January 6, 2020

Dear TUSD Community and Colleagues,

It’s remarkable to think half the school year is behind the US in TUSD and 2020 has arrived. It’s even more notable to recognize the efforts of our students, staff, and District. Our collective work has never been as critical as it is now—at a time where our students and families may face obstacles that prevent them from connecting to school, accessing resources, and taking advantage of opportunities to advance learning, support social-emotional needs, and increase parent engagement. My ultimate challenge, and greatest joy, is helping stakeholders make these connections so everyone wins and TUSD makes good on our commitment to serve students.

Equity has moved to the forefront of our efforts in TUSD. School & District staff have come to recognize the term as one that exemplifies fairness and justness, or leveling the playfield for all, and touches every aspect of education—curriculum, learning, mental health, technology, safety & security, and meals & transportation, contributing to the success of our young people. Understanding the unique needs of all students is imperative in providing a comprehensive, relevant, and equitable educational experience. Unfortunately, stress in young people is real. It is often very difficult for them to separate from difficulties they face when they arrive to school, no matter how hard they try or wish was possible. As one of many leaders in TUSD working on behalf of students, my colleagues and I remain committed to supporting all students in their pursuit of a positive educational experience with additional time and attention given to mindfulness and the power of presence and reflection.

The second half of the 2019-20 school year will include increased attention and information related to the benefits of mindfulness with the intent to create a moment of mindfulness at every site for the 2020-21 school year. Our internal efforts this past year have been focused and intentional, beginning with staff to garner their belief and support for our future mindful work with students. TUSD’s Student Support Clinicians have been leading this charge in staff meetings at schools and departments. Their efforts, combined with site and District leadership this spring, will continue as well as heightened emphasis from our Chief Communication Coordinator. Our students matter most—and accommodating their needs is our greatest challenge and work. Providing them with a life-skill that prepares them to tackle, cope, and conquer life’s obstacles is meaningful and timely. Personally and professionally, I believe our efforts cannot start soon enough so I am thankful for the efforts of my colleagues and your anticipated support to foster such skills every day.

I’ve said it many times before, and I’ll reiterate the same—every student deserves our best efforts and attention. Students and parents expect this of us because it’s the path we chose to serve and prepare young people. As a mother of three TUSD alumni and very soon, all college graduates, I’m confident in the educational experience TUSD offers, including the opportunities we afford all students; moving forward however, our efforts will concentrate on creating access for all students. Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to sharing time together during our spring events, including March’s Festival on the Green, April’s Student & Staff Recognition Evening, and May’s commencements. In the meantime, please consider volunteering at your student’s respective school to support ALL students—the Get Involved section of our websites can assist you.

Sincerely,

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