DATE: August 28, 2026

TO: Dr. Marcus Funchess, District Superintendent
Ms. Karen Cornett, Board President
Mr. Jeff Simmons, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Dr. Simone Kovats, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services
Palm Springs Unified School District

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

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SUBJECT: **2026-27 LCAP and ADOPTED BUDGET – APPROVAL**

The County Superintendent of Schools is required to review and approve the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) before 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 2026-27 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 2026-27 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.

Palm Springs Unified School District
Student Groups – Program Participation Status

Indicator	LEA	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED)	English Learner (EL)	Long-Term English Learner (LTEL)	Foster Youth (FY)	Homeless Youth (HY)	Students with Disabilities (SWD)
Enrollment Count 2025[1]	19,184	18,200	5,088		198	2,517	2,525
Enrollment Percent 2025[1]		94.9	26.5		1.0	13.1	13.2
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Proficiency 2025[2]	-43.6	-44.3	-78.5	-118.5	-74.3	-58.9	-122.5
Mathematics Distance from Proficiency 2025[2]	-87.9	-88.8	-113.6	-175.5	-114.3	-97.2	-162.9
Science Points 2025[2]	46.1	46.0	38.8	32.4	42.2	43.2	34.6
English Learner Progress Indicator 2025[2]			39.4	42.7			
Graduation Rate 2025[2]	91.4	91.7	88.2	90.7	90.3	86.1	75.3
College/Career Indicator Rate 2025[2]	48.1	48.2	30.1	27.5	26.7	34.2	14.9
A-G Completion Rate 2025[2]	48.2	48.1	32.3	30.1	32.3	34.2	14.1
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2025[2]	17.6	17.7	13.6	14.3	6.5	7.0	8.1
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2025[2]	27.3	27.5	22.7	32.8	42.3	30.1	33.5
Suspension Rate 2025[2]	4.4	4.5	4.2	8.5	9.9	4.7	5.9

[1]2025 California School Dashboard Downloadable Enrollment File (No LTEL Data Available)
[2]2025 California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Downloadable Data Files
Note: Blanks indicate that no public data is available for this data point.

Palm Springs 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 2025[1]	19,184	71	152	752	310	15,781	30	1,566	522
Enrollment Percent 2025[1]		0.4	0.8	3.9	1.6	82.3	0.2	8.2	2.7
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Proficiency 2025[2]	-43.6	-61.6	21.6	-63.4	40.3	-49.9	-31.3	-0.6	-12.0
Mathematics Distance from Proficiency 2025[2]	-87.9	-120.5	-27.6	-112.7	-4.6	-93.8	-51.6	-47.6	-54.7
Science Points 2025[2]	46.1	42.7	58.8	41.8	63.2	44.8		54.4	52.0
Graduation Rate 2025[2]	91.4		93.3	86.4	92.1	92.7		85.5	81.6
College/Career Indicator Rate 2025[2]	48.1		86.7	21.0	86.8	48.5		47.0	39.5
A-G Completion Rate 2025[2]	48.2		86.7	25.9	86.8	48.5		48.7	28.9
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2025[2]	17.6		46.7	3.7	23.7	18.3		15.8	13.2
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2025[2]	27.3	39.5	6.0	39.5	7.9	27.1	13.6	26.9	32.0
Suspension Rate 2025[2]	4.4	9.2	0.0	8.6	1.5	4.1	5.9	4.6	8.9

[1] California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Files
[2] CDE Dataquest and Files
Note: Blanks indicate that no public data is available for this data point.

We offer the following commendations and inquiry questions to consider for the implementation of the 2026-27 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 its continued commitment to improving academic achievement through evidence-based instructional practices and targeted supports. During the 2025–26 school year, multiple student groups demonstrated improvement in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, including African American students, English Learners, and Students with Disabilities, reflecting progress toward reducing achievement gaps.

The district is commended for strengthening student outcomes through coordinated academic systems, including Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), literacy interventions, English Learner supports, instructional coaching, and progress monitoring. These efforts coincide with increases in the graduation rate and A-G completion, demonstrating continued attention to preparing students for postsecondary success.

Additional dialogue related to the questions below may support the achievement of the goals and desired outcomes aligned with student academic achievement:

- The district has implemented multiple academic initiatives (e.g., MTSS, instructional coaching, literacy interventions, and English Learner supports). Which strategies have demonstrated the greatest measurable impact on student achievement? What evidence is informing decisions to continue, refine, or discontinue specific interventions?
- While multiple student groups demonstrated improvement in ELA and mathematics, achievement gaps remain for several student groups. How is the district using disaggregated student outcome data to identify the instructional practices and system conditions contributing to these persistent gaps, and what refinements are planned to accelerate achievement for these student groups?
- As multiple instructional initiatives are implemented concurrently, how is the district determining which actions are having the greatest influence on student academic outcomes, and how is that analysis informing future actions, instructional priorities, and resource allocation?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for expanding access to college and career readiness opportunities through a comprehensive system that includes Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) programs, Dual Enrollment, expanded arts offerings, and work-based learning experiences. These efforts reflect a continued commitment to providing students with multiple pathways to prepare for postsecondary education and careers.

The district is commended for its high-quality college and career readiness efforts across its educational program. CTE pathway completers also met A-G requirements, demonstrating the district’s intentional integration of career preparation with college eligibility and expanding students’ opportunities to pursue multiple postsecondary options.

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:

- As participation in rigorous coursework continues to increase, how is the district evaluating whether students from historically underrepresented student groups, including Foster Youth, English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students, are enrolling, persisting (i.e., engaging in productive struggle), and successfully completing these opportunities at equitable rates? How are those findings informing efforts to remove barriers and improve student outcomes?

