



ORANGE COUNTY
CLERK-RECORDER
CEQA FILING COVER SHEET

30-011512026-0026
202685000051

FILED

January 15, 2026
HUGH NGUYEN
CLERK - RECORDER

By [Signature]
Deputy clerk

THIS SPACE FOR CLERK'S USE ONLY

Complete and attach this form to each CEQA Notice filed with the County Clerk-Recorder

TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

Project Title

MONROE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Check Document being Filed:

- ☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
☐ Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Negative Declaration (ND)
☒ Notice of Exemption (NOE)
☐ Other (Please fill in type):

**FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE ORANGE
COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER ON 01/15/2026**
Posted 01/15/2026 Removed _____
Returned to agency on _____
DEPUTY 878

Filing fees are due at the time a Notice of Determination/Exemption is filed with our office. For more information on filing fees and No Effect Determinations, please refer to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 753.5.

FILED

JAN 15 2026

HUGH NGUYEN, CLERK-RECORDER

BY: EV DEPUTY

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

From: Santa Ana Unified School District
(Lead Agency and Applicant)

1601 E. Chestnut Avenue

Santa Ana, CA 92701

☒ County Clerk
County of Orange

601 N Ross St

Santa Ana, CA 92701

Monroe Elementary School Reconstruction Project
Project Title

417 E Central Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92707
Project Location - Specific

Santa Ana
Project Location - City

Orange
Project Location - County

The Santa Ana Unified School District proposes to partially demolish and reconstruct the Monroe ES campus. The proposed project will partially demolish and reconstruct the Monroe ES campus. The proposed project would demolish 13,905 square feet of the existing main building and reconfigure and modernize the remaining 27,800 square feet of interior space. The modernized building will include a lobby/welcome center; administrative offices/spaces; wellness/parent center; counselor, speech, and psych offices; teacher spaces; library; kitchen; lunch shelter; multipurpose room; four classrooms; restrooms; and storage rooms. The modernized building will also include an open ceiling with a taller roof in the center of the existing building. The proposed project would also construct a new 2-story classroom building (35,310 square feet) with 20 classrooms north of the main building. The two-story classroom building would include breakout rooms, staff workroom, de-escalation rooms, restrooms, and accessory spaces (e.g. storage and machine room). The buildings will include space for core academic classrooms, library/idea center, arts and creative learning spaces, physical education and recreation areas, food service and dining facilities, administrative offices, a health suite, and building support areas. The proposed project will also address core infrastructure needs, such as adding storage, IDF/electrical rooms, riser rooms, and custodial spaces. The proposed project would result in a net decrease of five total classrooms (29 existing classrooms reduced to 24 classrooms). Compared to current functional classrooms, the proposed project would result in a net decrease of one total classroom (25 functioning classrooms reduced to 24 classrooms). The proposed project would have an enrollment capacity of 577 students (a reduction of 48 seats compared to existing conditions). The proposed project will construct a new one-way vehicle drive aisle and fire lane that would run along the western side of the campus and would span the length of the project site. Vehicles would enter via an existing driveway on Center Avenue on the south end of the project site and exit on Warner Avenue on the north end of the project site. As part of this improvement, a new driveway would be constructed to connect to Warner

Avenue. A new parent and bus drop-off area will also be provided on the northern part of this drive aisle. This design will reduce vehicle congestion and improve student safety by separating vehicle types and minimizing walking distance for students. A landscape barrier will be installed between this drive aisle and the existing bike lane. This drive aisle would require the removal of one existing parking space. Existing driveways on Central Avenue, drive aisles, and internal circulation would remain.

The proposed project will also enhance and reconfigure outdoor spaces throughout the campus. A large multi-use playfield will be developed on the northern portion of the project site with striped areas for soccer and other field sports. New hardcourts striped for multiple sports would also be provided to the east of the new 2-story classroom building. West of the existing main building, a library outdoor area and dedicated kindergarten playground will be constructed. East of the existing main building, an outdoor track will be constructed around a landscaped play area. Site improvements will also include new bike parking, lighting along the adjacent bike lane, and landscape barriers to separate the bike path from vehicle lanes. Red curbs, sidewalks, and both new and existing crosswalks would be provided to improve circulation and safety. Trees and landscaping would be installed throughout the site to provide shade and visual relief.

