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MATH COUNTS

TwinRivers
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



"How do you think math will help you in the future?"



"I think math can help me in the future because if I need help with something very important, like if I need to measure something."

Haylie Heroux
11, 5th grade, Ridgepoint Elementary School



"I really want to be a doctor or pharmacist and you have to [calculate] how much medicine they need ... how many pills they need, stuff like that."

Makayla Chrestensen
14, 8th grade, Ridgepoint Elementary School



"I want to be a real estate agent, so I would have to use math to do that. You have to get people to buy houses from you, so you'd need to negotiate prices and stuff."

Arianna Boose
13, 8th grade, Ridgepoint Elementary School



"Right now math is helping me while looking into college — I calculate the tuition, the room and board, all of that. Math in the future can help you with a lot of great jobs."

Mekhi Haynes
17, Senior, Rio Linda High School



"Math is important to all the aspects of life that come after education: ... how to pay bills, pay a mortgage and it can even apply to your job or field that you work in."

Jett Jones
17, Senior, Rio Linda High School

Cover Photo by Anne Stokes



BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION

At Twin Rivers, students gain the foundational skills for success

When you look at how technology has changed our economy over the last 20 years, it's easy to see how fundamental math is to progress. Computer science, engineering, medicine and all the different technologies that build a better future for society require a solid mathematical foundation. Students who can master basic concepts early on — addition, subtraction, multiplication and division — are better prepared to pursue advanced levels of math and science in both higher education and the workforce.

The education we provide gives students that foundation to be successful while they're here at Twin Rivers and in their future. To prepare students as they matriculate through our system, we focus on high-quality instruction and ensure our curriculum is aligned with Common Core standards. We're building the capacity of our teachers and giving them more effective teaching tools, such as new curriculum in English language arts and a new math program. In particular, we have recently implemented the Swun Math program in our kindergarten through eighth grade classrooms with supplemental materials. With an emphasis on high-quality lesson design that engages

students, Swun Math is an innovative program that will better serve students and support higher academic achievement.

We are also offering new opportunities for our secondary students. This year, Twin Rivers' high school students can take college-level classes, giving them the chance to earn college credits and a taste of college-level coursework.

As a reminder to those same students, don't forget to fill out college financial aid forms starting at the beginning of

2018, even if you're not sure about your post-graduation plans. Parents, if your child is a senior, now is a good time to touch base with your student's school counselor to make sure they're on track to graduate.

For parents interested in checking out the new program — including Swun Math — our district

website offers support and learning resources that will help you better understand what your child is doing in the classroom.

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





HIGHLIGHTS FROM STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

Twin Rivers implementing a three-pronged approach to improve scores

by Anne Stokes

STANDOUT SCHOOLS

While overall standardized test scores in math and English language arts (ELA) across the district were relatively stable, there were some standout schools that showed improvement in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards. Out of 42 school sites, 25 showed an increase in ELA scores and 19 improved scores in math over last year, including:

	2015-16	2016-17	Increase
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			
Foothill High School	30%	46%	16%
Village Elementary	18%	28%	10%
Michael J. Castori Elementary	19%	28%	9%
Dry Creek Elementary	28%	36%	8%
Del Paso Heights Elementary	11%	18%	7%
MATH			
Dry Creek Elementary	32%	43%	11%
Woodlake Elementary	16%	26%	10%
D.W. Babcock Elementary	24%	30%	6%

Standardized testing provides a snapshot of student achievement, helping educators understand what educational programs and curricula are effective. Like many districts, Twin Rivers uses them as a tool to gauge what is working and what needs improvement.

According to Dr. Lori Grace, Assistant Superintendent of School Leadership, Secondary, the district's latest assessment shows the need for educators and administrators to place more emphasis on classroom instruction.

"We know the impact great teaching has on student achievement," Grace says. "In fact, research tells us that highly effective teachers significantly influence how students feel about school and learning. As a district, we will continue to focus on the growth and development of our staff by providing meaningful professional development to directly impact instruction."

According to the district's 2017 preliminary Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) achievement summary, the percentage of students who met or exceeded standards was:

- 31% in English language arts (ELA) (2% increase over previous year)
- 24% in math (same as previous year)

"There was some improvement here and there at certain grade levels and at certain schools, but as a cumulative effect of our dozens of schools together, we're not improving in math," says Dr. Anne Zeman, Assistant Superintendent of School Leadership, Elementary. "We're redoubling efforts this year in order to show much more significant gains."

