



Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District

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Empowering Today's Learners to Thrive in Tomorrow's World

January 13, 2022

High Desert School is delighted to announce that, after a rigorous application process, we were enthusiastically endorsed as a Redesignated California and National School to Watch. High Desert was initially designated as a School to Watch in 2012. We proudly redesignated in 2015, 2018, and now in 2022. Being designated as a School to Watch is an honor awarded to high-performing model schools that demonstrate academic excellence, social equity, and responsiveness to the needs of young adolescents. "Being a School to Watch means we are child-centered, realistic, proactive, innovative, and forward-thinking in our approach to educating students" Mr. Pelham, Teacher.

As a School to Watch, High Desert establishes partnerships with other high-performing Schools to Watch. These symbiotic partnerships allow sharing ideas and the best replicable practices for middle school students, thus strengthening the programs at our school. High Desert has developed and established programs shared as replicable practices with other model middle schools. "I am most proud of the Medal of Honor Character Development Program and how we have embraced it into our campus culture. It gives our school a positive community focus and is inclusive of all students," Ms. Alford Walsh, Teacher. Flagship programs such as the Medal of Honor Character Program, Harmonic Bronze Handbells, Dance Force, Science Olympiad, Athletics, and STEAM electives like the new CTE Lab are examples and what makes High Desert a School to Watch.

We would like to thank our Redesignation Application Writing Team for all of their hard work in highlighting the programs, events, and academic opportunities that make High Desert a School to Watch. Thank you to Ms. Alford Walsh, Mrs. Rosenfeld, Mr. Pelham, and Mrs. Van Ornum. "I'm proud to be part of such a caring and supportive community. I love how we come together to do whatever it takes for our students," Mrs. Rosenfeld, Teacher.

We would also like to thank the community for their engagement and support. "I see High Desert School as an innovative school which is always open to new programs to help students learning, a school that is mindful of the community needs, and as a school that promotes what is more important for a person's development and success, which are good values," Mrs. Elsa Cabrera, Parent. In addition, High Desert Booster Club is an active part of sponsoring and promoting positive programs on campus, like athletics, dances, and field trips.

Thank you to the Acton-Agua Dulce School District and AADUSD School Board for their incredible support that makes electives, events, and programs possible at High Desert School. “HDS is proud to provide equitable academic opportunities along with whole-child support. Earning this recognition for the fourth time is an honor for the entire HDS community,” said Dr. Sahakian, AADUSD Superintendent.

“We are honored to be recognized as a School to Watch. This program has helped us grow and develop programs and practices that support academic and social growth in all of our students as we continue to soar toward excellence. I am proud to be part of the High Desert Hawks family! The community, parents, students, teachers, and staff are truly a positive, engaged, unified team that makes High Desert amazing! Go Hawks!” Mrs. Van Ornum, Principal.



Schools to Watch Application Writing Team
Mr. Pelham, Mrs. Van Ornum, Mrs. Rosenfeld, Ms. Alford Walsh



California Schools to Watch Director Scott Steele congrats to Dr. Sahakian, AADUSD Superintendent and High Desert School, for being a Re-Designated School to Watch for 2022.