DRAFT INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

BUBBLING WELLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODERNIZATION PROJECT

PALM SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Prepared for:

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DECEMBER 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD or District) has prepared this Initial Study (IS)/Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and (collectively the "IS/MND") to evaluate the potential environmental consequences associated with the proposed Bubbling Wells Elementary School Modernization Project (proposed Project).

The District is proposing complete modernization improvements on the campus of Bubbling Wells Elementary School (BWES). The BWES campus is located in Desert Hot Springs, California, a community in the Coachella Valley. BWES serves the central northern portion of the City.

The campus was initially constructed in 1992 and includes a combination of permanent, modular, and portable buildings. The campus operates 43 classrooms, including 19 permanent (modular) classrooms and 20 relocatable classrooms, and is approximately 18 acres in size.

A Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) report completed in 2017 classified the majority of the existing school buildings on the Project Site as Category 4 – Poor. This category indicates that modernization, upgrades, and replacements due to system failures are a high priority at this time; major systems are failing and should be scheduled for replacement in the future. Some of the classroom buildings were classified as Category 3 – Fair. This category indicates that modernization, upgrades, and replacements due to system failures are a medium priority at this time; major systems are beginning to fail. Additionally, some of the modular classrooms were classified as Category 1 - Excellent; this category indicates that the buildings are modern, and upgrades due to system failures are not a priority at this time.

1.2 AUTHORITY

PSUSD, as Lead Agency pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is required to conduct environmental review for the proposed Project, pursuant to the CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. The basic purposes of CEQA are as follows: to inform decision-makers and the public about the potentially significant environmental effects of proposed activities, identify ways to eliminate or reduce such potentially significant environmental impacts through the use of feasible alternatives and mitigation measures, and to disclose why a governmental agency may consider approving a project if significant environmental effects are involved. To help with understanding specific topics, references to the statute, CEQA Guidelines, or appropriate case law is provided in this document.

An Initial Study (IS) is used to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment. The IS, as required by CEQA, describes the proposed Project and environmental setting, discusses potential environmental impacts, and identifies feasible mitigation measures to eliminate or reduce potentially significant effects. The IS also addresses the consistency of the proposed Project with applicable zoning, plans, and policies.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE IS/MND

The content and format of this report are designed to meet the requirements of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. The IS supports the finding that the proposed Project, as mitigated, would have no significant environmental impact and, for this reason, adoption of an MND is appropriate for the Project. This report contains the following sections:

- **Section 1: Introduction** identifies the purpose and scope of the IS/MND and the terminology used in this document.
- **Section 2: Environmental Setting** describes the existing conditions, surrounding land use, general plan, and existing zoning in the area of the proposed Project.
- **Section 3: Project Setting** identifies the location, background, and planning objectives of the proposed Project and describes it in detail.
- **Section 4: Environmental Checklist** presents the checklist responses and evaluation for each resource topic.
- **Section 5: Environmental Analysis** includes an analysis for each resource topic and identifies the impacts of implementing the proposed Project. It also identifies mitigation measures, if applicable.
- **Section 6: References** identifies all printed references and individuals cited in this IS/MND.
- **Section 7: List of Preparers** identifies the individuals who prepared this report and their areas of technical specialty.

Appendices present data supporting the analysis or contents of this report. These include:

- Appendix A: Air Quality CalEEMod Output Sheets
- Appendix B: Biological Resources Report
- Appendix C: Cultural Resources Report
- Appendix D: Energy Calculations
- Appendix E: Geotechnical Report
- Appendix F: EDR Report
- Appendix G: Construction Noise Worksheet
- Appendix H: Construction Vibration Worksheet
- Appendix I: AB 52 Notification Letters

1.4 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED MND

PSUSD is providing 30 days for review and comment on the Proposed MND, which is available online at https://www.psusd.us/ (Facilities Planning & Development Page). Interested individuals, organizations, trustees, responsible agencies, and other agencies can provide written comments to the address below.

Palm Springs Unified School District
Facilities Planning & Development Department
150 District Center Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92264

Contact: Julie Arthur, Executive Director
Fax: (760) 325-8728
E-mail: Facilities_Planning@psusd.us

Please include "Bubbling Wells Elementary School Modernization Project" in the subject line. Comments should include the name of a contact person within the commenting agency.

Prior to considering approval of the Project, the PSUSD Board of Education will consider the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration together with any comments as required by Section 15074 (b) of the CEQA Guidelines

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed Project is located at Bubbling Wells Elementary School (BWES) at 67501 Camino Campanero, Desert Hot Springs, CA, in Riverside County. The Project Site is located in unincorporated Riverside County, bordering the City of Desert Hot Springs (City) to the north and falling within the City's sphere of influence. Desert Hot Springs is located in the Coachella Valley in eastern Riverside County.

As shown in **2.0-1: Regional Location Map**, the City of Desert Hot Springs is surrounded by the unincorporated Riverside County to the north, east, and west, and North Palm Springs and Cathedral City to the south. Regional access to the City is provided via Interstate 10 (I-10), which runs south of the City, and 29 Palms Highway (Route 62), which intersects the I-10.

As shown in **2.0-2: Project Site Location Map,** the campus is bound by Camino Campanero to the north, Bubbling Wells Road to the east, Avenida Florencita to the west, and a residential neighborhood to the south. Uses around the campus include single-family residences to the south and east, and vacant, undeveloped land to the north and west. Primary access to the campus is provided from Camino Campanero.

The BWES campus is situated on a 17.99-acre rectangular parcel surrounded by relatively flat land. The elevation of the Project Site is approximately 886 feet above mean sea level (amsl). The existing school buildings are concentrated in the central and eastern portions of the campus, with campus access and parking located to the north and outdoor recreational areas located to the southeast and southwest.

2.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

BWES serves students from transitional kindergarten through fifth grade for regular and special education. The campus is one of 16 elementary schools in the PSUSD with a 2023-2024 enrollment of 648 students. [1]

BWES was constructed in 1992 on a terraced site. The original facility consisted of three playground areas, and the modular construction of nineteen self-contained classrooms, five smaller rooms for small group instruction, an administration building, a library, and a multi-purpose room. During the summers of 1993 and 1994, nine additional portable classrooms were added to the school to provide for the rapidly growing student population. An additional six portable classrooms were added during

1 Bubbling Wells Elementary School. 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card. School Facility Conditions and Planned Improvements. Accessed March 2025. https://www.psusd.us/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=6845&dataid=5442&FileName=2024%20SARC%20BW.pdf.

the 2001-2002 school year to keep pace with the continuing growth. Six more portable classrooms were added during the 2007-2008 school year to accommodate the continued growth at the school. [2]

During the 2009-2010 school year, BWES, which had been operating over capacity, experienced a reduction in student enrollment and staffing due to the opening of Cabot Yerxa Elementary School. Eight classes were eliminated during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years, relieving the overpopulation in the school. Improvements to the campus include exterior painting beginning in June 2021. [3]

The existing campus is approximately 18 acres in size and includes a combination of permanent, modular, and portable buildings. The campus includes 43 classrooms, including 19 permanent (modular) classrooms and 20 relocatable classrooms. As shown in **2.0-3: Existing Campus Layout**, the majority of portable structures are located in the eastern and southern portions of the campus, are used for 1st Grade, 2nd Grade, 3rd Grade, 5th Grade, and specialty STEM and Arts classrooms. The remaining facilities include modular classroom and administrative buildings. Other permanent campus facilities include a food service and multipurpose room (MPR), and a HeadStart classroom. PSUSD is proposing modernization, upgrades, and replacements for all of the classrooms on the BWES campus.

The campus currently contains three parking lots located along Camino Campanero. The westernmost lot serves the HeadStart classroom. The curbside student drop-off area, as well as visitor and staff parking, is located in the central lot, and vehicles enter and exit the lot from Camino Campanero. Additional staff parking and the school bus drop-off area are located in the easternmost lot, and vehicles enter and exit the lot from Bubbling Wells Road. Students either walk, ride their bikes, or are dropped off by vehicles at the school.

2.3 SURROUNDING LAND USES

As previously discussed, the Project Site is located in unincorporated Riverside County, bordering the City of Desert Hot Springs to the north and falling within the City's sphere of influence. Parcels to the north of the BWES campus are located in Desert Hot Springs, and parcels to the south, east, and west are located within unincorporated Riverside County.

The BWES campus is located within a residential community, as shown in **2.0-2: Project Site Location Map**. Neighborhoods including single-family homes are located immediately adjacent to the east (across Bubbling Wells Road) and south of the Project Site. The area immediately adjacent to the north, across Camino Campanero from the Project Site, is comprised of vacant, undeveloped

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2 Bubbling Wells Elementary School. 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card. School Facility Conditions and Planned Improvements.

3 Bubbling Wells Elementary School. 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card. School Facility Conditions and Planned Improvements.

land. Single-family residential neighborhoods are located west of the Project Site across Avenida Florencita, across a strip of desert open space that separates the school from the adjacent subdivision. The Hidden Springs Golf Course and Country Club is located to the southeast of the Project Site.

2.4 GENERAL PLAN AND EXISTING ZONING

The Western Coachella Valley Area Plan land use designation for the Project Site is Medium Density Residential (MDR), and the zoning is W-2 (Controlled Development Areas).[4] The W-2 zoning designation allows educational institutions, provided that approval of a plot plan is obtained first, pursuant to Section 18.30 of the Riverside County Ordinance No. 348.[5]

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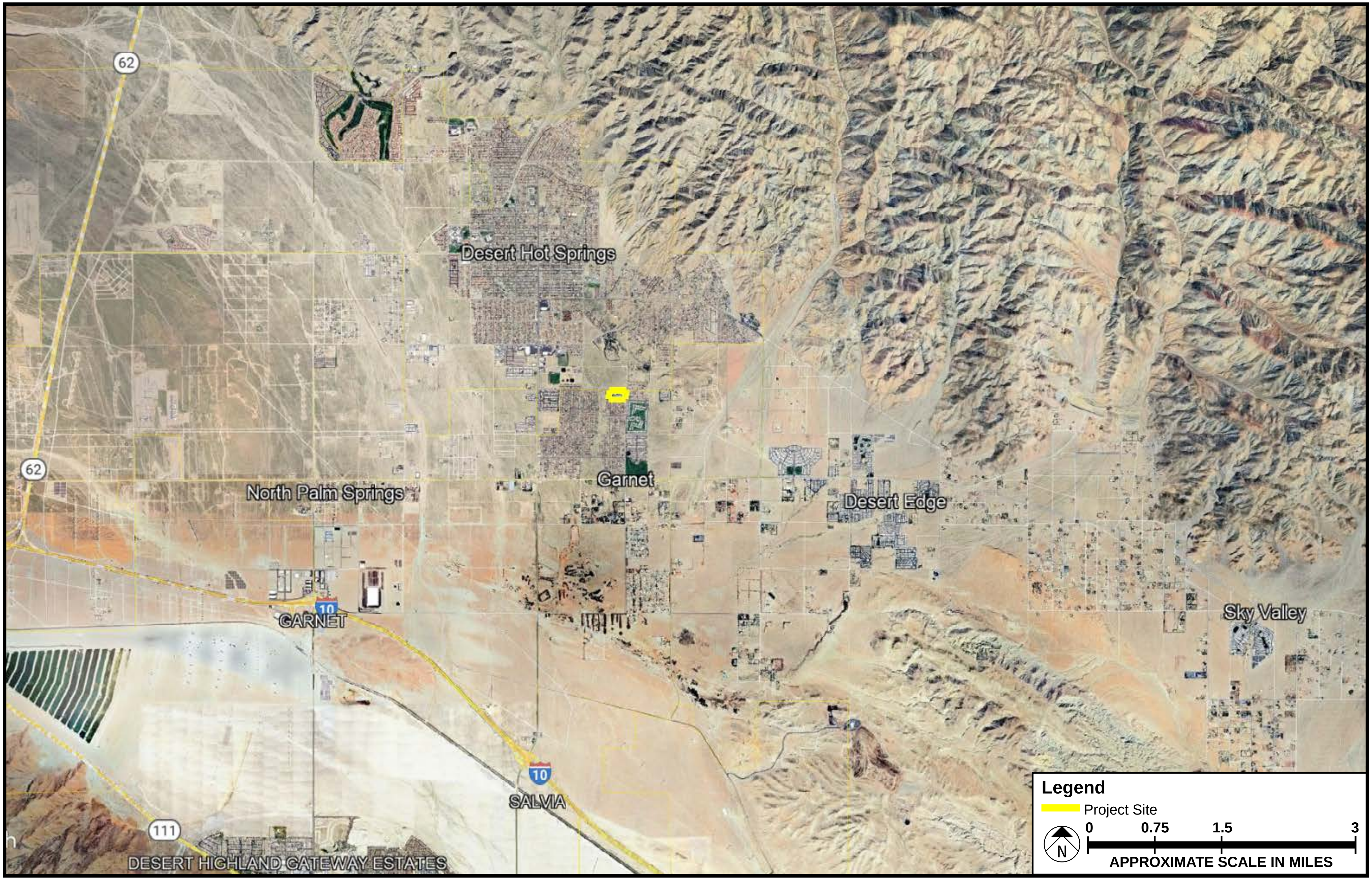
4 County of Riverside. *Western Coachella Valley Area Plan*. In *Riverside County Planning Department General Plan.* "Figure 3, Western Coachella Valley Area Plan Land Use Plan." Revised September 28, 2021. Accessed March 2025. https://planning.rctlma.org/sites/g/files/aldnop416/files/migrated/Portals-14-genplan-GPA-2022-Compiled-WCVAP-4-2022-rev.pdf.

5 County of Riverside. *Ordinance No. 348: Providing for Land Use Planning and Zoning Regulations and Related Functions of the County of Riverside*. Article XV, W-2 Zone (Controlled Development Areas). Revised April 28, 2023. Accessed March 2025. https://planning.rctlma.org/sites/g/files/aldnop416/files/2023-06/Ord348-04-28-2023-FINAL.pdf.



SOURCE: Google Earth – 2025

FIGURE **2.0-1**

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Regional Location Map

SOURCE: Google Earth – 2025

FIGURE **2.0-2**

Meridian Consultants

Project Site Location Map

049-016-20

SOURCE: RUHNAU CLARKE - October 2024

FIGURE **2.0-3**

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Existing Campus Layout

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 OVERVIEW

PSUSD proposes modernizing the BWES campus, including replacing existing portable and permanent classroom buildings with permanent buildings, expanding and modernizing the multipurpose and administration buildings, and improving the hardcourts, playgrounds, and athletic fields around the school buildings. **Figure 3.0-1: Proposed Improvements** illustrates the conceptual development plan.

As discussed above, the BWES campus was initially constructed in 1992 and currently serves approximately 648 students from transitional kindergarten (TK) through 5th grade. The campus is approximately 18 acres in size and contains permanent, modular, and portable buildings, including a combination of classrooms, offices, a food service and multipurpose room (MPR), a HeadStart classroom, as well as supporting storage spaces, mechanical spaces, and other utility spaces.

As shown in **3.0-1**, the proposed Project includes seven (7) permanent campus buildings. The existing Administration Building (Building 1) would serve as the main entrance to the campus, and would be renovated and expanded to add a lobby and reception area, administrative and health offices, a teacher's lounge, and an outdoor seating area. The existing MPR Building (Building 2) would be renovated and expanded to include a multipurpose room, kitchen, and outdoor lunch shelter. Buildings 3, 4, 5, and 6 would involve new construction in the western portion of the Project Site, currently developed with hardcourts and open fields. These new buildings would house classrooms for each grade level (Transitional Kindergarten through Fifth Grade), STEAM classrooms, Music classrooms, and Library and Physical Education Facilities. The existing Building 7 would be renovated to include two (2) flex-classrooms that could be used for indoor physical education during inclement weather. The proposed Project would also involve the development of a kinder playground and upper playground, as well as the development of new hardcourts, playfields, and athletic fields.

3.2 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

3.2.1 Project Schedule

It is anticipated that the construction activities would begin in August 2026 and end in August 2029, as shown in **Table 3.0-1: Project Schedule**. The proposed Project schedule is currently based on the demolition and construction activities for the whole Project Site being performed under a single construction contract. Construction is planned in 2 phases, with Phase 1 including the construction of 61,213 square feet of new buildings. Next, Phase 2 would include the demolition of 39,994 square feet of existing modular buildings and the modernization of 16,223 square feet of existing permanent and modular buildings.

TABLE 3.0-1: PROJECT SCHEDULE		
Construction Phase	**Activity Description**	**Approximate Duration**
1	Demolition of existing hardcourt, playground and play field	2.5 months
	Grading of Project Site area and import of 8,864 cubic yards of soil	2 months
	Construction of 61,213 square feet of new buildings	20 months
	Paving of asphalt surfaces	3 months
	Application of paint	5 months
2A	Demolition of 27,046 square feet of existing modular buildings and relocatables, hardcourt, and playground	2.5 months
	Grading of balanced Project Site	2 months
	Modernization of 16,223 existing permanent and modular buildings	8 months
	Paving of asphalt surfaces	2 months
	Application of paint	1 month
2B	Demolition of 10,560 square feet of existing relocatables, hardcourt, and playground	1 month
	Grading of balanced Project Site	1 month
	Paving of asphalt surfaces	1 month
2C	Demolition of 2,560 square feet of existing modular buildings	3 weeks
	Grading of Project Site and export of 3,260 cubic yards of soil	3 weeks

3.2.2 Construction Phasing

The proposed Project includes the phased removal and demolition of the structures on the BWES campus, the construction of permanent replacement classroom facilities, and the modernization of existing buildings. **3.0-2: Phasing Plan** illustrates the proposed Project's construction schedule.

Construction of the proposed Project would occur over two phases, as presented in **Table 3.0-1: Project Construction Phasing** and illustrated in **3.0-2: Phasing Plan.** Phase 1, New Classroom Construction, is anticipated to take 24 months to complete and involves the construction of four (4) new permanent buildings in the western portion of the Project Site and the subsequent demolition of the existing classroom buildings from the eastern portion of the Project Site, as well as the development of new playgrounds and improvements to the hardscaping and landscaping of the Project Site. Phase 2, New MPR Expansion and Administration Modernization, is anticipated to take 14 months to complete and involves the renovation and expansion of the existing multipurpose and administration buildings. The estimated total duration of construction for the proposed Project is 38 months, approximately three (3) years.

Construction staging would occur in the central portion of the existing campus. The proposed Project would begin with the construction and installation of portable classrooms in the northwestern portion of the Project Site. Upon completion of the installation of the portable classrooms, both students and faculty within the central classroom buildings of the campus would be relocated to the portable classrooms, followed by the demolition of the central classroom buildings. The school would continue to operate during construction. As new buildings and classrooms are completed, an ongoing phased vacation and relocation of students and faculty into the new campus facilities would occur, pending their availability.

The staging area would change for each construction phase, although to the extent possible PSUSD would place the area away from active school areas. A variety of construction equipment would be used. No street closures during construction are anticipated.

Construction activities would occur during regular weekday working hours, between 7:00 AM and 5:30 PM; Saturday construction hours would be limited to between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, and no construction would occur on Sundays.

All construction workers would be required to wear identification badges, PPE, and enter through a designated construction entrance. Construction areas would be separated from the rest of the campus by temporary fencing and secured by locks.

When school is not in session, the campus would be secured by temporary fencing and locked gates surrounding the active construction area(s). Additional security and safety measures may be implemented to further secure the campus during and outside of operational school hours.

New Classroom Construction

As shown in **2.0-3: Existing Campus Layout**, classrooms are currently dispersed across the campus with several smaller structures and portable units located around the central playfields. This current arrangement creates a somewhat fragmented layout, with instructional spaces spread between the north, east, and central portions of the site. As shown in **3.0-1: Proposed Improvements,** the proposed Project would consolidate and reorient classroom locations into a more unified campus core. New classroom buildings would be organized into larger, contiguous blocks along the western and southern portions of the Project Site, adjacent to the main playfields. This reconfiguration would cluster instructional spaces closer together, improving internal circulation.

The proposed Project includes the construction of four (4) new permanent buildings in the western portion of the Project Site, as well as the development of new hardcourts, playgrounds, and athletic fields. These buildings are identified as Buildings 3, 4, 5, and 6, and this area is currently developed as hardcourts and open fields. Building 3 would house Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Fourth Grade, and Fifth Grade classrooms. Building 4 would house Second Grade, Third Grade, and STEAM classrooms as well as the Library. Building 5 would house First Grade classrooms and Physical Education facilities. Building 6 would house music classrooms.

The existing classrooms would remain in use during the construction of the new buildings. After the completion of the new buildings, classes would transition into the new buildings, and the existing classroom buildings would be demolished and removed. Subsequently, the development of the new hardcourts and playgrounds would occur in the open spaces of the campus.

A kinder playground would be developed to the southeast of Building 3, and would include grassy play areas, a tricycle path, areas for classroom overflow and covered outdoor learning, as well as areas for both active and natural play.

The upper playground would be developed to the southeast of Building 2 in the central portion of the Project Site, and would include grassy play areas, a tricycle path, areas for covered outdoor learning, as well as areas for both active and natural play. Hardcourt play areas containing basketball courts would be located to the south of the upper playground. Athletic fields would be developed in the eastern portion of the Project Site.

New MPR Expansion and Administration Modernization

As shown in **3.0-1: Proposed Improvements**, the existing Administration Building, MPR Building, and Building 7 would remain in place and be renovated and expanded. The renovated MPR building would include a multipurpose room, kitchen, outdoor lunch shelter, restrooms, as well as supporting storage, mechanical, and other utility spaces. The renovated Administration building would serve as the main entrance to the campus and would include a lobby and reception area, administrative and health offices, a teacher's lounge and outdoor seating area, restrooms, as well as supporting storage, mechanical, and other utility spaces. Building 7 would be renovated to include two (2) flex-classrooms that could be used for indoor physical education during inclement weather.

Hardscape and Landscaping Improvements

Improvements would be made to the hardscape areas around the buildings, including the administrative building, multipurpose room, and classroom buildings. Hardscape improvements would involve redesigning the outdoor spaces, demolition of existing hardscape, and installation of the following: kinder play area, playground, tricycle path, covered outdoor learning area, and play areas. Existing parking would remain with limited reconfiguration as required to accommodate The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades.

The proposed Project would include comprehensive enhancements to the on-site landscaping to improve aesthetics, comfort, and environmental performance across the campus. Landscape improvements would incorporate a desert-appropriate plant palette consistent with the Coachella Valley Water District Lush & Efficient Desert Friendly Landscaping guide, emphasizing drought-tolerant, low-maintenance species suited to the Coachella Valley's arid climate.

New landscape buffers would be established along the northern and eastern frontages of the Project Site to soften views from adjacent streets and enhance the visual quality of the school's perimeter.

These buffers would include a mix of desert-adapted trees, shrubs, and groundcovers such as palo verde (*Parkinsonia florida*), desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*), and acacia species, complemented by accent plantings such as red yucca (*Hesperaloe parviflora*), feathery senna (*Senna artemisiodes*), and firecracker bush (*Russelia equisetiformis*). Reconfigured parking and drop-off areas would feature shaded landscape islands with canopy trees—such as mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) and mulga acacia (*Acacia aneura*)—to reduce heat gain, provide pedestrian comfort, and improve stormwater infiltration.

