

# Annual Report to the Community

2024-25



san diego county office of  
**EDUCATION**  
FUTURE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES™





SDCOE's  
*NORTH STAR* goal  
 is to reduce poverty  
 and increase  
 belongingness  
 through public  
 education.

# Annual Report to the Community

## 2024-25



### Table of Contents

Letter from the San Diego County Superintendent of Schools	4
Role of County Offices of Education and Superintendent of Schools	5
Role of the San Diego County Board of Education	5
Board of Education District Map	7
Revenue and Expenditures	8
San Diego County Student Demographics	10
Stories and Highlights	12
District Enrollment	35

A MESSAGE FROM  
**Dr. Gloria E. Ciriza**  
San Diego County  
Superintendent of Schools



Dear Partner in Education,

The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) devised a big, bold idea – a North Star goal of reducing poverty and increasing belonging through public education.

I'm so pleased to share that after listening to our employees and community partners, reviewing student achievement data and feedback, and aligning our work to our organizational foundations, in June of this year, we launched a plan to achieve that goal.

The five-year strategic plan enhances and amplifies the work SDCOE does every day on behalf of students, offering a cohesive and integrated approach as we pursue our North Star goal.

This plan is our guide to grow together toward a future defined by purpose, resilience, and shared success on behalf of the students and families who depend on us.

At a time of increasing uncertainty, our strategic plan priorities remain constant:

1. Transform SDCOE policies and structures to foster belonging by strengthening trust, collaboration, inclusivity, transparency, equity, and relationships among staff, learners, partners, families, and their communities.
2. Champion a collective responsibility to improve student outcomes through transformational experiences.

We know our region's children and families are counting on schools to be places of safety, community, and support, as well as dependable partners in their child's success today and in the future.

Our strategic plan focuses our work, sets the expectations for progress, and keeps children at the center.

Learn more about our strategic plan and dive into our work at [sdcoe.net/Annual-Report](https://sdcoe.net/Annual-Report). If you would like to learn more about any subjects that are addressed in the report, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Gloria E. Ciriza**  
San Diego County Superintendent of Schools  
superintendent@sdcoe.net



## The Role of County Offices

California has a three-level system of public education, which includes the California Department of Education (CDE), county offices of education, and local school districts. Regulations, funding, and policy decisions are generally established at the state level, while the day-to-day delivery of instruction is the responsibility of the more than 1,000 school districts throughout the state. The 58 county offices of education are the intermediate level of the public education system. County offices provide a support infrastructure for local schools and districts. They also fulfill state mandates to register teacher credentials, complete employee background checks, certify school attendance records, and develop countywide programs to serve students with special needs.

## The Role of the Superintendent

The San Diego County superintendent of schools, appointed by the County Board of Education, is the chief administrative officer, employer, and developer of programs and services as authorized by state statute or determined by needs or requests. The superintendent also provides educational leadership and administers mandated services. The superintendent has direct oversight responsibilities for approving and assuring school district budgets, calling school district elections, and assisting with school district emergencies by providing necessary services. The superintendent is also tasked with developing a three-year Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) for the schools operated by the County Office, and reviewing and approving the LCAPs for all school districts in San Diego County.



## COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS



**Dr. Gregg Robinson**  
District 1



**Guadalupe González**  
District 2



**Alicia Muñoz**  
District 3



**Dr. Erin Evans**  
District 4



**Rick Shea**  
District 5

## The Role of the San Diego County Board of Education

The County Board of Education operates under the authority of the California Constitution, the state Legislature, California Education Code, and the State Board of Education. Among other duties, the board is responsible for:

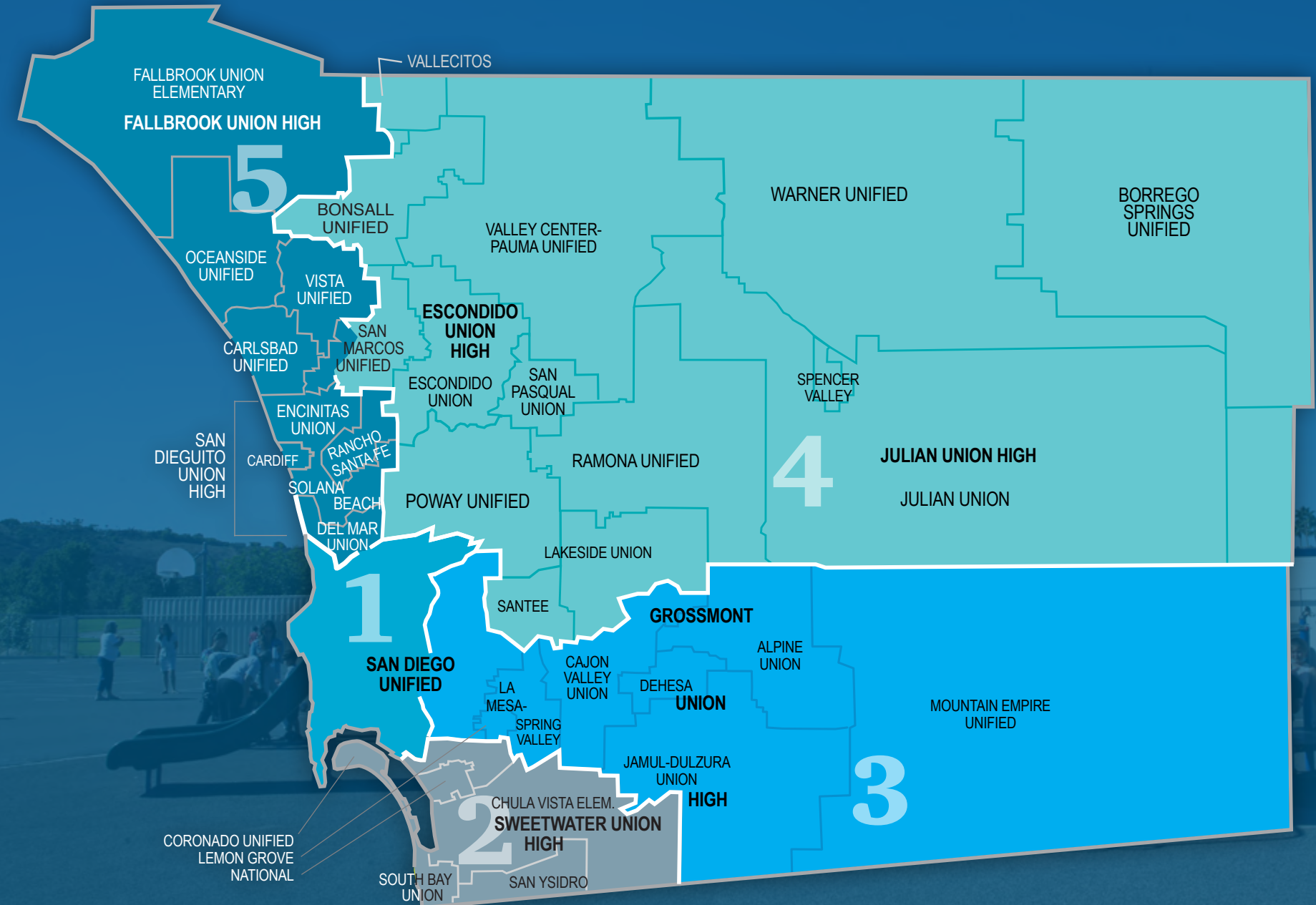
- Adopting the annual County Office of Education Local Control and Accountability Plan and budget
- Adopting policies governing the operation of the board
- Acting as the appeals board for student expulsions, interdistrict transfers, and charter school petitions
- Acting as the County Committee on School District Organization to review and approve proposals to change the way school district governing board members are elected
- Hiring and evaluating the county superintendent and establishing the rate of compensation
- Serving as the landlord and owner of property

Through its role of long-range policy development and other critical functions, the board works with the county superintendent of schools to offer the most effective education programs and district support services. The board also encourages the involvement of families and communities, and is a vehicle for citizen access to communicate about SDCOE's programs and services.

Explore more at



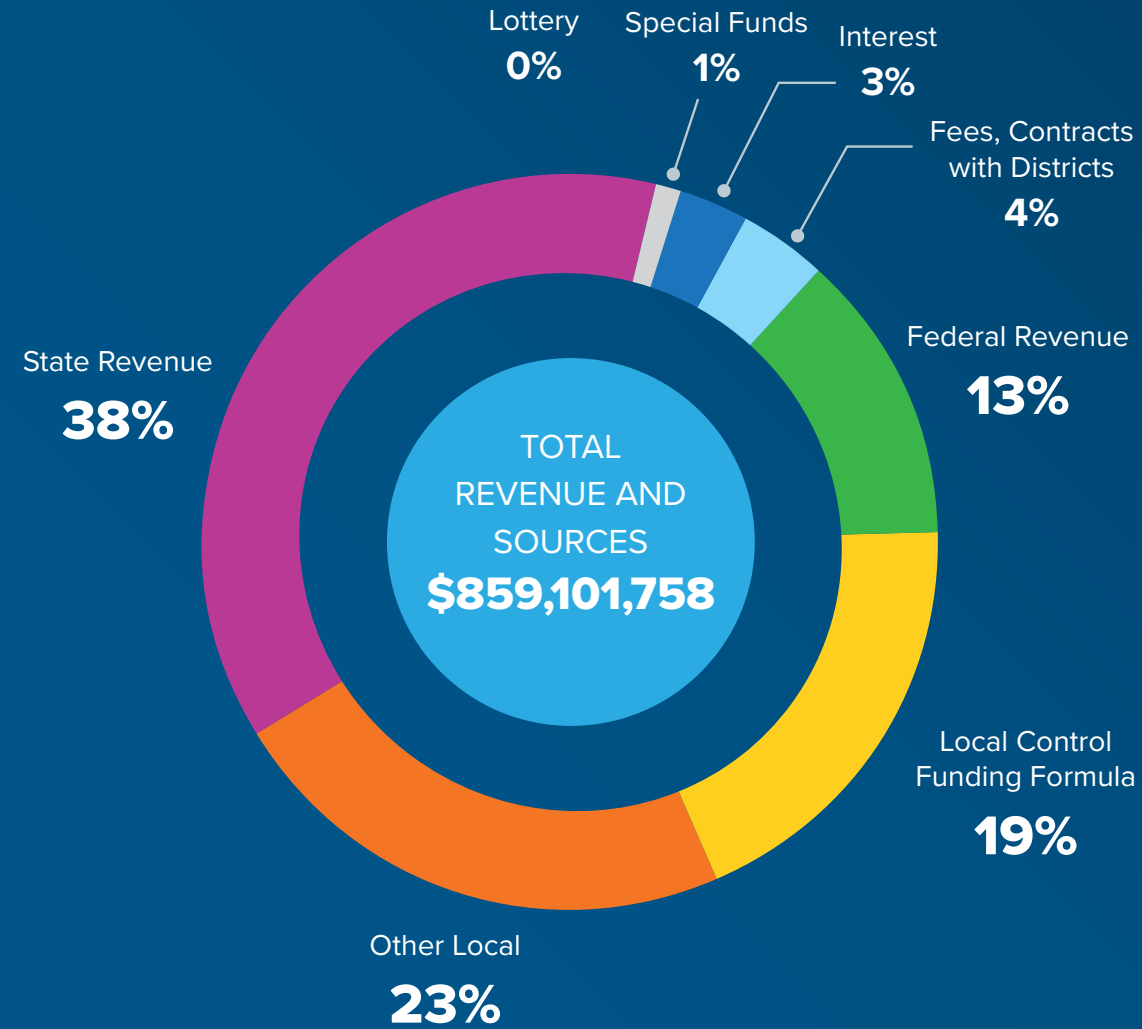
[www.sdcoe.net/annual-report](http://www.sdcoe.net/annual-report)



