



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Fontana Unified Middle School Teachers Honored for Excellence in Education, Student Engagement

**FONTANA, CA** – Truman Middle School teachers Christopher Leach and Kurtis Yinger have been recognized for their commitment to student success, earning regional or state-level honors for their impact inside and outside the classroom.

Leach, a language arts teacher, was named a finalist for the California League of Middle Schools Educator of the Year award. Yinger, a history teacher, was recognized as a History-Social Science Educator of Excellence by the Inland Empire Council for Social Studies (IECSS).

"Both Yinger and Leach are leaders on campus, and the fact that their work is being recognized is a reflection of the culture and hard work being done here to foster the best educational environment we can for our students," Truman Principal Dr. Kristen Sandler said. "Passionate teachers make students excited to attend class and learn."

Yinger, who was also named Truman's Teacher of the Year for 2024-25, earned the IECSS distinction for his interactive, student-centered approach to history instruction. His lessons are known for encouraging students to engage critically with historical concepts rather than passively absorbing information.

"I try to create an environment where students can engage with the material in ways that suit their individual learning styles," Yinger said. "Ultimately, I want my students to understand that history is not black and white, and it's always evolving. I encourage them to look at things from different perspectives, which helps them understand past decisions and better navigate the challenges they face in their own lives."

Leach was named one of 10 finalists for the California League of Middle Schools Educator of the Year award for his ability to inspire and engage students through creative lesson plans that promote academic growth.

"There are so many incredible teachers in this District – let alone Truman, which makes this recognition truly an honor and the experience truly humbling," said Leach, who strives to inspire lifelong learners. "The fact that I get to do what I love as a career is simply amazing. I can't say this award is really a credit to me nearly so much as it is my students. They want to learn and I want to teach, it's a wonderful combination."

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**FUSD\_TRUMAN1:** Kurtis Yinger, a history teacher at Truman Middle School, was named a History-Social Science Educator of Excellence by the Inland Empire Council for Social Studies for his innovative teaching approach and commitment to developing critical thinking skills in students.

**FUSD\_TRUMAN2:** Truman Middle School language arts teacher Christopher Leach was named a finalist for the California League of Middle Schools Educator of the Year award, recognizing his dedication to student engagement and lifelong learning.

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