

Los Angeles Unified School District
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
333 S. Beaudry Ave., 24th floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: (213) 241-6766
FAX: (213) 241-8952
www.lausd.net



News Release

CONTACT:
Shannon Haber, 213-393-1289

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 14, 2021

Board of Education Takes Steps to Implement State Seal of Civic Engagement for High School Students

LOS ANGELES (April 14, 2021) – The Board of Education voted unanimously on Wednesday to begin implementing the State Seal of Civic Engagement, an incentive for high school students aimed at encouraging their active and ongoing participation in issues of public concern.

Sponsored by Board Members Scott M. Schmerelson and Nick Melvoin, the resolution calls for the creation of an advisory board to establish specific criteria for Los Angeles Unified students to earn the seal, based on the state’s requirements. The state criteria include demonstrating excellence in civic learning, participating in civics-related projects, contributing to their community and understanding the U.S. Constitution.

“As recent national events have illuminated the necessity of civic engagement and educating our students to become well informed and engaged citizens, I am pleased that the Board voted to support my resolution,” Board Member Schmerelson said. “The resolution will not only recognize student’s civic activities, but it will also encourage and create pathways for students to become civically engaged in the democratic process at the community, local, state and federal levels.”

He also said he was inspired to bring the resolution forward, by Jaden Stewart, a junior at North Hollywood High School and a member of Board Member Schmerelson’s Student Advisory Council. Stewart was one of four students who addressed the Board.

“The implementation of the California State Seal of Civic Engagement demonstrates Los Angeles Unified’s commitment to empowering student voices,” Stewart said. “This is important now more than ever, after the year of challenges we have just experienced revealing the need for active participation in our communities on a local and national level. This initiative will inspire hope and encourage students to find creative solutions to issues that matter most to them. Thank you to Los Angeles Unified and Board Member Schmerelson for your commitment to supporting and recognizing students’ civic efforts and achievements. I’m looking forward to the amazing things that Los Angeles Unified students will accomplish.”

“When students believe that their voice matters, they are more likely to use that voice to make progress in our democracy,” Board Member Melvoin said. “Schools play an important role in catalyzing increased civic engagement by helping young people develop and practice the knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors needed to participate in the democratic process and create a better future for us all.”

“Our students’ voices are so critical to the future of our city, state, and country, and our public schools play an important role in ensuring they can lift their voices and participate in our democratic society,” Board President Kelly Gonez, a co-sponsor, said. “This resolution empowers both students and our communities to strengthen their participation and their activism, and I can’t wait to see what changes our students bring.”

“As an educator and as a student activist during the Civil Rights Movement, I have always supported young people becoming involved in issues that are important to them, and by registering to vote,” Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III, a co-sponsor, said. “Civic engagement among our students can help their voices be heard and encourage them to make a difference.”

“Students can learn about their rights and improve their skills such as research and speaking by participating in civic engagement,” Board Member Jackie Goldberg said. “The opportunity to earn a state seal will encourage more students to get involved.”

“With this new seal, Los Angeles Unified students will gain important civic engagement skills and knowledge of democratic concepts and processes by participating in projects that address needs and challenges in their own communities,” Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin, a co-sponsor, said. “Our students will be even more empowered to use their voice to become change agents and positively contribute to our democracy — both immediately as high school students as well as long into their adulthood.”

Three additional students addressed the Board on this resolution.

“As a student myself, I have recognized through the years how imperative civic engagement is within the youth,” Helen Morales, a junior at Granada Hills High School said. “When delving into the nucleus of what political socialization means to an individual, it starts off with their basic perception of what getting involved truly means. By passing the State Seal of Civic Engagement resolution, today’s high school generation will be propelled into the future’s leaders.”

“I am very excited to see the positive impact that the State Seal of Civic Engagement will have on students,” Serene Hwang, a junior at the Girls Academic Leadership Academy said. “It will empower active citizenship within youth and foster public awareness.”

“The future of America depends on our students’ ability to participate in leadership roles in our government,” Lalitha Dhyaram, a sophomore at North Hollywood High School said. “The resolution to implement the State Seal of Civic Engagement offers exactly that: an opportunity to educate and inform our young population in government and our democracy. With Los Angeles Unified being the second biggest school district in the U.S. in terms of student populace, I am so excited for the implementation of this seal and know that much good will come from this resolution. Thank you!”

###