



**RIVERSIDE COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION**
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Riverside County K-12 School Districts

Alvord USD
Banning USD
Beaumont USD
Coachella Valley USD
Corona-Norco USD
Desert Center USD
Desert Sands USD
Hemet USD
Jurupa USD
Lake Elsinore USD
Menifee Union SD
Moreno Valley USD
Murrieta Valley USD
Nuvview Union SD
Palm Springs USD
Palo Verde USD
Perris Elem. SD
Perris Union High SD
Riverside USD
Romoland SD
San Jacinto USD
Temecula Valley USD
Val Verde USD

RIVERSIDE COUNTY SCHOOLS 2018 POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

The legislative and governmental advocacy of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools and the 23 Riverside County school district superintendents is rooted in the countywide pledge that *all students in the county will graduate from high school well prepared for college and the workforce.*

Achieving this pledge demands that Riverside County school leaders follow the principles of educational equity – an equality of opportunity for *all* students, with a focus on outcomes and results. Not all students are the same, and those with less need more – more time, more attention and more support – in order to achieve success on an equitable level. These tenets form the fundamental basis of Riverside County’s advocacy.

The principles and priorities that appear below have grown out of this fundamental commitment to equity, and are intended to provide a framework for the advocacy efforts of the Division of Governmental Relations, in its representation of the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools and the school district superintendents before the California Legislature and other governmental agencies.

PRINCIPLES

As centers of their local communities, Riverside County school districts are tasked with and held accountable for meeting the educational needs and priorities of the students and families they serve. School district governing boards and site administrators need full discretion to deliver high quality educational programs and to meet local and state expectations. To most effectively achieve the goals that are outlined in the principles that follow, Riverside County schools support policies that align local responsibility with the necessary local authority, accompanied by robust accountability systems at the local and state levels.

EQUITY. Every student in California has a fundamental constitutional right to an adequate education that prepares him or her to graduate from high school qualified for a 4-year state university, a living wage job, and active participation in civic life. The Riverside County Superintendent of Schools and the school district

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superintendents of Riverside County support practices and policies to ensure that no student is denied the opportunity to learn, and practices and policies that support the most vulnerable Riverside County students – including but not limited to English learners, Foster Youth, and children from families that are economically disadvantaged.

ACCESS. The Riverside County Superintendent of Schools and the school district superintendents of Riverside County support policies to ensure that every student has access to a safe and healthy school, and to a high quality educational program designed to prepare him or her for success in college and the 21st century workforce.

COMMUNITY. An essential ingredient for achieving school improvement and educational equity is the development and maintenance of strong community and school ties. Riverside County schools support state and local policies that enhance the quality of life for students and families in Riverside County, and support policies that provide safe and healthy, student-centered learning environments and avenues for future student success.

EFFICIENCY. The Riverside County Superintendent of Schools and the school district superintendents of Riverside County support policies that promote and enhance the delivery of high quality educational programs through the efficient and effective use of all resources.

PRIORITIES

SCHOOL FINANCE ADEQUACY. Riverside County school leaders support a school finance system in California that fully funds a successful transition to state-adopted standards and assessments, and that allows local educational agencies to fund unmet needs including instructional materials, educational technology and professional development programs for staff. It is critical that the system recognizes costs of educating students with special needs and costs outside the control of local educational agencies, including but not limited to energy costs, health care costs, increases in the minimum wage, and employer contribution rates to the State Teachers Retirement System and the Public Employees Retirement System. We further support adequate base funding to bring California's per pupil funding level to be at or above the average of the top 10 states in the nation, as was envisioned by Proposition 98. Lastly, statewide elected officials must understand that Proposition 98 represents only a minimum level of funding below which the state must not fall, and not a funding level that would be considered adequate or stable by any objective observer.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS. Students must be provided broad and equitable access to academic programs and services that prepare them for successful transitions to college and careers. State policies should promote the enhancement of quality and access to programs that are critical for college readiness and career opportunities, promote effective articulation between the Pre-K, K-12 and higher education systems, and reduce barriers that prevent students from achieving their college and career goals.

