelle Chang • Cynthia Lu • Sarah Kim • Ayesha Ng

### Anabelle Chang

**Princeton University, 3.98 GPA**

Completed 8 AP Courses. Varsity golf state champion team, Hacienda 5, Hacienda League MVP. Publications, National Honor Society, For All Mankind, Key Club.

"It's been an honor to see how much our golf team has accomplished. Four years ago, our goal was just to qualify for the state championship, and now we have that title under our belt!"

### Cynthia Lu

**Brown University, 4.0 GPA**

Completed 7 AP Courses, IB Diploma Candidate. Future Business Leaders of America president, Publications - Yearbook editor-in-chief, Speech and Debate captain, Class Treasurer.

"I've always felt supported by friends and teachers to explore my beliefs, pursue extracurriculars and learn from the community around me."

### Sarah Kim

**Stanford University, 4.0 GPA**

Completed 7 AP Courses. National Merit commended scholar, AP scholar, Kiwanis leadership award. ASB president, Peer Counseling, Senior Class president, Interact Club vice president.

"My peers taught me the importance of building genuine relationships. They have influenced me to practice resilience, dedication, and persistence."

### Ayesha Ng

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 3.98 GPA**

Completed 8 AP Courses, IBCP Biomedical Science. US National Chemistry Olympiad Honors Top 150, USA Biology Olympiad semifinalist. Science Olympiad president, City of Hope intern.

"Science Olympiad taught me so much about teamwork, having the courage to explore, and trying new things each year."

## Mustang Named CIF Scholar Athlete



Walnut High senior Evan Sentoso has been honored as a 2017 CIF Scholar-Athlete of the Year. The scholarship award identifies student-athletes who excel in the classroom, athletics, and are strong contributors to their schools and communities.

Sentoso is a two-sport athlete participating in cross country and track and field. His commitment to his studies earned him class valedictorian status and AP Scholar with honors. The teen is also involved as a member of the Class of 2017 Cabinet, Future Business Leaders of America, and Hip Hop Club.

"Evan is invested in making his high school and community a better place for those who are less fortunate," said grade level coordinator Sonia Nunez.

Athletic director Jerry Person adds, "Evan is the true definition of scholar-athlete. He could not have raised himself to this level without strong character, hard work, sacrifice, commitment, integrity, fun and persistence."

Evan received a \$5,000 scholarship award and was honored at the State Capitol, Senate, and Assembly Floors on May 25 in Sacramento.

## Run, Teach, Eat, Sleep, Repeat! Walnut High Educator Breaks 3 World Records

To say that Walnut High teacher and cross country coach Jerry Knox is passionate about running might be an understatement. He laces up his running shoes five days a week, clocking five-to-eight miles, and 15 miles every Saturday.

Knox usually runs a marathon each month and in the past 11 years has crossed the finish line over 80 times. Last month, he completed his sixth 100-mile race.

Knox dribbled two basketballs throughout a 26.2-mile marathon to earn a Guinness World Record in London. He has also broken three Guinness marathon records in 2017 while jumping rope, wearing lederhosen, and a graduation cap and gown.

Knox displays the race medals in his classroom and aims at inspiring his students to live physically active lives. Sophomore Jason Yen says his marathon-running teacher is setting a good example for fellow students.

"He has a goal and achieves it by practicing and not giving up."

What's next for the vegan athlete? He plans to break the record for skipping during a marathon this fall!

ABC7 news spotlighted the ultra-marathon runner during a May 26 broadcast.



# News CLIPS...



## Walnut High seniors receive white coats during ceremony

Walnut High School recently honored 37 seniors well on their way to pursuing careers in the medical field. The teens were presented with white lab coats and honor medallions during a ceremony marking the completion of the rigorous three-year International Baccalaureate Career-Related Programme/Project Lead the Way (IBCP-PLTW) Biomedical Sciences Program.

## Schools earn place on California's Honor Roll

Eight WVUSD schools have earned a place on the 2016 California Honor Roll for high performing schools. They are: Evergreen, Quail Summit, Westhoff, Chaparral MS, South Pointe MS, Suzanne MS, Diamond Bar HS, and Walnut HS. The annual Honor Roll is part of a nationwide effort to recognize schools leading the way in helping students achieve at the highest levels. The program is sponsored by the Campaign for Business and Education Excellence and Educational Results Partnership.

## Center Stage: Drama company wins awards for spring musical

Diamond Bar High thespians received awards for the production of "In the Heights" during the 47th Annual Spirit of the MACY held at the Segerstrom Center on May 28. The MACY awards encourage and celebrate achievement in So Cal high school musical theater.

