



**Riverside County
Board of Education**

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DATE: August 30, 2024

TO: Dr. Gordon Amerson, District Superintendent
Ms. Marla Kirkland, Board President
Mr. Garrick Owen, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Mr. Mark LeNoir, Deputy Superintendent, Education Services
Val Verde Unified School District

FROM: Edwin Gomez, Ed.D., Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

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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.

Val Verde 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	19,379	4,221	17,040	2,362	202	730
Enrollment Percent 2023 ¹	N/A	21.8	87.9	12.2	1.0	3.8
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-38.5	-76.6	-44.4	-126.6	-71.8	-58.4
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-94.2	-119.1	-100.0	-161.3	-124.0	-111.1
English Learner Progress Indicator 2023 ²	N/A	43.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graduation Rate 2023 ²	93.2	78.8	93.0	81.4	66.7	88.8
A-G Completion Rate 2023 ²	55.2	25.0	54.2	22.6	22.2	33.1
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2023 ²	42.3	24.6	42.5	25.1	16.7	34.8
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2023 ²	30.4	28.6	31.7	40.0	32.7	42.6
Suspension Rate 2023 ²	3.5	3.0	3.7	6.5	12.2	3.3
¹ 2023 California School Dashboard Downloadable Enrollment File						
² 2023 California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Downloadable Data Files						
* 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 2023 ¹	19,379	46	295	2,125	214	15,460	43	721	350
Enrollment Percent 2023 ¹	N/A	0.2	1.5	11.0	1.1	79.8	0.2	3.7	1.8
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-38.5	-46.5	45.2	-51.6	61.3	-40.9	-27.3	-17.2	-30.0
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2023 ²	-94.2	-133.3	2.1	-109.7	2.0	-96.6	-99.9	-68.1	-80.8
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	93.2	*	100.0	96.2	100.0	92.5	*	88.9	96.4
A-G Completion Rate 2023 ²	55.2	*	85.7	56.3	87.9	54.0	*	55.6	39.3
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2023 ²	42.3	*	50.0	31.9	45.5	44.1	*	40.3	32.1
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2023 ²	30.4	37.5	16.5	30.8	4.9	30.7	59.3	30.2	32.5
Suspension Rate 2023 ²	3.5	1.9	0.9	7.4	1.3	3.0	8.0	3.2	4.0
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 the percentage of K-2 students at or above the early literacy benchmark over the last three years with noteworthy increases for low-income students (38 percent in 2020-21 to 48 percent in 2023-24), English Learners (32 percent in 2020-21 to 37 percent in 23-24), and Foster Youth (19 percent in 2020-21 to 31 percent in 2023-24) student groups. Additionally, the district has seen significant increases in their English

Learner reclassification rates which have more than doubled from 6.5 percent in 2021-22 to 13.8 percent in 2022-23 and was up 12.8 points from 1 percent in 2020-21.

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 monitor and evaluate the impact of professional development to accelerate achievement and promote engagement for all students with an emphasis on Foster Youth, Students with Disabilities, African American, and English Learner students?
- How might professional development efforts help secondary teachers effectively implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in daily classroom practice that supports accelerating student growth in English Language Arts and mathematics? In addition, how might the responses from the new math universal screener further aid the design and implementation of UDL lessons?
- How can the successful strategies that improved benchmark scores for K-2 low-income, English Learner, and foster youth students be adapted to enhance academic performance in grades 3-6 and secondary grade levels within these groups?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for their overall A-G completion rate which increased from 54 percent for the class of 2018 to 59 percent for the class of 2023 with low-income students (53 percent class of 2018 to 59 percent for class of 2023), Foster Youth students (18 percent class of 2018 to 32 percent for class of 2023), African American students (50 percent class of 2018 to 59 percent for class of 2023), Hispanic students (55 percent class of 2018 to 59 percent for class of 2023), and students with disabilities (19 percent class of 2018 to 28 percent for class of 2023) all demonstrating improvement. The district is to be recognized for increases in Career Technical Education (CTE) enrollment and pathway completion rates with a significant increase from 25 percent for class of 2020 to 45 percent for class of 2023 and a continued commitment to their graduation rate with increases for all student groups.

Lastly, the district is to be commended for their commitment to students enrolling in courses of rigor with meeting or exceeding their University of California (UC) Honors Credit Course Participation Rate [includes Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB)] goals for all student groups.

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 promote increased participation and student success in AP, IB courses, UC Honors courses for African American students, Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and Foster Youth in an effort to address student access and support in rigorous coursework? In addition, how might the district sustain and scale the general increase in AP pass rates for all student groups?

- Considering the district's parent and family engagement success, how might this increased participation be leveraged to impact courses of rigor awareness and increased student enrollment and completion of Career Technical Education Pathways, including college and career readiness for all student groups?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district deserves commendation for placing an importance on parent/family engagement in the 2023-24 school year with 18,370 participants joining family engagement courses, events, and offerings. The district should also be commended on their decrease in suspension rates from 9.1 percent overall to 3.5 percent for the district. Additionally, there was a decrease in suspension rates for African American students from 18.6 percent in 2011-12 to a rate of 7.4 percent in 2022-23. The district also deserves commendation for their decrease in suspensions for drug/alcohol/tobacco-related incidents which are down by more than 100 incidents from 2021-22.

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

- Beyond participation numbers, in what ways might the district monitor and evaluate the impact of the various family engagement efforts in supporting student academic performance?
- How might the district continue to measure the expansion of existing arts and K-8 sports programs to increase student engagement and connectedness and decrease chronic absenteeism at the elementary and middle school levels?
- How might the district analyze and assess Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) strategies that have been most effective in sustaining the downward trend in suspensions including drug, alcohol, and tobacco-related incidents?

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 17,755 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 1.2 percent decrease from the certified 2023-24 P-2 ADA. For 2025-26, the district projects a 0.6 percent increase in ADA. For 2026-27, the district projects a 1.2 percent increase 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 0.76 percent, 2.73 percent, and 3.11 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. The 2024-25 Enacted State Budget included COLAs of 1.07 percent, 2.93 percent, and 3.08 percent for the 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27 fiscal years, respectively. We recommend the district incorporate the enacted COLA for 2024-25 in its operating budget and consider these projections at First Interim for the subsequent years.

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 \$21.3 million in 2024-25, \$22.3 million in 2025-26, and \$17.0 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 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 Val Verde 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 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.