

# ADA VISTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Forest Hills Public Schools  
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Hola familias de Ada Vista,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Ada Vista families for your consistent and generous support for our school. We are so very lucky to have families who understand and support the unique needs of our Spanish immersion program at Ada Vista and we are extremely fortunate to have a group of very passionate and highly committed parents representing the parent community in our Ada Vista PTO.

I am writing this letter, on behalf of our entire Ada Vista teaching staff to thank you in advance for your support in the upcoming 2018-2019 school year. Our Native Spanish-Language Enrichment Program is kept strong each year through your generous financial contributions that directly fund our Native Spanish-Speaking Aides. Some of our parents have shared with me a desire to know more about the history of our Native Spanish-Language Enrichment Program, what it means to students and their immersion experience at AV, where we are with funding this year, and what it will take to keep the same level of enrichment we have been able to provide to students and staff for the last several years.

## **The History of AV Native Spanish-Speaking Classroom Aides**

The Ada Vista Elementary Spanish immersion program was started in 1999 with just one kindergarten class. At the time, the program was housed at Ada Elementary, but because Forest Hills public schools was committed to expanding the program through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the district acquired our existing building, renovated it, and dedicated it to Spanish immersion.

In 2005, Ada Vista applied for and was awarded a three-year Federal grant to fund project INCA (**I**ncreasing **N**ative language and **C**ultural **A**wareness) at Ada Vista. Through this grant, 17.6 hours per day of native Spanish-speaking aide time were added to enrich the language learning experience of our AV students. When the grant expired in 2007, the district did not have the ability to take over the financial responsibility and our AV parents, who saw the value of increasing the time spent listening and speaking with native speakers, raised the necessary money to keep them, and they (you) have done the same every year after that. Our native Spanish-speaking aides are funded by the district in their role as recess and lunchroom aides and by our Ada Vista families in their role as language-enrichment classroom Aides.

## Current Cost of AV Classroom Aides Compared to 10 Years Ago

School Year	# of Students	# of hours per day funded by families	Total cost	Avg. cost per student
2006-2007	290	17.6	\$35,000	\$121
2017-2018	492	20	\$60,500	\$122

### Can the District Provide Funding for Classroom Aides?

Funding for school buildings is based on a per-pupil allowance received from the State. Ada Vista receives the same amount of funding per student as all other buildings in the district. Over the last few years, all districts in Michigan have been forced to respond to increasing budgetary cuts year after year. FHPS has done everything possible to adapt to reduced funding from the state without affecting class sizes and resources that directly contribute to direct instruction in classrooms. The district is not able to fund classroom aides in any building across the district.

There are some positions that the district is able to fund, and below are a few examples. At Ada Vista, we have worked to maintain qualified Spanish-speaking staff in those positions.

Hrs./Day	Position	Description
3.5	Media Materials Clerk	Library
8.5	Reading interventionists (1 <sup>st</sup> grade)	Support qualifying 1 <sup>st</sup> grade students with reading skills.
4	Before and after school bus supervision	Support students at drop off and pick up.
7	Playground and lunchroom supervision	Support students in the playground and lunchroom.
5	31a Reading Interventionist (K, 2-4 grades)	Support qualifying students with reading skills.

### How Do Classroom Aides Enrich Students' Language Experience?

Every classroom at Ada Vista enjoys a scheduled one hour per day with a native Spanish-speaking classroom aide. Aides work directly with students as assigned by the teachers 100% of their time. Sometimes they work with a whole class, a large or small group, or with individual students. They support students with math, reading, writing, vocabulary, and with oral language development. Aides contribute to the overall immersion environment in our building with their diverse cultural backgrounds and their language skills.

Native Spanish-speaking aides have a very important part in enriching the overall immersion environment in the classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, playground, etc.

## How are We Maximizing Resources and Raising the Bar for 2018-2019

I am very excited to share about a task force including teachers and parents, all of whom are actively seeking to enhance the Native Speaking Aides program with the goal of maximizing benefits to all students. With input from AV classroom teachers, immersion consultants, parents, and aides themselves, we are exploring many different ways in which all students can, directly and indirectly, receive an increased amount of exposure to native-Speaking language.

## How Are We Doing this Year with Fundraising for Aides and How Are We Going Forward?

Through direct donations and Dia de Arte auction, the total amount raised to date for native Spanish-speaking aides is \$33,915. This is \$26,585 short of projected cost for the current school year, and the estimated cost for 2018-2019 is about 3% higher than \$60,500. The current shortage is exacerbated by the fact that a donor whom would provide greater than \$12,000 annually to the campaign, no longer has children at AV. Additionally, the Aides have always been supplemented by other AV PTO fundraising. We hope to reach our goal of \$60,500 by Friday, June 1. Funds raised this year will impact the amount of time AV students will receive with an Aide in his or her classroom.

We truly believe that Ada Vista parents have invested in and are committed to maintaining a high quality immersion program. We invite Ada Vista families who wish to contribute to help us maintain a high level of native language and cultural enrichment at Ada Vista, to support our native enrichment program through our Ada Vista PTO in one of the following ways:

- Send a check to Ada Vista, payable to "Ada Vista PTO."
- Send funds to PayPal at [adavistapto@gmail.com](mailto:adavistapto@gmail.com).
- Text "AVPTO" to phone number 56651.
- Give online at <https://cbo.io/d/AVPTO>.

I am very excited to share that we have a task force of teachers and parents who are actively seeking to enhance the Native Speaking Aides program with the goal of maximizing benefits to all students in a financially sustainable way. With input from AV classroom teachers, immersion consultants, parents, and Aides, we are exploring many ways in which all students can, directly and indirectly, receive an increased amount of exposure to native language and cultural experiences.

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Thank you for your support of the Native Speaking Aides program at Ada Vista Elementary!  
You have made a gift of \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ to Ada Vista PTO.

- Ada Vista PTO is a nonprofit organization pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Tax ID 38-3652000.
- No goods or services were provided in exchange for this gift.
- Contributions are tax deductible as permitted by law.