Along internal walkways and playfields, additional plantings and shade trees would provide comfort and visual interest, using species with moderate canopy spread and minimal litter to maintain safety and visibility. Outdoor learning and gathering areas would be enhanced with shaded seating, adaptive plantings, and decomposed granite or permeable paving to support sustainable stormwater management.

The landscape design would promote water efficiency through the use of drip irrigation systems, soil moisture sensors, and zoning of plant species based on hydrozones. Combined, these measures would contribute to reduced water consumption, improved microclimates, and a cohesive desert campus aesthetic that reflects the regional landscape character while supporting long-term sustainability goals.

SOURCE: RUHNAU CLARKE - July 2025

FIGURE 3.0-1

Meridian Consultants

Proposed Improvements

047-009-21

SOURCE: RUHNAU CLARKE - July 2025

FIGURE **3.0-2**

Meridian Consultants

Phasing Plan

047-009-21

3.3 PROJECT DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS

This Initial Study evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project, thereby enabling PSUSD, responsible and reviewing agencies, and interested parties to make informed decisions. The anticipated approvals for this proposed Project are:

Lead Agency	Action
• PSUSD Board of Education	• MND Adoption and Project Approval
Responsible Agencies	**Action**
• Regional Water Quality Control Board	• NPDES Permit; Notice of Intent (NOI) to Obtain Permit Coverage; Issue General Permit for Discharges of Stormwater Associated with Construction; Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)
Reviewing Agencies	**Action**
• California Department of Education, School Facilities and Transportation Services Division	• Review School Design and Program
• California Department of General Services, Division of the State Architect	• Review Building and Construction Plans
• California Department of Toxic Substance Control	• Review potential hazardous material remediation plans

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this Project.

☐	Aesthetics	☐	Agriculture and Forestry	☐	Air Quality
☒	Biological Resources	☐	Cultural Resources	☐	Energy
☐	Geology/Soils	☐	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☒	Hazards & Hazardous Materials
☐	Hydrology/Water Quality	☐	Land Use/Planning	☐	Mineral Resources
☒	Noise	☐	Population/Housing	☐	Public Services
☐	Recreation	☐	Transportation/Traffic	☐	Tribal Cultural Resources
☐	Utilities/Service Systems	☐	Wildfire	☐	Mandatory Findings of Significance

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐	I find that the Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and is eligible for a Categorical Exemption.
☐	I find that the Project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
☒	I find that although the Project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
☐	I find that the Project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
☐	I find that the Project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
☐	I find that although the Project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the Project, nothing further is required.

Julie Arthur
Julie Arthur (Nov 20, 2025 16:08:29 PST)

Signature

11/20/2025

Date

4.2 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATE SCHOOL FACILITY PROGRAM

In addition to the general environmental checklist, projects involving primary and secondary public schools have several additional requirements established by the California Education Code (Cal. Ed. Code), California Code of Regulations (CCR), and the Public Resources Code (PRC), as shown in **Table 4.2-1: Environmental Review Factors for State-Funded New School and State-Funded Addition to Existing School**. These requirements vary by type of school project and whether State funds are involved.

TABLE 4.2-1: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FACTORS FOR STATE-FUNDED NEW SCHOOL AND STATE-FUNDED ADDITION TO EXISTING SCHOOL

Topic	Applicable Code	Environmental Checklist
Air Quality		
Is the boundary of the proposed school site within 500 feet of the edge of the closest traffic lane of a freeway or busy traffic corridor? If yes, would the project create an air quality health risk due to the placement of the School?	PRC §21151.8(a)(1)(D); Ed. Code §17213(c)(2)(C)	Section 5.3, Air Quality, Question (e)
Geology and Soils		
Does the site contain an active earthquake fault or fault trace, or is the site located within the boundaries of any special studies zone or within an area designated as geologically hazardous in the safety element of the local general plan?	Ed. Code, §17212; CCR Title 5 §14010(f)	Section 5.6, Geology and Soils, Question (a)(ii)
Would the project involve the construction, reconstruction, or relocation of any school building on the trace of a geological fault along which surface rupture can reasonably be expected to occur within the life of the school building?	Ed. Code §17212; CCR, Title 5 §14010(f)	Section 5.6, Geology and Soils, Question (a)(iii)
Would the project involve the construction, reconstruction, or relocation of any school building on a site subject to moderate-to-high liquefaction?	CCR, Title 5 §14010(i)	Section 5.6, Geology and Soils, Question (a)(iv)
Would the project involve the construction, reconstruction, or relocation of any school building on a site subject to landslides?	CCR, Title 5 §14010(i)	Section 5.6, Geology and Soils, Question (a)(v)
Hazards and Hazardous Materials		
If a response action is necessary and proposed as part of this project, has it been developed to be protective of children's health, with an ample margin of safety?	Ed. Code §17210.1 (a)(4)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (b)
Does the proposed school site contain one or more pipelines, situated underground or aboveground, which carry hazardous substances, acutely hazardous materials, or hazardous wastes, unless	PRC §21151.8 (a)(1)(C)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (c)

TABLE 4.2-1: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FACTORS FOR STATE-FUNDED NEW SCHOOL AND STATE-FUNDED ADDITION TO EXISTING SCHOOL		
Topic	Applicable Code	Environmental Checklist
the pipeline is a natural gas line that is used only to supply natural gas to that school or neighborhood?		
Is the proposed school site located near an aboveground water or fuel storage tank or within 1,500 feet of an easement of an aboveground or underground pipeline that can pose a safety hazard to the site?	CCR, Title 5 §14010 (h)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (d)
Would the project create an air quality hazard due to the placement of a school within one-quarter mile of: (a) permitted and nonpermitted facilities identified by the jurisdictional air quality control board or air pollution control district; (b) freeways and other busy traffic corridors; (c) large agricultural operations; and/or (d) a rail yard, which might reasonably be anticipated to emit hazardous air emissions, or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous material, substances, or waste?	PRC § 1151.8 (a)(2); Ed. Code §17213 (b)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (f)
Is the school site in an area designated in a city, county, or city and county general plan for agricultural use and zoned for agricultural production, and if so, do neighboring agricultural uses have the potential to result in any public health and safety issues that may affect the pupils and employees at the school site? (Does not apply to school sites approved by CDE prior to January 1, 1997.)	Ed. Code §17215.5 (a)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (g)
Is the property line of the proposed school site less than the following distances from the edge of respective power line easements: (1) 100 feet of a 50–133 kV line; (2) 150 feet of a 220–230 kV line; or (3) 350 feet of a 500–550 kV line?	CCR, Title 5 §14010 (c)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (h)
Is the Project Site a hazardous substance release site identified by the state Department of Health Services in a current list adopted pursuant to §25356 for removal or remedial action pursuant to Chapter 6.8 of Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code?	PRC §21151.8 (a)(1)(B)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (i)
Does the Project Site contain a current or former hazardous waste disposal site or solid waste disposal site and, if so, have the wastes been removed?	PRC §21151.8 (a)(1)(A)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (j)
If prepared, has the risk assessment been performed with a focus on children's health posed by a hazardous materials release or threatened release, or the presence of naturally occurring hazardous materials on the school site?	Ed. Code §17210.1 (a)(3)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Questions (b), (f), and (k)

TABLE 4.2-1: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FACTORS FOR STATE-FUNDED NEW SCHOOL AND STATE-FUNDED ADDITION TO EXISTING SCHOOL		
Topic	**Applicable Code**	**Environmental Checklist**
Is the proposed school site situated within 2,000 feet of a significant disposal of hazardous waste?	CCR, Title 5 §14010 (t)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (l)
Is the proposed school site within two miles, measured by air line, of that point on an airport runway or potential runway included in an airport master plan that is nearest to the site? (Does not apply to school sites acquired prior to January 1, 1997.)	Ed. Code §17215 (a)&(b)	Section 5.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Question (m)
Hydrology and Water Quality		
Is the Project Site subject to flooding or dam inundation?	Ed. Code §17212; CCR, Title 5 §14010 (g)	Section 5.9, Hydrology and Water Quality, Question (j)
Land Use and Planning		
Would the proposed school conflict with any existing or proposed land uses, such that a potential health or safety risk to students would be created?	CCR, Title 5 §14010 (m)	Section 5.10, Land Use and Planning, Question (c)
Noise		
Is the proposed school site located adjacent to or near a major arterial roadway or freeway whose noise generation may adversely affect the educational program?	CCR, Title 5 §14010 (e)	Section 5.12, Noise, Question (b)
Public Services		
Does the site promote joint use of parks, libraries, museums, and other public services?	CCR, Title 5, §14010 (o)	Section 5.14, Public Services, Question (f)
Transportation/Traffic		
Are traffic and pedestrian hazards mitigated per Caltrans' School Area Pedestrian Safety manual?	CCR, Title 5 §14010 (l)	Section 5.16, Transportation/Traffic, Question (e)
Is the site easily accessible from arterials and is the minimum peripheral visibility maintained for driveways per Caltrans' Highway Design Manual?	CCR, Title 5 §14010 (k)	Section 5.16, Transportation/Traffic, Question (f)
Is the proposed school site within 1,500 feet of a railroad track easement?	CCR, Title 5 §14010 (d)	Section 5.16, Transportation/Traffic, Question (g)

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section provides an evaluation of the environmental topics identified in the Environmental Checklist form in Appendix G of State CEQA G Guidelines. [6]

A brief explanation for the determination of significance is provided for all impact determinations, with the exception of “No Impact” determinations that are adequately supported by the information sources the Lead Agency (PSUSD) cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” determination is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to the Project (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” determination includes an explanation of its bases relative to project-specific factors, as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

Explanations take into account the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

Once the Lead Agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, the checklist is utilized to indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant.

“Mitigated Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.

6 California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387, Appendix G.

5.1 AESTHETICS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
AESTHETICS—Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.1.1 Discussion

a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less than Significant Impact. Scenic vistas are views of features such as mountains, forests, the ocean, and/or urban skylines. Scenic vistas near the Project Site include the Little San Bernardino Mountains approximately 5.9 miles to the east, Big Morongo Canyon Preserve approximately 7.3 miles to the north, Mission Creek Preserve approximately 8.4 miles to the northwest, and the San Jacinto Mountains approximately 12 miles to the southwest.

Some of the more notable scenic vistas in the County include the Santa Rosa National Monument, located approximately 21.7 miles south of the Project Site. Along Camino Campanero Road, the Little San Bernardino Mountain ridge to the east and the San Jacinto Mountains to the southwest are visible but slightly obstructed by trees and existing residential development.

The proposed Project includes the development of four (4) new permanent campus buildings, the renovation and expansion of the existing multipurpose and administration buildings, development of a kinder playground and upper playground, and improvements to the hardscaping and landscaping throughout the campus. As shown in **2.0-3: Existing Campus Layout**, classrooms are currently dispersed across the campus with several smaller structures and portable units distributed around the central playfields. As shown in **3.0-1: Proposed Improvements,** the proposed Project would consolidate and reorient classroom locations into a more unified campus core. New classroom buildings would be organized into larger, contiguous blocks along the western and central portions of the Project Site, adjacent to the main playfields in the eastern portion of the Project Site. This reconfiguration would increase the distance between classroom structures and the eastern boundary of the Project Site, which would reduce visibility of classroom structures from the street and residences adjacent to the east.

The Project Site is currently developed with single-story buildings and will be redeveloped with new single-story school buildings. Because the proposed development would be consistent with the existing scale and visual character of the existing campus, the proposed Project would not substantially alter the existing visual environment. Construction would be short-term and would not require large equipment that would obstruct views of the vistas. For these reasons, the proposed Project would not substantially change existing public views of the surrounding scenic vistas. The proposed Project's impact on scenic vistas would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No Impact. The nearest State Designated Scenic Highway identified by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is State Route (SR) 62, located approximately 6.3 miles west of the Project Site. [7] An "Officially Designated" scenic highway means that the highway provides views of scenic backdrops and has been officially designated by the Caltrans Corridor Protection Program, which protects the views and natural landscapes surrounding the highway. [8] The Project Site is approximately 7 miles northeast of Highway SR-74, which is an Eligible Scenic Highway, but is not visible from this highway.

The Project Site is not adjacent to any buildings that may have historical significance. The closest historical resource is Cabot's Pueblo Museum, approximately 1.3 miles north of the Project Site. [9] The Project Site does not contain any scenic resources, such as rock outcroppings or trees, or historic buildings that would be damaged by the Project. Therefore, the proposed Project would not have any aesthetic impacts on potentially historical resources. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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7 Caltrans. "California State Scenic Highway System Map." Accessed April 2025. https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa.

8 Caltrans. Scenic Highways – Frequently Asked Questions. Accessed April 2025. https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways-faq2.

9 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element." Revised December 8, 2015. Accessed April 2025. https://planning.rctlma.org/sites/g/files/aldnop416/files/migrated/Portals-14-genplan-general-Plan-2017-elements-OCT17-Ch05-MOSE-120815.pdf.

c. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Less Than Significant Impact. As shown in **2.0-3**, the Project Site is developed with an existing elementary school and is surrounded by single-family residences to the south and east, and vacant, undeveloped land to the north and west.

The proposed Project would modernize and renovate the existing elementary school campus, including the development of four (4) new permanent campus buildings, the renovation and expansion of the existing multipurpose and administration buildings, the development of a kinder playground and upper playground, and improvements to the hardscaping and landscaping throughout the campus. As previously discussed**,** the proposed Project would consolidate and reorient classroom locations into a more unified campus core along the western and central portions of the Project Site. This reconfiguration would increase the distance between classroom structures and the eastern boundary of the Project Site, which would reduce visibility of classroom structures from the street and residences adjacent to the east.

These improvements would alter the visual character of the site by replacing older structures and portable classrooms with contemporary school facilities and by introducing additional landscape buffers, shade trees, and outdoor learning areas. The proposed Project would be consistent in scale and visual character with surrounding single-story residential development and would not introduce structures of unusual height or massing. Perimeter fencing, lighting, and other security features would be typical of modern school design and would not substantially degrade the existing visual environment. With the addition of landscaping and shaded pedestrian areas, the proposed Project would improve the overall visual quality of the Project Site compared to existing conditions. For these reasons, the proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the Project Site and its surroundings. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less Than Significant Impact. Existing sources of light within the area include lighting from the school buildings, street lighting along Camino Campanero, residential lighting, playground lighting, and high-intensity nighttime lighting within the parking lots on campus.

The proposed Project would not produce significantly more lighting than currently exists on the Project Site. The construction and staging areas would be located on-site and may be lighted in the evening for security purposes. The proposed exterior improvements, consisting of new, modernized permanent buildings, would include external security lighting. All new exterior lighting proposed would be focused and would not spill over the school boundaries. The proposed Project does not include any nighttime field lighting. Internal lighting at the proposed building would be minimal and most noticeable during a handful of nighttime events, such as Back-to-School night. Exterior lighting would not affect day or nighttime views in the area. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

5.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES—Would the project:				
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to nonforest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature could result in conversion of Farmland, to nonagricultural use or conversion of forestland to nonforest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.2.1 Discussion

a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use?

No Impact. The Project Site is currently developed with BWES and includes a combination of permanent, modular, and portable buildings. The Project Site is bounded by single-family residences to the south and east, and vacant, undeveloped land to the north and west.

According to the California Department of Conservation's "California Important Farmland Map," the Project Site and surrounding uses are listed as Urban and Built-Up Land.[10] Common examples of Urban and Built-Up land are residential, industrial, commercial, or institutional facilities.[11] The Project Site and surrounding area are not listed as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance. The Project Site and surrounding

10 California Department of Conservation. "California Important Farmland Map." Map. Accessed March 2025. https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/.

11 California Department of Conservation. "Riverside County Important Farmland." Map. Accessed March 2025. https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/metadata/importantfarmland/riverside_meta.htm.

development are not currently used for agriculture. Additionally, the proposed Project would not convert farmland to non-agricultural uses. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or Williamson Act Contract?

No Impact. The Project Site and adjacent properties contain a land use designation of MDR and a zoning designation of W-2. [12] The Project Site and adjacent properties are not under a Williamson Act Contract. [13] Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not conflict with existing land use designations for agricultural use or Williamson Act Contract. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

No Impact. The Project Site is zoned W-2 and is not zoned for forest, timberland, or timberland production. The Project Site is currently developed as an elementary school campus and is not used for forestland or timberland. As previously stated, the Project Site exists in a developed part of unincorporated Riverside County and is surrounded by land uses consisting primarily of medium-density residential housing. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with any existing zoning for or cause the rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d. Result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forestland to nonforest use?

No Impact. The Project Site is not zoned for forestland and contains no forestland. The proposed Project would not result in the loss or conversion of forestland to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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12 Riverside County. "Map My County." GIS Database. Accessed March 2025. https://gis1.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC_Public.

13 California Department of Conservation. "California Williamson Act Enrollment Finder." GIS Database. Accessed March 2025. https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/WilliamsonAct/App/index.html.

e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature could result in conversion of Farmland, to nonagricultural use or conversion of forestland to nonforest use?

No impact. The Project Site is not zoned for agriculture or forestland. The proposed Project would not result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use, or forestland to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

5.3 AIR QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
AIR QUALITY—Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Is the boundary of the proposed school site within 500 feet of the edge of the closest traffic lane of a freeway or busy traffic corridor? If yes, would the project create an air quality health risk due to the placement of the School?	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.3.1 Discussion

a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site is located within the South Coast Air Basin (Basin) and is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The SCAQMD is responsible for preparing the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), which addresses federal and State Clean Air Act (CAA) requirements.

The SCAQMD CEQA Handbook states, "New or amended General Plan Elements (including land use zoning and density amendments), Specific Plans, and significant projects must be analyzed for consistency with the AQMP."

Strict consistency with all aspects of the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) is usually not required. A proposed Project shall be considered to be consistent with the AQMP if it (1) furthers one or more policies; and (2) does not obstruct other policies. The SCAQMD CEQA Handbook identifies two key indicators of consistency:

- **Criterion 1**: Whether the project would result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations, cause or contribute to new violations, or delay timely attainment of the ambient air quality standards (AAQS) or interim emission reductions in the AQMP.

- **Criterion 2**: Whether the project would exceed the assumptions in the AQMP or increments based on the year of project buildout and phase.

The Basin is currently designated as nonattainment at the federal and State level for ozone and PM_{10}. The SCAQMD has developed regional emissions thresholds to determine whether a project would contribute to air pollutant violations. If a project exceeds the regional air pollutant thresholds, then it would significantly contribute to air quality violations in the Basin.

As shown in **Table 5.3-1: Maximum Construction Emissions** below, temporary emissions associated with the construction of the proposed Project would fall below regional thresholds, and impacts would be less than significant. Additionally, as shown in **Table 5.3-2: Maximum Operational Emissions** below, long-term emissions associated with proposed Project operation would not exceed SCAQMD's emission thresholds. As such, the proposed Project would not conflict with the growth assumptions in the regional air plan and would not contribute to air quality violations in the Basin.

Based on the air quality modeling analysis detailed below, short-term construction and long-term operational impacts would not be significant based on the SCAQMD regional and local thresholds of significance. Therefore, the proposed Project would not contribute to the exceedance of any air pollutant concentration standards and is found to be consistent with SCAQMD's 2022 Air Quality Management Plan (2022 AQMP) for the first criterion.

Consistency with the 2022 AQMP assumptions is determined by performing an analysis of the proposed Project with the growth assumptions in the 2022 AQMP. The emphasis of this criterion is to ensure that the analyses conducted for the proposed Project are based on the same forecasts as the 2022 AQMP. The 2024-2050 Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy (2024-2050 RTP/SCS), prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) adopted on April 4, 2024, includes discussion of the challenges in a changing region, creating a plan for the future, and paving the way forward to greater access, mobility, and sustainable growth, as well as measuring progress towards these goals. The chapters in SCAG's 2024-2050 RTP/SCS respond directly to federal and State requirements placed on SCAG, providing a foundation by which local governments are required to use as the basis of their plans for purposes of consistency with applicable regional plans under CEQA. For the proposed Project, the City of Los Angeles' General Plan Land Use Chapter defines the assumptions that are represented in the 2022 AQMP.

With respect to the determination of consistency with AQMP growth assumptions, the projections in the AQMP for achieving air quality goals are based on assumptions in SCAG's RTP/SCS regarding population, housing, and growth trends. Determining whether or not a project exceeds SCAG's growth forecasts involves the evaluation of the following: (1) consistency with applicable population, housing, and employment growth projections; (2) project mitigation measures; and (3) appropriate incorporation of AQMP land use planning strategies. The 2024–2050 RTP/SCS provides socioeconomic forecast projections of regional population growth. These growth forecasts are based on local plans and policies applicable to the specific area. The proposed Project would not increase population, employment, or housing projections. The proposed Project would update the existing school campus and modernize or replace current buildings on campus without increasing enrollment capacity. Thus, the proposed Project would not induce an increase in population, employment, or housing, and the Project would not conflict with growth projections used in the development of the AQMP.

The proposed Project would complete modernization improvements on the campus BWES and would not change the land use designation of the Project Site. As such, the proposed Project is consistent with the existing land use designation. The proposed Project is not anticipated to exceed the 2022 AQMP assumptions for the Project Site and is found to be consistent with the 2022 AQMP for the second criterion. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard?

Less than Significant Impact. A significant impact could occur if a project result in a considerable cumulative contribution to federal or State nonattainment pollutants. The Salton Sea Air Basin is currently designated as nonattainment at the federal and State level for ozone and PM_{10}.

In regard to determining the significance of the Project's contribution, the SCAQMD neither recommends quantified analyses of construction and/or operational emissions from multiple related projects, nor provides methodologies or thresholds of significance to be used to assess the cumulative emissions generated by multiple cumulative projects. Instead, the SCAQMD recommends that a project's potential contribution to cumulative impacts be assessed utilizing the same significance criteria as those for project-specific impacts. The SCAQMD states that "projects that do not exceed the project-specific thresholds are generally not considered to be cumulatively significant." [14] Therefore, if a project generates less than significant construction or operational emissions, then the project would not generate a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions for those pollutants for which the Basin is in nonattainment.

Construction

With respect to the proposed Project's construction-period air quality emissions and cumulative Basin-wide conditions, the SCAQMD has developed strategies to reduce criteria pollutant emissions outlined in the AQMP pursuant to National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Among the

14 South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). *White Paper on Potential Control Strategies to Address Cumulative Impacts from Air Pollution*. 2003. Appendix A. Accessed July 2025. http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/Agendas/Environmental-Justice/cumulative-impacts-working-group/cumulative-impacts-white-paper-appendix.pdf.

SCAQMD rules applicable to the Project are Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust) and Rule 1113 (Architectural Coatings). Rule 403 requires the use of stringent, best available control measures (BACMs) to minimize PM10 emissions during grading and construction activities. [15] Rule 1113 limits the VOC content of coatings, with a VOC content limit for flat coatings of 50 grams per liter (g/L). [16] Per SCAQMD rules and mandates, as well as the CEQA requirement that significant impacts be mitigated to the extent feasible, these same requirements (i.e., SCAQMD Rule 403 compliance, the implementation of all feasible Mitigation Measures, and compliance with adopted AQMP emissions control measures) would also be imposed on construction projects Basin-wide, where applicable.

