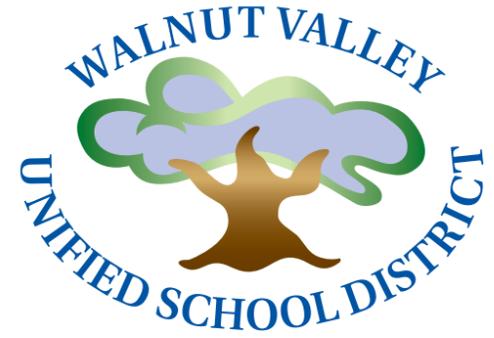


Outlook



Issue 33 SPRING 2016

Message from the Superintendent



Dear Walnut Valley family,

The recent A+ grade for our school district designates Walnut Valley as one of the premier school districts in the United States (see article on page 1), is a wonderful way to welcome in the Spring

and look forward to the many year-end celebrations, awards, and accomplishments that will take place as we look to finalize another outstanding school year. This year, we've continued to work towards our overall mission to create a learning environment that puts "Kids First - Every Student...Every Day" by building upon our 4 Focus Areas of Strengthening Relationships, Fiscal Stability, Student Achievement, and Leadership Development.

One of my most enjoyable and meaningful activities that I have participated in this year is the facilitation of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council. An eclectic and diverse group of students, ranging from 11-18 years old, representing schools across the district provide me with insight and innovative ideas for the betterment of our organization. Our students have initiated conversations on such topics as recycling opportunities, relationships, and socio-emotional matters. Each meeting is a strong reminder of the type of leaders that are being developed in our classrooms. Similarly, I have the unique opportunity to meet with parent and community member-based groups on a regular basis. The Coordinating Council is comprised of parent leaders from all 15 of our schools and provides for two-way communication between our school district and parent groups. This group is reflective of the unparalleled parent support and involvement that exists on all Walnut Valley campuses. Finally, our community has been involved with leadership projects and discussions touching on a variety of district-wide issues. Perhaps most notably, staff, parents, and community members are working together to refine our state-mandated Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Literally hundreds of stakeholders have contributed to this ongoing project which addresses specific goals and objectives, and connects district resources. Again, the participation and engagement of our stakeholders is extremely beneficial and much appreciated.

In closing, as the year winds down and we celebrate the many successes of the schools and our district, I am continually reminded of our district's TEAM approach and mentality that truly separates us from other school districts. It is this commitment to work together...to put Kids First...despite the constant hurdles placed in front of us such as changes to the curriculum and accountability system, elimination of construction and deferred maintenance resources from the state, and the restructured funding model that benefits districts with higher percentages of underrepresented students and thus places us near the bottom in school funding... despite these obstacles, we continue to work together as a TEAM and find unmatched success.

Thank you for being part of the TEAM!

Dr. Robert P. Taylor

WVUSD Receives an A+ Inspiring Students to be their Best

Walnut Valley has once again been recognized as a premier school district in the state and nation in the newest Niche rankings.

The "2016 Best Public School District in America" report provides a comprehensive assessment of the overall experience of a school district.

The District received an A+ grade, ranking #149 in the United States out of more than 12,000 school districts measured on key factors including strength of academics, health and safety, student culture and diversity, sports and fitness, extracurricular and activities, school resources, quality of student life, as well as student and parent reviews for overall excellence of the district.

Additionally, Walnut Valley is ranked among only 33 school districts in the state to receive an A+ grade and overall rank of #14, out of more than 1,000 California school districts.



The report also names WVUSD schools among top 100 in the state, with Diamond Bar and Walnut High Schools scoring in the top 50!

High Performing Model Middle School

South Pointe Honored as "School to Watch"

South Pointe Middle School has been designated as a model middle school in the 2015-16 Schools to Watch-Taking Center Stage Program.

A total of 13 high-performing middle schools in California received this year's award for demonstrating academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, and social equity.

South Pointe is now among a select cadre of 78 schools in the state and approximately 450 around the nation that are Schools to Watch.

"We are thrilled to have received this recognition," said Principal Susan Arzola. "Our school community has

worked very hard to create an exciting and challenging middle school program that inspires students to achieve their potential and look to their future!"

Schools to Watch, which are recognized at both the state and national level, become examples for middle schools across the country. South Pointe prepares students to be globally competitive through the integration of science, technology, engineering, the arts and math (STEAM).

"South Pointe is committed to providing students with a strong academic foundation to foster success as they move toward high school, college, and careers," said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.



