



# Quarterly Newsletter *Winter*

Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District's Official Newsletter

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Empowering Minds, Building Futures: Our Small District, Infinite Possibilities.

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Ken Pfalzgraf- Member

Eric Sahakian, Ed.D.- Superintendent



## Reflection

Eric Sahakian, Ed.D.- AADUSD Superintendent

Welcome to our winter edition of our newsletter showcasing the accomplishments of AADUSD during the winter season.

Please take a moment to "get in the know" of the many successes we have been a part of during these past few months thanks to our students, staff, parents, and community partners.

It's amazing to think that we're already three-quarters of the way through the school year. As we enter the home stretch, we're making that final push toward the finish line while continuing to support and guide our students to ensure their success.

AADUSD is stronger together!

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# Meadowlark Highlights



Beautiful Holiday door decor done by our amazing Cienna Taksony.

Mrs. Scheidig's class working on an activity for Valentines Day.



Our students had the opportunity to write a kindness act on our beautiful kindness bulletin board.



Celebrating Kindness Week: 01/27-01/31

## High Desert Highlights



### HDS Dodgeball Tournament

The HDS Dodgeball Tournament was an epic showdown of dodging, diving, and all-out fun! Teams across the community—Meadowlark Classified Staff, VHS Mustangs Football Coaches, and students from Meadowlark, High Desert, and Vasquez—came together for a high-energy battle. Laughter and friendly competition filled the air as players of all ages faced off, proving that dodgeball isn't just a game—it's a community tradition in the making!

Thank you to HDS Booster President Corrin Bailey for bringing this annual tradition to life.

### HDS Survivor was Incredible at Agua Dulce Parade of Tables

The Agua Dulce Women's Club Parade of Tables was a night of creativity, community, and a little bit of Survivor-style competition! HDS Booster Club went all in, crafting an island-worthy masterpiece, complete with a floating Vasquez Rocks and a majestic hawk soaring overhead. No one was voted off this island—just lots of admiration for their attention to detail!

A huge thank you to Isabella Laviolette for her Shark Tank-worthy pitch to help fund campus banners—she definitely had the winning pitch!



### HDS Students SOAR at Medal of Honor Speaker's Forum at the Reagan Presidential Library

On February 12, 2025, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society hosted their annual Medal of Honor Forum, bringing together Medal of Honor recipients Specialist Five Dwight W. Birdwell and Staff Sergeant Clinton L. Romesha to speak with over 600 students about the values of Courage, Commitment, Citizenship, Sacrifice, Integrity, and Patriotism. As Medal of Honor Recipient Leroy Petry shared, "It's never too early to understand the importance of courage and integrity." We're grateful that our Hawks have the opportunity to attend this inspiring event each year!



## High Desert Highlights (continued)



### HDS Hawks SOAR on ELPAC Assessment

To reclassify an English Learner (EL) student, CA requires them to achieve a high score (4 or 5) on a standardized English language proficiency assessment like the ELPAC, demonstrate strong academic performance compared to their English proficient peers, receive positive teacher evaluations, and undergo parent consultation before being considered fluent in English and no longer needing EL services; essentially, meeting criteria based on language proficiency testing, academic performance, teacher input, and parent involvement.

AADUSD School Board honored our EL students who reclassified this past school year. High Desert had the most students reclassified in the school district, with 31% of students able to reclassify.

Congratulations:

Tabitha Vasquez, Haley Guerrero, Homero Guerrero, Jacob Del Valle, Gracie Gonzalez Orellana, Mia Arellano, Jeminette Saldana, Cesily Perez-Martinez, Yaila Cruz, Kayla Rocha-Romero, and Axel Antonio Maya.

### WeCare AADUSD Takes on Kindness Week

Random Acts of Kindness Week is a celebration of small gestures that make a big impact, aiming to make kindness the norm in schools, homes, and workplaces. During the week, participants can perform daily acts of kindness like leaving a kind note, volunteering, or complimenting a stranger. Kindness strengthens relationships, boosts morale, and creates a more inclusive environment. A big thank you to our WeCare AADUSD team for promoting kindness at each school throughout the week!



