

# Quarterly Newsletter

Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District's Official Newsletter

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## Fall reflection: 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.

In addition, we are eager to heighten our parent engagement in the district through a series of formal parent education workshops.

The AADUSD Parent Ambassadors program, launched on 9/26, offers two parts to support parent education. Part 1 includes hybrid workshops, where participants can attend either in-person or virtually, with AADUSD staff presenting on various district-related topics such as education services, the district budget, and social-emotional supports available to our students. Part 2 features virtual (only) workshops covering key topics like family engagement in schools, setting academic goals for students, and navigating the challenges of the digital era, just to name a few. Stay tuned for upcoming announcements.

AADUSD is stronger together!

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## Get in the know...

Making it happen: Meadowlark,  
High Desert, and Vasquez Highlights

02

AADUSD Athletics Update

11

AADUSD Parent Groups in Action

13

## Meadowlark ES

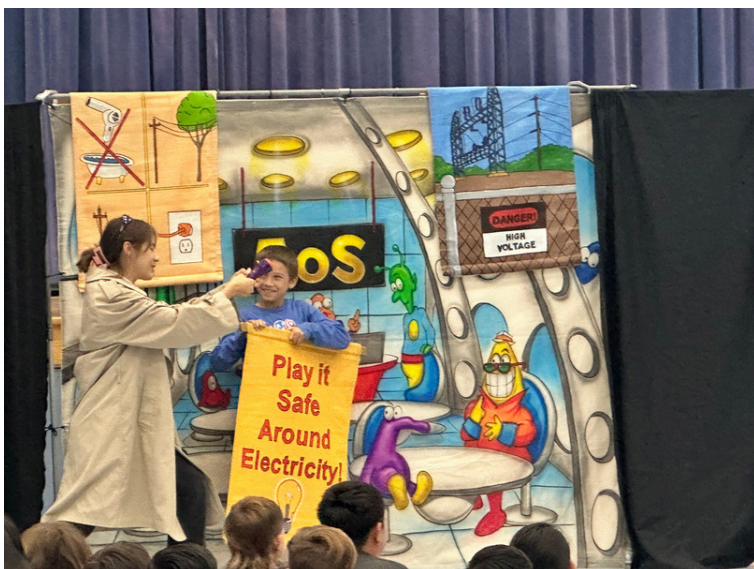
An action-packed start to the school year here at Meadowlark Elementary, filled with events that brought joy, energy, and learning to our students and families! ML kicked things off with Back to School Night on August 13, followed by a bustling first day of school on August 14. The PBIS Kickoff on September 5 taught our students all about school expectations, setting them up for a successful year. Then on September 26, we held our Family Picnic with over 800 family members joining us for a fun-filled day, making it one of our most memorable events yet!

October continued with our first-ever Hispanic Heritage Celebration on October 10, featuring live dance, festive music, delicious food tastings, and even a piñata—a new tradition that was enjoyed by all. The Great ShakeOut earthquake drill on October 17 was a success, showcasing our school's dedication to safety and preparedness. We then had a spirited Red Ribbon Week from October 23-30, with daily themes like crazy socks and dress-in-red day to promote healthy choices. The excitement ramped up further with a thrilling BMX Show on October 29, leaving students and staff in awe of the stunts, and the Halloween Parade on October 31, where students showcased their spooky costumes for all to enjoy. It's been an incredible year so far, and we're looking forward to more amazing experiences at Meadowlark!





## Meadowlark ES (continued)





## High Desert School



HDS welcomed students back to school in August. We are so grateful to the Acton Illegal Dumping Task Force for their amazing clean up efforts prior to school starting so that our Hawks have a safe and clean path to school. Thank you also to Tammy Necessary for the beautiful welcome back flowers delivered on the first day of school!



In September, ASB elected a great new set of officers to lead the Hawks on a school year that is Anchored in Achievement!



Our academic focuses this year are: student engagement in hands-on learning, increase in mathematics, writing across the curriculum, and improving student attendance.



High Desert welcomed a new counseling team. School Counselor, Ms. Zuly Quezada, and School Therapist, Miss Alondra Conde, have been doing classroom presentations for all of our classes. They are sharing information about their program and ways that they can support students. In addition, they are meeting with students individually to get to know them and offer support/guidance as needed.



