



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education

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NEWS RELEASE

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Bonita Unified Students Get a Taste of Farm-Fresh Knowledge at Mini Farmers Markets

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Bonita Unified School District is bringing farm-fresh produce and nutrition education directly to students through new Mini Farmers Markets at various BUSD school sites, supported by a \$3,000 California Farm to School Incubator grant.

In partnership with Old Grove Orange – a local produce supplier that serves all BUSD campuses – Grace Miller Elementary hosted the first event on Sept. 26, where students were presented with locally grown fruits and vegetables, learned about their nutritional benefits, and gained a better understanding of where their food comes from. The next Mini Farmers Market will take place Nov. 12 at Allen Avenue Elementary.

“Here students learn how their food starts on a farm, and ends in their lunchroom,” BUSD Director of Nutrition Services Edna McKenna said. “When they go to lunch, they will recognize healthy options and how they benefit their bodies. It’s important for them to know there is a difference between chips and an apple.”

Throughout the day, “Farmer Hugo” from Old Grove Orange guided students through produce found in their cafeterias, including Valencia oranges, Fuji apples, pluots, kale, cucumbers, and carrots. Students learned about the “superpowers” of these foods, such as boosting strength, supporting immune health, and maintaining healthy skin and eyes. After the presentation, students were allowed take three fruits or vegetables home, with the remainder donated to staff.

The Mini Farmers Market initiative builds on Bonita Unified’s ongoing commitment to student nutrition and wellness. BUSD Nutrition Services serves more than 9,000 meals daily, emphasizing scratch cooking from the District’s Central Kitchen, where soups, sauces, and entrées are prepared with fresh ingredients. Salad bars across the District feature locally grown fruits and vegetables, with canned produce rarely used.

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The Farm to School Incubator grant supports hands-on nutrition education and access to fresh, locally grown foods for K-12 students. This year alone, the program awarded \$52.8 million to 195 projects statewide, reaching more than 1.6 million students.

“Bonita Unified is committed to supporting students’ health and well-being, and programs like the Mini Farmers Markets provide our students with the knowledge and habits to help them thrive,” Superintendent Matt Wien said. “We are proud to partner with local farms to provide fresh, nutritious meals every day, while also helping students build lifelong connections to healthy food.”

PHOTOS:

BUSD_MINI_FARMERS_MARKET1: A Grace Miller Elementary student selects fresh kale after learning about its health benefits during Bonita Unified’s first Mini Farmers Market. The event introduced students to locally grown produce while teaching them the value of healthy eating.

BUSD_MINI_FARMERS_MARKET2: “Farmer Hugo” from Old Grove Orange explains the antioxidant benefits of pluots to Grace Miller Elementary students. This lesson is part of Bonita Unified’s effort to teach students about the nutritional value of foods served in their school lunches.

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