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**DATE:** September 14, 2016

**TO:** Dr. Gary Rutherford, District Superintendent  
Mr. Michael Duran, Board President  
Dr. James Novak, Assistant Superintendent  
Ms. Kathy Felci, Assistant Superintendent  
Desert Sands Unified School District

**FROM:** Kenneth M. Young, Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

**BY:** Teresa Hyden Chief Business Official (951) 826-6790  
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**Subject:** **2016-17 ADOPTED BUDGET and LCAP - 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 2016-17 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 2016-17 fiscal year has been approved by the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools. Our goal is to further enhance the performance of students by offering commendations and suggestions for the implementation of the plan and the development of the *Annual Update* and the 2017-18 LCAP.

**2015-16 Plan Implementation**

The district is to be commended for engaging stakeholders in the process by providing a document that contained both qualitative and quantitative data on their LCAP initiatives.

**Student Achievement**

Closing the achievement gap and ensuring all students are prepared for college and career is a priority under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). As noted in the table below, significant gaps are evident between subgroups and between all students in comparison to statewide performance.

Metric	State Average	District Average	White	African American	Hispanic	English Learner	Low Income	Students w/ Disabilities
% of Desert Sands USD			19.4	1.7	72.7	24.2	67.0	10.0
<b>Goal 2</b>								
% UC A-G Enrollment		92.2	94.6	93.1	91.1	83.4	90.4	77.7
% UC A-G Completion	48.6	38.4	49.8	29.2	33.0	4.6	32.3	6.0
% EAP – ELA / Math	23.0 / 11.0	26.0 / 8.0	42.1 / 14.2	20.0 / 10.0	19.1 / 4.0	2.2 / 2.1	18.1 / 5.0	3.4 / 1.3
% CAASPP – ELA / Math	44.1 / 33.8	44.9 / 28.1	65.9 / 48.1	43.0 / 25.6	37.1 / 20.9	16.0 / 11.8	36.1 / 20.0	8.2 / 4.3
<b>Goal 3</b>								
% Suspension / Expulsion	3.80 / .089	9.32 / .442	3.29 / .084	5.02 / .470	4.92 / .256	5.15 / .208	5.21 / .239	8.96 / .186

The district is commended for explicitly stating in the plan that actions should close the achievement gap. Review of the 2015-16 plan shows that the district has increased achievement for students in the low income subgroup. For the UC A-G completion metric, low income student percentage increased from 29 percent to 32.3 percent. For the Early Assessment Program (EAP) ELA / Math, the low income student percentage increased from 14.5 / 4.9 to 18.1 / 5.0.

Now that baseline scores have been identified on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), the plan would be strengthened by **differentiating actions and outcomes for significant subgroups** who are underperforming academically or overrepresented in suspension and expulsion data. Most of the subgroup actions were for all subgroups. We encourage you to consider setting aspirational and challenging *Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes (EAMO)* targets for all outcomes and for all subgroups. This would be supported by differentiating actions to accelerate underperforming subgroups based on data and priorities.

Noted in the table below is the Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) data. Although the 2016-17 Title III accountability data will be published after the 2016-17 LCAP is developed and approved, it is recommended that the district review data for 2015-16 performance and identify formative measures of English Learner progress and intervene immediately if actions are not producing expected results. Continue identifying additional actions that accelerate the achievement of English Learners.

Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) Trends									
	AMAO 1			AMAO 2a (Less Than 5 Years Cohort)			AMAO 2b (5 Years or More Cohort)		
	DSUSD	Target	Met?	DSUSD	Target	Met?	DSUSD	Target	Met?
2015-2016	59.9%	62.0%	No	29.4%	25.5%	Yes	50.3%	52.8%	No
2014-2015	60.9%	60.5%	Yes	28.6%	24.2%	Yes	52.0%	50.9%	Yes
2013-2014	59.6%	59.0%	Yes	28.2%	22.8%	Yes	52.4%	49.0%	Yes
2012-2013	59.7%	57.5%	Yes	29.4%	21.4%	Yes	49.8%	47.0%	Yes

**Monitoring Progress**

In order to be responsive to those actions that are working or not working, we continue to recommend utilizing a process that continually assesses the progress of each planned action and its effectiveness in reaching the *Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes* specified in your plan. Identifying leading indicators for progress on goals that can be shared with stakeholders on a regular basis will increase the community commitment to the plan. This will also allow you to clearly articulate, in the *Annual Update* section of the plan, whether the planned actions/services were effective. The statements of effectiveness must go beyond the mere indication of whether the action was completed or not and should clearly articulate the effect the action had on achieving the desired outcomes for all students or identified student subgroups for the specified goals.