According to the SCAQMD, individual construction projects that exceed the SCAQMD's recommended daily thresholds for project-specific impacts would cause a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions for those pollutants for which the Basin is in nonattainment. Construction of the proposed Project has the potential to create air quality impacts through the use of heavy-duty construction equipment and through vehicle trips generated from construction workers to and from the Project Site. In addition, fugitive dust emissions would result from demolition and construction activities. NOx emissions would result from the use of off-road construction equipment. Paving and the application of architectural coatings (e.g., paints) would potentially release VOCs.

Construction emissions were estimated according to the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook and construction emission factors contained in the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) (See **Appendix A: Air Quality CalEEMod Output Sheets**). The emission calculations assume the use of standard construction practices, such as compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust), which requires all unpaved demolition and construction areas to be wetted at least three times a day during grading and construction to minimize the generation of fugitive dust.

Construction of the proposed Project would take place in two (2) Phases, Phase 1 and Phase 2; however, Phase 2 has been split into three parts, Phase 2A, Phase 2B, and Phase 2C. Overlap of phases would only occur in 2028, when Phase 1 building construction, paving, and architectural coating would occur simultaneously with Phase 2A demolition. The results presented in **Table 5.3-1: Maximum Construction Emissions** are compared to the SCAQMD-established construction significance thresholds. As shown in **Table 5.3-1**, the construction emissions would not exceed the regional VOC, NO_x, CO, SO_x, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ concentration thresholds. Construction impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

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15 SCAQMD. *Rule 403: Fugitive Dust*. Amended June 3, 2005. Accessed April 2025. https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-403.pdf?sfvrsn=4.

16 SCAQMD. *Rule 1113: Architectural Coating*. Amended February 5, 2016. Accessed April 2025. http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/r1113.pdf.

TABLE 5.3-1: MAXIMUM CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS						
Source	VOC	NO_x	CO	SO_x	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
	pounds/day					
Phase 1						
2026	4.3	39.7	43.6	0.1	5.1	2.7
2027	2.0	9.9	26.7	<0.1	1.3	0.8
Phase 1 + Phase 2A[a]						
2028	10.7	41.0	54.8	0.1	4.4	2.5
Phase 2A						
2029	7.3	8.7	12.2	<0.1	0.4	0.3
Phase 2B						
2029	2.9	22.8	28.3	0.1	3.6	1.9
Phase 2C						
2029	2.9	24.7	28.8	0.1	4.1	2.0
Maximum	**10.7**	**39.7**	**43.6**	**0.1**	**5.1**	**2.7**
SCAQMD Mass Daily Threshold	*75*	*100*	*550*	*150*	*150*	*55*
Threshold exceeded?	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: CO = carbon monoxide; NOx = nitrogen oxides; PM10 = particulate matter less than 10 microns; PM2.5 = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns; SOx = sulfur oxides; VOC = volatile organic compounds.

[a] *Represents concurrent emissions from overlapping construction in Phase 1 and Phase 2A, as demolition of Phase 2A would occur at the same time as building construction, paving, and architectural coating in Phase 1.*

Source: Refer to **Appendix A: Air Quality CalEEMod Output Sheets**.

Operation

Operational activities associated with the proposed Project would result in long-term emissions from area, energy, and mobile sources. Area-source emissions are based on natural gas (building heating and water heaters), landscaping equipment, and consumer products (including paint) usage rates provided in CalEEMod. Natural gas usage factors in CalEEMod are based on the California Energy Commission (CEC)'s California Commercial End Use Survey data set, which provides energy demand by building type and climate zone. Mobile source emissions are derived primarily from vehicle trips generated by the proposed Project. The proposed Project would not increase the number of students attending the school, and as such, mobile trips would remain the same as the existing conditions.

The results presented in **Table 5.3-2: Maximum Operational Emissions** are compared to the SCAQMD-established operational significance thresholds. As shown in **Table 5.3-2**, operational emissions associated with the proposed Project would incrementally increase when compared to existing emissions as a result of the overall 29,256 square foot increase in building space, however operation of the proposed Project would not exceed the SCAQMD's emission thresholds and therefore would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant. However, the building would be constructed consistently with current building efficiency standards for new development, which would result in more efficient buildings. Operational impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

TABLE 5.3-2: MAXIMUM OPERATIONAL EMISSIONS						
Source	**VOC**	**NOx**	**CO**	**SOx**	**PM10**	**PM2.5**
	pounds/day					
Mobile	5.4	6.0	58.8	0.2	13.9	3.6
Area	2.6	<0.1	3.7	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Energy	<0.1	0.5	0.5	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Total	**8.0**	**6.5**	**62.9**	**0.2**	**13.9**	**3.6**
Existing Emissions	6.29	5.6	51.0	0.1	9.1	2.4
Net Change	1.7	0.9	11.9	0.1	4.8	1.2
SCAQMD Mass Daily Threshold	*55*	*55*	*550*	*150*	*150*	*55*
Threshold exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Notes: CO = carbon monoxide; NOx = nitrogen oxides; PM10 = particulate matter less than 10 microns; PM2.5 = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns; SOx = sulfur oxides; VOC = volatile organic compounds.

Source: Refer to **Appendix A**: **Air Quality CalEEMod Output Sheets**.

c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than Significant Impact. The SCAQMD developed the Localized Significance Threshold (LST) methodology [17] to assess the potential air quality impacts that would result in the near vicinity of the Project.

Receptors sensitive to air pollution include, but are not limited to, residences, schools, hospitals, and convalescent facilities. The nearest sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Project Site include the BWES campus, a preschool to the east, and residential uses to the north, west, south, and east.

For evaluation purposes, the SCAQMD territory is divided into 38 source-receptor areas (SRAs). These SRAs are designated to provide a general representation of the local meteorological, terrain, and air quality conditions within the particular geographical area. The Project Site is within SRA 30, Coachella Valley. [18] The LST methodology considers emissions generated from on-site sources and excludes emissions from off-site vehicular traffic. The SCAQMD provides mass-rate lookup tables as a screening tool to determine the likelihood of localized impacts from proposed Project construction and operation. Ambient conditions for the Coachella Valley, as recorded in SRA 30 by the SCAQMD,

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17 SCAQMD. *Final Localized Threshold Methodology.* July 2008. Accessed April 2025. http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/localized-significance-thresholds/final-lst-methodology-document.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

18 SCAQMD. "General Forecast Areas and Air Monitoring Areas." Map. Accessed April 2025. http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/map-of-monitoring-areas.pdf.

were used for ambient conditions in determining appropriate threshold levels. Additionally, the estimated maximum area of grading that would take place per day during each phase was used in determining appropriate threshold levels. The LST mass-rate lookup tables are applicable to NO_x, CO, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions.

Construction

The results of the construction LST analysis for the proposed Project are provided in **Table 5.3-3: Localized Construction Emissions**. It is important to note that construction would be required to comply with the SCAQMD's Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust), which requires watering of the Project Site during dust-generating construction activities, stabilizing disturbed areas with water or chemical stabilizers, and preventing track-out dust from construction vehicles. This compliance would further reduce construction-related emissions. As shown in **Table 5.3-3**, emissions would not exceed the localized significance thresholds for construction.

As emissions would be below SCAQMD localized thresholds, impacts to the sensitive receptors identified above from localized emissions during construction would be less than significant.

TABLE 5.3-3: LOCALIZED CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS

Source	NO_x	CO	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
	On-Site Emissions (pounds/day)			
Phase 1[a]				
Total maximum emissions	27.2	27.6	3.5	2.0
LST threshold	*210*	*1,501*	*8*	*5*
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Phase 1 and Phase 2A[b,c]				
Total maximum emissions	29.5	31.7	1.5	1.1
LST threshold	*210*	*1,501*	*8*	*5*
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Phase 2A[d]				
Total maximum emissions	24.3	27.2	3.4	1.9
LST threshold	*223*	*1,606*	*9*	*6*
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Phase 2B[e]				
Total maximum emissions	22.7	26.9	3.3	1.8
LST threshold	*223*	*1,606*	*9*	*6*
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Phase 2C[f]				
Total maximum emissions	22.7	26.9	3.3	1.8
LST threshold	*223*	*1,606*	*9*	*6*
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Notes:

TABLE 5.3-3: LOCALIZED CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS				
Source	NO_x	CO	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
	On-Site Emissions (pounds/day)			

Totals in table may not appear to add exactly due to rounding in the computer model calculations.

CO = carbon monoxide; NOx = nitrogen oxide; PM10 = particulate matter less than 10 microns; PM2.5 = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns.

[a] *Phase 1 construction area would result in approximately 2.7 acres graded per day. As such, LST thresholds for a 2.7-acre site in SRA 30 with receptors within 25 meters were used for comparison for Phase 1 emissions.*
[b] *Represents concurrent emissions from overlapping construction in Phase 1 and Phase 2A, as demolition of Phase 2A would occur at the same time as building construction, paving, and architectural coating in Phase 1.*
[c] *Phase 1 construction area would result in approximately 2.7 acres graded per day. As such, LST thresholds for a 2.7-acre site in SRA 30 with receptors within 25 meters were used for a conservative comparison for Phase 1 and Phase 2A emissions.*
[d] *Phase 2A construction area would result in approximately 3 acres graded per day. As such, LST thresholds for a 3-acre site in SRA 30 with receptors within 25 meters were used for comparison for Phase 2A emissions.*
[e] *Phase 2B construction area would result in approximately 3 acres graded per day. As such, LST thresholds for a 3-acre site in SRA 30 with receptors within 25 meters were used for comparison for Phase 2B emissions.*
[f] *Phase 2C construction area would result in approximately 3 acres graded per day. As such, LST thresholds for a 3-acre site in SRA 30 with receptors within 25 meters were used for comparison for Phase 2C emissions.*

Source: Refer to **Appendix A**: **Air Quality CalEEMod Output Sheets**.

Operation

Local emissions from the proposed Project's operation would include area and energy sources. Area-source emissions are based on natural gas (building heating and water heaters), landscaping equipment, and consumer products (including paint) usage rates provided in CalEEMod. Natural gas usage factors in CalEEMod are based on the CEC's California Commercial End Use Survey data set, which provides energy demand by building type and climate zone. The results of the operational LST analysis are provided in **Table 5.3-4: Localized Operational Emissions**. As shown in **Table 5.3-4**, emissions would not exceed the localized significance thresholds for operation.

Therefore, localized operational impacts resulting from the proposed Project on the sensitive receptors located around the Project Site would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

TABLE 5.3-4: LOCALIZED OPERATIONAL EMISSIONS				
Source	NO_x	CO	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
	On-Site Emissions (pounds/day)			
Project area/energy emissions	0.5	4.2	<0.1	<0.1
Existing area/energy emissions	0.4	2.7	<0.1	<0.1
Net Change	**0.1**	**1.5**	**0**	**0**
LST threshold	*304*	*2,292*	*3*	*2*
Threshold Exceeded?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Notes:

Totals in table may not appear to add exactly due to rounding in the computer model calculations.

TABLE 5.3-4: LOCALIZED OPERATIONAL EMISSIONS				
Source	NO_x	CO	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
	On-Site Emissions (pounds/day)			

CO = carbon monoxide; NOx = nitrogen oxide; PM10 = particulate matter less than 10 microns; PM2.5 = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns.

Total Project Site is 17.99 acres. LST threshold for 5 acres was conservatively used to compare localized operational emissions.

Source: Refer to **Appendix A: Air Quality CalEEMod Output Sheets**.

d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Less than Significant Impact. During construction activities associated with the operation of construction equipment, the application of architectural coatings and other interior and exterior finishes may produce discernible odors typical of most construction sites. Although these odors could be a source of nuisance to adjacent residences, they are temporary and intermittent in nature. As construction-related emissions dissipate, the odors associated with these emissions would also decrease, dilute, and become unnoticeable.

Further, as shown in **Table 5.3-4**, the construction and operation of the proposed Project would result in emissions below the localized significance thresholds. Mandatory compliance with SCAQMD Rule 1113-Architectural Coating would limit the number of VOCs in architectural coatings and solvents. Any unforeseen odors generated by the Project would be controlled in accordance with SCAQMD Rule 402. Rule 402 prohibits the discharge of air contaminants that harm, endanger, or annoy individuals or the public; endanger the comfort, health, or safety of individuals or the public; or cause injury or damage to business or property. Failure to comply with Rule 402 could subject the offending facility to possible fines and/or operational limitations in an approved odor control or odor abatement plan. As such, construction impacts would be less than significant.

According to the SCAQMD, "while almost any source may emit objectionable odors, some land uses would be more likely to produce odors...because of their operation." [19] Land uses that are more likely to produce objectionable odors include agriculture, chemical plants, composting operations, dairies, fiberglass molding, landfills, refineries, rendering plants, rail yards, and wastewater treatment plants. Operation of the proposed Project includes a school campus and would not contain any active manufacturing activities. Therefore, operational impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

19 SCAQMD. *Guidance Document for Addressing Air Quality Issues in General Plans and Local Planning*. May 2005.

e. Is the boundary of the proposed school site within 500 feet of the edge of the closest traffic lane of a freeway or busy traffic corridor? If yes, would the project create an air quality health risk due to the placement of the school?

Less than Significant Impact.

EDC Section 17213 states that a busy traffic corridor is defined as having 50,000 or more average daily trips (ADT) in a rural area or 100,000 or more ADT in an urban area. [20]

There are no freeways within 500 feet of the Project Site. The closest freeway, I-10, is located approximately 5.0 miles south of the Project Site.

As detailed within the Desert Hot Springs General Plan, [21] there are no roadways within 500 feet of the Project Site designated as an arterial highway, major highway, secondary highway, or collector. The closest major street to the Project Site is Palm Drive, a north-south Urban Arterial approximately 1.2 miles southwest of the western edge of the campus. A 2015 traffic count in Coachella Valley has identified an ADT of 29,780 for Palm Drive south of Dillon Road. [22]

Additionally, the proposed Project would not generate an increase in daily vehicle trips, as analyzed in **Section 5.17: Transportation**. The proposed Project is neither within one-quarter mile of a freeway nor within one-quarter mile of other busy traffic corridors, as defined by EDC Section 17213. [23] As such, there would not be an air quality health risk due to the placement of the proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

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20 California Education Code, sec. 17213. Accessed April 2025. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&sectionNum=17213.

21 City of Desert Hot Springs. *General Plan*. Adopted May 26, 2020. Accessed April 2025. https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/deserthotspringsca/uploads/2021/11/Desert-Hot-Springs-General-Plan-Adopted-07-2020-Small.pdf.

22 Coachella Valley Association of Governments. "Coachella Valley Traffic Counts." GIS database. Accessed April 2025. https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=fb9489b188e74be3b599afb52741849d.

23 California Education Code, sec. 17213.

5.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES—Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife	☐	☒	☐	☐
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.4.1 Discussion

a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less Than Significant With Project Mitigation. Special-status species include those listed as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) or California Endangered Species Act (CESA), species otherwise given certain designations by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and plant species listed as rare by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS).

The Project Site is located within the Coachella Valley in unincorporated Riverside County. The Project Site is generally located north of Interstate 10, west of State Route 177, and south and east of State Route 63 in the City of Desert Hot Springs. The Project Site is located in an area that is comprised of a mix of undeveloped, vacant land and residential development, and currently supports the existing Bubbling Wells Elementary Campus. The Project Site has been subject to previous development and disturbances associated with active school activity.

A Biological Resources Report was prepared for the Project Site by ELMT Consulting on April 4, 2025, available in **Appendix B.** The Biological Resources Report included a records search of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and other electronic databases to determine the suitability of on-site habitat to support special-status species as potentially occurring on or within the general vicinity of the Project Site. In addition, a review of the suitability of on-site habitat to support species protected under the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) and potential jurisdictional drainage features was conducted.

The CNDDB contains an aggregate of the most recent, updated listing of plant and animal species in California. A CNDDB records search of special-status plant and wildlife species, as well as natural communities of special concern, was conducted in the Seven Palms Valley USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle. Only one quadrangle was used due to the proximity of the Project Site to the quadrangle boundaries and regional topography. As listed in **Table 5.4-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Species** below, the search identified five (5) special-status plant species and thirty-eight (38) special-status wildlife species as having the potential to occur within the Seven Palms Valley quadrangle.[24] One (1) special-status plant community, desert fan palm oasis, was identified as occurring within this quadrangle.[25]

The proposed Project would involve changes to the existing school campus, which includes maintained landscaping, concrete and asphalt areas, surface parking, and an athletic field that is regularly landscaped. Further, based on the Biological Resources Report conducted for the Project Site, all special-status plant and wildlife species, as well as the special-status plant communities, were determined to be absent from the Project Site.

The Project Site contains an athletic field to the east and landscaping throughout the Project Site, which could potentially include habitat for sensitive bird species. The proposed Project would incorporate **Mitigation Measure BIO-1 (MM BIO-1)**, pre-construction clearance survey for nesting birds, pursuant to Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code, as well as the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which makes it unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or

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24 Refer to **Appendix B**: **Biological Resources Report.**

25 Refer to **Appendix B**: **Biological Resources Report.**

eggs of any migratory bird or bird of prey. Therefore, potential impacts to nesting birds, including burrowing owls, would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

TABLE 5.4-1: POTENTIALLY OCCURRING SPECIAL-STATUS BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status				Potential to Occur
		Federal	State	CDFW Listing	CNPS Rare Plant Rank	
Accipiter cooperii	Coopers hawk	None	None	WL	-	Presumed Absent
Accipiter striatus	sharp-shinned hawk	None	None	WL	-	Presumed Absent
Antrozous pallidus	pallid bat	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Aquila chrysaetos	golden eagle	None	None	FP / WL	-	Presumed Absent
Asio otus	long-eared owl	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Athene cunicularia	burrowing owl	None	CE	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Calypte costae	Costas hummingbird	None	None	-	-	Presumed Absent
Chaetodipus fallax pallidus	pallid San Diego pocket mouse	None	None	-	-	Presumed Absent
Chaetura vauxi	Vauxs swift	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Circus hudsonius	northern harrier	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Contopus cooperi	olive-sided flycatcher	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Crotalus ruber	red-diamond rattlesnake	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Eremoarionta morongoana	Moronga (=Colorado) desert snail	None	None	-	-	Presumed Absent
Falco columbarius	merlin	None	None	WL	-	Presumed Absent
Falco mexicanus	prairie falcon	None	None	WL	-	Presumed Absent
Gopherus agassizii	desert tortoise	THR	THR	-	-	Presumed Absent
Icteria virens	yellow-breasted chat	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent

TABLE 5.4-1: POTENTIALLY OCCURRING SPECIAL-STATUS BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES						
Scientific Name	Common Name	Status				Potential to Occur
		Federal	State	CDFW Listing	CNPS Rare Plant Rank	
Lanius ludovicianus	loggerhead shrike	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Special-Status Wildlife Species						
Lasiurus xanthinus	western yellow bat	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Leiothlypis luciae	Lucys warbler	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Marcobaenetes valgum	Coachella giant sand treader cricket	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Myotis yumanensis	Yuma myotis	None	None	-	-	Presumed Absent
Neotoma lepida intermedia	San Diego desert woodrat	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Nycticorax nycticorax	black-crowned night heron	None	None	-	-	Presumed Absent
Nyctinomops femorosaccus	pocketed free-tailed bat	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Ovis canadensis nelsoni	desert bighorn sheep	None	None	FP	-	Presumed Absent
Passerculus sandwichensis rostratus	large-billed savannah sparrow	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Perognathus longimembris bangsi	Palm Springs pocket mouse	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Polioptila malnura	black-tailed gnatcatcher	None	None	WL	-	Presumed Absent
Selasphorus rufus	rufous hummingbird	None	None	-	-	Presumed Absent
Setophaga petechia	yellow warbler	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Spinus lawrencei	Lawrences goldfinch	None	None	-	-	Presumed Absent
Spizella breweri	Brewers sparrow	None	None	-	-	Presumed Absent
Toxostoma lecontei	Le Contes thrasher	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent

TABLE 5.4-1: POTENTIALLY OCCURRING SPECIAL-STATUS BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status				Potential to Occur
		Federal	State	CDFW Listing	CNPS Rare Plant Rank	
Uma inornata	Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard	THR	END	-	-	Presumed Absent
Vireo bellii pusillus	least Bells vireo	END	END	-	-	Presumed Absent
Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus	yellow-headed blackbird	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Xerospermophilus tereticaudus chlorus	Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel	None	None	SSC	-	Presumed Absent
Special-Status Plant Species						
Astragalus lentiginosus var. coachellae	Coachella Valley milk-vetch	END	None	-	1B.2	Presumed Absent
Euphorbia arizonica	Arizona spurge	None	None	-	2B.3	Presumed Absent
Galium angustifolium ssp. Gracillimum	slender bedstraw	None	None	-	4.2	Presumed Absent
Linanthus maculatus ssp. Maculatus	Little San Bernardino Mtns. linanthus	None	None	-	1B.2	Presumed Absent
Selaginella eremophila	desert spike-moss	None	None	-	2B.2	Presumed Absent
Special-Status Plant Communities						
Desert Fan Palm Oasis	-	-	-	-	-	Absent

Key for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Fed) – Federal

END – Federal Endangered
THR – Federal Threatened
DL – Delisted

Key for California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CA) – California

END – California Endangered
THR – California Threatened
CE – Candidate for listing under the California Endangered Species Act
CTHR – Candidate Threatened
FP – California Fully Protected
SSC – Species of Special Concern
WL – Watch List

Key for California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Threat Ranks

0.1 – Seriously threatened in California
0.2 – Moderately threatened in California
0.3 – Not very threatened in California

CNPS California Rare Plant Rank:

1B = Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and Elsewhere
2B = Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, But More Common Elsewhere
3 = Plants About Which More Information is Needed – A Review List
4 = Plants of Limited Distribution – A Watch List
CBR = Considered But Rejected for Ranking

Source: Refer to **Appendix B: Biological Resources Report.**

The Project Site is completely developed and repeated human disturbance occurs regularly. Based on habitat requirements for specific special-status plant species and the availability and quality of on-site habitats for special-status wildlife species, the Project Site does not have the potential to support any special-status species or special-status plant communities listed as occurring within the Seven Palms Valley quadrangle, and all are presumed to be absent. Therefore, impacts to special-status species would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Mitigation Measures: The following mitigation measure shall be implemented before construction of the Project in order to reduce impacts on wildlife species that could be present on the Project Site.

Implementation of the below mitigation measure would reduce impacts to less than significant.