To address these challenges, Twin Rivers is focusing on three main areas of improvement:

"We're redoubling efforts this year in order to show much more significant gains."

Dr. Anne Zeman
Assistant Superintendent of School Leadership, Elementary

1. Professional development

Twin Rivers teachers are committed to providing students with the best possible educational opportunities. To that end, the district is committed to providing teachers the support and training to do so, including Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) who provide professional support and coaching.

2. Provision of new resources

Throughout the district, schools are implementing new curricular materials in both math and English language arts specifically aligned to Common Core standards. As an additional resource, kindergarten through eighth grade classrooms have implemented the Swun Math program, a new method which has proven successful in similar districts.

3. Direct intervention services for students

At Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) schools, additional teachers provide direct educational interventions for students in need of additional support in a small group setting.

DOING MATH THE **SWU**



Students in Michelle Bricker's eighth grade math class are encouraged to collaborate and solve math problems together, which is emphasized in the Swun Math method.
Photos by Anne Stokes



Teacher Sofiya Azarov's first graders sit in groups while working with base 10 blocks. Each student gets a turn, while their peers observe and help them.

New program aims to increase understanding of math across the district

by Laura Hillen

Eighth grade students cluster together, their excitement obvious as discussions become punctuated with highly animated gestures and even laughter. What has them excited? It's math.

Teacher Michelle Bricker's students are doing Swun Math — a new mathematics lesson plan launched this year in K-8 classrooms across Twin Rivers Unified School District in order to boost math scores. It emphasizes group work and a student's ability to explain their reasoning to peers.

"Kids remember what math was like before," says Bricker. "[Swun is] giving them confidence ... and stop[s] kids from giving up in their head."

Building off of Common Core State Standards, Swun explores an "I do, we do, you do" model: Teachers begin each class by introducing math concepts, and then students solve problems in groups before tackling problems individually.

"It's a [lesson design] that actually works for students," says Assistant Superintendent of School Leadership, Secondary, Dr. Lori Grace. "And the coaching model that allows teachers to learn [and] receive professional development ... makes it unique."

Swun reinforces basic math concepts, while encouraging math students to ask questions and learn how to voice their thoughts and needs.

With Swun Math, teachers are more like facilitators in the classroom, rather than lecturers. Teachers talking in front

of students for an entire lesson has been replaced by excited math students, huddled in groups and solving problems together. Teachers are able to provide direct guidance in the classroom, while receiving continuous support from the Swun Math organization.

"Swun trainers are in the district almost every day of the week," says Andrew Withers, Director of K-12 Professional Development.

Twin Rivers teachers can already see the difference.

"The vocabulary has increased a lot," says Sofiya Azarov, first grade teacher

at Ridgepoint Elementary. "Because ... we're doing it so much, [vocabulary] is coming out of their mouth because it's so natural. And [students] actually understand what they're talking about."

As Azarov has witnessed in her own classroom, students are eager

to collaborate on problems and make sure their peers are learning. As Swun Math demonstrates, students can often explore math concepts more intuitively by talking to one another than they could by just taking notes or listening to a lecture.

Twin Rivers is determined to see a districtwide increase in math skills — not just in one department or school. So far, everyone is feeling the effects of Swun Math.

"We've heard things like Swun has been life-changing for [teachers], that they're excited about teaching math again," says Grace. "I've actually heard kids cheer."

"We've heard things like SWUN has been life-changing for [teachers], that they're excited about teaching math again. I've actually heard kids cheer."

Dr. Lori Grace
*Assistant Superintendent of School Leadership, Secondary
Twin Rivers Unified School District*



"If you can explain something to somebody ... then you truthfully ... know what you're doing."

Si Swun
Creator of Swun Math

Q&A WITH SI SWUN

by Laura Hillen

Once a struggling math student himself, Si Swun is the mind behind Swun Math. Swun developed the program in order to explore the "why" behind math and boost student confidence. Swun and his Swun Math team have provided ongoing support and coaching to their school district partners since 2010, and have a track record of success across the nation. Twin Rivers is the latest district to use the program to build off Common Core State Standards and increase math understanding, one student at a time.

What makes Swun Math unique?