# Revenue and Sources

REVENUES	
State Revenue	\$324,141,379
Other Local	\$200,612,988
Local Control Funding Formula	\$159,001,210
Federal Revenue	\$108,593,709
Fees, Contracts with Districts	\$37,351,142
Interest	\$21,655,661
Special Funds	\$7,364,937
Lottery	\$380,732

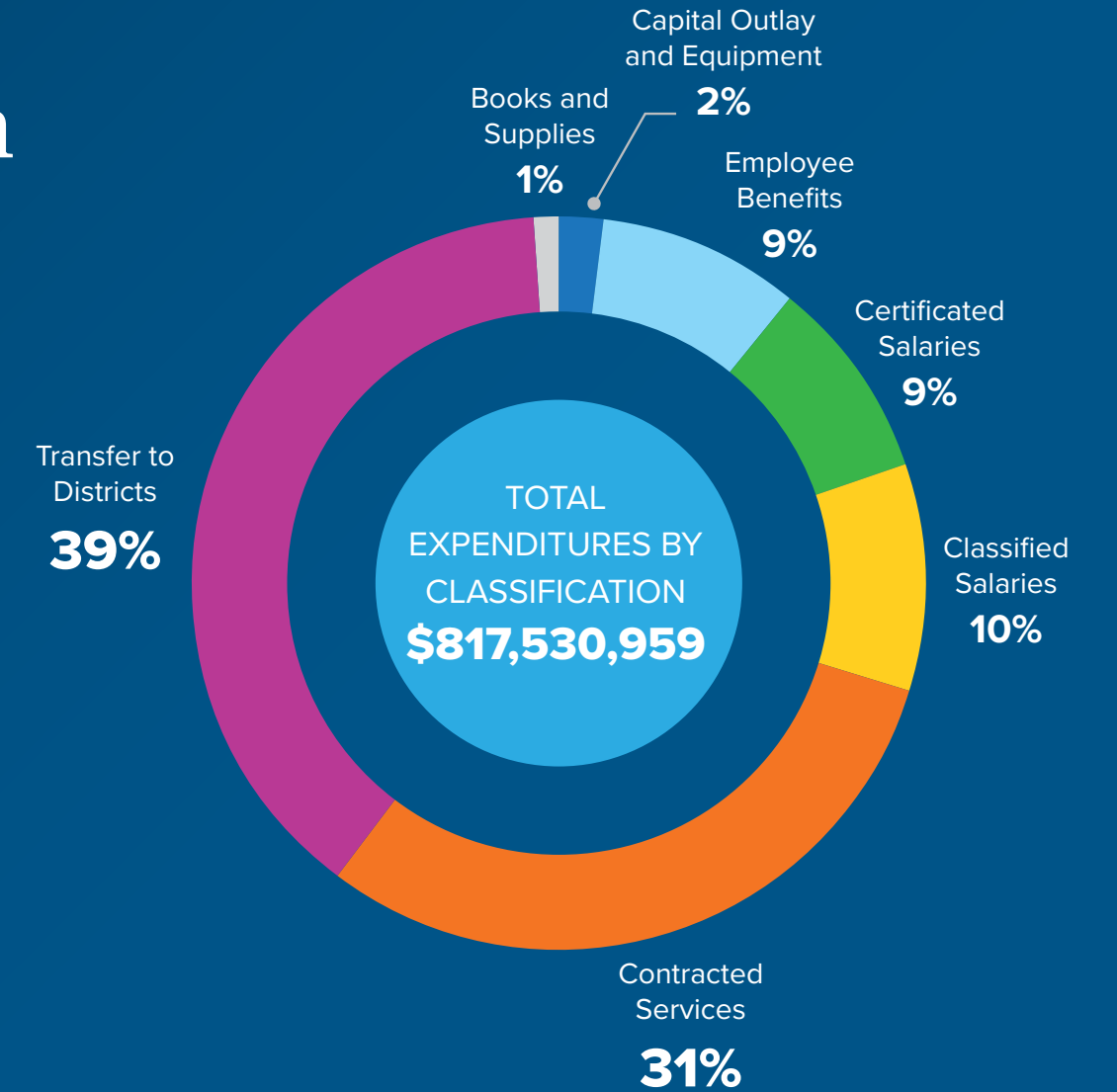
2024-25 Unaudited Actuals



# Expenditures by Classification

EXPENDITURES	
Transfer to Districts	\$322,789,480
Contracted Services	\$251,446,989
Classified Salaries	\$78,055,095
Certificated Salaries	\$70,633,865
Employee Benefits	\$70,551,254
Capital Outlay and Equipment	\$16,756,115
Books and Supplies	\$7,298,161

2024-25 Unaudited Actuals



# San Diego County Student Demographics

## ENROLLMENT

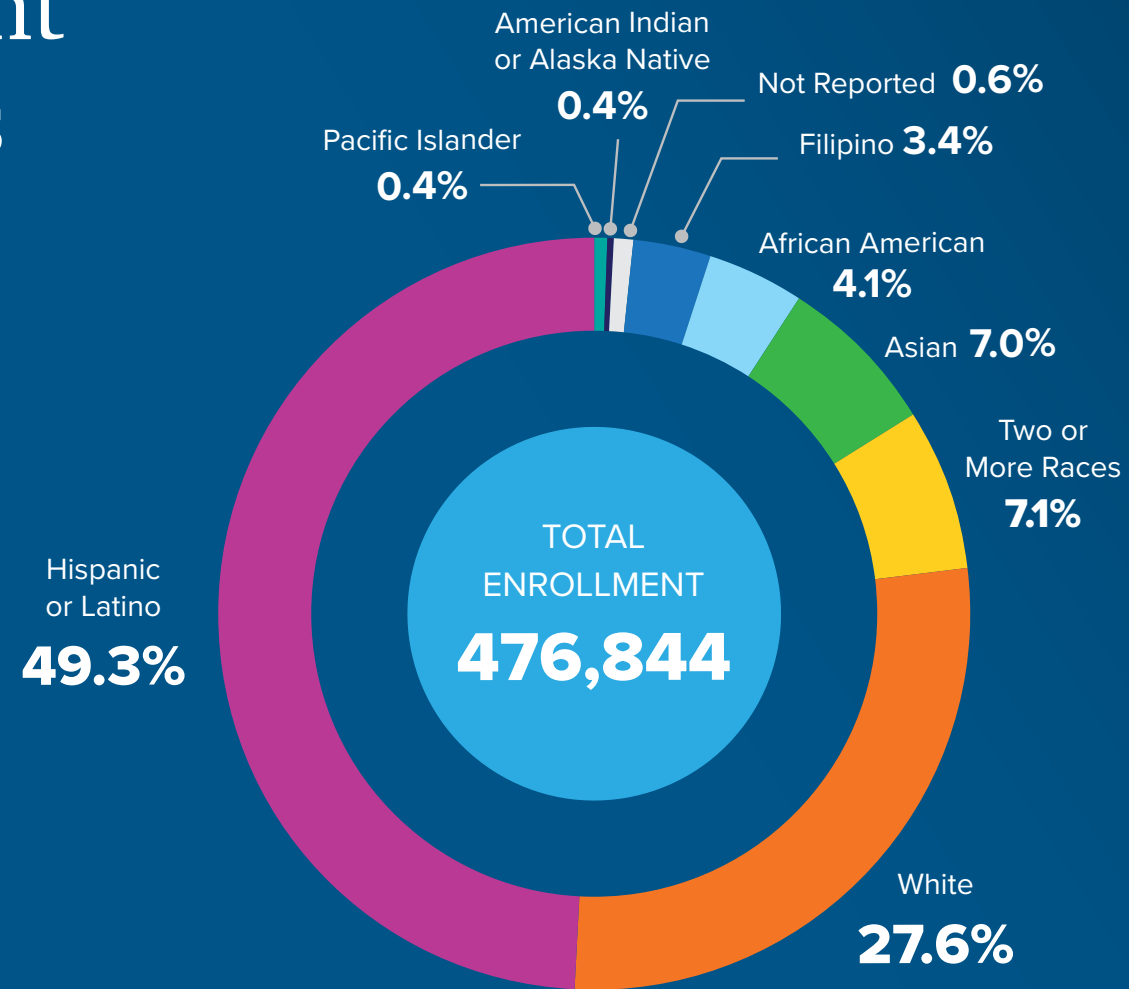
Hispanic or Latino	234,988
White	131,746
Two or More Races	33,913
Asian	33,419
African American	19,685
Filipino	16,385
Not Reported	2,947
American Indian or Alaska Native	2,006
Pacific Islander	1,755

## FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS

**County: 256,067 53.7%**  
Enrollment used for Meals 476,844

**State: 3,647,037 62.8%**  
Enrollment used for Meals 5,806,2

Source: CDE DataQuest 2025



# Internship Program Opens Doors for Students



**When you're a student, being able to see yourself in a job or imagine a career in a particular field is important.**

The technology field can be especially challenging to enter, which is why SDCOE's Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS) and Integrated Technology Services (ITS) division collaborated on a nine-week paid internship program for students attending JCCS.

