The TORRANCE TEACHER

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I Am...Trustworthy

TTA Launches Effort to Reclaim the Respect and Dignity We Deserve

What are we doing? We are standing together in solidarity to reclaim our identity as professionals and as unique individuals, deserving of dignity and respect. To do so, the Association sent out "I AM..." signs for members to join in an affirmation of all our roles as crucial members of the professional educator community.

Association leaders are asking for members to show pride in our work and our professional calling by standing together and proclaiming who we are and why we matter to our students, our colleagues, and our schools. Members are asked to customize their sign by adding their own chosen descriptors to the empty space on the "I AM..." sheet, to let everyone know who we are!

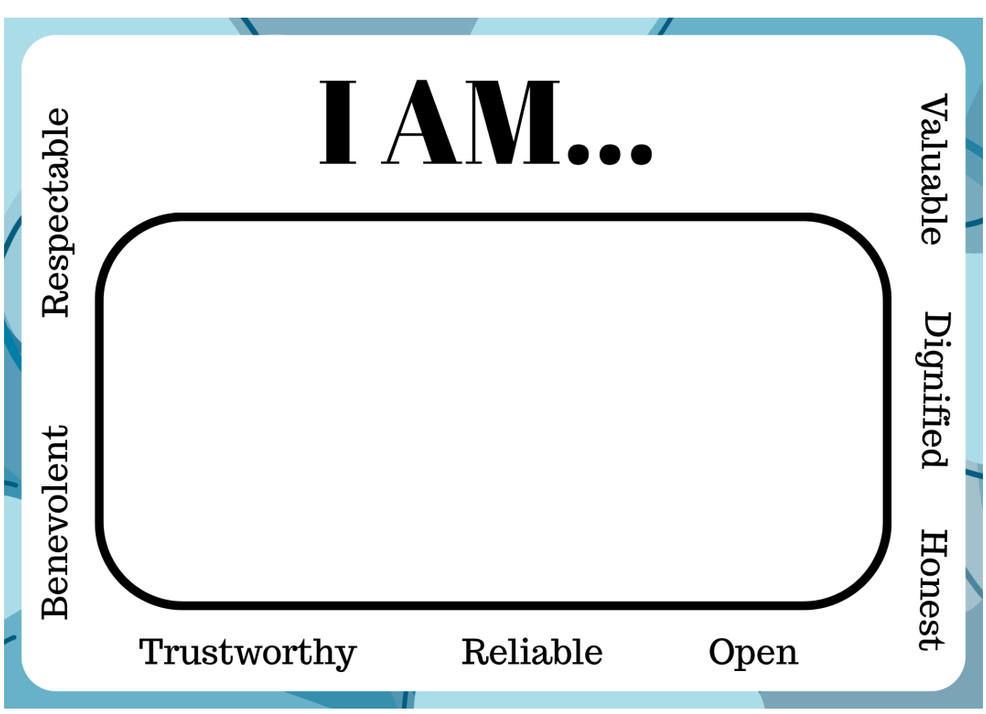
What does it mean? By affirming our identity as professional educators, we stand together to push back on the pervasive culture of fear and imbalance of power in TUSD. We are pushing back against the dismissiveness and disrespect we encounter every day. We are pushing back against the double standards that prevail in every aspect of our workplace, especially in the areas of discipline and accountability.

By pushing back, we are reclaiming our rightful place as stakeholders. We assert ourselves as valued partners in the education of our students and as experts on how best to serve them. We are reclaiming our status as respected members of our school community. And we are reclaiming our importance as trusted advisors and guides in the lives of our students.

Why does it matter? For too long, TUSD has been building a culture based on the notion that administrators and consultants know what our students need batter than we do. We have been subjected to a culture of fear, where decisions are made from the top-down, by district and site administrators, and deviation from those decisions has resulted in disrespect, retaliation, and even punishment.

We must stand together to push back against this culture. We must stand together to foster a workplace built on relational trust and psychological safety, where all stakeholders are treated as competent, open, honest, benevolent, and trustworthy. We must stand together to reclaim our identity as professionals and as educators from those who dismiss and undermine us. TUSD claims that they are "committed to providing a safe, secure, and respectful working and learning environment for all staff, students, parents, guardians, and visitors." They further say that they "will take action on every reported act of violence, threats, harassment, or intimidation within our schools or during school-related activities" (pg. 1, Workplace Violence Prevention Plan). It is up to us to hold them accountable to their commitment.

The ask: Work with your site reps to get an "I AM..." sign and attend the event where all will take a picture together. We will also boycott the November 2nd school board meeting, but rally at the December 14th school board meeting, the first meeting with the new school board member. We will welcome the school board with our signs. Talk to your site reps to learn more.



