



Communications Office
Media Advisory

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Recognition and Renewal for Twin Rivers Schools Leader

Sacramento, California- A little over a year into the creation of Sacramento's newest unified school district, Twin Rivers Board of Trustees thanked Superintendent Frank Porter for his "amazing calm, engaging leadership style, and tireless effort on behalf of students," and asked him to stay for another three years. At the regular September 15, 2009 board meeting, trustees presented Frank Porter with a letter of positive evaluation which will extend his Superintendent contract through 2012.

"When we committed to create the kind of school district the students of the north area deserve, I don't think any of us could have imagined the variety of challenges we would face. Frank's ability to maintain the utmost professionalism and unwavering optimism under unprecedented circumstances is inspiring," said Twin Rivers Board President Michelle Rivas.

Twin Rivers USD was created by a community vote in November 2007 which brought together the nearly 28,000 preschool through adult students in the North Sacramento, Grant, Rio Linda, and Del Paso School Districts. A series of task force groups and community summits provided the foundation for the new district which launched just eight months later in July 2008. The name and logo, like the mission and vision for the district, were suggestions from community members.

Prior to launching, the district created new personnel procedures, new board and administrative policies, a new organizational structure, new processes in every department, and tackled a multitude of operational necessities like painting buses, changing signage and paperwork, merging email, storage, and student information systems.

"During the past two years, Frank has literally completely immersed himself in district and community activities. The work and challenges are monumental yet he has surpassed all expectations, sharing the successes and lessons of Twin Rivers while actively seeking best practices from other educators and districts around the country." said Rivas. "He is energetic and consistently goes above and beyond in seeking to achieve the mission, vision and goals of our district. Frank is truly motivated by a passion to see all students achieve."

Complete immersion and high energy is a necessity for the unique circumstances facing the unified district. In addition to the enormous challenges involved in creating a new district, Twin Rivers was faced with one of the worst educational budgets from the State in more than 60 years. Again, on this issue, Porter drew positive comments from district trustees for his leadership and communication style during challenging budget times.

"Frank has worked positively with all stakeholders to communicate about the budget during this very difficult time. He has provided the leadership necessary to move toward financial stability, and has attempted to reduce the budget in areas that have the least impact on instructional services to students," said Trustee Roger Westrup. "From all observations, 2010-2011 will continue to be a challenging financial time. Frank's continued positive leadership will be instrumental in working with staff, community, and our board to make some very difficult decisions."

Board members also pointed to a variety of areas in which the new district has made significant progress. Investments in unique summer school enrichment and GATE opportunities, expansion of college and career readiness courses like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), first time articulation across grade levels and expansions of early childhood education including preschools at almost every elementary and full-day kindergarten have strengthened the academic core of district schools. In addition, the district has increased the focus on 21st Century Learning initiatives including video conferencing, engaging library media centers, interactive SMART boards, and project-based learning. Based on a review of the strengths in each of the unifying districts, high school career-technical academies were identified as another area of expansion. Information technology, criminal justice, environmental science, and Sports Health and Marketing are some of the many existing academies. Plans for a new green jobs academy are in the works.

The first year of scores for the district indicates the investments in academic programs are paying off. 2008-2009 scores show that the majority of Twin Rivers schools made significant growth in at least one category. 22 schools grew at least 5% in English Language Arts AYP Proficiency, and 16 schools grew at least 5% in Math AYP Proficiency. 23 schools grew 9 points or more in the Academic Performance Index (API), including 14 that raised their API by more than 30 points. As of this year, five schools have exceeded the state goal of an API of 800 and a second district school will receive a National Blue Ribbon Award.

“There are demonstrable improvements in student achievement in a variety of important areas. While there is still improvement needed, the fact that there was progress in our first year is remarkable, especially given all of the operational and fiscal distractions associated with the unification,” said Rivas, “any of which could have led our district away from its educational mission.”

In closing, the board commended Porter on his ability to work toward a new, positive culture for the new district that will help drive improvement efforts and create an inspiring learning and working environment for students and staff.

“I have heard from many teachers this year how much they appreciate Frank’s responsiveness and support,” said Rivas. “The hard work of many of our employees is due to their commitment to Frank. He is a true leader and his staff doesn’t want to let him down.”

Porter’s thirty-four year education career includes 10 years in the Buckeye USD in El Dorado County where he served as a teacher and assistant principal and more than 22 years in the Rio Linda Union School District (RLUSD) where he served in a variety of roles, including Superintendent for more than six years. Under Mr. Porter’s leadership in Rio Linda, eight of the district’s elementary schools earned California Distinguished School Awards, nine elementary schools earned Title One Achieving School Awards, and the district won it’s first National Blue Ribbon Award..

Porter has actively served on a wide range of local, regional, and statewide leadership positions including the Association of California School Administrators Superintendency Council, the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development and Education Committee, California School Board Association Superintendents Advisory Council, Board of Directors of School Employers Association of California, and the Board of Directors of LEED (Linking Education and Economic Development).