



**Riverside County
Board of Education**

Jamie Azpeitia-Sachs

Ray "Coach" Curtis

Bruce N. Dennis

Ben Johnson II

Michael Martinez Scott, Ph.D.

Jennifer Mejares Pham

Elizabeth F. Romero

DATE: August 28, 2026

TO: Dr. Ryan Lewis, District Superintendent
Ms. April Purkiss, Board President
Ms. Julie Edmunds, Assistant Superintendent, Fiscal Support Services
Dr. Sarah Ragusa, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Support Services
Lake Elsinore Unified School District

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

BY: Scott Price, Ph.D.  Amanda Corridan 
Associate Superintendent Associate Superintendent
(951) 826-6790 (951) 826-6648

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.

Lake Elsinore 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	20,559	15,765	2,407		186	1,348	3,216
Enrollment Percent 2025 ¹		76.7	11.7		0.9	6.6	15.6
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Proficiency 2025 ²	-30.0	-43.6	-78.0	-124.5	-70.7	-63.8	-101.8
Mathematics Distance from Proficiency 2025 ²	-73.8	-87.9	-113.4	-181.3	-111.4	-109.5	-138.1
Science Points 2025 ²	47.6	44.8	37.7	30.3	37.7	41.3	35.6
English Learner Progress Indicator 2025 ²			48.3	54.9			
Graduation Rate 2025 ²	94.5	94.0	86.4	93.0	88.2	86.4	85.8
College/Career Indicator Rate 2025 ²	39.2	33.6	9.7	8.8	23.5	21.9	13.2
A-G Completion Rate 2025 ²	32.6	27.3	8.0	7.0	17.6	19.4	8.0
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2025 ²	16.7	14.5	4.5	6.1	11.8	8.3	14.6
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2025 ²	20.6	23.8	18.4	21.3	32.4	31.1	27.4
Suspension Rate 2025 ²	2.8	3.3	2.5	6.5	7.8	4.4	4.8

¹2025 California School Dashboard Downloadable Enrollment File (No LTEL Data Available)

²2025 California School Dashboard/Dashboard Additional Report Downloadable Data Files

Note: Blanks indicate that no public data is available for this data point.

Lake Elsinore 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	20,559	41	369	918	341	13,995	65	3,928	901
Enrollment Percent 2025 ¹		0.2	1.8	4.5	1.7	68.1	0.3	19.1	4.4
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Proficiency 2025 ²	-30.0	-59.7	33.2	-40.1	45.2	-43.4	-26.5	-2.5	5.1
Mathematics Distance from Proficiency 2025 ²	-73.8	-117.6	1.1	-89.1	4.9	-88.6	-88.8	-42.2	-37.4
Science Points 2025 ²	47.6		58.6	42.0	63.0	44.9	47.1	53.7	56.0
Graduation Rate 2025 ²	94.5		96.7	96.6	94.6	94.0		95.2	98.5
College/Career Indicator Rate 2025 ²	39.2		66.7	34.8	78.4	34.9		46.5	53.8
A-G Completion Rate 2025 ²	32.6		66.7	32.6	73.0	28.8		36.6	44.6
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2025 ²	16.7		23.3	14.6	16.2	14.7		23.1	20.0
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2025 ²	20.6	25.9	12.0	21.2	7.8	21.6	44.4	18.3	20.6
Suspension Rate 2025 ²	2.8	4.5	1.2	4.8	0.6	2.9	2.8	2.3	3.3
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 implementing Tier I Best First Instruction, evidence-based literacy and mathematics practices, instructional coaching, and professional learning designed to strengthen classroom instruction. Further commendations are in order for fostering continuous improvement through the use of student performance data, professional learning communities

(PLCs), and coaching cycles intended to refine instructional practices and support student achievement across the district. Additionally, the district's instructional efforts are reflected in improvements in English language arts (ELA) across student groups that had previously demonstrated the greatest academic need.

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

- How might the district best evaluate the impact of its existing instructional priorities to inform the refinement, prioritization, and expansion of the highest impact, evidence-based practices so they can be implemented consistently and scaled effectively across the district?
- In what ways can the district evaluate the effectiveness of Tier I Best First Instruction, instructional coaching, and PLCs to determine which practices have the greatest impact on student achievement, and how might those practices be intentionally scaled across the district?
- How might the district best leverage the academic gains demonstrated by Foster Youth to determine which instructional practices are contributing most to student success, and how can those findings inform the careful selection, refinement, and prioritization of the highest-impact practices to accelerate outcomes for all students, particularly for English Learners and Students with Disabilities?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for expanding college and career opportunities through Advanced Placement (AP), Career Technical Education (CTE), Dual Enrollment, and innovative partnerships with institutions of higher education, including the development of an Early College model that broadens access to postsecondary coursework for students. The district is further commended for demonstrating an extraordinary commitment to investing in instructional improvement and college and career readiness through a broad range of innovative initiatives designed to support student success.

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 measure the implementation and coherence of Tier I Best First Instruction across school sites to ensure that instructional practices, academic advising, and coursework opportunities collectively improve equitable College/Career Indicator outcomes, particularly for the highest need learners?
- How might the district best evaluate the impact of its existing college and career readiness practices to inform the refinement, prioritization, and integration of the most effective supports that strengthen student access and enrollment in rigorous coursework across the district?
- In what ways might the district determine which college and career readiness investments

are contributing most to the successful access, participation, and completion of rigorous learning opportunities for students, and how can those findings inform the careful selection, refinement, and prioritization of the highest-impact practices to expand equitable access and success for English Learners and Students with Disabilities?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be recognized for implementing proactive, tiered supports that extend beyond traditional academic interventions. Additionally, the district is to be commended for introducing multiple pathways to support student success and strengthen connections to school through systematic attendance protocols, early identification of social-emotional needs, expanded counseling and mental health services, elementary Coordinated Assistance Resilience Education (CARE) team interventions, empathy interviews, schoolwide behavior support systems, and increased student engagement opportunities.

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

- How might the district best evaluate the impact of its existing student engagement and school climate programs to inform the refinement, prioritization, and expansion of the highest-impact practices while ensuring the overall system remains coordinated, sustainable, and strategically aligned?
- What additional opportunities exist to collect and synthesize authentic TK-12 grade student perception data to better understand which school climate and engagement initiatives are having the greatest impact, what barriers remain, and how those findings can be used to refine and strengthen district actions in support of continuous improvement?
- As the district addresses continued gaps in performance for Homeless Youth, how might a deeper understanding of the barriers contributing to chronic absenteeism inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of strategies that strengthen school connectedness and improve attendance for this student group?

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. On August 13, 2026, the district's board approved a 45-Day Revise incorporating

the enacted State Budget's impact. Our office incorporated the district's revised multi-year financial projection into our review and final determination.

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 18,424 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 2.2 percent decrease from the certified 2025-26 P-2 ADA. For 2027-28 and 2028-29, the district projects a 1.0 percent decrease in ADA each year. 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 projections include 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 projections indicate a positive ending balance for all funds in the 2026-27 fiscal year. For the unrestricted General Fund, the district projects no deficit spending in the current or two subsequent fiscal years.

Employee Negotiations – As of the board date, June 11, 2026, the district reports salary and benefit negotiations continue with both the certificated and classified bargaining units 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 Lake Elsinore 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's approved 45-Day Revision 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.