ACCOUNTABILITY. The state must maintain its commitment to the development of an integrated local, state and federal accountability system for public schools that is focused on continuous support for building capacity at local educational agencies and continuous student improvement, including measures of individual student growth. Statewide efforts to refine and improve the system should avoid punitive measures and focus on what Michael Fullan and Santiago Rincón-Gallardo referred to in a recent report (*California's Golden Opportunity, September 2017*) as the “right drivers” of whole system reform: capacity building, pedagogy, collaboration, and the coherence of policy and widespread involvement that engages people in understanding the changes). Further, it is critical for the success of the accountability system that there be clarity in the roles played by county offices of education, the California Department of Education and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence.

ASSESSMENTS. Local and state assessments must demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving, and deeper knowledge by all students, and a comprehensive student assessment system must measure readiness for college or career, and promote a broad academic curriculum for all students. Further, redundant assessments should be eliminated, testing time should be reduced, and student performance results should be provided to students and parents in a timely manner.

ENGLISH LEARNERS. The state must adopt clear and consistent criteria for the reclassification of English learner students that takes into account those students with special needs that result in profound language issues. Further, the state must pay particular attention to the reclassification rates of EL students, and track the academic progress of English learner students who are reclassified as proficient in English.

PERSONNEL. In order to provide physically and emotionally safe environments that are conducive to student learning and achievement, development of personnel policies and personnel decision making authority should be afforded to local educational agencies, which have the sole responsibility for the caliber, quality and conduct of all district staff.

An increased demand for teachers in California has come at a time when the supply of new teachers is at a 12-year low, and enrollment in educator preparation programs has dropped significantly. It is essential for the state to address this shortage through the development and support of innovative programs that encourage people to go into teaching, and be retained in the teaching profession, particularly in their own communities. Further, it is important for institutions of higher education to collaborate with local educational agencies to ensure that educator preparation programs produce teachers who are able to address the myriad needs of California students.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION. The state should promote the development and integration of comprehensive curriculum standards, frameworks and instructional methodologies that provide academic rigor in meaningful and relevant learning contexts, and ensure that students are able to

compete in the 21st century global economy. Instructional materials adopted by the state must demonstrate cultural diversity, and the accuracy of our students' cultural experiences. Students should have equitable access to programs that promote competitiveness in today's global society, including but not limited to multilingual skills, Career Technical Education, Science-Technology-Engineering-Math (STEM) and Science-Technology-Engineering-Arts-Math (STEAM).

EARLY EDUCATION. Research has demonstrated that the first eight years of life are instrumental in setting children on a path to success or conversely, in allowing achievement gaps to take root, forcing educators and students to play a continuous game of catch up. As a high quality early education provides the foundation of the success of children in school, it is essential that the state view our education system as a Pre-K through 12th grade system, and develop "early warning mechanisms" that allow educators to address achievement gaps that are identified at a very early age. The state must adequately fund preschool programs that are funded through Proposition 98, and ensure that existing data tracking systems fully incorporate the entire spectrum of early learning opportunities.

FACILITIES. Through their support of statewide and local facilities bond measures, California voters have demonstrated that school facilities are an important priority. The state must also continue to meet its obligation to ensure access to equitable school facilities. The statewide school facilities assistance program must maintain the historic partnership between the state and local school districts for financing those facilities, and address inequities resulting from local revenue raising capacity that is dependent on local wealth. Burdensome administrative requirements that increase the costs of constructing, modernizing and maintaining school facilities should be eliminated.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY. Students should be provided equitable access to technology that enhances teaching and learning, and which provides learning tools that are safe, engaging and based on the needs of each individual student.

MANDATES. The state must meet its obligation to reimburse school districts and county offices of education for prior mandate claims, and should develop a clear and public process for the inclusion and funding of future state-mandated activities – either through the constitutional claims process, or inclusion in the Mandate Block Grant Program.