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Board of Education

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**DATE:** August 29, 2025  
**TO:** Dr. Marcus Funchess, District Superintendent  
Mr. Sergio Espericueta, Board President  
Mr. Jeffrey Simmons, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services  
Dr. Simone Kovats, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services  
Palm Springs Unified School District  
**FROM:** Edwin Gomez, Ed.D., Riverside County Superintendent of Schools  
**BY:** Scott Price, Ph.D. *MP* 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 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.

Palm Springs 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 <sup>1</sup>	19,566	18,589	5,576	N/A	201	2,063	2,488
Enrollment Percent 2024 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	95.0	28.5	N/A	1.0	10.5	12.7
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 <sup>2</sup>	-46.1	-46.9	-88.4	-114.3	-71.5	-63.5	-131.9
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 <sup>2</sup>	-88.8	-89.6	-118.4	-173.8	-112.6	-97.6	-162.5
Science Distance from Standard 2024 <sup>2</sup>	-19.8	-20.0	-28.9	-33.7	-22.9	-22.0	-33.8
English Learner Progress Indicator 2024 <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	42.0	38.9	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduation Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	90.3	90.4	84.1	85.7	77.4	82.3	73.1
College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	36.9	36.9	14.8	14.6	16.1	20.5	5.3
A-G Completion Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	42.7	42.4	24.3	22.6	25.8	24.6	8.5
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	11.5	11.7	6.8	7.7	3.2	6.4	6.6
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	35.2	35.6	30.1	36.2	47.0	38.3	42.2
Suspension Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	5.3	5.5	4.9	10.9	13.5	5.3	7.9

<sup>1</sup>2024 California School Dashboard Downloadable Enrollment File (No LTEL Data Available)

<sup>2</sup>2024 California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Downloadable Data Files

\* Data Suppressed for Student Privacy Reasons

Palm Springs 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 <sup>1</sup>	19,566	72	152	763	317	16,021	31	1,658	552	
Enrollment Percent 2024 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	0.4	0.8	3.9	1.6	81.9	0.2	8.5	2.8	
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 <sup>2</sup>	-46.1	-44.3	42.7	-76.9	48.2	-52.3	-34.8	-4.8	-16.9	
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 <sup>2</sup>	-88.8	-97.9	4.7	-121.7	-4.3	-94.1	-49.5	-54.0	-63.3	
Science Distance from Standard 2024 <sup>2</sup>	-19.8	-24.2	-3.4	-25.6	-4.5	-21.0	*	-10.5	-17.7	
English Learner Progress Indicator 2024 <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Graduation Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	90.3	76.5	100.0	86.2	100.0	90.3	*	89.2	93.6	
College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	36.9	17.6	66.7	25.0	68.4	35.5	*	44.8	40.4	
A-G Completion Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	42.7	35.3	80.0	36.9	86.8	40.0	*	51.6	57.4	
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	11.5	11.8	26.7	9.2	28.9	11.1	*	12.7	6.4	
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	35.2	55.3	11.1	47.0	14.0	34.7	27.3	37.2	41.5	
Suspension Rate 2024 <sup>2</sup>	5.3	12.6	0.0	9.3	2.5	5.2	0.0	5.4	6.5	

<sup>1</sup> California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Files<sup>2</sup> 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 investment in tiered academic supports, including Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and school-based interventions in literacy and mathematics. These strategies have contributed to a 4.8-point increase in English language arts (ELA) and a

5.1-point increase in mathematics performance from the prior year, with notable gains for Foster Youth (+15.5 in ELA), Students with Disabilities (+4 in mathematics), and American Indian (+28.3 in ELA and +30.4 in mathematics).

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

- What specific strategies contributed to the +15.5-point gain in ELA for Foster Youth, and how might these be scaled across sites?
- How is the district measuring the impact of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) on student group performance, particularly for Students with Disabilities?
- How might the district strengthen support for Long-Term English Learners (LTELs) to accelerate growth in ELA and mathematics?

#### **Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework**

The district is to be commended for expanding rigorous course opportunities, including dual enrollment, A–G alignment, and Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways. This effort is reflected in a 2.1 percent increase in A–G completion, with graduation rates rising to 90.1 percent overall and gains seen among Socioeconomically Disadvantaged and Latino students.

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 systems are in place to ensure equitable access to dual enrollment and A–G coursework, especially as African American students show lower A–G completion than the district average?
- How is the district monitoring CTE pathway completion and success rates by student group, particularly for English Learners and Students with Disabilities?
- Given the increase in graduation rates, what academic supports contributed most to this success, and how are they being used to close remaining equity gaps?

#### **Student Engagement and School Climate**

The district is to be commended for its innovative and responsive approaches to student engagement, including the expansion of mental health services, implementation of inclusive enrichment programs, and targeted efforts that have contributed to a reduction in chronic absenteeism.

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

- Which engagement strategies (e.g., drone soccer, esports, wellness centers) have proven most effective, and how is their impact being measured?
- How is the district sustaining momentum in reducing chronic absenteeism, particularly for historically underserved groups?
- In what ways is student voice being used to inform future school climate initiatives and to build on the district's positive attendance trends?

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

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

***Fiscal Recommendations***

During our review we identified opportunities to improve data accuracy between the district's LCAP and fiscal documents. After board adoption, the district revised certain items which had no material impact on the implementation of the district's plan.

**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 17,306 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 0.6 percent decrease from the certified 2024-25 P-2 ADA. For 2026-27, the district projects a 1.3 percent decrease in ADA. For 2027-28, the district projects a 0.3 percent increase 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 \$12.8 million in 2025-26, \$3.4 million in 2026-27, and \$2.2 million in 2027-28. However, the projections incorporate transfers-in from the Special Reserve Fund for Other Than Capital Outlay Projects to the General Fund of \$7.2 million in the 2025-26 fiscal year, \$12.0 in the 2026-27 fiscal year and \$9.3 million in the 2027-28 fiscal year, which temporarily reduces the unrestricted deficits. 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* – As of the board date, June 24, 2025, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations are complete with the certificated bargaining unit for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

As of the board date, June 24, 2025, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations continue with the classified bargaining unit 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 Palm Springs 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.

*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 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.