Giving Students a Voice in Education



Twenty-five representatives from WVUSD elementary, middle, and high schools have been selected for the new Superintendent's Student Advisory Council. During the first meeting held February 11, students received leadership training, shared perspectives on their schools, and discussed innovative ideas for the future with Superintendent Dr. Taylor. The group will meet about every six weeks.

Suzanne Robotics Club Win Championship!

A new robotics club at Suzanne Middle School dominated a First Lego League (FLL) competition aimed at finding solutions to global environmental issues.

Two teams of the sixth grade programmers, Wolf Corps and RoboHeroes, vied in separate divisions while focusing on this year's FLL theme - Trash Trek. The teams won coveted championship awards during the 2016 California FLL Cup challenge at Legoland on January 24.

A trio of dedicated parent coaches has worked with the 14 students since they were fourth graders at Collegewood Elementary.



Bravo! Walnut High Tapped for National Award



Walnut High School has garnered national recognition as a 2016 Grammy Signature School Semifinalist by the Grammy Foundation. The Grammy Signature Schools program recognizes top U.S. public high schools that are making an outstanding commitment to music education during an academic school year. A total of 119 schools around the country received the distinction.

"We are very proud of the work that Instrumental Music Directors Dr. Buddy

Clements, Corey Wicks and Choir Director Lisa Lopez do to support the arts at Walnut High," said Principal Brandon Dade. "These outstanding music educators have gone above and beyond to develop a top-rate program!"

The Grammy Signature School program, created in 1998, recognizes top public high schools that are making an outstanding commitment to music education.



2015 Classified Employee of the Year

Joanne Taylor, Secretary II

"All of our Walnut Valley employees put "Kids First" every day because we want to do our best to help every student succeed," Joanne says. She has made a point of treating every student with respect and care in the Guidance Office at Diamond Bar High for the past 19 years. Many teens visit the office each day for a variety of reasons. "We can't forget that each student has their own back story," she adds. "I try to make students feel comfortable to ask questions, to get guidance, or just get a hug if needed."



Each spring, the office celebrates Brahma college admission successes on a special bulletin board. Joanne snaps Polaroid photos of each senior holding a handwritten sign with the college of their choice and then adds it to the display. "Seeing their pride and excitement of what the future may hold in their smiles is priceless!"

Joanne will now represent the District in the Los Angeles County Classified Employee of the Year competition.

Brahmas Named National Math Madness Champs!



After eight weeks of exciting competitions with hundreds of schools across the nation, the Diamond Bar High's Math Team was named national Math Madness champions. Math Madness is a national online event inspired by college basketball's March Madness tournament. First reports from the finals ranked the Brahmas in 2nd place; two days later, they were named

winner when officials announced that the other team had cheated. "This capped a truly unforgettable season," said math teacher coach Jeff Brose. "The students learned some lifelong lessons including the value of working as a team toward a goal and performing under pressure with poise and integrity – and some cool math too!"

Honoring "Class Act" Classified Employees

Walnut Valley recognized a dozen outstanding employees during the Class Act Cornerstone Awards on February 4. The Cornerstone Award recognizes exemplary classified employees who have gone "above and beyond the call of duty" in providing outstanding customer service to the District and community.

Congratulation to the 2015 Honorees!

Joanne Taylor, Secretary II
Diamond Bar High

Susan Lotz, Custodian II
Chaparral Middle School

Christine Tse, Instructional Aide II
Bilingual/Bicultural
Westhoff Elementary

Christina Herrera, Noon Aide
C.J. Morris Elementary

Noel Foly, Grounds Worker I
Diamond Bar High

Lisa Barta, Office Manager
Suzanne Middle School

Singing Chen, Instructional Aide II
Bilingual/Bicultural
Evergreen Elementary

Jorge Romero, Custodian II
Evergreen Elementary

Dori Valdez, SIS System Support Specialist
Educational Services

Chris Torres, Campus Security Officer
Ron Hockwalt Academies

Sheila Amini, Instructional Aide
Special Education
Vejar Elementary

Margie Rios, Registrar
Ron Hockwalt Academies

Starbucks Brews Up "Grande" Advice



Preparing to enter the workplace can be intimidating for anyone, but especially teens looking for a first job.

Diamond Bar High teacher Sally Jarvis came up with a unique way to help her special education students get set for that all-important first interview - she asked Starbucks to host mock interviews with her students. The "grande" idea for the new partnership was quickly accepted.

