

WE  
ARE **TR!**



# **WE ARE TR-MISSION POSSIBLE 16**

TWIN RIVERS UNIFIED STUDENTS AND STAFF

Twin Rivers is gearing up for the new school year with a can-do attitude!



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**TwinRivers**  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Fall  
2016

## Superintendent's Message



# Welcome Back to the Schools Where Students Love to Learn

In Twin Rivers Unified School District, we take pride in making our schools places where students want to come to learn and grow every day. That's why we will continue to build on the work we've completed to create wonderful campuses for students to thrive.

This school year, students will notice more reasons to stay on campus once the school day is finished. **Twin Rivers is embarking on a student engagement initiative** which will include academic, athletic and performing arts activities and clubs. If kids are engaged with a variety of exciting after-school activities, they will also perform better in the classroom. So students in every grade will be invited to explore what interests them beyond the books!

We want to include everyone in fun learning experiences at Twin Rivers, so this year **every sixth-grader will get to attend science camp**. Money will not be an issue for families, as the district will cover the cost of this three-day trip.

Our older students will have more opportunities to be college-ready. Students will now be encouraged to take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test beginning in eighth grade. Also, **every senior will be able to take the SAT tests for college admission**. Twin Rivers will cover the cost of these tests, so no one will face barriers getting into a good college.

Parents will be happy to learn that students will continue to get high-quality instruction and extra academic support where it's needed. We're rolling out a **multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) for students who need additional help** throughout the year. Ten elementary school sites have added MTSS teachers who can provide one-on-one and small-group instruction to keep kids from falling behind. These MTSS teachers will also have the tools to help students with social-emotional issues to promote positive behavior. We plan to expand this effort to every

Twin Rivers elementary school in the 2017-18 school year.

Finally, we know that students will have a better school experience if we provide them with high-quality facilities. With students away, **construction and facilities crews were hard at work over the summer months**. Campuses have gotten new coats of paint, wall-to-wall deep cleanings, new parking lots, a swimming pool and more. With dozens of facilities projects underway, we believe it's our duty to make schools great for students this year and well into the future.

Here's to a great 2016-2017 school year!  
We are TR!

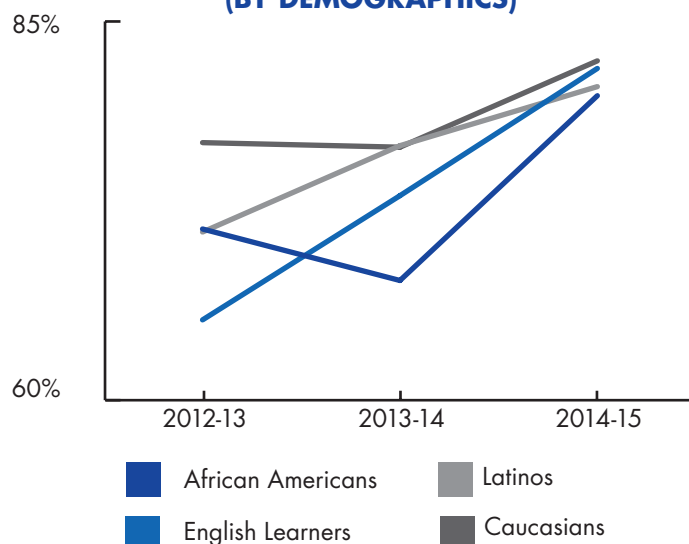
**-Dr. Steven Martinez**  
*Superintendent of  
Twin Rivers Unified  
School District*



