Notice of Exemption

To: ☒ Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

☒ Clerk-Recorder
County of Sonoma
585 Fiscal Drive, Rm. 103
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

From: (Public Agency)
Sonoma Valley Unified School District
17850 Railroad Avenue
Sonoma, CA 95476

Project Title: Sonoma Valley Unified School District Elementary School Closure and Consolidation

Project Applicant: Sonoma Valley Unified School District

Project Location – Specific: Prestwood Elementary School, 343 East MacArthur Street, Sonoma, CA 95476; El Verano Elementary School, 18606 Riverside Dr, Sonoma, CA 95476; and Sassarini Elementary School, 652 5th St W, Sonoma, CA 95476.

Project Location – City: Sonoma (Prestwood Elementary and Sassarini Elementary); Unincorporated Sonoma County (El Verano Elementary).

Project Location – County: Sonoma

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of the Project:
The Sonoma Valley Unified School District (District) approved the closure of Prestwood Elementary School, contingent upon: (1) revising elementary school attendance boundaries, (2) preparing an elementary transition plan, and (3) completing environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The action was prompted by sustained declines in elementary enrollment. The closure of Prestwood Elementary will result in the consolidation of operations into two receiving schools: El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. Based on projected 2026-27 academic enrollment and operational capacity, both El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary have adequate capacity to accommodate Prestwood Elementary's 274 students.

This CEQA analysis evaluates the potential physical environmental effects of the proposed actions, which include:
1. Closure of Prestwood Elementary School;
2. Adjustment of attendance boundaries and reassignment of students to receiving schools;
3. Relocation of the Extensive Support Needs Program; and
4. Installation of a single restroom within existing buildings at both El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sonoma Valley Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Sonoma Valley Unified School District

Exempt Status:

☒ Statutory Exemption. Closing of Any Public School (Article 18, Section 15282[i])

☒ Categorical Exemption. Existing Facilities (Article 19, Section 15301)

☒ Categorical Exemption. New Construction (Article 19, Section 15303)

☒ Categorical Exemption. Accessory Structures (Article 19, Section 15311)

☒ Categorical Exemption. Minor Additions to Schools (Article 19, Section 15314)

☒ Categorical Exemption. Educational or Training Programs Involving No Physical Changes (Article 19, Section 15322)

Reasons why project is exempt:
See attachment: Sonoma Valley Unified School District Elementary School Closure and Consolidation CEQA Exemption Findings.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Rena Seifts, Acting Superintendent

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (707) 935-4246

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: Kylie Pope Date: 10.10.25 Title: Consultant to the Sonoma Valley Unified School District

☒ Signed by Lead Agency (Consultant)

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

☐ Signed by Applicant

Revised 2011

CEQA Exemption Findings

Elementary School Closure and Consolidation

Sonoma Valley Unified School District

October 9, 2025

Prepared by

EMC Planning Group

CEQA EXEMPTION FINDINGS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSURE AND CONSOLIDATION

SONOMA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PREPARED FOR

Sonoma Valley Unified School District

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October 9, 2025

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Appendix B Sonoma Valley Unified School District Existing and Proposed Elementary School Attendance Boundaries

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Sonoma Valley Unified School District Elementary School Closure and Consolidation Categorical Exemption

Project Description

School Closure and Consolidation

Per Resolution No. 26-07 (Appendix A), the Sonoma Valley Unified School District (District) approved the closure of Prestwood Elementary School, contingent upon: (1) revising elementary school attendance boundaries, (2) preparing an elementary transition plan, and (3) completing environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The action was prompted by sustained declines in elementary enrollment.

This CEQA analysis evaluates the potential physical environmental effects of the proposed actions, which include:

1. Closure of Prestwood Elementary School;
2. Adjustment of attendance boundaries and reassignment of students to receiving schools;
3. Relocation of the Extensive Support Needs Program; and
4. Installation of a single restroom within existing buildings at both El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary.

The District currently operates four elementary schools:

- El Verano Elementary (18606 Riverside Drive);
- Flowery Elementary (17600 Sonoma Highway);
- Prestwood Elementary (343 East MacArthur Street); and
- Sassarini Elementary (652 Fifth Street West).

Table 1, Changes in District Elementary School Enrollment, 1997-98 to 2025–26, summarizes enrollment trends by school. During this period, enrollment declined at all four elementary schools. Overall, total district elementary enrollment decreased by 775 students (39 percent), from 1,965 to 1,190 students.

Table 1 Changes in District Elementary School Enrollment, 1997-98 to 2025-26

School	Enrollment 1997-98	Enrollment 2025-26	Percent Change
El Verano Elementary School	512	289	44 percent decline
Flowery Elementary School	500	355	29 percent decline
Prestwood Elementary School	506	274	46 percent decline
Sassarini Elementary School	447	272	39 percent decline
Total	**1,965**	**1,190**	**39 percent decline**

SOURCE: California Department of Education 2025; Sonoma Valley Unified School District 2025b.

In response to these enrollment declines, the District proposes school closure, consolidation, and boundary adjustments to reduce annual operational costs and improve efficiency.

School Attendance Boundary Adjustments

To align attendance boundaries with enrollment needs and maintain balanced distribution following the proposed closure of Prestwood Elementary, the District proposes boundary adjustments. Appendix B presents the existing and proposed attendance boundary maps. Table 2, Proposed Student Reallocation and Projected 2026-27 Enrollment, presents the reallocation of students as a result of proposed boundary adjustments and the resulting total estimated enrollment for the 2026-27 academic year.

Table 2 Proposed Student Reallocation and Projected 2026-27 Enrollment

School	Operational Capacity	2025-26 Enrollment	Excess Capacity[1]	Change from School Closure[2]	Projected 2026-27 Enrollment
El Verano Elementary School	575	289	286	+86 +64 = 150	439
Flowery Elementary School	440	355	85	N/A	355
Sassarini Elementary School	480	272	208	-64 +188 =124	396

SOURCE: California Department of Education 2025; Sonoma Valley Unified School District 2025
NOTES: 1 Excess capacity equals the operational capacity less the 2026-27 projected enrollment.
2 Based on District email communication dated September 10, 2025.

Current enrollment at Prestwood Elementary for the 2025–26 academic year is 274 students. Under the proposed closure and boundary adjustments, the District would reassign 188 Prestwood students to Sassarini Elementary and 86 Prestwood students to El Verano Elementary. To further balance enrollment, approximately 64 students who reside within proximity to El Verano but currently

attend Sassarini would also be reassigned to El Verano. In total, Sassarini would have a net increase of 124 students and El Verano would have a net increase of 150 students as a result of the proposed closure of Prestwood Elementary and boundary adjustments.

Enrollment and Operational Capacity of Receiving School Facilities

Table 3, Comparison of Peak Enrollment, Projected Enrollment, and Capacity of Receiving School Facilities – Post-Boundary Adjustments, evaluates the capacity of receiving schools to accommodate additional students after proposed boundary adjustments have occurred, should the District approve this action.

