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OFFICE OF EDUCATION
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DATE: August 30, 2024
TO: Dr. Tony R. Signoret, District Superintendent
Ms. Madonna Gerrell, 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.  Amanda Corridan 
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SUBJECT: 2024-25 LCAP and ADOPTED BUDGET – APPROVAL

The County Superintendent of Schools is required to review and approve the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan or the annual update to an existing Local Control and Accountability Plan prior to 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 2024-25 Local Control and Accountability Plan (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 2024-25 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	English Learner	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	Foster Youth	Homeless Youth
Enrollment Count 2023 ¹	20,160	6,069	19,602	2,394	192	2,080
Enrollment Percent 2023 ¹	N/A	30.1	97.2	11.9	1.0	10.3
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-46.7	-84.5	-47.6	-136.6	-87.0	-64.8
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-88.2	-116.3	-89.0	-166.5	-102.3	-96.8
English Learner Progress Indicator 2023 ²	N/A	41.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduation Rate 2023 ²	89.3	80.9	89.4	75.0	72.2	77.1
A-G Completion Rate 2023 ²	42.2	21.3	42.3	9.2	0.0	25.0
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2023 ²	12.5	6.4	12.7	1.6	5.6	4.8
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2023 ²	38.9	35.4	39.1	46.7	44.1	47.7
Suspension Rate 2023 ²	6.9	6.1	7.0	9.1	17.9	7.7

¹2023 California School Dashboard Downloadable Enrollment File
²2023 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 2023 ¹	20,160	80	150	872	333	16,403	25	1,754	543	
Enrollment Percent 2023 ¹	N/A	0.4	0.7	4.3	1.7	81.4	0.1	8.7	2.7	
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-46.7	-72.6	37.5	-76.0	39.5	-53.0	-11.0	-3.8	-18.7	
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-88.2	-128.4	13.0	-118.1	-3.7	-94.0	-53.4	-48.8	-62.5	
English Learner Progress Indicator 2023 ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Graduation Rate 2023 ²	89.3	*	*	87.1	100.0	89.4	*	84.7	91.2	
A-G Completion Rate 2023 ²	42.2	*	*	30.6	75.5	40.9	*	47.1	41.2	
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2023 ²	12.5	*	*	4.7	13.2	13.2	*	12.4	5.9	
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2023 ²	38.9	54.0	13.3	48.3	16.8	38.7	8.3	41.5	41.1	
Suspension Rate 2023 ²	6.9	7.1	0.6	15.4	2.6	6.6	8.6	6.4	6.7	

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 2024-25 Local Control and Accountability Plan and the refinement of the plan in future years:

Student Success in Academics

The district is commended for expanding its middle school Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program, achieving a 9.0 percent reclassification for English Learners in 2022-23, improving mathematics scores by 2.2 points, and enhancing inclusionary practices for Special Education by increasing access to core and elective courses.

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

- How might Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), local assessments, instructional strategies, and districtwide systems be utilized to support Tier 1 instruction, meet ELA and mathematics learning needs, and enhance student academic growth reflected in California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) and other data sources?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is commended for providing supplemental counselors for all grades, additional high school assistant principals to address discipline, absenteeism, and graduation rates, increased staffing and professional development for school safety, and an enhanced focus on college readiness, as evidenced by a 2.1 percent increase in A-G completion rates compared to the previous year.

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:

- What strategies can the district implement to improve student access, enrollment, and success in rigorous coursework, while considering the expertise of school counselors, school social workers, prevention specialists, and liaisons (Foster and Family Engagement) in implementing "strategic support and timely intervention practices" for A-G and CTE, particularly for the Low Income (LI), English Learner (EL), and Foster Youth (FY) student groups?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is commended for supporting research-based programs [MTSS, Science of Reading, Irvine Math Project, and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)], its Diversity and Racial Equity (DRE) teams promoting culturally-responsive methods for inclusive campuses, and its Family Engagement Centers offering workshops and services to engage parents and families of targeted student groups.

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

- How might the district assess the effectiveness of their MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports), pupil services, and climate survey data to reduce suspension rates and address chronic absenteeism districtwide?

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 2024-25 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 2024-25 fiscal year, as well as satisfy its multi-year financial commitments.

Based on our analysis of the information submitted, we approve the district's budget, but would like to highlight the following:

Enrollment and Average Daily Attendance (ADA) – The district estimates 17,826 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 1.1 percent increase from the certified 2023-24 P-2 ADA. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the district projects ADA to remain relatively flat. 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 0.76 percent, 2.73 percent, and 3.11 percent for the 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27 fiscal years, respectively. Our office recommends a contingency plan should LCFF funding not materialize as projected in the 2024-25 State Budget. The 2024-25 Enacted State Budget included COLAs of 1.07 percent, 2.93 percent, and 3.08 percent for the 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27 fiscal years, respectively. We recommend the district incorporate the enacted COLA for 2024-25 in its operating budget and consider these projections at First Interim for the subsequent years.

Unrestricted Deficit Spending – The district's Adopted Budget indicates a positive ending balance for all funds in the 2024-25 fiscal year. However, for the unrestricted General Fund, the district anticipates expenditures and uses will exceed revenues and sources by \$10.0 million in 2024-25, \$3.1 million in 2025-26, and \$3.3 million in 2026-27. Additionally, the district's multi-year projections are based on ongoing expenditure reductions of approximately \$8.7 million beginning in the 2025-26 fiscal year and an additional \$2.8 million in the 2026-27 fiscal year. In order for position reductions to occur in the 2025-26 fiscal year, action must be taken by March 15, 2025. 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 25, 2024, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations are complete with both the certificated and classified bargaining units for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

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 2024-25 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.

Other Funds – Subsequent to the district's Adopted Budget creation, the district received additional revenue in its non-general fund accounts. These funds were not included in the initial budget, however, are anticipated to be incorporated into the district's Unaudited Actuals.

AB 2756 – Current law, as enacted through AB 2756 (Chapter 52, Statutes of 2004), requires the County Superintendent to review and consider any studies, reports, evaluations, or audits that may contain evidence a district is showing 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.