



# HACIENDA LA PUENTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE *March 2025*



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## *Superintendent's* **MESSAGE**

Dear Hacienda La Puente Unified Community,

As spring begins, our District continues to flourish as Hacienda La Puente Unified celebrates the remarkable achievements of our students, teachers, staff, and schools. I am excited to share highlights from March that showcase the incredible talent, creativity, and dedication that make our community shine.

Our schools and educators continue to be recognized locally and statewide. Four of our schools earned the prestigious California Schools to Watch designation, and Glen A. Wilson High School teacher Willie Allen Jr. was honored with a Community Spotlight Award from Assemblymember Lisa Calderon for his outstanding contributions to the community.

Our students took center stage to display their many talents during Music in Our Schools and Arts Education Month this March. The third annual District Art Show featured more than 1,000 pieces created by students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. At the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) Conference, Cedarlane Elementary students wowed audiences with their drum, fan, and

Samulnori performances. Mariachi bands from both Orange Grove and Sparks middle schools united for a powerful, collaborative showcase that celebrated culture and community.

We also honored the vital role of student support services during Social Workers Week, recognizing our staff who help our students and families. We remain committed to providing resources that meet our community's needs, and celebrated the opening of Sparks Elementary School's Wellness Resource Center, expanding access to essential services.

Hands-on learning opportunities continued to enrich student experiences throughout the month. Young chefs showed their skills in the Student Chef Cookoff at Willow Adult School, while other student-athletes proudly represented their schools at the LA Marathon. During Read Across America Week, high school and middle school leadership students shared their love of reading with younger students, building connections across all grade levels.

March was full of inspiring moments, and we are immensely proud of the accomplishments within our Hacienda La Puente Unified community. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to create an environment where every student can grow, learn, and succeed.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alfonso Jiménez  
Superintendent  
Hacienda La Puente Unified School District



## Wilson High Teacher, Coach Honored for Dedication to Education, Community

Willie Allen Jr., a dedicated educator and coach at Glen A. Wilson High School, was recently **honored with a Community Spotlight Award by Assemblymember Lisa Calderon** for his lasting contributions to the community.

With 25 years of experience as a math teacher and coach, Allen Jr. has spent his career giving back to the District that shaped him – running the Wilson Youth Basketball Camp for 23 years and serving as an athletic director for 15 years.

Allen Jr. attributes his educational foundation to his family. Both of his parents are retired educators, and his sister remains in the field. Their commitment to education and service inspired him to become a lifelong learner, which encouraged him to stay in education. He also credits HLPUSD for providing him with an excellent education and memorable experiences, which he now strives to provide to his students.

“I’ve been doing this as a career for the past 25 years, but it’s something I’ve grown up with my entire life,” Allen Jr. said. “I wouldn’t change a thing. I enjoy this work, and I’m proud to be part of Hacienda La Puente Unified.”

Read more about Allen Jr. through our [recent news and announcements](#).



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## Hacienda La Puente Unified Middle Schools Named 2025 Schools to Watch, Showcasing Excellence

The California League of Middle Schools (CLMS) recognized **four Hacienda La Puente Unified schools** for their exceptional contributions to academic excellence, social and emotional support, and hands-on programs that prepare students for lifelong success.

Grandview College Preparatory Academy and Sparks Middle School are among 46 California schools to be newly designated as Schools to Watch, with Newton and Orange Grove middle schools being among 44 others to be redesignated. All schools were honored during the CLMS Conference from March 6 to 7.

HLPUSD's recognized schools have implemented targeted initiatives and comprehensive curricula to promote holistic student development, focusing on academic and personal growth. Central to this effort is the District's "Six C's of Deep Learning," which include character, citizenship, collaboration, community, creativity, and critical thinking – competencies that help cultivate resilience, perseverance, and lifelong learning.

Read more about our Schools to Watch on the [District's webpage](#).



Grandview College Preparatory Academy attended the California League of Middle Schools Conference from March 6 to 7 to accept their Schools to Watch recognition.



## HLPUSD Annual Art Show Featured More Than 1,000 Student Creations

The Hacienda La Puente Unified School District's annual Art Show showcased more than 1,000 unique art pieces created by students from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade. This year's theme, ["Kaleidoscope: A World Where Many Pieces Fit Together,"](#) inspired a vibrant array of artwork displayed from March 26 to April 3, with an opening night that featured live performances from the Fairgrove Academy Jazz Band, Glen A. Wilson High School Korean drummers, and the District's middle school mariachi ensemble from Sparks and Orange Grove middle schools.

A total of 202 awards were presented, with each HLPUSD school receiving at least two awards ranging from Best in Show to honorable mention. The prestigious Superintendent's Award, which included a \$100 scholarship, was presented to Maya Guzman from Workman High School. Additionally, Board of Education members selected their favorite pieces and also awarded those student artists with scholarships. All art pieces were available for sale, with proceeds going directly to the students.

Find an update of the story on the [District's webpage](#).