MM BIO-1: Pre-Construction Clearance Surveys Nesting Birds

Nesting birds are protected pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code (Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513 prohibit the take, possession, or destruction of birds, their nests or eggs). In order to protect migratory bird species, a nesting bird clearance survey should be conducted prior to any ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities that may disrupt the birds during the nesting season. If construction occurs between February 1st and August 31st, a pre-construction clearance survey for nesting birds should be conducted within three (3) days of the start of any vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities to ensure that no nesting birds will be disturbed during construction. The biologist conducting the clearance survey should document a negative survey with a brief letter report indicating that no impacts to active avian nests will occur. If an active avian nest is discovered during the pre-construction clearance survey, construction activities should stay outside of a no-disturbance buffer. The size of the no-disturbance buffer will be determined by the wildlife biologist and will depend on the level of noise and/or surrounding anthropogenic disturbances, line of sight between the nest and the construction activity, type and duration of construction activity, ambient noise, species habituation, and topographical barriers. These factors will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis when developing buffer distances. Limits of construction to avoid an active nest will be established in the field with flagging, fencing, or other appropriate barriers, and construction personnel will be instructed on the sensitivity of nest areas. A biological monitor should be present to delineate the boundaries of the buffer area and to monitor the active nest to ensure that nesting behavior is not adversely affected by the construction activity. Once the young have fledged and left the nest, or the nest otherwise becomes inactive under natural conditions, construction activities within the buffer area can occur.

b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

No Impact. Sensitive natural communities are those identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife due to the rarity of the community in the State or throughout its entire range.[26] Natural communities are ranked based on a variety of values, with the most basic being the rarity of the community and the threat of removal. Sensitive natural communities are those that are especially rare and at high risk of removal.

The Project Site is surrounded by existing residential development and includes a recreational field to the east. There are no documented sensitive natural communities or riparian corridors or located on the Project Site.[27, 28] Project implementation would not impact riparian habitat or sensitive habitat, and no impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

No Impact. The Project Site is a fully developed school campus. There are no recorded federally protected wetlands on or near the Project Site.[29, 30] The Project Site is neither in proximity to nor does it contain wetland habitat or a blue line stream.[31] Implementation of the proposed Project would not have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands, as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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26 California Department of Fish and Wildlife. "Natural Communities." Accessed April 2025. https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/VegCAMP/Natural-Communities/Background.

27 Refer to **Appendix B**: **Biological Resources Report.**

28 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element."

29 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). "Wetlands Mapper." Map. Accessed April 2025. https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.html.

30 Refer to **Appendix B**: **Biological Resources Report.**

31 Refer to **Appendix B**: **Biological Resources Report.**

d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Less Than Significant Impact. Habitat connectivity is an essential aspect of viable habitat conservation and wildlife management. Habitat connectivity is accomplished by establishing habitat linkages and wildlife movement corridors that connect fragmented pieces of habitat. This allows for the movement of wildlife, a place for new vegetation to recolonize, and diversifies the plant and wildlife gene pools across areas of available habitat.

The Project Site and immediate surrounding areas north, east, south, and west are developed with residential uses. The Project Site has not been identified as being located within a wildlife corridor or linkage. Implementation of the proposed Project would be confined to existing areas that have been heavily disturbed and are isolated from regional wildlife corridors and linkages. In addition, there are no riparian corridors, creeks, or useful patches of stepping-stone habitat (natural areas) within or connecting the Project Site to a recognized wildlife corridor or linkage. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project is not expected to impact wildlife movement opportunities, and impacts to wildlife corridors or linkages are not expected to occur. Impacts to would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.

No Impact. The City of Desert Hot Springs does not have a tree preservation policy nor any similar ordinance that protects trees or any other biological resources. Riverside County Ordinance No. 559 regulates removals of any living native tree on any parcel or property greater than one-half acre in size, located in an area above 5,000 feet in elevation and within the unincorporated area of the County of Riverside, without first obtaining a permit to do so, unless exempted by the provisions of Section 4 of this ordinance. [32] The Project Site is located in unincorporated Riverside County and is approximately 18-acres in size, however it is located in an area approximately 886 feet in elevation and therefore is not subject to the regulations outlined in Ordinance No. 559. No impact would occur from Project implementation.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

32 County of Riverside. Ordinance No. 559: *Regulating the Removal of Trees*. Accessed June 2025. https://rivcocob.org/sites/g/files/aldnop311/files/migrated/ords-500-559.7.pdf.

f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

No Impact. The Coachella Valley Multiple Species Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) is a regional plan addressing species and habitat conservation in the Coachella Valley. The Palm Springs Unified School District is not a participant in the CVMSHCP; therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

5.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
CULTURAL RESOURCES—Would the project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.5.1 Discussion

a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?

No Impact. CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5(a) defines a "historical resource" as a resource listed or determined to be eligible for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission, a local register of historical resources, or the lead agency. Generally, a resource is considered "historically significant" if it meets one of the following criteria:

i. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;

ii. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;

iii. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values;

iv. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The Project Site, including the campus itself and existing buildings located there, is not listed as a local historic landmark, nor is it on the California Historical Landmarks register or the Points of Historical Interest register.[33, 34] The campus was originally constructed in 1992 and is less than 50 years old. The campus and the permanent school buildings have not achieved sufficient age to be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria consideration

33 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element."

34 California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). "Riverside County: Landmarks Listed by County." Accessed April 2025. https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21452.

"g" of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. [35] Therefore, no historical resources are in the Project Site.

A cultural records search was conducted to identify recorded historic and prehistoric archeological sites within a 0.5-mile radius of the Project Site, available in **Appendix C: Cultural Resources Report**. The records search was conducted at the South Coastal Information Center (SCIC), housed at San Diego State University in San Diego, California, and was limited to the following: a records search of the California Historic Resource Information System (CHRIS), and a review of historic topographic maps and aerial photographs. No historic-period resources were identified within 0.5 miles of the Project Site. Project implementation would not impact any historical resources on or off-site. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Less Than Significant Impact. According to the Riverside County General Plan, the Project Site is not located within areas identified as sensitive for prehistoric archaeological sites. [36] Additionally, as stated above, there are no identified historic or prehistoric resources within one-half mile north of the Project Site.

The records search conducted identified two (2) previous cultural resource studies that intersected with the Project Site; however, there were no prehistoric or historic-period resources identified within the Project Site. Twelve (12) other cultural resource studies were conducted within the 0.5-mile buffer zone from the Project Site, and nearly all surveys and studies produced results indicating the absence of cultural resources, except for one (1) study associated with prehistoric ceramic scatter. [37] The proposed Project would occur within the graded and developed areas of the BWES campus and would not affect the off-site areas; therefore, the potential for encountering intact archaeological resources is low.

In the unlikely event that subsurface resources are identified during earthmoving activities associated with the proposed Project, the District would comply with PRC Section 21083.2(i), which requires provisions for archaeological resources accidentally discovered during construction. The District would be required to have any resources encountered during construction evaluated by a qualified archaeologist; if the finding is determined to be a unique archaeological resource, then it must be protected from damage and destruction, and either an archaeological sample must be

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35 Code of Federal Regulations. Title 36, Part 60.4, Criteria for Evaluation. Accessed April 2025. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-36/chapter-I/part-60/section-60.4.

36 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element."

37 Refer to **Appendix C**: **Cultural Resources Report.**

collected or an approved avoidance measure must be employed as stated in PRC Section 21083.2. Construction would be allowed in other areas while the archaeological mitigation takes place. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries

Less Than Significant Impact. A significant impact would occur if previously interred human remains were disturbed during excavation. The Project Site is in an urbanized area and has been subject to grading and development in the past. The nearest cemetery is the Desert Memorial Park, located at 31-705 Da Vall Drive, approximately 8.8 miles to the southeast.

In the unlikely event that earth-disturbing activities conducted by the District and/or its construction contractors identify undiscovered human remains, the District will comply with Government Code Sections 27460 et seq.,[38] Section 27491, and Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.98.[39] These regulations would require earthmoving activities to halt until the Riverside County Coroner can determine whether the remains are subject to the provisions of Section 27491 or any other related provisions of law. The required recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains would be subject to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative.

Additionally, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, the coroner shall make a determination within two working days of notification of the discovery of the human remains.[40] If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and recognizes, or has reason to believe, that they are those of a Native American, he or she shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission by telephone within 24 hours. The District will comply with existing regulations and the potential impact related to the accidental discovery of human remains. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

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38 California Government Code, title 3, div. 2, ch. 10, secs. 27460-27530.

39 Public Resources Code, , div. 5, ch. 1.75, sec. 5097.98.

40 California Health and Safety Code, div. 7, pt. 1, ch. 2, sec. 7050.5.

5.6 ENERGY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
ENERGY—Would the project:				
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.6.1 Discussion

a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Less than Significant Impact. The following analysis estimates the proposed Project's electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuel usage. This analysis also evaluates whether the proposed Project would result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources. In accordance with Appendix F of the CEQA Guidelines, the analysis includes relevant information to address the energy implications of the proposed Project. The supporting energy calculations are included in **Appendix D: Energy Calculations**.

Construction

The proposed Project would involve use of construction equipment that complies with applicable CARB regulations governing the accelerated retrofitting, repowering, or replacement of heavy-duty diesel on- and off-road equipment. Compliance with anti-idling and emissions regulations would result in efficient use of construction-related energy and the minimization or elimination of wasteful and unnecessary consumption of energy. Idling restrictions and the use of newer engines and equipment would result in less fuel combustion and energy consumption, as would the use of haul trucks with larger capacities.

During construction, energy would be directly consumed on a limited basis to power lights and electronic equipment, and indirectly for the conveyance of water used for dust control during grading. As discussed below, construction activities, including the construction of new buildings, typically do not involve the consumption of natural gas. Construction would also consume energy in the form of petroleum-based fuels associated with the use of off-road construction vehicles and equipment within the Project Site, construction worker travel, haul trips, and delivery trips. **Table 5.6-1: Summary of Energy Use During Construction** summarizes the quantity of petroleum fuels that would be consumed during construction. As shown in **Table 5.6-1**, 322,108 gallons of fuel and 3,503 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity would be consumed during construction.

TABLE 5.6-1: SUMMARY OF ENERGY USE DURING CONSTRUCTION	
Fuel Type	**Quantity**
Off-Road Construction Equipment	297,998 gallons
Construction Worker	12,573 gallons
Construction Vendor (MDH & HHD Trucks)	3,610 gallons
Construction Hauling	7,927 gallons
Total	**322,108 gallons**

Source: Refer to **Appendix D**: **Energy Calculations**.

Construction Equipment Fuel Estimates

Fuel consumed by construction equipment would be the primary energy resource expended over the course of Project construction. As shown in **Table 5.6-1**, an estimated 297,998 gallons of fuel would be consumed by construction equipment during Project construction. Fuel consumed by construction equipment was evaluated with the following assumptions:

- Construction schedule of 38 months.
- All construction equipment was assumed to run on diesel fuel.
- Typical daily use of eight (8) hours, with some equipment operating from approximately one (1) to seven (7) hours.
- Aggregate fuel consumption rate for all equipment was estimated at 18.5 horsepower hours per gallon (hp-hr/gal).
- Diesel fuel would be the responsibility of the equipment operators/contractors and would be sourced within the region.
- Project construction represents a "single-event" for diesel fuel demand and would not require ongoing or permanent commitment of diesel fuel resources during long-term operation.

Using the CalEEMod data input for the air quality and greenhouse gas analyses, the Project's construction phase would consume electricity and fossil fuels as a single energy demand; that is, once construction is completed, their use would cease. CARB's 2017 Emissions Factors Tables show that, on average, aggregate fuel consumption (gasoline and diesel fuel) would be approximately 18.5 hp-hr/gal.

Construction Worker Fuel Estimates

It is assumed that construction worker trips range from light-duty autos (LDA), light-duty truck 1 (LDT1), and light-duty truck 2 (LDT2) at a mix of 25 percent, 50 percent, and 25 percent, respectively, along area roadways. With respect to estimated VMT, construction worker trips would generate an estimated 13,461 VMT. Data regarding Project-related construction worker trips were based on CalEEMod model defaults.

Vehicle fuel efficiencies for construction workers were estimated in the air quality and greenhouse gas analyses using information generated from CARB's 2021 Emissions Factor Model (EMFAC) (see **Appendix A** for data). An aggregate fuel efficiency of 26.02 miles per gallon (mpg) was used to calculate VMT for construction worker trips. **Table 5.6-1** shows that an estimated 12,573 gallons of fuel would be consumed for construction worker trips.

Construction Vendor/Hauling Fuel Estimates

Data regarding Project-related construction worker trips were based on the CalEEMod 2022 model defaults. For architectural coatings, it is assumed that contractors would be responsible for bringing coatings and equipment with them in their light-duty vehicles. Therefore, vendors delivering construction material or hauling debris from the site during grading and building construction would use medium- to heavy-duty vehicles with an average fuel consumption of 7.75 mpg for medium-duty trucks and 6.05 mpg for heavy-duty trucks. **Table 5.6-1** shows that an estimated 11,537 gallons of fuel would be consumed for vendor and hauling trips.

Construction Energy Efficiency/Conservation Measures

Construction equipment would conform to CARB regulations and California emissions standards and is evidence of related fuel efficiencies. There are no unusual Project characteristics or construction processes that would require the use of equipment that would be more energy-intensive than is used for comparable activities, or equipment that would not conform to current emissions standards (and related fuel efficiencies). Equipment employed in the construction of the proposed Project would therefore not result in inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of fuel.

The proposed Project would utilize construction contractors that practice compliance with applicable CARB regulations regarding retrofitting, repowering, or replacement of diesel off-road construction equipment. Additionally, CARB has adopted the Airborne Toxic Control Measures to limit heavy-duty diesel motor vehicle idling in order to reduce public exposure to diesel particulate matter and other TACs. Compliance with these measures would result in a more efficient use of construction-related energy and would minimize or eliminate wasteful or unnecessary consumption of energy. Idling restrictions and the use of newer engines and equipment would result in less fuel combustion and energy consumption.

Additionally, as required by California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 13 Motor Vehicles, Section 2449(d)(3) Idling, idling times of construction vehicles are limited to no more than five minutes, thereby minimizing or eliminating unnecessary and wasteful consumption of fuel due to unproductive idling of construction equipment. Enforcement of idling limitations is realized through periodic site inspections conducted by County building officials, and/or in response to citizen complaints.

Operation

Energy consumption in support of, or related to, Project operations would include transportation energy demands (energy consumed by employee and patron vehicles accessing the Project Site) and facilities energy demands (energy consumed by building operations and site maintenance activities).

Transportation Fuel Consumption

Operations-related fuel consumption was calculated using the annual VMT from the air quality and greenhouse gas analyses' CalEEMod output, and using information generated from CARB's 2021 EMFAC model.

Table 5.6-2: Estimated Vehicle Operations Fuel Consumption shows that an estimated 149,633 gallons of gasoline and 65,953 gallons of diesel fuel would be consumed per year for the operation of the proposed Project.

Trip generation and VMT generated by the proposed Project are consistent with other similar commercial uses of similar scale and configuration, as reflected respectively in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual (11th Edition, 2021). That is, the proposed Project does not propose uses or operations that would inherently result in excessive and wasteful vehicle trips and VMT, nor associated excess and wasteful vehicle energy consumption. Furthermore, the State of California consumed approximately 4.2 billion gallons of diesel and 15.1 billion gallons of gasoline in 2015. Therefore, the increase in fuel consumption from the proposed Project is insignificant in comparison to the State's demand. As such, Project transportation energy consumption would not be considered inefficient, wasteful, or otherwise unnecessary.

TABLE 5.6-2: ESTIMATED VEHICLE OPERATIONS FUEL CONSUMPTION

Land Use	Annual VMT	Gasoline Usage	Diesel Usage
Elementary School	5,073,244	149,633	64,953
Parking Lot	0	0	0
Total	**5,073,244**	**149,633**	**65,953**

Source: Refer to **Appendix D**: **Energy Calculations**.

Facility Energy Demands (Electricity and Natural Gas)

Building operation and site maintenance (including landscape maintenance) would result in the consumption of electricity (Southern California Edison [SCE] and natural gas (provided by Southern California Gas Company[SoCalGas]). The annual natural gas and electricity demands were provided per the CalEEMod output and are provided in **Table 5.6-3: Project Annual Operational Energy Demand Summary**. As shown, the estimated electricity demand for the proposed Project is approximately 614,436 kWh per year. SCE estimates that electricity consumption within its planning area will be approximately 128,000 GWh annually by 2030, when the Project would be fully built out.[41] The Project would account for less than 0.01 percent of the 2030 annual consumption in SCE's planning area. As such, the Project would account for a negligible portion of the projected annual consumption in SCE's planning area.

The estimated natural gas consumption for the proposed Project is approximately 2,021,531 kBTU per year. Based on the 2024 California Gas Report, the California Energy and Electric Utilities estimates that the natural gas supply within SoCalGas' planning area will be approximately 1,377,875 million cubic feet (MMcf) per year in 2030.[42] The proposed Project would account for less than 0.01 percent of the 2030 annual forecasted supply in SoCalGas' planning area. Accordingly, natural gas demand during operation would be less than significant. Additionally, the building would be constructed consistently with current building efficiency standards for new development, which would result in more efficient buildings. Impacts would be less than significant.

TABLE 5.6-3: PROJECT ANNUAL OPERATIONAL ENERGY DEMAND

Land Use	kWh/year	Water Usage		Water-Related Electricity Use (kWh/yr)	Total Annual Electricity Use (kWhr)
		Indoor (gal/year)	Outdoor (gal/year)		
Elementary School	549,542	2,448,500	4,170,136	38,794	588,336
Parking Lot	26,100	0	0	0	26,100
Total	**575,642**	**2,448,500**	**4,170,136**	**38,794**	**614,436**

Source: Refer to **Appendix D: Energy Calculations.**

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

b. Conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would comply with applicable regulatory requirements for the design of new water-related infrastructure, including the provisions set forth in the CALGreen Code and California's Building Energy Efficiency Standards. Therefore, the proposed Project would be consistent with adopted energy efficiency plans. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

41 California Energy Commission. "California Energy Demand 2018-2030 Revised Forecast." Accessed April 2025. https://www.energy.ca.gov/publications/2018/california-energy-demand-2018-2030-revised-forecast.

42 California Gas and Electric Utilities. *2024 Gas Report*. August 2024. Accessed April 2025. https://www.socalgas.com/sites/default/files/2024-08/2024-California-Gas-Report-Final.pdf.

5.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
GEOLOGY AND SOILS—Would the project:				
a. Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. 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? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Does the site contain an active earthquake fault or fault trace, or is the site located within the boundaries of any special studies zone or within an area designated as geologically hazardous in the safety element of the local general plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Involve the construction, reconstruction, or relation of any school building on the trace of a geological fault along which surface rupture can reasonably be expected to occur within the life of the school building?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Involve the construction, reconstruction, or relocation of any school building on a site subject to moderate-to-high liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
v. Involve the construction, reconstruction, or relocation of any school building on a site subject to landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.7.1 Discussion

a. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i. 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? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

Less Than Significant Impact. A Geotechnical Report was conducted for the Project Site by Earth Systems in May 2025, available as **Appendix E: Geotechnical Report**. According to this report, the Project Site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Rupture Zone, Riverside County designated fault zone, or city fault zone.[43] Active or potentially active faults in the vicinity of the Project Site (within 25 miles) include the San Andreas, San Jacinto, Burnt Mountain, and Eureka Peak faults and multiple faults associated with the Eastern California shear zone. The nearest active faults are multiple traces of the San Andreas fault zone, including the Garnet Hill fault, the south branch Banning fault, and the north branch Mission/Mill Creek fault that traverse along the northeast margin of the valley. Specifically, the Mission/Mill Creek segment of the San Andreas fault is located approximately 0.3 miles northeast of the Project Site. Further, the Project does not involve activities that would induce rupture.

The proposed Project would adhere to the recommendations of the 2022 California Building Code (CBC),[44] which contains provisions to safeguard against major structural failures or loss of life caused by earthquakes or other geologic hazards. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

ii. Does the site contain an active earthquake fault or fault trace, or is the site located within the boundaries of any special studies zone or within an area designated as geologically hazardous in the safety element of the local general plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. As discussed above, the Geotechnical Report found that the Project Site is not within a special studies zone; however, because the Project Site is in a seismically active area, seismic ground shaking may and associated potential damage could occur in the event of earthquakes.

The California Building Standards Commission regulates development in California through a variety of tools that reduce hazards from earthquakes to other geologic hazards. The proposed Project would adhere to the provisions of the 2022 CBC which contains provisions to safeguard against major

43 Refer to **Appendix E**: **Geotechnical Report**.

44 California Building Standards Commission, *California Building Code*, title 24, part 2. Accessed April 2025. https://www.dgs.ca.gov/BSC/Codes.

structural failures or loss of life caused by earthquakes or other geologic hazards.[45] Compliance with the requirements of the 2022 CBC for structural safety would reduce hazards from strong seismic ground shaking. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

iii. Involve the construction, reconstruction, or relation of any school building on the trace of a geological fault along which surface rupture can reasonably be expected to occur within the life of the school building?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would include the construction of permanent classroom buildings in the existing BWES campus. According to the Geotechnical Report, the Project Site does not lie within a currently delineated State of California Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and there are no active faults mapped in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site. The closest active fault is the Mission/Mill Creek segment of the San Andreas fault, located approximately 0.3 miles northeast of the site.[46] Therefore, surface fault rupture is unlikely to occur at the Project Site.

The proposed Project would not involve construction of the proposed classroom buildings along this trace of the fault. Therefore, surface rupture is not expected to occur within the life of the building. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

iv. Involve the construction, reconstruction, or relocation of any school building on a site subject to moderate-to-high liquefaction?

Less Than Significant Impact. Liquefaction is the loss of soil strength from sudden shock, usually earthquake shaking, causing the soil to become a fluid mass. In general, for the effects of liquefaction to be manifested at the surface, groundwater levels must be within 50 feet of the ground surface, and the soils within the saturated zone must also be susceptible to liquefaction.

According to the Geotechnical Report conducted for the Project Site, the Site is located within "moderate" liquefaction zone, as identified in the City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan, due to susceptible sediments should groundwater rise, although groundwater is greater than 100 feet deep. The potential for liquefaction to occur on the Project Site is low because the current and historic high groundwater levels are deeper than 50 feet below the ground surface.[47] It is not anticipated that groundwater would be encountered during construction; however, landscaped or watered areas may encounter moist to wet soils in the upper shallow profile. The proposed Project would adhere to the

45 California Building Standards Commission, *California Building Code*, title 24, part 2.

46 Refer to **Appendix E**: **Geotechnical Report.**

47 Refer to **Appendix E**: **Geotechnical Report.**

2022 CBC [48] and Division of the State Architect Interpretation of Regulations A-9 (DSA-IR A-9), [49] as both contain provisions for soil preparation to minimize hazards from liquefaction and other seismic-related ground failures. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

v. Involve the construction, reconstruction, or relocation of any school building on a site subject to landslides?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is relatively flat. According to the Geotechnical Report conducted for the Project Site, the Project Site is not within a landslide hazard zone, per the City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan. Further, no evidence of landslides within the Project Site was observed. [50] Therefore, the Project Site has a low potential for landslides. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less Than Significant Impact. Erosion is the movement of rock fragments and soil from one place to another. Precipitation, running water, waves, and wind are all agents of erosion. Erosion typically occurs on steep slopes where storm water and high winds can carry topsoil down hillsides.

