

WE ARE **TR!**

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Winter 2016

**WE ARE *TR*·MISSION
POSSIBLE16**
TWIN RIVERS UNIFIED STUDENTS AND STAFF

A Report to the Community

Superintendent's Message



A Team Effort

Parents, teachers and administrators work together for student success

At Twin Rivers, we're here to make our community the best it can be. But parents, we can't do it without you. We're all in this together.

We strive to make our schools the kinds of places kids *want* to go, rather than where they have to go. We want them to be excited about learning and make that connection between coming to school and building their future.

The LCAP helps us do that. The Local Control and Accountability Plan gives us the financial means to provide experiences for Twin Rivers students that they otherwise may not have. Whether it's field trips for all third through sixth graders or making sure all secondary students, from eighth grade to seniors, can take the PSAT or SAT tests for free, the goal is to engage

students and give them a vested interest in their own education.

Parents, we need to hear your voice. You give us insight into what's happening within our community — experiences that are personal and sincere — and help us bring that to life within our schools. *You* help us identify what our students need.

Everything that we do at Twin Rivers is centered around student success. Our Strategic Framework to ensure that success, therefore, prioritizes unparalleled student achievement, effective organization as well as parent and student engagement. We have numerous programs at all of our schools across the district that were developed together with teachers, employees and community partners to make sure that all kids are visible.

The result: graduation rates we continue to be proud of! Although we're waiting for a final number from the state, our 2015-16 estimated graduation rate is 86 percent. Our district is seeing more kids graduating and more kids staying in school — and that's something we can all be proud of.

We're all on the same team. Let's continue to work together for our kids.

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



TRUSD By the Numbers

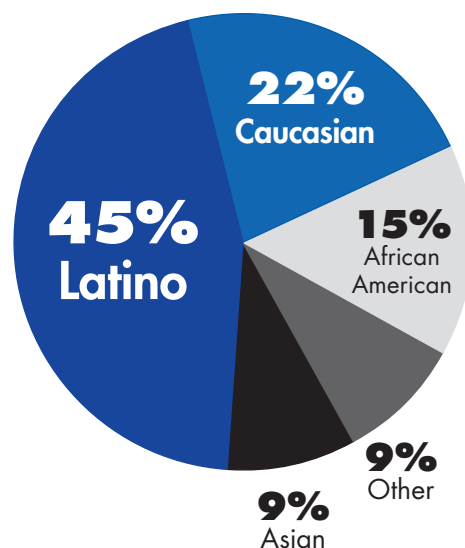


TRUSD is California's
29TH LARGEST
school district by enrollment
and covers
**82 SQUARE
MILES**

Serves **28,000 STUDENTS**
(preschool through adult education)
across **53 SCHOOL SITE
LOCATIONS.**



STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



Students speak
46 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

TWIN RIVERS EMPLOYS



3,016
staff and faculty
members

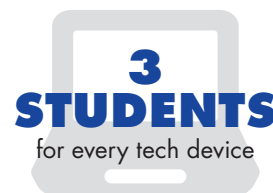
1,660
certificated employees

1,356
classified employees
including

50
Nationally Board
Certified educators



\$11,550
spent per student annually



3
STUDENTS
for every tech device



34
After School Education and
Safety Expanded Learning sites

Kyanna Thurston, a senior at Highlands High School, manages to balance AP classwork, varsity basketball and community service, all while maintaining a 4.0 GPA.
Photo by Anne Stokes



Star Student

STUDENT SUCCESS

- 1,140 students were in **college readiness and AVID programs**
- 1,049 students took one or more **Advanced Placement course**
- 128 students received the **State Seal of Biliiteracy**

↑ Graduation rate: 82.9%
(exceeds county and state averages)

↓ Dropout rate: 9.2%
(below county and state averages)

- **5.2% increase** in English learners reclassified to fluent English proficient (2014-2015)

Oct. 19 was PSAT/SAT day, when **6,305** 8th through 11th grade students and **1,178** high school seniors took their tests at **no cost to families**.

