



2026-2027 Executive Board Candidate Selection Committee

RECOMMENDED CANDIDATES

Name: Esther Mejia

District: El Rancho Unified School District

Position: President (One-year term)

My name is Esther Mejia, Board Vice President of El Rancho USD. Since 2023, I have proudly served LACSTA as Chair of the Nominations Committee (now Candidate Review Committee), Director, and currently Secretary/Treasurer. I also bring six years of school board experience, including service as President, Vice President, and Clerk, and I am a CSBA MIG alumna.

I am running for President because I believe deeply in LACSTA's core values: equitable access and opportunity for all students, high-quality public education, and strong local control. I strive to put these values into action through thoughtful advocacy and meaningful collaboration. As Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much," a belief that reflects the power of LACSTA to unite trustees in service of our students.

If elected, I will build on the strong foundation laid by past leadership by collaborating with the executive board to bring in impactful guest speakers who address district challenges; continue to partner with CSBA; elevate awareness of LACOE's extensive resources; and reintroduce a leadership academy to enhance trustee effectiveness and support strong governance. I would be honored to earn your support.

Name: Neda Farid

District: Glendale Unified School District

Position: Directors 6-10 (Two-year term)

I am interested in serving as a LACSTA Director because I believe in the power of the collective voice and understand the importance of engaging with fellow trustees to maximize our opportunities and better understand the needs of member districts to ensure that we are providing information, training and resources that are relevant and student centered.

My greatest strength has been my unwavering decades-long commitment to making public education accessible to all and to maintaining public trust by ensuring all stakeholders have a seat at the table. I value affiliate partnerships such as CSBA and also work closely with a strong network of community and non-profit organizations, civic leaders, higher education institutions, local businesses and government agencies to ensure that we maintain the highest standards for California students.

I am responsive to the needs of the community I serve and am a strong communicator. These skills will serve me well if elected as Director. Additionally, I serve in leadership roles on the boards of widely recognized civic, nonprofit, arts, and philanthropic organizations across Southern California and enjoy robust participation on various committees that serve the public across a spectrum of sectors, particularly students from underserved and immigrant populations.

Name: Michael Hooper Jr.

District: Compton Unified School District

Position: Directors 6-10 (Two-year term)

I am Michael Hooper, Vice President of the Compton Unified School District Board of Trustees and a lifelong resident committed to advancing student success and strengthening public education across Los Angeles County. My professional experience as a Los Angeles County DCFS Social Worker, member of SEIU 721, combined with over 18 years of private-sector leadership, has shaped my ability to lead with collaboration, accountability, and a deep commitment to equity.

I hold a Master of Social Work from California State University, Long Beach, where I developed a strong foundation in culturally responsive practice, ethical leadership, and systems-level thinking. Throughout my tenure, I have worked closely with educators, families, and community partners to expand access to high-quality programs, including STEM education, career pathways, and whole-child supports that address both academic and mental health needs.

As a candidate for Director of the Los Angeles County School Trustees Association, I will bring a collaborative mindset, strategic vision, and a results-driven approach. I am committed to strengthening communication among districts, elevating best practices, and advocating for policies that support student achievement and long-term sustainability. Together, we can ensure a unified and impactful voice for public education.

Name: Anthony Hunt

District: Palmdale Unified School District

Position: Directors 6-10 (Two-year term)

As a dedicated Board Member for the Palmdale School District and a leader in K-14 education, I am honored to announce my candidacy for Director. With a professional background in K-14 educational leadership and a proven track record of governance, I am prepared to amplify the voices of our county's trustees and the diverse communities we represent.

During my tenure, I have helped champion initiatives to modernize facilities, enhance student safety, and secure vital funding for classroom technology. My work has always been rooted in creating inclusive environments where both students and educators can thrive. Now, I seek to amplify the voices of trustees across the nation's largest county. As your director, my priorities will include:

- Strengthening our collective influence in Sacramento to ensure our districts receive the resources and local control they deserve.
- Expanding mentorship and professional development to help board members navigate the complexities of modern governance.
- Elevating the conversation around mental health resources and fiscal stewardship for students and staff countywide.

I believe our strength lies in collaboration. By standing united, we can build a more equitable and resilient educational landscape for all of Los Angeles County. I humbly ask for your vote to serve as a director.

Name: Ellen Park

District: Rowland Unified School District

Position: Directors 6-10 (Two-year term)

I am honored to be considered as a candidate for LACSTA. With nearly four decades in public education, I have dedicated my career to serving students, families, and communities through leadership, collaboration, and innovation. I have served as a teacher, bilingual coordinator, assistant principal, and principal (LAUSD & HLPUSD) and currently as a Board Member for the Rowland Unified School District. Throughout my career, I have worked to expand equitable access to high-quality programs, including dual language immersion and college- and career-readiness pathways.

I bring strong leadership, strategic planning, and relationship-building skills to this position. My experience working across diverse communities and educational systems (including serving on the CAFE Korean and APIBSMA) has strengthened my ability to listen, advocate, and build consensus around shared goals. I am deeply committed to supporting educators and ensuring that all students have opportunities to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

If elected, I hope to strengthen LACSTA by increasing member engagement, expanding professional development opportunities, and fostering stronger partnerships across schools and communities. I also aim to elevate the voice of educators in shaping policies that impact teaching and learning. I would be honored to serve and contribute to the continued growth and impact of LACSTA.

Name: Aaron Simental

District: Bassett Unified School District

Position: Directors 6-10 (Two-year term)

I've had the pleasure of serving as Bassett USD's LACSTA Representative for the last four years, the entirety of my current term of office. I've had the honor to serve on the LACSTA Executive Board for the last two years as a Director. During this time, I've served on the legislative affairs and bylaws committee, currently serving as bylaws chairperson. This is in addition to serving as an officer of my Board (currently second term as president, previous vice president and clerk), and serving on the CSBA Delegate Assembly and on the inaugural Board of the LA County LGBTQ Elected Officials Association. These roles have shown me the importance of community building outside our local districts. I've grown so much as a trustee from learning from my colleagues outside my area, to understand best practices and words of caution. If reelected as a Director, I hope to continue the remarkable work of the E-Board team in ensuring LACSTA continues as a reliable professional network and resource for our county's trustees. I'd also like to explore how we can position LACSTA with the LACOE Superintendent's Student Leadership Advisory Council and our school district student board members/ community college district student trustees.