The Project Site is developed within an existing school campus and does not contain topography or other conditions susceptible to erosion. The Project Site and surrounding areas are urbanized and relatively flat, containing minimal rise or changes in elevation. Additionally, no major slopes or bluffs are located within or adjacent to the Project Site.

Grading and excavation activities for the construction of the proposed Project may lead to localized erosion, as wind and water carry loose soils off-site. However, adherence to dust control measures required by the County and SCAQMD, including pre-watering, prompt revegetation, and use of soil binders, would reduce impacts associated with soil blowing and wind erosion during construction activities. Compliance with these erosion-control regulations would reduce soil erosion from the proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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48 California Building Standards Commission. *California Building Code*, title 24, part 2.

49 Division of the State Architect. *Publications, IR A-9*. March 2020. Accessed April 2025. https://www.dgs.ca.gov/DSA/Publications#GLs.

50 Refer to **Appendix E**: **Geotechnical Report.**

c. 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Subsidence typically occurs where groundwater or natural gas is extracted. According to the Geotechnical Report, the Project Site is within a “Susceptible” potential subsidence area; however, groundwater depths in the Project area remain fairly deep. Changes in regional groundwater pumping could result in subsidence in the future, depending on whether groundwater recharge continues and/or over-drafting stops, rather than geologic processes. No large-scale extraction of groundwater, gas, oil, or geothermal energy is occurring in the general Project vicinity or planned at the Project Site. Therefore, the Project Site is not located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable. In addition, collapse potential tests were conducted as part of the Geotechnical Report, which found that with the implementation of grading recommendations, the collapse potential is very low on the Project Site. As discussed above, the Project Site is located in a “moderate” liquefaction zone. However, the Project Site has a low potential for impacts due to liquefaction and lateral spreading, as groundwater levels were observed at depths greater than 100 feet. [51]

The proposed Project would implement soil improvement measures recommended in the Geotechnical Report, which would reduce the potential for impacts to soils within the Project Site. Further, the proposed Project would adhere to the 2022 CBC [52] and Division of the State Architect Interpretation of Regulations A-9 (DSA-IR A-9), [53] as both contain provisions for soil preparation to minimize hazards from subsidence, collapse, and other seismic-related ground failures. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?

Less Than Significant Impact. Expansive soils are characterized by their ability to undergo significant volume change (shrink or swell) due to variations in moisture content. Changes in soil moisture content can result from rainfall, landscape irrigation, utility leakage, roof drainage, perched groundwater, drought, or other factors, and may cause unacceptable settlement or heave of structures, concrete slabs supported on grade, or pavements supported over these materials. A laboratory test of Project Site soils was conducted as part of the Geotechnical Report. According to the Geotechnical Report, the Expansion Index of the onsite soil is “very low,” as defined by ASTM D 4829 and the 2022 CBC. Similarly, per recommendations of the Geotechnical Report, import fill soils

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51 Refer to **Appendix E**: **Geotechnical Report.**

52 California Building Standards Commission, *California Building Code*, title 24, part 2.

53 Division of the State Architect. *Publications, IR A-9*.

would be comprised of “very low” Expansion Index granular soil. Therefore, construction would not result in substantial hazards from unstable or expansive soils. The proposed Project would adhere to the guidelines of the 2022 CBC, which contains provisions for soil preparation to minimize hazards from expansive soils and other seismic-related ground failures.[54] Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

No Impact. Wastewater generated by BWES is currently managed through an on-site septic system, and the proposed Project involves decommissioning the septic system and connecting the Project Site to the municipal sewer system. Development of the proposed Project would not require the installation of a septic tank or any alternative wastewater disposal system, and the proposed Project would not be constructed on soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks surrounding the area. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site has been previously disturbed during the construction and operation of the BWES campus. Ground-disturbing activities would occur in areas that are already disturbed, which would include demolition, site preparation, and construction activities.

The County has been inventoried for geologic formations known to potentially contain paleontological resources. According to the County’s General Plan, the Project Site is designated within a Low Paleontological Sensitivity area.[55] The Project Site has been subject to excavation and grading, and soil disturbing activities related to proposed Project construction. Any paleontological resources that have been previously recovered at the time of the campus’ construction would have already been recovered pursuant to the applicable State, federal, and local regulations, or did not exist. Therefore, the potential for finding paleontological resources is low. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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54 California Building Standards Commission, *California Building Code*, title 24, part 2.

55 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. “Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element.”

5.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS – Would the project:				
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.8.1 Discussion

a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less than Significant Impact.

Construction

The analysis of the proposed Project's GHG emissions consists of a quantitative analysis of the GHG emissions generated by the construction and operation activities and a qualitative analysis of the proposed Project's consistency with adopted GHG-related legislation, plans, and policies. This approach is in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(a), which affirms the discretion of a lead agency to determine, in the context of a particular project, whether to use quantitative and/or qualitative methodologies to determine the significance of a project's impacts.

The total GHG emissions from the proposed Project were quantified to determine the level of the Project's estimated annual GHG emissions. As with the Air Quality section calculations, construction emissions were estimated using CalEEMod by assuming a conservative estimate of construction activities (i.e., assuming all construction occurs at the earliest feasible date) and applying the mobile-source emissions factors. The modeling used the same input values as previously discussed under the methodology section for air quality. SCAQMD's Draft Guidance Document—Interim CEQA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Significance Threshold recognizes that construction-related GHG emissions from projects occur over a relatively short-term period of time and contribute a relatively small portion of a project's overall lifetime GHG emissions. The guidance recommends that construction-related GHG emissions generated by a project be amortized over a 30-year project lifetime so that GHG reduction measures will address construction GHG emissions as part of the operational GHG reduction strategies.

CalEEMod was also used to estimate operational GHG emissions from electricity, natural gas, solid waste, water and wastewater, fireplaces, and landscaping equipment. CalEEMod calculates energy use from systems covered by Title 24 (e.g., heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [HVAC] system, water heating system, and lighting system); energy use from lighting; and energy use from office equipment, appliances, plug-ins, and other sources not covered by Title 24 or lighting. Mobile-source emissions were estimated based on the CARB EMFAC model. For mobile sources, CalEEMod was used to generate the vehicle miles traveled from the proposed Project uses based on the Project trip generation rate.

With regard to energy demand, the consumption of fossil fuels to generate electricity and to provide heating and hot water generates GHG emissions. Energy demand rates were estimated based on square footage as well as predicted water supply needs for this use. Energy demand (off-site electricity generation and on-site natural gas consumption) for the Project was calculated within CalEEMod using the CEC's CEUS data set, which provides energy demand by building type and climate zone.

Emissions of GHGs from solid waste disposal were also calculated using CalEEMod software. The emissions are based on the waste disposal rate for the land uses, the waste diversion rate, and the GHG emission factors for solid waste decomposition. The GHG emission factors, particularly for methane, depend on characteristics of the landfill, such as the presence of a landfill gas capture system and subsequent flaring or energy recovery. The default values, as provided in CalEEMod, for landfill gas capture (e.g., no capture, flaring, energy recovery), which are Statewide averages, were used in this assessment.

Emissions of GHGs from water and wastewater result from the required energy to supply and distribute the water and treat the wastewater. Wastewater also results in emissions of GHGs from wastewater treatment systems. Emissions are calculated using CalEEMod and are based on the water usage rate for the restaurant use; the electrical intensity factors for water supply, treatment, distribution, and wastewater treatment; the GHG emission factors for the electricity utility provider; and the emission factors for the wastewater treatment process.

The forecasting of GHG emissions related to construction requires assumptions about the timing of construction activities, as the emission factors for certain sources of GHG emissions decline over time. As shown in **Table 5.8-1: Construction GHG Emissions**, total construction emissions would be 1,350 metric tons of CO2e (MTCO2e). One-time, short-term emissions are converted to average annual emissions by amortizing them over the service life of a building. For buildings in general, it is reasonable to look at a 30-year time frame because this is a typical interval before a new building requires its first major renovation. As shown in **Table 5.8-1**, when amortized over an average 30-year Project lifetime, average annual construction emissions from the proposed Project would be 45 MTCO2e per year.

TABLE 5.8-1: CONSTRUCTION GHG EMISSIONS	
Construction Phase	**MTCO2e/Year**
Phase 1	
2026	333
2027	338
2028	112
Phase 2A	
2028	443
2029	28
Phase 2B	
2029	128
Phase 2C	
2029	96
Overall Total	**1,350**
30-Year Annual Amortized Rate	**45**

Notes: GHG = greenhouse gas; MTCO2e = metric tons of CO2

Source: Refer to **Appendix D**: **Energy Calculations**.

Operation

Operation of the proposed Project has the potential to generate GHG emissions through vehicle trips traveling to and from the Project Site. In addition, emissions would result from area sources on site, such as natural gas combustion, landscaping equipment, and use of consumer products. Emissions from mobile and area sources, indirect emissions from energy and water use, wastewater, and waste management would occur every year after full-development of the uses allowed by the proposed Project. Operational emissions from area sources, energy sources, mobile sources, solid waste, and water and wastewater conveyance are shown in **Table 5.8-2: Operational Greenhouse Gas Emissions** below. As shown in **Table 5.8-2**, the Project would result in a net increase of 644 MTCO2e per year compared to the existing uses. This would be a result of the overall increase of 29,256 square feet of building on the Project Site. However, the building would be constructed consistently with current building efficiency standards for new development, which would result in more efficient buildings compared to the existing uses. As such, the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on GHG emissions.

Mitigation Measures: No Mitigation Measures are required.

TABLE 5.8-2: OPERATIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	
Source	**Unmitigated MTCO2e per year**
Construction (amortized)	45
Area	1
Energy	247
Mobile	1,771
Waste	34
Water	9
Total	**2,108**
Existing	1,464
Net Change	***644***

Abbreviation: MTCO2e = metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Source: Refer to **Appendix A: Air Quality CalEEMod Output Sheets**.

b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would not conflict with local zoning, land use designations, plans, policies, or regulations. Moreover, the proposed Project would only upgrade and modernize existing facilities without increasing the local population, student capacity, employment opportunities, or housing. As such, the Project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No Mitigation Measures are required.

5.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS – Would the project:				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h. If a response action is necessary and proposed as part of this project, has it been developed to be protective of children's health, with an ample margin of safety?	☐	☐	☒	☐
i. Does the proposed school site contain one or more pipelines, situated underground or aboveground, which carry hazardous substances, acutely hazardous materials, or hazardous wastes, unless the pipeline is a natural gas line that is used only to supply natural gas to that school or neighborhood?	☐	☐	☐	☒
j. Is the proposed school site located near an aboveground water or fuel storage tank or within 1,500 feet of an easement of an aboveground or	☐	☐	☐	☒

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
underground pipeline that can pose a safety hazard to the site?				
k. Would the project create an air quality hazard due to the placement of a school within one-quarter mile of: (a) permitted and nonpermitted facilities identified by the jurisdictional air quality control board or air pollution control district; (b) freeways and other busy traffic corridors; (c) large agricultural operations; and/or (d) a rail yard, which might reasonably be anticipated to emit hazardous air emissions, or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous material, substances, or waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐
l. Is the school site in an area designated in a city, county, or city and county general plan for agricultural use and zoned for agricultural production, and if so, do neighboring agricultural uses have the potential to result in any public health and safety issues that may affect the pupils and employees at the school site? (Does not apply to school sites approved by CDE prior to January 1, 1997.)	☐	☐	☐	☒
m. Is the property line of the proposed school site less than the following distances from the edge of respective power line easements: (1) 100 feet of a 50–133 kV line; (2) 150 feet of a 220–230 kV line; or (3) 350 feet of a 500–550 kV line?	☐	☐	☒	☐
n. Is the Project Site a hazardous substance release site identified by the state Department of Health Services in a current list adopted pursuant to §25356 for removal or remedial action pursuant to Chapter 6.8 of Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code?	☐	☐	☒	☐
o. Does the Project Site contain a current or former hazardous waste disposal site or solid waste disposal site and, if so, have the wastes been removed?	☐	☐	☒	☐
p. If prepared, has the risk assessment been performed with a focus on children's health posed by a hazardous materials release or threatened release, or the presence of naturally occurring hazardous materials on the school site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
q. Is the proposed school site situated within 2,000 feet of a significant disposal of hazardous waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒
r. Is the proposed school site within two miles, measured by air line, of that point on an airport runway or potential runway included in an airport master plan that is nearest to the site? (Does not apply to school sites acquired prior to January 1, 1997.)	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.9.1 Discussion

a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Construction

Construction activities may involve the use of hazardous materials, which may include fuels, lubricants, coatings, and grease related to construction equipment and activities. However, hazardous materials would be used in accordance with regulatory standards and protocols and would not be in such quantities or stored in such a manner as to pose safety hazards. These activities would also be short-term or one-time in nature and would cease upon Project completion.

The transport, storage, and disposal of construction-related hazardous materials would be required to conform to existing laws and regulations. The construction equipment would be fueled and maintained by petroleum-based substances such as diesel fuel, gasoline, oil, and hydraulic fluid, all of which are considered hazardous if improperly stored, handled, or transported. Other materials used, such as paints, adhesives, and solvents, could also result in accidental releases or spills that could pose risks to people and the environment. These risks are standard, however, on all construction sites, and the proposed Project would not cause greater risks than would occur on other similar construction sites.

Construction contractors would be required to comply with federal, State, and local laws and regulations regarding the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials. Applicable laws and regulations include CFR, Title 29, Subpart H – Hazardous Materials;[56] CFR, Title 49, Chapter I;[57] and Hazardous Materials Transportation Act requirements as imposed by the USDOT, CalOSHA, CalEPA, and DTSC.[58] Additionally, construction activities would comply with SCAQMD Rule 403,[59] which would require the watering of exposed soils, as well as preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which is mandated by the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit and is issued and enforced by the Colorado River Basin RWQCB.[60]

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56 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Title 29, Subpart H. Hazardous Materials. Accessed July 2025. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-B/chapter-XVII/part-1910/subpart-H?toc=1.

57 CFR. Title 49, Chapter I. Accessed March 2025. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-I.

58 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). *Hazardous Materials Transportation Act of 1975*. Accessed March 2025. https://archive.epa.gov/emergencies/content/lawsregs/web/html/hmtaover.html.

59 SCAQMD. *Rule 403: Fugitive Dust*.

60 California State Water Resources Control Board. *Construction Stormwater General Permit (Order 2009-0009-DWQ)*. Accessed July 2025. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.html.

The proposed Project would adhere to Riverside County's standards for NPDES permit for municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), CAS617002, Order No. R7-2013-0011.[61] The SWPPP will include strict on-site handling rules and BMPs to minimize potential adverse effects to workers, the public, and the environment during construction, including but not limited to:

- Establishing a dedicated area for fuel storage and refueling activities that includes secondary containment protection measures and spill control supplies;
- Following manufacturers' recommendations on the use, storage, and disposal of chemical products used in construction;
- Avoiding overtopping of construction equipment fuel tanks;
- Properly containing and removing grease and oils during routine maintenance of equipment; and
- Properly disposing of discarded containers of fuels and other chemicals.

Compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing hazardous materials would ensure that all potentially hazardous materials are used and handled in an appropriate manner, which would minimize the potential for safety impacts to occur. For example, all spills or leakage of petroleum products during construction activities are required to be immediately contained, the hazardous material identified, and the material remediated in compliance with applicable State and local regulations regarding the cleanup and disposal of the contaminant released. All contaminated waste encountered would be required to be collected and disposed of at an appropriately licensed disposal or treatment facility. Strict adherence to all emergency response plan requirements set forth by Riverside County[62] would be required throughout the duration of the Project construction. Impacts related to the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

Operation

The BWES campus would continue to operate during construction. Hazardous substances associated with the operation of the campus would be similar to those used for BWES' current operations, which would be limited in both amount and use. Typical hazardous materials found at BWES include solvents, cleaning agents, paints, fertilizers, and pesticides. When used correctly and in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including pesticide regulations enforced by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), these hazardous materials would not result in a hazard to people or the environment.

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61 California State Water Resources Control Board. *Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) within the Whitewater River Watershed, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District*. November 2012. Accessed June 2025. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/board_decisions/adopted_orders/orders/2013/0011cv_ms4.pdf.

62 County of Riverside. *Emergency Operations Plan*. Accessed June 2025. https://rivcoready.org/about-emd/plans.

Impacts related to the transport, disposal, or release of hazardous materials during operation of the proposed improvements would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation. The proposed Project would require demolition of existing classroom buildings, construction of new buildings, development of new playgrounds, and improvements to the hardscaping and landscaping.

The Project Site was originally constructed in 1992 and includes a combination of permanent, modular, and portable buildings. Since the school facilities were built after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ban of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), and lead-based paint (LBP), it is unlikely that these hazardous materials are on site. Nevertheless, due to the close proximity of the proposed construction activities to school facilities, there could be a potential risk for school occupants (students, teachers, campus staff, and visitors) and construction workers, all of whom are considered sensitive receptors, to be exposed to health risks associated with PCBs, ACM, and LBP. Impacts are potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures: The following Mitigation Measures would reduce the Project's potential impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials to a less-than-significant level:

MM HAZ-1 The District shall retain a qualified expert(s) to determine if the Project Site contains any PCB-containing materials, asbestos-containing materials, and/or lead-based paint. If one, two, or all three of these hazardous materials are determined to be present on the campus, the District shall remove the hazardous material as specified in MM HAZ-2 for polychlorinated biphenyls, MM HAZ-3 for asbestos-containing materials, and/or MM HAZ-4 for lead-based paint.

MM HAZ-2 **Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs).** Mercury-containing light ballasts with unknown PCB content shall also be handled in accordance with 40 CFR 273. The ballasts shall be segregated and analyzed for PCB content or assumed to contain PCBs. PCB wastes are regulated as hazardous waste if the total PCB concentration is equal to or greater than 50 mg/kg (50 ppm) and/or the soluble PCB concentration is equal to or greater than 5 mg/L (5 ppm). A limited exemption for PCB-containing ballasts is found in 22 California Code of Regulations 67426.1 et seq. This section allows for up to two 55-gallon drums of PCB-containing materials per vehicle to be transported to an authorized location without having to use a hazardous waste manifest or a hazardous waste transporter.

The handling method selected shall be based on the costs associated with the labor to segregate and test the materials versus the additional disposal fees. However, the potential increased risk from handling potentially nonhazardous wastes as hazardous waste shall be carefully considered in the District's decision-making process.

MM HAZ-3 **Asbestos Containing Materials.** Prior to demolition and construction activities on the Project Site, asbestos abatement work shall be performed in compliance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations:

- South Coast Air Quality Management District's Rule 1403
- California Health and Safety Code (Section 39650 et seq.)
- California Code of Regulations (Title 8, Section 1529)
- California Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations (California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 1529)
- Code of Federal Regulations (Title 40, Part 61 [asbestos], Title 40, Part 763 [asbestos], and Title 29, Part 1926 [asbestos and lead])

A scope of work and procedures specifically tailored to the Project shall be prepared and adhered to by the abatement contractor, as directed by the District. The Project-derived asbestos wastes shall be segregated as either "Hazardous" or "Nonhazardous" and handled separately or combined and handled together as hazardous.

The handling method selected shall be based on the costs associated with the labor to segregate the wastes versus the additional disposal fees. However, the potential increased risk from handling potentially nonhazardous wastes as hazardous shall be considered in the decision-making process.

MM HAZ-4 **Lead-Based Paint (LBP).** Lead-containing materials shall be handled according to the CCR, Title 8, Section 1532.1, and Title 17, Sections 35001–36100. If lead-based paint is found, the District shall follow all Cal/OSHA procedural requirements and regulations for its proper removal and disposal before general demolition activities commence. Lead wastes are regulated as hazardous waste if the total lead concentration is 1,000 mg/kg (1,000 ppm) or greater, and/or the soluble lead concentration is greater than 5.0 mg/L (5 ppm).

c. Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is not located within one-quarter mile of a proposed school. The Project Site is in an operating school campus, and as such is within one-quarter mile.

Construction

Construction activities associated with the proposed Project would involve the use and handling of hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, coatings, grease, (possibly) asbestos, lead, and PCB-containing materials. The use and handling of these hazardous materials would be in accordance with regulatory standards and protocols discussed above, including CFR, Title 29, Subpart H – Hazardous Materials;[63] CFR, Title 49, Chapter 1;[64] Hazardous Materials Transportation Act requirements as imposed by the USDOT, CalOSHA, CalEPA, and DTSC;[65] and SCAQMD Rule 403.[66] Hazardous materials would not be used in such quantities or stored in such a manner that would pose a safety hazard. Construction emissions, including exhaust and dust, would be generated from the operation of equipment and vehicles.

As analyzed in Section 5.3 (c), emissions generated during construction would not result in impacts on the local environment, nor upon school occupants at the Project Site. The proposed Project's related emissions and handling of hazardous materials would not impact schools, including the Project Site, during construction. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

During operation of the proposed Project, modest amounts of cleaning supplies and solvents would be used for housekeeping and janitorial purposes, which would be similar to existing conditions. These hazardous materials would be contained, stored, and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and handled in compliance with applicable standards and regulations. Emissions generated during the operation of the school include those from natural gas used for heating buildings and water heaters, landscaping equipment, and consumer products such as paint.

As analyzed in Section 5.3 (c), emission sources would not result in impacts to the local environment, including school occupants. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

63 CFR, title 29, subpart H.

64 CFR, title 49, chap. I.

65 USEPA. *Hazardous Materials Transportation Act of 1975*.

66 SCAQMD. *Rule 403: Fugitive Dust*.

d. Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. A search of environmental records was conducted by Environmental Data Resources, Inc., available as **Appendix F: EDR Report**. The records search includes hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. [67]

The records search identified the Project Site in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) database, which means the site has been previously regulated under NPDES permitting requirements. Additionally, a new data warehouse system developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), called nSite, contains information about the Project Site from the California Integrated Water Quality System (CIWQS) and the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS). One site was identified within one-quarter mile of the Project Site; it is listed on the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Non-generators/No Longer Regulated (RCRA NonGen/NLR) database. [68] As a result, all potentially hazardous materials will be used and stored in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations. The implementation of the proposed Project would not expose the public or the environment to hazards. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

Less than Significant Impact. There are no private airports, airstrips, or heliport stations within the vicinity of the Project Site. The nearest airport to the Project Site is the Palm Springs International Airport, located approximately 7.7 miles to the south. Due to the distance from the airport, the Project Site would not encroach on any potential runway, nor result in a safety hazard for students, staff, or workers. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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67 California Government Code, title 7, div. 1, ch. 4.5, art. 6, sec. 65962.5. Accessed July 2025. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=65962.5&lawCode=GOV.

68 See **Appendix F**: **EDR Report.**

f. Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or evacuation plan. [69] The proposed Project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, the street network because all construction activities, including staging, would occur on the campus. Construction activities would be short-term. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

g. Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

No Impact. The Project Site and surrounding areas are located within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and are not classified within a VHFHSZ (Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone) as determined by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention (CAL FIRE). [70] The Project Site is surrounded by urban development; these areas are zoned residential.

