Dec. 11, 2019

Dear Staff and the Twin Rivers School Community,

Funding for public schools just took another hit. Five months ago, the California Department of Finance (DOF) projected a 3.0 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) to the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) for public school districts. Imagine our disappointment and frustration to learn school districts will not get that 3.0 percent after all. A new Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) report now indicates a much lower COLA of 1.79 percent for the 2020-21 school year, a loss of revenue for ALL public schools, including Twin Rivers. This will impact our district as we deal with rising operational costs and declining enrollment.

What does this mean?
Due to the lower COLA, our 2020-21 $3.8 million budget deficit has grown to $6.7 million. To be clear, we are facing a greater financial challenge to identify an additional $2.9 million in reductions, along with the $3.8 million we have reported to you and our stakeholders.

Budget planning shouldn’t be a painful process for schools. All we want is adequate LCFF funding for our schools, not less. That’s the message I hope the entire Twin Rivers school community has for our lawmakers in Sacramento.

As you know, we have been vigilant over the past two fiscal years identifying $16.9 million in reductions from a $300 million budget—$7.2 million in 2018-19 and $9.7 million in 2019-20. Through all the painful decisions, TR students remained our number one priority. We remain laser-focused on classrooms and programs that have a positive impact on student achievement and keep students actively engaged and in school. Yes, we have more agonizing decisions ahead, including possible school consolidations/closures. We have hosted six informational community meetings on the issue, outlining the District Administration’s Recommendation and getting valuable feedback from our stakeholders. Please note that the Board of Trustees has not made any decision on the issue. However, a Board vote could come in January 2020.

We will have more information about the budget in January when the Governor releases his budget. No matter what comes our way, we will get through it together. Our shared commitment to continuous improvement and your unique ability to inspire students and instill hope will make all the difference as we move forward.

Best regards,

Steve Martinez, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Twin Rivers Unified