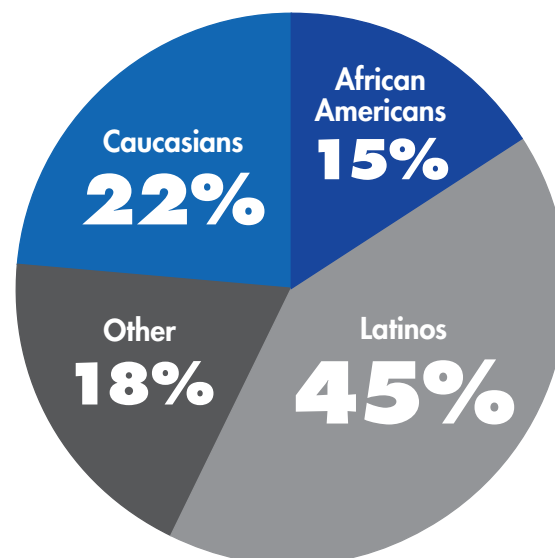
## Graduation Success



### GRADUATION RATES (BY DEMOGRAPHICS)



### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



### GRADUATION RATE

**82.9%**  
(exceeds county and  
state average)

### DROPOUT RATE

**9.2%**  
(below county and  
state average)



**“A positive learning environment has a major impact on student achievement.”**

Bill McGuire  
Deputy Superintendent of Administrative Services

Updated facilities, such as Grant Union High School's new pool, create a positive learning environment which has been shown to have an impact in student achievement. In November, voters will have the chance to support two bond measures that would invest \$288 million in tax dollars to the district's schools for facilities improvements.

Photo by Anne Stokes

## A LOOK AT THE PROBLEM



**Restrooms:** Some restrooms, like this one at Grant Union High School, are inefficient in water and lighting use, and are not compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act laws.



**Campus marquees:** As the first thing students and visitors see as they come onto campus, a dreary marquee can make a school feel unwelcoming.



**Roofing repairs:** The district has worked to improve leaky roofs that were in the worst condition, but some have remained in disrepair after reaching the end of their life cycles.

# Saving Our Schools

## A look at facilities needs on Twin Rivers campuses

by Kate Gonzales

Many of the campuses throughout Twin Rivers Unified School District need more than a simple facelift. For far too long, students and staff have had to make do with outdated heating and air conditioning systems, inefficient water and lighting systems and even restrooms that do not comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. These are just a few of the major facilities pitfalls Twin Rivers schools have faced for years.

With limited funds available from the state, district administration has been studying the feasibility of two bond measures — one would invest \$140 million in the district's elementary schools and the other would put \$148 million toward middle and high schools.

“This is what is required to save our schools,” says Bill McGuire, Deputy Superintendent of Administrative Services.

Twin Rivers has developed a Long-Range Facilities Master Plan, which details the facilities needs of schools, students and staff. It serves as a 25-year roadmap of repairs and upgrades the schools desperately need. Planned improvements include fixing outdated heating and air systems, improving vocational facilities and upgrading math and science classrooms. It will cost an estimated \$2.6 billion to complete all the projects outlined in the plan. And that's money the district doesn't have.

McGuire says the \$288 million the district would receive through the bond measures is necessary to continue to upgrade and modernize campuses districtwide.

“The two bond measures ... will really only put a dent in the needed repairs and improvements for Twin Rivers,” McGuire says. “However, this is a significant start to the facilities improvements that are so desperately required at Twin Rivers schools.”

He adds that studies have shown students tend to perform better academically when they are learning in high-quality facilities.

“A positive learning environment has a major impact on student achievement,” McGuire says.

Over the past year, three polls of likely voters have shown widespread support for the two bond measures, with more than 70 percent of respondents favoring additional funding for the district. McGuire points out that great school facilities also benefit neighborhoods with a correlating increase in home prices.

The Board of Trustees has the final decision on whether bonds will be placed on the Nov. 8, 2016 ballot.



## TWIN RIVERS: POINTS OF PRIDE

- 8 California **Gold Ribbon Schools**
- Students speak **46 languages**
- 50 **National Board Certified Educators**
- 127 students awarded the **State Seal of Biliteracy**
- **4,000 students** took the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) for free
- **22 Dell Scholars** since 2008 (with each student awarded a \$20,000 scholarship and a laptop)
- 1 of 130 school districts across the country recognized for creating **opportunities for traditionally underrepresented students by College Board's Gaston Caperton Opportunity Honor Roll**
- Recognized with a Meritorious Budget Award for Excellence for the **6th consecutive year** (Association of School Business Officials International)
- 2016 **California Model Continuation High School** – Pacific Career & Technology HS
- Project DREAM has raised and given back more than **\$500,000 in grants** to Twin Rivers students since 2004
- **IRS Certified Student Taxpayers** – 8th year of the program
- 29 schools received **2015 HealthierUS School Challenge Awards** – 6 gold, 19 silver, 4 bronze
- 2 schools received the **State Civic Learning Award of Merit** (CCAA and Rio Linda Prep)
- **2011 California Teacher of the Year**
- **2010 California Classified Employee of the Year**
- **32 Sacramento County Classified School Employees of the Year**

# Improving Student Achievement

Principals reflect on results from programs that promote collaboration

by Anne Stokes

Throughout Twin Rivers Unified School District, teachers, administrators and students work diligently to improve student achievement and foster success in their community.

