



Riverside County
Board of Education

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DATE: August 23, 2023

TO: Dr. Kelly May-Vollmar, District Superintendent
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Mr. Jordan Aquino, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
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Desert Sands 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: 2023-24 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 2023-24 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 2023-24 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.

Desert Sands Unified School District Student Groups – Program Participation Status						
Indicator	LEA	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	English Learner	Foster Youth	Homeless Youth	Students with Disabilities
Enrollment Count 2022 ¹	24,659	19,585	5,753	149	404	2,949
Enrollment Percent 2022 ¹	N/A	79.4	23.3	0.6	1.6	12.0
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2022 ¹	-35.0	-46.7	-69.0	-80.2	-60.8	-116.7
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2022 ¹	-81.5	-93.5	-110.2	-116.2	-117.9	-153.9
English Learner Progress Indicator 2022 ¹	N/A	N/A	50.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reclassified Fluent English Proficient Rate 2022 ^{2†}	=	=	=	=	=	=
Graduation Rate 2022 ¹	94.4	94.2	87.7	95.8	91.5	82.5
College and Career Prepared Rate 2022	#	#	#	#	#	#
A-G Completion Rate 2022 ¹	48.2	42.2	14.8	12.5	35.7	12.5
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2022 ¹	16.8	17.0	7.9	12.5	13.2	6.4
Dropout Rate 2022 ²	3.1	3.4	7.3	4.8	5.5	6.2

Desert Sands Unified School District Student Groups – Program Participation Status						
Indicator	LEA	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	English Learner	Foster Youth	Homeless Youth	Students with Disabilities
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2022 ¹	41.8	45.3	42.6	54.9	51.5	50.0
Suspension Rate 2022 ¹	3.5	3.8	3.8	7.3	4.9	6.5
Expulsion Rate 2022 ²	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
¹ California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Files ² CDE Dataquest and Files † Indicator Includes Charter Schools Within the District * Data Suppressed for Student Privacy Reasons = Data Unavailable Due to California Department of Education Delay in Release # Data Unavailable Due to CA School Dashboard Suspension Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic						

Desert Sands 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 2022 ¹	24,659	49	431	363	173	19,136	15	3,501	433
Enrollment Percent 2022 ¹	N/A	0.2	1.7	1.5	0.7	77.6	0.1	14.2	1.8
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2022 ¹	-35.0	27.9	35.6	-54.6	56.4	-45.8	N/A	14.5	13.0
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2022 ¹	-81.5	-26.7	5.2	-97.4	2.1	-93.3	N/A	-29.1	-30.6
English Learner Progress Indicator 2022 ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reclassified Fluent English Proficient Rate 2022 ^{2†}	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
Graduation Rate 2022 ¹	94.4	N/A	100.0	85.7	100.0	94.3	N/A	94.6	96.9

Desert Sands Unified School District Student Groups – Race/Ethnicity									
Indicator	LEA	American Indian	Asian	Black/African American	Filipino	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
College and Career Prepared Rate 2022	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
A-G Completion Rate 2022 ¹	48.2	N/A	76.0	45.7	64.3	41.8	N/A	68.5	65.6
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2022 ¹	16.8	N/A	14.0	8.6	32.1	17.4	N/A	14.4	12.5
Dropout Rate 2022 ²	3.1	*	0.0	8.8	0.0	3.2	*	2.4	0.0
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2022 ¹	41.8	43.2	15.9	36.6	17.1	44.1	64.3	32.1	40.6
Suspension Rate 2022 ¹	3.5	3.5	1.3	7.6	1.1	3.6	0.0	2.3	3.9
Expulsion Rate 2022 ²	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2
¹ California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Files ² CDE Dataquest and Files † Indicator Includes Charter Schools Within the District * Data Suppressed for Student Privacy Reasons ° Data Unavailable Due to California Department of Education Delay in Release # Data Unavailable Due to CA School Dashboard Suspension Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic									

We offer the following commendations and inquiry questions to consider for the implementation of the 2023-24 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 the increased use of i-Ready English language arts (ELA) and mathematics personalized pathways. The district is also commended for the continued support of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and training to build the capacity of administrators and instructional coaches. The district is additionally commended for providing ongoing and increased support for Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) with a six-day AVID Excel and Explorer professional development. The district demonstrated a commitment to establishing equitable and inclusive practices through the establishment of a separate goal for students in special education, focusing on supporting students with disabilities to graduate from high school prepared to successfully transition to college, career, and life.

