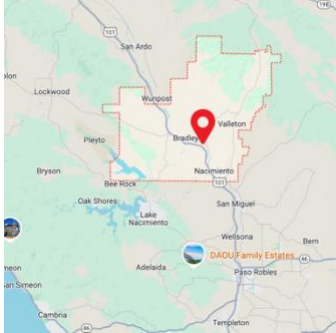


How Bradley Union School District is Growing and Thriving



Located on the border of Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties, Bradley Union School District has long been known as a close-knit rural community. However, in recent years, the district faced significant challenges, including six consecutive years of declining enrollment. Last year marked a turning point as the district saw its first enrollment increase in years.

Superintendent and Principal Josh Van Norman attributes this resurgence to Bradley's renewed focus on innovation, community engagement, and its growing reputation as a district on the rise. "Bradley has always been well-regarded, but it had fallen on hard times," Van Norman shared. "Now, we're focusing on the future, and people are noticing."

Enrollment on the Rise

For Bradley, this enrollment boost is more than just numbers—it's a revitalization of its identity. Families are choosing Bradley not only for its small class sizes and supportive community but also because of the district's exciting new programs and achievements. The influx of students includes siblings of current students and families drawn to the district from outside its traditional boundaries.

This growth has required some adjustments; Van Norman explains, "We've had to rethink lunchtime schedules, transportation routes, and classroom dynamics, but these are good challenges to have. It's exciting for us."





Bradley’s transformation has been driven by its focus on innovation and academic opportunities. Last year, the district was recognized as a member of the prestigious League of Innovative Schools, making it one of only eight districts nationwide. This recognition, coupled with local accolades from the Monterey County Board of Supervisors and an award from Representative Zoe Lofgren’s office, has shone a spotlight on the district’s achievements.

“When people see these successes shared in local newspapers, on social media, and on our website, they take notice,” Van Norman said. “It’s a reflection of our great staff, supportive board, and engaged community. These recognitions help build confidence in our district and attract new families.”

Programs That Inspire



Bradley’s enrichment programs have been a cornerstone of its appeal. From art and music classes to new opportunities like guitar lessons and golf, the district is committed to building creativity and engagement for its students. After-school enrichment programs in reading and math, along with a garden club, provide additional ways for students to connect and grow.

These offerings are particularly important in a rural district like Bradley, where families often face long commutes to access extracurricular activities. “By bringing these opportunities into the school community, we’re making life easier for families and creating a sense of belonging,” Van Norman explained. “This is a big reason families are choosing us.”

A Bright Future for Bradley Union School District

As enrollment continues to grow, Bradley is expanding its resources to meet the needs of its students. The district plans to hire additional instructional assistants to ensure more one-on-one support for students and continues to seek ways to enhance its programs and facilities.

Van Norman remains optimistic about the district’s trajectory. “Bradley’s story is one of resilience and renewal,” he said. “We’re showing that small districts can do big things, and the recognition we’re receiving is a testament to the incredible work happening here. Families are seeing the difference, and that’s why they’re coming.”



Bradley Union School District is an example of how innovation, community pride, and a clear vision for the future can transform a school district. Its recent growth is not just about numbers—it's about building a legacy that students and families are proud to be part of.