



Board of Trustees

Michelle Rivas
President

Michael Baker
Vice President

Basim Elkarra
Clerk

Bob Bastian
Member

Linda Fowler, J.D.
Member

Christine Jefferson
Member

Rebecca Sandoval
Member

Superintendent
Steve Martinez, Ed.D.

*To inspire each student to
extraordinary achievement
every day*

Sept. 11, 2020

To Staff and the Twin Rivers School Community,

From the time we are very young, we are introduced to the rhythm of questions being followed by answers, a pattern that educators heavily rely upon to teach and assess student learning.

Whether asking questions through inquiry-based discussions with large groups of students or administering a pop quiz, teachers know that questions should be followed by answers. In fact, we teach students that direct answers and responses are appropriate and respectful, and that evading a question can be seen as a sign of disrespect.

I feel that this simple truth is one of the reasons it is so uncomfortable for me when I cannot answer the direct question, "When are we going back to school, back to in-class instruction?" Honestly, if I had the answer, I would give it—promptly and directly.

The harsh reality is that many factors regarding reopening our campuses are beyond my control. They are being set by the public health professionals and our state leaders, upon whom we are relying to help us get this pandemic under control. What I can tell you is that we will likely return to school in "stages" or "phases," and not all at once.

Currently, our district administrative team is studying the various phases, some of which you may already be hearing about through the news media, and they include: (A) *One-on-one assessments* of students on campus to determine supports that they may need to access their education; this is currently in the process of being implemented. (B) *Small group support* for no more than 14 students on campus with provided supervision and support to access online learning; this could begin in the coming months. (C) *Waivers* to bring small groups, Pre-K through sixth grade, on campus for direct instruction from a teacher; this would require close collaboration with our teachers. The waiver process requires our district to apply to the County Department of Public Health for a waiver to bring the younger children back to school. Districts in the state are now beginning to look at waivers in earnest, with some already achieving success with this model. (D) *Hybrid instruction* for middle and high school students would allow us to bring small groups on campus for some instruction and the remainder of their instruction would be delivered online and asynchronously.

We are studying the aforementioned phases in Twin Rivers, and I commit to you that we will not make any changes unless we, first, believe it will improve things for our students, and second, know that our staff members are confident that we have proper plans and procedures in place to protect their personal health.

Yet, these options for returning to in-person school are being discussed quite publicly, and I want you to know that we are studying them and working through the many details that must be considered before rolling them out. I will keep you posted on our progress.

And so the question remains, “When will we return to school?” My answer: as soon as humanly possible without compromising student and staff safety. I wish I had a date and time because I know specificity would minimize much of the ambiguity in our lives, but a more concrete answer would be disingenuous.

As our staff is preparing for many return-to-school options, I ask our parents and families to continue to do their part. Stay connected with your student’s teachers. If you or your student need a hand or if any aspect of our online instruction is not working for you, then please reach out to your teacher or principal. Communicating and staying connected are two-way streets; let us know if you need additional support, please.

Good News

Student Achievement:

- We’re excited to share with you the UC, CSU and private universities 2020 Virtual College Fair. Students (TR seniors) will have the opportunity to hear what each campus has to offer. The colleges and universities will present separate sessions for high school students. Each campus will hold a 30 minute session for their first-time freshman audiences. There will be time for questions at the end of each presentation. Registration links, capacity, waitlists, and recorded sessions vary by campus and are noted on the schedule of events. UC Campuses: Sept. 14-17. Private Colleges & Universities: Sept. 21-24. CSU Campuses: Oct. 5-9. Students can click [HERE](#) to register today!
- Ten of our students are scheduled to mark U.S. Constitution Day on Sept. 17 by participating in the reading of the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California, will host a livestream “Reading of the U.S. Constitution” at 10 a.m. Sept. 17, to commemorate the anniversary of the original Constitution’s signing. The livestream can be viewed [HERE](#). The TR students are senior cadets in Grant Union High School’s Criminal Justice Academy. Congratulations to: Eric Paredes, Monica Garcia, Yahaira Alonso, Zuly Gallegos, Natalia Martinez-Barragan, Itzayana Perez, Alicia Chavez, Faasaina Igafo, Anabel Hernandez, Heidi Gonzalez, and Academy Lead Mario Fox and Officer Eric Fong (a Sacramento Police Department officer assigned to the Academy).
- The graduation rate for our special education students is up 6%, from 70% for 2018-2019 to 76.2% for 2019-2020. The overall District graduation rate is 85.4%.

Engagement & Outreach:

- Teams of principals, counselors, and nurses have been trained on the utilization of CareSolace mental health concierge services. This new service allows our school staff to connect students and families with mental health professionals immediately instead of supplying families with a list of care providers in their area. This “warm handoff” to care providers allows the team to match parent and student mental health needs and insurance options. Families will enjoy a simple process in making appointments and follow up through this service.
- Twin Rivers is providing free internet access to many district families in partnership with Comcast. This program is available to most TR students, with some basic limitations on availability; this is the fastest available completely free service at this time. Click [HERE](#) for instructions on how to apply.

District Operations:

- We expect to officially launch our COVID-19 saliva-based voluntary testing program next week for essential employees who are not displaying symptoms of the coronavirus. The test is free and will expand to students and all staff.
- Work continues on the District's COVID-19 Safety Plan. The plan will serve as a guideline for all instructional and non-instructional activities when we return to a traditional in-class model of instruction. Given the nature of the pandemic, our plan, which follows local, state and federal guidelines, will include enough flexibility to adapt to changing conditions.

As always, thank you for your patience as our team continues to work through the many issues that must be addressed before our schools open for in-person classroom instruction.

We Are TR!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Martinez".

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

Every Student, Every Day. Leaving No One Behind!