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*To inspire each student to
extraordinary achievement
every day*

Feb. 3, 2023

To Staff and Twin Rivers School Community,

It is personally gratifying when you see your hard work pay off. When earnest effort, dedication and diligence improve your performance, you are motivated to continue your hard work. With this in mind, I'm pleased to share with you that the most recent academic assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and math in our middle and high schools showed tremendous gains.

Great teaching incorporates regular assessments so teachers can see how students are progressing. I know the mere mention of the word assessment—or “test”—signals to some that we want to see what the students know, what they understand, and grade them. But assessments are actually critical teaching tools because teachers use the data gathered to inform the areas where they may need to double back and review to help increase student understanding.

We see the continuous loop of teach, practice, assess—teach, practice, assess across sports, music, dance, theatre, cooking, and in so many aspects of life. We need to see this continuous loop in academics as well, and with just as much focus on guiding the teachers and instruction, as informing the students regarding their progress.

The powerful combination of having our students and teachers back in class for in-person instruction and the use of data to inform instruction is paying off.

We saw the following gains in benchmark assessments administered last month in our secondary schools:

1. English Language Arts - up overall 6% from last year

7th grade	+ 3.97%
8th grade	+ 11.62%
9th grade	+ 4.13%
11th grade	+ 14%

2. Mathematics - up 15% from last year (Integrated Math 1, 2 and 3)

IM1	+ 8.54%
IM2	+ 21.69%
IM3	+ 15.18%

Benchmark assessments take place four times per year at the secondary grades and three times per year in our elementary grades. Benchmark assessments tell us how students are progressing in relation to grade level standards for that point in time. Teachers use them to evaluate their instruction and to monitor student progress so they can adjust instruction as needed.

Elementary benchmarks will be implemented in March, and we are eager to review this data as part of our education professionals' commitment to continuous learning.

Thanks to the TR Team

Support Services - Increased services through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) are certainly making a positive contribution to our students' comfort level at school. Thanks to the many members of the MTSS teams across our district.

Attendance - We can see that student daily attendance is up across the district and I want to thank parents and students for making it a priority to be in school. Our teachers are amazing, but they cannot do their job if the kids are not in class.

All indications show that our students are making academic gains this year, and this is great news. Education will always face challenges, and many are beyond our control—such as severe weather and public health issues. But it is clear that when we take charge of that which we do control, including professional learning, modifying our teaching to meet the students' needs, attendance, and kind, compassionate regard for our students and one another, we do see positive outcomes.

I am proud of the students, the teachers, and the support staff, and encouraged by this upward trending assessment data.

With warm regards,

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

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