

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the Duarte Unified School District**



Volume 5, Issue 15

February 2024

## Beardslee Academy Dual Language Immersion Program



**Students lead the flag salute in English and Spanish  
at the January 18, 2024 Board Meeting.**

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Julie T.  
Teacher  
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## SUPERINTENDENT

### DUSD Makes Positive Strides into 2024

While 2024 has only just begun, Duarte Unified School District is off to a great start, leading with innovation and excellence in education. Advancements in several areas, from technology to construction are hallmarks of the positive direction the district is headed.

The new Duarte USD app just launched. The app will be a great resource in staying up to date on all the vital details you need while on the go with ease. To download the app, simply search for “Duarte Unified School District” in the app/Google Play store. Anyone is able to download the app for access, but parents and guardians will continue to log in to their student specific areas using their credentials.

In a continued effort to showcase the amazing efforts of each Duarte Unified School, our board meetings this year feature a monthly school SPOTLIGHT. At our most recent board meeting in December, Beardslee Academy students took center stage demonstrating their bilingual abilities. The younger students eagerly lined up and recited the pledge of allegiance in English and Spanish with ease, and the older students spoke on the benefits of the dual language program, highlighting the advantages of the program’s rich curriculum.

As the new sports complex continues to advance through the many stages of construction, the naming committee plans to meet in February to generate name ideas.

The sports complex is an exciting addition for our students and the community as the district continues to elevate in all areas.

Duarte Unified School District would like to extend appreciation and thanks to the community for their part in the continued success of the district.



**Dr. Gordon  
Amerson**  
*Superintendent*

### DUSD Avanza Positivamente Hacia 2024

El año 2024 apenas ha comenzado y el Distrito Escolar Unificado de Duarte ha tenido un gran comienzo, liderando con innovación y excelencia en educación. Los avances en varias áreas, desde la tecnología hasta la construcción, son características de la dirección positiva que toma el distrito.

Se acaba de lanzar la nueva aplicación Duarte USD. La aplicación será un gran recurso para mantenerse actualizado con facilidad sobre todos los detalles vitales que necesita. Para descargar la aplicación, busque “Distrito Escolar Unificado de Duarte” en la tienda de aplicaciones o en la tienda Google Play. Cualquiera puede descargar la aplicación para acceder, pero los padres y tutores seguirán iniciando sesión en las áreas específicas de sus estudiantes utilizando sus credenciales.

En un esfuerzo continuo por mostrar los increíbles esfuerzos de cada escuela en el Distrito Unificado de Duarte, en nuestras reuniones de la mesa directiva, este año presentamos un foco escolar mensual. En nuestra reunión de la junta directiva más reciente en diciembre, los estudiantes de la academia Beardslee ocuparon un lugar central demostrando sus habilidades bilingües. Los estudiantes más jóvenes se alinearon con entusiasmo y recitaron el juramento a la bandera en inglés y español con facilidad. Los estudiantes mayores hablaron sobre los beneficios del programa de lenguaje dual, destacando las ventajas del rico plan de estudios del programa.

A medida que el nuevo complejo deportivo continúa avanzando a través de las diversas etapas de construcción, el comité de nombramiento planea reunirse en febrero para generar ideas de nombres. El complejo deportivo es una adición emocionante para nuestros estudiantes y la comunidad a medida que el distrito continúa elevándose en todas las áreas.

El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Duarte desea extender su aprecio y agradecimiento a la comunidad por su participación en el éxito continuo del distrito.



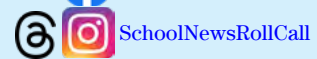
**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



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Happy New Year!  
Superintendent Dr. Gordon Amerson begins this issue with his message on page 3 highlighting the positive direction the district is headed in 2024. It will be fun to learn the ideas the naming committee comes up with for the new sports complex.

In this issue you will read about a 6-hour blood drive, celebrating outstanding accomplishments by students, literacy, workforce development and so much more. Enjoy!

Our next issue is May 15.



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**Jennifer Romero**  
Principal

### Celebrating Outstanding Achievements

We are delighted to share the outstanding achievements of our students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. Students were celebrated at the first semester awards assembly. The awards were given in various categories, reflecting the diverse accomplishments of our students.

The Academic Improvement Award was presented to those students who demonstrated remarkable growth overall, the Bronze Honor Roll was presented to students maintaining a 3.0 to 3.49; the Silver Honor Roll was presented to students maintaining a 3.5 to 3.99; and lastly the Gold Honor Roll was presented to students maintaining a 4.0. We are thrilled to witness the progress these students have made and commend them for their commitment to academic excellence. We are excited to recognize even more students for their accomplishments in the second semester and our confident that our students will continue to work hard and strive for excellence in their studies.



**Students Darla Vasquez 6th grade; Jocelyn Vargas, 6th grade; Ayden Van Savage, 6th grade**



**Kindergarteners Bethany De Arcos and Kamila Najera on the 100th day of school**

In other news, Beardslee students recently celebrated the 100th day of school. Our TK and Kinder students engaged in creative activities, decorating T-shirts with 100 items and other grades dressed up as 100-year-olds. The day was filled with fun and educational activities centered around the number of 100, providing a unique and enjoyable learning experience for our students. We are enthusiastic about the remainder of the school year and remain dedicated to fostering an environment of continuous learning and growth at Beardslee Academy where it is our goal to inspire and educate our students.



