

WE ARE TR!

Graduation
2017

SUCCESS, NOTHING LESS!

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Meet the graduates who made it to the top of their class



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Faculty and
staff honored

TwinRivers
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



"How has Career Technical Education (CTE) prepared you for your plans after high school?"



"I want to flex the business skills I've learned here — as well as some of my public relations and community service — to move into a political area."

Brian "Indiana" van der Veen
Senior, Rio Linda High School
CTE program: Marketing



"I want to major in computer programming or graphic design. I don't know if I want to make online games or if I want to design websites or clothes, I can do any of that. ... I'm way better prepared."

Alexis Brown
Senior, Grant Union High School
CTE program: A.R.T.S. (Academy of Rhythm, Technology & Stage Production)



"I want to be a businessman (and) all the teachers who are part of the Academy have helped us develop and pushed us forward to become what we want to be. ... I think this academy has prepared me well for life."

Bryan Figueroa
Senior, Grant Union High School
CTE program: A.R.T.S. (Academy of Rhythm, Technology & Stage Production)



"My digital media classes have prepared me in every way, shape and form ... I actually got into the college I wanted ... they accepted me right away because of my musical background. It's a dream come true to have that happen."

Christyana Botelho
Senior, Highlands High School
CTE program: Digital Media



"I want to be in the exercise and fitness industry (and) I already have experience in that. We became CPR, first aid and AED certified, so I gained a lot of experience that I think I can use toward my career."

Konstantyn Noga
Senior, Foothill High School
CTE program: Sports Medicine

TR Talk photos by Anne Stokes. Cover photo by Roman Rykun (file, 2016)



NEW BEGINNINGS

Twin Rivers helps students chart their own paths

Graduation can be bittersweet for many seniors. It is a time to celebrate the culmination of 13 years of work and dedication, while in many ways it can feel like an ending.

In actuality, it's a beginning. You are embarking on the next chapter of your lives, full of new possibilities, new risks and new rewards. It is my hope that Twin Rivers has armed you with the skills you'll need to navigate this exciting and challenging time: how to think critically, how to work as a team and the importance of lifelong learning.

I also hope we've inspired you to pursue your dreams.

I'm extremely proud of the graduating class of 2017. Every year it seems that students are better prepared, as seen in our improving graduation rates, the increase in the number of students taking and passing A through G classes, and the number of students participating in our CTE programs. This senior class has really paved the way for underclassmen, showing that regardless of what your interests are, you can carve a path to being successful — for college or

career — once you leave Twin Rivers Unified School District.

More and more, students are choosing Career Technical Education to prepare for their future. With a vast array of available courses — sports medicine, engineering, nursing, digital media, construction, entrepreneurship, and more — the goal is to engage students in work that aligns with their interests and give them a jump start on technical skills, knowledge and work experience. Whether you choose to enter the workforce or pursue higher education after graduation, CTE gives you choices.

To the class of 2017, I hope that in your time spent at Twin Rivers, we have given you the tools you'll need to carve a path to success. I wish you all the best of luck in whatever path you've chosen!

— Dr. Steven Martinez,
Superintendent of
Twin Rivers Unified
School District



SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SUPPORT STUDENTS

Twin Rivers works to develop positive culture for teachers and staff

by Anne Stokes

For educators and professionals, Twin Rivers is a great place to be: a supportive working environment that builds up both its own employees and the community.

"Twin Rivers is on the rise, and I think that everybody who works here can take pride in the district," says Bill McGuire, Deputy Superintendent of Administrative Services. "We're really pushing ... to be competitive with all of the other school districts in the region."

Competitive compensation

According to the California Department of Education, Twin Rivers ranks the highest in teacher pay per

student at \$4,205, which is a correlation of salary and class size.

Small class size

Overall, Twin Rivers has some of the lowest average class sizes in the region, again, according to the California Department of Education. In the 2014-15 school year, the district had the lowest average students per class in kindergarten (20.7), mathematics (21.2), science (22.9) and social science (19.9).

