

# WE ARE **TR!**



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**Students and teachers appreciate upgrades  
in classroom technology**

**TwinRivers**  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

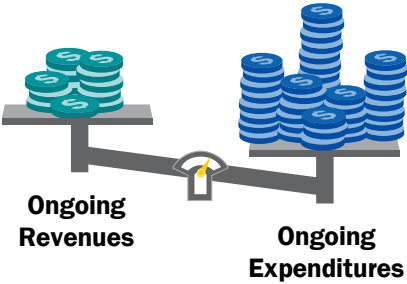


# BY THE NUMBERS

BY THEA MARIE ROOD

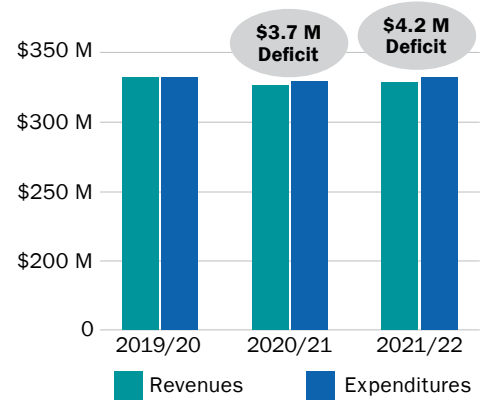
Although the Twin Rivers Unified School District is not in deficit spending this year, that will not be the case going forward.

"In January, the Governor revealed his 2020-2021 revenue proposal," says Kate Ingersoll, Executive Director of Fiscal Services. "They had originally predicted a 3% increase, then decreased it to 1.7% in November 2019. Now it's proposed to be 2.29%. So our projected deficit spending was at \$3.8 million and went up almost \$3 million — to \$6.7 million. And now, along with proposed special education revenue increases, it's down by \$3 million to \$3.7 million."



There is some possibility the district or state will identify additional funding sources – figures that are admittedly always changing. "But we're in deficit spending in all scenarios next year," Ingersoll says.

The district has already cut \$16.9 million between last year and this one, and until now have "kept it from the classroom," she says. **But next year, the district faces less revenue than expected on top of automatic step and column increases in staff salaries and STRS and PERS retirement increases.** "All those things cost more than the revenue," Ingersoll says.



While no schools will close at this time, the Board of Trustees did approve school reconfiguration for eight schools. "But we are still protecting classrooms," Ingersoll says. "People worry class size will go up – but it's not. We are still going to have the same number of teachers for staffing needs. And in a school of 215 students, you have no vice principal, no counselor – but in a school of 600, there are more programs and opportunities offered for students."

# From the Superintendent

There has been much discussion about what lies ahead for our district as we continue to deal with the fiscal impact of declining enrollment and underutilized schools. We must identify \$3.7 million in reductions for 2020-2021.

I can tell you right now that in talking with parents, staff and community members, everyone is determined to move forward together no matter how difficult the challenge. That alone says a lot about how far we have come in the past several years in managing change, easing transitions, and shifting to a culture that is all about what is strong in our district as we work towards the future.

We are in the midst of implementing actions the Board of Trustees approved at the Jan. 28, 2020 school board meeting. No schools will close at this time, but Trustees did approve school reconfiguration for eight schools and consolidation of Noralto and Harmon Johnson schools.

## New Grade Configurations for 2020-2021

At current enrollment levels and operating 15 grade configurations, we have too many under-enrolled schools. Students are not concentrated on campuses in a way that allows the district to utilize staff efficiently and offer consistent and robust educational programming across all school sites.

On July 2, 2019, the Board of Trustees approved Board Policy 7112. With the new policy, there is now a uniform grade configuration for what schools in Twin Rivers will look like as we move forward.

| School Type  | Approved Reconfigured Grades |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| Elementary   | K – 6                        |
| Elementary   | K – 8                        |
| Intermediate | 7 – 8                        |
| Secondary    | 9 – 12                       |

## School consolidations\* for 2020-2021:

| School Name                           | Grades |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Noralto Elementary and Harmon Johnson | K – 6  |

\*Consolidation refers to a single administration team in multiple buildings.