The proposed Project involves modernization of an existing school in a residential community and does not propose improvements that would exacerbate fire risk. Therefore, the proposed Project would not expose people or structures to wildland fires. No impacts would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

h. If a response action is necessary and proposed as part of this project, has it been developed to be protective of children's health, with an ample margin of safety?

Less than Significant Impact. Sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Project Site include the BWES campus, which would continue to operate during demolition and construction, and single-family residences. As these sensitive receptors could house or contain children for periods of the day, impacts from construction activities could have an impact on children's health. The BWES is the nearest sensitive receptor to the Project Site.

As addressed in **Section 5.3: Air Quality**, the proposed Project would not have a significant impact on human health. Additionally, prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Project must comply with DTSC or other regulatory agencies. These agencies could require additional site investigation to further assess the extent of contaminants of concern at the site. If the extensive on-site excavation and/or soil haul is determined to be an appropriate response action for a site, additional CEQA review

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69 County of Riverside. *Emergency Operations Plan*. August 2024. Accessed March 2025. https://rivcoready.org/about-emd/plans.

70 CAL FIRE. "Fire Hazard Severity Zones." Accessed June 2025. https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones.

may be required to evaluate potential impacts for the response related to air quality, noise, and traffic. Therefore, with regulatory compliance, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

i. Does the proposed school site contain one or more pipelines, situated underground or aboveground, which carry hazardous substances, acutely hazardous materials, or hazardous wastes, unless the pipeline is a natural gas line that is used only to supply natural gas to that school or neighborhood?

No Impact. There are no known underground or aboveground pipelines that carry hazardous substances or hazardous wastes to the Project Site. [71] No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

j. Is the proposed school site located near an aboveground water or fuel storage tank or within 1,500 feet of an easement of an aboveground or underground pipeline that can pose a safety hazard to the site?

No Impact. There are no known above-ground water or fuel storage tanks, nor underground or aboveground pipelines existing within 1,500 feet that pose a safety hazard to the Project Site. [72] No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

k. Would the project create an air quality hazard due to the placement of a school within one-quarter mile of: (a) permitted and nonpermitted facilities identified by the jurisdictional air quality control board or air pollution control district; (b) freeways and other busy traffic corridors; (c) large agricultural operations; and/or (d) a rail yard, which might reasonably be anticipated to emit hazardous air emissions, or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous material, substances, or waste?

Less Than Significant Impact.

a) Permitted.and.nonpermitted.facilities.identified.by.the.jurisdictional.air.quality.control.board. or.air.pollution.board¡

A project would expose sensitive receptors to elevated pollutant concentrations if it were to place the school in an area with pollutant concentrations above ambient concentrations in the SCAQMD area. The Facility Information Detail (FIND) database shows all the facilities that are required to have

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71 U.S. Department of Transportation. "Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, National Pipeline Mapping System Public Viewer." Accessed April 2025. https://pvnpms.phmsa.dot.gov/PublicViewer/.

72 California State Water Resources Control Board. "GeoTracker." Database. Accessed April 2025. https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/.

a permit to operate equipment that releases pollutants into the air within the SCAQMD boundary.[73] As shown in the EDR Report (**Appendix F**), the campus is not identified in the FIND database.

The proposed Project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, as the emissions associated with the proposed Project would be below SCAQMD localized thresholds.

Regional construction and operation emissions associated with the proposed Project would be less than significant.

The proposed Project is not anticipated to use hazardous materials in quantities that would pose a safety hazard. Hazardous substances are currently regulated under the California Accidental Release Prevention (CalARP) Program.[74] The CalARP Program satisfies the requirements of the Federal Risk Management Plan Program and contains additional State requirements, and applies to regulated substances in excess of specific quantity thresholds.[75] The majority of the substances have thresholds in the range of 100 to 10,000 pounds.

The uses of any of these potentially hazardous substances, noted above, are associated with the proposed Project's construction and operation. Construction activities may involve the use of fuels, lubricants, coatings, and grease related to construction equipment and activities. However, hazardous materials would be used in accordance with regulatory standards and protocols and would not be in such quantities or stored in such a manner as to pose safety hazards. These activities would also be short-term or one-time in nature and would cease upon project completion. Operation of the proposed Project may contain small (less than 100 pounds), if any, amounts of these hazardous substances, typical of cleaning, classroom, and computer lab spaces. However, typical use of these products would be in small quantities of chemicals for cleaning and not result in quantities at any one location that exceed the 100-pound CalARP threshold.

The Project Site consists of an existing operating school. Furthermore, there are no known hazardous air emissions generated from mobile and stationary sources within a quarter-mile radius of the Project Site identified within the FIND database, and would not pose an actual or potential endangerment to students or staff at the school. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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73 SCAQMD. "Facility Information Detail (F.I.N.D.)." Accessed April 2025. https://www.aqmd.gov/nav/FIND/facility-information-detail.

74 California Department of Toxic Substances Control. *DTSC California Accidental Release Prevention Program CalARP Fact Sheet*. Accessed April 2025. https://dtsc.ca.gov/california-accidental-release-prevention-program-calarp-fact-sheet/.

75 California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). *California Accidental Release Prevention Program*. Accessed April 2025. https://calepa.ca.gov/california-accidental-release-prevention/california-accidental-release-prevention-program-faq/.

b) Freeways.and.other.busy.traffic.corridors¡

EDC Section 17213 states that a busy traffic corridor is defined as having 50,000 or more average daily trips (ADT) in a rural area, or 100,000 or more ADT in an urban area. [76] The closest freeway, I-10, is located approximately 5.0 miles south of the Project Site.

As detailed in the Desert Hot Springs General Plan, there are no roadways within 500 feet of the Project Site designated as an arterial highway, major highway, secondary highway, or collector. The closest major street to the Project Site is Palm Drive, a north-south Urban Arterial approximately 1.2 miles southwest of the western edge of the campus. A 2017 traffic count in Coachella Valley has identified that the average daily trips (ADT) are 34,334 for Palm Drive south of Dillon Road.

Additionally, the proposed Project would not generate an increase in daily vehicle trips, as analyzed in **Section 5.17: Transportation**. The proposed Project is not within one-quarter mile of a freeway or any other busy traffic corridor as defined by EDC Section 17213. [77] Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c) Large.agricultural.operations¡

There are no large agricultural operations located within a quarter-mile of the Project Site. Surrounding land uses include school uses and single-family residences. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d) Rail.yard¡

There are no rail yards located within one-quarter mile of the Project Site. Surrounding land uses include school uses and single-family residences. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

76 California Education Code, sec. 17213.

77 California Education Code, sec. 17213.

l. Is the school site in an area designated in a city, county, or city and county general plan for agricultural use and zoned for agricultural production, and if so, do neighboring agricultural uses have the potential to result in any public health and safety issues that may affect the pupils and employees at the school site? (Does not apply to school sites approved by CDE prior to January 1, 1997.)?

No Impact. The Project Site and adjacent properties contain a land use designation of MDR and a zoning designation of W-2 (Controlled Development Areas).[78] As such, the Project Site is not designated by the General Plan or zoning for agricultural use. The Project Site is not subject to a Williamson Act Contract, as indicated in **Section 5.2: Agriculture and Forestry Resources**. There are no designated General Plan agricultural land uses or zoning adjacent to or in the vicinity of the Project Site. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

m. Is the property line of the proposed school site less than the following distances from the edge of respective power line easements: (1) 100 feet of a 50–133 kV line; (2) 150 feet of a 220–230 kV line; or (3) 350 feet of a 500–550 kV line?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is not within the prescribed distances of a 50 to 133 kilovolt (kV) line, a 220 to 230 kV line, or a 500 to 550 kV line.[79] No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

n. Is the Project Site a hazardous substance release site identified by the state Department of Health Services in a current list adopted pursuant to §25356 for removal or remedial action pursuant to Chapter 6.8 of Division 20 of the Health and Safety Code?

Less than Significant Impact. Where a proposed school site is listed by DTSC under Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 25356, the Project would, through the CEQA processes and under DTSC's oversight, undertake all required removal and/or remedial actions; ensure that DTSC removes the site from this listing; determine that the site as remediated poses no health risk to students, faculty, and staff; and secure DTSC's certification that all school buildings may be occupied and used for their intended purpose.[80] The public would then have the opportunity to review the site-specific investigations through the public review process. Compliance with the process and steps outlined

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78 Riverside County. "Map My County." GIS database. Accessed March 2025. https://gis1.countyofriverside.us/Html5Viewer/?viewer=MMC_Public.

79 California Energy Commission. "CA Electric Transmission Lines." Dataset. July 2025. Accessed April 2025. https://cecgis-caenergy.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/260b4513acdb4a3a8e4d64e69fc84fee_2/explore?location=37.004975%2C-118.629288%2C6.34.

80 California Health and Safety Code, sec. 25356. Accessed April 2025. https://california.public.law/codes/ca_health_and_safety_code_section_25356.

would ensure that impacts from any site used for a school project that DTSC formerly listed under HSC Section 25356 would not be a hazard to people on or near the site.

There is no listing pursuant to DTSC under HSC Section 25356 on the Project Site based on the EDR Report's comprehensive lists of contaminated sites (**Appendix F**), including the DTSC EnviroStor database. The proposed Project would involve the demolition of several buildings on the existing campus. Due to the age of the buildings that would be demolished, there is a potential for the presence of asbestos-containing materials, lead-based paint, and polychlorinated biphenyls. Therefore, the proposed Project would comply with federal and State regulations and the City guidelines and procedures outlined for lead, asbestos, and PCBs removal and remediation, if found on the Project Site. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

o. Does the Project Site contain a current or former hazardous waste disposal site or solid waste disposal site and, if so, have the wastes been removed?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is at an existing campus; there are no other schools located within a quarter mile of the Project Site.

Under EDC Section 17213(a)(1), a school district is prohibited from acquiring any of the following: a current or former hazardous waste disposal site, or a solid waste disposal site unless the site is a former solid waste disposal site and the wastes have been removed.[81] No current or former hazardous waste disposal sites exist in the Project Site based on the EDR Report's comprehensive lists of contaminated sites (**Appendix F**), including the DTSC EnviroStor and SWRCB GeoTracker databases.[82, 83]

Demolition and construction would involve the use and handling of hazardous materials, including fuels, lubricants, coatings, grease, (possibly) asbestos, lead, and PCB-containing materials. The use and handling of these hazardous materials would be in accordance with regulatory standards and protocols (see **sections 5.9(a)** and **5.9(b))** and would not be in such quantities or stored in such a manner as to pose significant safety hazards.

Emissions from the demolition and construction activities associated with the proposed Project, including exhaust and dust, would be generated from the operation of equipment and vehicles. As analyzed in **Section 5.3(c)**, these emissions generated during construction would not result in

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81 California Education Code, sec. 17213.

82 California Department of Toxic Substances Control. "EnviroStor." Accessed April 2025. https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/.

83 California State Water Resources Control Board. "GeoTracker." Accessed April 2025. https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?CMD=runreport&myaddress=Sacramento.

significant impacts on the local environment, including school occupants (students, faculty, and staff) at the Project Site.

During operation of the proposed Project, similar to existing conditions, modest amounts of cleaning supplies and solvents would be used for housekeeping and janitorial purposes. These hazardous materials would be contained, stored, and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions, as well as handled in compliance with applicable standards and regulations.

Emissions generated during school operation include those from natural gas for heating and water heaters, landscaping equipment, and various consumer products such as paint. As analyzed in **Section 5.3(c),** these emission sources would not result in impacts to the local environment, including school occupants. Therefore, emissions and handling of hazardous materials for the proposed Project would not result in impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

p. If prepared, has the risk assessment been performed with a focus on children's health posed by a hazardous materials release or threatened release, or the presence of naturally occurring hazardous materials on the school site?

Less than Significant Impact. Sensitive receptors include students, staff, and faculty present at the existing campus for periods of the day; impacts from demolition and construction activities could result in health impacts.

As discussed in **Section 5.3: Air Quality**, the proposed Project would not result in impacts on human health. Additionally, prior to the issuance of a building permit, the District must comply with DTSC or other regulatory agencies that oversee health-related issues.

As noted previously, there are no known hazardous materials that would affect the health of site occupants. However, depending on the outcome of any site assessment efforts required by any of these agencies, they could require additional site investigation to further assess the extent of contaminants of concern at the Project Site. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

q. Is the proposed school site situated within 2,000 feet of a significant disposal of hazardous waste?

No Impact. The EDR Report (**Appendix F**) indicated that there are no mapped sites listed in the Cortese database or any other related databases within 2,000 feet of the Project Site. Additionally, no active landfills or hazardous waste disposal sites were identified within this distance from the Project Site. The proposed Project will adhere to the standards established by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). No impacts would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

r. Is the proposed school site within two miles, measured by air line, of that point on an airport runway or potential runway included in an airport master plan that is nearest to the site? (Does not apply to school sites acquired prior to January 1, 1997.)

No Impact. The closest airport to the Project Site is the Palm Springs International Airport, which is located 6.7 miles to the south. As the Project Site is located farther than 2 miles from the nearest airport, the proposed Project would not conflict with an airport land use plan or operation of nearby airports. The proposed Project would not pose a safety hazard to people at the Project Site. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

5.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY – Would the project:				
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Substantially 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:				
i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. 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	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.10.1 Discussion

a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

Less than Significant Impact. New construction can result in two types of water quality impacts: (1) short-term impacts due to the discharge of eroded soil and other pollutants during construction, and (2) long-term impacts due to the creation of impervious surfaces (buildings, roads, parking lots, and walkways) that prevent the percolation of water into the ground, thereby increasing the rate and volume of stormwater runoff. Impervious surfaces can also increase the concentration of pollutants in stormwater runoff, such as oil, fertilizers, pesticides, trash, soil, and animal waste. Runoff from short-term construction and long-term operation can flow directly into nearby receiving waters such as streams, lakes, and man-made drains and channels.

The Project Site is in the jurisdiction of the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRBRWQCB).

Construction

The proposed Project would not expose large areas of pervious surfaces or increase runoff that would violate water quality standards. Construction equipment and activities could contribute pollutants to the local storm drain system, such as trash and debris, oil and grease, sediments, oxygen-demanding substances, nutrients, heavy metals, pesticides, and organic compounds. The District would comply with local, State, and federal regulations to prevent construction impacts on stormwater runoff in order to ensure that water quality is uncompromised during demolition and construction.

Discharges from site activities during demolition and construction activities could affect storm water, including soil and sediment entering storm water or being carried off-site by wind. This would be regulated by the Statewide General Construction Permit issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). [84]

Given that the construction areas would be greater than one acre, the District's construction contractor would be required to obtain a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) from the CRBRWQCB, which is in compliance with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). [85] The SWPPP specifies Best Management Practices (BMPs) with the aim of reducing or eliminating soil erosion and siltation from construction sites. Examples of BMPs include gravel bag berms, silt fencing, fiber rolls, street sweeping, and general housekeeping measures to prevent stormwater contact with construction materials. Compliance with the SWPPP and BMPs would minimize wastewater discharge and reduce the impact to water and groundwater quality. Impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

The Project Site is relatively flat with an elevation at the campus of approximately 886 feet amsl. Surface water flows on the paved area outside of the existing campus. Within the center of the campus, and around the perimeter of the campus, surface water flows through channels directed toward the existing municipal storm drains serving the campus.

As part of the proposed Project, the District would be required to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) MS4 Permit (Order No. R7-2013-0011) [86] and NPDES Permit

84 California State Water Resources Control Board. *Construction Stormwater General Permit (Order 2009-0009-DWQ)*.

85 USEPA. "Water Permitting (NPDES)." Accessed April 2025. https://www.epa.gov/npdes.

86 Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board. *NPDES Permit, Order No. R7-2013-0011*. June 2013.

No. CA0104973 [87] in order to implement best management practices to ensure that water quality is protected.

BMPs include, but are not limited to, covering all demolition material and waste, developing and implementing a spill recovery prevention/recovery plan, using water trucks to prevent dust emissions, and properly managing and maintaining vehicles and equipment. Impacts to the water quality of stormwater runoff would be minimal. Drainage and surface water discharges from the proposed Project would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Furthermore, the amount of impervious surfaces on the Project Site upon completion would be similar to the existing conditions. The Project would meet water quality standards and waste discharge requirements. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede substantial groundwater management of the basin?

Less than Significant Impact. The Mission Springs Water District (MSWD) provides water to the Project Site. Water supply is primarily sourced from groundwater produced from subbasins located in the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin, with total production reaching 8,269 acre-feet per year (AFY) in 2020. [88]

The proposed Project would not increase facility operations at the existing campus. Additionally, the Project Site has not historically been used for groundwater recharge, and Project implementation would not result in depleting existing groundwater supplies that could affect groundwater recharge. No groundwater wells or other potential sources of groundwater are located within or near the Project. [89] Impacts to groundwater supplies and recharge would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures would be required.

87 Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board. *Waste Discharge Requirements, Mid Valley Water Reclamation Plant No. 4, NPDES Permit No. CA0104973*. May 2012.

88 Coachella Valley Water District. *2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan*. June 2021. Accessed April 2025. http://cvwd.org/DocumentCenter/View/5482/Coachella-Valley-RUWMP.

89 California Department of Conservation. “Well Finder.” Accessed April 2025. https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doggr/wellfinder/.

c. Would the project substantially 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:

i. result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off-site;

Less than Significant Impact. The closest riverine habitat located is approximately 1.8 miles west of the Project Site. [90]

The proposed Project would improve on-site drainage and would not change any drainage patterns in the area. The proposed Project would include hardscape and landscape improvements that would redirect stormwater flow away from new buildings and doorways into existing inlets that would connect to the on-site storm drain system. The Project would not impact streams or rivers. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

Less than Significant Impact. No streams or rivers are located within the Project Site. The proposed Project would not alter existing drainage patterns of the site or area, such as through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, nor would the Project substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on or off site.

The proposed Project would include hardscape and landscape improvements to maintain or improve stormwater collection on the campus. The amount of impervious surface on the site after Project completion would remain similar to existing conditions. The proposed Project does not propose to alter any drainage patterns in such a manner that would cause on- and off-site surface runoff impacts. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

iii. 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;

Less than Significant Impacts. The increased stormwater runoff caused by impervious areas from the proposed Project would be collected in new inlets and pipes around the building and would be released into the existing drains. As the proposed Project would not increase enrollment capacity,

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90 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "National Wild and Scenic Rivers System." Accessed April 2025. https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.html.

the same types and amounts of pollution sources that are currently generated would be the same at the Project Site.

Stormwater would be collected by on-site basins and directed through the site's drainage system. As previously noted, during proposed Project construction activities, BMPs for minimizing soil erosion would be implemented. The proposed Project would not increase the sources of polluted runoff. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

iv. impede or redirect flood flows?

Less than Significant Impacts. The Project Site does not intersect with, nor is it within the vicinity of, any streams or rivers. Stormwater collected on the Project Site would be released into existing drains. The proposed Project would reduce ponding on the Project Site by replacing inlet grates and would not impede or redirect flood flows. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, would the project risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

No Impact. The Project Site is designated as "Area of Minimal Flood Hazard" Zone X within the Federal Emergency Management Agency.[91] Additionally, the Project Site is not located near the ocean or any large enclosed or semi-enclosed bodies of water. Therefore, the Project Site is not within designated tsunami or seiche zones. In the unlikely event of project inundation, the proposed Project would not release pollutants into waterbodies. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Less than Significant Impact. Under the California Water Code, the State of California is divided into nine regional water quality control boards (RWQCBs), which govern the implementation and enforcement of the California Water Code and the Clean Water Act. The Project Site is located within the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRBRWQCB) region.

The CRBRWQCB implements the Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin (Basin Plan). The Basin Plan is designed to preserve and enhance water quality and protect the beneficial uses of all regional waters. Specifically, the Basin Plan (i) designates beneficial uses for surface and

91 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). "National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL)." Accessed April 2025. https://msc.fema.gov/.

ground waters, (ii) sets narrative and numerical objectives that must be attained or maintained to protect the designated beneficial uses and conform to the State's antidegradation policy, and (iii) describes implementation programs to protect all waters in the Region. [92] In addition, the Basin Plan incorporates all applicable State and Regional Board plans and policies, and other pertinent water quality policies and regulations.

As discussed in **Section 5.10.a**, the District would comply with applicable federal, State, and local regulations and obtain required permits from the Colorado River Basin RWQCB. Construction and operation of the Project would adhere to the Basin Plan and would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of the plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

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92 California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin Region. *Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin Region*. Accessed April 2025. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/water_issues/programs/basin_planning/.

5.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project:				
a. Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Conflict with applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Would the proposed school conflict with any existing or proposed land uses, such that a potential health or safety risk to students would be created?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.11.1 Discussion

a. Physically divide an established community?

Less Than Significant Impact. Development of the proposed Project would not divide any established residential communities, as development would occur within the existing developed campus. No new roadways or infrastructure would be constructed that would bisect or transect the surrounding neighborhoods. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Conflict with applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Western Coachella Valley Area Plan land use designation for the of the Project Site is Medium Density Residential (MDR), and the zoning is W-2 (Controlled Development Areas).[93] As mentioned above, the W-2 zoning designation allows for educational institutions, provided that approval of a plot plan is obtained first, pursuant to 18.30 of the Riverside County Ordinance No. 348.[94] Impacts would be less than significant.

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93 County of Riverside. *Western Coachella Valley Area Plan*. In *General Plan*. "Figure 3: Western Coachella Valley Area Plan Land Use Plan."

94 County of Riverside. *Ordinance No. 348: Land Use Planning and Zoning Regulations*. Article XV, W-2 Zone (Controlled Development Areas). Accessed March 2025. https://planning.rctlma.org/sites/g/files/aldnop416/files/2023-06/Ord348-04-28-2023-FINAL.pdf.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Would the proposed school conflict with any existing or proposed land uses, such that a potential health or safety risk to students would be created?

No Impact. There are no existing or proposed land uses surrounding the Project Site that would pose a health or safety risk to students or faculty. The land use designations surrounding the Project Site include single-family residential immediately adjacent to the west and the south, vacant undeveloped land immediately to the north, and recreational uses to the southeast. None of these land uses are considered a health or safety risk to students. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

5.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.12.1 Discussion

a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State?

No Impact. According to the County's General Plan Multipurpose Open Space Element, the Project Site is located within Mineral Resource Zone 3 (MRZ-3). [95] This designation indicates an area where development has limited the ability to determine the presence or amount of mineral resources. There have been no known records of mineral resources within the Project Site and the existing campus is already developed. As such, there would be no disruption of existing mining operations, and there would be no loss of availability of a known mineral resource.

No impacts would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

No Impact. The Project Site is within MRZ-3 and is developed with a school. There are no known mineral resource recovery sites in the vicinity. The Project Site is also not designated as a mineral resource recovery site. [96] The closest mining operation to the Project Site is the Mountain View Road Pit Mine located approximately 3.5 miles south, and the Garnet Pit Mine located approximately 4.2 miles southwest, both of which are currently listed as open-pit sand and gravel mines. [97] No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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95 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element."

96 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 3: Land Use Element." Accessed April 2025. https://planning.rctlma.org/riverside-county-general-plan.

