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*To inspire each student to  
extraordinary achievement  
every day*

Dec. 2, 2022

To Staff and the Twin Rivers School Community,

In the world of education, we often find ourselves in discussions about academics. Reading, phonics, mathematics, science skills, composition and research are topics that teachers, administrators, and support staff discuss in depth and with great frequency. We also discuss the importance of developing the character traits that will give our students the fortitude to succeed both in school and in life.

Passion and perseverance are a powerful combination. At all ages and across myriad challenges, when a person has passion for something and chooses to persevere in spite of disappointment and occasional failures, they have the "secret sauce" that will help them in all aspects of life.

I see this remarkable combination in the Grant Union High School varsity football team. The Pacers that last year knew a great deal of disappointment—they were unsuccessful in game wins—is this year in the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Northern California Regional Division III-AA Football Championship Bowl Game after winning the Sac-Joaquin Section Division III title last week.

The team has 22 seniors who, while playing as juniors last year, faced disappointment after disappointment. Yet, they persevered. They practiced. They faced mistakes and missteps as opportunities to learn. They collaborated, supporting one another with affirmations that helped keep the team focused and positive. They were led by a coaching staff that believes in them, encouraging them every step of the way to see any weakness as an opportunity to grow stronger.

Passion and perseverance. This powerful combination must be nurtured in all our students, so that we give our students the strength to see errors and failures not as defeat, but as a chance to grow. Working together, school and home, we can model for our students to never give up on a goal or a dream. We can, indeed we must, show our students that mistakes and missteps are nothing to be ashamed of, rather they are opportunities to ask questions, ask for assistance, and try again.

Thank you for joining me in congratulating the Pacers as they take on El Cerrito High School at 7:30 tonight for the opportunity to advance to a state championship game. And let's make a commitment to take time throughout our busy days to notice when our students face challenge with optimism, so that we can praise them for investing in their character and personal strength.

In TR, we believe that education empowers our students to achieve their dreams; and education, while strongly focused on academics, must include nurturing our students' character and life skills.

With much respect,

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

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