### AADUSD Honors VFW Patriot's Pen Essay Contest Winners

For the Patriot's Pen, the requirement was to submit a 300-400 word essay on the topic, "My Voice in America's Democracy"

The winners are as follows:

1st Ailen Cabrera

2nd Esther Rivas

Ailen placed first in the District and now her essay has moved on to the state competition.

In addition to Patriot's Pen, we had two students from Vasquez High School who participated in the VFW Voice of Democracy Competition. This is a high school competition where students write a speech and provide a video of them giving the speech on the assigned topic. The theme for this year was, "Is America Today Our Forefather's Vision?"

Winners: 1st Place - Agustin Cabrera; 3rd Place - Francis Cabrera



## High Desert Highlights (continued)

### Engineer's Week – 7th Grade Presentation by Lockheed Engineers

Our 7th Grade Hawks had the amazing opportunity to experience Engineering from three Engineers from Lockheed Martin. Thank you to Bill Schneider, Rayon Harris, and Ted Leonard for spending their day sharing their love of science, engineering, and the scientific method. Students learned about pursuing a career in engineering, built and tested a structure to withstand an earthquake, and experimented with sound using a Ruben's Flame Tube. We are so grateful for the community partners that we have who make events like this possible!



High Desert is a California and National School to Watch 2025  
High Desert School is a one-of-a-kind learning community where innovation, engagement, and student success SOAR. As a Medal of Honor School, we cultivate leadership through mentorship, empowering students to exemplify integrity and commitment. Our diverse elective offerings and shortened sports seasons allow students to explore their passions in athletics, music, and STEM while building lasting connections. We foster family and community engagement through vibrant events like STEAM Night and Family Game Night, strengthening the bonds between school and home. With a commitment to positive school culture, restorative practices, and inclusive activities, High Desert School ensures every student feels supported, inspired, and ready to achieve greatness!

Dr. Sahakian, Mrs. Van Ornum, Mrs. Acuna, and Miss Ayers were so proud to be able to be present for the awards recognition ceremony in Monterey on March 6–7th! Go Hawks!



### AADUSD Spelling Bee 2025 – Results

This year's Spelling Bee had a record number of students participating. We are so proud of all of the students for their commitment and courage in showing their expertise in spelling.

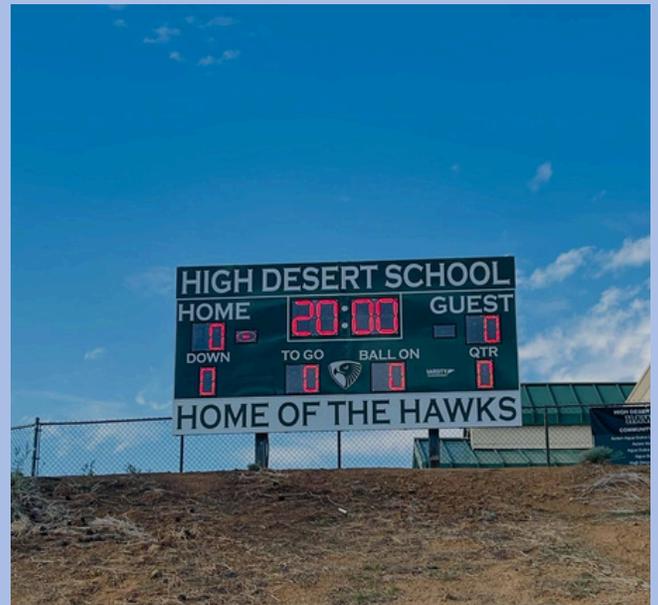
Congratulations to our top spellers!

1st Place: Paisley Kephart (fifth grade); 2nd Place: Ellie Kephart (fifth grade); 3rd Place: Grace Seymour (fourth grade)

Paisley and Ellie went back and forth for several rounds at the end to determine a winner. The winning word was "certificate." As the winner last year, Lillian Campbell, served as a judge along with two former sixth grade teachers, Susan Hunter and Joan Millar. Thank you to Mr. Rowland for making incredible decor, conducting an incredible competition, and being our Spelling Bee Coordinator again this year.



## High Desert Highlights (continued)



### HDS Celebrates Hawks' Field with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Game

We are so grateful for the wonderful community of support at High Desert! We celebrated Hawks Field with a ribbon cutting and a community soccer game! We loved watching the high school students join our middle schoolers and the elementary kids on the field. They look up to them so much!!!