## High Desert School (continued)



The HDS Spirit Squad had the great opportunity to learn cheers alongside VHS Cheer and even cheered with them during the VHS Homecoming Game. HDS ASB designed a fabulous float for the halftime parade. Thank you VHS for welcoming HDS to share in the celebration.



HDS has a partnership with Edwards Air Force Base to share the love of space science with our 5th graders. Mrs. Reveles' class attended in September and Mrs. Banola and Mrs. Higdon's class will attend in the Spring.



Hawks were so excited and grateful for the expanded opportunities for play with the new Outdoor Adventure Playground which includes: gaga pits, ping pong, foosball, pickleball, giant legos, scooters, and a big variety of outdoor yard games. Family Game Night was a big hit and the perfect opportunity to unveil the new play equipment. Thank you AADUSD for your support of positive student engagement in play!



## Vasquez High School



8/28 - In Ms. Owen's Class, students in the Introduction to Visual and Performing Arts class created different art pieces representing various art forms from the Middle Ages. Some of those art forms were recreations of mosaics, and guitar pieces and representative works of stained glass windows and lyres.



9/19 - The National Honor Society/Science National Honor Society students gained valuable insights into the importance of biodiversity and the delicate balance between human activity and the natural world when they went on a field trip to the LA Zoo. Learning about the various factors that threaten biodiversity, such as habitat destruction and climate change, helps foster a sense of responsibility for conservation. Exploring the zoo's diverse habitats and observing the fascinating creatures not only enhances understanding of wildlife but also highlights the beauty and complexity of ecosystems. Engaging experiences like this are crucial in cultivating a passion for protecting our planet and its inhabitants.

9/25 - VHS Students attended the National College Fair for an exciting experience! The National College Fair at the Los Angeles Convention Center offers a wealth of opportunities for students to explore a variety of colleges and universities. It's a fantastic way for them to gather information about academic programs, campus life, and financial aid options.



## Vasquez High School (continued)

10/17 - On October 17th at 10:45 AM, the entire staff and students at Vasquez High School participated in the Great ShakeOut Drill. The drill lasted approximately 20 minutes was designed to ensure that all staff and students are well-prepared for emergencies. Participating in the Great ShakeOut is crucial for high schools for several reasons:

**Earthquake Preparedness:** The event helps students and staff practice essential safety measures during an earthquake, such as "Drop, Cover, and Hold On." This preparedness can save lives and reduce injuries.

**Building Awareness:** It raises awareness about the risks associated with earthquakes and the importance of being ready. Students learn about emergency kits, communication plans, and evacuation routes.

**Community Engagement:** Involving students in the ShakeOut fosters a sense of community and responsibility. Schools can collaborate with local emergency services, promoting a culture of safety that extends beyond the classroom.

**Educational Opportunities:** The event can be tied into lessons on geology, physics, and safety protocols, making learning relevant and engaging. Students can conduct research projects or simulations related to earthquakes.

**Mental Preparedness:** Practicing for emergencies can help reduce anxiety about potential disasters. Familiarity with safety procedures can boost confidence among students and staff.

**Leadership and Teamwork:** Organizing and participating in the event encourages students to work together, enhancing leadership skills and teamwork.



10/25 - Mrs. Waggoner had the privilege to take this year's CCAP competitors to Mission College to learn and practice their first dishes for the preliminary round they will both be competing in late January. This year there's 38 high schools competing for culinary scholarships. Brandon Vasquez and Gavin Parrillo have volunteered to represent our culinary class and compete. Their efforts were tremendous on Friday and VHS definitely thinks these Mustangs will be making it to the finals. The CCAP program is so wonderful and one of the highlights of my job as a culinary teacher. VHS can only hope they get the well deserved scholarship, money at the end of this and Mrs. Waggoner is willing to help them every step of the way.