## Bright Ideas!

Walnut Elementary 4th and 5th graders are getting an extra dose of STEAM education during Genius Hour held every Thursday afternoon. Students select and register for three 8-week courses each semester. In a computer art class, budding graphic designers manipulate photos with the Pixel studio art program. Another group of children plant turnips, radishes, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, and cabbage in an eco-friendly gardening class. Students feed, weed, and best of all – bring home vegetables to share! Book Club, Minecraft EDU, American Folk Dance, and Yoga were added this year. "The students are excited about Genius Hour and we love that it gives them a chance to enjoy an area of interest. It is also an excellent opportunity for our teachers to share their passions with the students," said elementary learning specialist Jill Takayama.

## Alums Offer Advice During Pathways Career Day

About two dozen Diamond Bar High alumni returned to offer sage life advice during a career day sponsored by the Pathways Communication Academy, a small learning community that serves about 140 sophomores, juniors, and seniors on campus. The alums were eager to share their personal stories when peppered with questions from the teens. "If I can offer some kind of direction to anybody today, I thought it would be worth it," said Tony Sanchez, Class of 2001. The Pathways Communication Academy, now in its 18th year, is a school within-a-school model offering college prep courses and common core curriculum infused with a technical education focus. "The alumni career day is an opportunity for former students to share the stories of their past and their current journey with our high school students," said teacher Eleanor Boruah. "It's a genuine experience for our students to know it's a process, and the process started somewhere."

## National Merit winners announced

Five WVUSD seniors have received prestigious awards from the National Merit Scholarship Foundation. Congratulations to Sabrina Tseng, Benjamin Chen, and Shannen Rikki Barraeda - Diamond Bar High, Stephanie Djajadi and Cynthia Lu - Walnut High.

National Merit Scholarship winners are the Finalists in each state judged to have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills, and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

## Sports Update

**Diamond Bar High:** Boys tennis won the Palomares League Championship, Coach Carl Flint was named SGV Tribune Coach of the Year. Boys golf won its 9th straight league championship. Coach Tony McCabe was named So Cal Girls Golf Coach of the Year by California Coaches Association. Swimmers David Wang, Kelsie Lloyd won CIF Individual Champion awards.

**Walnut High:** Boys baseball and girls swim won CIF Championships. Senior Malia Avila finished 9th in the state in the 300-meter hurdles and was named SGV Tribune Female Track Athlete of the Year. Paul Acosta - baseball and EJ Gautreau - swim were named SGV Tribune Coaches of the Year. Girls and boys track, girls and boys swim, baseball, boys tennis, and boys golf took Hacienda League titles.

## Hard Work Pays Off! DBHS Sprocket Robotics Team Compete at World Championships

Days before Diamond Bar High's competitive robotics team went into battle, Team Sprocket #3473 members worked intently after school making slight modifications on gear intakes, checking the electronic board, and going over the complex CAD designs. The adventurous group of over 30 students geared up for a three-day Orange County regional FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) at UC Irvine.

Earlier, Sprocket finished 9th out of 66 teams in a "neck-to-neck" race during the regional FRC tourney in San Diego.

"It was the best we ever performed," said senior Casey Chen, one of the team's two passionate engineering captains. "This is a really good bot!"

Better yet, it was the first time in the team's history that Team Sprocket qualified to be an alliance captain, able to select the two other teams to play with during playoff matches, according to senior Cathy Chang, the team's business captain.



since 2011. The robotics team went on to become alliance captains in one of the most challenging divisions, with a very strong quarterfinal finish.



"FIRST is a really dynamic game. It changes throughout the season," she added. "Our team is constantly working to make our robot the best."

The hard work paid off when Team Sprocket was awarded a wild-card invitation to attend the World Championships in Houston, Texas held on April 19-22. Sprocket became the highest achieving team in the school's history, qualifying for international event for the first time

## Star Light, Star Bright WHS Astronomy Club Hosts Evening of Star Gazing



During the spring open house season, families flock to schools for an evening dedicated to showcasing student work, performances, and spending a few moments with teachers.

At Evergreen Elementary, something special also happens outside the decorated classrooms - under the night sky.

Walnut High's astronomy club set up two giant star gazers on the blacktop for children to get a close-up look at visible planets, bright stars, the moon, and Orion Nebula, the closest star formation to Earth.

This year, clear skies allowed viewing of another glowing dot in the sky – Venus.

Junior Ryan Shen, the club's president, organized the two-hour event with fellow members operating telescopes and explaining what the instruments were trained on, said teacher and advisor Mike Yamashiro.

## Cultivating Future Musicians High School Band Members Mentor Young Musicians

Over 150 elementary musicians took the stage with their Band Buddies mentors at Walnut High during the spring concert.

During four weekly rehearsals, under the direction of Corey Wicks, about 50 members of the Blue Thunder Marching Band sat side-by-side with the young artists.

Students worked hard learning *Bleacher Boogie* and *Circle of Life* as the culmination of the outreach effort available to local 5th grade WVUSD students.

"It's wonderful to see their smiles and growth throughout the program," said sophomore Band Buddy Angela Tzab, an alto sax player.

"I've been looking forward to coming every week!" said flutist Annabelle Lu from Vejar Elementary.