[It's very] interactive. We allow kids time to discuss and collaborate ... and that's empowering for [them] to learn how to do that. Teachers no longer are the lecturer but ... a facilitator.

How does it help students?

[Asking kids what they know and what they don't] allows them to think outside the box. The next step is ... how do you apply this in your

everyday life? If you can explain something to somebody ... then you truthfully really know what you're doing. Kids seem to understand things more when they talk to each other.

How does Swun Math benefit students from many backgrounds?

Numbers [don't] discriminate where you're from. Numbers are numbers. It's exciting [to see kids'] outcome, and they'll use whatever tool they have to express themselves. We call math the universal language because there's no barrier, ... [it's] such a gateway to a lot of kids. You can bring them out of their shell a little bit, even the shy ones.

What's next?

To go and help the areas that need [us] the most. My goal is to be able to have the opportunity to help [schools], and give kids and people access to the math world. Math is a window of opportunity for kids.

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO MATH

Parents play a key role in student success, even if they are not familiar with Common Core math material.

"Parents can support their children by encouraging them to do their very best even when the work is difficult," says Dr. Lori Grace, Assistant Superintendent of School Leadership, Secondary. "I would also recommend parents attend one of the district's upcoming Swun Math parent meetings."

Twin Rivers Unified School District has introduced Swun Math as a supplemental program to Common Core State Standards, in order to increase student skills in K-8 math and prepare students for upper level math courses that use similar learning styles.

Parents and students can access course information and math videos from home on each school's webpage. Parents can also follow these tips:

Provide a quiet place to work



Have children explain math problems to you



Encourage students to keep trying when a problem is hard



Check homework for completion, not accuracy



Ask questions, even if you don't know the answers



Tell students it's OK not to get everything right the first time





FACILITY INVESTMENTS

Twin Rivers Unified School District is improving its facilities with one goal in mind: unparalleled student achievement.

With each improvement, the General Services department reports excited feedback from parents, students and teachers. Providing students with a safe, clean and secure environment for learning translates to "Success, Nothing Less!"

This year, the Board of Trustees took an in-depth look at each prospective project and utilized an innovative, interactive platform to prioritize budget allocations based on necessity.

COMPLETED FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS (FROM 2014-2016)



● Painting projects: **\$2,431,144.92**

● Paving projects: **\$11,046,935.62**

● HVAC projects: **\$8,195,805.29**

● Miscellaneous district projects
(tennis courts, relocations, pool) :
\$14,147,294.70

● High school stadium artificial turf
projects: **\$3,515,772.59**

Grand total: \$39,336,953.12

**Stay tuned for more information on
2018's improvement projects!**

MAINTAINING BALANCE

Budget focuses on maintaining only the most successful programs

by Laura Hillen

After several years of expanding with new programs, Twin Rivers Unified School District is moving forward with a new financial point of focus — building upon its current investments.

"We've invested in great programs for the students, [who] are always our first thought when we're developing any new idea or process for the district," says Kate Ingersoll, Executive Director of Fiscal Services. "But from a fiscal end, we're tapping the brakes and slowing down as there won't be an influx of new programs."

Since 2013, Twin Rivers has been utilizing the state's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) to put new programs into action and give its students critical, innovative resources. As this state funding source winds down, Twin Rivers is honing its strategy to sustain only the best methods and programs moving forward.

"This year, more than the last few years, we really need to be asking ourselves ... 'how is this affecting student achievement [and] is this the biggest leverage to improve [that]?'"

**"We really need to be
asking ourselves ...
'how is this affecting
student achievement?'"**

Kate Ingersoll
*Executive Director of Fiscal Services,
Twin Rivers Unified School District*

And if not, does it need to be something else?" Ingersoll says.

That doesn't mean nothing new will be implemented this year, Ingersoll says, pointing to the new Swun Math program, but rather that any recent programs or plans must be determined to be both necessary and effective.

"We really invested funds into the teacher salary schedule for the 2017-18 year," Ingersoll says.

Twin Rivers will also continue actions and services funded through its Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), created with input from the community. This includes student engagement activities

like field trips, athletic clubs, visual arts, instructional teachers and more.

For information on Twin Rivers' budget for this year and how the district is minimizing deficit spending, the community can access a user-friendly budget book at www.twinriversusd.org/depts/fiscal_services.