At Hazel Strauch Elementary School, individual success comes from teamwork. In Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teachers share strategies, set standards and analyze student learning outcomes together.

"If the student didn't learn, then the question is, 'What are you going to do about it?' As a team they take an approach to answer those questions," says Principal Marlisa Rodriguez. "They are focusing on reviewing assessment data and making decisions [based on] the results."

Those assessments are implemented in their What I Need program, which targets language arts and groups students based on ability. According to Rodriguez, the program, which won a Gold Ribbon Award, has resulted in a 12 percent improvement in English Language Arts (ELA) scores, jumping from 24 percent to 36 percent proficiency.

At Foothill Ranch Middle School, students are building literacy across subjects through technology. Since implementing programs such as Newsela, an online library of current events articles, and the IXL math program this past year, students read and were assessed on 12,000 articles and completed 1.1 million math problems.



"We let the data tell the story of what areas we need to improve in and what areas we need to celebrate," says Principal Howard Holcomb. "We believe in the Cycle of Continuous Improvement and continually ask the question, 'What is it we need to do to improve?'"

According to Holcomb, students themselves are becoming very data savvy when it comes to their own achievement.

"I continually have students coming up to me in an excited fashion to tell me how they did on district benchmarks and how they improved on SBAC [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium] from last year's performance," he says. "This is powerful stuff."

At Highlands High School, Principal Darryl Hawthorne's focus has been improving both his students' test scores and school spirit. Through interdepartmental teacher collaborations, students are pushed to become critical thinkers. According to Hawthorne, ELA scores improved from 43 to 51, and math scores rose an impressive 50 percent, from 18 to 27.

The most visible improvement has been in students' community pride. Recognizing students for things like perfect attendance and "most improved" has fostered a sense of school spirit.

"We see that improvement with overall school pride ... and it's an overall better feel at the school. We can see that in the student body as we walk around, going to classes, talking to students," he says. "We've had improvements all across the board for us this year. It's been good to see."

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good to see."**

Darryl Hawthorne  
Principal, Highlands High School

Teachers at Harmon Johnson Elementary School meet to discuss strategies and educational standards at an afterschool Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting.  
Photo by Anne Stokes



## Results

# A CONTINUOUS CYCLE OF IMPROVEMENT

**“The work and dialogue around instructional practice and improvement ... is absolutely based on the teachers.”**

Jacqueline Perez  
Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

At Twin Rivers Unified School District, achieving success is an ongoing process. Educators continuously seek new resources and innovative methods to improve student achievement and ensure students’ ever-evolving educational needs are teachers’ top priority.

### PLAN WHAT IS NEEDED

Identify gaps in student achievement and determine the best course of action.

### DO IT

Implement appropriate educational strategies.

### STUDY IT

Analyze the data and assess the results.

### ACT TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

Implement successful strategies on a wider scale.

# Knowing What Needs to be Done

Teacher-led initiatives make the most of educators’ experience by Anne Stokes

No one knows what it takes to help students succeed better than teachers. Their boots-on-the-ground perspective is fundamental to addressing school-specific issues. At Twin Rivers, district administrators give teachers the means to implement their initiatives and share their success with other educators through programs designed to encourage collaboration.

“The frame of this work really has been around an urgency to build capacity at the school sites,” says Jacqueline Perez, Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. “The work and dialogue around instructional practice and improvement ... is absolutely based on the teachers.”

Here are some of the ways teachers are taking the initiative in student success:

#### Instructional Leadership Teams

Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) are comprised of faculty and principals who identify their school’s most pressing concerns and determine how to address them.

“The team is viewing data to see, ‘Where is it that we need to improve?’” Perez says. “Some schools may be tackling their student attendance issue, some school sites are going to be tackling their academic achievements and ... some are going to be tackling behavior management systems at their sites.”

#### Professional Learning Communities

In Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teachers help one another by sharing strategies and implementing consistent teaching standards. These teacher-led groups can be organized by grade level or subject.

“[Teachers] engage in improvements around instructional practices and analyze how students are doing in content and

understanding Common Core,” Perez says. “[They’re] looking at data, looking at their practice, how did this lesson go? How do we make improvements?”