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 use Universal Design for Learning to support the growth of Long-Term English Learners' language proficiency?
- What strategies might the district's literacy project facilitators use to enhance the work with the Early Literacy Initiative as they convey the best practices of reading instruction to the K-2 grade teachers?
- How might the district's sites use site-based Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to review informal and formal data, such as i-Ready, Panorama Surveys, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), to inform instruction throughout the year?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for supporting their foster youth to achieve the highest graduation rate in Riverside County. The district is also commended for expanding specialized programs to provide opportunities for student exploration such as increasing Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways including cosmetology and welding, increasing military science programs, expanding the AVID program to more elementary and secondary school sites, expanding dual enrollment courses, and implementing Arts, Media, and Entertainment programs at the middle schools. The district is also commended for increasing their community outreach to support international asylum seekers and expanding the professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals in their Newcomer Program to support these youth.

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:

- While the district has seen increased success with college and career indicators for foster youth, what strategies and indicators might be used to measure post-transition success, such as students attending college, students accessing extended foster care services, etc.?
- How might the district increase the enrollment of unduplicated students into the established rigorous programs (i.e., International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, and Dual Language Immersion) and expand the offerings in CTE Pathways?
- How might the district strengthen its ability to retain students in the AVID program when they transition from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for a decline in the suspension rate from 4.7 percent to 3.5 percent for students being suspended at least one day. The district is also commended for increasing the support staff for the Foster Youth and Homeless Youth student groups and implementing a three-layered approach to providing support to the students. Additionally, the district is commended for increasing mental health supports and services districtwide,

implementing a tiered system of support to address attendance and chronic absenteeism, and focusing on a comprehensive and systematic districtwide implementation of MTSS.

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

- As the district prepares for Strategic Alignment, how might the district obtain buy-in and commitment from all educational partners to accomplish the goals of developing plans to decrease chronic absenteeism, increase access to CTE classes, and increase access to credit recovery opportunities for the Students with Disabilities, Foster Youth, Homeless Youth, and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged student groups?
- How might the district incorporate the newly hired staff such as the Prevention Intervention Psychologists, Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), administrators, bilingual community technicians, counselors, and health technicians, into the established Tier I and Tier II systems to increase student connectedness to school, decrease chronic absenteeism, and improve overall attendance?
- How might the district analyze and map the impact and success of each initiative (such as the Site Attendance Lead program) implemented across programs, subpopulations, and within schools?

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 2023-24 May Revise. Subsequently, the 2023-24 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 21,420 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 1.7 percent decrease from the certified 2022-23 P-2 ADA. For 2024-25, the district projects a 1.8 percent decrease in ADA. For 2025-26, the district projects to remain flat 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 8.22 percent, 3.94 percent, and 3.29 percent for the 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26 fiscal years, respectively. Our office recommends a contingency plan should LCFF funding not materialize as projected in the 2023-24 State Budget.

Unrestricted Deficit Spending – The district’s Adopted Budget indicates a positive ending balance for all funds in the 2023-24 fiscal year. For the unrestricted General Fund, the district anticipates expenditures and uses will not exceed revenues and sources through 2025-26.

Employee Negotiations – As of the board date, June 20, 2023, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations continue with both the certificated and classified bargaining units for the 2023-24 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 Desert Sands 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. Additionally, existing law imposes a 10 percent cap on the amount school districts can maintain in their reserves in fiscal years immediately succeeding those in which the Public School System Stabilization Account balance is at least 3 percent of TK-12 Prop. 98 funding. This condition was met with the 2022-23 deposit amount, triggering the local reserve cap for the 2023-24 fiscal year. The district projects to meet the imposed 10 percent reserve cap.

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 2023-24 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.