

Bios For 2025 Association Election Candidates

THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL POSITIONS

Thornton High School Bio Vice President

Devin Olson TT Building Vice-President Candidate

My name is Devin Olson and I am running for Building Vice President for Thornton. I am currently the District Technology Committee Co-chair and a Building Representative for Thornton. I have been in the district for 20 years, in that time I have served the association in multiple positions: department rep, building rep, building VP and region 27 rep. I have served on multiple committees: negotiations, evaluations, PERA, elections, technology, and IPACE. In the past, I have been a delegate to the IEA RA and to the NEA RA.

I would like to continue my service to the faculty association as the Building Vice President for Thornton. I believe that all voices need to be heard and I will do my best to listen to everyone. We need to stand together to deal with the many challenges facing our profession. I hope that you will consider me your voice and advocate as we navigate the changing landscape of our district. I am committed to serving the faculty association and hope that you will consider me for the position of Building Vice President for Thornton.

Thornton High School Bios for Building Representative Vacancies

Joe Donka TT HS Building Representative Candidate

I have been an English teacher for twenty years. Before teaching, I was a web designer, surveyor, casino dealer, publisher, columnist, and author. I have been a department rep for fourteen of my sixteen years in 205 and a Building Rep for one. I have a lovely wife, two cats, a dog, and an unhealthy obsession with fountain pens, writing, and good food. Being a building rep has been a singular pride in my life. My father was a union president for 16 years and he instilled in me a desire to serve my fellow employees.

Denise Henry TT HS Building Representative Candidate

English/Reading/Speech teacher, Department Representative, Strong union supporter

Hello Fellow Wildcat Educators,

My name is Denise Henry, I am a Reading and Speech teacher at Thornton Township High School. I am a resolute and enthusiastic high school teacher with 20+ years of experience fostering a dynamic and engaging learning environment for students. In the past, I have served in the positions of Union Member, Secretary, and Vice President of the Union in Ford Heights.

Prior to the classroom, I served four and half years in the United States Navy (8/86 - 2/91) with a six-month tour in Iraq. I possess a Bachelor's in Business Administration, Masters for Reading

Specialist and a Masters in Educational Leadership. Beyond the classroom, I proudly serve as a Department Representative, advocating for my colleagues and ensuring our collective needs are heard. I am also a strong union supporter, believing in the power of collective bargaining to protect and advance the rights and well-being of educators.

From navigating the daily rhythms of high school life to witnessing the diverse experiences of my peers, I have developed a deep understanding of the challenges and triumphs we share. Our collective voice has the power to shape a more supportive and equitable environment for everyone. This conviction is why I am seeking the position of Union Representative. I am eager to serve as a bridge between the student body and the administration, ensuring that our concerns are heard, our rights are respected, and our ideas are valued.

My approach will be rooted in active listening, thoughtful communication, and a commitment to collaborative problem-solving. I am confident in my ability to represent the diverse perspectives within our school and to work constructively towards solutions that benefit all. As your representative, I am committed to ensuring fair treatment, safe working conditions, and strong representation for all members.

Barb James TTHS Building Representative Candidate

No bio submitted

Lauren Malito TT HS Building Representative Candidate

I am running for the Building Representative position because I believe in the power of collective action to create meaningful change in our schools. I have served as a Social Studies Department Rep for three years, I manage the FA website, and I am the Early Career Alternate for Region 27. As an early career educator, I bring energy, a fresh perspective, and commitment to Thornton. The phrase "best interest of the students" is the principle for all of the decisions I make as an educator, and we all know that supporting teachers is the most effective way to work in the best interest of our students.

Shalonda Morgan TTHS Building Representative Candidate

My name is Shalonda Morgan. For the past eight years, I've been a dedicated Math teacher at TT, and my passion for education spans a total of fourteen rewarding years. I'm deeply committed to helping students not only understand mathematical concepts but also appreciate their real-world applications.

Currently, I actively contribute to our local Faculty Association by serving on the Parent-Teacher/BC2N and Evaluation Committees. I previously had the privilege of serving as the Math Department Representative, advocating for the needs of my department.

My commitment extends beyond the local level, as I currently serve as the IEA Region 27 Representative and have been elected as an IEA-RA delegate. I am a strong union supporter, firmly believing in the importance of collective action to champion the rights and professional growth of educators.

THORNRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL POSITIONS

Thornridge High School Bio Vice President

Kim McNamara TR HS Building Vice-President Candidate

With 26 years of dedicated service at Thornridge High School, Kim McNamara brings a wealth of experience and proven leadership to the Building VP role. Over the years, Kim has held multiple key positions, including Department Chair, District Grant Coordinator, Wellness Co-Chair, and Building Rep for over a decade. She currently serves on the Professional Development and Resilience Committees, Insurance Committee, and District Wellness committee, continuing her commitment to supporting staff growth and well-being. Kim's deep institutional knowledge, collaborative spirit, and steady leadership make her a strong advocate for Thornridge educators. Her experience navigating both school-level and district-wide initiatives gives her the insight and confidence to stand up for staff and ensure the contract is upheld with clarity and fairness.

Thornridge High School Bios for Building Representative Vacancies

Dr. Jason Curl – TR HS Building Representative Candidate

Jason Curl, Thornridge's Automotive educator, brings 14 years of service in the district and eight years of union leadership experience as both Building Representative and Vice President. Known for his steady commitment to fairness and integrity, Dr. Curl has a strong track record of representing members and ensuring the contract is upheld. His deep understanding of union processes and willingness to stand firm make him a trusted advocate for staff. Whether in the shop or at a discipline meeting, Dr. Curl is never afraid to fight for what's right and always puts members first. His experience, dedication, and passion for equity make him a powerful voice for Thornridge educators.

Pat Lawson – TR HS Building Representative Candidate

With 25 years of dedication as a Physical Education and Driver's Education teacher at Thornridge High School, Pat Lawson brings deep experience and strong leadership to the role of Building Representative. A current and active rep, Pat has also served as a past department union representative and is actively involved in several key committees, including the Grievance Committee. Known for being both vocal and approachable, Pat is a trusted presence among staff and a passionate advocate for member rights. As a parent of a high school-aged daughter, Pat understands the challenges educators face both professionally and personally. Unafraid to stand up and fight for the integrity of our contract, Pat is committed to making sure every voice is heard and respected.

Kristen Sison – TR HS Building Representative Candidate

Kristen Sison brings a unique blend of industry experience and educational dedication to her candidacy for Building Representative at Thornridge High School. A proud mother of two high school daughters, Kristen has taught at both Thornton and Thornridge, giving her a broad perspective on district-wide needs. Her passion for continuous improvement is reflected in her

volunteer work on the Professional Development Committee, Resilience Committee, and Wellness Committee. With a strong affinity for technical reading and data analysis, Kristen is especially skilled at navigating and interpreting contract language—an asset that would serve members well. Kristen is committed to being a strong, informed voice for her colleagues and ensuring that staff interests are clearly and effectively represented.

Mike Whitman – TR HS Building Representative Candidate

With 25 years of dedication to Thornridge High School, Mike Whitman brings a strong record of leadership, experience, and advocacy to his candidacy for TW Building Rep.. A father and longtime educator, Mike currently serves as Co-Chair of the Building Professional Development Committee and is an active member of both the District Technology Committee and District PD Committee. He has served multiple terms as both a Building Representative and Department Representative, consistently standing up for staff and contractual rights. With decades of union involvement, Mike is deeply committed to protecting what matters most to educators. He's not afraid to speak up, ask the hard questions, and fight to ensure the contract is respected and upheld.

THORNWOOD HIGH SCHOOL POSITIONS

Thornwood High School Vice President Bios

Tasha Gresham TW HS Building Vice-President Candidate

Statement of Purpose: Building Vice President

I am honored to submit my candidacy for the role of Building Vice President. I am passionate about fostering a strong, united, and informed association, and I believe my leadership experience, communication skills, and commitment to collaboration make me well-suited for this important position.

My strengths include strong organizational skills, a collaborative leadership style, and the ability to listen and respond thoughtfully to the needs of our members. I bring a calm, solution-focused approach to challenges and a strong sense of fairness and advocacy.

I want to serve as Building Vice President because I care deeply about the well-being, rights, and voices of our members. I believe in the power of collective advocacy, and I am ready to work hard to ensure our association remains informed, engaged, and empowered.

