



RIVERSIDE COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
EDWIN GOMEZ, Ed.D.
County Superintendent of Schools

**Riverside County
Board of Education**

Jamie Azpeitia-Sachs

Kim J. Cousins

Ray "Coach" Curtis

Bruce N. Dennis

Ben Johnson II

Jennifer Mejares Pham

Elizabeth F. Romero

DATE: August 29, 2025
TO: Dr. Greg Sackos, District Superintendent
Mr. Dean Primmer, Board President
Desert Center Unified School District
FROM: Edwin Gomez, Ed.D., Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
BY: Scott Price, Ph.D.  Amanda Corridan 
Associate Superintendent Chief Academic Officer
(951) 826-6790 (951) 826-6648
SUBJECT: 2025-26 LCAP and ADOPTED BUDGET – APPROVAL

The County Superintendent of Schools is required to review and approve the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) before the approval of the district's Adopted Budget [Education Code Section 42127(d)(2)].

Adopted Local Control and Accountability Plan

In accordance with California Education Code (EC) Section 52070, our office has completed its review of the district's 2025-26 LCAP to determine whether it adheres to the guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE).

The district's adopted LCAP has been analyzed to determine whether:

- The plan adheres to the template adopted by the State Board of Education.
- The budget includes sufficient expenditures to implement the actions and strategies included in the plan, based on the projected costs included in the plan.
- The plan adheres to the expenditure requirements for funds apportioned on the basis of the number and concentration of unduplicated pupils.
- The plan includes the calculations to determine whether there is required carryover. If applicable, the plan includes a description of the planned uses of the specified funds and a description of how the planned uses of those funds satisfy the requirements for specific actions to be considered as contributing toward meeting the increased or improved services requirement.

The district's adopted LCAP has been analyzed in the context of the guidance provided by the California County Superintendents and the California Department of Education (CDE). Based on our analysis, the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan for the 2025-26 fiscal year has been **approved** by the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools. Our goal is to further enhance the performance of students by providing feedback and inquiry questions that will support the refinement of future Local Control and Accountability Plans, and any additional plans

designed to close the achievement gap in metrics that impact student preparedness for college and career.

Student Achievement

The purpose of the LCAP is to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills necessary to be successful in both college and career. The Riverside County Office of Education conducted a review of research on TK-12 college readiness indicators to identify those that would align with the LCAP purpose and have the greatest impact. As a result of this research, we recommend that local education agencies (LEAs) closely monitor the metrics listed in the data table below for all student groups.

Desert Center Unified School District Student Groups – Program Participation Status							
Indicator	LEA	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED)	English Learner (EL)	Long-Term English Learner (LTEL)	Foster Youth (FY)	Homeless Youth (HY)	Students with Disabilities (SWD)
Enrollment Count 2024 ¹	25	19	4	N/A	N/A	3	4
Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹	N/A	76.0	16.0	N/A	N/A	12.0	16.0
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-59.8	*	*	N/A	N/A	*	*
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-72.4	*	*	N/A	N/A	*	*
Science Distance from Standard 2024 ²	*	*	*	N/A	N/A	*	*
English Learner Progress Indicator 2024 ²	N/A	N/A	*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
A-G Completion Rate 2024 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ²	45.2	40.0	*	N/A	N/A	*	*
Suspension Rate 2024 ²	12.1	11.1	*	N/A	N/A	*	*

¹2024 California School Dashboard Downloadable Enrollment File (No LTEL Data Available)

²2024 California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Downloadable Data Files

* Data Suppressed for Student Privacy Reasons

Desert Center Unified School District Student Groups – Race/Ethnicity										
Indicator	LEA	American Indian	Asian	Black/African American	Filipino	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races	
Enrollment Count 2024 ¹	25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	N/A	6	1	
Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	72.0	N/A	24.0	4.0	
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-59.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	N/A	*	*	
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-72.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	N/A	*	*	
Science Distance from Standard 2024 ²	*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	N/A	*	*	
English Learner Progress Indicator 2024 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
A-G Completion Rate 2024 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ²	45.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	38.9	N/A	*	*	
Suspension Rate 2024 ²	12.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.0	N/A	9.1	*	

¹ California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Files

² CDE Dataquest and Files

* Data Suppressed for Student Privacy Reasons

We offer the following commendations and inquiry questions to consider for the implementation of the 2025-26 Local Control and Accountability Plan and the refinement of the plan in future years:

Student Success in Academics

The district is to be commended for its commitment to fostering a positive, student-centered learning environment that promotes both academic growth and school connectedness. The district's implementation of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Elementary, along with its intentional focus on student engagement strategies, is helping to build a strong foundation for future college and career readiness. Efforts to strengthen school climate, through small class sizes that allow for a remarkable 1:5 student-to-teacher ratio, targeted

social-emotional supports, and increased family outreach, are creating a more inclusive and responsive educational experience. Family participation and pupil engagement have continued to rise, supported by consistent communication, accessible events, and meaningful partnerships. The successful reclassification of 100 percent English Learners further reflects the district's effective support systems and commitment to equity.