Table 3 Comparison of Peak Enrollment, Projected Enrollment, and Capacity of Receiving School Facilities – Post-Boundary Adjustments

School	Peak Enrollment (Year)	2026-27 Projected Enrollment[3]	Operational Capacity	Excess Capacity[1]
El Verano Elementary School	512 (1997-98)	439[2]	575	136
Flowery Elementary School	500 (1997-98)	355[2]	440	85
Sassarini Elementary School	449 (1999-00)	396[2]	480	84
			Total	305

SOURCE: California Department of Education 2025; Sonoma Valley Unified School District 2025
NOTES: 1 Excess capacity equals the operational capacity less the 2026-27 projected enrollment.
2 Based on District email communication dated September 10, 2025.
3 2026-27 Projected Enrollment includes the relocation of 188 students to Sassarini and 150 students to El Verano.

After boundary adjustments, the three receiving elementary schools collectively have 305 seats of excess capacity—El Verano (136), Flowery (85), and Sassarini (84). Therefore, under the proposed boundary adjustments, the receiving schools have sufficient capacity to accommodate the student population with the closure of Prestwood Elementary. Further, historical peak enrollment data confirm that all receiving schools have previously operated at levels exceeding the projected 2026-27 enrollment.

Proposed Academic Program Relocations

In addition to the proposed closure of Prestwood Elementary and related boundary adjustments, the District is evaluating relocation of the Extensive Support Needs Program from Prestwood Elementary to El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. The Extensive Support Needs Program currently serves 34 students whose home attendance areas are: Flowery (14), Sassarini (8), El Verano (7), and Prestwood (5). These 34 students are included within—not in addition to—the 274 Prestwood students proposed for reassignment. Of the 34 students enrolled in the Extensive Support Needs Program, the District anticipates approximately 24 would attend Sassarini Elementary, including 14 transitional kindergarten through second grade students and 10 third through fifth grade students, while 10 preschool students would attend El Verano Elementary.

As shown in Table 3, El Verano Elementary has an operational capacity of 575 students and a projected 2026–27 enrollment of 439 students following all reassignments, leaving approximately 136 available seats. Similarly, Sassarini Elementary has an operational capacity of 480 students and a projected 2026–27 enrollment of 396 students, leaving approximately 84 available seats. Accordingly, both schools have sufficient capacity to accommodate the relocation of the Extensive Support Needs Program.

Potential Physical Changes

The District does not anticipate a need for additional classroom facilities at the receiving schools to accommodate the change in enrollment. However, this environmental analysis considers the installation of one additional restroom within an existing portable restroom facility at El Verano Elementary and one within an existing classroom at Sassarini Elementary.

The Extensive Support Needs Program serves preschool and transitional kindergarten through fifth-grade students. Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 17779 (Restroom Facilities), preschool, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten classrooms must have self-contained restroom facilities. To meet this requirement and accommodate relocated Extensive Support Needs students, the District is considering installation of a single restroom within existing buildings at each school site. No new instructional space is proposed. Because the improvements would occur entirely within existing buildings, no tree removal is required, and any potential environmental effects would be limited to the already developed portions of the school campuses.

Environmental Setting at Receiving Elementary Schools

El Verano Elementary 18606 Riverside Drive

El Verano Elementary, located at 18606 Riverside Drive, is situated within a developed residential area surrounded by residential neighborhoods to the north, east, south, and west. Sonoma Highway is located approximately 0.4 miles east of the school. Sonoma Creek is located approximately 0.1 miles east/north east of El Verano Elementary.

El Verano Elementary is located approximately 3.1 miles northwest of Prestwood Elementary.

Flowery Elementary 17600 Sonoma Highway

Flowery Elementary, located at 17600 Sonoma Highway, is situated within an area of both residential and commercial uses, surrounded by residential uses to the north, west/northwest, southeast, and commercial uses to the east. Larson Park is located south of the school, and a riverine habitat that branches off of Sonoma Creek lies to the west, bordering the southern boundary of the Flowery Elementary campus.

Flowery Elementary is located approximately 3.7 miles northwest of Prestwood Elementary.

Sassarini Elementary 652 Fifth Street West

Sassarini Elementary, located at 652 Fifth Street West, is situated within an area of both residential and commercial uses, surrounded by residential uses to the west, east, and south, and commercial uses to the north. Eraldi Park is located adjacent to the eastern campus boundary. A riverine habitat borders the eastern campus boundary of Sassarini Elementary.

Sassarini Elementary is located approximately 1.2 miles northwest of Prestwood Elementary.

Statutory Exemption

The proposed project qualifies for a statutory exemption under Article 18, Section 15282(i).

Section 15282(i) Closing Any Public School or Transfer of Students

> The closing of any public school or the transfer of students from that public school to another school in which kindergarten or any grades 1 through 12 is maintained as set forth in 21080.18 of the Public Resources Code.

PRC 21080.18 states:

> Application of Division to Closing of Public School Maintaining Kindergarten or Any of Grades 1 Through 12. This division does not apply to the closing of any public school in which kindergarten or any of grades 1 through 12 is maintained or the transfer of students from that public school to another school if the only physical changes involved are categorically exempt under Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 15000) of Division 6 of Title 14 of the California Administrative Code.

Discussion. The proposed project qualifies for this exemption as it involves closing Prestwood Elementary and consolidating operations at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. Attendance boundary adjustments will accompany the closure and consolidation. El Verano Elementary will accommodate a net increase of 150 students, and Sassarini Elementary will accommodate a net increase of 124 students. The receiving schools are expected to serve the projected 2026–27 enrollment without the addition of new classroom facilities. However, to accommodate the grade levels each school serves, the District is considering the addition of a single restroom within an existing portable restroom facility at El Verano Elementary, and one within an existing classroom at Sassarini Elementary; no new instructional space is proposed. This installation would not increase either school's enrollment capacity. Refer to categorical exemptions discussed below.

Categorical Exemptions

The proposed project qualifies for a categorical exemption under Article 19, Section 15301, Section 15303, Section 15311, Section 15314, and Section 15322 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Section 15301 Existing Facilities

Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or *no expansion of existing or former use* (emphasis added). The types of "existing facilities" itemized below are not intended to be all-inclusive of the types of projects which might fall within Class 1. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of use. Examples include but are not limited to:

(a) Interior or exterior alterations involving such things as interior partitions, plumbing, and electrical conveyances;

(b) Existing facilities of both investor and publicly owned utilities used to provide electric power, natural gas, sewerage, or other public utility services;

(c) Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities (this includes road grading for the purpose of public safety), and other alterations such as the addition of bicycle facilities, including but not limited to bicycle parking, bicycle-share facilities and bicycle lanes, transit improvements such as bus lanes, pedestrian crossings, street trees, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes);

(d) Restoration or rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment to meet current standards of public health and safety, unless it is determined that the damage was substantial and resulted from an environmental hazard such as earthquake, landslide, or flood;

(e) Additions to existing structures provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than:

(1) 50 percent of the floor area of the structures before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less; or

(2) 10,000 square feet if:

(A) The project is in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for maximum development permissible in the General Plan and

(B) The area in which the project is located is not environmentally sensitive.