## Reconfigured schools for 2020-2021

| School Name                   | Reconfigured Grades                       |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Rio Tierra Middle School      | From 6 – 8 to 7 – 8                       |
| Dry Creek Elementary          | From K – 4 to K – 6 (2 year transition)   |
| Orchard Elementary            | From K – 8 to K – 6 (2 year transition)   |
| Strauch Elementary            | From K – 5 to K – 6                       |
| Woodridge Elementary          | From K – 4 to K – 6 (2 year transition)   |
| Foothill Ranch Middle School  | From 5 – 8 to 7 – 8 (2 year transition)   |
| Rio Linda Preparatory Academy | From 5 – 8 to 7 – 8 (2 year transition)   |
| Morey Avenue ECDC             | Only TK & K to their schools of residence |

## What happens next?

In the coming months, you will receive more information about next steps to ensure the transition process is as smooth as possible for students and staff. As always, our number one priority is the success of every student. Please know that your children will continue to benefit from exceptional academic programs and engaging instructional practices as we create opportunities and develop new ways of doing business while addressing the district's structural deficit.

Change does not mean we are losing momentum. In fact, we continue to grow in key areas—graduation rates and test scores among them. We have an excellent team of educators and support staff who believe in each student's ability to achieve. We will remain focused on the work ahead of us to ensure all students meet their full potential.

Thank you for your encouragement and support as we continue to move TR schools forward, together.

— Dr. Steve Martinez,  
Superintendent,  
Twin Rivers Unified  
School District



# Reconfiguring Twin Rivers Schools

What it means, why it's happening and how it will affect students and families

To better meet the educational needs of students and the fiscal realities of the district, the Twin Rivers Unified Board of Trustees voted on Jan. 28, 2020 to approve reconfiguring eight schools. One of them is Hazel Strauch Elementary, a 2020 California Distinguished School that will transition from a K-5 site to a K-6 site in August 2020.

“Our parents are appreciative of the opportunity to now keep their kids here at Strauch through sixth grade, providing children another year of preparation before they transition into middle school,” says Michael Amparo, Strauch principal. “Our staff has always committed to do what’s best for kids and approach reconfiguration with the mindset that our sixth graders will be a positive addition to our school. We are confident we can work through any logistical challenges and continue to provide an optimal learning environment for all of our students.”

All Twin Rivers schools will eventually become either K-6, K-8, 7-8 or 9-12 grade-level sites. Currently, the district has 15 different school configurations. Changes will be phased in over the next one to two years.

“This will not affect the district’s current class size numbers as specified in the district’s collective bargaining agreement,” says Gina Carreon, Associate Superintendent for Human Resources. “Twin Rivers has some of the smallest class sizes in the area and modifications to class sizes requires negotiations with our teachers’ association.”

**Why reconfigure schools?**

The changes are necessary as the district deals with declining enrollment, underutilized schools and a structural budget deficit —

ongoing expenses continue to outpace current revenue sources. “We’ve seen a 6% decline in student enrollment in eight years,” says Dr. Kristen Coates, Associate Superintendent for School Leadership. “That means a loss of \$16.5 million. Over the last two years, Trustees have approved \$16.9 million in budget reductions, but we still face a \$3.7 million structural budget deficit.”

The Board-appointed Student Housing Committee (SHC) began reviewing the issue several months ago. SHC learned that Twin Rivers has more school configurations and more small schools than neighboring districts.

Students are not concentrated on campuses in a way that allows the district to utilize staff efficiently and offer consistent and robust educational programming across all school sites.

Among the 15 grade configurations are K-2, K-4, K-5, K-6, K-8, 3-6, 5-8, 7-8 and 9-12. Nearby Sacramento City Unified has 11 configurations and Elk Grove Unified (three times the size of TRUSD) has seven configurations. TRUSD schools are also significantly smaller than other districts,

with more than half serving fewer than 500 students.

“What that tells us is it costs more to maintain more configurations and more schools, with many services being duplicated,” says Dr. Coates. “So Trustees approved all the reconfigurations — from 15 down to four in July 2019 with the new Board Policy (BP 7112).”