Additional dialogue related to the question below may support achievement of the goals and desired outcomes aligned to student academic achievement:

- How might the district use assessment data and classroom observations to better understand recent academic trends in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, and implement research-based strategies that address the unique academic and social-emotional needs of students in a rural setting, while monitoring their effectiveness over time?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for its intentional and multi-faceted efforts to expand student access to and success in rigorous, standards-aligned learning. The district's implementation of AVID schoolwide and integration of WICOR® (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading) strategies into daily instruction reflect a clear commitment to building college- and career-ready skills. Instruction is further strengthened through the use of i-Ready diagnostics and individualized learning plans, which support data-driven instruction and targeted small-group interventions. Students also benefit from enriching academic experiences beyond the classroom, including learning excursions to college campuses (California State University, Long Beach, University of California, Riverside), the College of the Desert MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science, Achievement) Science Fair, and other Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-focused events that help build awareness of postsecondary pathways.

Additional dialogue related to the question below may support achievement of the goals and desired outcomes aligned to student access, enrollment, and success in rigorous coursework:

- How might the district internally collect, analyze, and use data to evaluate, revise, and enhance the impact of AVID and small-group instruction in promoting equitable access to inquiry-based, college- and career-aligned learning?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for its intentional and equity-driven approach to student well-being and engagement. The district has implemented a multi-tiered system of social and emotional learning (SEL) supports and expanded access to meaningful enrichment opportunities, tailored to the needs of its rural, remote student population. Notable achievements include weekly SEL instruction using Second Step and Lions Quest, increased access to mental health services, and the effective use of a certified therapy dog to support emotional regulation and school climate. Students participated in six SEL-focused learning excursions to colleges, national parks, and career/STEM events—broadening their real-world connections and interpersonal skills. The district has also excelled in family engagement, with

100 percent parent participation reported in the 2024–25 Parent Survey. Opportunities such as field trips, volunteer roles, and School Site Council are designed to be inclusive, with virtual access and community-based event locations that reduce barriers to participation. These efforts reflect a strong commitment to whole-child development, equity, and innovation, and serve as a model for similarly situated rural districts.

Additional dialogue related to the questions below may support achievement of the goals and desired outcomes aligned to student engagement and school climate:

- How might the district strengthen home-school partnerships and build on the impact of its SEL and engagement efforts to further reduce chronic absenteeism and deepen students' sense of connection to school?
- How might the district amplify student voice and leverage student council and leadership to further strengthen school climate and increase meaningful engagement in both academic and social-emotional learning?

To access resources and tools that will support future LCAP development, please go to

<https://www.rcoe.us/lcap-support>

Adopted Budget

In accordance with California Education Code (EC) Section 42127, our office has completed its review of the district's 2025-26 Adopted Budget to determine whether it complies with the criteria and standards adopted by the SBE and whether it allows the district to meet its financial obligations for the 2025-26 fiscal year, as well as satisfy its multi-year financial commitments.

The district's Adopted Budget was developed in the context of the Governor's 2025-26 May Revise. Subsequently, the 2025-26 State Budget was adopted, which contained differences from the May Revise. The district should update and revise its budget projections to reflect changes in available funding.

Based on our analysis of the information submitted, and our assessment of revenue changes in the enacted State Budget, we approve the district's budget, but would like to highlight the following:

Enrollment and Average Daily Attendance (ADA) – The district estimates 18 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 14.4 percent decrease from the certified 2024-25 P-2 ADA. For 2026-27, the district projects a 2.0 percent decrease in ADA. For 2027-28, the district projects a 6.2 percent decrease in ADA.

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) – As a “basic aid” district, the district's primary revenue source is property taxes. Our office recommends the district closely monitor actual property tax receipts throughout the year and revise its budget and multi-year financial projections accordingly.

2025-26 LCAP and Adopted Budget – Approval

Desert Center Unified School District

August 29, 2025

Page 6

Unrestricted Deficit Spending – The district’s Adopted Budget indicates a positive ending balance for all funds in the 2025-26 fiscal year. For the unrestricted General Fund, the district projects no deficit spending in the current or two subsequent fiscal years.

Employee Negotiations – As of the board date, June 25, 2025, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations continue with both the certificated and classified bargaining units for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Prior to entering into a written agreement, California Government Code (GC) Section 3547.5 requires a public school employer to publicly disclose the major provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, including but not limited to, the costs incurred in the current and subsequent fiscal years. The disclosure must include a written certification signed by the district superintendent and chief business official that the district can meet the costs incurred by the district during the term of the agreement. Therefore, please make available to the public and submit a disclosure to our office at least ten (10) working days prior to the date on which the governing board is to take action on a proposed agreement.

Reserve for Economic Uncertainties – The minimum state-required reserve for a district of Desert Center Unified School District’s size is the greater of \$88,000 or 5.0 percent. The district projects to meet the minimum-reserve requirement in the current and two subsequent fiscal years.

Cash Management – Attention to cash solvency remains a critical fiscal practice and should continue to be prioritized in the coming year. The district projects sufficient cash balances to cover projected expenditures during the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Fiscal Distress Documentation – Education Code Section 42127.6 requires the County Superintendent of Schools to review and consider any studies, reports, evaluations, or audits that may indicate a school district is experiencing fiscal distress. Our office did not receive any such reports for the district.

Conclusion

Our office commends the district for its efforts thus far to preserve its fiscal solvency and maintain a quality education program for its students. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our office.