RIVERSIDE COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
EDWIN GOMEZ, Ed.D.
County Superintendent of Schools

DATE: August 28, 2026

TO: Dr. Dalia GadElMawla, District Superintendent
Mrs. Mary Helen Ybarra, Board President
Ms. Melissa Elwood, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Dr. Jeremy Goins, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services
Corona-Norco 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)].

<u>Adopted Local Control and Accountability Plan</u>
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.

Corona-Norco 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]	49,487	35,279	6,606		231	437	6,951
Enrollment Percent 2025[1]		71.3	13.3		0.5	0.9	14.0
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Proficiency 2025[2]	14.8	-2.0	-37.5	-107.2	-86.4	-62.2	-74.6
Mathematics Distance from Proficiency 2025[2]	-24.7	-43.8	-67.0	-162.3	-121.1	-101.9	-112.3
Science Points 2025[2]	56.2	53.0	44.8	33.4	37.4	43.5	40.1
English Learner Progress Indicator 2025[2]			48.4	49.0			
Graduation Rate 2025[2]	95.9	95.8	90.0	92.8	82.1	88.3	87.5
College/Career Indicator Rate 2025[2]	59.0	56.5	19.8	18.2	17.9	30.3	15.0
A-G Completion Rate 2025[2]	55.0	52.1	15.5	14.9	7.1	22.5	14.2
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2025[2]	21.0	20.7	15.4	19.4	14.3	8.3	21.6
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2025[2]	12.4	15.0	11.9	18.8	26.8	32.8	20.1
Suspension Rate 2025[2]	3.2	3.8	4.2	8.8	15.6	8.1	5.8

[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.

Corona-Norco 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]	49,487	146	6,982	2,629	1,451	26,153	184	9,962	1,229
Enrollment Percent 2025[1]		0.3	14.1	5.3	2.9	52.8	0.4	20.1	2.5
English Language Arts (ELA) Distance from Proficiency 2025[2]	14.8	6.8	70.1	-0.3	77.2	-9.6	14.3	30.5	42.7
Mathematics Distance from Proficiency 2025[2]	-24.7	-36.5	56.6	-55.1	45.0	-56.6	-23.1	-6.9	9.1
Science Points 2025[2]	56.2	57.6	67.7	50.8	69.5	51.4	50.9	59.6	63.7
Graduation Rate 2025[2]	95.9	100.0	94.5	96.1	97.9	96.2	100.0	95.0	97.7
College/Career Indicator Rate 2025[2]	59.0	57.1	80.6	61.9	81.9	50.2	54.5	63.8	77.9
A-G Completion Rate 2025[2]	55.0	57.1	77.2	59.7	81.3	45.0	50.0	60.9	75.9
Career Technical Education (CTE) Completion Rate 2025[2]	21.0	14.3	27.1	17.4	25.7	19.8	9.1	21.9	18.4
Chronic Absenteeism Rate 2025[2]	12.4	17.2	4.6	20.1	3.9	14.8	24.5	11.0	12.0
Suspension Rate 2025[2]	3.2	4.0	1.6	6.8	1.4	3.5	4.1	2.7	3.1

[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:

<u>Student Success in Academics</u>

The district is commended for aligning student achievement data with evidence-based instructional improvement efforts, resulting in continued growth in English language arts (ELA). Through implementation of the California Mathematics Framework, instructional coaching, professional learning, and strengthened Tier I instruction, the district increased overall ELA performance as measured on the California School Dashboard, with notable gains among English Learners, Long-Term English Learners, and Students with Disabilities.

Current English Learners improved in ELA and mathematics on the California School Dashboard Growth Model at nearly the same rate as the overall district. Recently Reclassified English Learners outgrew every comparison group in both subjects—strong evidence that the EL program pipeline is working.

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

- As the district continues to implement multiple academic initiatives, how might the district determine which programs, services, and instructional practices are producing the greatest improvements in student learning and use those findings to inform future resource allocation?
- What might the district learn and implement from the academic growth demonstrated in ELA and mathematics to further accelerate outcomes for Foster Youth, Long-Term English Learners, and Students with Disabilities?

Student Access, Enrollment, and Success in Rigorous Coursework

The district is to be commended for developing a coherent, districtwide system that integrates instructional improvement, educator capacity-building, and student wellness supports to advance equitable outcomes for students.

The district is also to be commended for expanding opportunities for students to access and succeed in rigorous coursework through a comprehensive system of college and career pathways, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Dual Enrollment, Career Technical Education (CTE), and expanded credit recovery. The LCAP demonstrates a commitment to increasing equitable access to these opportunities while improving College/Career Indicator outcomes for multiple student groups.

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:

- What evidence might the district use to determine which instructional practices and student supports most effectively enable Long-Term English Learners, Foster Youth, Students with Disabilities, and Homeless Youth to successfully access, persist in, and complete rigorous coursework, and how might that evidence inform more equitable college and career readiness outcomes across all schools?
- As the district continues to expand rigorous learning opportunities, what might the district learn by monitoring participation and successful completion across student groups, and how can those findings inform efforts to ensure equitable access and outcomes in AP, Dual Enrollment, CTE, and other college and career pathways?

Student Engagement and School Climate

The district is to be commended for its continued commitment to educating the whole child through expanded counseling services, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), school safety, athletics, arts, and wellness supports. Graduation rates remain exceptionally strong, with improvements among several student groups. Suspension rates continue improving districtwide while the district maintains strong academic outcomes. The district demonstrates a clear commitment to equitable access through expanded counseling services for Foster Youth and Homeless Youth.

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

- In what ways might the district use student voice, local climate data, and state indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of its school climate initiatives and refine supports that promote student engagement and belonging across all schools?
- What opportunities exist to foster the evolution of MTSS to better integrate academic, behavioral, attendance, and college and career readiness supports into one cohesive system?

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/.

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 that had no material impact on the implementation of the district's plan.

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 44,921 ADA for the current fiscal year, or a 2.6 percent decrease from the certified 2025-26 P-2 ADA. For 2027-28, the district projects a 2.5 percent decrease in ADA. For 2028-29, the district projects a 2.6 percent decrease 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. However, for the unrestricted General Fund, the district anticipates expenditures and uses will exceed revenues and sources by $1.8 million in 2026-27, $4.0 million in 2027-28, and $7.6 million in 2028-29. 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 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 Corona-Norco Unified School District's size is 2.0 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.