

**Yuma Elementary School District Number One
Governing Board
Study Session**

The Governing Board for Yuma Elementary School District Number One held a Study Session on **April 7, 2026 at 5:30 P.M.** in the District Administration Office, 450 West Sixth Street, Yuma, Arizona.

Members present: Mr. Keith Ware, President; Mrs. Cori Rico, Member; Mrs. Lisa Anderson, Member; & Mr. Jeff Stoner, Member

Members absent: Mr. David Ibarra, Vice President;

Others present: Mr. Denis Ponder, Superintendent, and other Members of the Administrative Staff of Yuma School District One

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

Review and Discussion on the Proposed Exceptional Student Services Program Model for the 2026–2027 School Year (Addressing Enrollment Growth and Program Needs) – E. Jimenez

Mrs. Erica Jimenez, Director of Exceptional Student Services, provided a presentation that was aligned to the proposed 2026–2027 Exceptional Student Services (ESS) Program model, which was previously introduced at the March board meeting. She outlined the challenges currently facing the district, including the rapid growth in ESS student needs and the limited capacity at individual school sites to provide comprehensive special education programs that fully meet those needs.

Mrs. Jimenez emphasized the goal of serving students at their home schools, rather than transferring them to other campuses due to a lack of resources or appropriate program offerings. She presented data comparing the current model with the proposed model and shared student scenarios to demonstrate how the proposed changes would better support student needs. It was also reported that a survey had been distributed to parents of special education students to gather feedback on whether they would support their child attending their neighborhood school, provided that appropriate services are available for the 2026–2027 school year, rather than being transported to schools outside their area. The district received a strong and largely positive response. Additional discussion included considerations for ensuring school sites have the capacity to accommodate students if services are expanded at their home campuses. They discussed the focus on classroom ratios, staffing needs (including teachers and paraprofessionals) at each school site, and the continued need to transport some students to schools outside their home boundaries.

Board members engaged in discussion and asked questions regarding the proposal. Topics included challenges related to staff recruitment and retention, the importance of communicating this initiative to teachers and parents, and identifying it as a district priority. Board members also talked about the importance of providing opportunities for parent engagement, such as open forums to address questions and concerns. The study session concluded with all board members in agreement and supportive of moving forward with the proposed model for the 2026–2027 fiscal year.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Monica Navarro, Secretary to the Board

Keith Ware, President

David Ibarra, Vice President

Cori Rico, Member

Lisa Anderson, Member

Jeff Stoner, Member