



News Release

For Immediate Release
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January 12, 2016
#15/16-117

L.A. Unified Board swears in student member



(LOS ANGELES) – The Board of Education got an eighth member today – a 16-year old high school junior who will provide an official student voice on the issues and challenges facing the District.

Leon Popa was sworn in as the Board’s new student representative during a brief ceremony, and then took his seat on the dais.

“I have the passion and will to help all students claim the education they need and deserve,” said Mr. Popa, an aspiring doctor who attends the STEM Academy at Bernstein High School. “I want all students to have their voices heard.”

Mr. Popa will serve a one-year, unpaid term. He will participate in public discussions, but will not attend closed-session meetings or have access to confidential materials.

The seat was created after more than 3,000 students signed petitions last year, seeking representation on the Board of Education. California Education Code permits at least one nonvoting student member to be elected or appointed to a school district’s governing board.

Mr. Popa was selected by student government leaders from high schools across the District in an election that fielded five other candidates. Taylor Hanes, a senior at Verdugo Hills High School, was chosen as the student alternate on the board.

“I am thrilled to welcome Leon Popa to the Board,” said School Board President Steve Zimmer. “This is an important and significant moment for Los Angeles. Student voice finally has its proper place in the dialogue about the policy decisions that affect the lives of our students.”

“As the late, great David Bowie wrote, ‘And these children that you spit on as they try to change their worlds are immune to your consultations, they’re quite aware of what they’re going through.’”

“LAUSD is here to serve the needs of our students and we must include their voice at the table where decisions are made,” said Board Member Mónica García. “I congratulate and welcome our new student board member. This is a great step toward building a Student Board of Education to represent the interests of more than 600,000 of their peers.”

(MORE)

“The election of our Student Board Member is monumental,” said Dr. Ref Rodriguez, who represents District 5. “Thank you to all of the students and community members who pushed us to have their voice represented on this Board.

“For too long now, we have lacked student voice on this Board, and I am eager to work collaboratively with Mr. Popa to move the needle for all students in our district,” Dr. Rodriguez continued. “He reminds us all that the work we do should be driven by our passion for student achievement and success.”

(Pictured: Board Secretariat Jefferson Crain, left, and School Board President Steve Zimmer swear in Student Board Member Leon Popa.)

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