#### Multi-tiered Systems of Support

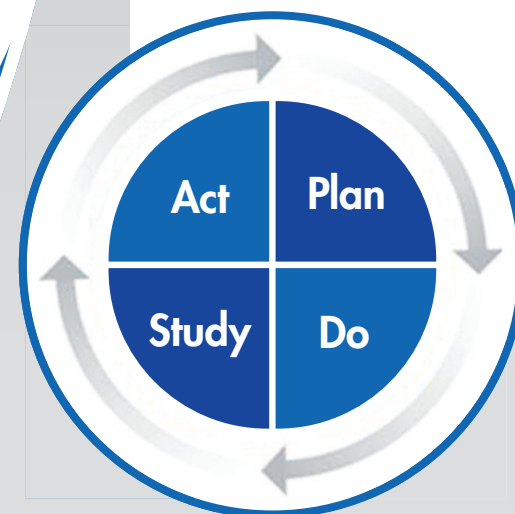
Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) address both students who aren’t performing at grade level and students who are not able to positively engage in the classroom.

“It’s a two-pronged approach tackling academic intervention and also students who need support around behaviors,” Perez says. “This year we’re going to be piloting MTSS at 10 elementary schools and looking at expanding [programs] in the 2017-18 school year.”

#### Secondary School Redesign

A comprehensive master schedule ensures students get the coursework they need. In Twin Rivers, the district is helping schools analyze their course offerings to ensure students have the opportunities to take the classes they need to graduate and prepare for college or the work force.

“It’s taking our principals and ILTs through a process of how to analyze their current data,” Perez says. “What kind of classes are students taking? What do we offer them? How can we increase opportunities for kids? We take them through a process so that they can begin recrafting their master schedule.”





## YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

Twin Rivers is continuing to implement its three-year, \$25 million facilities improvement initiative. Here is a list of the most recent round of projects completed, from summer 2015 to date:

### PAINTING PROJECTS:

Del Paso Heights, Garden Valley, Hagginwood, Hazel Strauch, Kohler, Madison, Noralto, Northwood, Oakdale, Regency Park, Village, Allison and Woodridge elementary schools; Foothill Ranch Middle School; Martin Luther King Junior Technology Academy; Norwood Junior High School; Rio Linda Preparatory Academy; Futures, Grant Union West Campus, and Vista Nueva Career and Technology high schools and Winona Center.

### PAVING PROJECTS:

Del Paso Heights, Fairbanks, F.C. Joyce, Foothill Oaks, Hagginwood, Noralto, Orchard, Pioneer, Village, Westside and Woodridge elementary schools; Martin Luther King Junior Technology Academy; Smythe Academy 7-8; Kohler PK-8; Rio Tierra Junior High School; Rio Linda Preparatory Academy and Futures High School.

### ROOFING PROJECTS:

Dry Creek, Del Paso Heights, D.W. Babcock, Fairbanks, F.C. Joyce, Foothill Oaks, Frontier, Garden Valley, Hagginwood, Harmon Johnson, Hillsdale, Kohler, Madison, Michael J. Castori, Noralto, Northwood, Oakdale, Orchard, Ridgepoint, Allison and Woodlake elementary schools; Creative Connections Arts Academy; Foothill Ranch Middle School; Norwood and Rio Tierra junior high schools; Foothill, Grant Union, Highlands, Pacific Career & Technology and Rio Linda high schools.

### ARTIFICIAL TURF REPLACEMENT:

Foothill, Grant Union, Highlands and Rio Linda high schools.

# New School Year, Improved Schools

Students return to better, brighter classrooms, campuses and facilities by Kate Gonzales

As students return to Twin Rivers schools for the 2016-17 year, it will be hard for them to miss the improvements that were made to their campuses over the summer months.

Freshly painted buildings and newly paved parking lots are just a few of the dozens of facilities upgrades that will make students, parents and staff feel welcomed on their first day back. At Grant Union High School, students will even have a new swimming pool to dive into.

“Great things are happening across the district,” says Kimbely Barnett, Executive Director of General Services at Twin Rivers.

Each year, an outside contractor conducts Facilities Inspection Tool (FIT) reports at all Twin Rivers schools, which identify deficiencies at each campus. Those reports, coupled with priorities outlined in the Long-Range Facilities Master Plan, a 25-year plan for facilities improvements, helped staff prioritize projects.

Barnett says more than 60 projects were in progress or completed over the summer months.

“Most people would say that’s impossible, and our motto is, ‘It *is* possible,’” she says.