*Laila Castro, a senior at Los Altos High School, received an Award of Excellence for her acrylic painting on a paper bag canvas during Hacienda La Puente Unified School District's annual Art Show from March 26 to April 3.*

## Hacienda La Puente Unified Students Showcase Talents at CABE Conference

Hacienda La Puente Unified School District students performed at the California Association of Bilingual Education (CABE) Conference, held from March 26 to 29. The event brought together educators, parents, and community members from across California to engage in workshops and sessions focused on biliteracy, English language development, multicultural competency, and equity in education for multilingual learners.

The District's students represented their schools with a variety of performances:

- [Cedarlane Academy](#) showcased its Korean Dual Immersion Program (KDIP) students with captivating fan, drum, and Samulnori performances. Cedarlane, which also offers a Mandarin Dual Immersion Program, highlighted the cultural experiences students engage in daily.
- [Orange Grove and Sparks middle schools](#) collaborated to feature a unified Mariachi ensemble, demonstrating their musical talents and teamwork. Sparks offers electives in both Korean and Spanish culture, while Orange Grove provides a Spanish language and culture elective, reflecting the District's commitment to bilingual education.

The CABE Conference served as an exceptional platform to celebrate the District's multiculturalism, emphasizing the importance of embracing both individual cultures and the rich diversity of others. The event also underscored the significance of bilingual education and the collective efforts of educators, parents, and district staff in supporting multilingual learners.

Stay up to date with our [District's news and announcements](#) on our webpage.



*Cedarlane Academy Korean Dual Immersion Program (KDIP) students performed fan, drum, and Samulnori performances at the CABE Conference on March 28.*



*Mariachi bands from Orange Grove and Sparks middle schools collaborated in a unified ensemble for a performance at the CABE Conference on March 29.*

## HLPUSD Community Fosters a Love of Reading



*Newton Middle School students celebrated Read Across America week by reading to Kwis Elementary School students, fostering literacy across the District.*

Hacienda La Puente Unified School District celebrated March as National Reading Month with key activities and spirited theme days that brought together students, teachers, parents, and staff during [Read Across America Week from March 3 to 7](#). This Districtwide collaboration sparked a love for reading, encouraged academic success, and strengthened a sense of community.

Throughout the month, educators swapped classrooms to read to new students, while middle and high school students and teachers visited elementary schools to share the joy of reading. Local first responders also donated their time to read to students, and families participated by reading their favorite books with their children.

The exchange of stories and ideas aimed to foster connections between the community and classrooms created a shared experience that spanned all ages and grade levels.



*Valinda Elementary School combined Career Week and Read Across America Week by inviting local first responders to read to students, fostering connections between the community and the classroom.*

## La Puente High Students Hit the Ground Running at LA Marathon

[La Puente High School students took part in the 39th annual Los Angeles Marathon](#) on March 17, demonstrating extraordinary dedication and perseverance as they completed the challenging 26.2-mile course.

Their goal was simple yet powerful: to finish strong and overcome the physical and mental challenges that come with an endurance sport. Get an inside look at the dedication and determination that fuels the students' marathon journey, along with their commitment to training, through [LP Runs LA](#).

Congratulations to all the La Puente High students who made their mark at the LA Marathon!

*La Puente High School students pose with their Los Angeles Marathon medals after completing the 39th annual event on March 17.*



*La Puente High School students are all smiles at the end of running the 26.2-mile course for the LA Marathon, proudly showing off their medals.*



## Hacienda La Puente Unified Students Showcase Culinary Creativity at Annual Cookoff

Clad in personalized, royal blue aprons and chef hats, three Lassalette Elementary School Lunch Divas faced off against a trio of ambitious culinary teams from Mesa Robles Middle School in their quest for the tastiest entrées at the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District's third annual **Student Chef Recipe and Cookoff**, held March 14 at the Willow Adult School culinary kitchen.

The four teams sliced, stirred, and sautéed their way through the TV cooking show-inspired competition, racing against the clock to diligently plate at least 25 servings. **The Lunch Divas came out victorious with their birria tacos**, winning over the taste buds of the judges.

In addition to having their dish included on HLPUSD's 2025-26 lunch menu, each Lassalette student chef received a \$150 gift card. For the Mesa Robles teams, animal fries took second place and earned \$100 gift cards; udon stir fry placed third and secured \$75 gift cards; and a Philly cheesesteak sandwich with steak cut fries came in fourth for \$50 gift cards. The three Mesa Robles teams competed in an attempt to extend their school's winning streak from the last two student cookoffs.

Read more about the Student Chef Cookoff on our [District webpage](#).



A Mesa Robles Middle School culinary team double-checks its supplies during Hacienda La Puente Unified's third annual Student Chef Recipe and Cookoff.



Lassalette Elementary School's Lunch Divas culinary team, posing with their family, Principal Lisa Mannino (back, second from left), and HLPUSD Superintendent Dr. Alfonso Jiménez (back, right), won the grand prize of Hacienda La Puente Unified's third annual Student Chef Recipe and Cookoff for their birria tacos, which will be included in the District's lunch menu during the 2025-26 school year.