In the fall of 2024, they piloted the program with two students – Mariah, and Faith, both seniors in SDCOE school programs.

The internship provided experience in all areas of information technology with a heavy focus on cybersecurity. The students spent time learning about the help desk, data systems, software development, network systems, the data center, cybersecurity, and project management. Each week, they had the opportunity to apply their learning through projects and activities.

Mariah said she didn't know much about technology or cybersecurity when she started the program but was interested in the paid learning opportunity and eager to learn new things.

"Cybersecurity is within every department and there is such a need because there are so many vulnerabilities," Mariah said. "I did not know that hackers could get access to your phone camera!"

The goal is to give JCCS student interns the best opportunities and expose them to high-paying careers in tech, said Peyri Herrera, senior director with the Enterprise Project Management Office.

"Mariah and Faith have been amazing with the energy and attention they've given to this, and their curiosity," she said. "Everyone lights up with these students. It's really cool to see our organization pull together and rally around them."

While ITS and JCCS took lead on developing the internship program, making it happen involved multiple departments at SDCOE, including Human Resources Services, Business Services, and Innovation.

"We're proud that this aligns with the North Star goal and supports our No. 1 district," Herrera said.





**San Diego County students experiencing a behavioral health crisis now have access to compassionate, age-appropriate help through the county's Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT).**

SDCOE and the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services have partnered to create crisis response services specifically designed for students and staff in K-12 public schools, using responders who are trained to manage these types of incidents in school communities.

"About 28% of our middle and high school students are experiencing chronic sadness and hopelessness, and more than 11% have seriously considered suicide, according to data from the California Healthy Kids Survey," said Heather Nemour, coordinator at SDCOE.

SDCOE advocated for school-specific services after hearing from numerous local educational agencies that they needed non-law enforcement support to address student mental health crises. SDCOE recently trained the county's contracted mental health clinicians on best practices in K-12 schools, which included strategies for collaboration with schools, students, and parents.

Crisis response teams utilize transitional-age youth staff or peer support specialists to engage with youth. They establish a safe environment and present themselves as calm and empathetic. They implement de-escalation strategies by engaging in active listening, avoiding judgment, and respecting the young person's physical space. They may also use techniques to build rapport and engage the youth to help meet their needs.

Teams also assess any additional needs a student may have and help coordinate treatment services as needed for up to 30 days from the initial service. "MCRT was able to help calm our student, and provided lots of resources for further assistance," said Siraj Mohamed, school counselor at City Heights Prep Charter School.

The youth-centered initiative is based on the county's existing Mobile Crisis Response Team launched in 2021 to provide an alternative response option for San Diego County residents experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis. The non-law enforcement teams are trained to respond, assess, and de-escalate behavioral health crises dispatched via the Access and Crisis Line or calls to emergency services across all regions of the county.

"Using a trauma-informed response to behavioral health crises will help break the cycle of stigma and help normalize it," Nemour said.

# Mobile Response Team Supports Students in Crisis



# Student-Led Marketing Project Inspires Career Options



**Students in the Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS) South Region had the opportunity of a lifetime to create a marketing campaign for a line of designer handbags.**

Through arts partner A Reason to Survive (ARTS) and local education non-profit Dreams+Ducats, 11 students participated in a two-month paid apprenticeship in which they learned the fundamentals of branding and campaign strategy, receiving mentorship and creative coaching from industry experts.

This included a visit from Natasha Thomson, senior manager of digital marketing at Condé Nast for Vogue and GQ, who shared with students her expertise and insights from working on global cross-platform campaigns.

“Before this, I didn’t know what I wanted to do for my career, but now it did bring out something I want to pursue in life,” said freshman Guadalupe.

The culmination of the experience was a youth-led photoshoot that combined street style with high fashion. It featured handbags provided by the London-based fashion brand Kurt Geiger, all set against the backdrop of South County San Diego.

“This project gave participants the opportunity to bring their story to the forefront, creatively expressing the beauty of the places they come from,” said Lucy Eagleson, executive director for ARTS.

As an ode to the London connection and their famed Tube, the students featured the San Diego Trolley in many of their photos.

“I could possibly make a career out of this,” said Dianella. “I really get to see an insight of how it works.”

The opportunity was made possible through a grant ARTS received from the Kurt Geiger Kindness Foundation, the non-profit charity associated with the designer. The foundation selected ARTS so they could work with justice-impacted youth on the project.





# Expanded Child Care Options for Military Families



**SDCOE launched the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-PLUS (MCCYN-PLUS) initiative to support eligible military families by providing greater access to high-quality, affordable child care in their communities.**

Funded and operated by the Department of Defense (DoD), MCCYN-PLUS also offers fee assistance to help reduce out-of-pocket child care expenses.