With Great Thanks, Tasha Gresham

Jason MacConnell TW HS Building Vice-President Candidate

Jason MacConnell has been teaching Math in the Special Education department at Thornwood for the past 15 years. He has served as a Department Rep, Building Rep and is currently the

Building Vice President. He has served on the Technology Committee and is the chair of the Finance Committee, as well as the Joint Evaluation and Extra Comp Committees, he has also been on the Negotiations Committee for the past two contract cycles. Jason believes that a union's strength comes from the diverse strengths and viewpoints of its members and wants to improve communication and collaboration to ensure that all Thornwood teachers have a voice in the operation of our Association and our school.

Christine Burger TW HS Building Representative Candidate

To My Esteemed Faculty Members,
I am seeking reelection to my position as building representative. Over the past year, I have served with earnestness and vigor, dedicating myself to representing our faculty with integrity and commitment.

Throughout this term, I've been actively involved in a variety of teacher representation matters and have also participated in multiple training sessions to better serve our collective interests. It would be an honor to continue this work on your behalf. I respectfully ask for your vote so I may return to this role and further support you and our faculty association.

With appreciation,
Christine Burger

Susan Hudson TW HS Building Representative Candidate

My name is Susan Hudson and I am seeking a 2nd term as a Thornwood Building representative. I've been a special education teacher in this district for 18 years. I currently serve as our Region 27 Chair since 2022, as well as an IEA board member, Thornwood building representative, and executive board member of our Faculty Association. As a member of the current contract negotiation team, I work closely with instructors to ensure everyone understands and benefits from our contract. I also assist on the IPACE committee and actively participate in state and local trainings, as well as state and national representative assemblies.

My commitment is to uphold our contract and advocate for staff rights and improved policies that help teachers do their jobs with fidelity. I believe in the power of organizing and approaching every issue with patience and empathy, and supporting colleagues as they navigate concerns and challenges. I am dedicated to making sure our voices are heard and our profession is respected.

Thank you for your support

Christina Lim TW HS Building Representative Candidate

As a proud member of the Social Studies Department at Thornwood High School, I currently teach IB History, AP Human Geography, and Freshman History. I am passionate about education and deeply committed to the success and well-being of both our students and our staff.

I'm seeking the position of building representative because I believe in the power of a strong, unified teachers union. Our profession faces increasing demands, and it is essential that educators have a voice in shaping the policies and decisions that impact our work environment, our students, and our professional integrity. I want to ensure that the teachers of Thornwood feel heard, respected, and supported.

By serving as a bridge between our union and our building, I will advocate for transparency, collaboration, and fairness for all. I am committed to standing up for our collective interests and working together toward positive change.

Jennifer Merwald TW HS Building Representative Candidate

As a dedicated union member and former Rep Council member, I'm committed to building a stronger, more unified workplace. My experience in leadership at Thornwood High School helped me develop my communication and advocacy skills, which I will use to amplify your voice. I believe in empowering every member, ensuring you're aware of your rights, and fostering positive working relationships. I'm running to be your Thornwood Building Representative because I'm passionate about helping you find your voice and making our union work for everyone.

LaRoi Sykes - TW HS Building Representative Candidate

My name is LaRoi Sykes, and I have worked in District 205 for the last eight years at both Thornridge High School and Thornwood. Teaching is my second career; I was part of IBEW Local 21 for 10 years. I also come from a Union family and firmly believe that all teachers' rights should be observed and protected. I have served in several different positions working on behalf of fellow teachers. This includes serving on the Joint Calendar, Rep Council, and Grievance Committee. Serving on the grievance committee has allowed me to expand my knowledge of the contract and to better protect member rights. If elected, I look forward to working with teachers and administration to solve contractual problems and improve teaching and learning conditions at Thornwood High School. I have never said "no" to a challenge.

Association District-Wide/Executive Positions

Association President Candidate

Mark Danielson TW HS

Since starting my teaching career 18 years ago at Thornwood, I have served in a variety of positions for the Faculty Association. I have been on the social committee, the community connections committee, the elections committee, the crisis committee, the grievance committee and the negotiations committee. During our last contract negotiations, I was appointed Chief

Negotiator. Having had this leadership role has been a great learning experience, putting me in a position to better understand our rights and think of ways to better serve our faculty. In addition to these roles, I have served on Rep Council for the science department for four years and have been on Executive Board for 13 years as a building rep, building Vice President, and most recently as Faculty Association President.