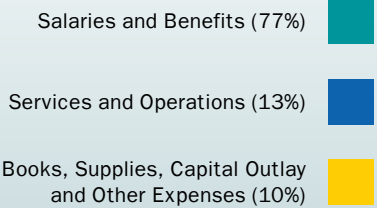
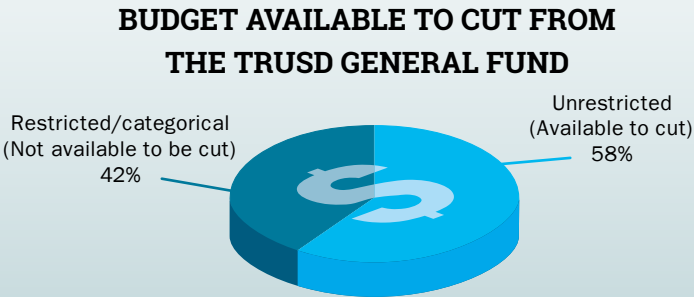
During the coming weeks, the district will have more detailed information for parents about the reconfigured schools and the transition process. While some things will be different, the district will continue to provide transportation to students while working proactively on solutions to any issues that may arise.

**“Over the last two years, Trustees have approved \$16.9 million in budget reductions, but we still face a \$3.7 million structural budget deficit.”**

**Dr. Kristen Coates**  
*Associate Superintendent for School Leadership*



Hazel Strauch will be a K-6 site in the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF TWIN RIVERS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT





# Why step up and serve?

TRUSD student board members share their motivation

PHOTOS AND STORIES  
BY ANNE STOKES



**MICHAEL WINGO**

Creative Connections Arts Academy 7 - 12  
Freshman

“ It’s important for the district to hear from students because the district is a large organization and they need to hear from students to see what’s going on in the small crevices, to make the school better overall. You need the small picture and the big picture together to make the overall picture better.”



**MONICA RODRIGUEZ**

Highlands High School  
Senior

“ I may not agree with other people so I’ve learned how to hear different perspectives. If it’s a concern, I should address it. It’s definitely inspired me to be a leader here at school.”



**BRYCE LACKEY**

Rio Linda High School  
Senior

“ A lot of times, we don’t know what’s going on and these decisions directly impact us. Being able to represent the people around me and give them a voice was the main reason I wanted to get involved.”



**TYUS CAREY**

Foothill High School  
Senior

“ Being the voice for my peers, I feel it’s really important to bring it to a larger forum. It’s about being that voice and having an impact.”



**KHALIL ALCOCER**

Grant Union High School  
Senior

“ It forces you to interact with people you wouldn’t normally interact with, which can be beneficial. It’s a cool experience.”



# Upward Trends

Data shows TRUSD is creating an environment for success for all students

BY THEA MARIE ROOD

The best way to see the progress at Twin Rivers Unified School District is to access the California School Dashboard, which gives district and school-by-school performance reviews based on the Department of Education's Accountability System.

"The Dashboard is a great tool for families and staff," says Dr. Kristen Coates, Associate Superintendent for School Leadership. "TRUSD met all of its eight 'local priorities.' And if you peel the data back, you see all the trends are improving."

She also points to other data that shows a tick upward. Even though the district was "orange" for college and career readiness – the color scale is blue, green, yellow, orange and red in descending order – there was a 2% increase from last year in the number of students who were ready for university attendance or a career path.

"There are eight different ways kids can show they're ready – test scores, A-G requirements [rigorous coursework], and career and tech education," Dr. Coates explains. "Looking at the data, what's notable is there was a 7% increase in test scores, and a

4% increase in both rigorous coursework and career and tech education. We are seeing an increase in these three areas, and they are making a big difference for our students."

Younger students are also showing big gains, with the largest increase in test scores showing up in the third- to sixth-grade population. "What we know is that college and career readiness starts in preschool," says Dr. Coates. "If younger

students are doing better on test scores now, college and career readiness will also increase in years to come. It shows they have a better foundation."

