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OFFICE OF EDUCATION
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County Superintendent of Schools

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DATE: August 29, 2025
TO: Dr. Frances Esparza, District Superintendent
Ms. Jocelyn Vargas, Board President
Ms. Socorro Sanchez, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services
Coachella Valley Unified School District

FROM: Edwin Gomez, Ed.D., Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
BY: Scott Price, Ph.D.  Amanda Corridan 
Associate Superintendent (951) 826-6790 Chief Academic Officer (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.

Coachella Valley Unified School District Student Groups – Program Participation Status							
Indicator	LEA	English Learner (EL)	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED)	Long-Term English Learner (LTEL)	Foster Youth (FY)	Homeless Youth (HY)	Students with Disabilities (SWD)
Enrollment Count 2024 ¹	16,046	6,848	14,955	N/A	85	213	2,047
Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹	N/A	42.7	93.2	N/A	0.5	1.3	12.8
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-61.7	-84.6	-66.9	-122.5	-97.8	-83.3	-127.3
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-101.5	-115.9	-108.3	-184.5	-150.6	-124.7	-159.7
Science Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-24.7	-28.7	-25.5	-35.6	-30.9	-28.1	-32.8
English Learner Progress Indicator 2024 ²	N/A	42.8	N/A	47.3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduation Rate 2024 ²	85.0	77.2	84.8	77.0	81.3	77.8	75.5
College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 ²	35.3	12.6	34.8	11.5	12.5	24.1	10.8
A-G Completion Rate 2024 ²	31.6	13.5	30.9	12.9	18.8	20.4	7.5
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ²	29.0	20.4	28.6	22.1	18.8	24.1	24.0
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ²	36.9	35.9	39.0	43.1	46.3	49.8	43.8
Suspension Rate 2024 ²	3.6	3.8	3.9	8.9	4.3	3.7	5.4

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

Coachella Valley 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	16,046	58	17	30	5	15,705	1	143	29	
Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹	N/A	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.0	97.9	0.0	0.9	0.2	
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-61.7	-76.9	20.0	-112.4	*	-61.7	*	-51.1	-69.4	
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-101.5	-135.1	-3.0	-168.3	*	-101.6	*	-82.1	-129.2	
Science Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-24.7	-29.4	*	*	*	-24.8	*	-17.1	*	
English Learner Progress Indicator 2024 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Graduation Rate 2024 ²	85.0	*	*	*	*	85.2	*	*	*	
College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 ²	35.3	*	*	*	*	35.6	*	*	*	
A-G Completion Rate 2024 ²	31.6	*	*	*	*	32.0	*	*	*	
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ²	29.0	*	*	*	*	29.2	*	*	*	
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ²	36.9	63.9	30.8	35.7	*	36.7	*	45.4	47.9	
Suspension Rate 2024 ²	3.6	8.2	0.0	7.5	*	3.5	*	4.9	9.2	

¹ California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Files² 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 sustained, multi-year investment in early literacy through a comprehensive initiative grounded in the Science of Reading. This effort includes

districtwide Lexia LETRS® (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training for TK–3 teachers and administrators, adoption of phonics-aligned curricula such as Benchmark and Heggerty, and structured site-based literacy implementation plans. Instructional coaches, particularly at the elementary level, have been strategically leveraged to support this work through lesson modeling, ongoing professional learning, and curricular alignment. This coherent TK–3 literacy initiative demonstrates strong cross-role alignment, clear strategic direction, and a focused commitment to early reading success.

The district is also to be commended for its demonstrated academic growth and school improvement efforts, as evidenced by gains in 2025 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Distance from Standard (DFS) scores in English language arts and mathematics, and significant progress reflected in the 2024 California School Dashboard. The successful exit of all but one school from Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) status, along with the exit of two of three schools from Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) designation, underscores the district's effective use of evidence-based interventions, strategic resource allocation, and commitment to equity-driven, data-informed instruction. These outcomes reflect a coherent and systemwide focus on accelerating academic achievement and closing performance gaps for diverse student populations.