This past school year, I had the pleasure of serving our Faculty Association as President, finishing our outgoing President Dwayne Bearden's term. It came with its share of challenges, but I feel as though I was able to learn a lot about the role during the past year. From attending our committee meetings, working with our grievance chair, attending Board of Education meetings, representing members, and building relationships with the Board of Education and Administration, I have had a very busy year. Some goals of mine if elected President include building upon and strengthening the assets we have within our organization. Fighting for our contractual rights, bringing respect to our profession at the local, state and national level, and getting more of our members involved and engaged in our union. I'd like to better educate our members on opportunities and benefits we have from the IEA-NEA. We recently were accepted to be a targeted local for their YRO (year-round organizing) program during the 2025-26 school year. This will include finding ways to send members to training, improving our communication and organizing capacity, and engaging with all members throughout the year. I would very much like to serve as President to help with this important work.

I look forward to helping serve our wonderful Faculty Association and its membership through hard work, dedication, and integrity. It is a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful group of educational professionals, and it would be an honor to serve once again in the capacity of a Faculty Association President of District 205.

Association Secretary Candidate

Elizabeth "Libby" Villarreal TT HS

I am Elizabeth (Libby) Villarreal and I am finishing up my eighteenth year working as a Spanish teacher in District 205. I served as a Department Rep for World Languages from 2008-2017. Since 2007, I have made it a priority to be involved and serve on various committees, including, but not limited to, the Professional Development Committee, Community Connections, and Elections Committee. For the last eight years, I have proudly served as Faculty Association Secretary and am grateful for the opportunity to do so as it taught me the importance of serving in the district.

Association Treasurer Candidate

Dr. Katherine Metro aka "Metro" TW HS

I am running for treasurer. I have served as the Faculty Association Treasurer for our union for 13 years. I have also served on several committees such as grievance, elections, professional development, and numeracy. In addition, I have been a building representative. If elected treasurer, I will continue to maintain accurate records and update our budget to reflect the

changes in the dues structure and the needs of our association. I will work to expedite all committee requests and tax-related filings.

Region 27 Representative Candidate Bios

Paula Garrison-Broome Region 27 Representative Candidate TT HS

My name is Paula Garrison-Broome. I am a 2nd year science department representative at Thornton, and I currently serve as a region 27 delegate. I know that there is a lot of work that must be done in our region to ensure that our students and staff have access to all the resources and educational support available. My plan is to use my 12 years of experience in education, and my tenacious spirit, to push for the changes that are necessary and to mobilize others to join the movement.

Tasha Gresham Region 27 Representative Candidate TW HS

Statement of Purpose: Region 27

I believe this role is critical to maintaining strong communication, trust, and collaboration among our members, and I am committed to upholding those values. With a strong sense of responsibility, effective communication skills, and a passion for member advocacy, I am confident in my ability to serve in this position with dedication and integrity.

I am approachable, dependable, and committed to creating an informed and engaged membership. I value open dialogue and will work to ensure that every member's voice is heard and respected. My strengths include being highly organized, a strong communicator, and a supportive team player.

I believe that strong building-level representation is the foundation of an effective association. I am eager to contribute in this role and to serve as a trusted resource and advocate for my colleagues.

With Great Thanks, Tasha G.

Elvis Madison Region 27 Representative Candidate TT HS

I'm Elvis Madison, and I'm asking for your vote to continue serving as your Region 27 Representative. For ten years, I've been a Social Studies teacher at Thornton Township High School. My experience within the Faculty Association is extensive.

I've served four years as Department Representative, a term as Building Representative, and I'm currently the TT-FA Vice President. I've also had the privilege of representing Region 27 since 2019.

Beyond our local association, I've actively participated in statewide initiatives. I've served on the IEA Mental Health & Wellness Committee and the IEA Bylaws & Resolutions Committee. I'm also a proud member of the IEA Minority Ethnic Caucus.

My commitment to equity and inclusion extends to the national level as well, where I'm a member of the NEA Black Caucus and the NEA LGBTQIA+ Caucus. Additionally, I'm a graduate of the IEA EMELT (Ethnic Minority Emerging Leadership Training) and Leaders for Just Schools program.

I'm dedicated to making a positive impact for District 205's students and all Association members in Region 27. I believe my experience, dedication, and proven track record make me the right choice to continue representing our local association in our region.

Shalonda Morgan Region 27 Representative Candidate TT HS

My name is Shalonda Morgan. For the past eight years, I've been a dedicated Math teacher at TT, and my passion for education spans a total of fourteen rewarding years. I'm deeply committed to helping students not only understand mathematical concepts but also appreciate their real-world applications.

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