In the end, Dr. Coates believes this all comes down to TRUSD's continued commitment to excellent teaching. "I credit the work by our teachers and staff at all our school sites – they are creating the right conditions for kids to be successful," she says. "Of course

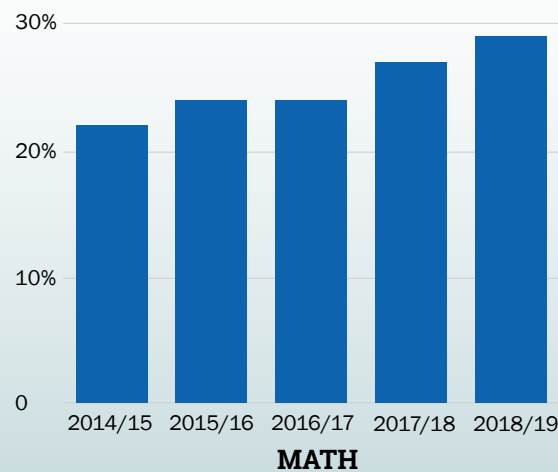
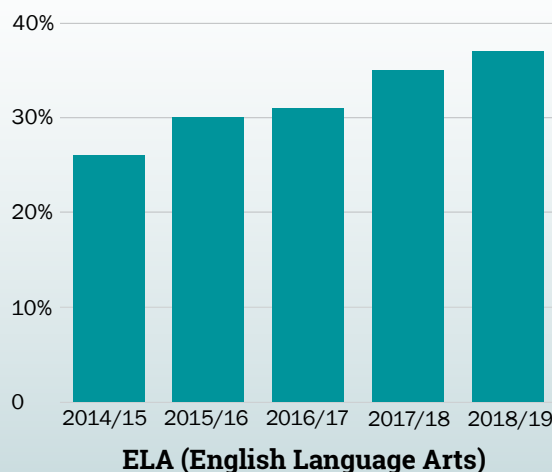
we want to see more green and blue in the Dashboard, and in the years to come, we will."

To access the California School Dashboard, see [caschooldashboard.org](http://caschooldashboard.org).

**"I credit the work by our teachers and staff at all our school sites – they are creating the right conditions for kids to be successful."**

**Dr. Kristen Coates**  
Associate Superintendent for School Leadership

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT HAS IMPROVED

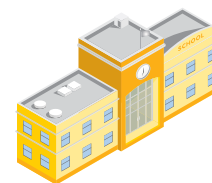


## LOTS TO CELEBRATE IN TWIN RIVERS SCHOOLS

Twin Rivers educates and supports approximately 25,240 students. **Districtwide highlights include:**



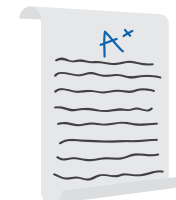
**86%**  
graduation rate



**2020**  
California  
Distinguished  
School  
Hazel Strauch Elementary



**698**  
students  
earning college credit  
during high school



**Free**  
PSAT/SAT  
PSAT for grades 8-11,  
SAT for seniors



**21.27%**  
HS students  
enrolled in Advanced  
Placement (AP) courses



**24**  
Career Technical  
Education (CTE)  
Programs



## NEW TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

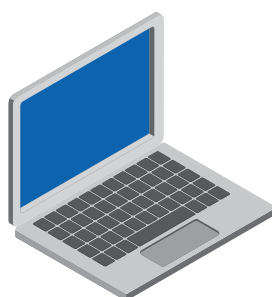
Twin Rivers has recently purchased new IT equipment for all schools across the district to make technology more accessible for both teachers and students.

"It's a huge investment and I think it's great what we're doing for our kids," says Barbara Schiffner, Twin Rivers' Executive Director of Information and Educational Technology Services. "Giving kids these kinds of tools they may not have at home is very important."

**New equipment investments include:**



**9,300**  
Chromebooks  
for students



**1,875**  
new laptops  
for all certificated staff



**400**  
Smart TVs  
for classrooms

# Teaching in a 21st Century Classroom

**New computer equipment makes technology  
accessible to students and teachers**

BY ANNE STOKES

**G**one are the days of chalkboards, overhead projectors and the "dog ate my homework" excuse; today's classrooms have gone digital. Computer literacy is no longer an extracurricular option; it's a required skill for college and career. To prepare students, Twin Rivers has made significant technology upgrades at all schools, investing in new Chromebooks for students, laptops for staff and Smart TVs for classrooms.

