



Riverside County
Board of Education

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DATE: August 23, 2023

TO: Dr. Greg Sackos, District Superintendent
Mr. Dean Primmer, Board President
Desert Center 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 Center 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	28	24	4	N/A	5	3
Enrollment Percent 2022 ¹	N/A	85.7	14.3	N/A	17.9	10.7
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2022 ¹	-93.7	-114.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2022 ¹	-85.9	-97.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English Learner Progress Indicator 2022 ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reclassified Fluent English Proficient Rate 2022 ^{2†}	=	=	=	=	=	=
College and Career Prepared Rate 2022	#	#	#	#	#	#
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2022 ¹	54.8	53.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Suspension Rate 2022 ¹	0.0	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Expulsion Rate 2022 ²	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 Center 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	28	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	17	N/A	9	2
Enrollment Percent 2022 ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	60.7	N/A	32.1	7.1
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Standard 2022 ¹	-93.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics Distance from Standard 2022 ¹	-85.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
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†}	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
College and Career Prepared Rate 2022	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2022 ¹	54.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Suspension Rate 2022 ¹	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Expulsion Rate 2022 ²	0.0	*	*	*	*	0.0	*	*	*

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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 on its use of a formative assessment system with i-Ready and Footsteps2Brilliance to support students’ learning specific to the area of mathematics and English language arts (ELA). The district is also to be commended for its commitment to hiring paraprofessionals to support the teachers and students as they work together to meet the needs of unduplicated populations.

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 a variety of student data (such as i-Ready or Student Personalized Learning plans) to share academic progress with parents and other community stakeholders?
- How might collaboration time with teachers and paraprofessionals be leveraged to purposefully analyze data and individualize instruction to better support unduplicated populations?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for working to ensure that the TK-Kinder class continues to set reading goals for active student engagement. The district is also to be commended for setting reading goals and promoting literacy goals for all students including the early grades.

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 ensure the access to a rigorous hands-on science and social science curriculum for all students?
- How might the district ensure students have the necessary academic experiences to ensure they are ready for rigorous A-G or Career Technical Education (CTE) pathway high school courses?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended on improving school attendance by investing in tools and resources to support the social and emotional health and well-being of students. The district is also to be commended for recognizing that strong parent involvement in their children's education leads to higher academic achievement and for making an intentional effort in gaining greater parent and community participation by hosting various social events at a centralized location.

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

- What opportunities are there to continue to expand the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) professional development?
- Are there other delivery considerations which may further foster engagement of the school district with local higher education institutions?
- How might the district's continued emphasis of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) set metrics with benchmarks for program management to determine growth in this area?

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. On August 9, 2023, the district’s board approved a 45-Day Budget Revision incorporating identified revisions into its multi-year projections to align data accuracy between the district’s LCAP and fiscal documents. Our office incorporated the district’s revised multi-year financial projections into our review and final determination.

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 23 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 1.6 percent increase from the certified 2022-23 P-2 ADA. For 2024-25, the district projects a 12.5 percent decrease in ADA. For 2025-26, the district projects a 14.3 percent decrease in ADA.

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) – As a “basic aid” district, the district’s primary revenue source is property taxes. Our office recommends the district closely monitor actual property tax receipts throughout the year and revise its budget and multi-year financial projections accordingly.

Unrestricted Deficit Spending – The district’s Adopted Budget indicates a positive ending balance for all funds in the 2023-24 fiscal year. However, for the unrestricted General Fund, the district anticipates expenditures and uses will exceed revenues and sources by \$0.6 million in 2023-24, \$0.2 million in 2024-25, and \$0.2 million in 2025-26. 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 21, 2023, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations are complete with both the certificated and classified bargaining units for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Reserve for Economic Uncertainties – The minimum state-required reserve for a district of Desert Center Unified School District’s size is the greater of \$80,000 or 5.0 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 2023-24 fiscal year.

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.