Student resources

The resources provided by Twin Rivers help students in and outside of the classroom. The district supports teachers' educational efforts through programs

"Twin Rivers is on the rise, and I think that everybody who works here can take pride in the district."

Bill McGuire

Twin Rivers' Deputy Superintendent of Administrative Services

like nutrition services, field trips, arts and music programs and no-cost PSAT and SAT testing opportunities.

"We have a very diverse population, and our teachers are providing the highest quality education," McGuire says. "We really believe the resources that

we're putting behind our teachers are making a difference for our students."

Professional development

Both teachers and classified employees are supported through professional development programs. For educators, the district employs 50 special assignment teachers who focus on lesson design, classroom modeling and other educational strategies. For classified employees, professional development includes programs like computer software training.

"We're really trying to build and grow the capacity of all employees in Twin Rivers Unified," McGuire says.

POINTS OF PRIDE

Graduation rate
up

84.4%

exceeding state and county averages

Dropout rate
down

8.3%

which is lower than county and state averages

Three out of the four comprehensive high schools in the district have graduation rates of

90% or higher

1,967 total Advanced Placement (AP) courses enrollment

5,807 students took the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) for free

16% reduction in suspensions

17.8% increase in the number of English learners reclassified to fluent English proficient

8 Twin Rivers schools

achieved a 2016 California Gold Ribbon Schools Award from the California Department of Education, which also named Pacific Career & Technology High School a Model Continuation High School.

In the 2014-15 school year, Twin Rivers ranked 1st in Sacramento County for **smallest average class size** and had an average student-to-teacher ratio of

less than 20:1

In the Sacramento area, Twin Rivers has the **highest teacher pay per student.**



Photos by Anne Stokes and Roman Rykun

From a great personal loss, Jazzmin Williams was inspired to help others after her 10-year-old sister, Taelor, passed away.

"It was really hard for me to go back to school after the loss of my little sister," she says. "I (thought): 'This is going to be for me and my sister. I'm going to do it because she didn't have a chance to.'"

Jazzmin says her future plans involve opening a counseling center to help teens who suffer a similar loss.

"I want to help other teenagers like myself, people who've lost a loved one ... and open up a business so they can have a place to come to when they're hurt."

**Jazzmin Williams**

Vista Nueva Career & Technical High School

ATTENDING:
Wiley College

PLANNED MAJOR:
Business Administration
and Management

As a varsity soccer and basketball player — and team captain for both — Brandy Huffhines says she learned a lot about responsibility during and after the game.

"Being that 'go-to' teammate was something that I enjoyed," she says. "Being a leader meant I had to stand as a role model."

That meant working hard to balance sports and her studies. She rose to meet that challenge with a spot on the Principal's Honor Roll all four years as well as a litany of All-League, MVP and championship titles.

While she admits it was challenging at times, she says, "I wouldn't have had it any other way. I love what I do."

**Brandy Huffhines**

Rio Linda High School

ATTENDING:
Sacramento City College

PLANNED MAJOR:
Pre-med

Coreon Cummings is fascinated by all things cerebral, beyond what we know from textbooks.

"There's a lot of things that we don't know about the brain still," he says. "That was the most interesting thing ever to me."

While academics are definitely a priority for Coreon — he's on the Principal's List and aspires to be a brain surgeon after all — he has also been active with the AT&T Pioneers volunteer network since elementary school. From that experience, he says the most important skill he's gained has been leadership.

"I learned how to get things done that need to get done," he says.

**Coreon Cummings**

Creative Connections Arts Academy

ATTENDING:
UCLA

PLANNED MAJOR:
Neuroscience

For a time, James Chhen debated between a career in engineering versus one in medicine. Just recently, the honor roll student, varsity tennis player and Key Club president decided on the latter, more specifically, pharmacology.

"I'm always astonished by how a drug can change a person's mind (or) save a life," he says. "And I've always liked helping people."

James is excited to take the next steps and is confident his hard academic work and leadership experience will serve him well.

