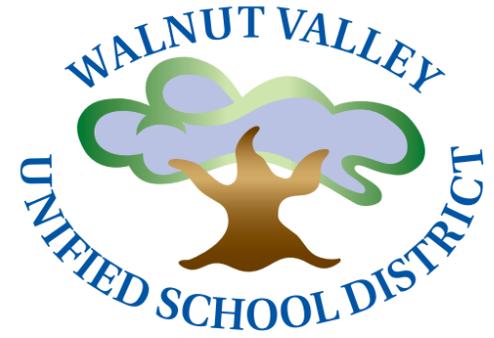


Outlook



Issue 53 FALL 2022



Bravo, Brahmas! Diamond Bar High School Receives National Recognition

Diamond Bar High School has been honored among the nation's best as a 2022 National Blue Ribbon School.

Principal Dr. Reuben Jones, U.S. Department of Education NBRSS Director Aba Kumi, Math Teacher Dena Lordi, State Supt. Tony Thurmond, WVUSD Supt. Dr. Robert Taylor.

A total of 297 schools across the country, with 29 in California, received this year's highest honor by the U.S. Department of Education.

"Walnut Valley USD takes great pride in announcing this exemplary mark of distinction!" shared Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.

"This coveted award is a testimony to the commitment Diamond Bar High educators have in meeting all of their students' academic, social, emotional and mental health needs, especially during the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic."

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors schools for challenging students to perform at high academic levels and for making significant progress in closing the achievement gap.

"Our theme this year is 'Raising the Bar' and I can't imagine a more powerful way to demonstrate our schoolwide theme than with receiving the National Blue Ribbon award!" said Principal Dr. Reuben Jones.

"I am so proud of our students and staff, both present and past, whose collective achievements have earned us this distinguished honor ... go Brahmas!"

Diamond Bar High School was formally recognized during an awards ceremony held in Washington DC on November 4.

California has the largest number of public school Blue Ribbon winners in the nation.

The roster of Walnut Valley USD National Blue Ribbon Schools also includes Quail Summit Elementary, Westhoff Elementary, Chaparral Middle School, and Walnut High School.



Welcome Home, Captain Reed!

Collegewood, Suzanne siblings surprised with military dad's homecoming

Ten-year-old twins Raiden and Kailani Reed were just about to begin a math test on multiplying and dividing fractions at Collegewood Elementary when they got the surprise of a lifetime.

After a six-month deployment, their dad, U.S. Army Captain Rodney Reed, returned with a grand gesture in their fifth-grade classroom.

A brown paper lunch sack was delivered to the children sitting side by side in the front row on September 26.

The minute they saw its contents - a raggedy pink and white stuffed dog - the tears began to flow. Puppy Dog, as they call it, had been on the mission in Jordan and Syria with their father.

The children immediately knew it was the signal that he was home.

"Dad!" Kailani shouted clutching the stuffed toy as he walked through the classroom door.

Raiden sprinted into his uniformed father's arms.

Captain Reed had carried that little stuffed toy, a gift from his children, in his IOTV bullet-proof vest throughout the tour.

"That's why he's all dirty," he reported to his daughter.

The adventurous dog had ridden in a Black Hawk helicopter and in MRAP armored convoys during the deployment.

"Puppy Dog was in the stuff when the bombs and rockets were going off," he shared.

"But we all survived!"



An hour later, the parents pulled off another surprise in son Hunter's orchestra class at Suzanne Middle School.

Music teacher Ami Garvin was directing students rehearsing a fitting patriotic song, "My Country Tis of Thee."

Seventh grader Hunter was in the back row with the other bass players and didn't notice his dad and mom, Wendi, enter through the back door.

The tears and hugs came seconds later and the 48 young musicians erupted in applause at the emotional family reunion.

And keeping in rhythmic tempo, students recited "Welcome Back, Captain Reed!"

"This is an opportunity for us to witness the love of a family and service - and to be a part of that was amazing!" Garvin shared.

"The best thing is that he's home and I can enjoy my time with him," Hunter said.

"I'm really happy!" said Kailani while standing outside her Collegewood classroom.

"I had always wanted him to do this, but I just didn't know when!"

"I'm so happy he's home - I didn't think we'd be seeing him for another week," said Raiden who was now grinning from ear to ear.

"It feels good to be home," Captain Reed shared after completing the second surprise mission.

View ABC7 News report of this heartwarming reunion at: <https://bit.ly/3Ui7z4z>.