Schools with the highest California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) growth:

English Language Arts	Math
Hazel Strauch Elementary – 12%	Hagginwood Elementary – 9%
Ridgepoint – 8%	Pioneer – 8%
Foothill Ranch Middle School – 21%	Foothill Ranch Middle School – 15%
Rio Linda High School – 9%	Highlands High School – 9%

A Step Above

High school senior manages to balance school, sports and community service by Anne Stokes

Kyanna Thurston likes a good challenge. This year, the ambitious Highlands High School senior is taking on a heavy advanced placement load — AP Government, AP Literature and AP Calculus. With a head for numbers and a determined competitive streak, she hopes to study business at California State University, Monterey Bay next year.

“My goal is to achieve more than the average student can achieve,” she says. “My drive comes from inside. I try to work as hard as I can so that I am a step ahead of everyone else. That applies to everything from basketball to academics to community outreach.”

Kyanna has a long list of achievements to show for all of her hard work: She has a 4.0 GPA, a varsity basketball player who has been named to the Sac-Joaquin Section All-League team three times and still does volunteer work in her spare time.

All of her accomplishments and aspirations are even more remarkable considering the situation Kyanna and her mother were in just a few years ago. Until 2014, they lived at Serna Village, a nonprofit organization that supports homeless families on their way to self-

sufficiency. Kyanna got her first taste of being in business as part of the organization’s entrepreneur club, which sold hot dogs and nachos and organized movie nights.

“Running your own business and being able to solve problems on our own was what I liked to do,” she says.

Even though she’s no longer a resident, Kyanna still volunteers her time at Serna Village, serving as treasurer of the nonprofit’s teen council. Last year, she also got involved in community outreach on campus, co-founding the school’s Gay-Straight Alliance, which helps create a safe space for LGBTQ youth and their allies.

And to help keep her academic work on track, Kyanna has been an AVID student for the past four years. The Advancement Via Individual Determination program is a college preparatory program where students not only help each other with schoolwork, but also get support with the college application process.

“We all study together, we all work and compare notes and we help each other with problems we don’t understand,” she says. “It’s helped me pass most of my classes because my classmates help me get things done and figure everything out.”

“I try to work as hard as I can so that I am a step ahead of everyone else.”

Kyanna Thurston
Highlands High School senior, honor student and varsity athlete



Local Control and Accountability

District seeks community's input on how to best serve students

by Anne Stokes

While Twin Rivers schools receive state funding, determining how to spend those funds falls under local district responsibility. Through input from stakeholders, including teachers, parents, community members and students, Twin Rivers Unified School District develops a plan to make best use of those funds, called the Local Control and Accountability Plan, or LCAP.

"It's a plan that we develop ... in order to ensure that our goals are in alignment with our priorities and the state's priorities to put the best program together for our students," says Cynthia Andrews, Twin Rivers' Director of Special Projects. "It's a plan that incorporates how we spend those funds on programs that affect student achievement and student development."

The state of California has eight priorities that must be addressed through LCAP funding:

Implementation of State Standards

The LCAP provides extensive professional development so teachers have the knowledge that they need to implement Common Core standards.

Access to Courses

Whether it's college-bound high school students who need to take A-G courses or an elementary student who needs a specific second language, LCAP funding enables Twin Rivers to provide students with the courses they need.

School Climate

Every student needs facilities that are clean, safe and conducive to learning. LCAP provides the funding to keep facilities in good working order, including working HVAC systems, parking lot pavement maintenance and structurally sound buildings. It also ensures student safety on campus through the Twin Rivers Police Services.

Other Student Outcomes

Different students need different resources to succeed. LCAP funding helps Twin Rivers schools ensure all students are given equal access to those resources they need to make the most of their education.

Basic Services

From providing electricity to hiring teachers, basic services provide for the basic staffing and running of school facilities.

Student Engagement

LCAP funding provides for engagement activities and programs such as VAPA (Visual and Performing Arts), MESA (Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement) and field trips to places such as the state Capitol, planetariums and science camps.

Student Achievement

Improving student achievement is Twin Rivers' most important goal. In order to help students achieve academically, the district has implemented a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for both academic and behavioral help. With LCAP funding, MTSS Intervention Specialists at school sites can help with student case management, provide pathways for remediation or academic support.