"My mindset is what determines my outcome in whatever situation I encounter," he says. "And I can control that."

**James Chhen**

Foothill High School

ATTENDING:
UC Davis

PLANNED MAJOR:
Biochemistry

ONWARD AND UPWARD

Twin Rivers graduates are on the move! Whether close to home, across the country or beyond, the class of 2017 is on the road to success. Here are some of the universities, colleges and armed forces our graduates are headed to in the fall.

- UC Berkeley
- UC Davis
- UC Irvine
- UCLA
- UC Merced
- UC San Diego
- UC Santa Barbara
- UC Santa Cruz
- University of the Pacific
- University of Nevada
- University of Minnesota
- University of Utah
- Southern Utah University
- Cal Poly Pomona
- Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
- CSU Channel Island
- CSU Chico
- CSU Dominguez Hills
- CSU East Bay
- CSU Fresno

7 VALEDICTORIANS

by Anne Stokes



Cover Story

As a freshman, Abraham Ochoa was shy. So much so that he admits he had trouble with presentations and even asking questions in class. By his sophomore year, he faced his fears — in a big way.

“I used sports and clubs to get more out of my comfort zone,” he says. “It’s taught me to be more of a leader, more outgoing and adventurous in general.”

Abraham’s array of extracurricular activities came to include cross-country running, volleyball, tennis, Friday Night Live, student government, Leadership and Mock Trial. At UC Davis, he plans to double major in mechanical and aerospace engineering, and hopes to go into teaching one day — as a professor.



Abraham Ochoa

Highlands High School

ATTENDING:

UC Davis

PLANNED MAJOR:

Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

Not only is Sandra Elizabeth Alfaro Rodriguez the first in her family to graduate high school, she’ll be the first in her family to go to college, too. She has an impressive list of academic accomplishments to her name: AP Scholar award, Principal’s award and California Scholarship Federation membership, as well as volunteer work with Interact and Grant’s Environmental Science Academy.

Rodriguez plans to study political science to encourage minority communities to make their voices heard.

“There are many minorities who feel that they don’t have a voice,” she says. “I want to be that voice that encourages them to really raise theirs up to be heard.”



Sandra Elizabeth Alfaro Rodriguez

Grant Union High School

ATTENDING:

UC Santa Cruz

PLANNED MAJOR:

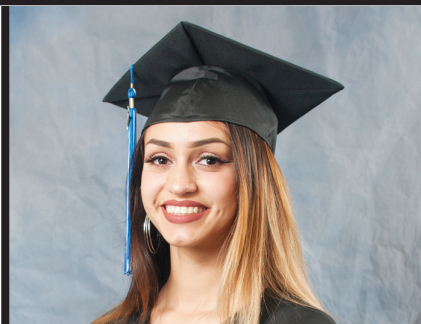
Political Science

Natalie Toral’s experience in Junior ROTC gave her the skills to accomplish anything she sets her mind to.

“I learned a lot (about) teamwork, leadership and, of course, lots of self-confidence,” she says.

Natalie received myriad awards and was promoted several times in two years, from Captain to Major and then to Lieutenant Colonel as Battalion Executive Officer. She says her proudest accomplishment was being named the 2016 Cadet of the Year.

After graduation, Natalie is keeping her options open. Eventually, she says she’d like to join her family in the real estate business, but first she’s considering following her passion: cosmetology.



Natalie Toral

Pacific High School

ATTENDING:

American River College

PLANNED MAJOR

Undecided

Keema High’s independent study program gave Maricsa Cortez the opportunity and skills to pursue her passion: ministry through her church.

“I enjoy the family we have in our congregation and giving to others. We can see how it helps them in their family life and their personal life,” she says. “I get to share the happiness knowing that we’re helping other people.”

Maricsa says that it’s an amazing experience helping families and working with youth. She plans to continue with her church’s outreach ministry after graduation.

“We can go anywhere around the world to help in different countries, different languages, and that’s something I would like to do,” she says.



