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*To inspire each student to
extraordinary achievement
every day*

Nov. 12, 2021

To Staff and our Twin Rivers School Community,

As I returned to work after the Veterans Day holiday, I find myself still thinking about all of our parents, staff, former students and community members who have served or are serving in the military. I can't say enough about their commitment to service and the sacrifices they have made and continue to make for each of us. Some of our former students who have served went through our Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) programs at Grant, Highlands, Pacific and Rio Linda high schools. JROTC helps assist students who desire to achieve their goal to serve in the military. Students who participate are not required to join the military after high school. The program also helps students develop their capacity for citizenship, leadership, character building and service to the community.

It is a selfless act to step up and serve one's country, and Veterans Day is a time for us to pay our respects to those who have offered this service. For one day, our nation stands united in respect for our veterans. As an educational institution, I am compelled to share this interesting bit of history about this federal holiday. Veterans Day began as a day to reflect upon the heroism of those who died in our country's service during the First World War. It was originally called Armistice Day as it fell on November 11, the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I. In 1954 the holiday was changed to "Veterans Day" in order to honor all veterans who served our country.

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Thanksgiving Week – This wonderful holiday, which brings family and friends together, is just around the corner. I hope that all of you are planning to host or join a feast full of traditions and joy. After over a year of social distancing, Thanksgiving this year will be all the more meaningful.

We have one more week before this well-deserved break, and across the District we will be busy with many important activities.

- **Elementary Grades** – As I mentioned in my Nov. 5 letter, our elementary teachers will be meeting with parents to discuss student progress. These are very important conversations about student academic work, social and emotional progress and strategies to build strong school-home partnerships. *Parents, please consider the questions that you want to ask your teacher to better understand how your student is doing in school. If they need to focus on key academic areas or on behaviors, be sure to ask their teacher what you can do at home to help your student in these areas while in class.*

- Secondary Grades – In our middle and high schools, our education professionals are collaborating to review student progress and work to build the necessary supports to help all students engage and succeed. We are keenly focused on making sure that all our students are on track to graduate from high school. *Parents, we encourage you to ask your students how they are doing in school. “What are you learning?” “Do you feel confident with the subject?” “If you need extra help, do you know how to get the support you need?” Showing your students that you share in our goal to keep them on a path to high school graduation helps us to be more effective with them when they are in school.*

Facilities To Support Excellence – I am proud to share that we are completing our long-range facilities master plan, which outlines the priority projects for our campuses and classrooms. The Board of Education received a report this week outlining four priority areas of focus for our facilities, which draws from the many meetings that we held with employees and community members.

Priority projects that have been completed or are in progress include roofing, HVAC upgrades, intercoms communication systems, fencing, restroom upgrades, fire alarms and lighting, playground structures and more. Upcoming projects include upgrades and modifications so we are ready to meet the needs of pre-school and transitional kindergarten, completion of a K-8 campus in Northlake, lunch shelters across the District and hydration stations, where students can fill water bottles with fresh, filtered water.

I want to thank the Board of Education for the thoughtful attention that they give to our school facilities needs. A Facility Master Plan provides a long-term road map for school districts to maintain facilities when state and local funds become available. Our Board knows that safe, healthy and comfortable classrooms can make a big difference for our teachers and students. Special thanks to our Facilities teams and our partners for their herculean effort to execute these many upgrades.

All the best,



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