Thank you to all of the people who made this possible!

Acton Women's Club – Generous donations to the campus over the years as well as a grant for our new HDS Booster Club Snack Shack

Agua Dulce Women's Club – Donations from Parade of Tables to support our campus and for our new Hawk Mascot "Talon"

Agua Dulce Airport – Spears Family – Through a connection with Terry Comstock (VHS Soccer Coach) and Wayne Spears (owner of Agua Dulce Airport), the Agua Dulce Airport has generously donated for the past seven years to support athletics. For the past three years, we put the donations together to make the purchase of our new scoreboard possible.

Acton–Agua Dulce Unified School District and School Board – Their shared vision of a campus renewed to support safe and active Hawks made the renovation of the field possible.

High Desert Booster Club – Corrin Bailey, Christine Beaumont, Veronica Honicky, Megan Laviolette, and all of the incredible parents who work tirelessly behind the scenes to raise funds that support all students!

Thank you to all of the amazing, talented, and dedicated staff who work at High Desert! There is not a better group of educators and staff anywhere!

Dawn Schneider, our first Athletic Director, and Gina Botton, our new Athletic Director, for creating a program that is focused on kids!

Thank you to all of our amazing coaches who dedicate their time and make such a big impact!

Thank you Chuck Bostwick from Supervisor Barger's Office, Assemblyman Tom Lackey, and Acton and Agua Dulce Women's Club members for being part of our day!

Thank you Coach Pete Zorba, Coach Terry Comstock, and the Vasquez Mustangs Men's Soccer team for joining and mentoring our students!

Thank you VHS Culinary for the delicious cookies!

## Vasquez High School Highlights



### University of California, Riverside Trip 12/3/24

Students reported their key takeaways were

- Learning the campus layout/life, and the majors and classes offered.
- UC Riverside offers programs in everything from engineering, creative writing, botany, entomology, to medical degrees.
- UCR also has a focus on research and community impact.

### Tutoring

VHS was excited to announce the offering of an after-school tutoring to support students in their academic success. This tutoring service will be available to all students who may need extra help with their coursework. Tutoring sessions will take place Monday – Thursday at VHS. Our dedicated team of teachers will be available to assist with a wide range of subjects and provide support to help students reach their full potential. We encourage students to take advantage of this valuable opportunity!

### Parking Permits were passed out to students!

For the safety and security of all students, all student vehicles must display a valid parking permit while on campus. This ensures that only authorized vehicles are allowed in the parking lot. We kindly ask that all families follow parking rules to help maintain a safe and efficient environment for everyone. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated to avoid any inconvenience. Thank you for your understanding and support!

### 8th Grade Roadshow – 1/29/25

The 8th Grade Roadshow was a huge success, as future Mustangs were welcomed to campus for an exciting day filled with school spirit and memorable experiences. Students from local middle schools had the opportunity to tour the campus, participate in a lively pep rally, and immerse themselves in the full Mustang spirit. The event kicked off with an engaging campus tour, where the future Mustangs explored the school's facilities, meeting teachers and staff along the way. The pep rally brought energy and excitement, showcasing the school's sports teams, cheerleaders, and band, all while giving the 8th graders a glimpse of the vibrant school culture they can look forward to. "The energy was electric, and it was fantastic to see our future Mustangs so excited about joining our school," said Dr. Smith. "We wanted to give them an experience they'll remember and make them feel part of the Mustang family." With the 8th Grade Roadshow now a success, the future Mustangs are more than ready to start their high school journey!

## Vasquez High School Highlights (continued)

### Winter Formal – 2/8/25

Vasquez High School recently hosted its highly anticipated Winter Formal on 2/8/25, a memorable event that brought students together for an evening of fun and celebration. The dance, held in the VHS gymnasium, was a spectacular night filled with music, dancing, and plenty of school spirit. Students dressed to impress, with many choosing elegant gowns and sharp suits, creating a festive atmosphere as they enjoyed the night with friends. The Winter Formal is an annual tradition at VHS, giving students a chance to celebrate the winter season and make lasting memories. The Winter Formal was a wonderful way to bring the school community together and create unforgettable experiences for the students of Vasquez High School.

