



Texas Association of Community Schools

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A TIME TO REMEMBER

This week, our country will remember that eventful day fifteen years ago when our nation was shaken by the terrorist act that resulted in the falling of the Twin Towers in New York City, the attack from the air on our Pentagon, and the tragic but heroic efforts of the passengers on United Flight 93 that crashed in a Pennsylvania field rather than finding its planned target in Washington, D.C. The numbers 9-1-1 have taken on a new meaning since that fateful day!

The Texas public school family is very large and diverse. Since those learning and working in public schools in Texas range from Pre-K to adults, our remembrance of that awful Tuesday morning vary. While very few public school students today have any memory of the events of the day, we adults have a reaction that may be influenced by our age. Those who were teaching then can probably remember vividly where they were and what they were doing as they heard the news of the planes flying into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Important historical events have a way of burning themselves on our memories! For those who were students on that fateful day, the memories may revolve more around the teacher or administrator who broke the news, the emotions that they shared, and the fear that events such as these can evoke.

The memories of the day and the meaning of the events are deeply personal and individual. While we know that every American was changed that day, there are no words to explain exactly what the changes were because the impact was different for each person. Some lost friends or family. Some lost our innocence with the realization that our country was not immune to the violence and hate that had affected other parts of the world. Others felt anger and a need for revenge for the blatant attack on our nation and to our way of life. We all grieved a bit with the realization that future generations of Americans would never really know of a carefree and worry free life that many Americans enjoyed prior to 9-11.

Life is different now than it was before the attacks. There was a time that air passengers were not required to remove their shoes before boarding a plane. The words "Afghanistan" and "Iraq" had no personal meaning "once upon a time". Many people might not have been surprised if the attack on our nation had come from Russia, China, or some other world power. Al-Qeda, and now ISIS, have become new words in our citizens' lexicon.

The events of fifteen years ago, however, brought new meaning to the word "hero". Policemen, firefighters, and other first responders distinguished themselves and earned a place of honor in our hearts because of their determined and dedicated service to their brothers and sisters in NYC, Washington, D.C., and in that field in Pennsylvania. Almost 3,000 people died and over 6,000 were injured in the deadliest incident for firefighters and law enforcement officers in the history of the United States. It is important that as a nation we never forget the sacrifices of those who perished or of the first responders. After fifteen years, it is easy to forget the pride we all felt on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, in the heroic work of not only the first responders in the targeted areas, but of the heroic efforts of the first responders in every American city and village.

Through it all, it is good to remember on this fifteenth anniversary of 9-11-01 the people in our lives who are important to us. I am thankful to be blessed with a wonderful family, the freedoms afforded in our country, and I am thankful that each of you have dedicated yourselves to helping build a better state and nation through educating all of our children!

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America!

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Anyone who is unaware that an election is looming has either been sleeping as soundly as Rip Van Winkle or is so focused on work they may be headed for a breakdown. You have heard the names Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, right? Isn't it hard to believe that we will be electing a new President of the United States in only nine weeks?

We are not only electing a President on that day, however. In addition to that important election, voting on all of the U.S. and state representatives will occur as well as some of our U.S. and state senators. Additionally, several other state officers as well as local county officials will be elected. In fact, many of you will have school board elections and school bond votes on the day. November 8, 2016, will be an important date for our country, our state, and our counties!

Are you registered to vote in this election? Is your staff registered? How about your students who are old enough to vote – are they registered? As TACS and Texas Educators Vote work to create a culture of informed voting among the 700,000+ individuals who earn a living in our state’s public schools, we need **your** help.

What might your help look like? (1.) Encourage your staff who are not registered to [register to vote](#). They have until October 11th to register for voting in this election. You might even have the registration cards available for them. (2.) Provide your staff with information regarding the candidates’ platforms and positions. The information can be found at texaseducatorsvote.com. Especially direct them to the [League of Women Voters](#) information and the [Teach the Vote](#) website. Both of these resources are informative and easy to use. (3.) During early voting and on election-day, make practicing their civic duty as easy as possible for all of the registered voters in your district – staff members and students. Providing a time to vote during their work day and transportation to the voting place is a benefit that will pay dividends back to your school! Early voting is October 24th until November 4th, and election-day is November 8th. (4.) Reward employees who do vote with a blue jeans day when they bring their “I Voted” sticker to their supervisor and/or hold department or campus contests to see which can have the greatest percentage of voters.

Of course, you are aware that Section 13.046 of the Texas Election Code states that each “...principal of a public or private high school or the principal’s designee shall serve as a deputy (voter) registrar in the county”. While the law was passed in 1983, periodically the Secretary of State (the state official with election responsibilities) will update the rules regarding elections being held in Texas. While it has been almost twenty years since the rules have undergone a revision, they do state that each school’s deputy voter registrar, **in the last month of each semester, shall distribute voter registration applications and instructions to those students who are or will be 18 years old**. However, the rules do not prohibit the deputy registrar from registering students at other times. **This week would be a good time to ensure that your high school students who are eligible to vote are registered to perform that most important civic responsibility!** After all, we are teachers.

You will not receive a Communiqué next week. The TACS staff will all be in San Antonio at the TACS/National IPA-TCPN Conference. I hope to see you there, also!!

Barry Haenisch
Executive Director