



PRESS RELEASE

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El Monte Union Celebrates Swearing-In of New 2025-26 Student Board Members

EL MONTE – The El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD) Board of Trustees made history in the District by expanding student representation with the swearing-in of two Student Board Members, Ashley Yu and Tessa Ocegueda, for the 2025-26 school year at the District's Aug. 6 Board meeting.

Yu and Ocegueda, both South El Monte High School students, will represent the voice of nearly 7,200 EMUHSD students. They step into newly-created leadership roles, with Yu serving as Student Board Member President and Ocegueda as Vice President. Both will continue their service on the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, where they served last school year.

"We have a lot of new goals for next year, and I am excited about what the year will become," said Yu, a senior. "As a 17-year-old student, I want to see real changes that are seen and felt from our student body across all school sites."

Yu has a history of fulfilling leadership roles both at her school and in the District, previously serving on the School Site Council, Local Control and Accountability Plan Committee, and as South El Monte High's Class of 2026 president – a role she has held for three years. She also serves as vice president of her school's Future Business Leaders of America chapter and has served on the newly-launched Best Buddies club on campus, which fosters inclusive student connections across ability levels. Yu credits her passion for advocacy to her year in the Pacific Century Institute's Project Bridge, a yearlong program that builds cultural awareness, leadership skills, and understanding of Korean culture and history.

Yu said her goal is to amplify student voices across all campuses and ensure that District efforts positively impact all students, not just those in leadership roles.

"Having a student representative is one of the most important roles any school district can have," Yu said. "At the end of the day, students are the ones impacted by the decisions made by adults, and those decisions should be shaped with our voices in mind."

Ocegueda is also an active student leader at South El Monte High, serving as the junior class and Class of 2027 Club president, and an Associated Student Body member. As a campus leader, she helps plan major events, including homecoming, spirit weeks, and prom.

"My goal is to create an inclusive environment where students feel confident to express their needs. I also hope to expand the efforts of our yearly resolutions," said Ocegueda, adding her goal of creating a Districtwide "Jean Day" to raise awareness and show support for survivors of sexual assault.

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After high school, Yu plans to study international relations and is exploring careers related to business, trade, or global politics. Ocegueda said she is inspired by a future in public service and plans to pursue a law degree and eventually become an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union. She is currently considering applying to several University of California and Ivy League institutions.

"Our student board members play a critical role in shaping our District's direction by providing authentic, student-centered feedback on important decisions," Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. "We are proud to welcome Ashley and Tessa to these positions of leadership and look forward to the valuable contributions they will bring to the Board and community."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

EMUHSD NEW STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS 1: South El Monte High School rising senior Ashley Yu (left) and rising junior Tessa Ocegueda (right) were sworn in as new Student Board Members during El Monte Union's Board of Trustees meeting on Aug. 6, marking the first time two students were chosen to fulfill the role.

EMUHSD NEW STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS 2: Newly sworn-in Student Board Members Ashley Yu (center right) and Tessa Ocegueda (center left) celebrate a historic moment with their families during the Aug. 6 Board of Trustees meeting, as they begin their roles advocating for student needs and policies alongside El Monte Union Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga (far right).

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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.