## HDS: Update From Athletic Director



11/8/24

High Desert Athletics is thriving this school year! Setting a new school record, we have over 75 student athletes competing on our Fall sports teams (Boys Varsity Volleyball, Girls Varsity Volleyball, Cross Country, JV Boys Soccer, JV Girls Basketball, and Spirit Squad). The Varsity Teams are still competing in the Silver League and our JV Teams are competing in the Santa Clarita Athletic Independent League. Our students are representing Hawks with a competitive spirit, pride, and ambition.

In Volleyball, we had 3 teams competing in the Silver League this year, 2 Varsity girl's teams and 1 Varsity boy's team. They were led by our returning coaching staff Michelle Herman and Gina Botton. The girls team was steady and strong throughout the league play 6-2 record and the boys were a young team growing and developing their skills at a rapid pace 4-4 league record. We had 2 teams make it to the Silver League Championship Tournament held at Vasquez HS. Both our Varsity Boys and Girls teams were finalists placing 2nd in league. All the athlete's can't wait to see all their hard work and the year "2024 Finalist" title go up on the team banner in the MPR.





## HDS: Update From Athletic Director (continued)



The HDS Cross Country team is hot on the trials this year. We are thrilled to have new coaches on board Laura Quint and Rolando Renteria. Making Hawk history, the team and coaches were extremely excited to participate in the Middle School Mt. Sac Invitational for the first time this year. All our runners pushed to new limits and reached new goals. Our new 5th grade runner, Avery Walker, made her debut placing 4th out of 103 runners in her age group at the Invitational. In Silver League, our girls team has been making their times earning points for their team, placing a consistent 3rd place in our meets. We have many new boys joining our team this year running competitively for the first time, they are digging deep and have loved the challenge! Everyone is training hard and preparing for the upcoming Championships on Nov 12th at Pelona Vista Park.



Coach Brando and Braulio Barron returned to our coaching staff this year and brought our JV Boys soccer team to the Semi-Finals after league play. The boys learned about being a disciplined athlete and the importance of working as a team. They had a blast in this new opportunity playing 7v7 at the indoor facility in Santa Clarita. The boys team placed Third overall in the Santa Clarita Athletic Independent League. Congratulations!!



## HDS: Update From Athletic Director (continued)



The Girls JV basketball team brought energy and school pride to every competition they attended. Though games did not always go their way, the team's work ethic and tenacity in every play was apparent to all spectators! Coach Leo Rivas and Matt Prosser truly enjoyed the positivity of the girls, they are a very proud coaching staff. The girls were a competitive team that improved greatly in their skill and game play. We are so proud of our tiny but mighty Lady Hawks!!



HDS has a great group of students participating on our Spirit Squad this year. Our squad of 11 started the year with the VHS cheer team at the football homecoming game. The team was so excited to practice and cheer alongside the high school cheer team as they applauded the Varsity VHS football team. Our HDS squad brings the spirit to many of our sporting team events, championships, and performs routines at our school pep rallies and events. Thank you to Miss Taylor Ayers for spreading your sunshine on our campus and leading the girls with positivity and pep!

The 100 Mile Club members have been getting in their weekly steps. Many students have already met their 25 mile marker goal earning the 100 Mile shirt. Keep reaching for your goals, we can't wait to see how many students make their 100 Mile Goal this school year!!

Our winter sports are fast approaching. Come watch our Co-Ed Varsity Flag Football team compete against the Silver League Teams on our HDS field. We also have JV boys Basketball, JV girl's indoor soccer, and Dance Force all starting up in November as well.

A HUGE thank you to our wonderful High Desert Coaching Staff for all the love, support, and guidance they give to our Hawk athletes weekly, you all ROCK!!! Thank you to our fearless leader ... Principal Mrs. VanOrnum, for all your support and awe-inspiring school pride !!!

GOOOOOO HAWKS !!!

👉 Mrs. Gina Botton - HDS Athletic Director



## VHS: Update From Athletic Director



### Fall Sports Wrap-Up: A Season of Progress and Promise

As the fall sports season wraps up, our teams have shown remarkable growth and determination, setting the stage for an exciting future.

**Girls Volleyball:** With a young and talented roster, the girls' volleyball team completed a successful season. Despite their youth, they displayed impressive skill and chemistry on the court. With this season's experience under their belts, they are primed to make a serious run at the playoffs next year.