This enhanced initiative broadens the pool of eligible child care providers by including those participating in the County's San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (SDQPI). By partnering with SDQPI, MCCYN-PLUS ensures that military families have access to high-quality, affordable child care, even in regions where nationally accredited providers may be limited.

Military families can search for and select an approved child care provider through the DoD's request-for-care website, [MilitaryChildCare.com](https://militarychildcare.com). Families may receive fee assistance that will offset the cost of child care not covered by the parent fee (calculated by total family income) up to the current provider rate cap of \$1,800 per month, per child making it easier for them to afford quality child care.

"We recognize the sacrifices made by military families and are committed to providing them with the support they need," said San Diego County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gloria E. Ciriza. "San Diego is home to many military families, and through the expanded MCCYN-PLUS initiative, they will now be able to access more than 400 community providers. The MCCYN-PLUS program is a testament to our dedication to ensuring that military families have access to quality, affordable child care, regardless of their location."

The Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood program is a result of collaboration between state and federal agencies and has helped military families reduce child care costs for over a decade. With the addition of San Diego County, MCCYN-PLUS is now in 16 states and one county, and is available to active-duty military personnel, National Guard members, reservists, and DoD civilian personnel.

SDCOE is dedicated to supporting military families by providing access to quality child care services. Through initiatives like MCCYN-PLUS, SDCOE works to positively impact the lives of military families and ensure they have the resources they need.

# By the Numbers

Explore more at



[www.sdcoe.net/annual-report](http://www.sdcoe.net/annual-report)

229

students in grades 4 through 12 from 16 public, charter, and private schools participated in National History Day



100

SDCOE employees, friends, and families showed their community support by marching in the San Diego Pride Parade

629

pounds of food and \$1,000 to feed local families were donated by SDCOE employees in December 2024



169

district financial reports were reviewed and approved by SDCOE's District Financial Services by the statutory deadlines

\$61  
MILLION

in grant funding has been secured by SDCOE

80

chapters of the Friday Night Live youth leadership development program are now active in regional school sites

753

educators and leaders across the state have accessed arts education support from SDCOE's Curriculum and Instruction team