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

- What further systems could be developed to assess how the district's Science of Reading and LETRS-aligned early literacy efforts in TK through grade 3 are impacting long-term student reading outcomes, particularly in areas such as language development for English Learners?
- What might it look like if the district expanded and systematized instructional coaching across content areas and grade spans with consistent structures for monitoring impact on student learning, especially for student populations like English Learners and Students with Disabilities?
- What might it look like if the district developed a cohesive, cross-departmental system for strengthening mathematics instruction that aligns curriculum, professional learning, coaching, and classroom-based formative assessments across grade spans and sites to improve student outcomes and close persistent opportunity gaps?
- What instructional practices, support systems, or leadership actions might have most contributed to the district's recent academic growth, and how might those be sustained, refined, or scaled to continue progress for all student groups?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is commended for its 7.7 percentage point increase in College/Career Indicator (CCI) performance, improving from 27.6 percent in 2023 to 35.3 percent in 2024, now in the Green performance level. This growth was driven by increased access to dual enrollment, Career

Technical Education (CTE) pathway completion, and A–G coursework, supported by the strategic integration of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Puente, and College and Career Centers. These programs provide structured scaffolding and college-going culture, particularly benefiting student groups such as Student with Disabilities (+8.0 percent), Homeless (+10.4 percent), Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (+7.8 percent), and English Learners (+5.9 percent) who showed the most substantial CCI gains.

The district is also to be commended for improving A–G completion rates among Long-Term English Learners (12.9 percent), English Learners (13.5 percent), and Students with Disabilities (7.5 percent), all of whom moved from Red to Yellow performance bands. These gains suggest intentional systems are in place, such as expanded counseling services, course access through the 7-period day, and targeted academic support to help students not only enroll in but succeed in rigorous college-preparatory coursework.

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

- How might the district consider the use of disaggregated enrollment and completion data, including Advanced Placement (AP), A–G, dual enrollment, and CTE, to identify patterns of success and opportunity gaps among English Learners, Long-Term English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Foster Youth students?
- In what ways can AVID participation be tracked and evaluated for its effectiveness in increasing A–G completion, particularly for student groups showing lower outcomes such as Students with Disabilities and English Learners?
- How might the district consider expanding or refining embedded supports, such as tutoring, scaffolded instruction, and co-teaching models, to ensure that students enrolled in rigorous coursework are not only accessing these opportunities but are also positioned to complete them successfully?
- What additional strategies can the district consider implementing to increase the number of “dual completers,” students completing both A–G and CTE pathways, especially at Equity Multiplier schools or sites with historically lower CCI preparedness?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for fostering a positive and inclusive school climate through its comprehensive wellness infrastructure. The district’s Wellness Centers, highly valued by students, provide accessible emotional and behavioral health support, while partnerships such as the Latino Commission Counseling Service, with over 50 therapists, further expand access to mental health care.

In addition, Parent Centers and community liaisons at all 21 sites offer culturally responsive workshops and family wellness events, reinforcing a shared commitment to student and family well-being. The district’s responsiveness to student feedback, particularly around safety and emotional support, reflects a deep commitment to listening and acting on student voice.

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 analyze its drop in Foster Youth suspension rate and replicate the effective practices contributing to this success across other student groups still seeing increases?
- How might the district monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the newly implemented Prisms Virtual Reality program in enhancing student engagement and school climate, particularly for student groups such as Foster Youth, Homeless Youth, and Long-Term English Learners?
- How might the district consider expanding its approach to evaluating family engagement by incorporating qualitative measures that reflect parent empowerment, voice, and partnership in school improvement efforts?

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:

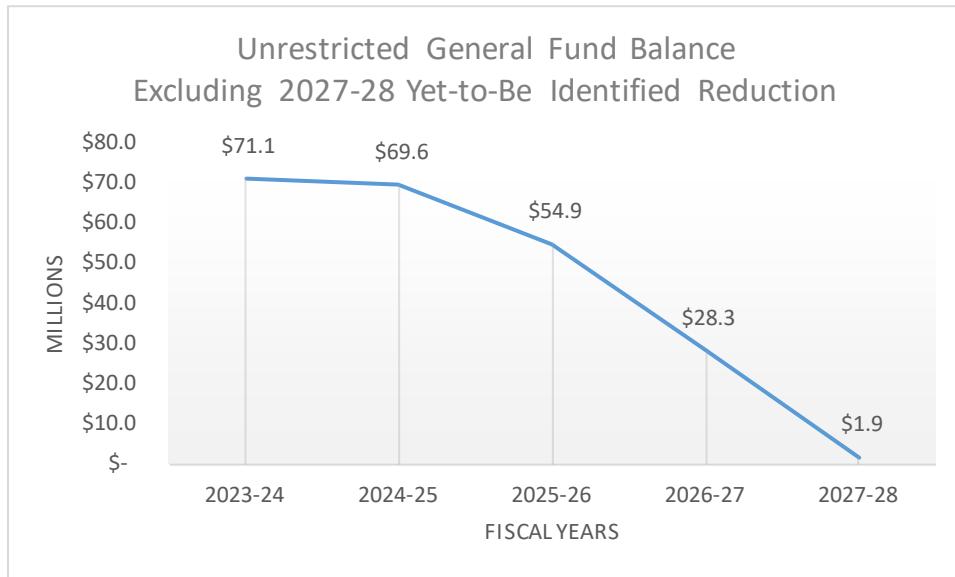
Enrollment and Average Daily Attendance (ADA) – The district estimates 14,107 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 1.2 percent decrease from the certified 2024-25 P-2 ADA. For 2026-27 and 2027-28, the district projects a 1.8 percent decrease in ADA each year. It will be important for the district to monitor enrollment in the current and subsequent years to ensure accurate LCFF revenue and plan accordingly.

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) – The district's Adopted Budget included Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) for LCFF funding of 2.30 percent, 3.02 percent, and 3.42 percent for the 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28 fiscal years, respectively. Our office recommends a contingency plan should LCFF funding not materialize as projected in the 2025-26 State Budget.

Ongoing Structural Deficit – Despite proposed reductions and projected future COLA, the district is still facing structural deficits that increase each year. The district’s projections of the unrestricted General Fund indicate the following deficits:

- **\$14.7 million** in 2025-26
- **\$26.6 million** in 2026-27
- **\$17.1 million** in 2027-28

The 2025-26 unrestricted deficit is partially offset by a \$13.0 million one-time transfer from the Special Reserve Fund for Capital Outlay Projects to cover the General Fund contribution to Routine Restricted Maintenance. Absent this transfer, the district’s 2025-26 unrestricted deficit would amount to \$27.7 million. Additionally, the 2027-28 unrestricted deficit includes yet-to-be-identified reductions of \$9.3 million, without which the district’s structural deficit for that year would amount to \$26.4 million. The cumulative impact of these structural deficits is projected to reduce the available unrestricted ending fund balance by \$58.4 million over three years, resulting in an estimated balance of \$11.2 million in 2027-28. As the structural deficit increases annually, this remaining fund balance will not be sufficient to support ongoing deficit spending beyond that point. Without further corrective action, the district’s structural deficit will continue to escalate. Our office strongly advises against any new ongoing expenditures without offsetting reductions and urges the district to identify long-term solutions to stabilize its financial outlook.



Employee Negotiations – As of the board date, June 26, 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.

Position Control – During review of the district’s 2024-25 Estimated Actuals, our office identified key position control budgeting practices that may hinder the district’s ability to accurately forecast and manage personnel costs. Our office strongly recommends the district review its position control budgeting practices and analyze the impact of actual position changes on the district’s multi-year projections.

Reserve for Economic Uncertainties – The minimum state-required reserve for a district of Coachella Valley Unified School District’s size is 3.0 percent. The district projects to meet the minimum-reserve requirement in the current and two subsequent fiscal years. However, the district’s multi-year projections included a yet-to-be identified unrestricted expenditure reduction of \$9.3 million in the 2026-27 fiscal year.

Cash Management – Attention to cash solvency remains a critical fiscal practice and should continue to be prioritized in the coming year. Based on the cashflow version received by our office on July 17, 2025, the district projects sufficient cash balances to cover projected expenditures during the 2025-26 fiscal year. However, as the district’s structural deficit remains, available cash balances will diminish proportionately. Should the district identify the need for temporary borrowing options, our office strongly advises districts to consult with legal counsel and independent auditors prior to using Cafeteria Special Revenue Fund (Fund 13) and Building Fund (Fund 21) for temporary interfund borrowing purposes to remedy cash shortfalls.

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 received Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team’s (FCMAT) Fiscal Health Risk Analysis in March 2025 identifying key areas of concern in the district’s fiscal health, as well as the district’s audited June 30, 2024, Financial Statements.

In 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.