



## Coachella Valley Unified School District

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**Dr. Josie Paredes, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services**

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April 4, 2022

Dear Coachella Valley and Riverside County Parents and Students:

The Coachella Valley Unified School District ("District") and the Riverside County of Education ("RCOE") is committed to creating and sustaining an inclusive, equitable and respectful environment so that every person has a sense of belonging and is provided the support necessary to thrive. We believe that valuing visible and invisible diversity is essential for an inclusive teaching and learning environment that promotes educational excellence for all. The District and RCOE respect, and teach our students to respect, each other and our individual differences. These differences include race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, socio-economic status, learning styles, abilities, and age.

The District recognizes that it will take growth, change, hard work and vigilance to uphold these standards, but sometimes we fall short. Due to miscommunication, the 2019-2020 issue of the Desert Mirage High School yearbook failed to include a group of seniors, including special education students, photographed in their cap and gowns. It will never be the intention of the District to alienate students or diminish their place in our community. The students at Desert Mirage High School Yearbook Committee demonstrated their ability to uphold these ideals and made immediate efforts to rectify the mistake. The students printed amendment pages to the yearbook and included an additional section for all students who missed their opportunity to be featured in the yearbook. The District and RCOE are now also releasing an updated virtual copy of the yearbook to be provided free of charge to all students and parents. This copy will include all seniors in their cap gown, fully included within the rightful pages along with their peers.

We value all students and continue to foster a truly inclusive community, where students and adults are welcomed and where their faces, voices, and experiences are reflected and valued. Thank you for your partnership and commitment in developing a better school for our students and each other. If you have any further concerns or questions related to inclusion, diversity and equity in the Coachella Valley Unified School District or at the Riverside County Office of Education, please contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dr. Josie Paredes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Josie Paredes

Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services