### 11th Grade Parent Night – 2/11/25

Vasquez High School recently hosted an informative 11th Grade Parent Night in the library to help ensure that families of future seniors are well-prepared for the upcoming school year. The event provided valuable information about the senior year process, including graduation requirements, college applications, scholarships, and other important milestones. The event was a great success, offering parents the opportunity to ask questions and gather information about everything their student will need to succeed in their final year at VHS.

### CSULA National College Fair 2/25/25

On February 25, a group of VHS students joined forces with the Counseling and AVID classes for an exciting campus tour of California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA). The event was part of a larger college fair, providing students with a unique opportunity to explore higher education options and get a firsthand look at life on a college campus. The day began with an engaging campus tour, where students were introduced to CSULA's diverse academic programs, state-of-the-art facilities, and vibrant student life. From modern classrooms to beautiful outdoor spaces, the tour allowed students to imagine themselves walking the same halls as future college students. In addition to the tour, students had the chance to participate in the college fair, where they interacted with representatives from various universities and learned more about what it takes to apply, succeed, and thrive in college. This event provided invaluable insights into the college admissions process, financial aid options, and the many pathways available after high school. The experience was both educational and inspiring, igniting excitement about the possibilities for the future.

### CSULA Field Trip (2/25/25)

Students reported their key takeaways were  
It's a nice campus with student activities and clubs  
Students need to meet GPA Requirements to play sports  
CSULA has a good Nursing, Engineering, Film, Forensics and Aviation Program  
CSULA offers about 300 scholarship opportunities

## Vasquez High School Highlights (continued)

### Maintenance/Custodian Appreciation Day – 3/7/25

On March 7th, Vasquez High School took a moment to recognize and celebrate the hard work and dedication of our Maintenance and Custodian teams for Appreciation Day. These essential staff members play a key role in keeping our school clean, safe, and running smoothly, ensuring that students and staff have a welcoming environment every day. The appreciation event highlighted their contributions, and staff members were honored with heartfelt thanks and special recognition for their tireless efforts. Thank you to our Maintenance and Custodian teams for all that you do to support the VHS community!

### Cal Lutheran – 3/20/25

On March 20th, a group of eager VHS students embarked on an unforgettable field trip to California Lutheran University, where they got a firsthand look at the university's inspiring campus and cutting-edge facilities. The day was packed with exciting experiences, offering the students a sneak peek into college life. The tour kicked off with an engaging welcome from Cal Lutheran's admissions team, who shared valuable insights into the university's academic programs, student life, and the countless opportunities available on campus. Students were thrilled to explore the state-of-the-art classrooms, modern labs, and beautiful outdoor spaces, all set against the stunning backdrop of the Conejo Valley. Along the way, students had the chance to ask current students about their experiences, gaining an inside perspective on what it's like to be part of the Cal Lutheran community. From the thriving arts scene to the strong focus on leadership and service, it was clear that the university offers an environment that fosters personal and academic growth.

Students reported their key takeaways were  
Athletic Opportunities  
learned about their international program  
Athletic medicine program



## Meadowlark PTO Activities



Meadowlark PTO continues the excitement throughout the year with many fun and exciting activities!

If it's hosting pizza parties for winning classes or doing many things behind-the-scenes we are always continuously busy. Meadowlark PTO was able to purchase a book vending machine for Meadowlark. It was truly a hit for our students. It has finally been a resource for our children as they earn PBIS points for good behavior. They are able to turn in PBIS points for a golden token that can be used for the vending machine. We are always looking for book donations to fulfill our vending machine seeing that the students really love earning those golden tokens!

In December PTO hosted a table at the Agua Dulce Women's Club Parade of Tables event. Meadowlark's wonderful student council was able to present our Shark Tank speech and they all did such an amazing job! PTO received many generous donations while attending this event with those donations we were able to buy a Buddy Bench for our playground. The thought behind a Buddy bench is if a student is having trouble finding somebody to play with they can sit at the Buddy Bench and other children will know to include them and that all students of Meadowlark are our buddies.

Right before Meadowlark went on holiday break PTO hosted our Annual holiday shop where students are able to buy inexpensive gifts for their family. That week we had a surprise visit from the one and only Santa Claus, the students were thrilled and bombarded him with all their wishes for Christmas Santa was able to pass out a candy cane for each of our Meadowlark Students.