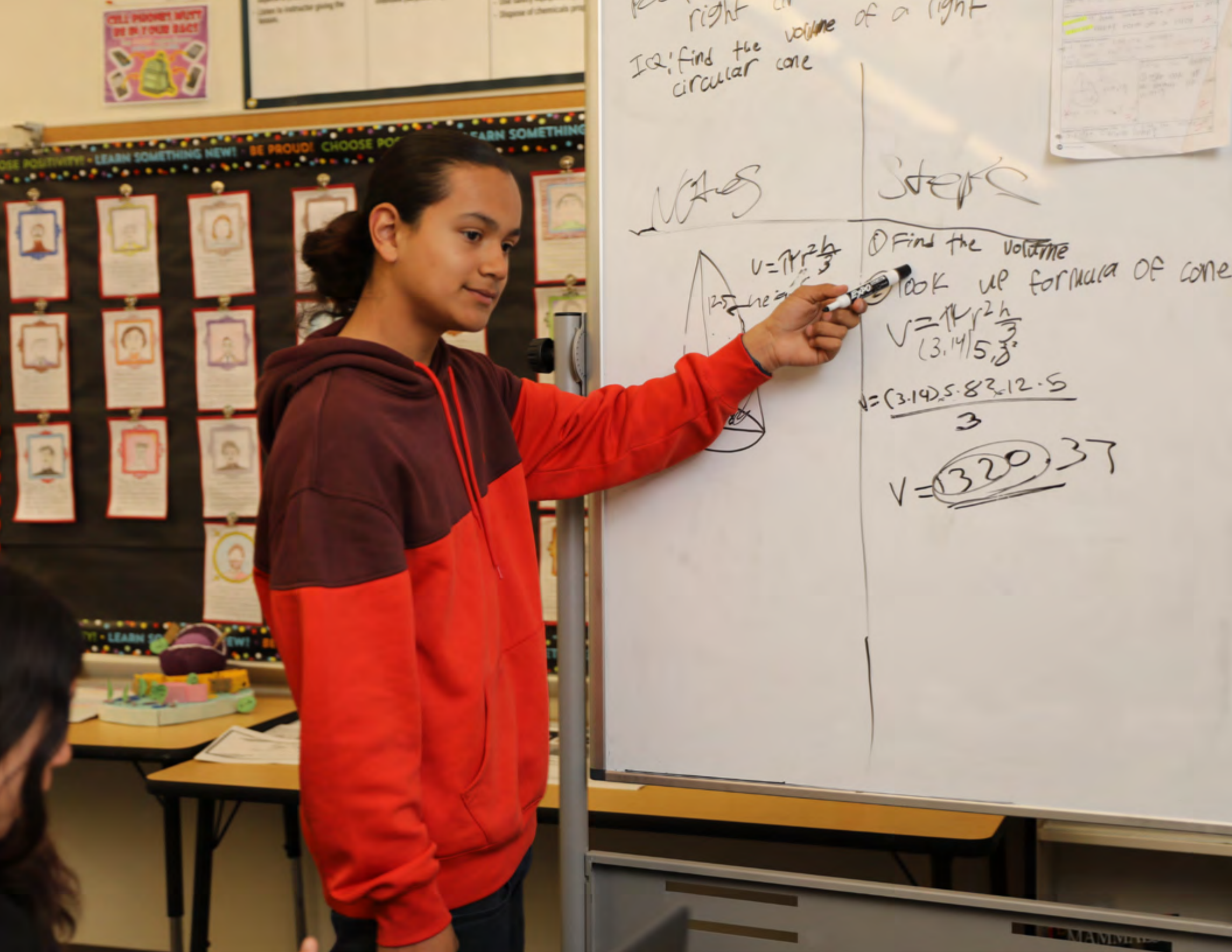
298

local educational agencies across the country utilize SDCOE's Red Herring cybersecurity awareness training system



592

mentors support nearly 1,000 teacher candidates through SDCOE's Teacher Induction Program



**This spring, nearly 600 students from across San Diego County and the Inland Empire explored how they could pursue a career in education through programs and resources that can help them achieve their goals.**

The annual Future Educators Summit is geared toward high school and undergraduate students who are looking to launch into a career in education. This year's event was held at San Diego Mesa College, and was a collaboration among SDCOE's Teacher Effectiveness and Preparation team, CSU San Marcos, After School Unlimited, and the region's community colleges, universities, and TK-12 schools.

Students heard from experts in the field covering a wide variety of topics, including early education, after-school programs, special education, credentialing, and more. They learned valuable tips on the various ways they can reach their goals and understand what options and resources are available to them as they work toward their future careers.

A big takeaway for many was the financial considerations, looking at both the costs to pursue their career and what kind of wages and benefits they might get after landing a job.

"I learned there are ways to get your tuition or other costs paid for, which is really helpful," said Lesly P., a sophomore at Oceanside High School.

Others took note that the pathway to a career in education does not necessarily have to look like a traditional four-year university right after high school.

"I really like that [the panelists] shared they didn't really like sitting in a classroom in college," shared Elizabeth G., a sophomore at Oceanside High School, after hearing the "Education Roles Outside the Classroom" panel featuring several SDCOE employees who are in non-classroom roles. "I signed up for the educator pathway because I've been babysitting and spending a lot of time with little kids, but I don't know if spending all that time in a college classroom is for me. I like that there are flexible options like online classes."

# Inspiring the Next Generation of Educators



# Students Change Lives Using Technology



**A tiny thread of plastic can go a long way when it's in the hands of SDCOE employees and students who are dedicated to making a difference in their community.**

At the Linda Vista Innovation Center, middle school students have new opportunities to design items that help those with special needs.

“Educational technology can change the lives of students and animals,” said Carrie Lane from the Educational Technology team, who led the effort.

The students determine which projects to tackle based on needs. So far this has included an adaptive football for a student who is blind, specialized feeders for animals with injured beaks, grips to help students grasp pencils, and special covers for Nintendo Switch controllers that feature braille.

“Just the fact that they’ve been introduced to the concept of assistive technology is a mission accomplished,” said Jim Perondi, an orientation and mobility instructor with the South County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) who has helped with the projects. “It shows that accessibility and assistive technology don’t have to be only in the digital space.”

It also helps the students requesting the items learn important skills about self-advocacy.

“This is a great way to have kids converse about what things they would like and what they would benefit from, not what we think they need,” said Tanya Gonzalez, a teacher with the South County SELPA who is also involved with the projects.

All of it has been brought to life with imagination and the power of 3D printers.

The process started this spring with 22 students from Marston Middle School in San Diego picking projects based on needs presented from local organizations and schools. The work included designing specialized animal feeders and habitats for animals at the Living Coast Discovery Center and San Diego Humane Society as well as a foot-ball with a whistle in it and wearable bells that allowed one of our students, who is visually impaired, to play football.

“Students providing Diego with something that was made for him gave him such a feeling of acceptance and belonging,” Gonzalez said.





**SDCOE and San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) hosted a networking event in September in South San Diego County to connect educators with housing, food, medical, and other child support services to build and grow community schools.**

Nearly 200 educators and community partners learned about regional supports and resources that can make a difference for students and families.

“I’ve been an educator for 23 years and so much of this is new and valuable,” said Maria Kuz, a resource teacher in National School District. “We know the need. We get to the parent conference and they tell us, and now we have so much more to connect them with.”

The day-long event included a morning of presentations from several HHSA departments, San Ysidro Family Health, and behavioral health service providers in the South Bay. The afternoon was devoted to action planning. Individuals rotated among eight stations where they identified goals to support community schools, discussed best practices, identified barriers to success, and how to maximize collaboration.

“We surveyed educators in our South County community schools and they shared that they needed more resources and information about housing, behavioral and mental health supports, food insecurity, and access to medical care,” said Erin Mahoney, senior director at SDCOE. “We collaborated with HHSA to ensure we brought relevant information to educators and offered a unique opportunity to connect with the organizations that have resources and services available that can directly benefit their students and families.”

