Los Angeles Unified School District
Board of Education

Scott M. Schmerelson
Board Member, District 3

News Release

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LAUSD Board Recognizes Diwali throughout Los Angeles Schools

Los Angeles (November 14, 2023) - A resolution sponsored by Board Vice President Scott M. Schmerelson, co-sponsored by Board Members Melvoin, Goldberg, Ortiz-Franklin, and Gonez, and passed unanimously, was approved today, officially recognizing Diwali in the Los Angeles Unified School District for the first time.

The resolution recognizes the contributions of the South Asian community to California and the Los Angeles region while asking the superintendent to incorporate age-appropriate discussions and practices about South Asian heritage into the district curriculum.

“I am proud to have worked with the South Asian community around Los Angeles to bring forth this resolution,” said Board Vice President Scott M. Schmerelson. “This ensures the district stays ahead of the curve in recognizing Diwali, our South Asian Community, and the more than one billion people who observe this essential holiday.”

Carvalho:

“I wish a joyful Diwali to everyone in Los Angeles Unified who celebrates it,” said Board President Jackie Goldberg, “and hope that we all take a moment to consider how much richer we are for the presence of our South Asian students, families, community members, teachers, and other District staff.”

“Our diversity is our strength,” said Board Member Dr. Rivas. “Honoring Diwali and South Asian heritage is a way to celebrate the richness that permeates Los Angeles Unified schools and reminds us to bring light, value knowledge, and lead with love in challenging times.”

“Diwali celebrates the rich cultural legacy of South Asian people,” said Board Member Dr. George McKenna III. “Symbolizing light over dark, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance, it can serve as a guiding light in today’s times.”

“Wishing a happy Diwali and hoping that the festival of light brings joy, happiness, and prosperity to all who celebrate,” said Board Member Nick Melvoin. “We are proud to recognize the unique customs, contributions, and culture of our South Asian students, families, and employees and celebrate the rich diversity that makes LA Unified a better place.”

“We are excited to recognize and celebrate Diwali and to take this opportunity to appreciate the significant contributions of the South Asian community to the cultural, academic, and professional landscape of our city,” said Board Member Kelly Gonez. “By embracing and celebrating South Asian heritage, we foster an environment of inclusivity, understanding, and respect and make our community stronger and more vibrant for everyone.”

“Today and every day, we proudly honor the vibrant cultures and cherish the immense contributions of our Indian American and South Asian heritage communities within LA Unified,” Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin said. “Creating an environment where each person feels acknowledged and included is fundamental for our students to thrive in school as their full, authentic selves.”

“It is an honor to celebrate such a rich community that has had a significant impact in LA Unified,” said Student Board Member Karen Ramirez. “Our Indian and South Asian Americans are an integral part of our LA Unified community. I am proud to recognize an important part of their culture and identity. To all participating LA Unified teachers, staff, and fellow students: Happy Diwali!”

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