Read across America week at Meadowlark was a lot of fun we organized a very fun spirit week where students dressed up everyday and PTO was able to provide a fake mustache for all of the students to participate in dress as Dr. Seuss, the Lorax day.

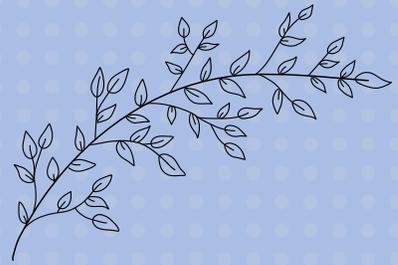
PTO also purchased a brand new book for every student of Meadowlark to take home to keep their reading minds active .

The wonderful Acton Women's Club granted Meadowlark PTO the funds to purchase our fence mural project. We have started but haven't quite finished, once it's finished, it's going to be an amazing addition to the front entrance of our school with it being visible all the way from Soledad Cyn. Rd . We are very excited to showcase the new addition.

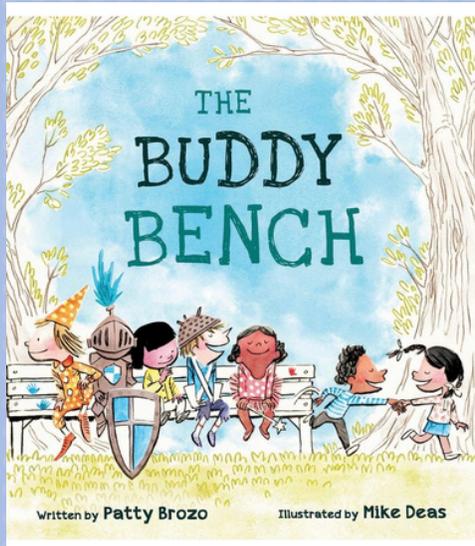
Between decorating the hallways for kindness week or passing out almost 400 green necklaces for St. Patrick's day. We truly try our best to make this Elementary experience the best it can be for the wonderful children at Meadowlark.

Meadowlark PTO President- Heather Miliotti

# Meadowlark PTO Activities (continued)



# Meadowlark PTO Activities (continued)





## High Desert Booster Activities

Booster club had an eventful winter season. We kicked off with our second annual dodgeball tournament! HDS Booster participated in the Parade of Tables. Our table was in the theme of the Survivor game show. Booster club took home 3rd place. February, we treated the High Desert staff to a panda express luncheon, it was a bit!

HDS Booster Chair- Corrin Bailey





## Vasquez PTSO Activities

VHS PTSO had a busy winter. We started off with a staff luncheon on November 19th providing our wonderful staff with several soup and salad options, sliders and delicious desserts. On December 7th we were graciously invited again to the annual Agua Dulce Women's Club Parade of Tables event.

Our A Very Disney Christmas table was designed and set up by the amazing Celeste Brooks. Our table attendees included current and former PTSO members as well as VHS Principal Dr. Reyna Smith. This was a fun event and we were able to fundraise for new ez-ups and spirit flags for the parking lot.

On February 11th we had another staff luncheon featuring food from Panda Express. We heard this was a big hit among staff which is always our goal. Our luncheons would not be possible without the hard work of Dawn Mayes and Veronica Honicky. We appreciate them so much.

We are excited that Spring is finally here, but know that the end of the school year is approaching fast. We are looking forward to our upcoming Binghetti Fundraiser, Teacher Appreciation Week as well as honoring the senior class on their way to graduating.

Thank you to everyone that supports PTSO!