The proposed project would benefit the Monroe ES students, teachers and staff and the broader SAUSD community by providing new, modern academic facilities and updating aging buildings and infrastructure onsite.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

Santa Ana Unified School District

Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Santa Ana Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

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JAN 15 2026

Exempt Status: (check one below)

☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);

☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));

☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));

☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: §15301 Class 1, Existing Facilities, §15302 Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, §15303 Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, §15311 Class 11, Accessory Structures, and §15314 Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools

☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

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BY: EV DEPUTY

Categorical Exemption Class 1, Existing Facilities (CEQA Guidelines §15301)

The proposed project includes modernization and reconfiguration of the existing building on the developed Monroe ES campus. Modernization efforts would include reconfiguration of interior spaces, which would include demolition of 13,905 square feet of the existing building; new walls, paint, fixtures, cabinets, and other administrative and education furnishings; installation of a higher roof and open ceiling concept; and a covered lunch shelter attached to the building. These modernization efforts would occur entirely within existing building footprint and maintain the same educational uses and purposes. The modernization of the existing building would reduce the existing building size and reduce the number of classrooms in this building from 25 existing classrooms to four classrooms. As such, modernization of the existing building includes repair, maintenance and minor alternations to existing public facility that does not expand its use.

Site work, including restriping of the existing student drop-off area, pavement repair, and accessibility upgrades are minor alteration of existing public facilities and would not alter the school's operational use. As

such, these components of the proposed project qualifies for exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

Categorical Exemption Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction (CEQA Guidelines §15302)

The proposed project includes modernization and reconfiguration of the existing building on the developed Monroe ES campus. Modernization efforts would include reconfiguration of interior spaces, which would include demolition of 13,905 square feet of the existing building; new walls, paint, fixtures, cabinets, and other administrative and education furnishings; installation of a higher roof and open ceiling concept; and a covered lunch shelter attached to the building. These modernization efforts would occur entirely within existing building footprint and maintain the same educational uses and purposes. The modernization of the existing building would reduce the existing building size and reduce the number of classrooms in this building from 25 existing classrooms to four classrooms. The proposed project will also construct a new 2-story classroom building (35,310 square feet) with 20 classrooms north of the main building. The two-story classroom building would include breakout rooms, staff workroom, de-escalation rooms, restrooms, and accessory spaces (e.g. storage and machine room). The modernized campus would have 24 classrooms, which is less than the existing number of classrooms onsite, and have substantially the same use and purpose as the existing campus buildings.

The proposed project will also reconstruct associated site facilities, including the playfields, hard courts, and on-site parking areas. The proposed project would also redesign and construct a parent drop-off lane and bus loading zone along the western side of the campus that would connect to Warner Avenue, providing improved safety and operational efficiency while maintaining the same number of access points on East Central Avenue. Because the modernized building and facilities would remain on the existing Monroe ES campus, serve the same educational purpose and approximate capacity, and maintain site layout as existing conditions, these components of the proposed project are exempt from CEQA under Section 15302.

Categorical Exemption Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (CEQA Guidelines §15303)

The proposed project includes construction of small ancillary facilities and project site improvements throughout the Monroe ES campus, including new playground equipment, shade structures, walkways, landscaping, bike parking, library outdoor area, and accessible paths of travel. These improvements will be located entirely within the existing developed campus and would serve to support existing educational operations. The proposed project would also redesign the existing parking lot and construct a parent drop-off lane and bus loading zone along the western side of the campus that would connect to Warner Avenue, providing improved safety and operational efficiency while maintaining the same number of access points on East Central Avenue.

These proposed features constitute minor new construction and accessory site improvements within a developed school property. Therefore, these components of the proposed project are exempt from CEQA under Section 15303.

