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DATE: August 29, 2025
TO: Dr. Ward Andrus, District Superintendent
Mr. Nicolas Pardue, Board President
Mr. Darren Daniel, Deputy Superintendent
Mr. James Whittington, Chief Financial Officer
Ms. Faythe Mutchnick-Jayx, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services
Murrieta Valley Unified School District
FROM: Edwin Gomez, Ed.D., Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
BY: Scott Price, Ph.D. *SP* Amanda Corridan *AC*
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.

Murrieta Valley 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	22,317	11,776	1,179	N/A	105	230	4,161
Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹	N/A	52.8	5.3	N/A	0.5	1.0	18.6
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ²	21.7	3.6	-28.1	-80.9	-71.9	-39.9	-57.3
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-16.8	-35.9	-55.7	-141.0	-103.4	-73.2	-93.8
Science Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-5.2	-8.8	-17.4	-26.8	-25.0	-17.0	-20.5
English Learner Progress Indicator 2024 ²	N/A	N/A	55.0	52.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduation Rate 2024 ²	97.7	97.4	97.3	97.7	*	97.0	91.9
College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 ²	58.8	51.7	28.4	26.7	*	27.3	18.8
A-G Completion Rate 2024 ²	60.0	52.8	35.1	33.7	*	30.3	19.9
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ²	13.4	11.3	9.0	9.3	*	7.6	9.0
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ²	18.2	22.7	21.7	25.8	33.0	34.3	24.5
Suspension Rate 2024 ²	2.6	3.3	3.1	8.3	16.4	5.2	4.8

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

Murrieta 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	22,317	59	883	1,164	820	9,546	125	7,452	1,896	
Enrollment Percent 2024 ¹	N/A	0.3	4.0	5.2	3.7	42.8	0.6	33.4	8.5	
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2024 ²	21.7	-31.4	59.0	-7.3	59.0	7.1	26.8	33.5	34.6	
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-16.8	-53.4	42.1	-59.4	30.0	-34.8	-28.0	-2.4	-2.0	
Science Distance from Standard 2024 ²	-5.2	-4.4	2.4	-13.5	1.9	-8.8	-6.1	-2.0	-1.0	
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	97.7	*	99.0	98.4	100.0	97.8	100.0	97.3	96.4	
College/Career Indicator Rate 2024 ²	58.8	*	74.7	50.8	75.0	52.5	58.3	64.0	55.7	
A-G Completion Rate 2024 ²	60.0	*	68.8	56.3	78.4	54.1	66.7	63.4	60.9	
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2024 ²	13.4	*	9.4	6.3	14.8	11.0	16.7	17.1	14.2	
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2024 ²	18.2	47.4	11.3	20.8	12.5	20.4	29.1	15.9	18.1	
Suspension Rate 2024 ²	2.6	9.5	1.8	5.1	1.3	2.7	2.3	2.1	2.6	

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 achieving Green status in all core academic areas on the California School Dashboard, with notable improvements in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics supported by a comprehensive districtwide Professional Learning Teams (PLT)

initiative with dedicated PLT leads and coordinator support. The district demonstrates exceptional overall performance with high graduation rates, strong A–G completion rates, and notable California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) gains for Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and Foster Youth, all supported by Professional Learning Teams, smaller class sizes, comprehensive counseling services, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) programming, and instructional coaching support.

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

- Given the district's overall high proficiency in CAASPP and growth among several student groups, how can Tier I instruction be strengthened and prioritized to accelerate learning and improve ELA and mathematics outcomes for Long-Term English Learners (LTELs), Foster Youth, and Homeless students?
- What elements of the district's early intervention system have contributed to recent academic gains for Students with Disabilities and English Learners? How can these supports be refined to better serve students who are not yet making similar progress, particularly LTELs, Foster Youth, and Homeless students?
- How might student voice tools, such as empathy interviews and student panels, help uncover the specific needs and barriers facing LTELs, Foster Youth, and Homeless students, and guide systemwide supports that build academic identity and close persistent achievement gaps?
- Given that the district has set the goal to decrease the percentage of LTELs by 2 percent annually by 2026, what comprehensive, evidence-based systemic changes must occur, including reclassification support for dually identified students, to achieve this improvement with sustainable results?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for having made notable progress in college and career readiness and student engagement. On the California School Dashboard, the College/Career Indicator improved substantially from the previous year, with strong student group performance, including English Learners, Long-Term English Learners, and Students with Disabilities achieving Yellow status. Key contributors to this success include counselor support in A–G and Career Technical Education (CTE) coursework, AVID programs, promotion of the Seal of Biliteracy, including the highest award of the American Sign Language (ASL) Seal of Biliteracy in the state, and alignment with the Profile of a Graduate framework through grade-level projects.

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 expanding course offerings and adjusting scheduling structures increase access and enrollment of underrepresented students, including English Learners, Long-Term English Learners, Homeless Youth, Foster Youth, African American, and Students with Disabilities to AVID, Honors, and Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and examinations?

- How might the district systematically address the barriers that prevent proportional representation of all student groups in advanced coursework and CTE pathways, and how might support systems ensure student success and completion once enrolled in these rigorous programs?
- Given the shift to two-year CTE pathways, what systems are needed to ensure the same level of career readiness and industry certification that prepare students for high-skill, high-wage careers?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for strategic Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) implementation that has dramatically improved school climate and student outcomes, with a substantial increase in schools scoring at high levels on the Tiered Fidelity Inventory. This systematic approach has yielded exceptional results, including high graduation rates, strong A–G completion, reduced chronic absenteeism, and improved suspension rates. These outcomes directly correlate with comprehensive support infrastructure such as Tier 2 attendance teams, elementary behavioral coaches, Playworks programming, and middle school "reset rooms."

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

- Significant disparities persist for specific student groups in suspension rates and chronic absenteeism. How might the district ensure that systems for MTSS Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are responsive to the unique needs of disproportionately impacted student groups?
- With 54 percent of parents indicating that the school values their opinion, how might the district strengthen parent and community partnerships and enhance parent voice in school and district decision-making?
- How will the district ensure that expanded MTSS attendance and mental-health supports translate into stronger student-adult relationships at the secondary level, and reduce chronic absenteeism specifically for Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students?

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.

Since the adoption of the district's budget, the 2025-26 State Budget has been enacted, which includes updates and changes from the assumptions used by the district. The district is encouraged to review and revise its budget projections as needed to align with the enacted State Budget and reflect any material changes in funding or assumptions.

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 20,394 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 0.6 percent increase from the certified 2024-25 P-2 ADA. For 2026-27, the district projects a 0.3 percent increase in ADA. For 2027-28, the district projects a 0.8 percent increase in ADA. The district's attendance projections for the two subsequent fiscal years appear optimistic based on historical trends. It will be important for the district to monitor attendance to ensure accurate LCFF revenue and plan accordingly. Our office recommends the district develop a contingency plan should attendance not materialize as planned.

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) – The district's Adopted Budget included Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) for LCFF funding of 2.43 percent, 3.52 percent, and 3.63 percent for the 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28 fiscal years, respectively. The COLA assumptions for the out-years do not reflect the lower, revised figures proposed in the 2025-26 enacted State Budget. Our office recommends a contingency plan should LCFF funding not materialize as projected in the district's Multi-Year Projection (MYP) or 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 \$2.5 million in 2025-26, \$13.3 million in 2026-27, and \$10.1 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 12, 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 Murrieta 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.

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.