Parental Involvement

At school sites, parents can attend Parent Clubs and School Site Council to voice their concerns, as well as participate in Parent University, back-to-school nights, open house or volunteer in the classroom. On a district level, parents can have a voice in planning through Twin Rivers' Parent Leadership or District English Language Acquisition Committees (DELAC).

Students reap the benefits when parents are involved in their education. Having parents' input is vital for district policymakers to understand how to best serve students.

"It's incredibly important for parents to participate in this [LCAP] process because we need an authentic parent voice to help us know what our students need," Andrews says. "We analyze data, we look at what's happening in classrooms, we talk with teachers, we talk with principals, but at the end of the day, parents know their students best."

For more information on how to get involved, call 916-566-1600 ext. 63350 or visit www.twinriversusd.org/misc/lcap/.

"At the end of the day, parents know their students best."

Cynthia Andrews
Director of Special Projects, Twin Rivers Unified School District



Twin Rivers encourages parents to participate in the LCAP process to ensure they have a voice in determining how programs and projects are funded.
Photo courtesy of Twin Rivers Unified School District

Achievement, Engagement, Effectiveness

Three areas of focus help deliver the very best for students

by Amanda Caraway

Twin Rivers Unified School District is committed to providing the very best for its students, parents, staff and community. In order to achieve this, they have identified three strategic focus areas:

Unparalleled Student Achievement

Twin Rivers believes that by focusing on unparalleled student achievement, its students will have access to all of the best options that life can offer after they graduate.

"Unparalleled student achievement is essential to everything we do," says Dr. Lori Grace, Assistant Superintendent of School Leadership at Twin Rivers. "It's at the heart and soul of the organization."

To achieve this goal, student assessment systems are in place to support teachers and help them identify things like best teaching practices and students who are struggling. One example is the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) held at every school in the district. On two Wednesdays each month, teachers come together to analyze student data. They look at test scores and other measurements to identify areas where students struggle and where they excel. That way they can discuss solutions, identify goals and learn from each other.

"Teachers work together to create the tests, so success is easier to measure because all students take the same test," Grace says. "If a particular teacher has really high scores, they are able to share best teaching practices so that all teachers and students benefit."

This approach seems to be working. After initiating an integrated math program last year, the district saw gains across the board. One school, Foothill Ranch Middle School, saw a 20-point increase in test scores.

Engagement and Outreach

Fostering engagement and outreach is important because when parents become engaged with the school, student attendance and grades go up.

"It's important for both parents and students to feel invested in the school," says Yolanda Mayoral Falkenberg, Parent and Community Engagement Coordinator for Twin Rivers.

To encourage this investment, the district has created parent engagement opportunities like Parent University, a participant-driven forum. The first meeting is a dialogue with parents to learn about their concerns and decide on a focus area.

"The focus is different for each school," Falkenberg says. "Some common ones are bullying, traffic safety and homework assistance."

Once the focus is determined, workshops are held at a time and place that is convenient for the parents. Some schools hold weekly workshops, while others meet quarterly.

"These programs help parents feel empowered to positively advocate for their children," Falkenberg says. "I often hear them say that they didn't realize they could ask for certain things and have it be positively received by the school."

Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness

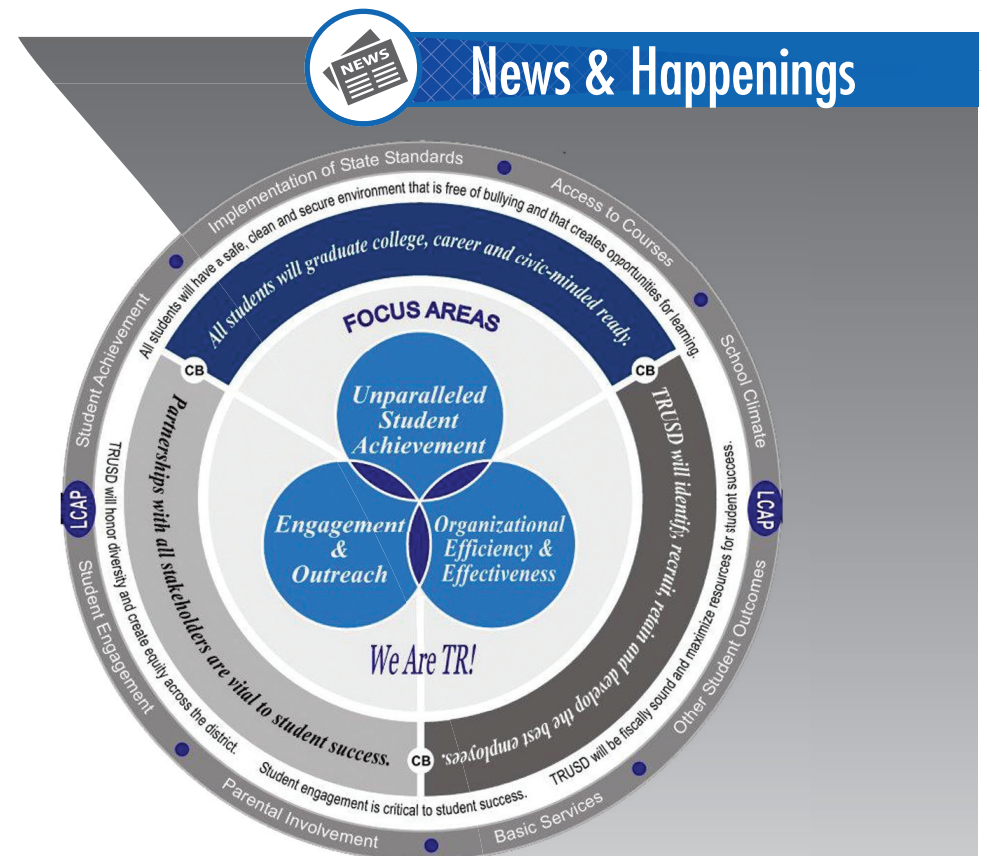
Twin Rivers has made it a priority to operate with more efficiency and effectiveness for the good of the students and the community. That's one reason Armando Orozco, Director of Maintenance for Twin Rivers, has a goal of responding to work orders within 24 hours with a 30-day completion rule.

"The maintenance of our facilities is a vital focus of our day-to-day operations and our long-range management priorities," says Orozco. "It has been proven time and time again that well-maintained schools help create positive learning environments for students. When our students feel they are in a clean, safe and secure environment, they can focus on learning at their highest potential."

Organizational efficiency enables teachers to focus on their students rather than worrying about other things like faulty lighting. This, in turn, supports the district's focus on unparalleled student achievement.

"When our students feel they are in a clean, safe and secure environment, they can focus on learning at their highest potential."

Armando Orozco
Director of Maintenance for Twin Rivers





Students visit the Sierra College
Natural History Museum.
Photo Courtesy TRUSD

When Students Have Fun, They Achieve

Twin Rivers' new Student Engagement Department brings curriculum to life

by Amanda Caraway

School rallies and field trips to pan for gold may be fun on the surface — but these activities happen for a reason.

The Twin Rivers Unified School District's Student Engagement Department is in charge of developing activities and events to improve student engagement — which leads to student achievement. Since the department's creation in 2015, the district has seen a remarkable impact.

"We create anchor activities that tie to curriculum and help the material come to life," says Craig S. Murray, Executive Director of Student Engagement. "The goal is to choose activities for each grade that coordinate with lessons and standards."

For example, fourth graders focus on California history, so they take field trips to places

including the state Capitol, gold country and The California Museum. Sixth graders study science, so they attend an overnight science camp.

"It's one thing for students to read about the Gold Rush, but it's different when they are actually there panning for gold," Murray says. "For many of our kids this is the last chance they get to do these things."

Murray believes these activities help encourage attendance and classroom achievement. Eighth-grader Aaliyah Delgado agrees. At her school, Smythe Academy Middle School, they hold quarterly Renaissance Rallies for students with strong GPAs and attendance records.

