

El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Nov. 22, 2024 CONTACT: Maria Hernandez PHONE: (909) 447-2406

El Monte Union Students Chosen to Join L.A. County Superintendent's Student Advisory Council

EL MONTE – Four El Monte Union students have been selected from a competitive pool of applicants to serve on the 2024-25 Los Angeles County Superintendent Dr. Debra Duardo's Student Advisory Council, providing them with a leadership platform to engage in meaningful conversations on critical issues in public education.

Rosemead High School (RHS) senior Alexis DiPrima, junior Van Do, and Mountain View High School (MVHS) junior Alejandro Dena and sophomore Noah Reyes have joined fellow student leaders across Los Angeles County public high schools on the council. The group meets virtually every quarter throughout the 2024-25 school year to discuss and influence decisions on key educational topics, including educational equity, student well-being, and the overall quality of our schools.

"The voices of our students are essential to shaping the future of education and creating positive change in our communities," said Duardo. "Our Student Advisory Council demonstrates the power of student leadership, providing invaluable insights and inspiring actions that ensure we are meeting the needs of all students. I am deeply grateful for their courage, creativity, and commitment to advocacy."

During its first meeting in September, the council discussed vaping prevention, inclusion for special education and LGBTQ+ students, and training to help peers recognize signs of grooming. The group began planning initiatives, including a "Know Your Educational Rights" campaign for immigrant students and a year-end Student Empowerment Summit, where students will present reform proposals to educational leaders and officials, at its Nov. 20 meeting.

DiPrima, an American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) California Girls State delegate, has dedicated her high school career to fostering inclusion, supporting students with disabilities, and uplifting her community. She founded and leads Rosemead High's Hispanic Youth Leadership Council, is creating a Districtwide special education inclusion council, and serves as vice president of Sisters Achieving Greatness Art Truth Health & Service Club, which promotes breast cancer awareness and volunteerism. A consistent contributor to Key Club and the California Scholarship Federation, DiPrima is also launching V.U.E.L.A. (Visionaries Uniting and Empowering Leaders of America), a nonprofit offering free mentorship and advocacy training for students.

"As a freshman, I noticed an achievement gap within my Hispanic culture, which inspired me to make a change," DiPrima said. "I also have a sister with autism and I've felt the need to be her voice. I believe youth advocacy is crucial, and I want to help others find ways to serve their communities locally and on a larger scale."

Van Do, who moved to the U.S. from Vietnam at age nine, has demonstrated resilience and a commitment to leadership and service, serving as RHS Associated Student Body (ASB) treasurer since her freshman year and as a Link Crew leader.

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Currently, she is in the interview process to become an ALA California Girls State delegate alongside DiPrima. In her spare time, Do enjoys baking for friends and classmates and credits journaling with helping her manage school and personal stresses.

"I'm so grateful for my Link Crew leader, who took the time to uplift me during my loss, kept my passion alive, and helped me find my path and choose the clubs I wanted to join," Do said. "Without their support, I wouldn't be where I am today. Many people in power talk about change without following through, so I'm thankful for this opportunity to serve, raise awareness on critical issues, and offer the same support I received to others."

Dena has a passion for academics, leadership, and has participated in the Dual Enrollment and Harvey Mudd Upward Bound programs since his freshman year. He also completed an internship with Scripps Research, focusing on biology and the human brain, though his primary interest is political science. Dena serves as president of Pacific Horizons, a club that celebrates cultural diversity and inclusivity at MVHS, and is president of the school site council. He is also a varsity tennis player and a silver medalist in the school's Academic Decathlon team.

"I've always loved learning about political systems and the geography of different countries," Dena said. "When I learned about the countries of the world, I started following global news more closely. I am grateful for the chance to speak with influential people and students across the county to understand local government functions and the steps to make real change and help others."

Reyes' passion for representing his community and supporting students struggling with mental health is what motivated him to apply for the council. As a dedicated member of his school's ASB, Reyes credits his peers for inspiring him to get involved and become a student leader.

"I've enjoyed working with the diverse members of the Student Advisory Council," Reyes said. "During our first meeting, it was clear that everyone, from county leaders to students, was open and eager to address our challenges. As students, it's important that we're part of the solution and that our voices are heard because we're the ones who experience these daily struggles."

Outside of academics, Reyes cares for his baby brother, builds friendships through skateboarding, and actively seeks new clubs to join. He is focused on continual personal growth and reaching his post-secondary goals, with a passion for making a difference in his life.

"We are incredibly proud of Alexis, Van, Alejandro, and Noah for earning a place on this influential council," El Monte Union Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. "Their passion and commitment to advocacy are truly inspiring, and I am confident they will represent their school and our District well as they work to make meaningful changes."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

EMUHSD LACOE SAC REPS 1: From left: Rosemead High School senior Alexis DiPrima and junior Van Do have been selected to serve on the 2024-25 Los Angeles County Superintendent Dr. Debra Duardo's Student Advisory Council. The council meets quarterly throughout the school year to engage in meaningful conversations on critical issues in public education.

EMUHSD LACOE SAC REPS 2: From left: Mountain View High School sophomore Noah Reyes and junior Alejandro Dena have been selected to serve as representatives on the 2024-25 Los Angeles County Superintendent Dr. Debra Duardo's Student Advisory Council.

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The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.