Here’s a look at facilities improvements made this summer:

- **Grant Union High School pool:** For the first time since 2009, the Grant Union High School swim team will have a state-of-the-art pool, and will no longer need to go off-site for practice.

- **New Alternative Education site:** Twin Rivers has a new site for Keema High School, an alternative education school. Keema High will open its doors to students this year at 1281 North Ave.
- **Foothill Ranch Middle School HVAC upgrades:** Students can take a breath of fresh (and cool!) air as the summer heat stretches on thanks to the middle school’s improved HVAC system.
- **Pavement:** Some major and minor pavement improvements were made over the summer at eight schools, including Grant, MLK, Village and Kohler.
- **Fresh paint:** A new coat of paint can make a big difference to a campus’ curb appeal. Nine school sites — including Rio Linda Prep — had the outsides of their buildings painted.

The overall goal of these projects is to create conditions for student success — and updated, high-quality facilities are the first step. When students see these improvements, they know the district cares about the learning environment at every school. In turn, students respect the schools.

“It really makes a huge difference for the learning environment,” Barnett says. “When children see the district making these improvements, they respect and want to take care of their campuses.”

**“Most people would say [finishing 60 projects in one summer is] impossible, and our motto is, ‘It *is* possible.’”**

Kimbely Barnett  
Executive Director, General Services



In the fall, Grant Union High School students will have access to a new state-of-the-art pool, one of the many facilities upgrades completed this summer at Twin Rivers schools.  
Photo by Anne Stokes

# A Team Approach

Parental involvement benefits students in many ways

by Anne Stokes

Parental involvement in students' education has been shown to increase overall student achievement.  
Photo by Roman Rykun



Get Involved

When parents and educators work together, students win. From helping the district decide how best to spend budgetary funds to keeping lines of communication with teachers open, parental involvement has significant and long-lasting effects on student achievement. Studies from the Harvard Family Research Project have found that students tend to score higher on standardized tests, have better grades and attendance rates when their parents are involved in their education. Not only are such students more likely to graduate from high school, but they're also more likely to go on to college.

"[Parent involvement] makes a huge difference," says Yolanda Falkenberg, Twin Rivers Unified School District Parent Engagement Team Coordinator. "It creates a more welcoming environment when the teachers know that parents are there to support and to bring forth any concerns in a timely manner so that they can talk about it face-to-face and come up with positive solutions for the betterment of their child."

Here's how parents at Twin Rivers schools can get involved:

## Parent Resource Centers (PRC)

At PRCs, families — not just students — can find help with a variety of issues. Not only can students get help with homework and after-school tutoring, parents can also find job-searching assistance and more.

"They have anything from bulletin boards with job postings [and] current community events posted. They typically have a computer that parents can utilize to work on resumes or just look up info online to help their children," Falkenberg says. "We also use that space to provide workshops for parents in areas that they're interested in."

Several Twin Rivers campuses house PRCs, including Harmon Johnson Elementary, Del Paso Heights Elementary and Highlands High School.

## Parent University

At Parent University, families can find answers to myriad issues like how to help their children with homework, ways to better communicate with adolescents and bullying.

"We ask parents what they're interested in learning more about, what questions they have about the school, the community and their children," Falkenberg says. "From that we generate ideas as to what we can provide in the form of workshops."

Currently, 27 Twin Rivers school sites hold regular events, but the district plans to expand the program to all 53 sites with a minimum of three events a year. Parents can check with their child's school for schedules.

## Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

School districts decide what services and strategies to spend their budgets on through Local Control and

Accountability Plans (LCAP).

Parents can advocate for their children's education through Twin Rivers' PAC, which gives parents a say as to what should be included in the district's budget.

LCAP funding goals encompass a broad range of issues, including increasing parent involvement, facilities maintenance and how to improve instruction. "Pretty much anything that folks can think of, we can typically tie them to one of our goals," Falkenberg says.

No matter how it's done, when parents get involved in education, students reap the benefits. It's important for parents to be knowledgeable about their school's operations as well as how district operations trickle down to classrooms. Whether it's supporting teachers and reinforcing lessons at home through homework or influencing policy on a district-level, parents need to stress the importance of getting an education by making school a family priority.

For more information, contact Twin Rivers' Parent Community Engagement Team at 916-566-1600 ext. 64107.