"It really pushes students to get better grades so they can go to the rallies and have fun," she says. "Plus, these activities give you more interaction with other students, so you get to know more people rather than just hanging out with the same small group."

Delgado is vice president of her school's student council and is part of the spirit committee, which plans lunchtime activities every Friday. These activities include three-legged races and spirit days, where students are encouraged to wear things like Disney clothes or neon colors to school.

"We work so hard during the week, and then on Fridays we get to have fun at lunch and play games," Delgado says.

Twin Rivers also created a student activities director position at each high school. Isabel Acosta serves in that role at Grant Union High.

"We plan events to help our students learn and become invested," Acosta says. "For example, on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, our students created



"It's wonderful to know you have provided a child an experience he otherwise might never have had."

Craig S. Murray
Executive Director of Student Engagement

posters and marched with the community to the state Capitol to raise awareness."

Acosta also plans events that focus on things like breast cancer awareness and the importance of voting. For one of her activities, she partnered with the California Secretary of State's office to educate students on the importance of voting and how to register to vote.

"When students want to be at school, they're more likely to come and learn while they're here," Acosta says. "These activities help them feel like they are a part of something that matters. Plus, being part of an extra-curricular program, such as a club, encourages students to get good grades."

Staff feedback on these student engagement efforts is consistently positive, but the most impactful thing for Murray and his staff is when they receive positive feedback from students.

"One that sticks out in my mind is a thank you card we received from a boy from Syria after a trip to the IMAX movie," Murray says. "It's wonderful to know you have provided a child an experience he otherwise might never have had."

Students visit the California
State Capitol building.
Photo Courtesy TRUSD



Targeting Our Dollars



Results

Budget reflects school and district goals

by Amanda Caraway

Twin Rivers Unified School District is focused on targeting dollars to achieve goals and become stronger fiscally, all in an effort to support student achievement. This means not only focusing on district goals, but also supporting the goals of each school in the district. The Fiscal Services Department is charged with this important task.

“Part of our job is to help our schools monitor their funds and ensure that money is being spent the way it was allocated to be spent,” says Kate Ingersoll, Executive Director of Fiscal Services for Twin Rivers. “Each school has their own accountability improvement plan that they can follow to help remain on track.”

The district’s revenue comes from state and federal sources and includes categorical funds (which have to be spent on certain things, like English language learners) and local revenues. Because of the high population of impoverished children and foster children in the district, 80 percent of the budget comes from the state’s Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

“Twin Rivers has a high population of underprivileged children, and now 86 percent of our students fall into this category,” Ingersoll says. “This year we qualified for over \$50 million in LCFF money based on the number of qualifying students.”

The LCFF funds have improved the lives of many students by enabling the district to once again offer things like music classes and additional school counselors.

“All of these things help maintain a student focus and improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness,” Ingersoll says.

One of the biggest accomplishments has been reducing the student-to-teacher ratio in classes. For example, the ratio for

kindergarten classes is now 21-to-1 thanks to the hiring of more teachers. In addition, nutrition services has the funds to ensure that qualifying students receive breakfast before class.

Maintaining efficiency and effectiveness in all departments is important for many reasons. This is why Ingersoll’s department is focused on creating new systems that help teachers and students. They prioritize paying vendors in a timely manner and creating online systems that will make things easier. By June 2017, the entire health benefits system will be online as will the purchasing requisition system. In collaboration with other departments, other online forms are in the process of being developed for overtime approval and reimbursements.

“These new systems will eliminate paper and make things more efficient,” Ingersoll says. “That way, teachers can focus on students rather than worrying about filling out paperwork, locating lost forms and following up with vendors.”

Ingersoll also places great importance on maintaining a balanced budget and being transparent with the board and the community. The district has budget projections in place for the next two years, and she is confident that the district is in a good place to experience long-term fiscal stability. The department is also focused on eliminating the district’s long-term debt.