# HLPUSD'S WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

*Proud to be, creating mental harmony.*



Equity & Access

## March Wellness Wednesday Recap: Movement and Wellness

Boosting activity levels can positively impact physical and mental health for people of all ages. When we think of exercise, we might feel like what we're doing isn't enough – or that we don't have time for a “full” workout.

However, movement includes a wide range of activities that can be adapted to all ages, skill levels, and abilities – most of which require little to no equipment. This month, we encourage you to step outside and away from your everyday responsibilities for at least five minutes and discover a form of movement that works for you. Visit our [news and announcements section for recommendations on exercises](#).

Please call the Equity and Access department at (626) 933-5302 for additional District resources, including information on food banks, foster youth programs, mental health support, wellness apps, and more.

## Sparks Elementary Hosts Grand Opening for Wellness Resource Center

Sparks Elementary School unveiled its new [Wellness Resource Center](#) during its Open House night on March 27. This initiative was made possible by a [\\$21.3 million grant from the California Community Schools Partnership Program \(CCSPP\)](#), which equips 17 HLPUSD campuses with integrated support services that address the academic and social-emotional needs of students and their caretakers and families.

The Wellness Resource Center at Sparks Elementary provides essential resources such as backpacks, school supplies, books, clothing, games, and food. It also serves as a dedicated space where students can relax and take a break. Additionally, families have the opportunity to connect with on-site specialists for further resources and support tailored to their needs.



(Left to right) HLPUSD Coordinator of Community Schools Claudia Perez, Sparks Elementary School Community Schools Site Specialist Carolina Zuniga Mejia, and Los Angeles County Office of Education Strategic Partnerships Administrator Steve Zimmer.

## Celebrating National School Social Work Week



Carolina Zuniga Mejia is a community school site specialist at Sparks Elementary, helping to provide personalized support to the school's community.

The first week of March marked [National School Social Work Week](#), a time to recognize the invaluable contributions of school social workers. We honored our dedicated on-site specialists and the Equity and Access team for their unwavering commitment to supporting students, educators, and the entire school community. Their dedication plays a vital role in creating a positive and inclusive environment for all.



HLPUSD's Equity and Access department helps support the social, emotional, and physical development of our students to ensure they reach their goals and succeed.



## Join our Next Parent University Workshop

Hacienda La Puente Unified School District is committed to supporting parents in creating a responsible and nurturing environment for their children. We are excited to offer an informative workshop presented by Foothill Family, designed to equip caregivers with essential knowledge and tools for raising children in today's digital age.

**MAY**


**7**

**8:45AM – 9:45AM**  
**SPANISH**

**The Dangers of Unmonitored Internet Access for Children**

Caregivers will learn about internet dangers, how to help their children avoid excessive screen time, and tips for keeping their life balance

**SIERRA VISTA MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
15801 SIERRA VISTA CT. LA PUENTE, CA 91744



We encourage all parents and caregivers to attend this valuable session to gain insights into protecting children in the digital world. For more information or questions, please contact our Equity and Access department at (626) 933-5302.

## Graduation and Promotion Schedule

Date	School Site	Time	Location
Wednesday, May 14	English as a Second Language (ESL) Recognition Ceremony	10:00 AM	Hacienda Heights Community Center
Thursday, May 15	Adult High School Graduation and Career/Technology Awards	10:00 AM	Hacienda Heights Community Center
Tuesday, May 20	Cedarlane Academy Promotion Ceremony	8:30 AM	Blacktop
Tuesday, May 20	Grandview College Preparatory Academy Promotion Ceremony	9:00 AM	Blacktop
Tuesday, May 20	Valley High School Graduation	3:00 PM	Hacienda Heights Community Center
Tuesday, May 20	Workman High School Graduation	5:00 PM	Expo Center
Tuesday, May 20	La Puente High School Graduation	7:30 PM	McIntosh Field
Wednesday, May 21	Sparks Middle School Promotion Ceremony	8:30 AM	Blacktop
Wednesday, May 21	Newton Middle School Promotion Ceremony	8:45 AM	Blacktop
Wednesday, May 21	Mesa Robles School Promotion Ceremony	9:00 AM	Blacktop
Thursday, May 22	Orange Grove Middle School Promotion Ceremony	8:30 AM	Blacktop
Thursday, May 22	Fairgrove Academy Promotion Ceremony	9:00 AM	Blacktop
Thursday, May 22	Sierra Vista Middle School Promotion Ceremony	10:00 AM	Blacktop
Thursday, May 22	Wilson High School Graduation	5:00 PM	Merrill Stadium
Thursday, May 22	Los Altos High School Graduation	7:30 PM	Mauch Stadium



We are getting closer to that time of year when we celebrate the hard work and achievements of all of our students as they step forward into the next stage of their education and careers! Let's join together as a community during our ceremonies for special recognitions, promotions, and graduations.