(f) Addition of safety or health protection devices for use during construction of or in conjunction with existing structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment, or topographical features including navigational devices;

(g) New copy on existing on and off-premise signs;

(h) Maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs (excluding the use of pesticides, as defined in Section 12753, Division 7, Chapter 2, Food and Agricultural Code);

(i) Maintenance of fish screens, fish ladders, wildlife habitat areas, artificial wildlife waterway devices, streamflows, springs and waterholes, and stream channels (clearing of debris) to protect fish and wildlife resources;

(j) Fish stocking by the California Department of Fish and Game;

(k) Division of existing multiple family or single-family residences into common-interest ownership and subdivision of existing commercial or industrial buildings, where no physical changes occur which are not otherwise exempt;

(l) Demolition and removal of individual small structures listed in this subdivision:

(1) One single-family residence. In urbanized areas, up to three single-family residences may be demolished under this exemption.

(2) A duplex or similar multifamily residential structure. In urbanized areas, this exemption applies to duplexes and similar structures where not more than six dwelling units will be demolished.

(3) A store, motel, office, restaurant, or similar small commercial structure if designed for an occupant load of 30 persons or less. In urbanized areas, the exemption also applies to the demolition of up to three such commercial buildings on sites zoned for such use.

(4) Accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences.

(m) Minor repairs and alterations to existing dams and appurtenant structures under the supervision of the Department of Water Resources.

(n) Conversion of a single family residence to office use.

(o) Installation, in an existing facility occupied by a medical waste generator, of a steam sterilization unit for the treatment of medical waste generated by that facility provided that the unit is installed and operated in accordance with the Medical Waste Management Act (Section 117600, et seq., of the Health and Safety Code) and accepts no offsite waste.

(p) Use of a single-family residence as a small family day care home, as defined in Section 1596.78 of the Health and Safety Code.

Discussion. The proposed project qualifies for this exemption as each receiving school is an existing facility, and the project involves the operation and minor alteration of these facilities with negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The receiving schools are expected to serve the projected 2026–27 enrollment without the addition of new classroom facilities. However, to accommodate the grade levels each school serves, the District is considering the addition of a single restroom within an existing portable restroom facility at El Verano Elementary, and one within an existing classroom at Sassarini Elementary; no new instructional space is proposed. This installation would not increase either school's enrollment capacity.

Section 15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. The numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel. Examples of this exemption include, but are not limited to:

(a) One single-family residence, or a second dwelling unit in a residential zone. In urbanized areas, up to three single-family residences may be constructed or converted under this exemption.

(b) A duplex or similar multi-family residential structure, totaling no more than four dwelling units. In urbanized areas, this exemption applies to apartments, duplexes and similar structures designed for not more than six dwelling units.

(c) A store, motel, office, restaurant or similar structure not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and not exceeding 2500 square feet in floor area. In urbanized areas, the exemption also applies to up to four such commercial buildings not exceeding 10,000 square feet in floor area on sites zoned for such use if not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances where all necessary public services and facilities are available and the surrounding area is not environmentally sensitive.

(d) Water main, sewage, electrical, gas, and other utility extensions, including street improvements, of reasonable length to serve such construction.

(e) Accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences.

(f) An accessory steam sterilization unit for the treatment of medical waste at a facility occupied by a medical waste generator, provided

that the unit is installed and operated in accordance with the Medical Waste Management Act (Section 117600, et seq., of the Health and Safety Code) and accepts no offsite waste.

Discussion. The proposed project qualifies for this exemption as it may include the addition of a single restroom within an existing portable restroom facility at El Verano Elementary, and one within an existing classroom at Sassarini Elementary; no new instructional space is proposed. The construction of these restrooms is considered a limited number of new, small facilities. This installation would not increase either school's enrollment capacity. The receiving schools are expected to serve the projected 2026–27 enrollment without the addition of new classroom facilities, and no physical modifications beyond the potential additional restroom at each school site is anticipated.

Section 15311 Accessory Structures

Class 11 consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to:

(a) On-premise signs;

(b) Small parking lots;

(c) Placement of seasonal or temporary use items such as lifeguard towers, mobile food units, portable restrooms, or similar items in generally the same locations from time to time in publicly owned parks, stadiums, or other facilities designed for public use.

Discussion. Although the proposed project's additional restrooms are not minor *structures* accessory to (appurtenant to) existing school facilities, they are minor facilities accessory to the existing buildings in which they would be constructed. Therefore, the proposed project qualifies for this exemption.

Section 15314 Minor Addition to Schools

Class 14 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. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption.

Discussion. The proposed project qualifies for this exemption as it may include the addition of a single restroom within an existing portable restroom facility at El Verano Elementary, and one within an existing classroom at Sassarini Elementary; no new instructional space is proposed. The receiving schools are expected to serve the projected 2026–27 enrollment without the addition of new classroom facilities, and no physical modifications beyond the potential additional restroom at each school site is anticipated.

As shown in Table 3 (page 3), the projected 2026-27 enrollment indicates that all receiving schools will have excess capacity after boundary adjustments and consolidation. While all receiving schools have sufficient capacity, including excess seats, the potential addition of a single portable restroom at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary would be solely intended to accommodate the grade levels each school serves and would not expand enrollment capacity. Therefore, the proposed project, including the potential addition of a single restroom within existing facilities at each school would not result in an increase in original student capacity by more than 25 percent or more than 10 classrooms.

Section 15322 Educational or Training Programs Involving no Physical Changes

> Class 22 consists of the adoption, alteration, or termination of educational or training programs which involve no physical alteration in the area affected or which involve physical changes only in the interior of existing school or training structures. Examples include but are not limited to:
>
> (a) Development of or changes in curriculum or training methods.
>
> (b) Changes in the grade structure in a school which do not result in changes in student transportation.

Discussion. This exemption is applicable as the proposed project involves modification of the Extensive Support Needs Program through the closure of Prestwood Elementary and the consolidation of its operations into El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. The Extensive Support Needs Program serves preschool and transitional kindergarten through fifth-grade students. Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 17779 (Restroom Facilities), preschool, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten classrooms are required to have self-contained restroom facilities. To comply with this requirement and accommodate the relocated Extensive Support Needs preschool students at El Verano Elementary and transitional kindergarten and kindergarten students at Sassarini Elementary, the District is considering installation of a single restroom within existing buildings at each school site. No additional physical improvements beyond these two potential restroom installations are proposed.

Environmental Analysis

Aesthetics

None of the receiving schools are located within a designated scenic area (Caltrans 2025; County of Sonoma 2025). The project consists of closing Prestwood Elementary, adjusting attendance boundaries, consolidating operations at the receiving schools, and potentially installing a single restroom within existing facilities at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. These additional restrooms would be a minor addition within existing buildings that would not result in an aesthetic or visual impact. Accordingly, the project would not: (a) affect scenic vistas; (b) damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway; (c) conflict with zoning or other regulations

governing scenic quality; or (d) create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views.

Agriculture and Forest Resources

None of the receiving schools are located on land designated for agriculture nor do they contain forest resources (County of Sonoma 2025; City of Sonoma 2018; Google Earth 2025). The project would occur entirely within existing, developed school sites and would not require rezoning or off-site improvements affecting agricultural or forest lands. Therefore, the project would not: (a) convert important farmland; (b) conflict with zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract; (c) conflict with zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land or timberland; (d) result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use; or (e) indirectly lead to conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use.