**Additional Metrics to Consider**

The purpose of the LCAP is to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills to be successful in both college and career. This work cannot wait until high school, nor can it be successful without more specific focus by grade level and by subgroup.

A focus group was convened by the Riverside County Office of Education in 2014-15 to review research on K – 12 college readiness indicators and identify those that would align with the LCAP and have greatest impact. As a result of the focus group research, we continue to recommend that LEAs focus on additional college readiness indicators for various grades including but not limited to:

- Score of Level 3 or Level 4, “Standard Met” or “Standard Exceeded,” as indicated on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment in Reading and Mathematics at grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 by subgroup. (State Priority 4)
- Chronic absentee rates by grade level and subgroup at the following grades – Kindergarten, 1, 2; last grade of elementary (5 or 6); first grade of middle school (6 or 7); first grade of high school (9 or 10). (State Priority 5)
- Percent of students earning passing grades – C or better – in English and Mathematics at the exit grades from elementary (5 or 6) and middle school (8 or 9) by subgroup and gender. (State Priority 8)
- Suspension and expulsion rates by subgroup and gender for “disproportionality.” (State Priority 6)
- Percent of students failing two or more classes at grade 9 by subgroup and gender. (State Priority 8)

### **Describing Use of Supplemental and Concentration Grant Funds and Proportionality**

The purpose of the LCAP *Section 3* is to ensure that all unduplicated and underperforming students receive increased or improved services in proportion to the increased funding received to serve those identified students in order for them to graduate from high school with the skills to be successful in both college and career.

In *Section 3A*, the justification for using funds districtwide and/or schoolwide should include a description of why this use of funds is most effective and why it is more effective than using the funds to target the students by subgroup in order to meet the district goals.

In *Section 3A* we commend the district for clearly describing the dollars spent on the goals and services/actions in *Section 2*. Desert Sands clearly lays out the services and actions that are directed to unduplicated student to close the achievement gap.

In *Section 3B*, the district is asked to describe how services for the unduplicated students have increased or improved as compared to services provided to all students in proportion to the increase in funding received to serve those students. We commend the district for providing clear examples for the services and actions that are directly for unduplicated students.

In the development of the 2017-18 LCAP, we would recommend that the district continue to broadly describe the services identified in the LCAP from the previous year(s), and then describe those services being added in the current LCAP year in *Section 3B*. This would continue to demonstrate that the district is maintaining and building its support for unduplicated students proportionally each year and increases the transparency of the plan for the stakeholders. This will be important as, by 2020-21, this section will need to demonstrate that the district has increased or improved services to reflect 100 percent of its supplemental and concentration funds at full implementation.

### **Adopted Budget**

In accordance with California Education Code (EC) Section 42127, our office has completed its review of the district's 2016-17 Adopted Budget to determine whether it complies with the criteria and standards adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) and whether it allows the district to meet its financial obligations for the 2016-17 fiscal year, as well as satisfy its multi-year financial commitments.

The district's Adopted Budget has been analyzed in the context of guidance provided by our office, based on the Governor's 2016-17 May Budget Revision. Based on our analysis of the information submitted, we approve the district's budget, but note the following concern:

- *Declining Enrollment* – The district's projections indicate declining enrollment for the current fiscal year.

The following pages provide further details on the district's 2016-17 Adopted Budget. In addition to this analysis, current law as enacted through AB 2756 (Chapter 52, Statutes of 2004) also 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.

*LCFF Gap Funding* – For purposes of determining the potential gap funding increase, the district has estimated 54.84 percent for the 2016-17 fiscal year, 73.96 percent for 2017-18, and 41.22 percent for 2018-19. The district has unassigned funds each year in the unrestricted ending General Fund balance that will cover a portion of the projected gap funding increase should it not materialize.

*Unduplicated Pupil Percentage* – The district reports an unduplicated pupil percentage of 71.23 percent for 2016-17, 70.30 percent for 2017-18, and 70.10 percent for 2018-19. The district’s unduplicated pupil percentage included in the 2015-16 P2 certification by the California Department of Education is 72.15 percent.

*Employee Negotiations* – As of the board date, June 21, 2016, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations continue with both the certificated and classified bargaining units for the 2016-17 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.

The district’s adopted budget was developed prior to adoption of the 2016-17 Adopted State Budget. Actual state budget data should be reviewed and incorporated into the district operating budget and multi-year projections during the First Interim Reporting process.