**"[Parent involvement] makes a huge difference."**

Yolanda Falkenberg  
Parent Engagement Team Coordinator



## DID YOUR SCHOOL'S START TIME CHANGE?

Allison: 7:45 AM  
Babcock: 8:45 AM  
Castori: 7:45 AM  
CCAA: 8:10 AM  
CCAA High 9-12: 8:00 AM  
CCAA High 7-8: 8:30 AM  
Del Paso Heights: 7:45 AM  
Dry Creek: 8:30 AM  
Eastside Campus, WPCS: 7:55 AM  
Fairbanks: 7:45 AM  
F.C. Joyce: 8:30 AM

Foothill High: 7:30 AM  
Foothill Oaks: 8:30 AM  
Foothill Ranch: 8:45 AM  
Frontier: 8:15 AM  
Frontier Campus, WPCS: 8:00 AM  
Garden Valley: 8:15 AM  
Grant High: 7:30 AM  
Hagginwood: 8:00 AM  
Harmon Johnson: 8:45 AM  
Hazel Strauch: 8:30 AM  
Highlands High: 7:30 AM

Hillsdale: 8:15 AM  
Kohler: 8:00 AM  
Madison: 8:15 AM  
Martin Luther King Jr.: 8:40 AM  
Miles P. Richmond: 7:30 AM  
Morey Ave.: 8:00 AM  
Noralto: 8:45 AM  
Noralto Preschool (AM): 8:20 AM  
Noralto Preschool (PM): 12:30 PM  
Northwood: 8:15 AM  
Norwood Jr. High: 8:40 AM

NOVA: 8:30 AM  
Oakdale: 8:30 AM  
Orchard: 8:15 AM  
Pacific High: 8:44 AM  
Pacific Pathways: 8:40 AM  
Pioneer: 7:45 AM  
Regency Park: 8:45 AM  
Ridgepoint: 8:00 AM  
Rio Linda High: 7:30 AM  
Rio Linda Prep: 8:40 AM  
Rio Tierra Jr.: 8:40 AM

Sierra View: 7:45 AM  
Smythe Charter, TK-6: 8:10 AM  
Smythe Charter, 7-8: 7:40 AM  
Village: 8:15 AM  
Vineland/Preschool (AM): 8:20 AM  
Vineland/Preschool (PM): 12:30 PM  
Vista Nueva High: 8:30 AM  
Westside: 8:00 AM  
Westside Campus, WPCS: 7:55 AM  
Woodlake: 8:30 AM  
Woodridge: 8:00 AM

## NEW SCHOOL YEAR, MORE SUCCESS!

While students were enjoying their summer break, Twin Rivers Unified School District was busy making improvements and planning for student success in the 2016-17 school year.

**We're ready!**

### School Starts August 9th!



Check page 7  
for your school's  
start time.



Twin Rivers Unified School District  
5115 Dudley Blvd.  
McClellan, CA 95652  
916-566-1600

Visit [www.twinriversusd.org](http://www.twinriversusd.org) for:



**List of  
schools**



**District  
news**



**Parent  
resources**

## 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR

**KEEP TRACK OF  
ALL IMPORTANT  
TWIN RIVERS  
DATES AT:**

[www.twinriversusd.org/  
calendar](http://www.twinriversusd.org/calendar)

### AUGUST 2016

**8/9** First day of school

### SEPTEMBER 2016

**9/5** Labor Day

### OCTOBER 2016

**10/7** End of grading period,  
grades 7-12

### NOVEMBER 2016

**11/11** Veterans Day

**11/15** TK-6th grade  
shortened day

**11/17-11/18** Non-student day;  
TK-6th grade parent/  
teacher conferences

**11/21-11/25** Thanksgiving

### DECEMBER 2016

**12/20-12/21** First semester final  
exams/minimum day  
(high school)

**12/21** End of grading period,  
grades 7-12/minimum  
day

**12/22-1/6** Winter Break

### JANUARY 2017

**1/9** Students return from  
Winter Break

**1/16** Martin Luther King., Jr.  
Day

**1/27** Non-student day

### FEBRUARY 2017

**2/17 & 2/20** Presidents Days

**2/24** End of grading period,  
TK-6th grade

### MARCH 2017

**3/17** End of grading period,  
grades 7-12

**3/24** Non-student day

### APRIL 2017

**4/10-4/14** Spring Break

### MAY 2017

**5/29** Memorial Day

**5/31-6/1** Second semester final  
exams/minimum day  
(high school)

**6/1** Last day of school/  
minimum day/end of  
grading period