Biological Resources

All receiving schools are located within developed residential and/or commercial areas. Although each campus is near a creek or other riverine habitat, no in-water, riparian, or other ground-disturbing activities are proposed. The only physical improvements under consideration are the placement of a single restroom within existing buildings at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. No tree removal or grading is proposed. Accordingly, the project would not affect riparian habitat or wetlands, would not interfere with wildlife movement, and would not result in adverse effects on biological resources.

Cultural Resources

The proposed project, including the potential addition of a single restroom within existing buildings at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary, does not include earth-moving activities that might result in an adverse change in the significance of any unknown buried historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5, cause an adverse change in the significance of an unknown archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5, or disturb any unknown Native American human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries.

Geology and Soils

The only physical improvement associated with the project is the potential addition of a single restroom within existing buildings at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. Any installation would be designed and permitted in accordance with the California Building Code (Title 24), as adopted and enforced by the Division of the State Architect for public school facilities. Compliance with these standards would reduce the risk of adverse effects, including those related to seismic ground shaking, liquefaction, or slope instability.

The proposed project, including the potential addition of a single restroom within existing buildings at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary, would not result in direct or indirect potential adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving any of the following:

- rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault;
- strong seismic ground shaking;
- seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; or
- landslides.

Additionally, the project would not result in soil erosion or the loss of topsoil, be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Water Use

The proposed project would not result in a cumulative increase in the student population within the District; therefore, water use within the District would not increase. Conversely, with student enrollment declining over the years, water use at District facilities has decreased. Therefore, the proposed project would not decrease groundwater supplies.

Surface Water Quality

The potential addition of a single restroom within existing buildings at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary would not require earth-moving activities. Therefore, the project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise degrade surface or ground water quality; interfere with groundwater recharge; alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite; create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or impede or redirect flood flows; or conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

Transportation (Vehicle Miles Traveled)

Hexagon Transportation Consultants (Hexagon) conducted a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) study to assess the impacts of closing Prestwood Elementary and the transfer of students to El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. The full VMT study is provided in Appendix C.

Hexagon estimated that the current average distance to school for elementary students districtwide is approximately 1.19 miles. Under the proposed consolidation plan, the average distance for District elementary schools would decrease from 1.19 miles to 1.0 mile. Specifically, Prestwood Elementary students reassigned to El Verano Elementary would experience a decrease in travel distance from approximately 3.46 miles to 1.57 miles; Prestwood Elementary students reassigned to Sassarini Elementary would experience a decrease from 1.0 mile to 0.8 mile; and Sassarini Elementary students reassigned to El Verano Elementary would experience a decrease from 1.3 miles to 0.86 miles. It should be noted that the decrease in travel distance for students transferring from Prestwood Elementary to El Verano Elementary is due to the fact that these students do not currently reside within the existing Prestwood Elementary attendance area.

Overall, district-wide elementary school VMT are projected to decrease by approximately 49 percent compared to 1997–98 enrollment levels as a result of the proposed consolidation plan.

Air Quality

Each of the receiving schools are located within the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (hereinafter "air district"), which regulates criteria air emissions to comply with state and federal standards. The air district establishes significance thresholds for criteria air pollutants to assess the significance of air quality impacts under CEQA, including those from proposed new schools. Transportation sources, particularly passenger cars and light-duty trucks, are the primary contributors to air emissions for such projects, including schools. As described in the Transportation section, the project would result in an overall decrease in VMT; therefore, there would be no adverse impact associated with air quality.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Similar to the discussion under Air Quality above, the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory (the sum of emissions from all sources) for projects subject to CEQA, including school operations, are typically dominated by emissions from transportation sources, particularly passenger cars and light-duty trucks. As described in the Transportation section, the project would result in an overall decrease in VMT; therefore, there would be no adverse impact associated with greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy

Electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuel are the most common forms of energy used in the operation of land use projects, including schools. As described in the Transportation section, the project would result in an overall decrease in VMT; therefore, there would be no adverse impact associated with transportation energy use.

The addition of two restrooms within existing buildings could result in a very minor increase in electricity, which would not be substantial. However, closing and consolidating schools could result in a reduction of district-wide electricity and natural gas.

Noise

The proposed project would not result in significant noise impacts. Due to a steady decline in enrollment, traffic volumes on surrounding streets have decreased and would remain lower with project implementation, compared to peak enrollment levels at all receiving schools (Table 3, page 3). As a result, noise levels at all receiving schools would remain below the highest, historic levels. Construction of restrooms at either receiving school could result in a temporary increase in noise levels, likely contained within the existing buildings where the restrooms would be added; however, these impacts would be very minor and temporary and are therefore considered less than significant.

Exceptions to Categorical Exemptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines lists exceptions that would prohibit a project from qualifying for a Categorical Exemption, even if the project satisfies the requirements for one or more of the exemption classes. EMC Planning Group conducted a review and evaluation of the proposed project and concluded that none of the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 (a-f) apply to the proposed project (discussed below). Therefore, the Statutory Exemption, as well as the Categorical Exemption, is appropriate pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301, 15303, 15311, 15314, and 15322.

> a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

Discussion. All receiving schools are located within existing, developed areas—Sassarini Elementary within the City of Sonoma and El Verano Elementary in unincorporated Sonoma County. The only potential physical change is the installation of a single restroom within existing buildings at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary within the existing disturbed campus footprint. As summarized in the Environmental Analysis discussion, there is no evidence that the affected campus areas are located in particularly sensitive environments. See Environmental Analysis above. Therefore, this exception would not apply.

> b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

Discussion. The proposed project involves the closure of Prestwood Elementary and the consolidation of its operations into El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. While this action affects multiple campuses, it represents a single administrative and operational change within the District's existing elementary school system, which includes a total of four elementary schools. The project would not result in new construction or expansion of school facilities, other than the potential installation of a single restroom within existing buildings at both El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary.

Earlier in 2025, the District closed Adele Harrison Middle School and consolidated its operations with Altimira Middle School in response to declining enrollment. Although both projects involve the reorganization of District facilities to address enrollment trends, they occur at different school levels (elementary versus middle school) and in different locations. Each project involves the reallocation of students within existing campuses, with minimal or no physical modifications. Therefore, when considered together, these actions are considered to have an insignificant cumulative impact.

> c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

Discussion. Based upon the Environmental Analysis discussion above, there is no reasonable possibility that the proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

> d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

Discussion. According to the California Department of Transportation Scenic Highway Map, none of the receiving schools are located near an officially designated scenic highway (Caltrans 2025). Additionally, none of the receiving schools are within a designated scenic corridor (County of Sonoma 2018). The only physical improvements under consideration are the placement of a single restroom within existing buildings at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. Since none of the receiving schools are located near a designated scenic highway or within a scenic corridor, and these modifications would occur within existing buildings, the project would not result in adverse impacts to scenic resources associated with a state scenic highway.