Quick Hits

Over & Under Payment for Sick Leave Incentive. TUSD recently informed TTA that nearly 500 members were impacted by either an under or overpayment for the annual sick leave incentive payment on the October 5th pay warrant. TUSD should be notifying impacted members about repayment plans for repayments of between $50-$300. TUSD said that they plan to set up repayment plans over 1-2 payments, and that if there is a need for alternatives to contact payroll. Members who were short of pay (again of payments between $50-$300) should see a correction on upcoming warrants.

The sick leave incentive program is established in contract language in Article XXIV: Health and Welfare Benefits (page 78). The language says, "An incentive program shall reward members of the bargaining unit at the rate of $50 per day of unused sick leave for any days that remain above 4 of the 10 accrued for the year. The maximum reward for an individual will be $300. The reward program shall be known as 'The Sick Leave Incentive Program' and payments will be issued by the October pay warrant. Any donation of sick days to the Catastrophic Leave Bank will not affect participation in this program provided the unit member donates sick days accrued in years other than the current year."

This is the second year in a row that pay for the incentive program has not gone as planned. Last year, the payments didn't run until later in the fall semester. This year, according to Chris Diaz, TUSD Executive Director of Finance, a glitch in the accounting software caused over and underpayment. Hopefully, after TUSD switches to the updated payroll system this year, we can avoid issues with the incentive in the future.

Organizing Team: The TTA Organizing Team will meet on Thursday, November 12th at 4:15 PM at the TTA Office. The OT will be working on the "I AM…" campaign and next steps for supporting Negotiations.

Workplace Violence Prevention Program: The TUSD Workplace Violence Prevention Plan was established in July of 2024 in response to state law updates (SB 553). The plan is supposed to be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Because of the increase in violent behaviors on campuses across the district (and the nation), TTA leaders recommend that members review the plan. The plan is a five page document and an accompanying slide deck. There is also a link to a form where members can report instances of workplace violence. TTA leaders further recommend that members use the report form. Even TUSD says that they want employees "to understand the importance of reporting" (pg. 3, Workplace Violence Prevention Plan). The reports are collected and then referred to the appropriate department by the Risk Management office. TUSD says that communication is designed to encourage an open interaction without fear of retaliation. Part of the plan is to hold annual training. TTA has alerted the District that we are encouraging our members to use the plan to document their safety concerns and that too many employees do not know about or understand the plan. TUSD has said they plan to make it part of the annual notices at the beginning of every year moving forward. To find the plan, visit the TUSD portal. Go to the Quick Links column on the homepage of the portal. About 2/3rd of the way down the column is a link to the plan's landing page with copies of the plan and report form.

Heat Mitigation Task Force: At the October 12th Board of Education meeting, Dr. Keith Butler announced the creation of a Heat Mitigation Task Force (HMTF) to "improve learning environments in TUSD." Dr. Butler set the focus of the group to work "The Hot Spots Project" to improve the hottest learning spaces at each of the 31 school sites. The first meetings have been dedicated to hiring a firm for project management. Once the firm has been hired then the group will monitor the project design, deliverables and results during the next 10 months with a goal of completion by August 2027.

Midterm Elections 2026

How to help with the November Election



Ryan Rauzon
TUSD Board of Ed
Area D



Sara Deen
Assembly
District 66



John Erickson
State Senate
District 24



Richard Barrera
Superintendent
of Public Instruction



Proposition 3

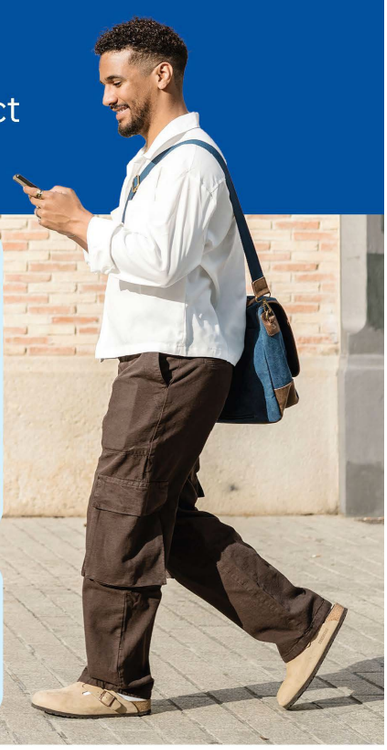
10/31—Canvassing with Ryan Rauzon (4620 Highgrove Ave, Torrance 90505, 10:00 AM)
10/31—Tabling with Torrance Democratic Club @ Torrance Farmer's Market (9-11 or 11-1)
Between now and November 3: VOTE!

For more information on each of the campaigns, visit: electryanr.com, saradeenforca.com, johnerickson4senate.com, barreraforedu.com, and yesprop3ca.com.



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