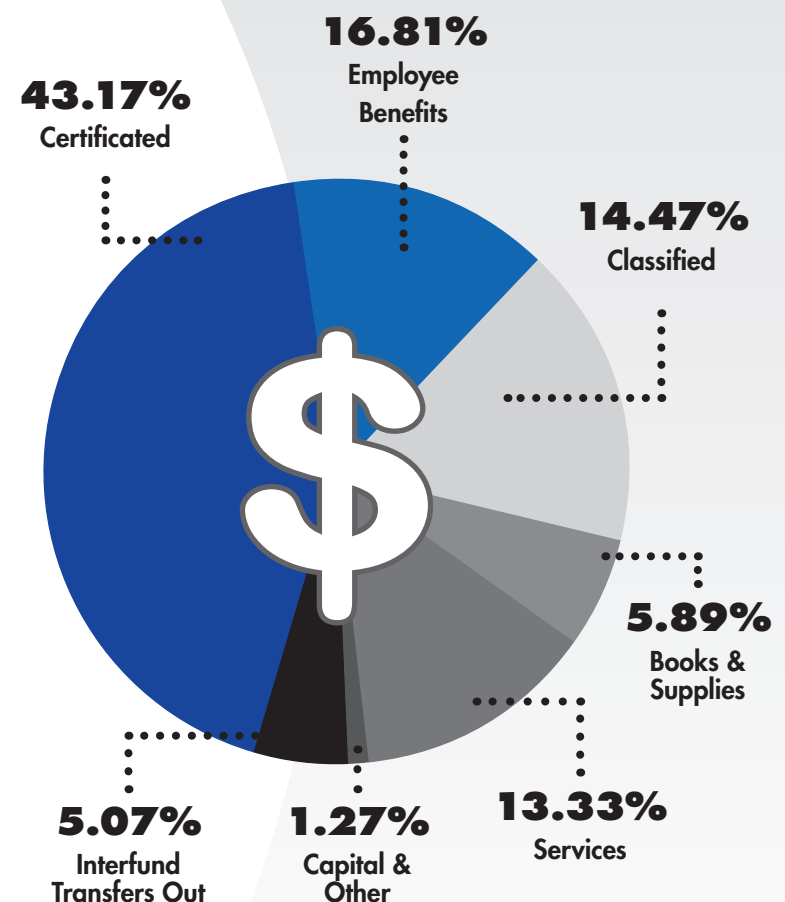
As a result of these efforts, Twin Rivers has received the Meritorious Budget Award for the last six years from the Association of School Business Officials International.

“Only four other districts in the state have received this international award,” Ingersoll says. “We are pleased to be recognized.”

“Teachers can focus on students rather than worrying about filling out paperwork, locating lost forms and following up with vendors.”

Kate Ingersoll
Executive Director of Fiscal Services

2016-17 GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES



Twin Rivers has received the Meritorious Budget Award for the last six years from the Association of School Business Officials International.

ATTENDANCE COUNTS

Across Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD) school staff have increased attention and more concerted efforts to improve school attendance. All TRUSD school programs are taking action to not only reduce school truancy and chronic absenteeism, but also rethink discipline practices that remove students from the classroom. Additionally, TRUSD school programs are taking more common sense changes that focus on improved tracking, monitoring and addressing attendance problems. These changes involve the timely systemic tracking and review of data to address attendance concerns. Finally, one of the biggest efforts to improve districtwide attendance is increasing communication by:

- Increased parent engagement
- Reviewing and discussing student attendance data
- Providing information about the negative impact of missed school and academic success
- Explaining to parents the important role they play in a students' attendance.

Also, TRUSD is working hard to address common misconceptions about attendance, such as, early grade attendance isn't as important as high school, only consecutive day absences have an impact on schooling, students will catch up by the time they reach high school, and absences are OK if parents give permission for a student to miss school. TRUSD is working hard to send the message to all of our parents that "showing up" to school every day counts and makes a difference in student success.



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

2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR

DECEMBER 2016	
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

DON'T MISS OUT!

We're getting close to winter break, which begins Thursday, Dec. 22. Make sure students do not miss school on the last three days of the semester: Monday, Dec. 19 through Wednesday, Dec. 21. Students return from winter break on Jan. 9.

KEEP TRACK OF ALL IMPORTANT TWIN RIVERS DATES AT:

www.twinriversusd.org/calendar