

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: Los Angeles

12400 Imperial Highway

Norwalk, CA 90650

From: (Public Agency): Hacienda La Puente Unified School District
15956 E. Gale Ave
City of Industry, CA 91745

(Address)

Project Title: Bixby Elementary School Closure and Cedarlane Academy Consolidation Project

Project Applicant: Not Applicable

Project Location - Specific:

16446 Wedgeworth Dr. and 16333 Cedarlane Dr.

Project Location - City: Hacienda Heights Project Location - County: Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Closure of Bixby Elementary School and transfer of 243 students to Cedarlane Academy. See attached Resolution for further details.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Not Applicable

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Hacienda La Puente Unified School District

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 14-§15314
- ☒ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: 21080.18

Reasons why project is exempt:

The transfer of Bixby's 243 students is statutorily exempt under PRC section 21080.18. The indirect effects of the school closure are categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines, section 15314. Cedarlane Academy's capacity is 976 current students with only 633 students enrolled. See attached resolution for further details.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: _____ Area Code/Telephone/Extension: _____

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: [Signature] Date: 11/14/23 Title: Director of Planning & Development

▪ Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

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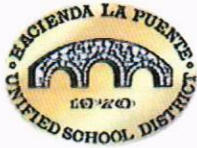
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Signature: [Signature] Date: 11/14/23 Title: Director Rodriguez

■ Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____



HACIENDA LA PUENTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

15959 EAST GALE AVENUE • CITY OF INDUSTRY, CALIFORNIA 91745 • (626) 933-3800

DR. ALFONSO JIMÉNEZ, Superintendent

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
CHRISTINE H. SALAZAR, President
STEPHANIE SERRANO, Vice President
JEFFREY DE LA TORRE, Clerk
NANCY LOERA, Member
GINO KWOK, Esq., Member

RESOLUTION NO. 2023/24-20
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE HACIENDA LA PUENTE UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT DETERMINING THAT THE BIXBY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CLOSURE AND CEDARLANE ACADEMY CONSOLIDATION PROJECT IS EXEMPT
FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT, DECIDING TO
CARRY OUT THE PROJECT, AND DIRECTING THE FILING OF A NOTICE OF
EXEMPTION

WHEREAS, the Hacienda La Puente School District ("District") has developed the Bixby Elementary School Closure and Cedarlane Consolidation Project ("Project") in which the District would:

1. Close Bixby Elementary School ("Bixby") and the students from Bixby would attend Cedarlane Academy ("Cedarlane"). Further, students could be distributed to other schools with capacity, based on proximity, family choice, class size, and other relevant factors; and

WHEREAS, Bixby is located at 16446 Wedgeworth Dr., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745. Cedarlane is located at 16333 Cedarlane Dr., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745; and

WHEREAS, in September 2022, the California Governor signed into law Assembly Bill ("AB") 1912, codified in Education Code section 41329, which requires a school district under financial distress (as defined in Ed. Code § 41329(b)) to conduct an equity impact analysis utilizing a developed set of metrics ("AB 1912 Metrics") when considering school closures or consolidations, and to seek public input on those metrics prior to adopting a final recommendation; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2023, the California Attorney General issued "Guidance Regarding Laws Governing School Closures and Best Practices for Implementation in California" ("AG Guidance"), which advises all school districts, not just those that meet the definition of "under financial distress," to assess the AB 1912 Metrics when considering school closures or consolidations; and

WHEREAS, AG Guidance provides, "[f]or districts that are considering closures but do not fall under AB 1912's mandate, following AB 1912 and the best practices identified in this guidance will reduce a district's legal risk, improve community trust, and parent engagement, and begin to remedy the continuing harms of segregation"; and

WHEREAS, the District has experienced a significant decline in enrollment, and some schools in the District are not of sufficient enrollment to provide optimal educational services and are also financially inefficient; and

Vision Statement:
The Hacienda La Puente Unified School District is a community committed to developing lifelong learners who value themselves and the diversity of all people; apply decision-making skills leading to responsible actions; and use creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving in meeting the challenges of a changing society.

WHEREAS, the District is considering reconfiguration of District schools, including closure and consolidation ("Reconfiguration Plan"); and

WHEREAS, the District does not meet the definition of a district "under financial distress" under Education Code section 41329(b), but seeks to follow AG Guidance in developing a Reconfiguration Plan; and

WHEREAS, the District established a School Reconfiguration Committee ("SRC") to make recommendations to the District's Board of Education ("Board") regarding a Reconfiguration Plan, including for the 2024-2025 school year ("SRC Recommendations"); and

WHEREAS, the SRC met six (6) times and focused on certain criteria in its school closure or consolidation analysis and recommendations to the Board, which align with the AB 1912 Metrics, including a review of enrollment data; and

WHEREAS, the District has conducted staff and community surveys and multiple community input sessions – both virtually and in person - to receive input from the community regarding reconfiguration; and

WHEREAS, starting on October 9, 2023, a draft Equity Impact Analysis Report ("Report") that analyzes and presents the Reconfiguration Plan and considers SRC Recommendations, information in compliance with AB 1912 and the AB 1912 Metrics contained in Education Code section 41329(a)(1), was made available to the public and was presented to the Board and public at a regularly scheduled Board meeting of October 12, 2023; and

WHEREAS, at the October 12, 2023, and October 26, 2023, regularly scheduled Board meetings, public hearings were held to receive public input on the Reconfiguration Plan and Report, and additional public input sessions have occurred since the October 12, 2023, Board meeting; and

