

March 9, 2023

Golden Spotlight:

Tonight we are celebrating our High Desert VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) youth essay contest winners this evening.

Each year more students in grades 6-8 enter the VFW's youth essay contest. The essay contest encourages young minds to examine America's history, along with their own experiences in modern American society, by drafting a 300- to 400-word essay, expressing their views based on a patriotic theme chosen by the VFW Commander-in-Chief. This year's theme: My Pledge to Our Veterans.

We are so proud of all of our students for their hard work and extra efforts to write such compelling essays.

The winners are as follows:

1st Francis Cabrera also 2nd in the District

2nd Connor Koopman

3rd Esther Rivas

Honorable Mention Leonardo Rivas

Honorable Mention Rylei Scantlin

Honorable Mention Lina Rose Rodriguez

Tonight I will cover two strategic initiatives from our existing strategic plan: Effective Leadership and Community Engagement.

Effective Leadership:

We are excited to introduce Mr. Kevin Vensko coming to us from Newhall School District, as our new Assistant Supt. Of Business Svcs (pending board approval this evening). Kevin has served Newhall School District in the area of Business Svcs for an impressive 10 years. Kevin's background in Business services supporting k-12 schools is extensive. He currently serves as the Director of Business and Fiscal Svcs. and prior to that he served as their Fiscal Svcs. Account and Auditor respectively.

Kevin has earned his MBA from Cal State Dominguez Hills and has been certificate as chief business official for the California School Business Officials. We welcome Kevin to our district and look forward to him joining our team. Without further ado, I'd like to ask Kevin to come up and say hello and introduce his family who are here as well.

Community Engagement:

- Our continued efforts for branding and marketing our unique and wonderful district- all three sites now are playing the following video on a loop at the front office- highlighting our efforts, what makes us unique and effective school district.
- In addition, we are looking to heighten communication with all of our educational partners which include our parents, students, staff, and community members. With that said, we are launching a platform called "Communication Station". This feature will be pushed out to all school sites as well as posted on our website with a QR code for easy accessibility. The platform would allow stakeholder comments, suggestions, etc. I will have access to input received which would allow me to facilitate information to

the appropriate party here at AADUSD.

- A quick update to our Strategic Plan Efforts. With the robust feedback and input received from our educational partners- be it our parents, students, staff, we are moving forward with our Development Team sessions. These sessions are scheduled for March 20th, 21st and April 6th. The team which would be a total of 35 participants will synthesize feedback received and help us in narrowing down the key elements needed to update our existing strategic plan and goals. We are looking forward to this process and will keep our community updated every step of the way.

Finally, two community events I'd like to share that are coming up this month. We have been cordially invited to the Dance Force Youth Ballroom competition at Eastside High School on March 11th for middle and high school students and March 12th for 4th and 5th grade students. High Desert will be competing against other schools from around the Antelope Valley. For more information, feel free to contact High Desert Schools' main office. Also, on Saturday March 25th, the Harmonic Bronze will hold their Spring Concert at 7:00 pm at High Desert. This is always a special community event and we are looking forward to the performance by all as well as special guest performances.

COVID Report:

- As of 03/07/23, Los Angeles County is in the "low" category for CDC

COVID-19 Community Levels.

- In the Low category, masking is strongly recommended in indoor public places if you are at risk for severe illness
- Masking is still required in healthcare settings, and for 10 days after the last day of exposure if you were a close contact to someone with COVID-19.
- In the Acton and Agua-Dulce surrounding areas there have seen 10 new cases of Covid-19 since our last report on Feb. 9th.
- In our AADUSD school community there have been 5 positive cases reported since 2/9/2023, and exposure notifications have been sent for those affected.
- We want to remind parents to test their students if they have any symptoms and keep them home for fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or unusual new cough.
- Home test kits are available at all school sites, at your local pharmacy using your Medical/Medicare card, or check with your insurance.