Early childhood education can improve a student's outcomes in school and beyond. Twin Rivers has assembled an Early Childhood Education Task Force to focus on serving youth ages birth through third grade. Photo by Melissa Uroff

WORKING TOWARD THE COMMON GOOD

Task forces focus on safety and early learning

by Anne Stokes

Early Childhood Education Task Force

Twin Rivers' ECE task force is developing a five-year strategic plan to increase the early childhood educational opportunities for children from birth through third grade. According to Elizabeth Cunnion, Coordinator for Twin Rivers' Early Childhood Education, such opportunities can translate into better outcomes for students, including lower drop-out rates.

"The purpose was to provide a districtwide coherent approach that supports the academic achievement and the social and emotional competence of all early learners," she says.

Members include:

- District representatives
- Board of Trustees
- Site Administrators
- Teachers
- Parents
- Sacramento County Office of Education
- Sacramento Promise Zone
- Reducing African American Child Death
- Liberty Towers
- Child Action, Inc.
- Roberts Family Development Center
- First Five Sacramento
- Neighborhoods Choice
- Mutual Assistance Network
- Highlands Community Charter
- Greater Sacramento Urban League
- Sacramento Housing Redevelopment Agency

Key focus points:

- High-quality teaching and learning
- Integrative services and inclusion
- High-quality locations and facilities
- Family advocacy and community engagement
- Increasing and improving workforce capacity

Recommendations:

- Ensuring teachers have professional development opportunities
- Early intervention for students who need help, and mainstreaming special education students into general education classrooms
- Recruiting and hiring high-quality teachers
- Making preschool available and ensuring sites are safe learning environments
- Connecting families with neighborhood agencies and available resources

How to participate:

If you're a parent or community member interested in serving on an ECE advisory committee, contact ECE Director Dr. Julie Montali at julie.montali@twinriversusd.org or look for copies of the ECE Task Force strategic plan in front offices this winter.

Safety Task Force

In order to identify the concerns and strategies necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff, Twin Rivers convened a Safety Task Force in June 2016.

"The purpose of the team is to identify structures and services that are necessary to support safe school environments and ultimately make recommendations to the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent regarding future work," says Dr. Sara Noguchi, Associate Superintendent for Innovation, Research and Design.

Members include:

- District representatives
- Board of Trustees
- Site Administrators
- Teachers
- Parents
- Sacramento County Probation and Sheriffs departments
- Sacramento County Behavioral Health Services
- Sacramento Police Department
- California Highway Patrol
- Sacramento Gang Prevention and Intervention Task Force

Key focus points:

- School culture and climate
- Physical and emotional well-being
- School facilities
- Student discipline
- Crisis response and emergency preparedness

Recommendations:

- Create schools where staff, families and communities have a sense of belonging
- Develop district expectations for social-emotional learning regarding implementation of strategies
- Develop a districtwide discipline model
- Pass a facilities bond to support the growing facilities issue

How to participate:

Families who would like to get involved can do so through the district's Parent University online at twinriversusd.org or contact Dr. Noguchi at 916-566-1622.



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

Good to Know



PSAT: GATEWAY TO COLLEGE SUCCESS

Twin Rivers is turning accessibility into achievement. The district paid the fee for 5,852 eighth through 11th grade students to take the PSAT on October 11. The district also paid the fee for 1,078 seniors to take the SAT.

"We have many initiatives in place to support college and career readiness," says Counseling Coordinator Carol Young. "Offering the PSAT at no cost to families is one of them. The exam is an awesome opportunity for our students. They will be able to opt-in to the College Board's free Student Search Service, which connects them with colleges and universities they may not be familiar with. Also, depending on their scores, students may be selected to participate in scholarship programs linked to the exam."

To further help students set their sights on college, TRUSD counselors use many college prep tools, including:

AP potential report: identifies qualified students, suggests class placement

Student Search: connects students to relevant scholarships and colleges

Khan Academy: offers free and personalized tutoring

College Board: outlines scores, assesses student progress

The district offers a similar program for seniors and the SAT.

2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR

KEEP TRACK OF ALL
IMPORTANT TWIN
RIVERS DATES AT:

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

NOVEMBER 2017	
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	K-12 Professional Development Day (no school)
FEBRUARY 2018	
2/16	President's Day
2/19	President's Day
MARCH 2018	
3/16	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)