CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: ☒ Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

☒ County Clerk
County of Sonoma
585 Fiscal Drive # 103F, Santa Rosa
CA, 95403

From: Santa Rosa City Schools
(Lead Agency and Applicant)
110 Stony Point Road Suite #210,
Santa Rosa, CA, 95401

School Consolidation and Transitional Kindergarten Project
Project Title

Santa Rosa City Schools: Santa Rosa Middle School (MS), Santa Rosa High School (HS), Montgomery HS, Lewis Early Learning Academy, Brook Hill Elementary School (ES), Herbert Slater MS, Doyle Park ES (which houses the Santa Rosa French American Charter School), Hilliard Comstock MS, Piner HS, Steele Lane ES, Albert F. Biella ES, and receiving elementary schools
Project Location - Specific

Santa Rosa
Project Location – City

Sonoma
Project Location – County

The SRCS will implement a school consolidation program that will be implemented over two years (2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school year). The SRCS will consolidate 11 school campuses to 5 campuses, and the 6 unoccupied campuses will close. The District will close Lewis Early Learning Academy, Herbert Slater MS, Brook Hill ES, Doyle Park ES (which currently houses the Santa Rosa French-American Charter School), Hilliard Comstock MS, and Steele Lane ES campuses. The District will continue to own all closed campuses. No improvements are proposed at any of the closed campuses. There are no other known plans for these campuses. As part of the consolidation program, improvements are proposed at the existing Piner HS campus to accommodate the increase in students; Albert Biella ES campus to accommodate the relocation of Special Day Class (SDC) preschool and Early Start Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students, and Santa Rosa MS campus to accommodate the TK students associated with Santa Rosa French-American Charter School. No physical improvements are proposed at Santa Rosa HS, Montgomery HS, Hilliard Comstock MS, Lewis Early Learning Academy, Brook Hill ES, Herbert Slater MS, Doyle Park ES, and Steele Lane ES. Further details are provided below.

Consolidation

During the first year (2025-2026) of the consolidation program, Santa Rosa MS students will relocate to the existing Santa Rosa HS campus. No improvements are proposed at the Santa Rosa HS campus, and the Santa Rosa HS campus will serve grades 7 through 12. Herbert Slater MS students will relocate to the existing Montgomery HS campus. No improvements are proposed at the Montgomery High School campus, which will

serve grades 7 through 12. Following the relocation of Herbert Slater MS students to the existing Montgomery HS, the existing Herbert Slater MS campus will close. Brook Hill ES students will relocate to their next nearest existing elementary schools. With the decline in enrollment, the receiving elementary school campuses have available capacity to accommodate the students. Following the relocation of Brook Hill ES students, the existing Brook Hill ES campus will close.

During the second year (2026-2027) of the consolidation program, the existing Santa Rosa French-American Charter School students will relocate from Doyle Park ES campus to the existing Santa Rosa MS campus. To accommodate the TK program associated with Santa Rosa French-American Charter School, two modular classroom buildings (six classrooms total) to serve TK students will be installed at the Santa Rosa MS campus (refer to section "Campus Improvements at Santa Rosa Middle School" for further discussion). Subsequently, the existing Doyle Park ES campus will close.

Lewis Early Learning Academy students will relocate to the Albert F. Biella ES. Following the relocation of Lewis Early Learning Academy students, the existing Lewis Early Learning Academy campus will close. SDC students currently at Steele Lane ES will relocate to Albert F. Biella ES. Remaining Steele Lane ES students will relocate to their next nearest existing elementary schools. With the decline in enrollment, the receiving elementary school campuses have available capacity to accommodate the students. Following the relocation of Steele Lane ES students, the existing Steele Lane ES campus will close. To accommodate the SDC and DHH students, interior modernizations to existing buildings are proposed at the Albert F. Biella ES campus (refer to section "Campus Improvements at Albert F. Biella Elementary School" for further discussion).

Hilliard Comstock MS students will relocate to Piner High School. The Piner HS campus will serve grades 7 through 12. As part of the consolidation program, the proposed project includes the construction of a two-story, 12-classroom building, the removal of three portable classrooms, and courtyard improvements at Piner HS. Refer to the section "Campus Improvements at Piner High School" for further discussion. Following the relocation of Hilliard Comstock MS students, the Hilliard Comstock MS campus will close.

The District will continue to own all closed campuses. No improvements are proposed at any of the closed campuses. There are no other known plans for these campuses.

