

Quarterly Gold

Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District's Official Newsletter



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Fall reflection

by Eric Sahakian, Ed.D.- AADUSD Superintendent

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

Along these same lines, you may be aware that we have been working with our stakeholders to update our district's **Strategic Plan**. The initial work for updating our Strategic Plan includes input from staff, families, and community. We firmly believe that this process, also known as "**Listening Sessions**" will support us in identifying the priorities that stakeholders feel we should be focusing on as a school district.

As we move forward with the process, we will continue to listen to your thoughts, ideas and suggestions. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time. AADUSD is stronger together!
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Get in the know...

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Meadowlark ES



In October Meadowlark celebrated **Red Ribbon Week** and pledged to be drug-free. Meadowlark had crazy hair day, crazy sock day, and ended the week with wearing our costumes and having a costume parade. PTO was amazing and organized professional BMX bikers to help our students learn about working hard and being kind.



In November, Meadowlark was busy learning about the electoral process. The 3rd and 4th-grade students who are running for student council gave speeches and votes were cast. All students who voted proudly displayed their "I Voted" stickers!

Mr. Palacios, an air force veteran came to read to students about **Veterans Day** and answered questions about the military.

Meadowlark ES (continued)



Meadowlark began having clubs at lunch for students to explore extracurricular activities, such as **Art Club**, **Garden Club**, and **Spanish Club**. The Garden Club was started with the help of Ms. Emma Schmidt. Ms. Emma and PTO raised \$1000 to revitalize Meadowlark's Garden. Students who are in the Garden Club have been removing weeds and preparing the garden beds for planting. Ms. Edeling Ventura started the Spanish Club and is teaching Spanish to students during lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Spanish Club is very popular and there is a long waitlist, many Meadowlark teachers have also joined Spanish Club and are having fun learning new words in Spanish. Ms. O'Brien has also started an art club during lunch on Wednesdays for fourth graders. Students are learning to draw from an amazing artist.

Makerspace Innovative Lab Grand Opening



On November 14th, AADUSD was thrilled to host the **Makerspace Lab Grand Opening** at Meadowlark ES! Thank you to our school board for their vision and support of the Makerspace. Your advocacy in support of student achievement is evidenced by the opening of our new Makerspace lab.

These collaborative work spaces prepare our students with the critical 21st century skills in the fields of science, technology, engineering, art, and math. They provide hands on learning, support critical thinking skills and even boosts self-confidence.



High Desert School

Friday Fun - 6th Graders Enjoy Building and Creating

Students in 6th grade engage in hands-on activities the spark creativity, collaboration, and curiosity. In Miss Ayers class, students earn Friday Fun at the end of the week to celebrate their successes for the week. In Mr. Rowland's class, students adopted pets to keep them company and motivated to do their best in school. Our teachers think out of the box for ways to engage and inspire their students to continually strive to be their best! High Desert Hawks are ready for a successful school year! Great work to all of the students and special thank you to Mr. Rowland and Miss Ayers for sharing their knowledge and creativity with the students.



Hawks Have Spirit - First Spirit Week was Filled with Fun

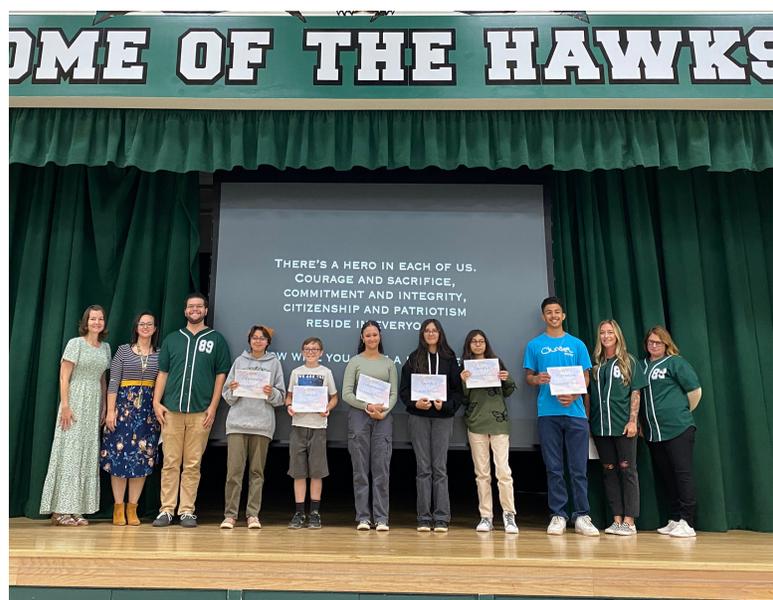
Our Hawks enjoyed their first spirit week filled with dress up fun and activities. Mr. Knee and the ASB crew did a fantastic job organizing and running events to keep our Hawks engaged during the week. The week kicked off with Anything But a Backpack, then students dressed to impress in their best dressed teacher outfits. Wednesday was Jersey day supporting all of our favorite teams. Thursday was Cinema Day celebrating all of the movies we love, and Friday was color day. Each class was assigned a color and the Tug-of-War competition was on Friday. Great work to all of the students and special thank you to all of our participants for a great spirit week!

High Desert School (continued)



Emergency Preparedness Matters - Duck, Cover, and Evacuate

High Desert Hawks participated in the California Great Shakeout on Thursday, October 20th. The goal of the Great Shakeout is to help our students be prepared in the event of a major earthquake. As part of our ongoing emergency drills, the shakeout has students practice duck and cover, lockdown, and evacuation. Staff practices search and rescue to support our efforts to keep kids safe. Thank you to the students who followed the directions of our staff members during the drill and for the students who participated as injured parties. We also would like to thank those parents who came to practice our pick up and early release procedures. Great work to all of the students, teacher, staff, and parents in completing a successful Great Shakeout Drill!



Medal of Honor Character Counts - First Quarter Medal of Honor Awards

On Friday, October 21st, High Desert teachers recognized students for their Medal of Honor Core Value Character Traits of Courage, Commitment, Citizenship, Sacrifice, Integrity, and Patriotism. Teachers shared messages to the students who earned the awards and well as to the students in the audience. Character is something our students work on each day and aim to continually work toward being their best selves both on and off campus. Thank you to all of the teachers for their time and support of our students and their character goals. We also would like to thank those parents who support and encourage their children to be individuals of good character. Great work to all of the students, teacher, and staff for a great 1st quarter!

High Desert School (continued)



Red Ribbon Week Raises Awareness - Red Ribbon Week - Celebrate Life: Live Drug Free

Our High Desert Hawks raised awareness about the effects of drug and alcohol use on their minds and bodies. Students learned about negative effect of drugs on the brain and how drug use can mimic a natural high. Students watched videos from celebrities that spoke of the Natural High they get from following their passions and how that natural high is long lasting and will lead them to greater success. Students participated in lunch activities, spirit days, and concluded with a Door Decorating Contest to show off their commitment to being drug and alcohol free. Special thank you to all of the teachers for supporting Red Ribbon Week efforts and the preventative education surrounding this campaign.



Mrs. Dahlstrom Retires - Dedication, Hard Work, and Love of Kids

Our High Desert Hawks will miss seeing Mrs. Mary-Ann Dahlstrom on campus as she enters retirement. Beginning her career as a nurse, she has always had a passion for serving. After retiring from nursing, she started her second career in education as an instructional aide. Mrs. Dahlstrom has worked at High Desert School for 16 years and is best known for her work as an aide in our classrooms, especially math. She has a love of the students, a passion education, and a talent at supporting mathematics instruction. From classroom support to Learning Lab at lunch, Mrs. Dahlstrom left an impression on all those she came in contact with. Her fun personality, reliability, and dedication were an integral part of High Desert. Most recently, she joined our Athletics program as an Assistant Coach for the Cross Country team. Alongside Mrs. T, the two led the Hawks to a Boys Cross Country Championship victory. Mrs. Dahlstrom is excited about retirement and spending more time with her grandbabies. We will miss her awesome yearbook photos and smiling face on campus, but we are excited for her and the new adventures that await her in her well-earned retirement. Special thank you to Mrs. Mary-Ann Dahlstrom for her years of dedication and service to the students of High Desert and the Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District. Thank you for all that you have done to support both the students and the staff members! You will be missed sincerely and left big shoes to fill on campus.



HDS Gym Grand Re-Opening



HDS Gym Grand Re-Opening - Sharon Lowrie MPR Re-Opens with Pride

Our High Desert Hawks celebrated the grand re-opening of the Sharon Lowrie Memorial MPR on October 24th. Spirit Squad, led by Coach Adaliz Giron cheered on the staff and students in the volleyball game after the ceremony. Congressman Mike Garcia attended the ceremony to celebrate and shared his compliments of the the gym re-design as well as the display of our Medal of Honor Character Traits which are proudly displayed. Senator Scott Wilk's representative, Brandon Roque, attended HDS as a student and returns to celebrate the accomplishments of our school, including participating in the Staff vs. Students Volleyball Game. There was also a great lineup of High Desert athletes who spoke about the positive impact of athletics on their academic performance and social-emotional needs. Special thank you to Vasquez High School Culinary Arts and HDS Booster Club for the delicious treats. Great work to everyone who made the event possible!

Vasquez High School

- **Culinary classes are doing well!** Our pumpkin carving competition was a success and all the students enjoyed being creative and all having their own pumpkin to carve. Kamron Wadsworth was the winner of the contest.
- Ms. Waggoner took three students to a CCAP training for our scholarship program. We attended **Harbor College** where the students watched a live demonstration of the recipes that they will be practicing and then competing with. Branson Tucker, Brett Dawson and Hayley Rudd were the students. They displayed wonderful attitudes and representation of our school and culinary program. We are very proud of their work and efforts that day.



Vasquez High School (continued)

Boys Varsity Basketball defeated Palmdale Academy Charter by a final score of 79-19 to begin the season 1-0!



The La Cabana/Basketball Fundraiser was a huge success on 11/9. Thank you to all staff and community members who came out to enjoy great food and showed their support. The night was a SLAM DUNK!

HDS: Update From Athletic Director

The **High Desert Hawks Cross Country Team** ran their way into the record books at the Silver League Championship Meet on November 3rd. Coached by Mervat Tawfik and Maryann Dahlstrom, the boys team topped 2nd place Challenger Middle School by 2 points and repeated as **Silver League Champions!** The following boys placed in the top 20 and earned a medal: 3rd place Zach Chambers, 6th place Benjamin Heggem, 7th place Cole Stueve, 8th place Christopher Larson, 10th place Joshua Sandoval-Plouffe, 17th Leonardo Rivas. The girl's team, while small, was mighty! They finished in 3rd place as a team and the following earned a top 20 finish: 5th place Sophia Ballinger, 6th place Alexis Van Ornum, 14th Kylie Finn, and 15th place Atoosa Makanvand.

The inaugural season of **Co-Ed Flag Football** is getting underway. Coached by Pat Tucker and Gina Botton, the Hawks are looking to make their mark on the field.

Dawn Schneider, HDS- A.D.



VHS: Update From Athletic Director



Vasquez just finished up its fall season.

Girls' volleyball finished their season with an 8-15 record. They won more games this year than in the past four years combined. Even though they didn't make playoffs, the team is moving in the right direction, and we anticipate the program will continue to grow over the next two years.

Football finished their season with an 0-8 record. We had some issues with the coaching staff to start the season, but we then brought in coach Darryl. Coach is an outstanding leader and role model for our students. He is passionate about our team and is determined to turn around the program. I am fully confident he will build a program the school will support.

Cross country finished their season at the CIF prelims last week. The girls finished 8th in their heat but failed to qualify for CIF championships. Dillon Anderson ran for the boys and finished in the top 18% in his division. The girls' team were league champs again for the second year in a row. Coach McLaws and Zorba have taken the team to the next level. Next year they will again be the odds-on favorite to repeat as league champs. They return 5 out of 6 starters.

Boys basketball is starting its season this week. The boys' team won their first game in dominating fashion. They won 72-19 against Palmdale Academy Charter. They open league play on 11/17 against Desert Christian.

The girls' team is also starting their season this week against Desert Christian. We are thrilled to field a girls' team this season. It's been since 2020 that we have had a team. COVID affected this team and the boys' team the most during the pandemic.

Girls' soccer has opened its season with two convincing victories. One against league rival Valley Torah and the other against powerhouse Antelope Valley High. The girls' team lost five seniors from last year's squad but they seem poised to make another run at a league championship.

Side note: With the two victories, Coach Terry Comstock is not only the winningest coach in Vasquez's history, but he also surpassed two hundred victories for his career. That's an impressive feat at any level of sports. Well done, coach!!

Boys soccer opened its season against Lancaster HS with a 4-1 loss. Although it's a rebuilding year for the boys' team, Coach Pete has some talented underclassmen. Vasquez is one of the favorites to win a league title as they face a tough Desert Christian and Palmdale Aerospace squads this season.

Go Mustangs!!

Sheldon Sparks, VHS- A.D.

Highlights from ML PTO

Meadowlark Students sure have been busy these last few weeks. Students had the opportunity to enter a cake decorating contest at the Vasquez fall festival. All the cakes entered were remarkable. Meadowlark PTO also won the scarecrow contest held at the VHS fall festival. Thank you to all who voted. Meadowlark also had their very first mini pumpkin patch where every student was able to pick and take their very own pumpkin home. Students also participated in a costume parade where they shared their Halloween costumes with the entire school. Parents were welcome and everyone had an awesome time. Students also celebrated **Red Ribbon Week** by dressing up each day to show they supported being healthy and drug free. On crazy sock day kids were treated to a **BMX show** which was so much fun for not only the kids but for the teachers and staff as well. Our very own principal Mrs. Moynihan was brave enough to let one of the riders jump over her on their bike.

Big thank you to Watt Construction's generous donation, as Meadowlark was able to kick off our **Garden Club!** We now have students learning and showing their hard work after lunch to make Meadowlark's garden beautiful.

Last but not least we started November off with a day full of rain but of course Meadowlark students are the luckiest of all and got to learn right under a full rainbow!

Heather Miliotti, PTO President



Highlights from HDS Booster Club

At High Desert, the last few months have been amazing. Our donation of food and snacks to ASB's Halloween dance allowed the students to enjoy an incredible spread of food and snacks. As parents, it was a blast chaperoning. Penny wars was a big hit with 5th grade. They won a pizza party for raising the most money. Those funds will be used in our upcoming basketball games. Throughout this month, we will be donating athletic sweatshirts to all High Desert students who play sports. Lastly, we held a "Shock Hop 50's" teachers luncheon, which was a huge success. Red Robbing Burgers were provided to the staff and everyone had a great time. In our role as boosters, we enjoy supporting our students and staff throughout the year.

Thank you,
Adaliz Giron, HDS Booster Club President



Highlights from VHS PTSO

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Indeed! These words once spoken by Helen Keller describe our fabulous volunteers within the PTSO! I am so grateful for each of them as they helped make our staff fall luncheon & fall festival successful venues last month. The soup-themed staff luncheon was headed up by Hospitality Co-Chairs Lee Jennings & Dawn Schneider who along with Suzy Ames and Mari McLaws, served up delicious soups from Olive Garden Restaurant which included pasta fagioli and gnocchi with sausage, along with breadsticks, and salads from Rattler's BBQ; dessert in the form of cupcakes courtesy of parent Laura Beebe were also enjoyed. The lounge was decorated in fall colors by Mary Fife who has taken up the challenge of transforming the room as the seasons change.

