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Los Angeles Unified Convenes Greening Schools and Climate Resilience Committee

Key Stakeholders Come to the Table to Address Climate Crisis and Green Our Schools

Los Angeles, CA (March 15, 2023) - The Greening Schools and Climate Resilience Committee of the Los Angeles Unified Board of Education chaired by Dr. Rocío Rivas convened its first session Wednesday, March 15, 2023. Dr. Rivas was joined by Board President Jackie Goldberg and Board Member Nick Melvoin. The purpose of the committee is to assess and propose policies, practices and resources needed to create District-wide sustainable, healthy, resilient, and equitable learning environments.

Stakeholder members bring a broad range of experience and expertise, from academics and experts to parents and community leaders: Bevin Ashenmiller of Occidental College, Lucy Garcia from the Climate Reality Project Los Angeles, Héctor Huezo of Jobs to Move America (JMA) / Los Angeles County Electric Truck & Bus Coalition, Tori Kjer from the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, Claire Latane from Cal Poly Pomona, Aleigh Lewis from Angelenos 4 Green Schools, Alicia Morales Pérez with Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), Mikaela Randolph from Heal the Bay, Nicolas Gardner-Serna of Sunrise Movement LA, and Katie Theel representing DSA, Green New Deal for Public Schools.

“One of the top concerns I get when I visit schools throughout my district is that we need to bring nature to our school yards and prepare them for future climate needs,” said LAUSD Board President Jackie Goldberg. “One of my first actions as Board President was to establish this committee to focus our attention on the urgent need for green solutions and to create needed transparency and accountability for this work.”

"I am so ready to continue this work," said Dr. Rivas "and help shape an agenda for LAUSD to lead on greening, sustainability and climate resilience". "Greening our schools is essential to meeting the climate crisis while nurturing our students and communities. We must ensure all of our schools have equitable opportunities to bring trees, gardens, water recapture, reusables, and so much more to their campuses."

"I am excited to serve on our new Greening and Climate Resilience Committee and further the District's efforts to green our campuses, lower our carbon footprint, and protect our planet." said Board Member Nick Melvoin. "LAUSD will continue to lead the way toward a greener and more sustainable future for our kids and school communities—and I look forward to helping us get there."

All Green Committee meetings will focus on a key target area, to allow for productive dialogue and effective work as a body. These efforts also support Pillar 2 of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan: [Joy and Wellness: Safe and Healthy Environments to Promote Joy and Wellness](#). Pillar 2A of the plan, Welcoming Learning Environments, specifies action to design and sustain welcoming, safe, environmentally friendly, affirming, and inclusive learning environments.

Said Claire Letane of Cal Poly Pomona, "I'm honored to serve the District on this committee, and look forward to exploring holistic solutions to climate resilience and health equity. The design of our schools and grounds can support public health, mental health, and climate justice, particularly when design comes from the community and works with natural systems. We can design schools that heal trauma, support learning, boost the immune system, cool the community, and inspire awe."

"Students and young people are key to winning a livable and just future for all of us." said Sunrise LA Hub Coordinator Nicolas Gardner-Serna. "Winning green schools would only lead to more climate victories in housing, transit, industry, and more. We are honored to be invited to sit on the Green Schools Committee; we are ready to use this position to champion a Green New Deal for LA Schools. We are excited to fight for a 100% fossil fuel-free LAUSD by 2030, a 100% electric bus fleet, green spaces for our students, healthy food for our communities, and strong Community Schools that pay education workers enough to live."

"I'm excited to work alongside Dr. Rivas to ensure that federal, state and district level investments to fight climate change and improve student outcomes also strengthen our communities by prioritizing employment and equity, especially for the districts most impacted environmental justice communities." said Héctor Huezo. "Together we can make the transition to a healthier and greener school district a just economic engine for working families in Los Angeles."

"I am pleased to be able to support the District as we work to build climate resilience into our school sites in ways that support health, equity, and environmental literacy for our students and the broader community." said Bevin Ashenmiller. "In particular, I look forward to making evidence-based and comprehensive changes to our school sites that improve the quality of the

school day for our students, teachers and staff, improving learning while reducing stress. As an LAUSD parent volunteer for over 15 years I am excited for this district-wide committee and the opportunity to make a difference for all students.”

The first meeting included an overview of District sustainability efforts, and a progress update on the 2040 goal of a [zero-emission school bus fleet](#), with a focus on electrifying school buses. Video of yesterday’s meeting may be found on the District’s YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@lausdboardmeetings>. The Committee will meet monthly.