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*To inspire each student to
extraordinary achievement
every day*

Oct. 22, 2021

To Staff and our Twin Rivers School Community,

As we celebrate and participate in Digital Citizenship Week (Oct. 18-22), I want to remind all of our students that online communications should always strive to be collaborative, positive, instructive and informative. Now more than ever, students are online and while we want them to be confident with technology—as it will be a vital part of their lives in college and career—we also want them to be smart users of technology. We want them to be respectful, responsible, and safe.

In essence, we want our students to understand that good digital citizenship helps safeguard their own reputations and is an essential aspect of effective contributions to their communities.

Shifting from in-person to online teaching and learning was necessary during the throes of COVID-19. Online was necessary, but not ideal. However, one positive outcome from shifting to online instruction is that all our students received devices and now have access to the internet, so that communication between home and school is consistent across our school community, allowing stronger school-home communication.

TR students can now rely on District provided computers to communicate with teachers, with one another, and to access instructional information.

Now that we have put the power of the internet in the hands of all students, we must be cognizant of the need to stress to all students the importance of being responsible with social media and online communication. Additionally, we must strive to educate students on how to safely utilize these tools so that they do not fall victim to nefarious online activity.

Earlier this school year, an online challenge was shared through TikTok inviting, or as the father in me would say “daring”, students to take the challenge to disrupt school. Specifically, each month students are called – or “dared” – to participate in a themed prank of sorts. But these are not pranks. Calls to damage school property or slap someone are serious acts of vandalism and physical assault. Some of the TikTok challenges could result in very serious consequences for students, including suspension, expulsion, police involvement and monetary fines for resulting damage. Some students may engage in these activities without understanding the gravity of the consequences of these actions.

I am asking all families to please speak with your students about the importance of using the internet, online communication and social media for the better. Use it to access credible information. Use it to connect and collaborate in learning. Use it to share positive information. I encourage all parents to discuss and monitor their child's online activity to keep them safe and responsible.

While exploring Digital Citizenship Week online, I found this slogan that I shared with my family, especially with my daughters, and that I am pleased to share with my TR family as well.

When you are online ... Ask yourself, is what I'm about to say ...?

T - True
H - Helpful
I - Inspiring
N - Necessary
K - Kind

Take care and enjoy the weekend.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Martinez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Steve Martinez, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Twin Rivers Unified