

# aavidum

“I’ve got your back.”

## What does it mean?

The word “**Aavidum**” cannot be currently found in any dictionary or encyclopedia however many students, teachers, and educators are working hard to make sure everyone knows the word!!

The word “**Aavidum**” stems from Latin roots related to the idea of “**having someone’s back**” and was created by students when a club formed in Cocalico School District in 2004 following the tragic suicide death of a student. Since this time, the word, concept, and power of Aavidum have spread beyond one high school and moved into the halls and classrooms of middle, high, and now elementary schools across nation.

Aavidum’s goal is to create a positive mental health environment, a culture of “I Got Your Back” in schools and communities across the nation by forming Aavidum chapters and by empowering youth.

At the elementary level, the concept of Aavidum helps teach our kids about the importance of supporting and caring for each other. Students will be connected to their classmates and teachers in a powerful and committed relationship of support and compassion. Students will learn signs of sadness in others as well as themselves. With this information, they will also then learn what to do in order to help have someone’s back during these emotional times. Finally, students will be empowered to search for and find their own strengths and life gifts, learning about what makes each of them special and unique.

In 2013, Landisville Primary Center became the first elementary school in the country to create an Aavidum program, better known as “Little Aavidum”. This year, we are bringing Little Aavidum to Los Amigos Elementary School to teach and spread the “I’ve got your back” message throughout Los Amigos and beyond. With your help and support, we hope to instill meaningful lessons and character-building opportunities in all of our students to help better and strengthen their lives in positive directions.

## Aavidum at Los Amigos

Classroom lessons  
once a week to  
reinforce and teach  
students about:

- ✓ Empathy
- ✓ Caring/Kindness
- ✓ How to help others
- ✓ Signs of Sadness
- ✓ How to be a Good Friend
- ✓ Critical Thinking
- ✓ Problem-Solving

School-wide creation  
of a Culture of Caring,  
Connection, & Support  
for all students, staff,  
and families.

**Goals:**

- To recognize the signs of sadness in others (peers and adults).
- To recognize and know other peers and staff members that children can turn to and talk to when feeling sad, upset, or when they have a problem.
- To create a school culture of caring, kindness, respect, and empathy in which all students, staff, and families are connected to each other through a common cause and support system.

**Is your son or daughter sad?***Symptoms of childhood depression*

- Continuous feelings of sadness, hopelessness
- Social withdrawal
- Vocal outbursts or crying
- Irritability or anger
- Increased sensitivity to rejection
- Changes in appetite -- either increased or decreased
- Changes in sleep -- sleeplessness or excessive sleep
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue and low energy
- Reduced ability to function during events and activities at home or with friends, in school, extracurricular activities, and in other hobbies or interests
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Thoughts of death or suicide

**Ways to Help**

- ✓ **Listen.** Allow time to talk with your child, giving him/her your fullest attention.
- ✓ **Help discover coping skills and strengths:** Sit down and have your kids think of and create things they can do when feeling upset. Search for many things they are already good at doing and use these talents to help overcome future obstacles.
- ✓ **Take time to Love:** Show your kids you care by hugs, kisses, high-fives, and smiles.
- ✓ **Reassure your child.** Let him/her know that you are there for them and that with time, things will get better.
- ✓ **Seek Support of Others.** Contact your child's teacher, principal, school counselor, and other important support systems...we all have your back at Los Amigos Elementary!