"It's part of the 21st century classroom where students have access to tools they need to experience the real world," says Barbara Schiffner, Twin Rivers' Executive Director of Information and Educational Technology Services. "Kids can collaborate and partner with each other to learn, which is really what you do in the real world."

At Dry Creek Elementary, every student in Jennifer Elson's second grade classroom has their own Chromebook to work on. Together with wireless access, online curriculum and other educational software, she says it's an effective way to engage students in math, language, history and science lessons.

"They have access to all the curriculum that is available online, educational games [and] reading programs," Elson says. "Just opening up a teacher's edition book and reading from there, that's not interactive, that's not going to get their attention."

The new tools are not just useful for students, they also enable teachers to do their job more effectively. Elson says the new equipment — including the classroom's Smart TV — helps her stay organized, makes it easier to share information and materials, and literally puts a wealth of online information at her fingertips.

"This brings a whole new element to teaching," Elson explains. "I can organize things and I can save everything I write on here. I have access to all the teacher editions, so I'm able to pull up what used to be in a book."

While Elson's second grade students are just starting their IT literacy, Twin Rivers' goal is to continue students' access to technology through high school, including the use of Google Classroom.

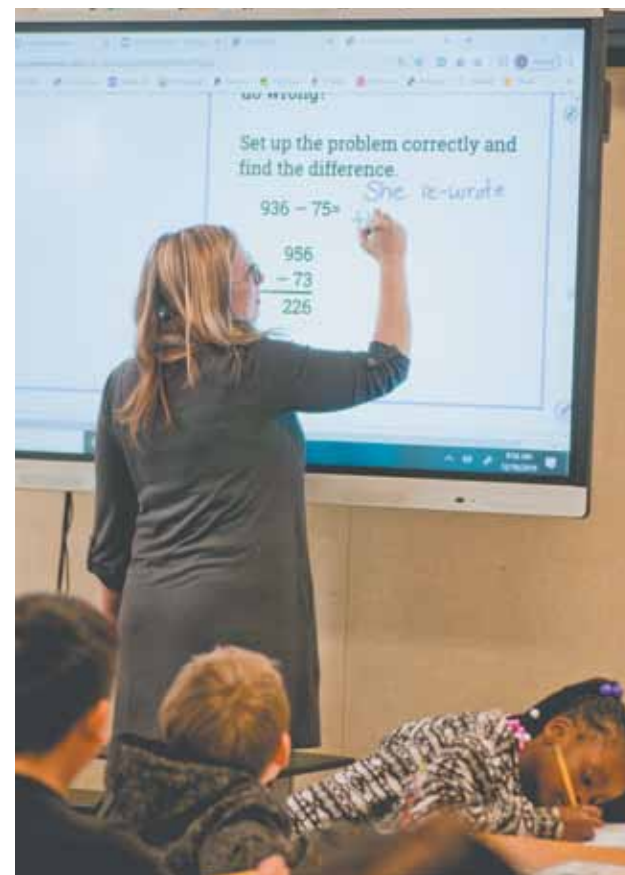
"Kids can turn in their homework digitally instead of on paper, which makes it easier for teachers," explains Schiffner. "They can create materials ... and students can access the materials via Google Classroom."

While the new tech tools help streamline both students' and teachers' work flow, Elson also stresses the importance of teaching kids online etiquette and safety.

"Let's face it, this is their world now; computers are their reality," Elson says. "I want them to be conscious about being online and how to navigate the web."

**"This brings a whole new  
element to teaching."**

**Jennifer Elson**  
Second grade teacher, Dry Creek Elementary



Dry Creek Elementary School teacher Jennifer Elson uses her classroom's new Smart TV to help engage students in a math lesson; she says the new equipment is also very useful in teaching language, history and science curriculum.

PHOTO BY ANNE STOKES



Perry Herrera, the district's Director of Facilities Construction and Engineering, shows off some of the new HVAC units atop Twins Rivers' schools.  
PHOTO BY ANNE STOKES

# A Roof-Down Approach

Twin Rivers prioritizes maintaining schools' roofing and HVAC

BY ANNE STOKES

**T**win Rivers recently invested \$100 million in facility updates, the main focus of which has been roofing plus heating, ventilation and air conditioning upgrades. As of October 2019, the district has completed 420,000 square feet of roofing and installed approximately 180 rooftop HVAC units. More work is slated to be completed over the summer.