# Duarte High School

1565 E. Central Ave., Duarte, CA 91010 • 714/990-3221 • [www.duarteusd.org/dhs](http://www.duarteusd.org/dhs)



**Luis Haro**  
Principal

## Blood Drive

On January 25, 2024, Duarte High School hosted a blood drive on campus. On a cold Thursday morning we had over 45 eager people donate blood from the school and in the community. The Interact club hosted the event with the support of the parent organization The Rotary Club. The City of Hope helped run the 6-hour donation. With the help of student volunteers and parent supporters, students who were 16 and over, were our willing donors. Additionally, Duarte High School partnered

with our neighboring California School of the Arts to allow their students to participate as well.

Assistant Superintendent, Rick Crosby was a donor. He commented, "We know in the community there is a blood shortage. I applaud the efforts of DHS to organize a large event to pitch in and aid the blood drive effort." Interact Club President, Diya Shah Patel, was pleased with the outpouring of support for the donors and also pleased by Interact's organization throughout the day. She stated, "Students had to balance leaving class, donating blood, and possibly feeling a little off throughout the day. It was worth the effort."







**Sofia Valdez**  
*Director of  
Child Development  
Programs*

## Learning about Trees

Teaching preschoolers about trees and nature is a fun and interactive experience for young learners. Therefore, preschool learning foundations are crucial in shaping children's understanding of the world around them. With that in mind, our highly qualified early childhood educators purposefully incorporate a curriculum that includes a study to explore trees in a six-week term through investigations.

A new investigation is introduced each week with a focus question to spark children's curiosity, wonder, and critical thinking. They learn about the trees' characteristics and their role in our environments. Preschoolers acquire deep knowledge about the creatures that inhabit trees and the foods they produce, in addition to the different parts of the trees, what lives in them, what they are made from, and who cares for them. Observing how preschool children embrace nature and their interest in exploring, predicting, and making conclusions about the trees around them is fascinating!

Most importantly, the tree study helps children explore science and social studies and strengthens their literacy, math, technology, and art skills. It builds upon children's interest in trees and past real-life experiences. During the study, children use literacy, math, technology, and the arts skills to investigate and represent their understanding of trees.

This study has been a successful learning journey for children, staff, and families. Our preschoolers enjoyed every activity where we spent valuable time talking, sharing ideas, and using many new words to increase vocabulary and literacy skills. At Duarte Preschool, we are proud of the seeds of knowledge we are planting in every single child's mind, expecting that they will flourish to their fullest potential in their educational journey and life.







**Dr. Kelly Lawson**  
*Principal*

### Book Buddies and Literacy

Team Maxwell teachers work together to cultivate a love for literacy at the highest level. Mrs. Brannon's K/1st grade student buddy up with Mrs. Tate's 4th /5th students form book buddies. The book buddies meet once a week to simply read. Buddies allow

kid and a friend to share in the experience of reading the same book together and discussing it. The book buddies read together to improve their reading fluency. One student reads aloud while the other listens and provides support as needed. The roles are then reversed, with each student



**Teachers: Jackie Brannon and Tifani Tate**

taking turns as the reader and the listener. Though reading students experience life in the dessert, magic kingdoms, on in space and even in a magic school bus. Book buddies read Graphic Novels, High interest books, and lots of Something magical happens when older students read with younger students. Reading is a shared experience. Children get to practice reading at their skill level and they also have the opportunity to relax and listen as the fluent reading of more complex text is modeled for them. The magic of reading is discovered through the eyes of friends and for some through the eyes of older siblings.



**4th & 1st Grade Book Buddies**



# Mt. Olive Innovation and Technology *High School*

1400 Mt. Olive Dr., Duarte, CA 91010 • 626/599-5900 • [www.duarteusd.org/MIT](http://www.duarteusd.org/MIT)



**Kevin Morris**  
*Principal*

## Duarte's CTE Workforce Development in Cosmetology and Barbering

Mt. Olive Innovation and Technology High School (MIT) and a local Cosmetology and Barbering School partnered in 2023

to engage student's in workforce development for cosmetology and barbering. This unique partnership offers students full scholarships and the Duarte Career Technical Education (CTE) program covers the cost of student's registration, state board exam fees and cosmetology and barbering kits.

Duarte's CTE goal is to partner with business and industry to develop engaging and meaningful workforce development experiences to guide students to becoming career ready and certified. There are currently fourteen (14) MIT students enrolled in the Cosmetology and Barbering School, Monday through Thursday from 5 pm – 9 pm and on Saturdays from 9 am – 4 pm. Students have to complete 1,000 hours of hands on training, technical instruction and practical operations. In addition, students learn about human physiology, anatomy; shaving, trimming



**MIT student styles a student's hair in preparation for her first day of Cosmetology and Barbering School.**

beards, mustaches, hair cutting, hair styling, shampooing, perming, coloring, skin and nails, facials, safety and more. Once they have completed their hours students are eligible to take the state board exam to earn their certificate in cosmetology and barbering.