Jarvis works with teens with a focus on career and independent living skills. In her Transition class, students learn about money, budgeting, careers, resumes, work skills, life skills, and job interviews.

"Most of my students will go directly into the career route. It is my job to set them up for a future full of success," she explained.

Five local Starbucks managers volunteered their time to conduct mock interviews with 30 special education and Pathways Communication Academy students during the one-hour event in the school library. The DBHS students walked away from the lesson feeling more confident and knowledgeable about interviews.

"They had smiles on their faces and were so excited about having this opportunity!" said Jarvis. "It was heartwarming to see my students practicing life skills that will benefit them as they move toward future jobs and career paths."

Teacher selected for National Master Program

Maple Hill Elementary kindergarten teacher



Lisa Esse has been selected as a Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Master Teacher. PLTW provides learning experiences to K-12 students through pathways in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. Master Teachers play a vital role in providing support to classroom teachers. PLTW launched at Maple Hill last summer.

Master Teachers play a vital role in providing support to classroom teachers. PLTW launched at Maple Hill last summer.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

It's a Wrap!

Chaparral Middle School Construction Completed



The new food service building features energy efficient doors and windows.

The dust has finally settled at Chaparral Middle School!

After eight years of constant construction on campus, Chaparral celebrated the completion of the last of its projects on February 25.

The school community gathered during a grand reopening and ribbon cutting to mark the milestone moment.

"Tonight we celebrate this beautiful facility which is truly a 21st-century learning environment," said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor to the audience assembled in the renovated multipurpose room.

During the annual Open House following the ceremony, Chaparral reopened its main building to the public and officially debuted its new music education building, the "Cougar Conservatory", along with its new food services building, the "Cougar Kitchen."

Previous construction on campus included relocated athletic fields, construction of a new gymnasium, and 14-classroom science and Design-Based Learning building.

"I want to thank our community for the financial support that has made our dreams a reality. I hope each of you has time to walk around the campus to enjoy what the community has built for us," said Principal Ron Thibodeaux.

All projects were made possible by voter support of Bond Measures S & Y passed in November 2007. About \$14.3 million was spent on the final phase of construction.

Main education building classes and administration moved into 28 portables at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year while construction workers renovated the campus. Instruction resumed in the modernized main building on January 4.

The technology-rich learning environment was thoughtfully designed for teachers and their students. Instructors have new adjustable workstations with portable document cameras and digital projectors.

Modernized classrooms are furnished with ergonomic chairs and rectangular, triangular, or square desks that can be grouped into teaching pods.

The renovated school is equipped with energy efficient doors and windows, skylights, and LED lighting to help the District save on its electric bill.

The new 10,200 sq. ft. music arts building features polished concrete floors, storage cabinets, skylights, LED projectors and lighting, and has been acoustically engineered with sound-absorbing ceiling tiles and panels on the walls.

The school's new 3,900 square-foot food services building is equipped with commercial-grade stainless steel ovens, cooktops, walk-in refrigerator and freezer, pizza ovens, food slicers, mixers, and wrap-around salad bar.

The party at Chaparral also marked its 40th anniversary of providing outstanding education to children in the community.

"I'm very proud that our kids get to come and learn here every day."

Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor



Energy efficient administration offices



Acoustically engineered music arts classrooms



Commercial-grade equipped food services



Modernized classrooms with ergonomic furniture



Technology-rich environments

Construction and modernization projects made possible by your support of Bond Measures S & Y.



Now Enrolling! Summer Enrichment Program

Walnut Valley Educational Foundation (WVEF) offers K-5 grade summer enrichment classes taught by highly-qualified, credentialed teachers whose curriculum meets or exceeds California's Content Standards. The program gives children the opportunity to grow academically by engaging them in experiences that develop their skills in critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. Instruction will include English language arts, math, and enrichment through science, art, and technology. Classes are held Monday through Thursday, June 6 - July 14 (no school July 4), at Quail Summit and Vejar Elementary Schools from 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Cost is \$510. Registration is available at www.walnutvalleyfoundation.com, email wvefsummerschool@gmail.com or call (909) 345-3349.

WVEF will honor dedicated parent volunteers and community members during *Night of the Stars... Celebrating Education* gala event April 21, at the Diamond Bar Center.

For ticket or sponsorship information, please contact Cindy Ruiz at (909) 973-9677.

News CLIPS...

Publications garner honors

Walnut High's 'The Hoofprint' newspaper and "Cayuse" yearbook writing teams and advisor Rebecca Chai have been named 2016 Crown Finalists by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. The hybrid newspaper was one of 53 finalists and yearbook one of 65 finalists from around the nation.