Message from the Superintendent



Dear Walnut Valley Educational Community,

After an incredible start to the new school year, I am truly excited for the upcoming holiday season ... we have so much to be thankful for in Walnut Valley.

I am very proud to be part of this award-winning organization. We just received notice that, once again, we are ranked in the top 25 of all public school districts out of 1,100 school districts across California (and in the top 1% of all districts across America). Additionally, as you will read in this publication, Diamond Bar High School (DBHS) joins Walnut High School (WHS) as a National Blue Ribbon School ... further signifying them as among the very best high schools in the United States.

I am also extremely thankful to our community for the support of Measure WV. Our Board of Trustees just officially approved the process to construct a new gymnasium and fully modernize the library at WHS. We recently opened the new, state-of-the-art Science Building at DBHS and are anxiously looking forward to opening our new Music Building in the upcoming weeks. Suzanne Middle School is under construction for a new Science Building, gymnasium, and upcoming Music Building. South Pointe Middle School is set to soon open its new Music Building and Walnut Elementary School will soon open its new Multi-Purpose Building. These are just a sampling of the many enhancements to our schools throughout the District.

Again, thanks to our community for your unwavering support of our students, staff, and schools.

Happy Holidays!

Take care,
Robert P. Taylor, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Join the Walnut Valley Family!



Now accepting applications for Transitional Kindergarten through grade 12 students for the 2023-2024 school year!

Learn more about District of Choice (Applications accepted October 4 - December 31), Parent Employment (Allen Bill), Inter-District Transfer Permit, and Caregiver options.

Enrollment Information Meeting:
Tuesday, December 6 • 6:30 p.m.
Join Webinar at: <https://bit.ly/3QS6azK>
Password: 2023DOC.

For more information or general inquiries regarding enrollment, please call (909) 595-1261 ext. 31360 or email enroll@wvusd.org.



2022 District Teacher of the Year

Raelene Waddell

"I have been forever grateful that teaching has been my career," the 38-year veteran educator said.

Second grade teacher Raelene Waddell from Westhoff Elementary was celebrated as the 2022 District Teacher of the Year during the 25th annual Salute to Teachers awards.

Waddell has also been distinguished as a semifinalist in the Los Angeles County Teacher of the Year competition.

"Teachers make a difference not only for the day, or the year, but often for a lifetime," she said during the October 19 recognition.

Waddell decided to become a teacher during elementary school.

"My third-grade teacher Mrs. O'Dell taught me in so many little ways, each of which helped me to navigate through life," she shared.

"I wanted to make a difference for my students like she made in mine," she added.

"And I believe that I have done that for many years now."

Waddell congratulated fellow Teachers of the Year and saying that they inspire her to "strive to be better."

"I don't know how many of you will get to 38 years, but know that you make a difference, and that you are someone's Mrs. O'Dell!"



Back to Class!

Walnut Valley USD Kicks Off 2022-23 School Year

Walnut High School cheer squads and student leaders gathered 30 minutes before the bell to officially welcome students on the first day of school.

Teens waved blue and gold pompoms chanting "Let's Go, Mustangs!" while the Blue Thunder marching band filled corridors with music as students streamed through the entrance on August 8.

"Playing some of my favorite pep tunes early in the morning for everyone was a great way to get back in the rhythm of daily school life!" shared senior alto sax player Lance Vinculado.

"It really got me into the swing of things and gave me that true school spirit for my final year of high school," added trumpet player Sameer Chowdhury.

At Diamond Bar High School, USB leadership re-established its first day pep rally held in the gymnasium.

The long-standing tradition had been on pause during the pandemic.

"Seeing everyone's smile and bringing back the energy we all missed made the rally more memorable!" said USB vice president senior Aunica Dionisio.

The school's competitive spirit was definitely "in the air" during the high-octane assembly according to USB senior Bell Liu.

The "Star Wars" themed-event featured spirit contests, fall sports team introductions, band, and dance team performances.

In total, Walnut Valley USD welcomed over 13,300 students at the 15 Diamond Bar and Walnut campuses.

"I love seeing smiling faces, learning new names, and making new connections," shared Suzanne Middle School social studies teacher Josh Henness of the first day exhilaration.

"I have a feeling this is going to be a great year!"



Saluting the 2021-2022 Teachers of the Year...

These stellar educators have been judged by their peers as shining examples with exemplary dedication, classroom practices, and commitment to excellence. They have risen to the challenge during the pandemic bringing care, compassion, love, and creativity to classrooms.