During our review of the district’s Local Control and Accountability Plan, we noted the following:

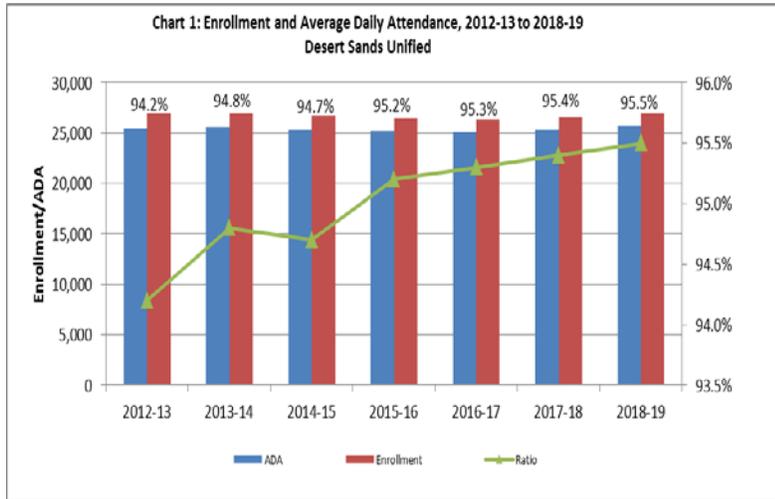
- Any difference between budgeted expenditures and estimated actual annual expenditures in the *Annual Update* section requires an explanation. We recommended that a reason for the variance be added to each action. The district implemented our recommendation.
- The budgeted expenditures for each action/service for each school year requires the district to reference all funding sources for each proposed expenditure which must be classified using the California School Accounting Manual (CSAM) as required by Education Code sections 52061, 52067, and 47606.5. We recommended a funding source be added for each action. The district implemented our recommendation.
- Supplemental and Concentration grant funding is included in the Local Control Funding Formula to increase and/or improve services to targeted student populations. If S&C grant funds, used to serve the targeted pupil population, have been underinvested each fiscal year, it may be difficult for the district to demonstrate the minimum proportionality percentage at full implementation.

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.

## 2016-17 Adopted Budget Report

### Desert Sands Unified School District

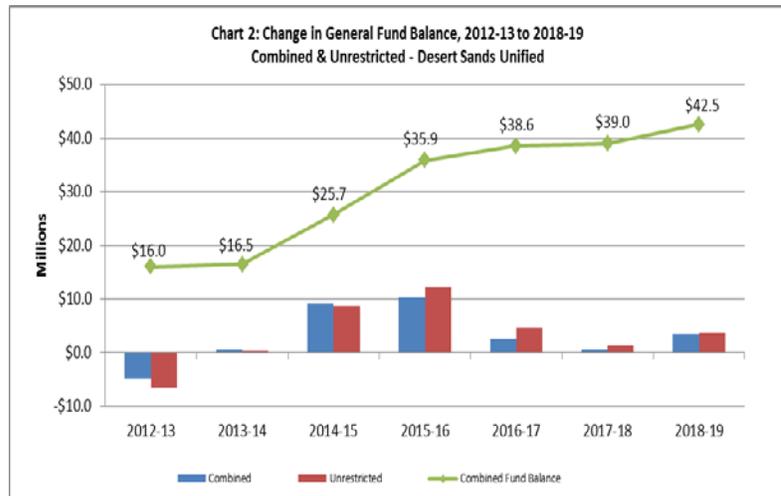
#### Enrollment and Average Daily Attendance (ADA)



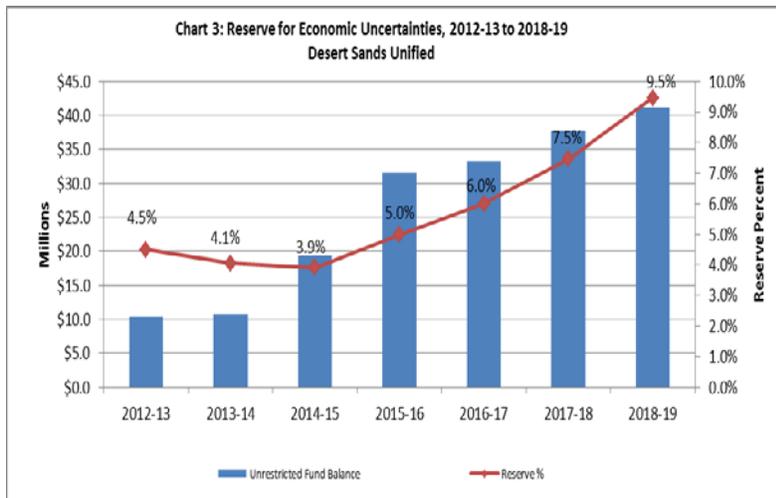
The district's projected ADA to enrollment ratio (capture rate) for 2016-17 is 95.3 percent, which is within the historical average ratio for the three prior fiscal years. The district estimates 25,132 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 0.3 percent decrease from the 2015-16 P-2 ADA. For 2017-18 and 2018-19, the district projects a 0.7 and 1.6 percent increase in each year respectively. District demographer projects increase of enrollment due to birthrate increase.