This career pathway provides students authentic connections to business and industry in a field related to their career interest and passions. This is an amazing program for Duarte Unified students which provides a roadmap to career readiness and helps them leverage their strengths to build confidence for future success.



**Cosmetology students from MIT pose with instructor, Monica Mora.**

# Royal Oaks STEAM Academy (K-8)

2499 Royal Oaks Dr., Bradbury, CA 91008 • 626/599-5400 • [www.duarteusd.org/roe](http://www.duarteusd.org/roe)



**Dr. Esther  
Tamanaha**  
*Principal*

## Academic Awards

We came back from Winter Break Soaring! We came back from break ready to learn! On Friday, January 19th, we celebrated 6-8th grade students' academic achievement. This Award Ceremony consisted of many of our students receiving awards for their GPA and Perfect Attendance.

The Academic Awards consisted of our Gold Award for a 4.0, Silver Award for 3.5-3.99 GPA, and Bronze Award for a cumulative GPA of 3.0-3.49 in first and second quarters. We had over 131 sixth-eighth graders receive this award, and this was a well-attended event. Thank you to our the teachers and parents for helping our students reach this achievement! Way to go Eagles!







**Erin Fish**  
Principal

### Supporting All Students through PBIS

Implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in a school can be a highly effective way to create a positive and supportive school climate. Some of the key components for successful PBIS implementation include clearly defining and communicating behavior expectations, explicitly teaching the behavior expectations, positive reinforcement and consistency. At

Valley View Academy, we make PBIS implementation a priority as a way to best support all of our students. The students of Valley View Academy are continuously working to meet our school PBIS expectations based on the acronym S.W.I.M. This stands for Show respect, Work as a Team, Identify and Solve Problems, and Make Positive Choices. When a student is caught meeting one of these expectations,

they are recognized by staff and awarded a Dolphin Dollar. Last year we began implementation of our SWIM store where students can use their Dolphin Dollars to purchase incentives including snacks, school supplies, fidgets and other fun toys. The SWIM Store is now a part of our school community and students look forward to shopping twice a month. This would not be a reality without the hard work of our PBIS team, support and donations from families, and student volunteers to help run it. In addition to recognizing students with Dolphin Dollars, we end every month with a Student of the Month assembly where one student from each class is recognized for demonstrating characteristics that align to our SWIM expectations in and out of the classroom. The strong implementation of PBIS at Valley View has not only positively impacted our school culture, but we have been recognized for the third year in a row for the Platinum Level Award. Keep up the great work Dolphins!



# Los Angeles County Office of Education

9300 Imperial Hwy., Downey, CA 90242 • 562/922-6360 • www.lacoe.edu

## Teachers of the Year



**Debra Duardo,**  
**M.S.W., Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent*

Congratulations to 16 Awardees Selected as “Los Angeles County’s Teachers of the Year.”

In September, the Los Angeles County Office of Education honored dozens of educators during the 42nd Annual Teachers of the Year Awards banquet, held at the Universal City Hilton. Sixteen of them were selected as LA County’s Teachers of the Year.

I was excited to be at the event, to thank our teachers for the tremendous job that they do every day, and for the way they support and make sure that our students have access to a quality education.

“The work that you guys do is often thankless, but I know that it’s incredibly rewarding, to see the impact that you have on your students, to watch them grow and learn and to know that you played a role in shaping their lives is truly something special... and so is the People’s Choice Awards for Best Comedy”, said actor Adam Shapiro, who added humor as he addressed the teachers.

“It feels amazing, it’s such an honor to be with colleagues from all around LA County and I’m so thrilled that my principal, my partner teachers and my family could be here to experience this moment with me”, shared Kimberly Min, a teacher at LAUSD who was selected for the prestigious honor.

LACOE’s Teachers of the Year Program is the largest local competition in the state and nation. It is part of the oldest and most prestigious honors contest in the U.S. for public school teachers. The 16 Los Angeles County educators will advance with other county winners from around the state to the California Teachers of the Year competition this fall.

**Please join me in congratulating the 2023-24 L.A. County Teachers of the Year:**

**Melissa Ellis**

Bellflower Unified School District

**Alanna Grimaldi**

Burbank Unified School District

**May DeGuzman**

Centinela Valley Union High School District

**Kirsten Neill**

Downey Unified School District

**Hannah Rodriguez**

Duarte Unified School District

**Bryan Johnson**

Keppel Union School District

**Kimberly Furman**

Lancaster School District

**Drew Lewis**

LAUSD

**Marcella Lopez**

LAUSD

**Kimberly Min**

LAUSD

**Daniel Leonard**

Manhattan Beach Unified School District

**Alison Meloserdoff**

Monrovia Unified School District

**Danielle Burson**

Norwalk-LaMirada Unified School District

**Courtney Baker**

Redondo Beach Unified School District

**Casey Cuny**

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**Aimee Glotz**

Wiseburn Unified School District