> e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

Discussion. The proposed project is not located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. The receiving school sites are not located on the California Environmental Protection Agency's Cortese List (Health and Safety Code Section 25187.5). The State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker (Health and Safety Code Section 25295 and Water Code Sections 13273 and 13301) does not indicate any active hazardous sites at any of the receiving schools. The receiving school sites are not listed on the California Environmental Protection Agency's list of solid waste sites identified by the Water Board with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit (Health and Safety Code Section 116395).

> f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Discussion. The proposed project does not include any physical modifications to existing buildings at Prestwood Elementary. Additionally, none of the receiving schools are within historic districts nor are they identified as historic (County of Sonoma 2024; City of Sonoma 2019; California State Parks 2025). Therefore, the potential addition of a single restroom within existing buildings at El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary would not result in a substantial adverse change to a historical resource.

Evidence And Findings

The proposed project involves the closure of Prestwood Elementary, along with the adjustment of attendance boundaries to support the consolidation of operations into El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. To account for potential needs, this environmental analysis conservatively includes the potential addition of a single restroom within existing buildings at both El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. These potential restroom additions are intended solely to accommodate the grade levels the schools serve and would not increase enrollment capacity at either of the school sites. No physical modifications beyond the potential restroom additions are anticipated. As shown in Table 3, (page 3), enrollment projections for the 2026-27 academic year indicate that both receiving schools will have sufficient capacity after consolidation.

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Energy

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Sonoma Valley Unified School District
Resolution No. 26-07

A

APPENDIX

BEFORE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE SONOMA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
RESOLUTION NO. 26-07

RESOLUTION APPROVING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION

WHEREAS, Sonoma Valley Unified School District ("District") has experienced significant declining enrollment over a protracted period of time, with the total enrollment of the District dropping from 4,127 students in 2015-16 to 2,964 students as of September, 2025;

WHEREAS, commencing in 2021, the District has undertaken a detailed and holistic review of its budget in order to assess and remedy financial challenges resulting in part from declining enrollment;

WHEREAS, consolidating some of the District's campuses is part of an overall plan to reduce annual operational costs and maintain long term financial stability in the District;

WHEREAS, in 2022 and 2023, the District engaged Perkins Eastman as consultants to prepare a 2023 Facilities Master Plan ("Perkins Eastman Study"), which assessed enrollment trends, facilities needs, input gathered from various meetings, and school consolidation scenarios;

WHEREAS, on April 20, 2023, as part of the District's efforts to address projected budget shortfalls and declining enrollment, the Board suspended enrollment at Dunbar Elementary School beginning in the 2023-24 school year;

WHEREAS, the District formed a School Consolidation Advisory Committee ("Committee") to study and recommend schools for closure and/or consolidation, based on data and established criteria;

WHEREAS, the Committee consisted of eighteen (18) members, including parents, labor union representatives, community members, City officials, and District staff, and including representation consistent with CDE guidelines;

WHEREAS, the Committee considered community input, criteria recommended by the California Department of Education ("CDE"), the Perkins Eastman Study, and other data, and made recommendations for consolidation on October 15, 2024, which recommendations are included in the Committee's School Consolidation Committee Report dated October 15, 2024. The Report is hosted on the SVUSD School Consolidation Committee page of the District's website, and available at: https://www.sonomaschools.org/68031_2;

WHEREAS, consistent with Education Code section 17387 and guidelines on school consolidation prepared by the California Department of Education ("CDE"), the District engaged in a process to garner meaningful input and community involvement regarding school closure

and/or consolidation scenarios, which has included, but not been limited to, the following activities:

- The District established the Committee to analyze the District's school sites and make a recommendation regarding school consolidation;

- The Committee analyzed the District's school sites and make a recommendation regarding further school consolidation, with the Board directing the Committee to consider scenarios including a scenario consisting of three (3) elementary schools, one (1) middle school, and one comprehensive high school (a "3-1-1" model; solely for purposes of this model, Sonoma Valley and Creekside High Schools were considered as one high school);

- The Committee convened nine (9) public Committee meetings, held on January 16, February 27, March 19, April 23, May 21, August 20, September 10, October 8, and October 15, 2024, plus an optional tour of four (4) elementary schools and one (1) middle school on October 9, 2024;

- The District conducted polling of parents and the community;

- District staff conducted three (3) public town hall meetings at three different locations within the District, held on October 1, 2, and 3, 2024, one of which was held in Spanish;

- The District has maintained an active "SVUSD School Consolidation Committee" page on the District's website, which hosts resources pertaining to school consolidation;

- The Board held a public study session on October 29, 2024, in which the Board considered the Committee's recommendations and data regarding school closure and consolidation contained in the Committee's Report;

- The Board held a regular Board meeting on November 14, 2024, in which it considered the possibility of taking action on school consolidation;

- The Board held a special meeting on November 18, 2024, to further discuss and receive public comment on consolidation scenarios.

WHEREAS, the Board held a regular meeting on December 13, 2024, and adopted Resolution No. 25-10, Resolution Approving School Consolidation, in which the Board approved the closure of Adele Harrison Middle School at the conclusion of the 2024-25 school year, and committed to closing one (1) elementary school at the conclusion of the 2025-26 school year, while committing itself to select the elementary school for closure on or before May 8, 2025;

WHEREAS, the Board held a regular Board meeting on March 13, 2025, during which it discussed next steps for elementary school consolidation;

WHEREAS, the Board held a public study session on April 22, 2025, in which the Board discussed the consolidation of elementary schools and options for selection of the elementary schools to consolidate;

WHEREAS, the Board held a regular meeting on May 8, 2025, and adopted Resolution No. 25-23, Resolution Approving Elementary School Consolidation, in which the Board approved the closure of Flowery Elementary School at the conclusion of the 2025-26 school year;

WHEREAS, the Board held a regular meeting on June 17, 2025, in which it reconsidered the closure of Flowery Elementary School, and adopted Resolution No. 25-40, rescinding Resolution No. 25-23;

WHEREAS, the Board held a study session on August 20, 2025, in which it further considered the elementary school to close at the conclusion of the 2025-26 school year;

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed and considered the Committee's Report and input received from the community regarding elementary school consolidation.

WHEREAS, the Board held a regular Board meeting on September 11, 2025, at which it further discussed elementary school consolidation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FOUND, DETERMINED AND RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE SONOMA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. The foregoing recitals are adopted as true and correct.

2. Subject to the conditions set forth below, after consideration of the meaningful input and community involvement received throughout this process as outlined above, review of available data and of the Committee's Report, and consideration of the CDE's guidelines, and in order to address projected budget shortfalls and declining enrollment, the Board approves the following consolidation of its elementary schools and hereby finds and determines that the consolidation is in the best interests of the District, its students, and the community:

   At the conclusion of the 2025-26 school year, Prestwood Elementary School shall close.

3. The Board's approval of the foregoing elementary school closure and consolidation shall be subject to and conditioned upon the following, each of which shall be met prior to closure or consolidation of the school(s) identified above:

   - The District's elementary school attendance boundaries shall be revised in a manner that is consistent with the Education Code and Board Policy, and shall be presented to the Board for approval.

   - An elementary school transition plan shall be prepared that outlines the District's

anticipated community outreach efforts to assist students and their families with the elementary school transition, and shall be presented to the Board.

