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*To inspire each student to
extraordinary achievement
every day*

Jan. 14, 2022

To Staff and the Twin Rivers School Community,

As I reflect on the upcoming Martin Luther King Jr. national holiday on Monday, Jan. 17, I am reminded of a quote from a 1960 speech he delivered at Spelman College: *"If you can't fly, run; if you can't run, walk; if you can't walk, crawl; but by all means keep moving."* Relevant then and relevant now! Regardless of our circumstances and all the challenges we continue to navigate, we must keep moving forward. And I believe this is precisely what we do day in and day out in Twin Rivers.

Dr. King led a remarkable life. The late civil rights leader and social justice advocate was a man with a purpose, plan and vision who always had a clear course of action. He boldly addressed issues while many shied away. He kept moving. What a great example he set for all of us who dedicate our lives to ensuring an equitable and inclusive education to all students. Yes, we face new and ongoing challenges that impact our families, our communities and our nation, especially during this pandemic. But we're moving forward and I thank each of you for your role in helping us to keep schools open and our scholars in class. We know our work is far from complete, but we will keep moving forward.

Enjoy the three-day Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend, and do all that you can to stay safe and healthy.

Fond Memories of a Wonderful Friend

This week, our school community said good-bye to a dear friend. Bob Bastian, a member of the Twin Rivers Unified School District Board of Trustees, passed away the morning of Jan. 12. I was stunned when I received the news, and I continue to be saddened by this profound loss and the reminder that life is so precious. A tireless champion for kids, Bob will be greatly missed.

Bob began his career in education, working in maintenance for the Rio Linda Union School District while attending Sacramento State where he earned his teaching credential. After graduating, he proudly taught at Lincoln High School and then at Rio Linda. He served on the Rio Linda Union School District Board of Trustees for 10 years before he was elected to the Twin Rivers Unified School District Board of Trustees in 2007.

I always admired his commitment to serve, and I will miss his quiet confidence and unwavering passion for students and education. The Board of Trustees and I ask all of you to join us in holding the Bastian family in our hearts. We will plan a tribute to Trustee Bastian's amazing life and will share with you details on how you can join in this ceremony where we will honor his legacy.

In honor of our friend, our colleague and a public education hero, we remember you, Bob, with deep respect, appreciation and a warm fondness.

Governor's Executive Order

Earlier this week, Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order making it easier for school districts to hire qualified substitute teachers and other employees amid critical staffing shortages due to the uptick in COVID-19 cases. While the executive order will expire at the end of March, to me, this action clearly and firmly reflects the Governor's deep commitment to keep schools open. I want you to know that in TR, we share this commitment. If the pandemic's forced closure of our schools taught us anything, it is that students learn best when they are in school. COVID-19 cast a white-hot spotlight on the positive power of in-person teaching and learning and on the importance of keeping our schools open and students in class with teachers and support staff.

While we are doing our level best to keep schools open, I want to be honest about the situation in TR. The Omicron variant spreads quickly and easily, causing a high volume of student and staff absences. We had 24 reported illnesses in our custodial staff in just one day earlier this week. On a personal note, I hope all of you feel better soon! It's anticipated that the next two to five weeks are going to be tough. A surge in COVID-19 cases means a lot of absences. Let's take full advantage of the Governor's efforts to help us secure quality substitutes. If you know of a person who might be qualified, perhaps a retired teacher, please share this link with them: <https://bit.ly/3Fq8p7y>.

Updated Contact Tracing Guidance

The District recently updated our COVID-19 contact tracing protocols, based on public health guidelines. Please click on the following links to learn more about them and what happens when a school receives a positive case: [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Hmong](#).

Families, if your student must be away from school due to illness (which is not always COVID), possible exposure, or some other personal situation, you are strongly encouraged to keep in touch with your student's teacher, counselor, or site administration to get their daily class assignments. Excellent resources in support of mathematics instruction can be found [HERE](#). We must partner to do all we can to make sure our students' education is minimally disrupted.

All the best,

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

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