WHEREAS, as part of the October 12, 2023, regularly scheduled meeting Board agenda, the Board considered and adopted Resolution No. 2023/24-15 – Resolution of the Board of Education of the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District Statement of Conformance with the Equity Impact Analysis Metrics for the Consideration of School Closures or Consolidations Pursuant to Education Code, Section 41329 (AB 1912); and

WHEREAS, prior to today's November 9, 2023, Board meeting, the District published a final Report and a Report on Incorporation of Public Input in Final School Closure Recommendation ("Public Input Report"), which discusses the public input that was received and the District's plan for addressing the concerns raised; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Education Code section 41329(a)(2)(C), the Board hereby declares that the community engagement process as set forth by AB 1912 has been completed; and

WHEREAS, based on the information presented to the SRC, the AB 1912 Metrics, the SRC Recommendations, the Report, the Public Input Report, prior Board items and resolutions, including this Board Item and Resolution and reference documents, and community input on the AB 1912 Metrics and Report, the District's recommendation is to close Bixby and consolidate it with Cedarlane; and

WHEREAS, prior to commencement of the Project, the District must ensure the Project complies with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"); and

WHEREAS, the Project meets the definition of Public Resources Code section 21080.18; and

WHEREAS, categorical exemptions to CEQA are set forth in Article 19 of Chapter 3 of Division 6 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations ("CEQA Guidelines"); and

WHEREAS, the Class 14 Categorical Exemption, set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15314, exempts a project that consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms, whichever is less; and

WHEREAS, as of September 2023, Bixby's enrollment was 243 students; and

WHEREAS, Cedarlane's capacity is 976 students, with only 633 students enrolled as of September 2023, and it has an available capacity of 343 students; and

WHEREAS, considering that the 243 Bixby students will be distributed to Cedarlane within its existing available capacity and consolidating Bixby with Cedarlane, the Project will not increase the capacity by greater than 25% or 10 classrooms. Thus, the consolidation of Bixby with Cedarlane would still have an existing capacity for 100 more students and no need to increase capacity. Further, students could be distributed to other schools with capacity, based on proximity, family choice, class size, and other relevant factors; and

WHEREAS, CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 provides five exceptions that would disqualify a project from being categorically exempt. These are: (1) where the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place would be significant over time; (2) a significant environmental impact would occur due to unusual circumstances; (3) a project that would cause damage to scenic elements within a designated state scenic highway; (4) a project that is on a site designated as a Hazardous Waste Site; or (5) a project that causes a substantial adverse change to a historical resource; and

WHEREAS, none of the five exceptions apply because 1) the Project is the only project of the same type at the same place. Although the District contemplates other school closures/consolidations at other sites, each school closure is separate and apart with its own distinct characteristics and features; 2) there are no known unusual circumstances that would be caused by the consolidation of Bixby with Cedarlane, because Cedarlane has available capacity to absorb all of the Bixby students within its existing capacity, and it was designed for the maximum capacity; 3) according to the Caltrans Scenic Highway System Map website, the Bixby site and Cedarlane site are not adjacent to or visible from any officially designated State of California scenic highways. Therefore, no scenic highways or scenic resources would be affected as a result of the Project; 4) neither Bixby nor Cedarlane are located on a site designated as a Hazardous Waste Site; and 5) the Project does not include any changes to existing buildings. Therefore, the Project would not cause a change in the significance of a historical resource.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Education ("Board") hereby finds, determines, and resolves as follows:

Section 1. The above recitals are true and correct.

Section 2. The District has completed the community engagement process pursuant to Education Code section 41329(a)(2)(c).

Section 3. Based on the information presented to the SRC, the AB 1912 Metrics, the SRC Recommendations, the Report, the Public Input Report, prior board items and resolutions, including this Board Item and Resolution, all referenced documents and community input on the AB 1912 Metrics and Report, the Board's final recommendation is to approve the Project to close Bixby and consolidate Bixby with Cedarlane.

Section 4. The Project meets the definition of the Class 14 Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guidelines § 15314) because Cedarlane has available capacity to absorb Bixby's enrollment without exceeding its available capacity and without the need to make facilities changes or additions.

Section 5. There are no unusual circumstances that would cause this Project to create a potentially significant environmental impact, and none of the exceptions are applicable.

Section 6. The applicable requirements of CEQA have been fulfilled for the Project.

Section 7. The District decides to carry out the Project.

Section 8. The Superintendent or designee is directed to carry out all necessary actions to implement the Resolution, including the filing of Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted at a meeting of the Board of Education of the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District, at a meeting thereof duly held on the 9th day of November, 2023, by a majority vote of all of its members.

ADOPTED by the following vote: 3-2

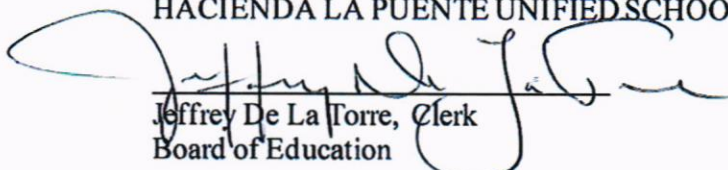
AYES, and in favor of, Members: G. Kwok, N. Loera, C. Salazar

NOES, Members: J. De La Torre, S. Serrano

ABSTAIN, Members: None

ABSENT, Members: None

HACIENDA LA PUENTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT


Jeffrey De La Torre, Clerk
Board of Education