- Consideration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Res. Code, §§ 21000, et seq. ("CEQA")) of the foregoing elementary school closure and consolidation and the attendance boundary adjustment shall occur, including an analysis of whether any exemptions are applicable to the elementary school consolidation. The CEQA consideration shall be presented to the Board for review and approval.

4. The Superintendent and/or her designee are authorized and directed to take such further actions as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out the intent of this Resolution.

The foregoing Resolution was adopted at a meeting of the Governing Board of the Sonoma Valley Unified School District on September 23, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES: 4
NOES: Ø
ABSTAIN: Ø
ABSENT: 1

Board President
Sonoma Valley Unified School District

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE
AND CORRECT COPY:

Clerk
Sonoma Valley Unified School District

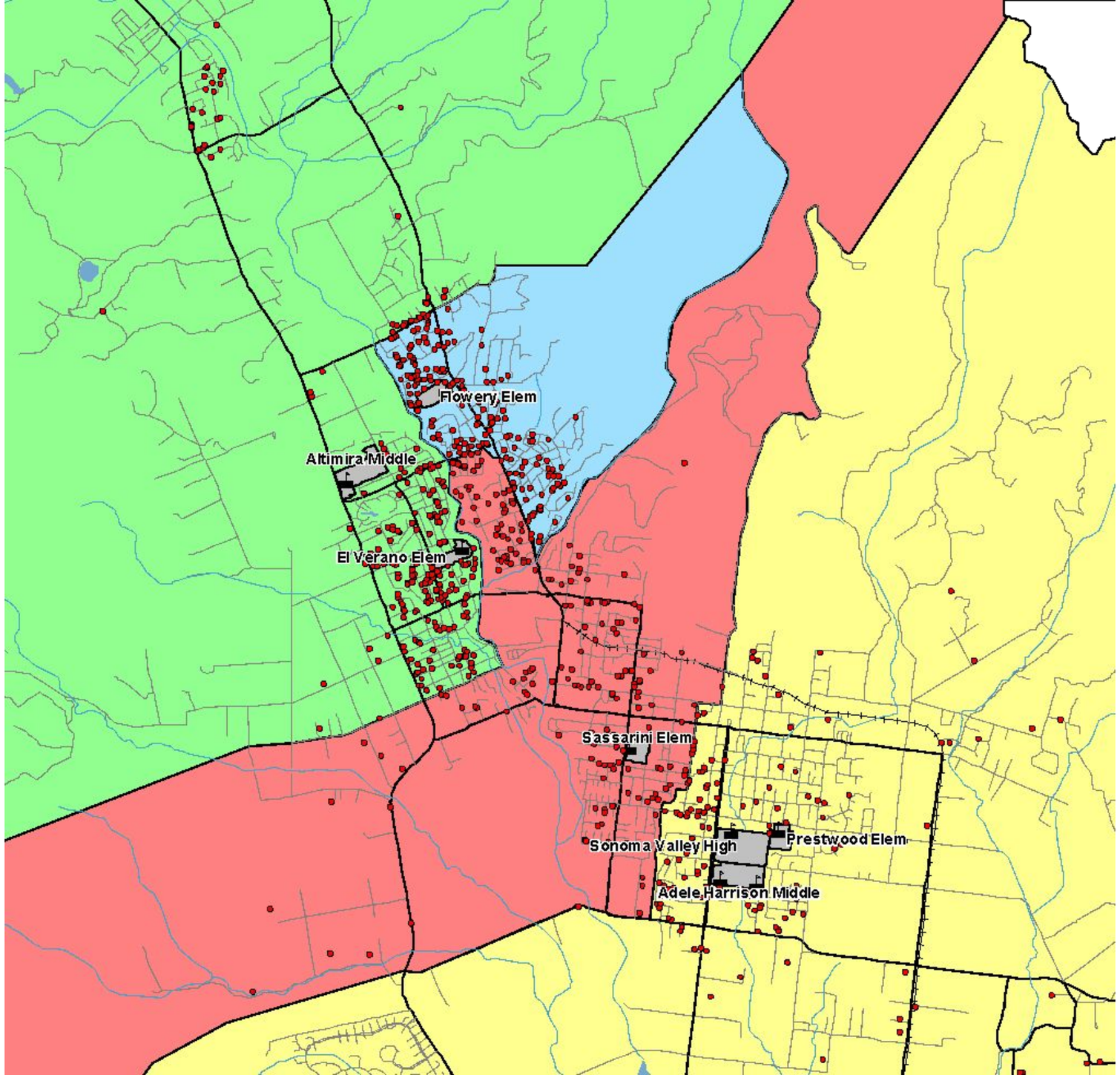
4904-1313-5978, v. 1

Sonoma Valley Unified School District
Existing and Proposed Elementary School Attendance Boundaries

B

APPENDIX

Current Elementary School Boundaries



Elementary students attending each school and the school capacity:

Enrollment	Capacity
Flowery = 355	440
El Verano = 289	575
Sassarini = 272	480
Prestwood = 274	504