97 California Department of Conservation. "Mines Online Map." Accessed April 2025. https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mol/index.html.

5.13 NOISE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
NOISE—Would the project:				
a. Generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b. Is the proposed school site located adjacent to or near a major arterial roadway or freeway whose noise generation may adversely affect the educational program?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.13.1 Discussion

a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Less than Significant with Project Mitigation.

Environmental Setting

Human response to noise varies widely depending on the type of noise, time of day, and sensitivity of the receptor. The effects of noise on humans can range from temporary to permanent hearing loss and can induce mild stress and annoyance due to such things as speech interference and sleep deprivation. Prolonged stress, regardless of the cause, is known to contribute to a variety of health disorders. Noise, or the lack thereof, is a factor in the aesthetic perception of some settings, particularly those with religious or cultural significance. Certain land uses are particularly sensitive to noise, including schools, hospitals, rest homes, long-term medical and mental care facilities, and parks and recreation areas. Residential areas are also considered noise-sensitive, especially during nighttime hours.

The Project Site, as it is an existing school campus, would be considered an on-site sensitive receptor as it would continue to operate during construction. Additionally, the following were identified as off-site sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Project Site:

- **Site 1**: Single Family Residential (R1) uses along Bubbling Wells Road
- **Site 2**: Single Family Residential (R1) uses along Ave Atezada.
- **Site 3**: Single Family Residential (R1) uses and a Preschool along Avenue Mirola.

Regulatory Setting

As the Project Site is located within the sphere of influence of the City of Desert Hot Springs, the City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan Safety and Noise Element[98] guidelines to determine noise compatibility for specific land uses are identified below. These guidelines are shown in **Table 5.13-1: Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Exposure** and depict the CNEL ranges of allowable exterior ambient noise levels for various land uses at buildout. As shown in **Table 5.13-1**, noise levels for schools are considered "normally acceptable" up to 60 dBA and "conditionally acceptable" up to 65 dBA.

TABLE 5.13-1: LAND USE COMPATIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY NOISE EXPOSURE

Land Use Categories	Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)						
	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Residential land uses: Single and multifamily dwellings							
Residential land uses: Mobile homes							
Transient lodging: Hotels and motels							
Schools, libraries, churches, hospitals, nursing homes & convalescent hospitals							

98 City of Desert Hot Springs. *General Plan*. Adopted May 26, 2020. Accessed April 2025. https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/deserthotspringsca/uploads/2021/11/Desert-Hot-Springs-General-Plan-Adopted-07-2020-Small.pdf.

TABLE 5.13-1: LAND USE COMPATIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY NOISE EXPOSURE

Land Use
Recreation land uses: Golf courses, open space (with walking, bicycling, or horseback riding trails, etc.)
Playgrounds, neighborhood parks
Office building, personal business, and professional services
Commercial land uses: Retail trade, movie theaters, restaurants, bars, entertainment activities, and other services
Heavy commercial/industrial: wholesale, manufacturing, utilities, transportation, communication
Auditoriums, concert halls, amphitheaters, music shells, and meeting halls

Normally Acceptable: Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

Conditionally Acceptable: New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

Normally Unacceptable: New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insultation features included in the design.

Clearly Unacceptable: New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs, General Plan, https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/deserthotspringsca/uploads/2021/11/Desert-Hot-Springs-General-Plan-Adopted-07-2020-Small.pdf. Accessed April 2025.

While the Project Site is located outside the City of Desert Hot Springs, the City's Municipal Code is considered in this analysis as it provides relevant guidance for evaluating potential impacts on nearby areas within the City. The City of Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code sections relevant to the evaluation of the proposed Project in this analysis include the following:

Section 8.12.030. Prohibits unlawful noise disturbances within City limits or within 200 feet of City. Per Section 8.12.020, a noise disturbance is any sound that:

- Endangers the safety or health of any person;
- Disturbs a reasonable person of normal sensitivities; or
- Endangers personal or real property.

Section 8.12.090. Prohibits operational noise disturbances across residential property boundaries outside specified hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM through 6:00 PM.; Saturday, 8:00 AM through 6:00 PM and Sunday, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM.

Section 9.04.030. Prohibits construction activities between the hours of 5:00 PM on each day and 7:00 AM on the next day, except when daylight saving time is in effect. During such time as daylight savings time is in effect in the City, no such activities shall be permitted between the hours of 6:00 PM of each day and 6:00 AM of the next day. No such activities shall be permitted on Sundays.

Section 17.40.300. Prohibits discernible vibration beyond the boundary line of the property.

The City's Municipal Code does not establish a numeric maximum of acceptable construction source noise levels at potentially affected receivers. Unincorporated Riverside County has established noise standards for residential land uses outlined in Chapter 9.52; however, this chapter specifies that it is not intended to establish thresholds of significance for the purpose of any analysis required by the CEQA. Further, sound emanating from capital improvement projects of a governmental agency, as well as the maintenance or repair of public properties, is exempt from County Noise Regulations, outlined in Chapter 9.52.020 of the Riverside County Code of Ordinances.

A quantified determination for CEQA constitutes as the generation of noise levels in excess of standards, or as a substantial temporary or periodic noise increase. Therefore, this report identifies a construction noise level threshold to evaluate these potential impacts.

For purposes of this noise study, to evaluate whether the proposed Project will generate a substantial periodic increase in short-term noise levels at off-site sensitive receiver locations, the construction-related noise level threshold in the Criteria for Recommended Standard: Occupational Noise Exposure prepared by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is used. A division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, NIOSH identifies a noise level threshold based on the duration of exposure to the source. The construction-related noise level threshold starts at 85 dBA for more than eight hours per day, and for every three (3) dBA increase, the exposure time is cut in half. This results in noise level thresholds of 88 dBA for more than four hours per day, 92 dBA for more than one hour per day, 96 dBA for more than 30 minutes per day, and up to 100 dBA for more than 15 minutes per day. For the purposes of this analysis, the lowest, more conservative construction noise level threshold of 85 dBA Leq is used as an acceptable threshold for construction noise at the nearby sensitive receiver locations. Since this construction-related noise level threshold represents the energy average of the noise source over a given time period, they are expressed as Leq noise levels. Therefore, the noise level threshold of 85 dBA Leq over a period of eight hours or more is used to evaluate the potential Project-related construction noise level impacts at the nearby sensitive receiver locations.

Construction

Off-Site

Construction activities that would occur during the construction phases would generate both steady-state and episodic noise that would be heard both on and off the Project Site. Each phase involves the use of different types of construction equipment and, therefore, has its own distinct noise characteristics.

Although the proposed Project is exempt from County Noise Regulations and the Project Site is located outside the City of Desert Hot Springs, the Proposed Project is consistent with the established limits to the hours of construction outlined in Section 9.04.030 of the City's Municipal Code.

The potential noise impact generated during construction depends on the phase of construction and the percentage of time the equipment operates over the workday. However, construction noise estimates used for the analysis are representative of worst-case conditions because it is unlikely that all the equipment contained on site would operate simultaneously. As would be the case for the construction of most projects, the construction of the proposed Project would require the use of heavy-duty equipment with the potential to generate audible noise above the ambient background noise level. The proposed Project's construction noise levels at the nearest off-site sensitive receptors are shown in **Table 5.13-2: Construction Maximum Noise Estimates**. As shown, construction noise levels would result in a maximum increase of 7.9 dBA at the single-family residential uses along Ave Atezada and Avenue Mirola located directly south of the Project Site, exceeding the daytime significance threshold of 85 dBA for residential uses.

Impacts would be potentially significant.

TABLE 5.13-2: CONSTRUCTION MAXIMUM NOISE ESTIMATES

Site	Nearest Off-Site Building Structures	Distance from Project Site (feet)	Max Leq	Significance Threshold (dBA)	Maximum Noise Increase over Significance Threshold without Regulatory Compliance Measures (dBA)
1	Residential uses along Bubbling Wells Road	80	84.1	85.0	—
2	Residential uses Ave Atezada	25	92.9	85.0	+7.9
3	Residential uses along Avenue Mirola	25	92.9	85.0	+7.9

Source: FHWA, RCNM, version. 1.1. Refer to **Appendix G**: **Construction Noise Worksheets**.

On-Site

Similar to the off-site sensitive receptors, the proposed Project would expose on-site receptors, including students and faculty, to increased ambient exterior noise levels during construction. The nearest on-site sensitive receptors would be as close as approximately 25 feet from the nearest operational building. Construction noise during the heavier initial periods of construction may reach up to 92.9 dB when measured at a reference distance of 25 feet from the construction activity. [99] This could interfere with certain educational programming and learning activities when school is in session. Additionally, existing school windows may be open because HVAC systems will not be fully functional during certain phases of construction, exacerbating the level of noise.

Construction staging would occur on the existing campus at the Project Site. The proposed Project would begin with the demolition of existing hardcourt, playground, and playfield, then the construction of the new buildings, followed by the demolition of existing buildings, the renovation of existing buildings. The school would continue to operate during demolition and construction. As new buildings and classrooms are completed, an ongoing phased vacation and relocation of students and faculty into the new campus facilities will occur as new facilities become available.

Project-related demolition and construction activities would occur from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Because schools are typically in session from 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM, activities would occur during the most sensitive timeframe. If the Project's construction activities were required on Saturdays, these activities would occur during the hours of 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, or 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM when daylight savings is in effect. These construction hours are consistent with Section 9.04.030 of the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code, although as previously discussed, the Project Site is located outside the City of Desert Hot Springs and the proposed Project is exempt from County Noise Regulations.

To further reduce exposure of noise-sensitive receptors (both on and off campus) to the proposed Project's demolition and construction-related activities, the proposed Project would coordinate the noisiest construction activities to occur during periods when school is not in session.

The District would work to limit the majority of the site preparation and grading activities. The start of new building construction would occur during the school's summer session or during school vacation periods.

Because construction activities will occur over an approximate continuous 18-month period, noise at the nearby sensitive receptors would constitute a potential temporary noise impact. Noise levels on the Project Site would be considered high for intermittent periods of time and would occur during the most sensitive times of the day (7:30 AM to 2:30 PM). Impacts would be potentially significant.

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99 Refer to **Appendix G** for construction noise worksheets

Operation

As the proposed Project would implement various modernization improvements to existing buildings to meet current code requirements and develop new structures within areas of the existing buildings on the campus, the operational noise levels would not substantially change. No operational impacts would occur.

Mitigation Measures: The following Mitigation Measures shall be implemented.

MM N-1 The District shall direct construction activities that result in noise above 65 dB(a) to correspond with the school schedule to minimize noise and vibration impacts when classes are in session, and to avoid critical (testing) periods. Intensive construction activities such as demolition and grading shall be scheduled to occur after 2:30 PM Monday through Friday.

MM N-2 The District's construction contractor shall ensure that construction equipment is properly muffled according to industry standards and is in good working condition.

MM N-3 The District's construction contractor shall utilize diesel generators and compressors that are listed as "quiet units" by the manufacturer.

MM N-4 For all noise- and vibration-generating construction activity on the Project Site, the District's construction contractor shall employ additional noise and vibration attenuation techniques to reduce noise and vibration levels. Such techniques may include, but are not limited to, the use of sound blankets on noise-generating equipment and the construction of temporary sound barriers between construction sites and nearby sensitive receptors.

MM N-5 The District's construction contractor shall turn off all idling equipment when not in use for more than 5 minutes.

MM N-6 The District's construction contractor shall disconnect backup alarms on vehicles that require them.

MM N-7 The District's construction contractor shall utilize temporary noise deflector walls during construction, where feasible.

MM N-8 The District's construction contractor shall place noise- and vibration-generating construction equipment, as well as construction staging areas, away from sensitive uses, including operating classrooms, where feasible.

MM N-9 The District's construction contractor shall coordinate the reduction of construction activities with nearby classrooms during exam periods to minimize noise and vibration. The District's construction contractor shall provide construction activity schedules to try to minimize noisy activities when construction is taking place to the fullest extent practicable.

Level of Significance Following Mitigation:

With the implementation of the above mitigation measures, noise generated during Project construction would be less than significant impact.

b. Is the proposed school site located adjacent to or near a major arterial roadway or freeway whose noise generation may adversely affect the educational program?

Less than Significant Impact. EDC Section 17213 states that a busy traffic corridor is defined as having 50,000 or more average daily trips (ADT) in a rural area or 100,000 or more ADT in an urban area. [100]

There are no freeways within 500 feet of the Project Site. The closest freeway, I-10, is located approximately 5.0 miles south of the Project Site.

As detailed within the Desert Hot Springs General Plan, [101] there are no roadways within 500 feet of the Project Site designated as an arterial highway, major highway, secondary highway, or collector. The closest major street to the Project Site is Palm Drive, a north-south Urban Arterial approximately 1.2 miles southwest of the western edge of the campus. A 2015 traffic count in Coachella Valley has identified an ADT of 29,780 for Palm Drive south of Dillon Road. [102]

Additionally, the proposed Project would not generate an increase in daily vehicle trips, as analyzed in **Section 5.17: Transportation**. The proposed Project is not within one-quarter mile of a freeway or other busy traffic corridor as defined by EDC Section 17213. [103] As such, the proposed Project would not be impacted by roadway noise. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

c. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than Significant with Project Mitigation.

Construction

Off-Site

Construction machinery and operations can generate varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the construction procedures and the construction equipment used. The operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in amplitude with

100 California Education Code, sec. 17213.

101 City of Desert Hot Springs, *General Plan*.

102 Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG). "Coachella Valley Traffic Counts." Accessed April 2025. https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=fb9489b188e74be3b599afb52741849d.

103 California Education Code, sec. 17213.

distance from the source. The effect on buildings located in the vicinity of a construction site often varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and construction characteristics of the receptor buildings. The results from vibration impacts can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibration at moderate levels, to slight damage at the highest levels. Groundborne vibration from construction activities rarely reaches the levels causing damage to structures. Neither the City nor unincorporated Riverside County has any adopted standards, guidelines, or thresholds relative to ground-borne vibration. As such, available guidelines from the FTA would be considered to assess impacts due to ground-borne vibration. While ground vibrations from construction activities do not often reach the levels that can damage structures, fragile buildings must receive special consideration. Potential building damage occurs when construction activities cause groundborne vibration levels to exceed 0.5 inches per second peak particle velocity (PPV ips) at reinforced-concrete, steel, or timber buildings and 0.3 PPV ips for engineered concrete and masonry buildings. [104]

Heavy construction equipment may generate substantial levels of vibration that would cause annoyance to on- and off-site vibration-sensitive receptors. However, vibration dissipates quickly with distance. As heavy construction equipment moves around the site, average vibration levels at the nearest sensitive receptors on the campus and in adjacent residences would diminish rapidly with increased distance between the receptors and the equipment. Backhoes are capable of producing 92.0 VdB at 25 feet, [105] which is the approximate distance to the nearest classroom building throughout the Project's phased construction activities.

A vibration velocity of 75 VdB is the approximate threshold between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible levels for many people. The residential neighborhoods directly surrounding the Project Site with regard to construction activities would not be affected as a result of the attenuation of groundborne vibration, given their distance from where excavation and ground-disturbing activities would occur on the site. The majority of construction activities would occur on the northern portion of the Project Site when the new buildings are being constructed and not directly adjacent to the surrounding residential neighborhood. Construction activities would be restricted to daytime hours, which is when the surrounding off-site residences are the least sensitive to vibration intrusions. **Table 5.13-3: Construction Vibration Impacts—Building Damage** presents vibration impacts associated with on-site demolition and construction in terms of building damage. As shown in **Table 5.13-3**, the forecasted vibration levels due to on-site demolition and construction activities would not exceed the building damage significance threshold at the nearby sensitive receptors.

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104 Federal Transit Administration (FTA). *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*. p. 112. September 2018. Accessed April 2025. https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/research-innovation/118131/transit-noise-and-vibration-impact-assessment-manual-fta-report-no-0123_0.pdf.

105 Office of Planning and Environment, Federal Transit Administration. *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*. FTA-VA-90-1003-06. May 2006, 12-9.

As with generated noise levels, construction activities would be scheduled to avoid critical school schedule periods (e.g., testing periods) to reduce vibration impacts while students are in class. Equipment that generates the highest levels of vibration would be scheduled to be operated after school hours to the degree possible, or when classes are not in session. However, construction-related vibration levels would be considered high for intermittent periods of time throughout the phased construction schedule. Impacts to students, staff, and faculty are considered to be potentially significant.

TABLE 5.13-3: CONSTRUCTION VIBRATION IMPACTS—BUILDING DAMAGE

Nearest Off-Site Building Structures	Estimated Vibration Velocity Levels at the Nearest Off-Site Structures from the Project Construction Equipment					Significance Threshold (PPV ips)
	Jackhammer	Large Bulldozer	Loaded Trucks	Vibratory Roller	Small Bulldozer	
Residential uses along Bubbling Wells Road (80 feet)	0.006	0.016	0.013	0.037	0.001	0.3
Residential uses Ave Atezada (25 feet)	0.035	0.089	0.076	0.210	0.003	0.3
Residential uses along Avenue Mirola (25 feet)	0.035	0.089	0.076	0.210	0.003	0.3

Source: Refer to **Appendix H**: **Construction Vibration Worksheets**.
US Department of Transportation, Federal Transportation Authority, *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*.

On-Site

Similar to the off-site sensitive receptors, the Project would expose on-site buildings to increased vibration levels during construction. As shown in **Table 5.13-3** above, the forecasted vibration levels due to on-site construction activities would not exceed the building damage significance threshold at a reference distance of 25 feet. On-site vibration impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation is required.

Operation

The proposed uses would be stationary and would not generate substantial groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels. Operational vibration impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: Though not required to reduce vibration impacts caused by Project construction, the District will implement **MM N-10** and **MM N-11** to limit vibration impacts.

MM N-10 Notification shall be provided to all occupied residences within 200 feet of an area where construction activities may result in groundborne vibration of more than 80 VdB, at least 10 days in advance of such activities.

MM N-11 Before any site activity, the contractor shall be required to submit a material haul route plan to the City for review and approval. The contractor shall ensure that the approved haul routes are used for all materials' hauling, in order to minimize exposure of sensitive receivers to potential adverse noise levels from hauling operations.

d. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airstrip land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The Project Site is not within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan. The closest airport to the Project Site is the Palm Springs International Airport, which is located approximately 6.7 miles to the south. Therefore, the Project Site is not within two miles of a public airport or public-use airport that would expose people residing in, or working in, the Project area to excessive noise levels. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

5.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
POPULATION AND HOUSING – Would the project:				
a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.14.1 Discussion

a. Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

No Impact. The proposed Project would not increase enrollment capacity at the school nor involve the development of new homes or businesses. As such, it would not introduce new populations to the area. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. No housing exists on the Project Site since the site is within an existing school campus. The proposed Project will not demolish existing housing. The Project Site would not expand into the surrounding development and would not require the movement of already-established housing. Therefore, the Project would not displace any existing people or housing. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The Project Site is developed as a school campus and would not displace existing housing or people. The number of jobs and types of jobs provided by the campus would also remain the same. Therefore, the proposed Project would not displace any people, jobs, or housing. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

5.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
PUBLIC SERVICES				
Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
a. Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Does the site promote joint use of parks, libraries, museums, and other public services?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.15.1 Discussion

a. Fire protection?

Less Than Significant Impact. Fire protection, medical aid, rescue, and hazardous materials response in unincorporated Riverside County are provided by the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD) and CAL FIRE. [106] The nearest station to the Project Site is County Fire Department Station 37 (City of Desert Hot Springs), located at 65958 Pierson Boulevard, Desert Hot Springs, approximately 2.1 miles northwest of the Project Site. The fire department operates 101 fire stations in six (6) divisions, consisting of 15 line battalions.

During demolition, construction, and subsequent operation, the proposed Project would not interfere with any of the daily operations of the County's Emergency Operation Plans (EOP), [107] nor would it require additional staff from the RCFD. All construction activities, including staging, would occur on the Project Site and be performed per the District's, County's, and RCFD standards and regulations. Construction activities would not cause any road closures and, in effect, would not decrease RCFD's accessibility to BWES or the surrounding development.

The proposed Project would neither increase nor decrease the number of students and faculty on site. Impacts to fire protection would be less than significant.

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106 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 6: Safety Element." June 2024. Accessed March 2025. https://planning.rctlma.org/riverside-county-general-plan.

107 County of Riverside. *Emergency Operations Plan*. August 2024. Accessed March 2025. https://rivcoready.org/about-emd/plans.

<u>Mitigation Measures</u>: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Police protection?

<u>Less than Significant Impact.</u> Police protection services in unincorporated Riverside County are provided by the Riverside County Sheriff's Office, which is located at 65950 Pierson Boulevard, approximately 2.1 miles northwest of the Project Site.

The PSUSD also has a Security Department, which collaborates with a team of Campus Safety and District Patrol officers across more than 30 locations. School security personnel work collaboratively with allied law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of students and staff. [108]

Security would be provided by campus security guards during demolition and construction activities of the proposed Project. All construction workers would be required to wear identification badges and check in through the school office prior to each day’s construction activities. Construction areas would be separated from the rest of the campus by temporary fencing, secured by locks and security guards.

Students participating in academic activities would not be able to access the areas of the campus undergoing construction activities. When school is not in session, the construction areas would be secured by temporary fencing and locked gates. Additional security and safety measures may be implemented to further secure the campus during and outside of school operational hours.

The proposed Project would not change the number of students or faculty on site. No additional law enforcement services would be necessary. Project development would not require the construction of new or expanded police facilities; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

<u>Mitigation Measures</u>: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Schools?

<u>Less than Significant Impact</u>. The proposed improvements and modernizations of the proposed Project would not introduce new students or resident population to any of the schools, as the upgrades are intended to serve the existing school population. Therefore, the proposed Project would not increase the demand for school resources. The proposed Project would not generate additional students requiring facilities; therefore, impacts to school facilities would be less than significant.

<u>Mitigation Measures</u>: No mitigation measures are required.

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108 Palm Springs Unified School District. “Department Overview.” Security. Accessed March 2025. https://www.psusd.us/Page/6314.

d. Parks?

No Impact. Demand for parks and recreational facilities is usually determined by an area's population. Considering that the proposed Project would not generate additional population or involve construction of dwelling units, the demand for park facilities would remain the same. Therefore, no impacts to parks would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

e. Other public facilities?

No Impact. The proposed Project would not increase the local population, number of students, or number of faculty on site; as such, it would not cause a need for other government facilities, such as libraries.

A public library is located at 14380 Palm Drive, Desert Hot Springs, approximately 0.8 miles northwest of the Project Site. Development of the proposed Project would not require the construction of new or expanded library facilities, and the demand for library services would remain the same. For these reasons, there would be no impact to library services.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

f. Does the site promote joint use of parks, libraries, museums, and other public services?

No Impact. The proposed Project would not result in an increase in school enrollment or population and would not construct any dwelling units. The proposed Project would not promote the joint use of parks, libraries, museums, or other public services. The proposed Project would not require the construction of new or expanded public services. In addition, no off-campus construction would occur, and the vicinity residential population would not be increased or decreased by the proposed Project. Therefore, no impact from the joint use of parks, libraries, museums, and other public services would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

5.16 RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
RECREATION—Would the project:				
a. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.16.1 Discussion

a. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

Less Than Significant Impact. Demand for parks and recreational facilities is usually determined by the area's population.