"We asked how can we minimize the amount of work orders and where would we want to start if my goal is to create a warm, safe and dry learning environment for staff, students and anybody else who comes into our schools," says Perry Herrera, Director of Facilities Construction and Engineering. "Roofs and HVAC just made sense."

Staying warm in the winter and cool in the summer months is more than mere convenience; it's an integral part of creating a hospitable learning environment for students and faculty. Together with new HVAC units, Twin Rivers also utilizes energy-efficient economizers to circulate fresh air into classrooms and help meet the Healthy Schools Act requirements.

Herrera notes it's important to upgrade facilities proactively rather than fix items as they become a problem. A leaking roof, for example, can ruin paint, damage carpets and light fixtures, as well as create mold and mildew concerns. Patching the

same leak and fixing the same repair year after year ties up technicians and is a distraction for students and teachers.

"The building itself is a group of systems that are designed to work together in order to prolong the life of that structure. A system failure like roofing not only affects the roofing, it defeats all the other systems," he says. "That alone affects the entire functionality of the building system as a whole, which costs you hundreds of thousands of dollars for every year or season you choose to prolong that project."

Along with HVAC upgrades, the district is also upgrading their energy management systems. Using Pelican Wireless Systems, district technicians can adjust, monitor and troubleshoot conditions at any campus or room throughout the district. Such access will enable them to identify areas of concern before even setting foot on campus.

"It's more cost and energy efficient in that you can tell what's wrong without having to physically go out to a site and troubleshoot," Herrera says. "We can adjust all the set points, troubleshoot an area so that if you do send them out there, there's a high probability they have a good understanding of what the problem is."

**"If my goal is to create a warm, safe and dry learning environment for staff, students and anybody else who comes into our schools, ... roofs and HVAC just made sense."**

**Perry Herrera**  
*Twin Rivers Director of Facilities Construction and Engineering*



## FACILITIES

### TWIN RIVERS' 2019-2020 CAMPUS UPGRADES



#### High Schools

**Creative Connections Arts Academy**  
HVAC and roofing

#### Foothill

Boiler replacement, roofing and HVAC

#### Grant Union

DROPS water efficient landscaping, roofing, restroom facilities, drainage and HVAC

#### Highlands

HVAC and roofing

#### Rio Linda

HVAC and score board replacement



#### Middle Schools

#### Foothill Ranch

Roofing and LED lighting

#### Rio Linda Preparatory Academy

Storm drain project

#### Rio Tierra

HVAC and roofing



#### Elementary Schools

**Creative Connections Arts Academy**  
Energy management system and paving

#### Castori

HVAC and storm drain grading

#### Del Paso Heights

Shop demo

#### Foothill Oaks

Energy management system

#### Frontier

Energy management system

#### Oakdale

Portable classroom and playground paving

#### Orchard

Energy management system and building signage

#### Regency Park

Energy management system

#### Ridgepoint

Paving

#### Village

Drinking fountains and shade structure

#### Woodlake

Flooring

#### Woodridge

Energy management system and roofing



Twin Rivers Unified School District  
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McClellan, CA 95652  
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Visit [www.twinriversusd.org](http://www.twinriversusd.org)



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## Earn college credits in high school



Contact your high school counselor for more information.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Twin Rivers 2019-20 Student Calendar

| February 2020                  | May 2020                                       |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2/14-17</b> Presidents' Day | <b>5/25</b> Memorial Day                       |
| March 2020                     | June 2020                                      |
| <b>3/6</b> TK-6 Shortened Day  | <b>6/3-4</b> Finals/Minimum Days               |
| April 2020                     | <b>6/4</b> Last Day of School<br>(minimum day) |
| <b>4/6-13</b> Spring Break     |                                                |

Keep track of all important Twin Rivers dates at:  
[www.twinriversusd.org/calendar](http://www.twinriversusd.org/calendar)



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