



RIVERSIDE COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
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County Superintendent of Schools

Riverside County
Board of Education

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DATE: August 30, 2024
TO: Ms. Renee Hill, District Superintendent
Mr. Dale Kinnear, Board President
Mrs. Erin Power, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Dr. Daniel Sosa, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction TK-12
Riverside 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.

Riverside 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	39,425	6,709	28,766	4,899	223	999
Enrollment Percent 2023 ¹	N/A	17.0	73.0	12.4	0.6	2.5
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-16.8	-82.3	-33.8	-102.9	-67.9	-67.0
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-57.5	-108.3	-76.1	-131.9	-108.6	-108.8
English Learner Progress Indicator 2023 ²	N/A	44.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduation Rate 2023 ²	92.6	81.0	91.4	85.0	81.5	78.0
A-G Completion Rate 2023 ²	49.9	16.0	42.0	8.5	18.5	20.9
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2023 ²	6.7	3.3	6.4	6.8	3.7	1.0
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2023 ²	23.7	23.9	27.2	31.8	29.4	41.2
Suspension Rate 2023 ²	4.6	4.5	5.5	7.1	12.7	6.1

¹2023 California School Dashboard Downloadable Enrollment File
²2023 California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Downloadable Data Files
* Data Suppressed for Student Privacy Reasons

Riverside 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	39,425	113	1,464	2,299	449	26,954	134	6,706	742	
Enrollment Percent 2023 ¹	N/A	0.3	3.7	5.8	1.1	68.4	0.3	17.0	1.9	
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-16.8	-38.9	66.3	-29.5	57.3	-32.3	-23.3	22.9	32.6	
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-57.5	-99.8	48.9	-84.1	19.7	-74.8	-42.8	-12.4	-3.5	
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	92.6	94.1	94.5	94.1	98.4	91.0	100.0	95.7	98.1	
A-G Completion Rate 2023 ²	49.9	52.9	71.7	50.0	82.5	43.5	50.0	62.0	67.9	
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2023 ²	6.7	5.9	7.1	3.7	9.5	6.3	0.0	8.7	5.7	
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2023 ²	23.7	32.9	10.5	26.1	9.4	25.9	34.8	17.2	21.0	
Suspension Rate 2023 ²	4.6	6.7	2.5	7.5	1.5	4.8	8.8	3.4	4.2	

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 to be commended for maintaining an impressive overall graduation rate of 92.6 percent, with a 24.3 percentage point improvement in the graduation rate for Foster Youth students bringing their graduation rate to 81.5 percent. Additionally, the district has sustained a high graduation rate for Black/African American students at 94.1 percent. In spring 2024, the district successfully reclassified 660 English Learners, an increase of 125 students from the previous year, demonstrating its continued dedication to their academic success. Lastly, it is to

be commended that the district's job fairs focus on hiring diverse candidates as a part of a strategy to enhance the College/Career Indicator, which builds on the cultural assets of all students. These commendable efforts highlight the district's commitment to inclusivity, academic excellence, and continuous improvement.

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

- How can successes identified through Fastbridge screeners be leveraged to support the continued improvement of measurable outcomes in mathematics and English language arts?
- How might the district continue to utilize the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) data to identify successes and barriers to support the English Learner, Foster Youth, and Students with Disabilities student groups?
- How might the district and site teams foster effective collaboration to align professional development systems and practices to best meet the needs of all students through the MTSS process?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for an increase of nearly 4 percent in Early Assessment Program (EAP)-Math readiness for college-level courses from Year 2 to 3, positioning the district to be well on track to meet its 2024 goal of 16.9 percent in this area. Notably, the district has also made significant progress in increasing enrollment and participation in College and Career Access Pathways and Dual Enrollment courses. By providing transportation to mitigate barriers, the district has ensured broader access to these opportunities. Additionally, the district has maintained an exceptional 99 percent graduation rate among Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) students for the past two years, with 92 percent of AVID seniors meeting A-G graduation requirements. These achievements reflect the district's commitment to academic excellence and equitable access to educational resources.

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 of support can the district implement to increase completion rates for all student groups, especially the Hispanic and Socio-Economically Disadvantaged student groups, in their enrolled CTE pathways?
- How can the district analyze the equitable recruitment enrollment practices and access to specialized programs like Heritage and Legacy Programs to increase Puente and AVID participation for student groups such as English Learner, Foster Youth, Homeless Youth, and Students with Disabilities?
- Given the increased graduation rates for the Foster Youth student group, how might the district further improve college and career readiness for youth in foster care, including access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses, completion of A-G and/or CTE pathways,

and improved college/career indicators through existing programming or other community partnerships?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for its outstanding efforts in social-emotional and behavioral support, leading to a 6 percent growth in English language arts and a 3 percent growth in mathematics districtwide. Education code violations in Aeries have decreased by 56 percent, and the suspension rate has dropped by 22 percent. Enhanced family and community partnerships have significantly improved family engagement programming, including workshops, translation services, social-emotional learning curriculum, and comprehensive Child Welfare and Attendance support. These efforts have reduced the 2023-24 four-year adjusted cohort dropout rate to 0.8 percent and decreased chronic absenteeism by 4.6 percent, demonstrating the district's commitment to student success and well-being.

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

- What additional targeted interventions, initiatives, support systems, and educational partnerships can intentionally address chronic absenteeism and suspension rates across all student groups, but more specifically, among specialized student groups, such as youth in foster care, students experiencing homelessness, students with disabilities, and English learners?
- What are some efficacy measures the district can implement across initiatives and supports targeting climate, culture, and student engagement to foster ongoing, timely progress monitoring?
- How might the district use the MTSS model to identify and mitigate barriers to school engagement and chronic absenteeism and decrease suspension rates to provide youth in care with equitable opportunities to graduate and increase postsecondary readiness?

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 35,870 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 1.3 percent decrease from the certified 2023-24 P-2 ADA. For 2025-26, the district projects a 0.2 percent increase in ADA. For 2026-27, the district projects a 0.7 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 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 \$9.8 million in 2024-25 and \$7.9 million in 2025-26.

Employee Negotiations – As of the board date, June 27, 2024, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations continue with both the certificated and classified bargaining units for the 2024-25 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 Riverside Unified School District's size is 2.0 percent; however, the governing board requires the district maintain a 4.0 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

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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.