Categorical Exemption Class 11, Accessory Structures (CEQA Guidelines §15311)

The proposed project will include the construction of a new one-way drive aisle/fire lane and new driveway on Warner Avenue that will have parent and bus drop-off lane along the western edge of the campus. The new drive aisle/fire lane will support the Monroe ES campus and will function as an accessory structure within the existing campus. Landscaping and walking paths throughout the campus will also be minor accessory structures to the Monroe ES campus. Therefore, the drive aisle/fire lane, landscaping and walking paths are exempt from CEQA under Section 15311.

Additionally, the proposed project will modernize on-site utilities, including electrical and irrigation systems, to meet current standards as replacement upgrades, maintaining the same function and capacity as existing infrastructure without creating expanded demand. These utility upgrades will not result in expanded use or increased demand. Therefore, these components of the proposed project will be exempt from CEQA under Section 15311.

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BY:

EV

DEPUTY

Categorical Exemption Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools (CEQA Guidelines §15314)

The proposed project would reconstruct portions of the existing Monroe ES campus and construct a new two-story classroom building containing 20 classrooms, replacing the older classroom areas within the existing main building. The proposed project would result in a net decrease of five total classrooms (29 existing classrooms reduced to 24 classrooms). Compared to current functional classrooms, the proposed project would result in a net decrease of one total classroom (25 functioning classrooms reduced to 24 classrooms). The proposed project would have an enrollment capacity of 577 students (a reduction of 48 seats compared to existing conditions). Total enrollment capacity would decrease from 625 to 577 students, well below the Class 14 threshold of a 25 percent or ten-classroom increase.

Additional improvements such as the new hardcourts, playfields, outdoor learning spaces, and circulation enhancements including the new drive aisle and drop-off zones would occur entirely within the existing developed campus. These campus modifications are intended to improve accessibility, safety, and campus organization.

Because the proposed project would occur within existing school grounds, would not expand the campus boundary, and would result in a net decrease in classroom count and student capacity, it qualifies for exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15314.

See Attachment to Notice of Exemption for further explanation of the evaluation, which is available at the Santa Ana Unified School District Office, 1601 E. Chestnut Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92701.

Reasons why project is exempt

Julie Molloy, Senior Facilities Planner	714.558.5501	Julie.Molloy@SAUSD.US
Contact Person:	Area Code/Telephone/Extension:	Email:

If filed by applicant:

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

Date
Received for
Filing:

Signature:

1/15/2026

Title:

Director of Facilities Planning

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JAN 15 2026

HUGH NGUYEN, CLERK-RECORDER

BY:

EV

DEPUTY



State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife
2026 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE CASH RECEIPT
DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/26) Previously DFG 753.5a

Print **Scan/Over** **Save**

RECEIPT NUMBER:

30-01/15/2026-0026

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER (if applicable)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

LEAD AGENCY SANTA ANA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE 01/15/2026
COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING ORANGE COUNTY	DOCUMENT NUMBER 202685000051	
PROJECT TITLE MONROE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT		

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME SANTA ANA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER (714) 558-5501
PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS 1601 E. CHESTNUT AVENUE	CITY SANTA ANA	STATE CA
		ZIP CODE 92701

PROJECT APPLICANT (Check appropriate box)

☐ Local Public Agency ☒ School District ☐ Other Special District ☐ State Agency ☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

- ☐ Environmental Impact Report (EIR) \$ 4,227.50 \$ _____
☐ Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND) \$ 3,043.75 \$ _____
☐ Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW \$ 1,437.25 \$ _____

☒ Exempt from fee
 ☒ Notice of Exemption (attach)
 ☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)
☐ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

☐ Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only) \$ 850.00 \$ _____
☐ County documentary handling fee \$ 50.00 \$ _____
☐ Other \$ _____

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ Cash ☐ Credit ☐ Check ☐ Other

TOTAL RECEIVED \$ 0.00

SIGNATURE X	AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE Esmeralda Ventura Deputy Clerk
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