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DATE: August 29, 2025
TO: Ms. April Smith, District Superintendent
Ms. Jamey Mullion, Board President
Ms. Rachel Angel, Director of Business Services
Ms. Lois Shaffer, Director of Data, Assessment, and Accountability
Palo Verde 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
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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.

| Palo Verde Unified School District Student Groups – Program Participation Status | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Indicator | LEA | Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED) | English Learner (EL) | Long-Term English Learner (LTTEL) | Foster Youth (FY) | Homeless Youth (HY) | Students with Disabilities (SWD) |
| Enrollment Count 2024 ¹ | 2,706 | 2,210 | 177 | N/A | 46 | 94 | 391 |
| Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹ | N/A | 81.7 | 6.5 | N/A | 1.7 | 3.5 | 14.4 |
| English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ² | -70.3 | -81.5 | -94.2 | -144.4 | -136.4 | -139.1 | -154.3 |
| Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ² | -119.2 | -128.2 | -140.4 | -216.5 | -159.2 | -149.9 | -176.4 |
| Science Distance from Standard 2024 ² | -25.2 | -27.7 | -27.5 | -36.0 | * | -28.4 | -34.3 |
| English Learner Progress Indicator 2024 ² | N/A | N/A | 35.1 | 37.9 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Graduation Rate 2024 ² | 83.8 | 82.2 | 78.9 | 93.8 | * | 63.6 | 64.7 |
| College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 ² | 51.6 | 49.0 | 15.8 | 18.8 | * | 36.4 | 21.2 |
| A-G Completion Rate 2024 ² | 22.5 | 19.8 | 10.5 | 12.5 | * | 18.2 | 2.9 |
| Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ² | 33.3 | 32.0 | 15.8 | 18.8 | * | 18.2 | 23.5 |
| Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ² | 39.0 | 42.5 | 31.6 | 33.3 | 45.5 | 57.1 | 46.4 |
| Suspension Rate 2024 ² | 10.7 | 11.9 | 9.2 | 11.0 | 20.6 | 15.8 | 16.9 |

¹2024 California School Dashboard Downloadable Enrollment File (No LTTEL Data Available)
²2024 California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Downloadable Data Files
 * Data Suppressed for Student Privacy Reasons

| Palo Verde 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 | 2,706 | 16 | 6 | 239 | 7 | 1,970 | 4 | 386 | 59 | |
| Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹ | N/A | 0.6 | 0.2 | 8.8 | 0.3 | 72.8 | 0.1 | 14.3 | 2.2 | |
| English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ² | -70.3 | * | * | -115.4 | * | -71.8 | * | -42.8 | -91.3 | |
| Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ² | -119.2 | * | * | -154.1 | * | -121.0 | * | -88.8 | -166.0 | |
| Science Distance from Standard 2024 ² | -25.2 | * | * | -32.2 | * | -25.8 | * | -19.3 | -25.5 | |
| 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 | 83.8 | * | * | 73.7 | * | 85.8 | * | 90.0 | * | |
| College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 ² | 51.6 | * | * | 33.3 | * | 53.1 | * | 63.3 | * | |
| A-G Completion Rate 2024 ² | 22.5 | * | * | 10.5 | * | 22.2 | * | 33.3 | * | |
| Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ² | 33.3 | * | * | 26.3 | * | 32.7 | * | 50.0 | * | |
| Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ² | 39.0 | 38.5 | * | 55.3 | * | 37.5 | * | 33.0 | 45.5 | |
| Suspension Rate 2024 ² | 10.7 | 0.0 | * | 22.1 | * | 9.1 | * | 11.7 | 9.5 | |

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 sustained focus on instruction, including the use of pacing guides, benchmark assessments, and academic Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs), which is contributing to incremental gains in Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)

English Language Arts (ELA) and Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Reading across multiple grade levels. Notably, the district has taken a comprehensive approach to mathematics improvement, with STAR Math proficiency gains supported by professional learning, expanded classroom technology, and targeted intervention tools such as IXL. Instructional coherence has also been strengthened through participation in Lexia LETRS® (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training, the development of common assessments, and site-based coaching efforts that reinforce consistent, standards-aligned teaching practices. Furthermore, the district has aligned instructional leadership and accountability systems with student learning goals by conducting regular classroom walkthroughs focused on access to state standards and the use of data to inform instruction, strategies that collectively support improved academic outcomes.