VHS PTSO President- Brooke Messerly



# Vasquez PTSO Activities (continued)



Tuesday, February 11th

## VHS STAFF LUNCHEON

Provided by the VHS PTSO

### LUNCH LINE-UP

- Orange Chicken
- Beef and Broccoli
- Chow Mein
- Fried Rice
- Steamed White Rice
- Fortune Cookies
- Sweet Treats

Provided by the VHS PTSO

## FALL LUNCHEON VASQUEZ STAFF

- SOUPS**  
Zappa Toscana, Baked Potato, Tomato & Rice, and Chicken Tortilla
- SALADS**  
Trader Joe's Salad  
Olive Garden Salad & Breadsticks
- ENTREES**  
Grinder Sliders  
Pulled Pork Sliders
- DESSERTS**  
Pumpkin Pie  
Red Velvet and Lemon Cookies
- DRINKS**  
Tea  
Lemonade  
Soda

Tuesday, November 19th

## Showcasing High Desert School Athletics



### Varsity Co-Ed Flag Football:

High Desert Kicked off the winter sport season with Varsity Co-Ed Flag football. Carrying a team of 26, the Hawks battled throughout the season placing 4th in the Silver league. Team Captains Toren Ashtyn-Bowens Jr. and Esther Rivas share, “they will always remember the team celebrations of scoring a touchdown, the team energy, and support of each other we kept throughout the season.” Thank you to our great coaching staff Pat Tucker, Matt Prosser, and Tom Scaggs for your constant support of our young athletes.

### JV Girls Soccer:

The girls were a strong, competitive team this year. Competing in the SCAIL league for the first time, they made it all the way to finals placing second in the league. They had a blast playing in the indoor arena. Congratulations to Head Coach Leo Rivas and the team for an awesome season!



### JV Boys Basketball:

Our Coaching staff Mr. McWilson and Mrs. McWilson had a huge turnout of athletes and were able to coach 2 JV teams for the SCAIL league. This was the first time playing competitive basketball for most of our players. The boys were high energy all season long! Our A1 team placed second in the season and A2 was 5th. Congratulations to both teams and coaches for an amazing season!

Showcasing High Desert School Athletics (continued)



Dance Force:

Dance Force had another spectacular year! Our dancers dedicated many hours of training to prepare for their competition and took home several awards. One being the team spirit award!!! High desert students competed in East Coast Swing, Foxtrot, Merengue, Cha-Cha, Bachata, and the Viennese Waltz. Great Job to the coaching staff, Christine Beaumont and Gina Botton, and to all dancers for your team work and inspirational energy.



Varsity Boys Soccer:

The boys were led into the season with new coaching staff, Jake VanOrnum and Anthony Saenz. The team was very focused on improving their soccer skill development and game strategy. Player Sebastian Raigoza, “our team did really well this season, we finished 3rd. I will always remember my coaches and supportive team members. We had a lot fun this season!”

Varsity Girls Soccer:

HDS Soccer team came into the season strong with a few returning 8th graders. Brianna Hagiou reflects, “this was my last year playing soccer at HDS and I am thankful I got to play with a great group of girls. Our team was always fun, gave positive support to each other, and although we all wanted to beat our rivals, taking second place in the league was pretty cool.” Thank you to our dedicated coaches, Pat Tucker and Matt Prosser.



## Showcasing Vasquez HS Athletics

Winter sports have wrapped up at VHS, and it was a strong season! Boys' soccer, girls' soccer, and boys' basketball all made the CIF playoffs. Now, spring sports are in full swing. The track team is bigger than ever, with 30 athletes on the roster. Swim is also going strong, with 12 athletes hitting the pool this season. Girls' softball is off to a great start, aiming for another league title. Baseball has been impressive too, taking down Canyon, Golden Valley, and Antelope Valley—three big schools that usually have the edge over Vasquez. League play has begun, and our Mustang athletes look competitive this year!

Sheldon Sparks, Vasquez HS Athletic Director





## **SPRING BREAK: APRIL 21 – APRIL 25**

**Dear AADUSD Parents, Guardians, Staff, Students and Community Partners-**

**We're now three-quarters of the way through the school year, and spring break is just around the corner.**

**I hope you take this time to relax and enjoy meaningful moments with family and friends. When we return, we'll be in the final stretch, working hard to support our students and help them finish the year strong.**

**None of this would be possible without the dedication and hard work of our incredible AADUSD staff. Thank you for everything you do for our students—I truly appreciate your commitment.**

**Wishing you the very best,**

**Eric Sahakian, Ed.D.- AADUSD Superintendent**

For more information on district programs,  
opportunities for engagement, or questions  
please reach out to  
Dr. Eric Sahakian, AADUSD Superintendent  
at [esahakian@aadusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:esahakian@aadusd.k12.ca.us)