Attendees included principals, community schools coordinators, HHSA representatives, and those interested in learning about the community schools strategy, which addresses a student’s academic, social and emotional, physical, and mental well-being, and how county services can bolster that effort.

In a partnership that’s unique across the state, SDCOE and HHSA are driving the effort to reimagine schools as community hubs where students, families, staff, and community members thrive.

## SDCOE, County Health Partner to Connect Community Schools with Needed Supports



# Sparking Student Interest in Firefighting Careers



**As extreme fire seasons become the new normal in San Diego and throughout the state, the need for trained firefighters and fire safety professionals has never been greater.**

The County will be relying on the next generation of first responders, so the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) is working closely with the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and CAL FIRE San Diego to spark student interest in careers in fire safety and help establish a steady workforce pipeline to this critical field.

According to the October 2023 Labor Market Analysis for Firefighting Occupations in San Diego and Imperial Counties conducted by the Centers for Excellence, demand for firefighters in the region is projected to grow in the next few years. Notably, the report indicates that entry-level positions have low barriers to entry, only requiring a high school diploma and Emergency Medical Technician certification, and typically pay at or above the living wage.

In an effort to meet these projected staffing needs and develop career pathways that are accessible to students right after graduation, SDCOE's Work-Based Learning team has worked closely with the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department to give students a firsthand look at careers in fire service. Since the 2020-21 school year, the team has coordinated 150 work-based learning activities with San Diego Fire-Rescue, including classroom guest speakers, station tours, and student workshops, serving 11,769 students and educators.

"Our goal is to train the next generation of leaders in San Diego's workforce," said Sonia Lira, a project specialist for the Work-Based Learning team at SDCOE. "Our partnership with the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department not only prepares students for high-growth, high-wage careers at one of our region's top employers, but also inspires them to think of a career path that is in service of others and their community."

For many students who are looking for alternatives to college after graduation – specifically affordable and accessible options – pursuing a career in fire safety can be a viable option.

SDCOE is also further expanding its fire safety career experiences by exploring a new partnership with CAL FIRE San Diego. The initiative will bring a unique hands-on experience to the Linda Vista Innovation Center, with plans to tie the experience to some of the activities and experiences at Cuyamaca Outdoor School.





## Migrant Education Welcomed Parents and Students at Regional Conference



**SDCOE hosted the 2025 Migrant Education Regional Parent Conference, providing an opportunity for parents to learn how to support all aspects of their children's academic, personal, and emotional growth through workshops presented by experts in the fields of education, mental health, public health, cybersecurity, and financial literacy, to name a few.**

Nearly 175 parents and their children, who attend schools across the North County, received insightful information from breakout sessions presented by both SDCOE staff and community partners. They also had the opportunity to meet with community service and health providers throughout the daylong event.

"We are extremely grateful to our partners who came out this year to support our parents who took advantage of this day," said Migrant Education Senior Director Elisa Ayala. "We received a lot of positive feedback from the parents and children thanking us for this event and asking if we could have events like this more frequently."

There were additional opportunities for health, vision, and dental screenings, as well as a variety of informational booths provided by non-profits, community services, and local businesses. As parents were learning and enjoying the presentations, the conference also provided educational and informational lessons, activities, and demonstrations for their children. There were also cultural performances by Rancho Buena Vista High School's student mariachi and Ballet Folklorico Sangre Mestiza from Escondido.

Migrant Education Program Region 9 serves all qualifying children and youth in Orange and San Diego counties and is administered by the San Diego County Office of Education. Currently, Region 9 serves approximately 3,000 migratory children and youth (ages 3 to 21) in 56 school districts across both counties.

”

**We know our region’s children and families are counting on schools to be places of safety, community, and support, as well as dependable partners in their child’s success today and in the future.**

Dr. Gloria E. Ciriza,  
San Diego County Superintendent of Schools





Alpine Union	1,441	National	4,360
Bonsall Unified	2,281	Oceanside Unified	17,467
Borrego Springs Unified	3,066	Poway Unified	34,405
Cajon Valley Union	18,527	Ramona Unified	4,949
Cardiff	641	Rancho Santa Fe	505
Carlsbad Unified	10,708	San Diego County Office of Education	7,826
Chula Vista Elementary	28,845	San Diego Unified	113,787
Coronado Unified	2,763	San Dieguito Union High	12,055
Dehesa	13,578	San Marcos Unified	18,950
Del Mar Union	3,497	San Pasqual Union	548
Encinitas Union	4,298	San Ysidro Elementary	4,144
Escondido Union	16,848	Santee	6,076
Escondido Union High	8,751	Solana Beach	2,620
Fallbrook Union Elementary	5,042	South Bay Union	5,450
Fallbrook Union High	1,999	Spencer Valley	4,196
Grossmont Union High	21,694	Sweetwater Union High	35,774
Jamul-Dulzura Union	810	Vallecitos	195
Julian Union	2,289	Valley Center-Pauma Unified	3,636
Julian Union High	112	Vista Unified	21,271
La Mesa-Spring Valley	10,616	Warner Unified	3,258
Lakeside Union	4,832	Statewide benefit charters	5,279
Lemon Grove	3,053		
Mountain Empire Unified	4,402		

# Enrollment by District



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