Proposed New Elementary School Boundaries

Estimated Enrollment/Site Capacity/Bussing*

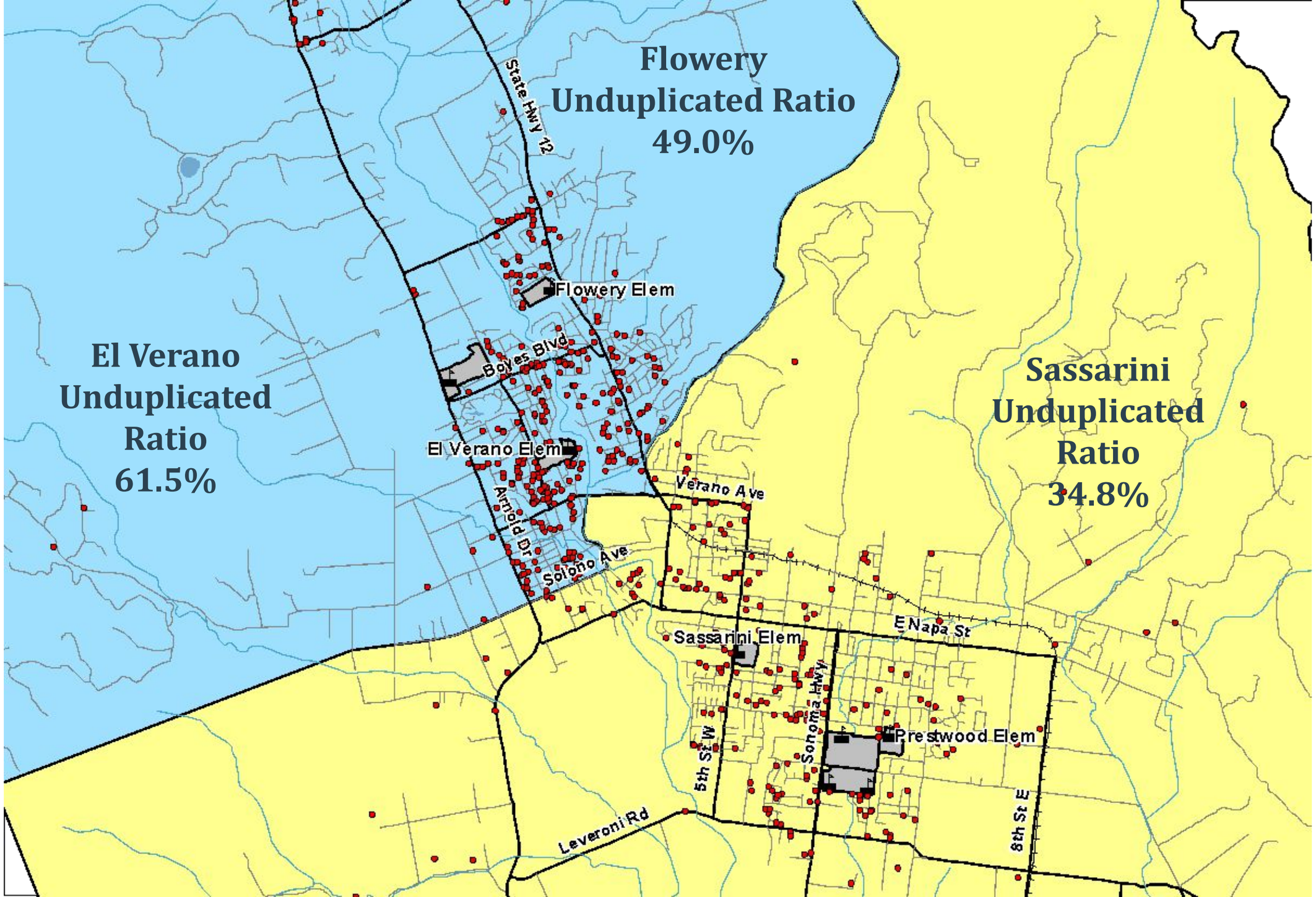
El Verano
439 / 575 / 119

Sassarini
396 / 480 / 127

Flowery Dual Immersion
355 / 440

Average Distance to school (miles)
El Verano = 0.925
Sassarini = 1.094

*Students eligible for transportation



Sonoma Valley Unified School District
Elementary School Closure and Consolidation VMT Study

C
APPENDIX

HEXAGON TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANTS, INC.

October 9, 2025

Ms. Teri Wissler Adam
EMC Planning Group
601 Abrego Street,
Monterey, CA 93940

Re: Sonoma Valley Unified School District Elementary School Closure and Consolidation VMT Study

Dear Ms. Adam:

Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc. has completed a transportation impact assessment of the planned school consolidation for the Sonoma Valley Unified School District. We understand that per resolution No. 26-07 the district has approved the closure of Prestwood Elementary School, consolidating the school into El Verano Elementary and Sassarini Elementary. Under the plan some students from Sassarini Elementary would be reassigned to El Verano Elementary as well.

CEQA Guidelines.

Public agencies are required to base transportation impacts on vehicles miles traveled (VMT) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 state as follows:

> Generally, vehicles miles traveled is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. For the purposes of this section, “vehicle miles traveled” refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project.

There have been no express standards developed that are specifically applicable to school district projects, as there are for residential and commercial projects. The CEQA Guidelines allow responsible agencies to develop their own standards with the overall goal of reducing VMT over time.

Definition of VMT for Consolidation Plan.

VMT is defined as the number of trips associated with each school multiplied by the length of each trip. VMT is typically analyzed on a daily basis. The trips generated by each school include trips to and from the school by faculty and staff as well as students being dropped off and picked up. VMT is a measure of the burden placed on the transportation system to move vehicles and is also a measure of the greenhouse gas emissions attributable to motor vehicles. California has established goals to reduce emissions by reducing VMT.

VMT Analysis

The current average distance to school and post-consolidation distance to school for reassigned elementary school students in Sonoma Valley Unified School District were provided by the District demographer. The current average distance to school was determined to be 1.19 miles.

Prestwood students reassigned to El Verano will see their distance to school decrease to 1.57 miles, Prestwood students reassigned to Sassarini will see their distance to school decrease to 0.8 miles, Sassarini students reassigned to El Verano will see their distance to school decrease to 0.86 miles (see Table 1). All non-reassigned students will experience no change in their commute distance. The new District elementary school average distance to school will decrease from 1.19 miles to 1 mile under the consolidation plan. Combined with school enrollment declining this results in a decrease in trips and VMT (see Table 2).

Hexagon prepared trip generation estimates are based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual 12th Edition, which indicates that an elementary school generates an average of 2.27 trips per student per day.

In total, the District-wide elementary school VMT for both schools in 1997-98 was 5,327 vehicle miles per day (see Table 3). Post-consolidation, this figure is expected to decrease to 2,709 vehicle miles per day, representing a net reduction of 49%.

Conclusion

In summary, elementary school enrollment in the Sonoma Valley Unified School District has decreased by 39% since the 1997-98 school year, leading to a corresponding reduction in vehicle miles traveled. Although some students will see a change in the distance to attend school, the significant decline in enrollment at District elementary schools results in an overall reduction in VMT compared to historical levels.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this analysis. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,
HEXAGON TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANTS, INC.

Gary K. Black
President

Table 1
Change in Average Distance to School

	Number of Students	Average Miles to School[1]	
		Current School	Reassigned School
Prestwood to El Verano	86	3.46	1.57
Prestwood to Sassarini[2]	188	1	0.8
Sassarini to El Verano	64	1.3	0.86
Non-reassigned Students	852	1	-
		1997-Present	2026-27
District-wide Average Miles to School		1.19	1.00

Notes:
1. Average distance provided by district demographer
2. Current distance measured from approximate median point on Prestwood student population map. (approximately at MacArthur Street & CA Highway 12)

Table 2
Change in Enrollment and Trips Generated

	Change in Enrollment[1]		ITE Trips Generated[2]	
	1997-98	2025-26	1997-98	2025-26
El Verano	512	289	1163	657
Flowery	500	355	1135	806
Prestwood	506	274	1149	622
Sassarini	447	272	1015	618
District Elementary Total	1965	1190	4462	2703

Notes:
1. SOURCE: California Department of Education 2025; Sonoma Valley Unified School District 2025
2. Elementary School (Land Use 520): average daily trip rate of 2.27 trips per student . Source: ITE Trip Generation Manual, 12th Edition.