Monica Power	C.J. Morris Elementary
Frances Baird	Castle Rock Elementary
Joey Navarro	Collegewood Elementary
Shelby Coomber	Evergreen Elementary
Lisa Peterson	Maple Hill Elementary
Jessica Cadena	Quail Summit Elementary
Natalie Lawrence	Vejar Elementary
Jessica Rubio	Walnut Elementary
Raelene Waddell	Westhoff Elementary
Jennifer Najera	Chaparral Middle School
Jennifer Murphy	South Pointe Middle School
Joshua Henness	Suzanne Middle School
Diana Wai	Diamond Bar High
Tiffany Redcher	Walnut High
Jennifer Sorbara	Ron Hockwalt Academies



Elementary School Superstars!

Congratulations!

2022 HONOREES

California PBIS Coalition Awards



Implementing PBIS with Fidelity and Passion

All nine superstar elementary schools have been honored with 2022 California PBIS Implementation Awards for building positive school and classroom cultures.

Congratulations!

Collegewood, Westhoff, Maple Hill, Quail Summit, and Vejar – **PLATINUM level**

Cyrus J. Morris – **GOLD level**

Walnut Elementary – **SILVER level**

Castle Rock and Evergreen – **BRONZE level**

"We are excited and honored to be recognized at this level for our PBIS practices," said Vejar Elementary Principal Dr. Whitney Prenger. "While we know PBIS includes positive support for our students we also recognize that our site and teams continue to support students with multi-tiered systems of support, positive reinforcement, social emotional education, and restorative practices. We are grateful for the work of our entire community and thankful for the opportunity to improve our practices in PBIS."

Top of the Class! Senior Scholars Named 2023 National Merit Semifinalists

Continuing a tradition of excellence, 18 Walnut Valley USD seniors have been named semifinalists in the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program. These high achieving students represent the top 1% in the country. Congratulations to the following students:



Diamond Bar High School:

Ryan Chung, Jeffrey Gong, Marcus Hsieh, Andrew Huang, Edward Kim, Jason Kim, Jenna Kim, William Li, Chloe Lim, Ryan Shin, Angie Sun, Angelina Young, and Max Zhu.

Walnut High School:

Samuel Chou, Hudson Kaleb Dy, Shani Su, Chelsea Yeh, and Jadon Zhu.



The nationwide pool of approximately 16,000 semifinalists are the highest-scoring entrants in each state.

All semifinalists have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,200 National Merit Scholarship awards worth more than \$28 million to be awarded next spring.

Students entered the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the PSAT Test as juniors which served as the initial screen of program entrants.

To move onto the finalist round, students are judged based on a detailed scholarship application covering their academic record, leadership abilities, employment, participation in school and community activities, and honors and awards received.

Students must also write an essay and be recommended by a high school official.

"This award means that my hard work finally paid off!" said Diamond Bar High senior Ryan Shin.

Construction Update



Building projects made possible through the support of Measure WV are in full swing all around the District. Thank You, Community!

Ribbon Cutting Marks Completion of Diamond Bar High Science Building



Walnut Valley USD celebrated the modernized 500 Science Building at Diamond Bar High School during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 21.

The official unveiling marked the completion of the nearly \$14.3 million construction of the 38,790 square-foot building funded by voter support of Bond Measure WV passed in 2016.

"It's wonderful to see the learning that is happening in this new building," remarked Principal Dr. Reuben Jones.

"Measure WV allowed for this modernization and we're so grateful for that."

Parents, teachers, students, staff, community members, and local officials attended the grand opening that culminated with guided tours.

The new two-story building features 18 state-of-the-art chemistry, biology, and physics classrooms.

"I want to thank our community for their support of Measure WV," said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.

"We wanted to have facilities to match our top-notch science program here at Diamond Bar High," he shared.

"I would say these are the best in the country and I'm really thrilled!"

The sprawling classrooms were designed to hold both lectures and labs with adjoining collaboration spaces located in the center of each floor.

"These new classes have more space, brighter wall color, and more of a laboratory setting – but most importantly they have windows!" said senior Zachary Asawesna.

"Now learning science is more fun than it already was!"

"Seeing the conversations taking place as students are up moving and doing experiments is amazing," commented instructional dean Jennifer Burns.

"And I can't wait to see more!"

Longtime science educators Jennifer Bravo, Teresa Hebert, and Eric Sorenson were part of the initial design meetings with architects.

