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*To inspire each student to
extraordinary achievement
every day*

Oct. 15, 2021

To Staff and the Twin Rivers School Community,

As you can imagine, reaction has been strong statewide on both sides of Gov. Gavin Newsom's COVID-19 vaccine requirements for children in public and private schools. While our District has not been flooded with emails and phone calls, we are hearing from some of you who are frustrated and dissatisfied with the Governor's directive. We are aware that a group that opposes the mandate has planned a statewide school walkout. The group is asking parents to keep their children home on Monday, Oct. 18, a school day. While people have every right to speak up, declare concerns and protest the Governor's actions, I respectfully urge parents to do so without disrupting our students' learning. A missed school day is a lost opportunity for students to learn.

This pandemic continues to be extremely challenging, and I know you're aware that Twin Rivers Unified has no control over the COVID-19 vaccine requirements, which won't go into effect until the vaccine receives full approval for students in grades seven through 12 from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is our understanding that medical and religious exemptions allowed for the current slate of required K-12 immunizations would also apply to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate. Throughout the pandemic we have followed all guidance from local and state agencies and will continue to do so. Our top priority remains the health and well-being of our students and staff.

More and more lately, I find myself thinking about all we have gone through together to help keep our students and staff safe, and thus keep our students in school. I find myself reflecting on how grateful I am that you and members of the TR team have been cooperative about our COVID-19 protocols. Students and staff are wearing face coverings. Many have been vaccinated. Others chose to get the regular COVID-19 tests to demonstrate they are not contagious. I do realize these are inconveniences, so I want to make sure you know how grateful I am for your positive attitudes and compliance.

I am all the more thankful that our TR team is working together and not attacking one another over our personal choices regarding vaccinations or testing. I hope this peaceful approach will continue in our District because it allows us to keep energy focused on student needs, and students should always be our first priority.

Please consider that for 18 long months, the pandemic prevented having our schools open for all students, but now they are back. Please let us continue to educate them, in school and in person. They do not need to miss school for voices to be heard. If you have strong feelings against vaccination mandates, consider sending an email or video message to the Governor and writing a letter to your elected representatives.

So far this school year, TR has been a model for collaboration and cooperation to get our schools open and to keep our schools open. Thank you for doing your part to keep our organization on a positive path.

Respectfully,

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