Maricsa Cortez

Keema High School

PLANS:

Church ministry

- CSU Monterey
- CSU Stanislaus
- Livingstone College
- Norfolk State University
- American River College
- Sacramento City College
- Sierra College
- Santa Rosa Junior College
- Tuskegee University
- Wiley College
- U.S. Army
- U.S. Marine Corps Reserve
- U.S. Navy
- William Jessup University
- Earlham College
- Florida Memorial University
- Mary Baldwin University



THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST

Whether they're teachers in the classroom, bus drivers getting kids to and from school or food services workers making sure students are well-fed, Twin Rivers staff has one priority: what's best for their students.

"We have such a great group of people who work on behalf of our

students," says David Robertson, Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations. "Without them, we can't meet the needs of all the students that we love and work hard for in Twin Rivers. ... Our staff works very hard on behalf of our kids and we want to make sure to honor them."

Each school site and district department honors their own teacher and classified employees of the year, who are then nominated for districtwide recognition. Twin Rivers' annual Teacher of the Year winner is then considered for Sacramento County honors.

MEET TWIN RIVERS' OUTSTANDING STAFF 2017

Allison Elementary

Teacher: Anne Drahmann

Classified: Sheila Laxton

Babcock Elementary

Teacher: Kay Patterson

Classified: Gabriela Prado

Castori Elementary

Teacher: Alice Phillips

Classified: Mai Thao

Creative Connections Arts Academy

Teacher: Thuy Pham

Classified: Ruth Martinez

Del Paso Heights Elementary

Teacher: Cornell Gathing

Classified: Virginia Thomas

Dry Creek Elementary

Teacher: Marci Dixon

Classified: Rick Helmer

Fairbanks Elementary

Teacher: Pa Xiong

Classified: Jennifer Shipp

Foothill High School

Teacher: Cheri Mendoza

Classified: Mike Clark

Foothill Oaks Elementary

Teacher: Courtney Harbman

Classified: Mary Hollinger

Foothill Ranch Middle School

Teacher: Andrea Cottrell

Classified: Sandra Braff

Frontier Elementary School

Teacher: Jennifer Schmidt

Classified: Jaime Radalyac

Garden Valley Elementary

Teacher: Tara Herfurth

Classified: Shirley Madsen

Grant Union High School

Teacher: Michael Cook

Classified: Victoria Carson

Hagginwood Elementary

Teacher: Angie Higgins

Classified: Randy Rodoni

Harmon Johnson Elementary

Teacher: Douglas Shinoda

Classified: Sarah Velosa

Highlands High School

Teacher: Steven Eakes

Classified: Shanté Briley

Hillsdale Elementary

Teacher: Denise McManus

Classified: Robyn McKenzie

Joyce Elementary

Teacher: Joshua Schaa

Classified: Debra Murphy

Keema High School

Teacher: Jonathan Sher

Classified: Bryon Cather

Kohler Elementary

Teacher: John Lyman

Classified: Louise Young

Madison Elementary

Teacher: Mary Ann Blohm-Craig

Classified: Dee Thomas

Martin Luther King Jr. Technology Academy

Teacher: Matthew Callman

Classified: Samantha Koen

Miles P. Richmond School

Teacher: Kathi Clark

Classified: Michelle Muench



Morey Avenue Early Childhood Development Center

Teacher: Megan Olivas
Classified: Christina Southvilay

Noralto Elementary

Teacher: Monica Roberts
Classified: Elia Gonzalez

Northwood Elementary

Teacher: Paul Matthews
Classified: Johnnie Williams

Norwood Junior High

Teacher: Kathleen Standley
Classified: Cindy Nienhuis

Oakdale Elementary

Teacher: Angela Roberson
Classified: Mandy Molina

Orchard Elementary

Teacher: Nicole Watte
Classified: Margaret Torado

Pacific Career & Technology High

Teacher: Reginald Owens
Classified: Sharon Huerta

Pathways Community Day School

Classified: Linda Stracener

Pioneer Elementary

Teacher: Renee Castro
Classified: Joshua Smith

Regency Park Elementary

Teacher: Laura Bingham
Classified: Jessie Gallagher