DBHS junior earns perfect score

Diamond Bar High's Ben Chen is one of only 15 students nationwide to earn a perfect score on the American Mathematics Competition (AMC) Exam. Chen and fellow Brahmas William He, Sabrina Tseng, Michael Wu, Quinhong Chen, and Matthew Ho advanced to the American Invitational Mathematics Exam.

Science Bowl team advances to national finals

A team of Diamond Bar High students won the regional competition during the 2016 National Science Bowl in Bakersfield and will now advance to the National Finals in Washington, D.C. in April. In the "Jeopardy"-style contest, teams answered basic through AP-level questions in biology, chemistry, physics, and environmental science. Congratulations and good luck to Leslie Sim, Ben Chen, Miriam Sun, Jeff Chow, and Brandon Hung!

Mathletes qualify for state

Suzanne Middle School's MATHCOUNTS Team took 1st place at the East San Gabriel Valley Chapter competition in February. The top-ranked team and two individual winners qualified for the California State Competition at UC Irvine on March 12. Congratulations to Darren Chen, William Lin, Tyler Xu, and Melody Yu.

CJM Students Spread Cheer

CJ Morris Elementary held its annual Family Night of Giving on December 17 to spread holiday cheer to families in need. Toys and sporting equipment were collected for the Spark of Love toy drive. New children's pajamas were donated for the Orangewood Children's Center and "gently used" towels and blankets were collected for the Inland Valley Humane Center. The children crafted cards with special messages for the troops. Families also had the opportunity to spend time together making holiday ornaments - one to take home and one that would be donated to a local nursing home.

Winter Sports Highlights

Diamond Bar High: Boys basketball finished 4th in League and 1st round of CIF playoffs. Girls basketball finished 2nd in League and CIF Quarterfinals. Boys soccer tied for 1st in League. Wrestling had nine individuals qualify for CIF - Leighlan Corpus (League Champ), Adam Salvosa, Zaid Perekh, Michael Cardiel (League Champ, League MVP), Don Je Lee, Owen Bonilla, Ian Campbell, Christian Munoz, and Fredric Royce. Corpus, Cardiel,

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Dr. Robert P. Taylor
Superintendent

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Larry L. Redinger, Member



IMPORTANT DATE:
Last Day of School - May 26



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School and District News @WVUSD_Tweet

Passport to Wellness Kick-Off Incorporating Healthy Strategies

Striving to support the wellness needs of students, Diamond Bar High opened doors to a new Wellness Center in late January with a "Passport to Wellness" full-day event with ribbon cutting, community vendors, student performances, and a tour. The program offers an additional layer of support services and personal management strategies including stress and anxiety relief, progressive relaxation exercises, and guided meditation designed to help students reduce stress.

"The goal is to teach our students how to develop social skills and ways to cope with everyday problems in appropriate and healthy ways," said coordinator Sandy Davis.

Trained peer counselors are available in the center to assist students during the school day.

"Our eleven student wellness interns have been very committed to their training and are excited to be of service to their peers," she said.

"It's a one-of-a-kind program that enables students to take charge of their own wellness," says senior Geovon Thomas.



Students Build Galaxies 'Star Wars' Tutorials Inspire Stellar Coding Skills



"It's fun and I can create my own games. You see those awesome games that you play on computers and you want to make one of those. When you do, you feel accomplished!" said Nicholas Lee (pictured), a 7th grader at Chaparral Middle School.

Walnut Valley students are building galaxies with code in "Star Wars" tutorials during this year's Hour of Code. In classes around the District, students create their own computer games, using block-based coding to help Princess Leia and spherical robot BB-8 collect scrap parts. The Hour of Code global event, founded by Code.org, aims at exposing millions of students to computer science and coding basics as part of Computer Science Education Week.

Students Warm the Hearts of Local Seniors

Quail Summit's Character Crew delivered hundreds of handmade valentines to Diamond Bar senior citizens February 9. The 25 children distributed 649 messages of kindness, one from every student on campus.

"I think it will make them feel really happy and valued," shared 4th grader Violet Kieta. Many of the pink and red heart-shaped cards included sweet personal notes and artwork from the children.

"I've been looking forward to this!" exclaimed Marjorie Fair. "I'll put the valentines on my refrigerator!" The senior club provides generous support to the school each year and the Valentine gifts were the perfect way for students to show their appreciation.

