

Notice of Exemption

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

From: (Public Agency): Hemet Unified School District
1791 W Acacia Avenue
Hemet, CA 92545
(Address)

County Clerk
County of: Riverside
2724 Gateway Drive
Riverside, CA 92507

Project Title: Elementary School #10 Kindergarten Expansion

Project Applicant: Hemet Unified School District

Project Location – Specific:

North of the intersection of Prairie Rd & Western Hills Dr, west of Kentia Ct. Assessor parcel numbers 461-860-001, 002.

Project Location – City: Unincorporated Winchester Project Location – County: Riverside

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The proposed project would benefit students and staff of the Hemet Unified School District by providing adequate space for transitional kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms. The classrooms would be designed for and approved by the California Department of Education in relation to Title 5 standards. See attachment for further details.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Hemet Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Hemet 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 Sec. 15314 Minor Additions to Schools
- ☐ Statutory Exemption. State code number: _____

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County of Riverside
Peter Aldana
Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder

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Reasons why project is exempt:

Categorical Exemption Class 14 Sec. 15314 permits minor additions to schools "within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25 percent or ten classrooms, whichever is less." The proposed project would increase the capacity of Elementary School #10 by 167 students (22.3%) and six classrooms, both of which are within the allowable exemption parameters for Class 14.

The proposed project has been examined in the context of this Section and has been found consistent with these criteria. Further, the application of this Section of the CEQA Guidelines is not barred by any exceptions set forth in Section 15300.2

The attachment to this Notice of Exemption provides additional detail in support of this finding.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mike Sattley Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (951) 765-5100 ext. 5400

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:  Date: 6/24/24 Title: Facilities Director

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

☒ Signed by Applicant

Authority Cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

**ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL #10 KINDERGARTEN EXPANSION
UNINCORPORATED WINCHESTER, RIVERSIDE COUNTY
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

1. Description of the Existing Setting Onsite and in Adjacent Areas

The project site is located north of the intersection of Prairie Rd & Western Hills Dr, west of Kentia Ct, in unincorporated Winchester, Riverside County. The project site is comprised of assessor parcel numbers 461-860-001, 002. The site is within Planning Area 36 of the Winchester Hills Specific Plan No. 293 and is designated for use as a school site. The land is currently undeveloped and adjacent to existing residential to the east and south, vacant land and residential that is under construction to the south, a future park to the west, and the Salt Creek Flood Channel to the north.

2. Description of the Proposed Project

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for Elementary School #10 in December 2005, and adopted by the Governing Board of the Hemet Unified School District in January 2006. The MND evaluated a capacity for Elementary School #10 of 750 students. Since the adoption of the MND the State has moved from half-day to full-day kindergarten. In addition, transitional kindergarten has been implemented, opening kindergarten to students aged four years and up. This has effectively doubled the number of kindergarten classrooms needed at each elementary school, in addition to the creation of a new grade level.

To adequately house the kindergarten and transitional kindergarten students in spaces designed to meet the California Department of Education's Title 5 standards, the student capacity and number of classrooms for Elementary School #10 needs to be increased by 167 students and six classrooms.

3. Review of Possible Exceptions to the Categorical Exemption

The proposed project has been reviewed under Sec. 15300.2 for any characteristics that might invalidate findings that the project is exempt from CEQA. Section 15300.2 identifies six exceptions to categorical exemptions:

- a. **Location.** Sec. 15300.2 specifically references classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 as possibly having significant environmental impacts. A Class 14 Categorical Exemption would be applied; thus the proposed project would not fall within a class where the exemption may be subject to a possible exception. As the proposed project is located within land approved for school use it is not environmentally sensitive. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species as it is part of an approved specific plan that is partially built out. The project site is not within a Western Riverside

County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) criteria cell designated for preservation or future preservation.

- b. Cumulative Impact.** The proposed project is not part of successive projects proposed at the project site that, combined with other ongoing projects, could have an adverse impact on the environment individually or cumulatively. The proposed project is not associated with any "successive projects of the same kind in the same place over time". Thus, no cumulative impacts are possible and this exception does not apply to the proposed project.
- c. Significant Effects.** In considering whether the proposed project would create any significant impacts, the environmental checklist in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines was reviewed. Project implementation would not result in significant effects to any of the 21 environmental factors. Hemet Unified School District and its Program/Construction Manager would comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and best management practices to avoid and/or minimize any potential environmental impacts as well as to protect the safety of site occupants. Therefore, there is no reasonable possibility that the proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- d. Scenic Highways.** According to the Caltrans Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the proposed project is not within or in the vicinity of any state scenic highway (Caltrans 2024). Thus, no impact would result from the proposed project and this exception does not apply.
- e. Hazardous Waste Sites.** Sec. 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines states that a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code. Sec. 65962.5 specifies lists of the following types of hazardous material sites: hazardous waste facilities; hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Quality Control Board has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated. The following databases were searched and the site was not included on any such list: GeoTracker (State Water Resources Control Board), Envirostor (Department of Toxic Substances Control), and EnviroMapper (United States Environmental Protection Agency).
- f. Historical Resources.** The National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources and local sources were reviewed and the existing school site has not been identified as a significant historical resource. Therefore, the project would not result in an impact to historic resources pursuant to Public Resources Code Sec. 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15064.5. As a result, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.