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

- How might the district measure that instructional tools, such as pacing guides, benchmark assessments, and walkthrough “look fors,” are improving instruction and engagement for English Learners, Long-Term English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students?
- What evidence might be collected and monitored to demonstrate that the district’s current instructional approaches, including Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI), are maximizing student thinking and inquiry, particularly for those student groups performing furthest below grade level in ELA and mathematics?
- What strategies and systems might be considered and built to monitor whether Foster Youth, English Learners, and other underserved students are receiving grade-level Tier I instruction with timely scaffolds to decrease the need for intervention or remediation tracks that limit access to rigorous content?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for its efforts to expand access to rigorous coursework and ensure more equitable student enrollment in college and career pathways. The addition of Career Technical Education (CTE) teachers and sections has broadened course offerings at the high school level, contributing to the increase in students completing components of the College/Career Indicators, including English Learners and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students. The district’s collaboration with Palo Verde College to expand dual enrollment opportunities represents a forward-thinking approach to increasing postsecondary readiness for all students. Furthermore, the district’s investment in identifying and supporting underserved student groups, particularly Foster Youth and Homeless Youth, through examining and improving systemwide data practices and expanded academic supports reflects a commitment to ensuring that all students can access and succeed in rigorous 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 strengthen systems that ensure Foster Youth and other high-mobility students are consistently enrolled in A–G, CTE, or dual enrollment courses that support both graduation and college and career plans?
- How might collaboration between special education, general education, and CTE staff be structured to create inclusive, interest-based pathways for Students with Disabilities, through strategies such as co-planned instruction, adapted course materials, targeted master scheduling, and shared professional learning focused on equitable access and student success?
- What might be influencing the pace of English Learner progress toward reclassification, and how might instructional teams, including teachers and paraprofessionals, collaboratively examine instruction, language supports, and feedback loops to accelerate growth?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for its multifaceted efforts to improve student engagement and foster a safe, inclusive school climate. The addition of a dedicated science teacher at Twin Palms Continuation High School, along with the implementation of a garden, group session room, and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, demonstrates a clear commitment to increasing relevance and connection for students who need it most. Expanding CTE offerings has not only enhanced college and career readiness but, as research informs us, deepens student engagement through hands-on, interest-based learning. The district's investment in Behavior TOSAs and Active Supervision training for campus security and paraeducators reflects a thoughtful approach to supporting positive behavior and social-emotional needs across sites.

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

- What might be shaping current graduation and dropout patterns, particularly at Twin Palms Continuation High School, and how might the district deepen its understanding of student experiences and engagement by strengthening teacher credentialing, academic progress monitoring, and school culture?
- How might the district further strengthen the alignment of its efforts around behavior supports, mental health services, counseling, and student voice to deepen their collective impact on reducing chronic absenteeism and suspension, particularly for Foster Youth and Homeless Youth?
- How might the district elevate student voice as a central driver for improvement by using tools like California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), student surveys, and real-time engagement feedback to collect and examine students' perspectives, and respond with timely, student-informed changes to instruction, culture, and support systems?

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 2,353 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 0.8 percent increase from the certified 2024-25 P-2 ADA. For 2026-27, the district projects a 2.6 percent decrease in ADA. For 2027-28, the district projects a 1.3 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 \$1.4 million in 2025-26, \$24,950 in 2026-27, and \$0.1 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 – As of the board date, June 24, 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 Palo Verde 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.

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.