**Cross Country:** The cross country season saw the girls' team finishing strong, achieving a milestone by qualifying for the CIF preliminaries. The team's hard work and endurance paid off, and they'll compete in the CIF prelims on November 15, 2024, at the challenging Mt. Sac course.

**Boys Football:** In perhaps the most remarkable achievement of the season, the boys' football team ended a decade-long playoff drought, finishing with a commendable 6-5 record. Their playoff berth marks a significant milestone for the program and showcases the team's dedication and resilience.

As we close out the fall season, the energy now shifts to winter sports, where our athletes are gearing up for another exciting season of competition and teamwork.

Go Mustangs!!

Sheldon Sparks, VHS- A.D.



## Highlights from ML PTO

Meadowlark PTO has started the 2024-2025 school year off with so many fun and exciting activities !



PTO hosted our annual week long Book Fair which is always such a delight to see the excitement of the students purchasing and browsing all the wonderful books. We also invited Meadowlark families to come and have a family picnic with their student during lunch time , that event is truly our favorite seeing our Meadowlark students share their love for their school with their entire family .



Red ribbon week was full of fun and education for our students . We had the student's favorite BMX show come and show the school their amazing tricks all while giving our students such positive and meaningful messages. Students also pledged to stay healthy and say no to drugs by each tying a red ribbon to our front fence.



## Highlights from ML PTO (continued)



PTO joined VHS in support of their annual fall festival, which we have so much fun every year hosting our cake decorating contest/silent auction. We truly are surprised every year of what our talented students of the AADUSD come up with. On campus we had our very competitive pumpkin decorating contest in which Miss Taylor's third grade class won with their very creative ice cream cone pumpkin! Between painting students little hands for our beautiful front entrance to planning Halloween parades to see all of the fun and cute costumes or hosting teacher and staff luncheons PTO is always trying our best effort to make our school that much more amazing than it already is!



## Highlights from HDS Booster Club



The Booster Club was off to a great start. In August the club kicked off the year with selling P.E. clothing at registration. We participated at back to school night by showcasing the new custom High Desert Athletics EZ up. We sold the rest of our used books along with vintage spirit wear.

September brought us to our Back to School Bunco night. We partnered the Blaha realty team and had a great time. September was also the kick off to our School Store fundraiser hundreds of dollars were donated to the teachers in the form of gift cards. Booster parents manned the snack bar and the bounce house obstacle run during High Desert Game Night. The snack bar is in full swing at all the sporting games. October we have been busy planning and preparing for upcoming events in November and December.

The Booster club also participated at Vasquez's Fall Festival. We brought back our gooey game of spaghetti search. Also congratulations to Candice for winning the scarecrow contest. The Beetlejuice was awesome. Booster parents also volunteered at the Halloween dance, I don't know who has more fun the kids or us. Dodgeball on the 15 of November!





## Highlights from HDS Booster Club (continued)





## Highlights from VHS PTSO

The new Vasquez High PTSO board members hit the ground running this school year. We are coming up with and constantly brainstorming new ways to fundraise so that we can better help the students, teachers and staff at our beloved school.

We were at registration and the homecoming dance selling drinks and snacks. We now have our own sweatshirts and t-shirts that we are selling which have been really popular. On October 26th we held the annual fall festival. We had a great turnout from not only guests, but the various classes and groups fundraising for their own organizations.

There were fun games, good food, creepy crawlers, a haunted house and even a Dia de Los Muertos exhibit this year along with vendors and raffles. The event was a huge success in our eyes, and we hope that everyone enjoyed themselves. We are already thinking about what we can do bigger and better next year. Next Tuesday we are having a Teacher & Staff Luncheon to show our appreciation for all the hard work they have put in so far. We have a delicious menu planned and can't wait to give the teachers and staff some delicious comfort food as a way to say "Thank You".

We have some great things planned for the last half of the school year that we hope to send out some more information about soon. We are always in search of new members and ideas on how to fundraise if anyone has any suggestions.

Thanks to the support of the district , Principal Reyna Smith and the VHS staff we are off to a great start and looking forward to the future.