Table 3
District VMT Calculations

District-wide Elementary School VMT		
	1997-98	2026-27
Number of Students	1965	1190
Trips Generated	4462	2703
Average Distance to School	1.19	1.00
Vehicle Miles Traveled	5327	2709
Percent Change in VMT		-49.2%

Figure 1
Current District Elementary School Boundaries

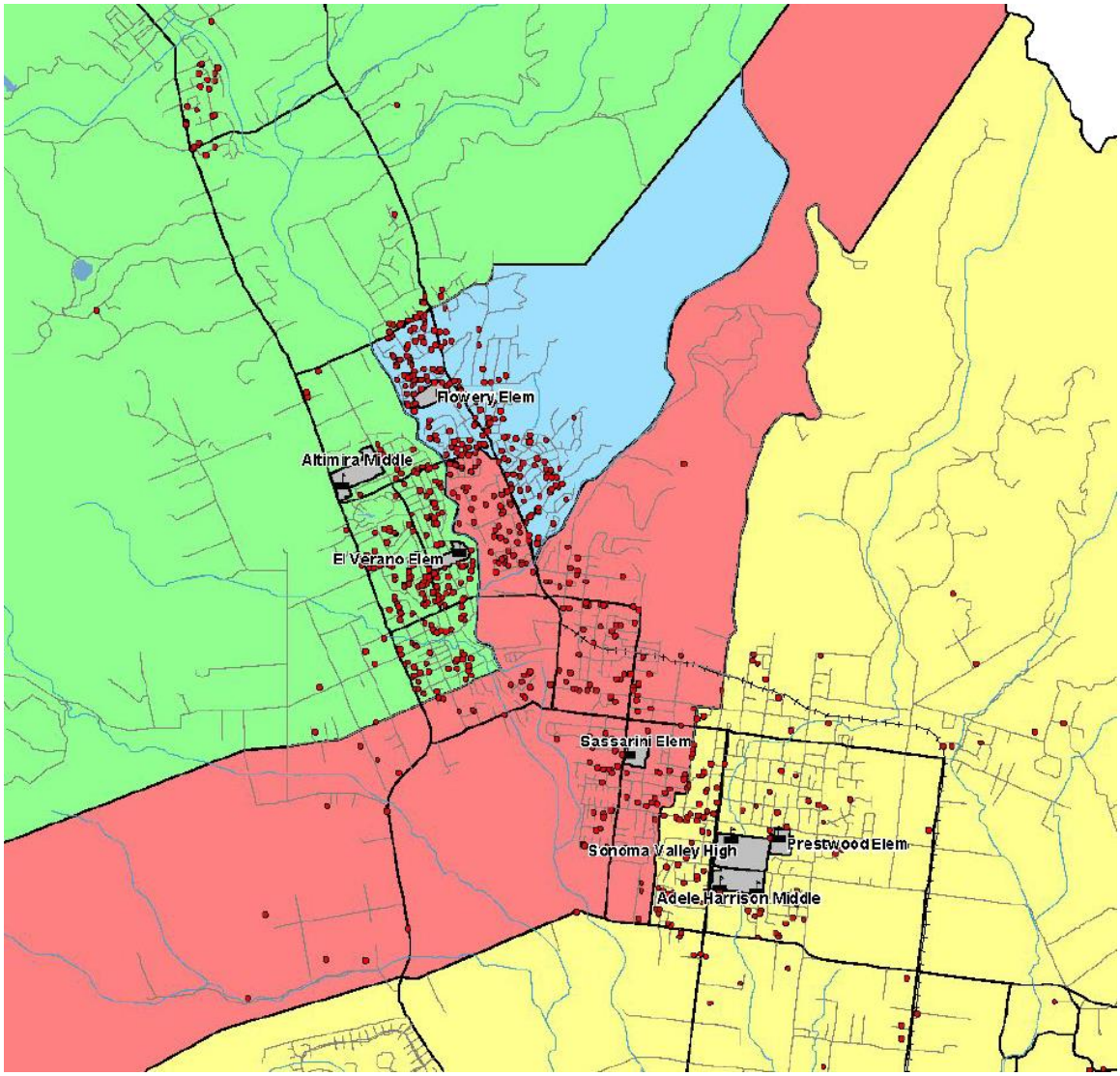
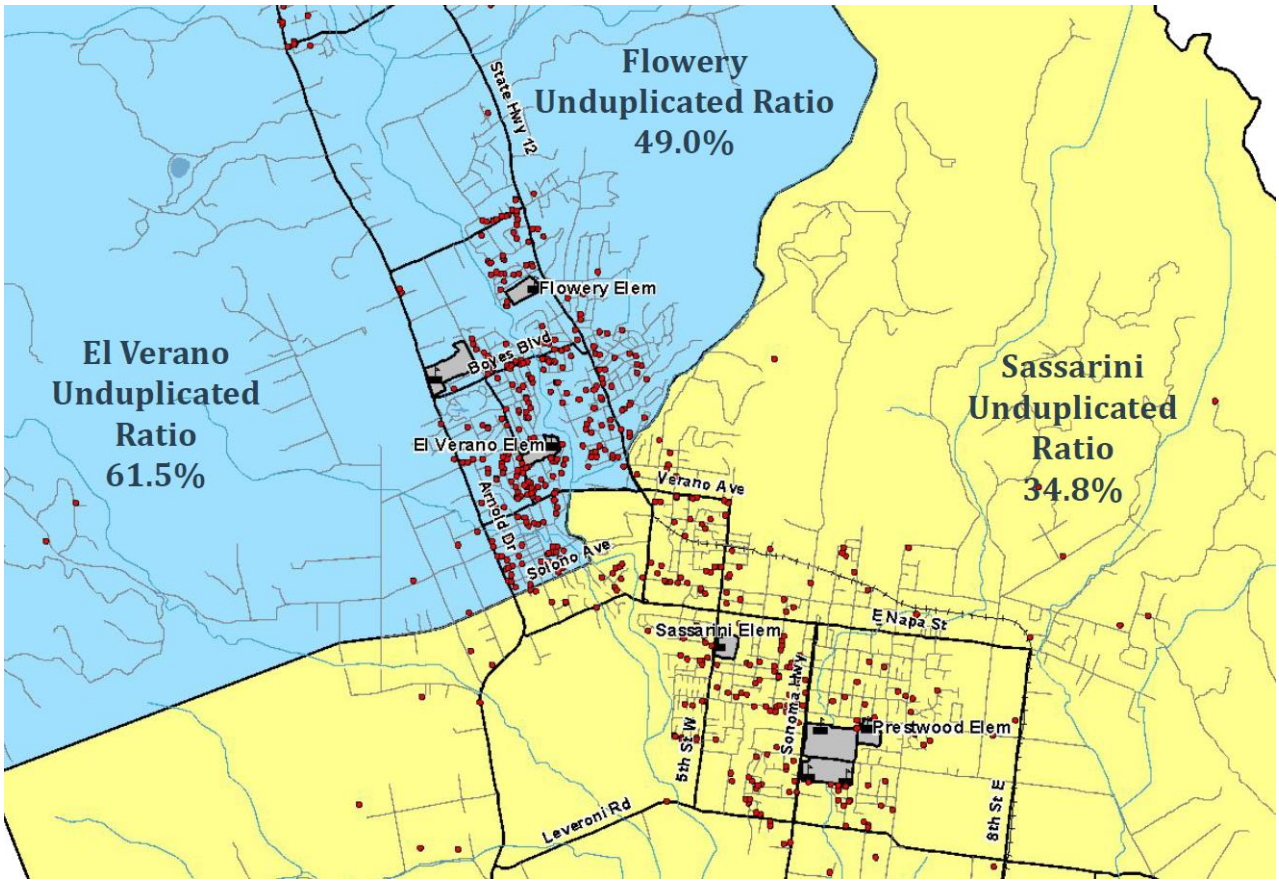



Figure 2
Proposed District Elementary School Boundaries