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*To inspire each student to
extraordinary achievement
every day*

Sept. 9, 2022

To Staff and the Twin Rivers School Community,

Lately, there's quite a bit of media coverage of the decline that we see in student test data due to COVID-19. Across the country, the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) test results from a long-term trend (LTT) reading and math assessment showed declines in reading and math scores for 9-year-old students compared to 2020 results. While NAEP results cannot be used to establish cause, over 70% of the students tested reported having attended virtual learning during the last school year. The U.S. Secretary of Education was quoted as saying, "... I've traveled to 35 states and talked with countless students, families and educators. In every conversation, it's clear: The pandemic has had profound impacts on our children and youth."

With this information receiving a lot of attention and given that we saw a decline in student test scores last year as well, I want to share with our school community a very important sentiment, an important reality.

Student tests, whether they are state tests, teacher's quizzes, or districtwide tests, are intended for one key purpose: to guide instruction. I try to remind my own children that succeeding on a test is an honorable goal. Whether a driving test, a fitness test, or a test in a subject at school, to do well is terrific. Achievement and understanding should always be the student's goal.

But the most essential purpose of an assessment or test is to guide the instructor, so they know where to focus their time. A football coach runs drills, so they can see where the team needs to focus energy. A piano teacher asks a student to repeat over and over the parts of a song that are most challenging, helping the student to master the content and gain confidence in their playing. A classroom teacher looks at test data with this key question in mind, "What do I need to focus on to help my students understand this content?"

As you read and hear about students nationwide showing dips in learning, please remember, and please remind your students, that the TR team has this. This information is being reviewed and our dedicated education professionals are identifying precisely where to spend their time and talent to benefit our students.

School-Home Partnerships

Families can play an important role in helping our students achieve by encouraging them to create regular study habits such as:

- Doing homework in the same place at the same time
 - Plan when you are going to study and space it out
 - Consistency makes studying become part of a daily routine
- Minimizing distractions
- Taking breaks
- Avoid cramming
- Setting goals for each study session and sticking to those goals
- Rewarding yourself
- Studying with a group to reinforce the material

Working together, I have every confidence that we will take the information provided by all data and use it to build strategies to support students to achieve academic success. Thanks to our educators, support staff, administrators and families for communicating and collaborating to help TR kids reach their best.

Warmly,

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

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