

Los Angeles Unified School District
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
333 S. Beaudry Ave., 24th floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: (213) 241-6766
FAX: (213) 241-8952
www.lausd.net



News Release

CONTACT:
Shannon Haber, 213.241.6766

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 18, 2017

#16/17-207

L.A. Unified Recognizes April As Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide of 1915

LOS ANGELES— The Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution Tuesday to observe the Armenian Genocide of 1915 in April.

It is estimated that over 2 million Christians of Armenian, Greek and Assyrian descent were systematically deported and executed by the Ottoman government from 1915-23. Until this day, the Republic of Turkey, among other nation states, continues to negate statements that these crimes against humanity took place.

However, the state of California and L.A. Unified are at the forefront of promoting a curriculum relating to human rights and genocide to educate future generations.

"It is essential that L.A. Unified join in recognizing April as the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide of 1915," said Board Member Mónica Ratliff, sponsor of the resolution. "The 1.5 million people, women, men, children, and babies who were marched to their death or slaughtered must not be forgotten."

She added, "The relief efforts of the Near East Relief organization, which saved approximately 1 million refugees, including 130,000 orphans, must also be remembered. We must ensure that our students learn the truth about the Armenian Genocide, what they can do to prevent such crimes against humanity from occurring in their world, and how they can provide assistance when such a tragedy occurs."

Board President Steve Zimmer agreed with her. "We will not stop fighting until the Armenian Genocide is fully acknowledged by the federal government and fully recognized by the Republic of Turkey," he said. "This is a cause we will not stop fighting for. April 24 has become a very important day in L.A. Unified and in our country."

"We stand in support of the commemoration of the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, and underscore the importance for students to study history with accuracy," said School Board Vice President Dr. George J. McKenna III.

(MORE)

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE 2-2-2-2-2

#16/17-207

Dr. Kay Mouradian, author of *My Mother's Voice*, a book about her family's experience during the Armenian Genocide, which became a film, addressed the board and said, "I appreciate you recognizing the Armenian Genocide. What people do not realize is that the Armenian Genocide was the template for the Holocaust." She added, "It is important for text books to give the correct information about the Armenian Genocide."

"We have seen the danger in 'alternative facts' and misinformation," said School Board Member Mónica García. "Displacement, expulsion, and inequity have been a common thread amongst the most resilient communities in our world," said "We support age appropriate dissemination of historical facts so that the atrocities of the past will no longer occur in the future."

"Commemoration of the Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide is always a somber occasion but one that we can never ignore," said Board Member Scott Schmerelson. "We simply cannot allow the possibility of similar crimes against humanity by failing to teach, discuss, and understand how religious and ethnic intolerance led to the state-sanctioned genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Armenian people by the Ottoman government in 1915."

Added Board Member Dr. Ref Rodriguez, "It is critical to acknowledge past wrongs in order to protect the future. I am proud to support Armenian students and their families in L.A. Unified so that we may build a better future together and prevent such atrocities from ever happening again."

###