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DATE: August 29, 2025
TO: Dr. Sonia Llamas, District Superintendent
Mr. Brent Lee, Board President
Mrs. Erin Power, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Dr. Jacquelyn Perez, Assistant Superintendent, Access and Community Engagement
Riverside Unified School District
FROM: Edwin Gomez, Ed.D., Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
BY: Scott Price, Ph.D. *AK* Amanda Corridan *OK*
Associate Superintendent Chief Academic Officer
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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 (RCOE) 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.

Riverside 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	38,855	18,919	6,755	N/A	188	1,694	5,195
Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹	N/A	48.7	17.4	N/A	0.5	4.4	13.4
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-16.2	-32.5	-77.8	-113.2	-66.1	-57.7	-100.0
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-55.6	-74.1	-104.6	-165.0	-102.9	-93.5	-130.0
Science Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-14.7	-18.0	-26.7	-32.5	-22.7	-22.1	-29.6
English Learner Progress Indicator 2024 ²	N/A	N/A	39.8	35.7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduation Rate 2024 ²	94.5	93.9	84.5	88.9	76.0	84.5	83.8
College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 ²	45.6	39.4	10.3	7.9	20.8	23.7	8.8
A-G Completion Rate 2024 ²	51.2	45.4	18.5	16.1	20.0	29.7	13.3
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ²	12.5	11.7	7.3	8.1	8.0	7.8	10.7
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ²	18.8	22.0	19.1	19.9	25.9	32.2	24.6
Suspension Rate 2024 ²	4.0	4.7	3.9	9.1	11.5	5.3	6.6

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

Riverside 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	38,855	105	1,489	2,216	430	26,805	120	6,267	774	
Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹	N/A	0.3	3.8	5.7	1.1	69.0	0.3	16.1	2.0	
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-16.2	-43.1	62.8	-25.3	52.3	-31.4	-43.7	22.9	29.8	
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-55.6	-103.0	40.9	-78.8	19.5	-72.7	-63.4	-9.0	-11.6	
Science Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-14.7	-15.8	2.0	-18.6	-2.3	-18.1	-13.6	-5.6	-4.5	
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	94.5	*	94.6	94.9	97.8	94.4	92.9	95.1	96.2	
College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 ²	45.6	*	81.8	38.5	77.8	40.6	50.0	56.7	58.8	
A-G Completion Rate 2024 ²	51.2	*	82.0	53.5	82.2	46.2	35.7	61.0	65.4	
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ²	12.5	*	11.7	12.6	11.1	12.2	14.3	14.8	7.7	
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ²	18.8	26.3	10.3	23.5	6.0	20.4	32.1	12.9	16.0	
Suspension Rate 2024 ²	4.0	2.6	1.9	7.4	1.4	4.1	7.5	3.3	3.8	

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 strong academic performance and equity-focused initiatives that have led to measurable improvements for underserved student groups. With a high graduation rate of 94.5 percent, the district also celebrates 303 students eligible for the Seal of Biliteracy, 569 for the State Seal of Civic Engagement, and 800 for the Golden State Seal

Merit Diploma. English Learners made notable gains in reclassification rates, English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) scores, and Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish performance, supported by dedicated staff and structured English Language Development (ELD) programs. Targeted efforts in mathematics and English language arts (ELA), such as reduced class sizes and focused interventions, have led to performance improvement among historically underserved groups, including Foster Youth, Students with Disabilities, and Homeless Youth. These outcomes reflect the district's effective use of data-driven strategies and its strong investment in professional development and instructional leadership.

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

- How can the district further accelerate academic progress for English Learners to ensure sustained growth across all grade levels and content areas?
- What strategies have been most effective in improving outcomes for underserved student groups, and how can these be scaled or adapted to other sites?
- In what ways can the district deepen the impact of professional development and instructional leadership to further close achievement gaps and support equitable instruction? How can the district collect data from the effectiveness of professional development and use it to make informed decisions about further professional development?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for effectively supporting college and career readiness through strategic collaboration among leaders and counselors, with targeted monitoring of student progress for English Learners, Foster Youth, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students, and Students with Disabilities. Intentional expansion of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, including partnerships with RCOE and community partners, has led to 45 high school pathways across 13 sectors and 13 aligned middle school programs. CTE enrollment reflects district demographics, ensuring equitable access, while dual enrollment opportunities continue to grow. The Graduation Incentive Program provides small group and one-on-one coaching, tutoring, and mentoring for students in credit recovery at continuation high schools, with bi-weekly progress checks. Notable gains include a 4.5 percent increase in College and Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities and a rise to 10.3 percent for English Learners, supported by ongoing efforts to adjust schedules, expand access, and align guidance with systems across A–G, CTE, and dual enrollment.

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:

- What structures are in place to ensure continued collaboration between counselors, teachers, and site leaders around A–G completion, dual enrollment, and career pathways planning while also enhancing alignment among these areas to increase student flexibility and post-secondary readiness?

- What systems are currently in place to proactively identify students who are off-track in their college and career readiness, and how are targeted interventions and supports being implemented to address their specific needs and ensure successful outcomes?
- In what ways can the district deepen its partnership with higher education and industry to expand meaningful opportunities for underserved student groups in CTE and college-credit programs?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for making meaningful strides in creating a safer, more inclusive learning environment. Student well-being is improving, along with school safety ratings rising to 58 percent. Expanded restorative practices, now delivered through in-house training, reflect a strong commitment to positive school culture. Lastly, regular site attendance meetings and geo-mapping protocols ensure timely support to support absent students, highlighting a comprehensive, data-driven approach to climate connectedness.

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

- How can the district deepen students' sense of belonging and emotional connection to school by leveraging student voice, climate data, and the roles of staff, peers, and programming to create safer, more inclusive environments?
- What practices have been most effective in reducing suspension rates, and how can they be expanded or refined to better support Students with Disabilities, African American students, and Homeless students?
- In what ways can data tools and attendance interventions be refined to support most at-risk students, chronic absenteeism, and disengagement?

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 34,945 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 1.6 percent decrease from the certified 2024-25 P-2 ADA. For 2026-27,

the district projects a 1.7 percent decrease in ADA. For 2027-28, the district projects a 1.6 percent decrease in ADA. 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.

Unrestricted Deficit Spending – The district’s Adopted Budget indicates a positive ending balance for all funds in the 2025-26 fiscal year. However, for the unrestricted General Fund, the district anticipates expenditures and uses will exceed revenues and sources by \$32.3 million in 2025-26, \$17.2 million in 2026-27, and \$8.0 million in 2027-28. Our office strongly discourages districts from committing to additional ongoing expenditures without offsetting reductions and stresses the need to continue identifying solutions to reduce any potential structural deficit.

Employee Negotiations – The district reports salary negotiations are complete with both the certificated and classified bargaining units for the 2025-26 fiscal year. However, the district reports benefit negotiations continue with both the certificated and classified bargaining units for the 2026 calendar 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 Riverside Unified School District’s size is 2.0 percent; however, the governing board requires the district maintain a 4.0 percent reserve for economic uncertainties. In light of the current fiscal environment, our office recommends districts maintain reserves higher than the minimum and commends the district’s board for this fiscally prudent practice. The district projects to meet the minimum-reserve requirement, and board-required reserve, 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. 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

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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.