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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
6/9/2026

California Legislative Audit Reaffirms Measure O Funds Used Responsibly and in Alignment with Voter Intent

RIVERSIDE, Calif., June 9, 2026 — Riverside Unified School District (RUSD) has once again been affirmed in its responsible stewardship of Measure O local bond funds, according to a State audit released today. The audit confirmed that the District's process for selecting Measure O projects complied with applicable laws and requirements, and that expenditures align with the ballot language approved by nearly 70% of Riverside voters in 2016. This finding is consistent with two prior court rulings in the District's favor following legal challenges brought by Riversiders Against Increased Taxes (RAIT).

The audit was conducted through the California Joint Legislative Audit Committee process, focusing on the District's management of the STEM Education Center, a decade-long, multi-institution effort. That project has already reached its next chapter. Regular conversations between the Superintendent and Chancellor began just weeks after both assumed their posts in July 2025. In May 2026, RUSD and UC Riverside jointly announced an expanded vision for partnership that extends access and opportunity to students across all District schools, a decision rooted in listening, data, and the shared priorities of both institutions' current leadership. Work to address Riverside STEM Academy facility needs through District-led solutions is already underway.

"We welcome this audit and its findings," said Board President Dr. Noemi Hernandez Alexander. "Our community entrusted us with these resources, and we take that responsibility seriously. We have modernized classrooms and libraries, built new kindergarten buildings and play areas, replaced portables, renovated pools and gyms, expanded stadiums, upgraded science facilities, and built two brand new neighborhood schools, with Ofelia Valdez-Yeager Eastside Elementary embarking on its construction. From early childhood centers to high school campuses, Measure O has replaced century old infrastructure with safe, modern learning environments. This is what \$392 million in voter-approved investment looks like, and Riverside families see it every day."

What the audit's report did not fully capture is the depth of community engagement that has defined this District's approach under current board and superintendent leadership, which directly informed the path forward. In her first months as superintendent, Dr. Llamas conducted 68 school site visits, held 36 parent and family engagements, and met with 19 civic and community partners as part of a structured listening effort. That community-centered approach extended directly to the Riverside STEM Academy (RSA) community. At the board's direction in December 2025, RSA staff, students and families were surveyed in early 2026 gathering metrics on educational priorities, facility alternatives, and program satisfaction. Subsequently, a consensus survey conducted in March 2026 helped shape the decision that both institutions ultimately made together.

Oversight of Measure O funds remains ongoing and transparent. The independent Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC) meets regularly and has consistently confirmed, under Proposition 39 standards, that funds are being used as voters intended. Financial records, CBOC meeting agendas, minutes, and audit reports are all publicly available on the District website, as they have been throughout the life of Measure O.

RUSD appreciates the work of the State Auditor's office and recognizes the shared goal of continuing to strengthen communication and transparency with our community. Many of the operational and documentation practices identified in the audit's recommendations have already been addressed, and the District is committed to continuous improvement.



"This is about trust, transparency, and results," Superintendent Dr. Sonia Llamas said. "As a new superintendent, I knew that trust had to be earned through presence, listening, and decisions that reflect what our community needs. From my very first conversations with the Chancellor, our focus was never on a single project. It was on how two of Riverside's most important institutions can build a robust partnership that creates conditions for all students to thrive. That work is well underway, and all students and families will see it in the expanded UCR-RUSD partnership. As we continue our Long Range Facilities Planning, we remain committed to listening, sharing information openly, and collectively building the future our students deserve alongside our Riverside community."

RUSD has published a full FAQ and additional context at riversideunified.org/audit, including documentation of the community engagement process and project history that provide a fuller picture of this work.

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