Ridgepoint Elementary

Teacher: Tani Russo
Classified: Charles McGimsey

Rio Linda High School

Teacher: Matthew Bussone
Classified: Laura Ganjouee

Rio Linda Preparatory Academy

Teacher: Sharon Glover
Classified: Aleksandr Bgatov

Rio Tierra Junior High

Teacher: Sharon Her
Classified: Eduardo Rodriguez

Sierra View Elementary

Teacher: Melissa Clark
Classified: Betty Kennedy

Smythe Academy of Arts & Sciences (P-6)

Teacher: Mary Jo Hoffmann
Classified: Sendy Sanchez

Smythe Academy of Arts & Sciences (7-8)

Teacher: Karolee Smiley
Classified: Anny Cha

Strauch Elementary

Teacher: Agatha Rector
Classified: Sara Garrison

Village Elementary

Teacher: Kathy Rodgers
Classified: Johnathon Stige

Vista Nueva/NOVA Opportunity School

Teacher: Gewon Richards
Classified: Elizabeth Huddleston

Westside Elementary

Teacher: Kristina Planting
Classified: Chrissy Thomas

Westside Preparatory Charter - Frontier, Eastside and Westside campuses

Teacher: Laurie Walker

Woodlake Elementary

Teacher: Katreena Tolentino
Classified: Marianne Alvarez

Woodridge Elementary

Teacher: Sharon Blevins
Classified: Loretta Saragosa

District Office Bay A / B

Amber Lynch

District Office Bay C

Irina Manzyuk

District Office / Bay D / IT

Brittany Smith

Police Services

Cory Yen

Transportation

Paul Harrison

Winona Center

Vince Navarrete

FINDING THE RIGHT PATH

Students face a wealth of educational and career choices after graduation. Through Twin Rivers' Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, students can take ownership in their future and test drive potential careers. With 20 career pathways in 15 different industries, CTE programs prepare students for college and careers after high school. Whether it's learning how to shoot, edit and produce a short film or how to communicate and collaborate with others, programs provide students with the hard and soft skills employers look for.

According to the Association for Career & Technical Education, CTE graduates are not only more likely to graduate, but more than 75 percent go on to postsecondary education. And once they do enter the workforce, they benefit from an increased earning potential. Skilled trade jobs, such as those in the health care and STEM fields, are some of the economy's fastest growing occupations, but can be hard for companies to fill. CTE pre-apprenticeship opportunities help close the skills gap.

Twin Rivers CTE Programs include:

- Digital Media
- Culinary Arts
- Engineering
- Sports Medicine
- Health Sciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Agriscience (plant and animal sciences)
- Marketing
- Construction
- Criminal Justice

To see what programs are offered at a Twin Rivers school in your neighborhood, visit www.twinriversusd.org/depts/arts_and_career_education/career_college.



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

Visit www.twinriversusd.org for:



List of schools



District news



Parent resources

2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR

KEEP TRACK OF ALL
IMPORTANT TWIN
RIVERS DATES AT:

www.twinriversusd.org/calendar

AUGUST 2017

8/8 First day of school

SEPTEMBER 2017

9/4 Labor Day

OCTOBER 2017

10/31 Professional Development Day (no school)

NOVEMBER 2017

11/10 Veterans Day (observance)

11/16 -11/17 Parent/Teacher Conference Days (TK-6) (no school)

11/20-11/24 Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER 2017

12/19-12/20 Finals/Minimum Day (secondary only)

12/21-1/5 Winter Break

JANUARY 2018

1/15 Martin Luther King., Jr. Day

1/26 Professional Development Day (no school)

FEBRUARY 2018

2/16 Presidents Day

2/19 Presidents Day

MARCH 2018

3/16 Professional Development Day (no school)

3/26-4/2 Spring Break

MAY 2018

5/28 Memorial Day

5/31 Minimum Day (secondary only)

JUNE 2018

6/1 Last Day of School (minimum day)