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*To inspire each student to  
extraordinary achievement  
every day*

March 4, 2022

To Staff and the Twin Rivers School Community,

This month, we mark two significant dates in our COVID journey. Two years ago in March 2020, the state went into lockdown and everything we once took for granted, like eating in restaurants and working in offices with colleagues were paused, and schools were closed for in-person instruction. Indeed, it was a time of worry and uncertainty.

This month, on Monday, March 14, we return to schools without masking being required. While masks continue to be strongly recommended, they will no longer be required for staff or students starting on the 14th. In response to questions about transportation, school buses serving K-12 populations are considered a school setting so masking remains required through March 11, after which time masking will be strongly recommended.

I recall that in one of my past Friday Updates, I shared that it felt a bit like we were navigating a raft in choppy river waters. We had to be prepared for rapid turns, difficult times and do all that we could to work together to keep the raft moving forward and everyone in it safe.

It seems that we are now in smoother waters, and thus we are able to better anticipate what is coming and how to prepare for it. Just around the corner, we are no longer required to mask, and I know that this will come as a welcome relief for many, while some will continue to feel that masking is prudent for their personal health.

To all our employees and families, I ask that we remind our students to respect the choice of those around them. No one should be teased or bullied for their personal choice. We value every member of our TR school community and it's essential that everyone feels our schools are safe, welcoming and healthy environments.

It is important to remember what the public health experts espouse: the virus is something that we must learn to live with, and this means that we must continue to be vigilant about staying home from work or school if you have symptoms. This is one of the most important actions we can take to slow the spread. TR will continue to offer masks to all employees and students who may need them. TR will also maintain our cleaning protocols throughout our schools, and continue to have air purifiers available to staff members who would like them for their offices or classrooms, as we know that some find this added measure gives them additional peace of mind. And TR will continue to offer free testing to students and staff. Click [HERE](#) for more information. Also, please be aware that the district continues to host vaccine clinics. Visit the [COVID-19 Vaccine Information page](#) for dates and times.

We will continue to do all that we can to support clean, healthy working and learning environments for our students and employees. We ask that starting on March 14, as many come to school without a mask on for the first time in nearly two years, that we share our smiles and our kindness, remembering that everyone has the right to make a personal choice about masking, and personal choice must be respected.

**Around TR**

As the conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues, the wide-reaching impacts are being felt by students and families throughout the world. In TR, we have staff and students with family or cultural ties to Ukraine and Russia. Please know that our schools are a safe and welcoming place for all of our students and families. School counselors are available to support students in small Social-Emotional Groups that will begin meeting during the school day to help students cope if they are feeling anxious and overwhelmed about the war in Ukraine. Parents and guardians will be notified about the Social-Emotional Groups through ParentSquare. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your school counselor. We are hopeful that this conflict will end soon. As always, TR remains a united school community, supporting and caring for one another.

With warm regards,

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

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