

Thornton Fractional District 215
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Thornton Fractional North High School Awarded \$20,000 Grant to Support English Language Learners

Lansing, IL: Symetra Life Insurance Company is awarding \$20,000 to TF North High School through their Symetra Heroes in the Classroom MVP Award. The “MVP Award” grant will increase support for the school’s growing population of English Language Learners (ELLs) and their families. The funds will be used to add 75 new tablets to classrooms, purchase flexible seating to promote collaborative learning, and address needs of ELL families through community outreach and after school resources such as English and naturalization classes, career training, and job fairs. The goal of the outreach programs is to bridge language and cultural barriers in order to build relationships between ELL families and the school. TF North principal Brian Rucinski said, “I’m extremely excited about the opportunities that this money will provide to our ELL students and families. We are so grateful for Symetra’s generosity and support.”

TF North is one of only two nationwide recipients of the grant, and became eligible to apply for it when math teacher Erik Perez won the Symetra Chicago Bears Heroes in the Classroom Award earlier this year. The Symetra Heroes in the Classroom Award is a community program that recognizes 16 Chicago-area teachers during the Chicago Bears season for outstanding leadership and instructional skills. Criteria for the award includes a teacher who makes a real difference in the life of students, goes above and beyond in day-to-day responsibilities, and helps students build life skills. Mr. Perez teaches Algebra and Geometry, coaches Cross Country, and sponsors the Dreamers Club at TF North. As part of the Heroes in the Classroom Award, TF North received a \$2000 donation, and Mr. Perez got tickets and a VIP sideline experience to a Chicago Bears home game.

Dr. Sophia Jones-Redmond, incoming Superintendent of District 215, noted, “It is outstanding news that TF North is a recipient of this grant, and I commend Principal Rucinski, Mr. Perez, and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Dr. Rena Whitten for their collaboration on the application. Thornton Fractional District 215 extends a heartfelt thank you to Symetra for this generous award, and we look forward to utilizing the funds to better serve our ELL students and families.”

About Thornton Fractional High School District 215: District 215 serves the students of Burnham, Calumet City, Lansing, and Lynwood at Thornton Fractional North High School, Thornton Fractional South High School, Thornton Fractional Center for Academics and Technology, and Thornton Fractional Center for Alternative Learning. The mission of District 215 is to provide diverse learning opportunities that inspire all students to become life-long learners who contribute to their community.

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