"Science is fun to begin with, but now it's a lot of fun and I think that really helps with the learning," said Bravo who teaches biology.

The new 21st century classrooms have been outfitted with dual projectors, maker space workrooms, lab storage areas, and more.

"The added technology such as vacuum lines and fume hoods will allow us to offer a greater variety of labs to enhance student experiences in science," chemistry and physics teacher Hebert added.

For the past 19 years, biology teacher Sorenson was in his previous 975 square-foot retrofitted science class separated from other teachers.

"I was grateful and have a lot of good memories," he said.

"But, over here I have 1,400 square feet and now get to be with all my colleagues all under one roof!"

"It's like we died and went to heaven!" he added.

"In my 25 years as a high school teacher, these are the most modern high school laboratory classrooms in

the region," lauded chemistry and physics teacher Jose Marquez.

Biology teacher Kerry Iwanaga, who taught 29 years in the original "dark and dingy" classroom, echoed the excitement of his colleagues.

He noted the connected lab spaces and natural lighting as his favorite features in the "bright, white, and shiny" learning spaces.

"These new science classrooms feel so new and professional – it's like we're teaching on a college campus!"

Coming Soon!

Diamond Bar High School Instrumental Music Building

Construction on the three-story building is wrapping up in early November with a grand opening celebration planned in early 2023.



Construction Begins

Walnut High School New Gymnasium Breaks Ground

The Board of Trustees approved a contract with Robert Clapper Construction during the October 10 meeting for the amount of \$7,702,000.

The 425-day project has a scheduled completion date of December 31, 2023.



CTE Spotlight

Walnut High Nursing Pathway Offers Medical Career Preview



All eyes were on teacher Jennifer Carreno as she demonstrated a blood draw on a medical forearm during the fifth period Advanced Medical Assisting class.

Students wearing their blue scrubs eagerly gathered as she walked through the steps snugly wrapping a tourniquet, swabbing with alcohol, positioning intake vials, locating a vein, and finally using a venipuncture needle to simulate drawing blood. There was even a hanging bag of red plasma (water and food coloring) for the full effect.

Then it was the students' turn. The close-knit group applauded the first volunteer after he completed the detailed task.

These practical learning opportunities and experiences are helping Walnut High School students determine whether they have a passion to pursue a career in the medical field.

"Every minute of this pathway has been enjoyable," shared senior Camden Tsou.

"It's expanded my skill set and knowledge of the field that I want to go into."

Teens are learning to remove stitches, wrap wounds, and care for people when they are in need.

"And that's what drove me to the program," he added.

On October 17, students rotated through several clinical sessions including performing CPR, taking blood pressure, and probing IVs.

"This class is hands-on and I like learning the skills,"

shared junior Kiran Moritani who wants to become a nurse - just like her mother.

Senior Christian Juria, whose parents are both nurses, has already applied to nursing school for next year.

"I really like the content of these courses and everything about the medical field – the terminology, clinical tasks, and basic nursing procedures," he said.

The school's robust Career Technical Education (CTE) program is preparing young people for productive futures in a wide range of careers including early childhood education, architecture, business entrepreneurship, sports medicine, graphic design, and video production.

Over 150 students are currently enrolled in the Nursing Pathway which offers three sequenced courses: Health Careers, Nursing, and Medical Assisting.

Each day, Carreno, a licensed registered nurse, shows her students what a career in nursing looks like and that she truly loves her job.

"And if I can make them as passionate about healthcare as I am – that's my goal!"



Celebrating Cultural Diversity



Westhoff Elementary School's signature Culture Fair celebrating the school's diverse cultures returned October 14 after a three-year pandemic break.

Families enjoyed delicious authentic food from 15 different countries from around the world.

Students proudly dressed in clothing representing their heritage with several performing traditional dances.

The school's Community Club hosted the event.

"We were so happy to bring the Culture Fair back!" shared President Lorena Huang of the event created to bring the community together.

"We might be from different backgrounds, but we are here with the same interest for our kids!"

Principals celebrate fundraising goals in unusual ways...

Mohawk Time!

Chaparral Principal Gets Hair Buzzed



Chaparral Middle School Principal Robby Jung fulfilled his promise to get a new "hairdo" when the school met their \$60,000 Community Club Ed. Support Campaign goal.

"I've never been this nervous!" Jung admitted before the buzz cut and color during the lunchtime spectacle on October 4.