- The district offers multiple college and career pathways, including CTE, Dual Enrollment, AVID, and A-G coursework. How is the district ensuring these opportunities are strategically aligned so that students experience coherent pathways leading to postsecondary success rather than disconnected program participation?
- What does the district's analysis reveal about the students who have access to rigorous coursework but do not successfully complete these opportunities? How is that analysis informing academic, counseling, and student support systems to improve persistence and successful completion?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for sustained improvement in student engagement, as reflected in reduced chronic absenteeism and improved attendance outcomes across multiple student groups.

The district is commended for strengthening school climate through comprehensive student support systems, including mental health services, counseling, MTSS, attendance interventions, and behavioral supports. The district's suspension rate improved, reflecting continued efforts to create safe and supportive learning environments.

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

- What does the district's analysis of disaggregated attendance, discipline, and school climate data reveal about the underlying factors contributing to disparities among student groups, and how are those findings informing targeted actions to improve students' sense of belonging, engagement, and overall school experience?
- How is the district evaluating the effectiveness of its integrated student support systems beyond specific programs/initiatives, and how are those findings informing continuous improvement efforts?
- In what ways is the district integrating feedback from students, families, and other educational partners with outcome data to identify systemic barriers and inform decisions that strengthen students' sense of belonging, engagement, and overall school experience?

To access resources and tools that will support future LCAP development, please go to https://www.rcoe.us/services-for-districts/assessment-accountability-and-continuous-improvement/lcap-support/.

Adopted Budget

In accordance with California Education Code (EC) Section 42127, our office has completed its review of the district's 2026-27 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 2026-27 fiscal year, as well as satisfy its multi-year financial commitments.

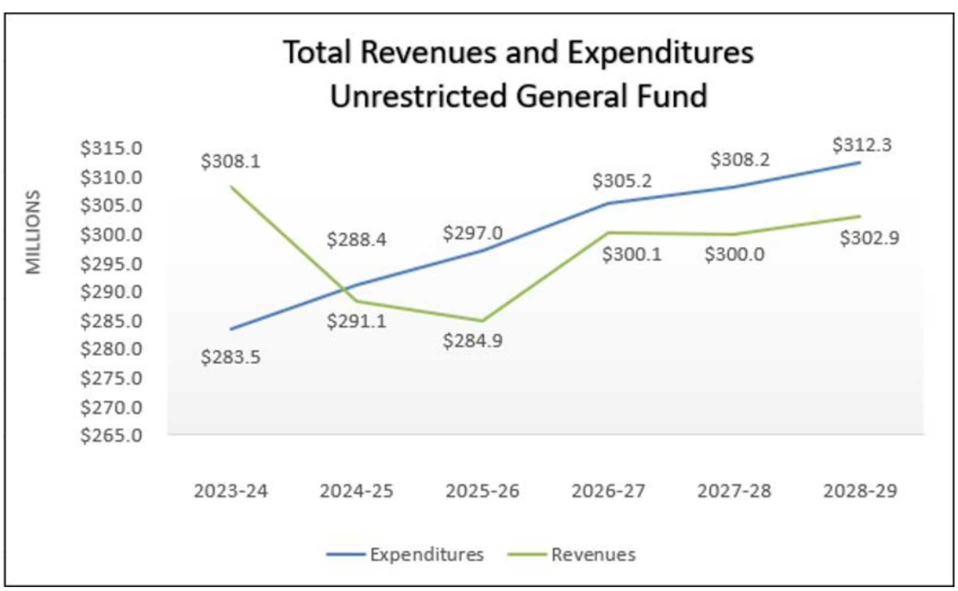
The district's Adopted Budget was developed in the context of the Governor's 2026-27 May Revise. Subsequently, the 2026-27 State Budget was adopted, which contained differences from the May Revise. The district should update and revise its budget projections to reflect changes in available funding.

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 16,595 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 2.2 percent decrease from the certified 2025-26 P-2 ADA. For 2027-28, the district projects a 0.3 percent increase in ADA. For 2028-29, the district projects a 0.9 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 4.31 percent, 3.30 percent, and 3.09 percent for the 2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29 fiscal years, respectively. Our office recommends a contingency plan should LCFF funding not materialize as projected in the 2026-27 State Budget.

Unrestricted Deficit Spending – The district's Adopted Budget indicates a positive ending balance for all funds in the 2026-27 fiscal year. The district's unrestricted deficit, as illustrated in the chart below, is not isolated to a singular year. For the unrestricted General Fund, the district anticipates expenditures and uses will exceed revenues and sources by $5.1 million in 2026-27, $8.2 million in 2027-28, and $9.4 million in 2028-29.



Additionally, the projections incorporate transfers-in from the Special Reserve Fund for Other Than Capital Outlay Projects to the General Fund of $6.0 million in the 2026-27 fiscal year, $11.0 million in the 2027-28 fiscal year, and $8.6 million in the 2028-29 fiscal year, which temporarily reduces the unrestricted deficits. Projections indicate that the Special Reserve Fund for Other than Capital Outlay Projects balances will be depleted following the transfer in the 2028-29 fiscal year. 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 23, 2026, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations are complete with the certificated bargaining unit for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

As of the board date, June 23, 2026, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations continue with the classified bargaining unit for the 2026-27 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 Palm Springs 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 10.0 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 3.0 percent of TK-12 Prop. 98 funding. This condition was met with the 2025-26 deposit amount, triggering the local reserve cap for the 2026-27 fiscal year. The district projects to meet the statutory 10.0 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 2026-27 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.

Fiscal Distress Documentation – Education Code Section 42127.6 requires the County Superintendent of Schools to review and consider any studies, reports, evaluations, or audits that may indicate a school district is experiencing 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.