



**RIVERSIDE COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION**
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County Superintendent of Schools

**Riverside County
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DATE: August 25, 2021

TO: Mr. Michael R. McCormick, District Superintendent
Mr. Ty Liddell, Board President
Mr. Stacy Coleman, Deputy Superintendent
Mr. Mark LeNoir, Assistant Superintendent, Education Services
Val Verde 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: 2021-22 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 2021-22 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; and
- The plan adheres to the expenditure requirements for funds apportioned on the basis of the number and concentration of unduplicated pupils.

The district's adopted LCAP has been analyzed in the context of the guidance provided by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) and the California Department of Education (CDE). Based on our analysis, the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan for the 2021-22 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 your refinement of the 2021-22 Local Control and Accountability Plan 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 needed to be successful in both college and career. Riverside County Office of Education conducted a review of research on K-12 college readiness indicators to identify those that would align with the LCAP purpose and have greatest impact. As a result of this research, we recommend that local education agencies (LEAs) closely monitor the metrics listed in the data tables below for all student groups.

Val Verde Unified School District Student Groups – Program Participation Status						
Indicator	LEA	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	English Learner	Foster Youth	Homeless Youth	Students with Disabilities
Enrollment Count 2020 ¹	19,940	16,580	3,802	255	895	2,315
Enrollment Percentage 2020 ¹	N/A	83.1%	19.1%	1.3%	4.5%	11.6%
ELA Distance from Standard 2019 ¹	-16.5	-22.8	-40.3	-57.4	-41.9	-108.7
Math Distance from Standard 2019 ¹	-60.2	-65.8	-72.9	-80.8	-85.4	-144.3
English Language Progress Indicator Rate 2019 ¹	N/A	N/A	39.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reclassified Fluent English Proficient Rate 2021 ^{2†}	N/A	N/A	0.9%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduation Rate 2020 ¹	94.5%	94.4%	81.6%	81.5%	90.3%	81.9%
College and Career Prepared Rate 2020 ¹	47.6%	46.7%	19.1%	26.9%	38.8%	7.2%
A-G Completion Rate 2020 ²	60.9%	59.7%	31.5%	33.3%	44.3%	20.0%
CTE Completion Rate 2020 ¹	17.8%	18.0%	11.6%	0.0%	15.8%	12.5%
Dropout Rate 2020 ²	5.1%	5.3%	16.0%	21.9%	13.6%	10.0%
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2019 ¹	8.3%	8.8%	6.9%	16.0%	19.9%	14.2%
Suspension Rate 2020 ²	3.6%	3.9%	3.2%	10.5%	3.4%	6.6%
Expulsion Rate 2020 ²	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
¹ California School Dashboard Data Files ² CDE Dataquest and Files [†] Indicator Includes Charter Schools Within the District *Data Suppressed for Student Privacy Reasons						

Val 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 2020 ¹	19,940	60	301	2,424	262	15,490	49	851	389
Enrollment Percentage 2020 ¹	N/A	0.3%	1.5%	12.2%	1.3%	77.7%	0.2%	4.3%	2.0%
ELA Distance from Standard 2019 ¹	-16.5	4.1	50.1	-36.6	68.5	-18.2	-6.1	12.0	4.7
Math Distance from Standard 2019 ¹	-60.2	-37.5	22.1	-86.6	22.4	-61.1	-35.6	-34.0	-45.6
Graduation Rate 2020 ¹	94.5%	*	96.4%	93.3%	100.0%	94.6%	*	89.0%	100.0%
College and Career Prepared Rate 2020 ¹	47.6%	*	63.0%	33.9%	81.3%	49.5%	*	45.1%	48.3%
A-G Completion Rate 2020 ²	60.9%	*	55.6%	58.1%	90.6%	60.8%	*	63.5%	64.3%
CTE Completion Rate 2020 ¹	17.8%	*	25.9%	10.2%	9.4%	19.3%	*	18.3%	24.1%
Dropout Rate 2020 ²	5.1%	*	0.0%	5.1%	0.0%	5.4%	*	5.6%	3.3%
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2019 ¹	8.3%	15.8%	2.3%	12.2%	3.8%	7.5%	23.8%	8.9%	13.3%
Suspension Rate 2020 ²	3.6%	0.0%	1.0%	7.0%	1.1%	3.1%	5.1%	4.0%	4.3%
Expulsion Rate 2020 ²	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
¹ California School Dashboard Data 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 2021-22 Local Control and Accountability Plan and the refinement of the plan in future years:

Student Academic Success in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics

The district is to be commended for their increases between the 2018 and 2019 Smarter Balanced test administrations including 4.9 point increase in ELA for all students, 4.1 point increase for English Learners, 3.7 point increase for Foster Youth, 5.7 point increase for Low Income students, and 14.9 point increase for Students with Disabilities. The district is also to be commended for the

3.4 point increase in mathematics for all students, the 4.6 increase for English Learners, 21.3 points for Foster Youth, 3.9 point increase for Low Income students, and 11.7 point increase for Students with Disabilities. The district should also be commended for focusing on the need for implementing more inclusive practices, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and evidence-based classroom instruction. In addition, the implementation of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) in all classrooms, and math and reading camps to support student learning should be commended. The use of Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs), coaching, modeling best practices as an ongoing support is commendable. Making use of the Interim Assessment block as part of the district's formative assessment process to support increase in test scores is additionally recognized.

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

- How might the STEAM initiative influence shifts in mathematics instruction to include standards for mathematical practice, mathematical reasoning, connections, and discourse?
- In what ways can an increased focus on UDL influence Early Literacy efforts?
- How might the district consider and systematically evaluate the intervention strategies implemented to support closing the achievement gap in ELA and mathematics for systematically marginalized students such as English Learners, Students with Disabilities, Foster Youth, and Low Income student groups?

Course Access and Student Enrollment in Rigorous Coursework and Career Technical Education (CTE) Pathways

The district is to be commended for continuing the upward trend in College/Career Indicator (CCI) from 39.8 percent in 2018 to 47.6 percent in 2020 using the same methodology of previous years provided by the California Department of Education. In addition, their Foster Youth students have also demonstrated significant CCI increases from 3 percent in 2018 to 27 percent in 2020. The district is to also be commended for their overall A-G completion rate increase from 54 percent for the class of 2018 to 61 percent for the class of 2020. The rate of Foster Youth meeting A-G requirements also increased from 4 percent in 2017 to 33 percent in 2020. Despite school closures, the district also increased their CTE Pathway completion rate from 15 percent to 25 percent and have added additional supports including summer learning to improve graduation and A-G completion.

Additional dialogue related to the questions below may support achievement of the goal and desired outcomes aligned to course access and student enrollment in rigorous coursework and CTE pathways:

- What progress monitoring systems are in place to determine the effectiveness of the College and Career support programs to meet the needs of Low Income, Foster Youth, English Learner, and Students with Disabilities student groups?
- How might the district promote and support acceleration models for intervention to increase access to A-G courses for Students with Disabilities, English Learner, Foster Youth and Low Income student groups?

- What systems might the district utilize to evaluate the fidelity of implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to address the performance gaps and implement Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and UDL to include Students with Disabilities?

Pupil Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for their holistic support of students and families in the pandemic including increasing the number of therapists available to students, ensuring families have access to meals, increasing technology training and providing school supplies. Additionally, the approach to family and community inclusion is commendable, as evidenced by the 95 percent of families surveyed expressing a sense of belonging to their schools despite the school closures. The district is commended on their work with differentiated assistance in better understanding the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and restorative practices needed to address suspension rates as well as the focus to train all staff on strategies to engage students in addressing their social emotional health and academic needs. Lastly, the use of both quantitative and qualitative data in measuring the effectiveness of the work, such as the “Evening Hours” and the “Seed Program,” is commendable.