Campus Improvements at Santa Rosa Middle School

The improvements at the existing Santa Rosa MS campus (i.e. the new location for the Santa Rosa French-American Charter School) will support TK students. The proposed project will construct two modular classroom buildings with three classrooms each (Building J and E), a TK play area, a 1st to 6th grade play area, and a parking lot. Other improvements include the installation of bike lockers and racks, fire access route and gate, paved walkways, and fencing. The proposed parking lot will be constructed southeast of the existing gymnasium and will include 17 standard parking stalls and two Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible spaces. The driveway curb cuts providing access to the proposed parking lot are existing. Vehicles will enter the eastern driveway and exit on the western driveway. Associated parking lot signage will be installed. Additionally, the two proposed playgrounds will include play structures. To allow for the proposed improvements, eight portable classroom buildings with eight classrooms will be removed. The improvements at the existing Santa Rosa MS campus will result in a net decrease of two classrooms on the campus.

Campus Improvements at Albert Biella Elementary School

To accommodate the SDC and DHH students at the current Albert Biella ES campus, the proposed project interior modernization improvements to existing buildings to serve SDC and DHH students consistent with the California Department of Education standards. Interior modernization will include accessible and age-appropriate classroom counters, furniture, fixtures, and restroom fixtures. The proposed improvements at the Albert Biella ES campus will not increase the enrollment capacity of the campus.

Campus Improvements at Piner High School
To accommodate the increase of students at the current Piner HS campus, the proposed project will construct a two-story, 12-classroom building on the south side of Piner HS. Additionally, west of the proposed classroom building a new outdoor courtyard will be constructed with a synthetic turf area, seat walls, bike lockers and racks, a water fountain, fencing and gates. The proposed project will also include concrete walkways, a new fire hydrant, and ADA parking stalls with applicable signage. A new fire access lane will be constructed east of the proposed classroom building, which will connect to the existing fire access lane. To allow for the construction of the proposed project, three existing portable classrooms and 26-parking spaces at the southern portion of campus will be removed. No changes to pick-up/drop-off nor vehicle access to the campus are proposed. The proposed project will result in a net increase of nine classrooms.

Construction
Construction at Piner HS and Santa Rosa MS is scheduled to start in the fall of 2025 and complete in the summer of 2026. Construction at Albert Biella ES will start spring of 2026 and be completed in the summer of 2026. All construction equipment and workers will be within the boundaries of the Santa Rosa MS, Piner HS, and Albert Biella ES campuses.

The proposed project will not increase enrollment in the District, and the proposed project will address declining enrollment and ensure the efficient allocation of resources. The SRCS student body and staff and surrounding community will benefit from a more efficient allocation of school and educational resources.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

Santa Rosa City Schools

Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Santa Rosa City Schools

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

Exempt Status: (check one below)

☐ 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: §15301 Class 1, Existing Facilities, §15303 Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, §15311 Class 11, Accessory Structures, and §15314 Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools

☒ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: § 21080.18

Statutory Exemption PRC Section 21080.18

The closure of existing Lewis Early Learning Academy, Herbert Slater MS, Brook Hill ES, Doyle Park ES (which currently houses the Santa Rosa French-American Charter School), Hilliard Comstock MS, and Steele Lane ES campuses; the transfer of these students to other existing campuses within the district (as described in the Project Description); the restructuring of Santa Rosa HS, Montgomery HS, and Piner HS campuses to serve 7th through 12th graders; and the restructuring of Santa Rosa MS campus to serve TK through 6th graders are statutorily exempt pursuant to PRC Section 21080.18, since the site improvements at Santa Rosa MS, Albert Biella ES, and Piner HS campuses are categorically exempt. No physical improvements are proposed at Brook Hill ES, Lewis Early Learning Academy, Steele Lane ES, Herbert Slater MS, Hilliard

Comstock MS, Montgomery HS, Santa Rosa HS, Doyle Park ES, and receiving existing elementary school campuses. Therefore, the proposed project is statutorily exempt pursuant to PRC Section 21080.18.

Categorical Exemption Class 1, Existing Facilities

Albert F. Biella ES Campus: The interior modernization improvements to existing buildings to serve SDC and DHH students at the Albert Biella ES campus are exempt from CEQA under Class 1, Existing Facilities (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301). Interior modernization will include accessible and age-appropriate classroom counters, furniture, fixtures, and restroom fixtures. No exterior improvements at Albert Biella ES campus are proposed. The interior improvements to existing buildings will not alter the basic functions of the campus. Thus, these components of the proposed project at Albert Biella ES campus will be exempt from CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

Categorical Exemption Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Santa Rosa MS Campus: The proposed construction of a TK play area, a 1st to 6th grade play area; and installation of bike lockers and racks, fire access route gate, paved walkways, and fencing are exempt from CEQA under Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (CEQA Guidelines Section 15303). The proposed TK play area; a 1st to 6th grade play area; and installation of bike lockers and racks, fire access route gate, paved walkways, and fencing are small accessory structures to support the school campus. The new bike lockers and racks and play structures associated with the two play areas are small new equipment and accessory structures. The aforementioned improvements will be on an existing campus to serve students and will not increase student capacity; these components of the proposed project are exempt from CEQA under Section 15303.