Seventh grader Matthew Ng and eighth grader Caleb Fu won the chance to shear and color their principal's hair in a school-wide raffle drawing. School counselor Hon Tran assisted students during the once-in-a-lifetime endeavor.

"This isn't something I ever thought I would do!" Fu shared clutching the clipper.

Moments later, the students eagerly began buzzing and spraying red and yellow temporary hair dye on their school leader's freshly shaved locks.

"I've never had a mohawk before – but it's for the kids!" Jung said while taking his seat on the amphitheater stage.

"OK, here we go – say goodbye to my hair!"

Watch video at: <https://youtu.be/jlTu5TKwt3k>.

Here's the Scoop!

Maple Hill Principal Becomes a Sundae



Maple Hill Elementary students turned Principal Kim McNeil into an ice cream sundae on October 10 to celebrate the Fall Enrichment Fundraiser raising over \$61,300 – setting a new school record!

Students took turns dousing their school leader with vanilla ice cream, chocolate and strawberry syrup, mini marshmallows, rainbow sprinkles, and topped it off with candied cherries, of course!

"Being a sticky mess was worth it!" McNeil shared.

"The families went above and beyond to help our school! But, when it comes down to it, everything we do is for our students."

Outlook

Issue 53 Fall 2022



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2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

Fall Break

November 21-25

Winter Break

December 16-January 3

Spring Break

April 3-10

Last Day of School

May 25

Let's Talk! – We want to be responsive to your needs and invite you to send questions, comments, and suggestions to www.wvusd.org.

Boom, Clap, Snatch!

Math Games Keep the Learning Fun

Fifth grade teacher Alex Surdam loves to incorporate games and brain breaks during math lessons at Quail Summit Elementary.

"It's a fun and interactive way to keep my students engaged, while simultaneously practicing their math skills," she said.

During Boom, Clap, Snatch, students pair up facing each other on the carpet.

Each player is given a whiteboard and an Expo Marker is placed in between them.

At the teacher's "boom" and "clap" cues, students hit the floor and clap in unison.

When they hear "snatch" they compete to grab the marker and solve the math problem posted on the board.



This is when the excitement in the classroom revs up. The rivalry to grab the prized marker during each round is fierce.

"I like to compete against my friends and see who is faster," says Tiana Li.

"I can also practice my math facts and it's fun!"

Teams demonstrate good

sportsmanship working together to quickly solve and check the problems.

"I love playing this game because it helps us with math, it's fun to work with a friend, and Mrs. Surdam is super funny!" shares Luke Loera.

Partners check each other's work with teams awarded one point for each correct answer.

"I enjoy playing the math game and learning at the same time. It feels so cool to actually have fun in math," adds classmate Mia Zhu.

"This game helps strengthen our class community, which is crucial at the beginning of the school year!" Surdam said.



Coming to the Stage...

Diamond Bar High School is Officially Joining the "Frozen" Family!

This spring, Diamond Bar High will be the first high school in California to present

Frozen: The Broadway Musical featuring the critically acclaimed theme song, *Let It Go*. Mark your calendar for 7 p.m. performances on April 21, 22, 27, 28, and 29, with a 2 p.m. matinee on April 22.

Drama teacher Jared Kaitz applied for The United States of *Frozen: Love is an Open Door* competition last summer. A total of 51 U.S. high schools, one from each state and one territory, were selected winners of the contest presented by the Educational Theatre Association, Disney Theatrical Group, and Music Theatre International.

Lauren Nicole Chapman, who is currently starring as Anna in the *Frozen* national tour announced the lucky contest winners in a special video message on September 9.

"We are so honored and excited to be the California representative to tell this beautiful story that promotes inclusion and diversity," Kaitz said.

Tickets for *Frozen* will be available at www.dbhspac.org/buy-tickets.



Family Fun Night Returns!

Evergreen Elementary School brought back its harvest-themed extravaganza featuring a corn maze, carnival games, robotics demonstration, face painting, and more on October 21.

"It's just so much fun!" exclaimed Community Club President Mona Hwang as the 6 p.m. event with over 1,100 in attendance kicked off.

"The kids can come back to school and enjoy free time with their friends!"

Over 200 volunteers were on hand including parents, staff, and high school students.

"Our Community Club does a wonderful job putting on such an amazing event for our students, families, staff, and community," shared Principal Dr. Gabriel Cardenas.

"It was such a blast and a great way to get the Evergreen community together!"