



RIVERSIDE COUNTY  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
EDWIN GOMEZ, Ed.D.  
County Superintendent of Schools

Riverside County  
Board of Education

Jamie Azpeitia-Sachs

Kim J. Cousins

Ray "Coach" Curtis

Bruce N. Dennis

Ben Johnson II

Jennifer Mejares Pham

Elizabeth F. Romero

**DATE:** August 30, 2024  
**TO:** Dr. Christi Barrett, District Superintendent  
Mr. Jeremy Parsons, Board President  
Mr. Darrin Watters, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services  
Dr. Nereyda Gonzalez, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services  
Hemet Unified School District  
**FROM:** Edwin Gomez, Ed.D., Riverside County Superintendent of Schools  
**BY:** Scott Price, Ph.D.  Amanda Corridan   
Chief Business Official  
(951) 826-6790  
Chief Academic Officer  
(951) 826-6648  
**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.

Hemet Unified School District Student Groups – Program Participation Status						
Indicator	LEA	English Learner	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	Foster Youth	Homeless Youth
Enrollment Count 2023 <sup>1</sup>	21,626	2,972	18,733	3,311	243	900
Enrollment Percent 2023 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	13.7	86.6	15.3	1.1	4.2
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2023 <sup>2</sup>	-62.3	-100.6	-67.9	-133.2	-89.6	-90.2
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2023 <sup>2</sup>	-106.9	-142.2	-112.5	-164.6	-137.3	-130.9
English Learner Progress Indicator 2023 <sup>2</sup>	N/A	46.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduation Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	89.3	78.0	88.8	78.7	77.4	83.6
A-G Completion Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	41.3	20.3	39.1	13.4	16.1	26.8
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	29.7	19.4	29.0	20.0	22.6	18.6
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	37.4	33.7	39.1	42.3	46.0	52.0
Suspension Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	6.3	5.5	6.7	10.2	11.9	9.0

<sup>1</sup>2023 California School Dashboard Downloadable Enrollment File

<sup>2</sup>2023 California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Downloadable Data Files

\* Data Suppressed for Student Privacy Reasons

Hemet 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 <sup>1</sup>	21,626	153	165	1,702	189	14,785	67	3,717	848	
Enrollment Percent 2023 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	0.7	0.8	7.9	0.9	68.4	0.3	17.2	3.9	
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2023 <sup>2</sup>	-62.3	-89.3	-16.8	-90.8	49.5	-65.8	-56.8	-44.1	-50.4	
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2023 <sup>2</sup>	-106.9	-118.8	-63.1	-140.1	-2.7	-111.3	-96.3	-82.3	-99.3	
English Learner Progress Indicator 2023 <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Graduation Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	89.3	90.9	94.7	81.3	96.2	90.3	*	89.3	83.9	
A-G Completion Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	41.3	45.5	57.9	25.4	65.4	42.5	*	42.4	32.3	
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	29.7	18.2	47.4	22.4	23.1	30.1	*	31.9	22.6	
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	37.4	55.5	19.5	46.9	16.5	36.9	55.3	34.8	39.9	
Suspension Rate 2023 <sup>2</sup>	6.3	13.8	1.1	13.0	0.5	5.3	2.5	7.1	6.7	

<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 2024-25 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 early literacy data which indicates increased reading readiness measured by the Reading Composite Score and in Grade 1, where the percentage of students at or above benchmark increased from 19 percent to 42 percent. The district should also be commended for its commitment to professional development with over 120 teachers trained in the Science of Reading based Lexia LETRS® (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) program and the continuous improvement implementation which will provide strategic support to both site and district teams as they focus on developing

interventions to address inequitable student outcomes. The district also deserves commendation for the launch of its student outcome scorecard system to monitor literacy, suspension, and chronic absenteeism data.

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 conduct a root cause analysis and/or student focus groups to identify barriers to student success in English language arts and mathematics to refine current practices and to provide interventions which will increase student learning? Additionally, how might site and district teams collaborate to ensure these interventions are effectively implemented across all levels?
- How might the district leverage support systems and professional development to assist classroom teachers with effectively implementing the Early Warning System data tool in daily classroom practice to accelerate student growth in English language arts and mathematics?
- How might the district continue to monitor the targeted Multi-Tiered System of Supports strategies and interventions implemented to specifically increase English language arts and mathematics scores for the Foster Youth, Students with Disabilities, African American, and English Learner student groups?

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

The district is to be commended for its overall A-G completion rate of 49.7 percent in 2023 (improved from 17.8 percent in 2012 and 41.3 percent in 2017) and graduation rate of 89.6 percent in 2023 (improved from 76.5 percent in 2010). The district should also be commended for increasing their Career Technical Education (CTE) enrollment from 27.7 percent in 2020 to 36.37 percent in 2023 and overall completion rates from 15.86 percent to 19.22 percent. These increases also impacted English Learner students with CTE enrollment increases from 15.1 percent in 2020 to 25.38 percent in 2023 and Foster Youth from 12.8 percent completers in 2022 to 22.6 percent in 2023. The district should also be commended for its commitment to college preparatory coursework access through their Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program which demonstrated that AVID students overall maintained higher grade point averages (GPAs) compared to non-AVID 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:

- How might the district identify and utilize recruitment and monitoring practices to ensure an increase in English Learner, Foster Youth, and Students with Disabilities student group enrollment and completion of college and career readiness courses of rigor? In what ways can the Early Warning System data tool be calibrated and utilized to improve A-G completion, graduation rate, CTE pathways, and Advanced Placement enrollment? In addition, what additional evidence-based strategies can the district implement to increase the percentage of historically underrepresented student groups that graduate college and career prepared?

- In what ways could the district further vertically articulate K-12 school-wide systems and best instructional strategies to close the achievement gap?
- How might the district continue to recruit students into pathways and programs including AVID and CTE, and effectively communicate to families about their benefits to increase their college and career readiness indicators?

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

The district is to be commended for reducing their chronic absenteeism rate from 50.5 percent (2021-22) to 39.5 percent (2022-23) and year to date with current estimates of 36.7 percent as of May 2024 according to LCAP Goal 3 Annual Update. The district also deserves commendation for its commitment to student connections with a high of 2,729 students engaged in after-school sports, up from 1,882 and elementary athletics modeling a secondary after school setting. The district is to be commended for the significant improvements in school climate data. The positive changes reflect their collective efforts and dedication to creating a nurturing and effective learning environment. Key achievements from their local climate survey include the student learning environment seeing a remarkable rise from 52 percent to 80 percent and support for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has surged from 38 percent to an outstanding 84 percent.

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

- How might the Early Warning System data tool be calibrated and utilized to improve students' sense of belonging and feeling safe at school?
- How might increased participation in elementary athletics impact overall student engagement and academic success? Additionally, how might the district leverage the emotional engagement from athletics to increase involvement in academic activities?
- How might the district leverage successful strategies used to increase high school graduation rates with targeted student groups including Foster Youth, English Learner, and Students with Disabilities?
- In what ways can the district continue to expand targeted support programs, such as tutoring, mentorship, and academic counseling, for the English Learner, African American, and students of Two or More Races student groups to increase graduation rates?

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 20,241 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 1.3 percent increase from the certified 2023-24 P-2 ADA. For 2025-26 and 2026-27, the district projects ADA to remain 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 1.07 percent, 2.93 percent, and 3.08 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.

*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 \$21.9 million in 2024-25, \$10.1 million in 2025-26, and \$24.6 million in 2026-27. 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 18, 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 Hemet Unified School District's size is 3.0 percent; however, the governing board requires the district maintain a 5.0 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 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.

*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.