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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Torrance Education Foundation Awards \$50,000 in STEM Grants to Teachers 65 Grants to TUSD Teachers for Science, Technology, Math, and Engineering Projects

Torrance, CA - \$50,000 in grants from Torrance Education Foundation (TEF) will support 65 STEM related learning projects at Torrance Unified School District (TUSD) schools during the 2017-2018 Academic Year.

Lead Teachers for each project have just received notification of their grants. Grants support projects at all grade levels from Kindergarten through High School. Applications were open to all teachers in Torrance Unified School District. Grant funds will pay for materials and supplies, competition entry fees, and in one case will even purchase a competition robot.

All funded projects provide extracurricular learning that complements classroom activities for students in the STEM disciplines: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Dr. Chad Mabery, President of the TEF Board of Directors, states, "Our STEM Initiative helps teachers build excitement around STEM subjects by giving students more hands-on experience. It also gives teachers a chance to collaborate so that more students can benefit. Mastering STEM subjects is crucial for student success today, so all of us at TEF are delighted this program has seen such strong growth."

"The Torrance Education Foundation's focus on enhancing and expanding STEM learning opportunities for all our students is to be commended," says Superintendent Dr. George Mannon. "State funding for school districts always falls short and TEF helps us fill that gap. TEF has become the catalysts through which the District has been able to strengthen and grow many of our STEM programs, such as the elementary science labs project."

"I would like to thank the thousands of parents and our business community for continuing to invest in our students through their ongoing support of TEF. It is because of your generosity that our teachers are able to have the tools they need to better engage our students. We are extremely grateful for our enduring, strong partnership with TEF."

#### About the STEM Initiative Grants

Now in its 4<sup>th</sup> cycle, the TEF STEM grants were launched in 2014 to provide teachers with financial support for new and sustainable STEM learning opportunities for K-12 TUSD students that promote collaboration among all schools.

The STEM Initiative has experienced robust growth each year since 2014, with total grants expanding 712% and numbers of schools participating doubling in four years.

2014	24 grants	\$ 21,000	13 schools
2015	31 grants	25,500	16 schools
2016	48 grants	39,500	21 schools
2017	<u>65 grants</u>	<u>50,000</u>	24 schools
Totals to date	168 grants	\$136,000	

Initially focused on only five prescribed programs, growth in interest and participation has led to the addition of two more target programs and a new pilot program, for a current total of eight:

After-school Engineering Clubs  
CyberPatriots Coding Club

Robotics, incorporating FIRST Lego League  
and TorBots, TUSD's flagship robotics club

Family STEM Night  
Hour of Code  
Math Counts

Science Olympiad  
Stellar Explorers\*

\* pilot round

The TEF STEM Initiative Grants Program is open to all teachers in TUSD with an interest in promoting STEM subject learning. Applications are accepted each fall, soon after the school year begins, for qualifying expenses to coordinate and execute one of the targeted activities. Interested TUSD teachers should contact Torrance Education Foundation for more information.

### **About Torrance Education Foundation**

Torrance Education Foundation (TEF) promotes and supports academic excellence for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students in the Torrance Unified School District. TEF recognizes outstanding teachers and education contributors; develops strategic alliances with business organizations, parents and the community; supports innovation and curiosity; and champions an inspirational, well-rounded education for all students served by the TUSD. Founded in 1992, TEF is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity. In partnership with Torrance Unified School District and the community, TEF gathers and channels financial support from Torrance families, businesses and area philanthropies to ensure that all students have access to the widest variety of exciting, cutting-edge, enriching educational and learning opportunities.

In the past five years, TEF has provided major funding totaling more than \$2 million to TUSD. In addition to the annual STEM Initiative Grant Awards, recent TEF support for TUSD includes \$164,000 to equip the first four Elementary Science Labs built and now up and running at Evelyn Carr, Edison, Lincoln and Yukon Elementary Schools. Fundraising continues for Phases II and III, to equip the 13 remaining elementary schools labs being constructed in 2017 and 2018. Other recent projects supported have included: (1) acquiring, installing and maintaining WiFi technology in all TUSD schools; (2) building out and equipping a computer learning laboratory at the TUSD District office for faculty, staff and others; and (3) underwriting the cost of teacher training in literacy, math, and science for elementary, middle and high school teachers, including placing substitute instructors in all classrooms during the months when TUSD teachers were attending the mandated training courses.

In partnership with local businesses and family sponsors, TEF annually provides college scholarships to graduates from all five District High Schools, as well as financial support for a wide variety of District needs, including but not limited to Academic Decathlon teams, middle school leadership workshops, and direct support for myriad school-based projects and priorities.

TEF also operates tuition-based summer school for Torrance Area students. Since 2009, the TEF-owned South Bay Enrichment Academy has enrolled more than 1,500 Torrance area children each summer in fully WASC-accredited summer school for grades K-12.

### **About Torrance Unified School District**

Torrance Unified School District (TUSD), established in 1947 and unified in 1948, includes 17 elementary, 8 middle, and 4 high schools, 1 continuation school and 1 alternative high school. The District also has 3 adult school campuses and 1 pre-school for children with special needs.

TUSD is nestled in the South Bay, in the western part of Los Angeles County. TUSD is bordered by the Palos Verdes Peninsula on the south, cities of Redondo Beach and Gardena to the west and north, and the city of Carson on the East. The District encompasses all of the city of Torrance. The District's jurisdiction includes approximately 21 square miles.

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