Piner HS Campus: The proposed construction of an outdoor courtyard; and installation of a synthetic turf area, seat walls, bike lockers and racks, a water fountain, fencing and gates, concrete walkways, and a fire hydrant are exempt from CEQA under Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (CEQA Guidelines Section 15303). The proposed outdoor courtyard and installation of a synthetic turf area, seat walls, a water fountain, fencing and gates, and concrete walkways are small accessory structures and within the school campus. The new bike lockers and racks and fire hydrant are small new equipment and accessory structures. The aforementioned improvements will be on campus to serve students and not increase student capacity; these components of the proposed project are exempt from CEQA under Section 15303.

Categorical Exemption Class 11, Accessory Structures

Santa Rosa MS Campus: The construction of a parking lot, a TK play area structures, a 1st to 6th grade play area structures, bike lockers and racks, fire access route and gate, paved walkways, fencing, and signage are exempt from CEQA under Class 11, Accessory Structures (CEQA Guidelines Section 15311). The proposed project will construct a parking lot, a fire access route, and associated signage are exempt under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15311(a) and (b). The installation of the TK play area structures, 1st to 6th grade play area structures, bike lockers and racks, fire access route gate, paved walkways, and fencing are minor accessory structures to the Santa Rosa MS campus. The aforementioned structures will be within the Santa Rosa MS campus to serve students and will not increase student capacity. These components of the proposed project are exempt from CEQA under Section 15311.

Piner HS Campus: The construction of ADA parking spaces, an outdoor courtyard, and fire access lane and installation of seat walls, bike lockers and racks, a water fountain, fencing and gates, and a fire hydrant are exempt from CEQA under Class 11, Accessory Structures (CEQA Guidelines Section 15311). The proposed project will construct a fire access lane, ADA parking spaces, and associated signage which are exempt under CEQA Guidelines 15311(a) and (b). The outdoor ADA parking spaces, courtyard, seat walls, bike lockers and racks, a water fountain, fencing and gates are minor accessory structures to the Piner HS campus. The aforementioned structures will be located within the Piner HS campus to serve students and will not increase student capacity. These components of the proposed project are exempt from CEQA under Section 15311.

Categorical Exemption Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools

Santa Rosa MS Campus: The proposed project at Santa Rosa MS campus, including the proposed installation of the two modular classroom buildings with three classrooms each (six classrooms total), is exempt from CEQA under Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools (CEQA Guidelines Section 15314). The six new classrooms will be located within the school campus. The proposed project will result in the removal of eight portable classrooms. Thus, the proposed project at Santa Rosa MS will result in a net decrease of two classrooms on the campus which is less than the 10 classrooms allowed under this exemption. The enrollment design capacity of the campus will decrease by 4.6 percent. Therefore, the proposed project will not increase the student capacity of the campus by more than 25 percent. Because the proposed project is on the existing Santa Rosa MS campus, will not add more than 10 classrooms, and will not increase student capacity by 25 percent or more, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15314.

Albert F. Biella ES Campus: The proposed project will not install nor construct any new classrooms at Albert F. Biella ES campus. As shown in Table 1, the proposed project will not affect the enrollment design capacity at Albert F. Biella ES. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15314.

Piner HS Campus: The proposed project at Piner HS campus, including the construction of a 12-classroom building and removal of 3 existing portable classrooms, is exempt from CEQA under Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools (CEQA Guidelines Section 15314). The proposed project will result in a net increase of 9 classrooms, which is less than the 10 classrooms allowed under this exemption. The enrollment design capacity of the campus will increase by 12.3 percent. Therefore, the proposed project will not increase the student capacity of the campus by more than 25 percent. Because the proposed project is on the existing Piner HS campus, will not increase the school classrooms by 10, and will not increase student capacity by 25 percent or more, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA under Section 15314.

The proposed project was also reviewed for possible exceptions under Section 15300.2 and found that the exceptions do not apply. See attachment to Notice of Exemption for further explanation of the evaluation, which is available at the District office at 110 Stony Point Road, Suite #210, Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

Reasons why project is exempt

Erik Oden, Executive Director	707-890-3800	eoden@srcs.k12.ca.us
Contact Person:	Area Code/Telephone/Extension:	Email:

If filed by applicant:

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

Date Received for Filing: _____

Signature: _____ Title: *Executive Director Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations*