RESOLUTION NO. 30/2024-2025
OF
INGLEWOOD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
DETERIMING THAT THE HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSURE AND 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 Inglewood Unified School District ("District") has developed the Highland Elementary School Closure and Consolidation Plan ("Project") in which the District would close Highland Elementary School ("Highland") with 376 TK-6 students from Highland relocating to Centinela TK-8 ("Centinela") within Centinela's existing available capacity; and

WHEREAS, Highland is located at 430 Venice Way, Inglewood, CA 90302; Centinela is located at 1123 N Marlborough Ave, Inglewood, CA 90302; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the District became financially insolvent and was placed under state receivership, and since that time has been assigned an Administrator to oversee the District; and

WHERAS, in September of 2018, Assembly Bill ("AB") 1840 became effective and provides for several changes in the oversight of fiscally distressed districts and accordingly sets forth specific requirements for the District; and

WHERAS, the requirements of AB 1840 included the requirement for *"Complete comprehensive operational reviews that compare the needs of the school district with similar school districts and provide data and recommendations regarding changes the school district can make to achieve fiscal sustainability"*; and

WHEREAS, the Financial Crisis Management Assistance Team ("FCMAT"), who has been assigned to monitor the District's progress in meeting requirements to exit receivership, has stated in several of its reports that "*continuing to operate the same number of schools underutilizes school sites for an undefined number of years and poses a financial burden on the district"*; and

WHEREAS, according to a recent demographic study, the District's enrollment has declined by 4,001 students between the 2014-15 school year and the 2023-24 school year, and is projected to continue to decline by over 1,482 students by the 2029-30 school year; and

WHEREAS, the District currently operates more schools than it can maintain and modernize, and the small size of the schools is an impediment to offering more robust academic programs and is financially inefficient. Given all of the above facts, it is necessary for the District to consider closing and consolidating some of its schools for the 2025-2026 school year; and

WHEREAS, in September 2022, the California Governor signed into law 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 June 20, 2024, in compliance with AB 1912 requirements, the County Administrator adopted Resolution 55/2023-2024 Establishing the Equity Impact Analysis Metrics for the Consideration of School Closures and Consolidations Pursuant to AB 1912. The Resolution established the following school closure criteria, which includes the AB1912 Metrics in conformance with Education Code section 41329(a)(2)(C):

A. The condition of a school facility.
B. The operating cost of a school and the associated savings resulting from a closure or consolidation.
C. The capacity of a school to accommodate excess pupils.
D. Special programs available at the schools being considered for closure or consolidation and whether those programs will be provided at the same current level at the schools to which pupils will be diverted.
E. Environmental factors, including, but not limited to, traffic and proximity to freeway access.
F. Balance of pupil demographics, including race or ethnicity, pupils with disabilities, English learners, foster youth, and homeless youth, in the schools being considered for closure or consolidation, and the resulting demographic balance of pupils after placement in other schools, in order to determine if the decision to close or consolidate will have a disproportionate impact on any particular demographic group.
G. Transportation needs of pupils.
H. Aesthetics and the opportunity for blight and negative impact on the surrounding community.
I. Impact on feeder school attendance patterns with the closure of any particular school and whether the closure will attenuate attendance at other schools or specialized programs as a result; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2023, the Office of the Attorney General issued a letter which provided guidance *Regarding Laws Governing School Closures and Best Practices for Implementation in California*, which the County Administrator will consider when making school closure and consolidation decisions; and

WHEREAS, at a regularly scheduled Board meeting on December 18, 2024, the public was presented with a draft Equity Impact Analysis Report ("Report") that analyzes and presents information in compliance with AB 1912 and the AB 1912 Metrics; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the AB 1912 requirements a public hearing was held on December 18, 2024 to receive public input from the community regarding the draft Report and the AB 1912 Metrics analyzed in the Report; and

WHEREAS, prior to today's January 15, 2025, 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

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

WHEREAS, based on the AB 1912 Metrics, 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 and/or consolidate schools within the District as described in this Resolution; 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, Highland's 2025-2026 enrollment is projected to be 376 students; and

WHEREAS, Centinela has a total capacity of 1,266 students with a 2025-2026 projected enrollment of 470 students, and available capacity of 796 students; and

WHEREAS, therefore, the 376 students from Highland will be distributed to Centinela within its existing available capacity and by closing Highland and transferring the students, the Project will not increase original school capacity by 10 classrooms or 25%; and

WHEREAS, thus the Project meets the definition of the Class 14 Categorical Exemption. 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; while the District contemplates school closures and consolidations at multiple 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 Project, because each school discussed herein has available capacity to absorb all students from closed or consolidated schools within their existing capacities, and the schools were designed for the maximum capacity; 3) according to the Caltrans Scenic Highway System Map website (California State Scenic Highway System Map), none of the schools discussed herein are 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) none of the schools discussed herein are located on a site designated as a Hazardous Waste Site; and 5) the Project does not include any alterations to existing buildings; therefore, the Project would not cause a change in a significant historical resource.

NOW, THEREFORE, the County Administrator of the Inglewood Unified School District hereby finds, determines, declares, orders 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 AB 1912 Metrics, 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 Project is approved to close Highland and consolidate it with Centinela.

Section 4. The Project meets the definition of the Class 14 Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guidelines, § 15314) because the school has available capacity to absorb new students 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 County Administrator or designee will carry out all necessary actions to implement the Resolution, including the filing of Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk and the State Clearinghouse.

This Resolution shall take effect upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 15th day of January 2025, by the County Administrator of the Inglewood Unified School District of Los Angeles County, California.

James Morris, Ed.D.
County Administrator