Additional dialogue related to the questions below may support the achievement of the expected annual measurable outcomes and goals aligned to pupil engagement and school climate:

- How might the district implement Restorative Practices with fidelity across all grade levels, and what systems might be utilized to increase effective efforts?
- How could the ongoing impact of SEL and Restorative Practices on suspension rates be disaggregated and monitored to replicate effective outcomes for all student groups?
- How might school-level and district-wide initiatives for Foster Youth students be coordinated to improve academic and social emotional needs?
- How might the impact of school police and safety personnel on pupil engagement metrics and school climate be measured?

Monitoring Progress

It is recommended that the district utilize a process that continually assesses the progress of each planned action and its effectiveness in achieving the *Desired Outcomes* related to each goal specified in the LCAP. Identifying leading indicators for progress on goals and developing a system to monitor those indicators throughout the year is encouraged. The information received from progress monitoring can support communication with stakeholders and provide information the district will need to clearly articulate, in the *Goal Analysis* section of the plan, the effectiveness of the planned actions/services.

To access resources and tools that will support future LCAP development, please go to <https://www.rcoe.us//lcap-support>.

Adopted Budget

The district’s Adopted Budget was developed in the context of the Governor’s 2021-22 January Budget Proposal. Subsequently, the 2021-22 State Budget was adopted, which contained significant differences from the January Budget Proposal and May Revise. The district should

update and revise its budget projections to reflect changes in available funding and the associated programming responses.

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 18,753 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 2.0 percent decrease from the held harmless 2020-21 P-2 ADA. For 2022-23, the district projects a 0.4 percent decrease in ADA. For 2023-24, 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 incorporates LCFF funding as proposed in the Governor's 2021-22 January Budget Proposal, which includes compounded COLAs of 3.84 percent, 2.98 percent, and 3.05 percent for the 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 fiscal years, respectively. Subsequent to the district's Adopted Budget approval, the 2021-22 enacted State Budget increased the concentration grant funding factor from 50 percent to 65 percent, which includes a provision that 15 percent of the grant must be used to increase the number of credentialed or classified staff who provide direct services to pupils. The enacted State Budget also includes compounded COLAs of 5.07 percent, 2.48 percent, and 3.11 percent for the 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 fiscal years, respectively. We encourage the district to update its projection of available LCFF funding provided by the enacted state budget and incorporate the stakeholder engagement process in the creation of the district's one-time supplement to the *Annual Update* of the 2021-22 Local Control and Accountability Plan, which must be board approved on, or before, February 28, 2022.

Unrestricted Deficit Spending – The district's Adopted Budget indicates a positive ending balance for all funds in the 2021-22 fiscal year. However, for the unrestricted General Fund, the district anticipates expenditures and uses will exceed revenues and sources by \$9.0 million in 2021-22, \$6.8 million in 2022-23, and \$14.0 million in 2023-24. Our office strongly discourages districts from committing to additional ongoing expenditures without offsetting reductions and stresses the need to begin identifying solutions to reduce any structural deficit.

Employee Negotiations – As of the board date, June 15, 2021, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations are complete with the certificated bargaining unit for the 2021-22 fiscal year. As of the board date, June 15, 2021, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations continue with the classified bargaining units for the 2021-22 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 Val Verde Unified School District’s size is 3.0 percent. The district projects to meet the minimum reserve requirement the current and 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 2021-22 fiscal year. Should the district identify the need for other 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.

COVID-19 Response Funds – Both the Federal and State governments have provided substantial one-time funding to schools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which include specific restrictions on timing and use of the funds. The enacted budget trailer bill extended several timelines for the one-time funding, therefore developing multi-year plans on the use of these funds, as well as capturing additional detail required for federal reporting purposes, will be critical to the district’s long-term plan. We encourage districts to begin formulating a plan for these funds that incorporates Federal and State requirements and how the district will mitigate any ongoing expenditures that are planned to be supported by one-time funding.

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.