#### Fund Balance

The district's Adopted Budget indicates a positive ending balance for all funds in the 2016-17 fiscal year. Chart 2 shows the district's deficit spending historical trends and projections.



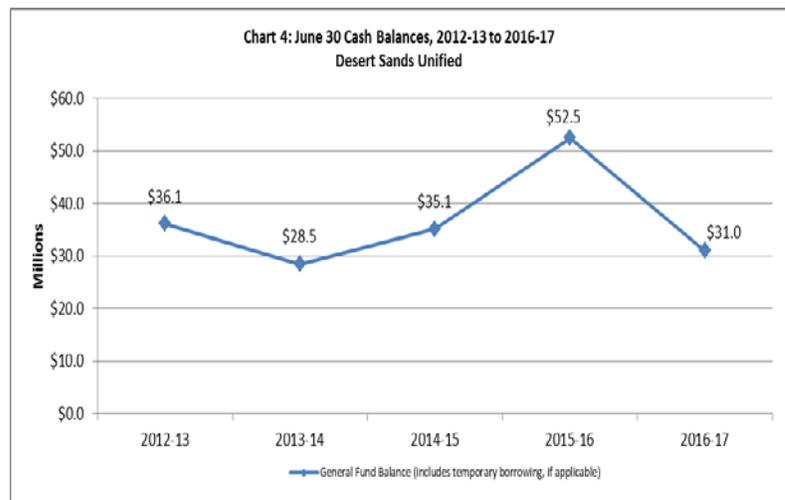
### Reserve for Economic Uncertainties



The minimum state-required reserve for a district of Desert Sands Unified’s size is 3.0 percent. Chart 3 displays a summary of the district’s actual and projected unrestricted General Fund balance and reserves. The district projects to meet the minimum reserve requirement in the current and subsequent fiscal years.

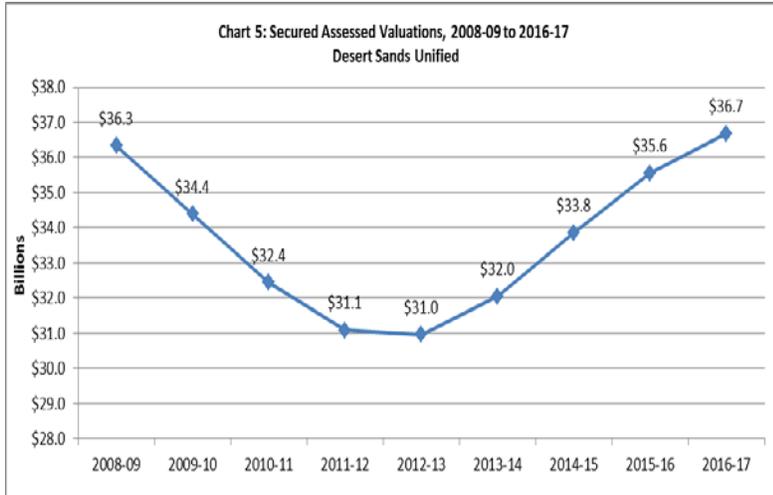
### Cash Management

Chart 4 provides a historical summary of the district’s June 30<sup>th</sup> General Fund cash balance. Based on the budget’s cash flow analysis, the district projects a positive General Fund cash balance of \$31.0 million as of June 30, 2017. This balance does not include any temporary borrowings, and the district’s internal cash resources appear sufficient to address cash flow needs in the current year. Our office recommends the district continue to closely monitor cash in all funds to ensure sufficient resources are available. In addition, 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.



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## Assessed Valuations



The Riverside County Assessor's Office has estimated secured assessed valuations will increase by 5.08 percent countywide in 2016-17. Chart 5 displays a historical summary of the district's secured property tax assessed valuations.