"We want the students to get a taste of high school band so that they continue to be excited about band in middle school and beyond," Wicks said.



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**SEPTEMBER 23**

## Get Connected at the Parent Symposium coming this fall

WVUSD will host a Parent Symposium to provide resources and training for parents, guardians, and grandparents in the areas of academics, social emotional needs, cultural diversity, and more. Internationally recognized educator, parenting expert, and best-selling author Dr. Michelle Borba will be featured as the keynote speaker. Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 23. For more information, visit [www.wvUSD.k12.ca.us](http://www.wvUSD.k12.ca.us).

**Outlook**

Issue 37 Summer 2017



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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:** School Begins – August 14  
Labor Day Holiday – September 4 • Thanksgiving Holiday – November 20-24  
Winter Break – December 21, 2017 to January 5, 2018

## Teachers Committed to Excellence Writing Workshop Sharpens Skills

Making a commitment to turn classrooms into writing workshops has produced significant results for Collegewood Elementary teachers Therapi Kaplan and Elisabeth Jones.

Two years ago, the educators were determined to find a way to help students become better writers. That summer, they attended a five-day intensive Teachers College Reading and Writing Institute at Columbia University led by renowned educator Lucy Calkins. Applying what they learned, Kaplan has witnessed a “night and day” difference in the children’s writing skills.

“They improve two-to-three grade levels in their writing. I get the chills just thinking about it!”

During 45-minute active writing sessions, the instructors confer with individuals and small groups while offering feedback as the students craft their writing.

“This differentiated instruction is giving different kids what they need,” added Jones who teaches a 3rd-4th grade combo class. “And it’s unlocked the door for writing.”



The classes wrapped up a new chapter in their learning with a publishing party to celebrate a batch of literary opinion and compare and contrast essays.

In total, over 100 Walnut Valley K-8 educators currently implement the successful writing workshop program.

## Students make Global Connections



Chaparral Middle School 8th grader Izzy Reedy and a dozen classmates learned about culture, education, weather, and even sports in Tanzania this year. But, it wasn’t by opening a textbook or conducting research on a computer. The Diamond Bar students gained knowledge through a global connection with the Gyekrum Arusha Secondary School, located over 8,500 miles away in East Africa.

Education specialist Kimberly Ramos formed the partnership with the class through the World Education Connection program. Students and teachers got to know each other by communicating back and forth using email and Google Hangout.

“They would ask lots of questions and post photos,” Ramos said about the 21st century-learning

technology. “Anything I received from the teacher, I would post on Google Classroom to share with my kids.”

Ramos said her students embraced the program and were amazed with how many similarities they had with their new friends.

“The kids loved seeing each other. And the things we learned this year have had more meaning because we were able to connect with the other half of the ‘Kilimanjaro Squad’ on a personal level.”

The global teams shared their thoughts on the power of connection during an inaugural World Education Day event.

“Asante Sana!” the students exclaimed in Swahili while waving to one another during the live global broadcast.

“We got to experience the way they live and learn,” Brant said. “I wouldn’t have changed a thing about this experience!”

Students said they also gained appreciation for their own lives after seeing the East African partner school squeeze 80 students inside a class with dirt floors and dilapidated furniture.

“It showed me to be grateful for what I have, and to respect elders and family,” Reedy said.

## Valuing Differences Elementary Students Write Friendship Book for ASD Schoolmates

Two C.J. Morris Elementary 3rd graders believe that everyone has a right to have friends, especially students with autism. Nyla Rivera and Kailyn Park feel so strongly that they’ve written a book to support special needs students on their campus.

Last year as a 2nd grader, Rivera noticed a few students sitting alone at recess and lunchtime. One boy was even quietly talking to himself, while another child replied a gruff “leave me alone” when she offered a hello. Rivera didn’t understand why.

“I would see them so quiet, just waiting for a friend,” the eight-year-old explained. “This year, I found out they have autism and they need friends.”

The eight-year-old decided to take action. She recruited her best friend and classmate, Kailyn, and the two girls quickly began spending their free time with kids in the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) class.

“Now they know we’re not strangers,” said nine-year-old Park. “And little by little, they began to trust us and started talking to us.”



This year, the girls collaborated on another project together. They’ve written “Everyone Has a Right” to honor the dozen students in Rochelle Mortensen’s ASD class. The story is intended to be an encourager for the students to make friends.

“If you try, you can do it!” Park says in the story.

Making friends is a real challenge for our students with autism, Mortensen explained. Students identified on the spectrum are impacted in their development of social and communication skills.

“We have social lessons every morning. But with students like Nyla and Kailyn, they can practice these skills and learn to fit in,” she added.

“These two girls have a special bond with the students and wanted to brighten their day with this book,” 3rd grade teacher Shayleen Ojeda said.

Ojeda plans to have the book professionally printed and bound, and offer copies for sale with all proceeds donated to special needs classes in Walnut Valley USD.