The Annual Fall Festival, which had been missed since 2019, was a superb success which brought out the entire community; each school campus was represented, as well as women's clubs, town council and a variety of vendors. In addition to game booths, a bounce house, endless raffle baskets, food trucks, haunted house, costume contest, and wonderful song & dance numbers, this year's venue also offered up a scarecrow alley and pumpkin patch courtesy of Hilary Blaha Realty Associates. Something else that was new were representatives from elected officials' offices such as Congressman Mike Garcia, and Senator Scott Wilk who were in attendance to highlight special volunteers. Assemblyman Tom Lackey was present to award a Certificate of Recognition to long-time parent volunteer Celeste Brooks and to Dancin' in Acton, a supporter of the annual festival and where so many local youth learn to dance! PTSO was delighted to have these special guests in attendance and are grateful for the donations from the community as well as the time that so many put into this event to make it successful!

Together is Better!

Tracy Costan, PTSO President



Thank you Acton Women's Club

Thank you Acton Women's Club Board of Directors and **President, Karen McNeil** and **Past President, Victoria Taylor** for the annual luncheon invitation. The Acton Agua Dulce Unified School District is humbled and honored to have your support.

We are always so grateful for the Acton Women's Club tireless work in support of our students as they place a special emphasis on providing support and scholarships and generous donations to our three wonderful schools.

Through your donations we have been able to continue working towards our district's mission and vision of academic excellence for all students.

On behalf of the school district, we thank you for your unwavering support and care. You truly make the difference for us! Thank you.



AADUSD's Strategic Plan Update



A comprehensive strategic planning process designed to update the District’s previous plan began in the fall. The process is designed to engage stakeholders in the district in developing an updated **Strategic Plan** that will keep the focus of everyone in the district on the important work necessary to support student success.

AADUSD STRATEGIC PLAN



The Acton Agua Dulce Unified School District Strategic Plan Initiatives developed during the 2018-2019 school year

1.0 - Student Achievement

Student academic, behavioral and social-emotional success is crucial in order to graduate from our schools ready to be purposeful leaders in college, career, and life.

2.0 - Effective Instruction and Leadership

Leading with a positive growth mindset, all AADUSD staff emphasize meaningful, productive interactions and implements equitable, high-quality data-informed instruction. To this end, we strive to attract, train, and retain employees as well as develop strategic leaders who embrace the vision and values of our district.

3.0 - Community Engagement

Stakeholders play a vital role in what is the educational process. We value their opinions and feedback and seek to involve them in decisions which impact the education of our students. We establish a culture which encourages positive relationships among our students, staff, and parents as well as educational, business, and community partners.

4.0 - Student Safety and Connectedness

A safe and respectful environment is essential to student success. We foster a culture that promotes the emotional health, safety, and well-being of students, staff, and parents.

5.0 - Utilization of Fiscal Capital

It is imperative for the district to operate efficiently and effectively with the resources available to meet the organization’s goals and expectations.

The current AADUSD Strategic Plan, developed in 2018-2019

Listening Sessions conducted recently supported us in identifying priorities that stakeholders feel we should be focusing on as a school district. In addition, a comprehensive survey was provided to all AADUSD stakeholders to complete. In the next few months, an additional platform for stakeholder input will be provided.

Key discussion items at our Listening Sessions included the following questions:

1. What do you see as the strengths of our schools?
2. What improvements would you like to see?
3. What changes in our community over the next three to ten years do you see as important for the AADUSD to address?
4. What are the most important actions the AADUSD should take to ensure all our students are well prepared for further education and a productive role in our society?
5. Upon graduation from high school, what do you hope our students will know and be able to do?