Existing recreational facilities and areas in the County include a variety of county parks and 35 Regional Parks, encompassing roughly 23,317 acres.[109] Existing park facilities within the City of Desert Hot Springs include eight (8) recreational parks and one (10) dog park.[110] The Desert Hot Springs Soccer Park is located 0.6 miles northwest of the Project Site for a total of approximately 0.05 square miles.

Implementation of the proposed Project would upgrade and modernize existing facilities without increasing the local population, student capacity, employment opportunities, or housing. Therefore, demand for recreational facilities would remain the same, and no substantial physical deterioration of the existing facilities would occur due to the implementation of the proposed Project. There may be possible short-term impacts to recreational facilities if recreational facilities on school property are open to the public outside of school hours or for local programs. These facilities would be temporarily unavailable during construction.

During the construction of the proposed Project, workers would typically commute to work on site and leave the local area after the workday. Any use of either park would be negligible. Additionally, the recreational facilities in the vicinity of the Project Site would continue to be operational during

109 Riverside County Planning Department. General Plan. "Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element."

110 Desert Hot Springs, California. "Park Amenities/Attractions." *Park Facilities and Locations*. August 2021. Accessed April 2025. https://www.cityofdhs.org/park-facilities/.

construction, and as such, no overcrowding of other nearby parks would occur. Therefore, demand for recreational services on a short-term and long-term basis would remain the same, and deterioration to recreational facilities would not occur. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. Development of the proposed Project would update and modernize existing facilities on campus, including on-site recreational facilities such as the kindergarten playground. No off-site recreational facilities have been proposed, and no expansion of existing recreation facilities would be required. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

5.17 TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC—Would the project:				
a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Are traffic and pedestrian hazards mitigated per Caltrans' School Area Pedestrian Safety manual?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Is the site easily accessible from arterials and is the minimum peripheral visibility maintained for driveways per Caltrans' Highway Design Manual?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g. Is the proposed school site within 1,500 feet of a railroad track easement?	☐	☐	☐	☒

5.17.1 Discussion

a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Existing Conditions

The proposed Project is bound by Camino Campanero to the north, Bubbling Wells Road to the east, Avenida Florencita to the west, and adjacent residences to the south. The Project Site is accessed regionally by Interstate 10 (I-10), approximately four (4) miles southwest of the Project Site, and SR-62, approximately 6.3 miles west of the Project Site. Within the Project Site vicinity, public transit is provided by SunLine Transit Agency. Bus routes 2 and 5 run in a north-south direction, providing a bus stop located approximately 0.8 miles west of the campus at the corner of Camino Campanero and Palm Drive. Bus route 2 terminates at B Street and West Buddy Rogers Avenue in Cathedral City, and Bus route 5 terminates along Highway 111 and Town Center Way between Rancho Mirage and Indian Wells.

Construction

Construction-related traffic would be short-term and would cause a nominal increase in vehicle trips associated with trucks delivering material or equipment and workers commuting to and from the

Project Site. Due to the proximity of the Project Site to SR-62, most construction workers would access the Project Site from SR-62, exiting off Dillon Road if coming from the west. Additionally, I-10 would be used for local travel from west to east. Construction workers typically arrive and leave work sites between 7:30 AM and 4:30 PM, and not during peak school hours (8:00 AM to 3:00 PM), thus minimizing impacts to the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

Operation

Existing parking would remain with limited reconfiguration as required to accommodate ADA upgrades. The proposed Project would not make any changes to the circulation system, would not decrease roadway capacity, would not generate appreciable additional traffic, or change traffic patterns that could cause an impact to the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Operations would not conflict with the County's circulation plans, ordinances, policies, or the performance of the surrounding roadway.

The construction and operational phase would not conflict with programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less Than Significant Impact. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 was developed in response to Senate Bill 743, which eliminated auto delay, LOS, and similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 is a basis for determining impacts. The new criteria "shall promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses" (PRC Section 21099(b)(1)). [111] Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is the new indicator of the travel levels on the roadway system by motor vehicles.

The proposed Project would improve an existing elementary school campus and would not expand the existing enrollment capacity nor change school operations. The proposed Project, by maintaining the existing campus with sustainable features and continuing to accommodate the surrounding community needs, would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b). Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

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111 California Public Resources Code, Division 13, Environmental Quality, Chapter 2.7, Modernization of Transportation Analysis for Transit-Oriented Infill Projects, sec. 21099. Accessed April 2025. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=21099.&lawCode=PRC.

c. Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less Than Significant Impact. The campus currently contains three parking lots located along the northern frontage of the campus. The curbside student drop-off area, as well as visitor and staff parking, are located in the central lot, and vehicles enter and exit the lot from Camino Campanero. Additional staff parking and the school bus drop-off area are located in the easternmost lot, and vehicles enter and exit the lot from Bubbling Wells Road. With implementation of the proposed Project, existing parking would remain with limited reconfiguration as required to accommodate ADA upgrades.

The proposed Project would not add new roadways, circulation changes, or design features with sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Driveway access and bus loading zones would remain in the same locations. Throughout the proposed construction activities, students would continue to be picked up and dropped off at BWES along Camino Campanero. Construction access would be located on the north side of campus via Camino Campanero.

Existing emergency access to the Project Site and nearby sensitive uses would not be altered or disrupted under construction and operational phases, and no changes to the off-site roadway system would be necessary. The proposed Project would not cause an increase in hazards. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d. Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed Project would not alter or disrupt emergency access roadways. The proposed Project would not change the roadway system, and construction activities would not require lane closures of nearby roadways or make changes to traffic lanes. With implementation of the proposed Project, existing parking would remain with limited reconfiguration as required to accommodate ADA upgrades. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

e. Are traffic and pedestrian hazards mitigated per Caltrans' School Area Pedestrian Safety manual?

No Impact. With implementation of the proposed Project, existing parking would remain with limited reconfiguration as required to accommodate ADA upgrades. The proposed Project would not make changes to the bicycle system, roadways, or traffic lanes. All proposed improvements and modernizations of the proposed Project would be contained within the Project Site.

The proposed Project would not increase the exposure of students to traffic and pedestrian hazards. Surrounding roadways are already marked with appropriate school zone signs and crosswalks. The proposed Project would comply with Caltrans traffic control requirements for school areas. [112] No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

f. Is the site easily accessible from arterials and is the minimum peripheral visibility maintained for driveways per Caltrans' Highway Design Manual?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site consists of the existing BWES campus. Project construction may temporarily affect the segments of Camino Campanero and Bubbling Wells Road adjacent to the campus. These roads would provide access to the Project Site for demolition and construction activities. No changes are proposed to the surrounding road system. No buildings, structures, or landscaping would be introduced near any of the existing driveways which would impair visibility. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

g. Is the proposed school site within 1,500 feet of a railroad track easement?

No Impact. The proposed Project is not located within 1,500 feet of a railroad track easement. The nearest railroad track easement is approximately 4.5 miles to the southwest. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

112 California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*. 2021. Accessed July 2025. https://dot.ca.gov/programs/safety-programs/camutcd/camutcd-files.

5.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES—Would the project:				
a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.18.1 Discussion

a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or

Less Than Significant Impact. "Tribal cultural resources," as defined in PRC Section 21074, are: sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe.[113] Additionally, PRC section 5020.1(k) defines "local register of

113 California Public Resources Code, Division 13, Environmental Quality, Chapter 2.5, Definitions, sec. 21074. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PRC&sectionNum=21074. Accessed July 2025.

historical resources" as a list of properties officially designated or recognized as historically important by a local government pursuant to a local ordinance or resolution. [114]

As discussed in **Section 5.5: Cultural Resources**, the Project Site is not on a local historic landmark list, the California Historical Landmarks register, or the California Points of Historical Interest register. The Project Site was constructed in 1992 and is developed with school facilities that do not display distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction. In addition, the Project Site is not eligible for listing under the National Register of Historical Places, pursuant to federal National Register standards (36 CFR § 60.4), which establishes a 50-year benchmark for eligibility listing. Therefore, the Project Site is not listed or eligible for listing as a historic resource. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measure is required.

ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Less Than Significant. Public Resource Code Section 5024.1(c) includes criteria to be used for listing a resource in the California Register. As discussed above, the Project Site is not listed nor eligible for listing as a historic resource. As discussed in **Section 5.5**, Cultural Resources, a records search was conducted with the California Historic Resource Information System (CHRIS) (see **Appendix C).**

No cultural resources were identified within the Project Site. In addition, no other historic-period, prehistoric, or tribal cultural resource was identified within the Project Site. A Sacred Land File (SLF) search conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) concluded that the Project Site is not identified as sacred land (see **Appendix C**).

No cultural resources, including tribal cultural resources, were discovered when the Project Site underwent construction in the early 1990s, nor have any been identified since. As the proposed Project's construction and demolition activities would involve limited earthmoving work, and the Project Site is previously graded and developed portions of the campus, it is unlikely that subsurface items would be discovered during construction.

Assembly Bill (AB 52) establishes a formal consultation process for California Native American tribes on development projects. AB 52 notification letters were sent by the District to the Agua Caliente

114 California Public Resources Code, Division 5, Parks and Monuments, Chapter 1, State Parks and Monuments, Article 2, Historic Resources, sec. 5020.1. Accessed April 2025. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=5020.1.&lawCode=PRC.

Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI) and Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla tribes on August 21, 2025. Only the ACBCI responded in a letter dated September 23, 2025. In their response the ACBCI noted the Project area is not located within the boundaries of the ACBCI Reservation, but is within the Tribe's Traditional Use Area. The ACBCI Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) requested copies of cultural resource documentation generated in connection with the Project as well as formal government to government consultation. A consultation meeting between the District and ACBCI representatives was held on November 3, 2025. While the Project Site has been disturbed by construction of the existing school and there is no documentation indicating that Tribal Cultural Resources are present on the site, the District stated that their standard construction contract includes the following construction management measures addressing the inadvertent discovery of cultural resources during construction:

1. Should unknown subsurface items become unearthed, the District and/or its construction contractor shall cordon off and protect the area of the find from further disturbance until a qualified archeologist and/or tribal representative is retained to investigate the discovery. The qualified archaeologist and/or tribal representative shall prepare a report summarizing the methods and results of the investigation, including an itemized inventory and detailed analysis of recovered artifacts upon completion of field and laboratory work. The report shall include an interpretation of the cultural activities represented by the artifacts and a discussion of the significance of any tribal cultural resources discovered. The submittal of the report to the District and ACBCI representative, as appropriate, along with final curation of the recovered artifacts, will signify completion of the monitoring program and, barring unexpected findings of extraordinary significance, the mitigation of potential project impacts on tribal cultural resources.

2. Should buried human remains be discovered during grading or other construction activity, in accordance with State law, the County coroner shall be contacted. If the remains are determined to be of Native American heritage, the Native American Heritage Commission and the appropriate local Native American Tribe shall be contacted to determine the Most Likely Descendant (MLD).

5.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS—Would the project:				
a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water, drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonable foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.19.1 Discussion

a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new water or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater, drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction of which relocation could cause significant environmental effects?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site is currently served by existing utilities, including electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and water. Wastewater is currently managed through an on-site septic system. As part of the proposed Project, the existing septic system would be decommissioned, and the Project Site would be connected to the municipal sewer system.

Mission Springs Water District (MSWD) is responsible for providing sewer services in Desert Hot Springs and has sufficient wastewater treatment capacity to accommodate the proposed Project. The District's Alan L. Horton Wastewater Treatment Plant has a design capacity of approximately 2.3 million gallons per day (MGD) and is currently operating at about 1.56 MGD (~68 percent) capacity.[115] Additional treatment capacity of 1.5 MGD is being added through the new Nancy Wright Regional Water Reclamation Facility, which is designed to support growth and septic-to-sewer conversions in the Desert Hot Springs area.[116] The school's wastewater generation would represent a negligible fraction of available capacity, and the proposed Project would not result in a substantial increase in water demand or wastewater generation, as it would not increase student or faculty population..

No expansion of off-site wastewater treatment facilities or other utility infrastructure would be required. The proposed Project would also comply with Title 24 and CalGreen requirements, improving water and wastewater efficiency compared to existing conditions.[117, 118] Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonable foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Less than Significant Impact. Mission Springs Water District supplies water to the Project Site, and the proposed Project would not increase the demand on water supply as it would not increase the student or faculty population. The proposed Project would also involve improvements to meet Title 24 and CalGreen requirements, including the installation of water-efficient plumbing fixtures.[119, 120] Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

c. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Less than Significant Impact. As previously discussed, wastewater is currently treated by through an on-site septic system, and the proposed Project involves connecting the Project Site to the sewer system. The school's wastewater generation would represent a negligible fraction of the available

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115 California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Order No. R7-2014-0049. 2014. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb7/board_decisions/adopted_orders/orders/2014/0049mswd_ahorton.pdf

116 Mission Springs Water District (MSWD). "Wastewater Capacity History, CV Water Counts – Agency Spotlight." Accessed April 2025. https://cvwatercounts.com/agency-spotlight-mission-springs-water-district/.

117 California Code of Regulations. *California Building Standards Code*, Title 24. Accessed April 2025. https://www.dgs.ca.gov/BSC/Codes.

118 California Code of Regulations. *California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen)*, Part 11, Title 24. Accessed April 2025. https://www.dgs.ca.gov/BSC/CALGreen#codes.

119 California Code of Regulations. *California Building Standards Code*, Title 24. Accessed April 2025. https://www.dgs.ca.gov/BSC/Codes.

120 California Code of Regulations. *California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen)*. Part 11, Title 24.

capacity of the Mission Springs Water District, and the proposed Project would not result in a substantial increase in water demand or wastewater generation, as it would not increase student or faculty population. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

Less than Significant Impact. Both the City and the County depend on contract waste haulers to serve the areas surrounding the Project Site. The proposed Project would generate construction waste and would comply with the California Green Building Standards Code, which requires that at least 65 percent of waste created by construction and demolition activities be recycled or salvaged. [121] The proposed Project would also comply with County Ordinance No. 657 (Regulating Collection and Removal of Solid Waste) [122] and Ordinance No. 745 (Comprehensive Collection and Disposal of Solid Waste). [123]

Solid waste generation during operation would be similar to existing conditions since the proposed Project does not propose operational changes. The proposed Project would meet the requirements of waste diversion and would not generate solid waste in excess of State standards. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

e. Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less than Significant Impact. Construction and operation of the proposed Project would comply with federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Solid waste generated by the proposed Project would not interfere with the California Integrated Waste Management Act, which requires that local municipalities implement programs to divert at least 50 percent of their solid waste from landfills. [124, 125] Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures required.

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121 California Code of Regulations. *California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen)*. Part 11, Title 24.

122 Riverside County. Ordinance 657. *Ordinances 100*. Accessed July 2025. https://rivcocob.org/ordinances.

123 Riverside County. Ordinance 745. *Ordinances 100*. Accessed July 2025. https://rivcocob.org/ordinances.

124 California Public Resources Code, Division 30, Waste Management, Part 1, Integrated Waste Management, Chapter 1, General Provisions, sec. 40000 et seq. Accessed April 2025. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=PRC&division=30.&title=&part=1.&chapter=1.&article=1.

125 Riverside County Department of Waste Resources. *Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan*. Accessed April 2025. https://rcwaste.org/planning-services-overview/ciwmp.

5.20 WILDFIRE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
WILDFIRE—If located in or near State responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard zones, would the project:				
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildlife risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☒	☐

5.20.1 Discussion

a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site and surrounding areas are within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and are not classified within a VHFHSZ (Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone) as determined by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention (CAL FIRE). [126]

Designated evacuation routes within the WCVAP include Interstate 10, approximately 4 miles southwest of the Project Site; State Route (SR) 62, approximately 6.1 miles northwest of the Project Site; and Dillon Road, approximately 0.9 miles south of the Project Site. [127] In addition, two (2) fire access locations are provided along the southern boundary of the Project Site; the first fire access point by the southwest corner adjacent to the hardscape play area, and the second fire access point adjacent the southwest corner of the baseball field.

126 CAL FIRE. "Fire Hazard Severity Zones." Accessed June 2025. https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones.

127 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 6: Safety Element."

The proposed Project would not directly impact these roadways as all improvements would occur on site. Additionally, construction activities would be temporary in nature. According to the County's General Plan, it is anticipated that planned evacuation routes contain sufficient road capacity and freedom of traffic flow. [128] For these reasons, impacts to an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildlife risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

No Impact. The Project Site is currently developed as an elementary school campus and is not located within a VHFHSZ. [129] In addition, the proposed Project includes the development of permanent campus buildings, modernization of the multipurpose and administration buildings, improvements to the kinder playground and upper playground, and improvements to the hardscaping and landscaping. The Project would adhere to the County's Fire Code, based on the California Fire Code, which sets standards for building and construction, as well as the provision of adequate water supply for firefighting and fire-retardant construction. [130] Therefore, project implementation would not exacerbate wildlife risks due to wildfire. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

No Impact. The proposed Project includes the development of permanent campus buildings, modernization of the multipurpose and administration buildings, improvements to the kinder playground and upper playground, and improvements to the hardscaping and landscaping. Existing portable and permanent classroom buildings would be demolished.

No additional infrastructure would be constructed in association with the proposed Project, nor would improvements be necessary to any existing infrastructure system to serve the demands of the Project. For these reasons, no impact would occur from the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk or result in ongoing impacts to the environment. No impact would occur.

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128 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 6: Safety Element."

129 County of Riverside. *Western Coachella Valley Area Plan*. In *Riverside County Planning Department General Plan*.

130 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 6: Safety Element."

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Less Than Significant Impact. According to FEMA's National Flood Hazard Map, BWES is located within a Zone X, or designated as having a 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard. Areas with 0.2% Annual Chance of Flood Hazard are at-risk for floods have a 1 in 500 chance of flooding each year. [131] As the Project Site is already developed, flood control facilities and other measures to increase flood protection have already been established for the campus.

Further, as discussed in **Section 5.7**: **Geology and Soils**, and **Section 5.10**: **Hydrology and Water Quality**, the Project Site is relatively flat and is not in an area susceptible for landslides. [132] Additionally, the Project Site is in a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) that is not in a VHFHSZ area. [133] Therefore, the proposed Project would not expose Project occupants and structures to risks caused by fire-related runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage, and impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

131 FEMA. "National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer." Accessed March 2025. https://hazards-fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b0adb51996444d4879338b5529aa9cd.

132 Riverside County Planning Department. *General Plan*. "Chapter 6: Safety Element."

133 County of Riverside. *Western Coachella Valley Area Plan*. In *Riverside County Planning Department General Plan*.

5.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Project Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE—Does the project:				
f. Have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
g. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	☐	☒	☐	☐
h. Have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

5.21.1 Discussion

a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation. The Project Site is surrounded by single-family residences to the east and south; vacant, undeveloped land to the north and west; and the Hidden Springs Golf Course and Country Club to the southeast. Further west are additional single-family residences.

As discussed in **Section 5.4: Biological Resources**, the Project Site is entirely developed and disturbed with school facilities and operations. Nevertheless, it is possible that migratory birds access the Project Site. Preconstruction surveys will be required under **MM BIO-1**. Implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce potentially significant impacts to the protected species.

With respect to cultural resources, the proposed Project would be implemented in areas that have been graded and developed with school uses. In the unlikely event that ground-disturbing activities result in the accidental discovery of archaeological resources, the District will comply with PRC Section 21083.2(i).[134] In the event of an accidental discovery of human remains, the District will comply with Government Code Section 27460 et seq.,[135] PRC Section 5097.98,[136] and California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5.[137]

Mitigation Measures: The above mitigation measures are proposed to reduce impacts to less than significant.

b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

Less Than Significant with Project Mitigation. In addition to the proposed Project, the District continues to maintain and modernize other schools that it operates. Where applicable, the analysis conducted in the Initial Study considers the environmental effects of the other schools, as well as other past, current, and probable future development projects.

With the incorporation of the mitigation measures specified herein, the proposed Project would not result in environmental impacts that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable.

Mitigation Measures: The above mitigation measures are proposed to reduce impacts to less than significant.

c. Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less than Significant with Project Mitigation. The proposed Project's potential impacts to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, traffic, and other environmental issues have been evaluated and found that development and operation of the proposed Project would result in less than significant adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

Although the proposed Project does not involve the destruction of any existing buildings that might contain hazardous materials, the following mitigation measures **MM HAZ-1** and **MM HAZ-2** through **4** are proposed to prevent the potential of a significant hazard. Furthermore, although noise during construction would comply with designated hours of construction, **MM N-1** through **MM N-8** and **MM N-11** would be implemented to further reduce noise levels to below 80 dBA, and **MM N-9** and **MM N-**

134 California Public Resources Code, Division 13, Chapter 2.6, sec. 21083.2.

135 California Government Code, Title 3, Division 2, Chapter 10, sec. 27460.

136 California Public Resources Code, Division 5, Chapter 1.75, sec. 5097.98.

137 California Health and Safety Code, Division 7, Chapter 2, sec. 7050.5.

10 to further limit vibration impacts. **MM TCR-1** through **MM TCR-2** would be implemented during construction to mitigate potential discoveries of tribal cultural resources. Implementation of these mitigation measures would limit potential effects that construction and operation of the Project could have on human beings. With mitigation, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: The above mitigation measures are proposed to reduce impacts to less than significant.

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8.0 TERMS, DEFINITIONS, AND ACRONYMS

AB	assembly bill
AFY	acre-feet per year
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
ASL	above sea level
Basin Plan	Water Quality Control Plan for the Colorado River Basin
BMP	Best Management Practice
BWES	Bubbling Wells Elementary School
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CBC	California Building Code
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CHRIS	California Historic Resource Information System
CNDBB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Survey
CO	carbon monoxide
CO2	carbon dioxide
CRBRWQCB	Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board
CVAG	Coachella Valley Association of Governments
CVMSHCP	Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
CVWD	Coachella Valley Water District
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIA	Energy Information Administration
EIC	Eastern Information Center
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMFAC	CARB on-road vehicle emissions model
ESA	Endangered Species Act
GC	General Commercial
GHG	greenhouse gases
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HVAC	heating/ventilating/air conditioning
LST	Localized Significance Threshold
MM	Mitigation Measure
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCP	Natural Community Conservation Plan
NOx	nitrogen oxide
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
OFFROAD	CARB off-road emissions model
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl
PM10	particulate matter less than 10 microns

PM2.5	particulate matter less than 2.5 microns
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
PSUSD	Palm Springs Unified School District
R1	Single Family Residential
RCALUC	Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission
RCALUCP	Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
RCDEH	Riverside County Department of Environmental Health
RCFD	Riverside County Fire Department
RL	Low Density Residential
RM	Medium Density Residential/Multiple Family Residential
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
RWQCB	regional water quality control boards
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCE	Southern California Edison
SLF	Sacred Lands File
SOx	sulfur oxide
SR	State Route
SSAB	Salton Sea Air Basin
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VHFHSZ	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone
VOC	volatile organic compound
WMP	(construction) waste management plan