

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation **From:** Lake Elsinore Unified School District
 1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
 Sacramento, CA 95814 5545 Chaney Street
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

County Clerk
 County of Riverside
4080 Lemon Street
Riverside, CA 92501

Earl Warren Elementary School Modular Classrooms Project
 Project Title

41221 Rosetta Canyon Drive
 Project Location - Specific

Lake Elsinore Riverside
 Project Location – City Project Location – County

The proposed project includes the installation of two new modular classrooms, southwest of the existing modular classrooms on the southeast portion of the campus. The modular classrooms would meet the current needs of the campus and would not increase the student capacity of Earl Warren ES. The proposed project would not require the demolition or relocation of any existing buildings or structures.

The proposed project would be constructed in one phase over approximately one month, occurring during Summer 2026. Less than one acre of the project site would be disturbed during the installation of the new modular structures. The demolition of existing buildings or structures would not be required. The proposed project would include utility trenching that would connect to existing utility lines at the existing campus. Additionally, no trees will need to be removed during construction.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

Lake Elsinore Unified School District
 Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Lake Elsinore Unified School District
 Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

Exempt Status: (check one below)

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

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

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

Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 3, CCR §15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; Class 14, CCR §15314, Minor Additions to Schools

Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures)

Section 15303 provides a list of example projects that would qualify for a Class 3 exemption; the list of examples is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of all qualifying projects. Examples provided include up to three single-family residences in an urbanized area; a multifamily residential structure with no more than four units; a 2,500-square-foot store, motel, office, or restaurant; accessory structures such as garages, carports, and patios; utility extensions and street improvements to serve such construction; and others.

The proposed project consists of the installation of two modular classrooms and associated electrical utility lines. The proposed modular classrooms would be minor additions to the existing Earl Warren ES campus that would fit within the scale of projects exempt under the Class 3 categorical exemption. In addition, the proposed classrooms would provide support facilities for the current student population without increasing student capacity. As such, the proposed project meets the requirements of the Class 3 exemption.

Class 14 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures)

The proposed project involves the addition of two portable classrooms to serve the existing student population without increasing student capacity. Additionally, the project is located entirely within the existing school grounds. As such, the proposed project meets the requirements of the Class 14 exemption.

The District also reviewed the project for possible exceptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 and found that none of the exceptions apply.

Reasons why project is exempt

Brad Runge, Director of Facilities

951-253-7015

Contact Person:

Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

If filed by applicant:

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

Date
Received for
Filing: _____

Signature:



Title:

DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES

Attachment to Notice of Exemption

Earl Warren Elementary School Modular Classrooms Project Lake Elsinore Unified School District

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Lake Elsinore Unified School District (District) proposes to install two new modular classrooms (proposed project) on the Earl Warren Elementary School (ES) campus (project site). This supplemental information provides justification for the Categorical Exemptions pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15303 and 15314. The District is the lead agency for the proposed project in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15051(c).

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Project Location

The Earl Warren ES campus is a 14.30-acre school site located at 41221 Rosetta Canyon Drive (Assessor Parcel Number 347-340-031) in the City of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County. The proposed project would be constructed at the southeastern end of the campus, directly southwest of existing modular classrooms.

Earl Warren ES is bounded by Rosetta Canyon Drive to the north, Royal Sunset Road and Pascali Lane to the west, Elsinore Hills Road to the east, and undeveloped land to the south. The campus is approximately 0.67 mile southeast of State Route 74 and approximately 1.12 miles northeast of Interstate 15 (see Figure 1, *Regional Location*). Vehicular access to the campus is provided primarily from Elsinore Hills Road and Rosetta Canyon Drive (see Figure 2, *Local Vicinity*).

There is a riverine intermittent streambed (R4SBC) beginning on the southwestern portion of the hardcourts on the campus and an R4SBC approximately 0.09 mile south of the project site (USFWS 2026a). An R4SD is a streambed in a riverine system that contains flowing water during part of the year, and surface water is present during extended periods of the year, typically early in the growing season. Based on the Critical Habitat for Threatened & Endangered Species Mapper, there are no critical habitats on or within one mile of the project site that are supported by the streambeds (USFWS 2026b).

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Existing Land Use and Zoning

The project site contains the existing Earl Warren ES campus. According to the City of Lake Elsinore’s geographic information system (GIS) zoning map, the project site is zoned Specific Plan (SP) (Lake Elsinore 2026). The Specific Plan zone applies to areas of the city that have an adopted specific plan. The campus is in the Ramsgate Specific Plan area and is designated as a School Site (Lake Elsinore 2007).

Surrounding General Plan Land Use Designations

The campus is surrounded by single-family residences to the east, west, and north, which are designated as Medium Low Density (MLD), and open space to the east, which are designated as and Open Space and Conservation (OS) under the Ramsgate Specific Plan. To the south, the currently undeveloped open space is designated as Low Density Residential under the Lake Elsinore Hills District of the Lake Elsinore General Plan.

Lake Elsinore Unified School District

The District provides school services for students from transitional kindergarten (TK) through 12th grade in Southwest Riverside County. District boundaries include the cities of Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, and Wildomar, as well as several unincorporated communities, including Lakeland Village and Horsethief Canyon. The District consists of 13 elementary schools, two K–8 schools, four middle schools, three high schools, and two alternative schools. The District also offers adult transition programs at one school and preschool programs at four campuses. Districtwide enrollment in the 2025–2026 school year is 20,821 students (CDE 2026a).

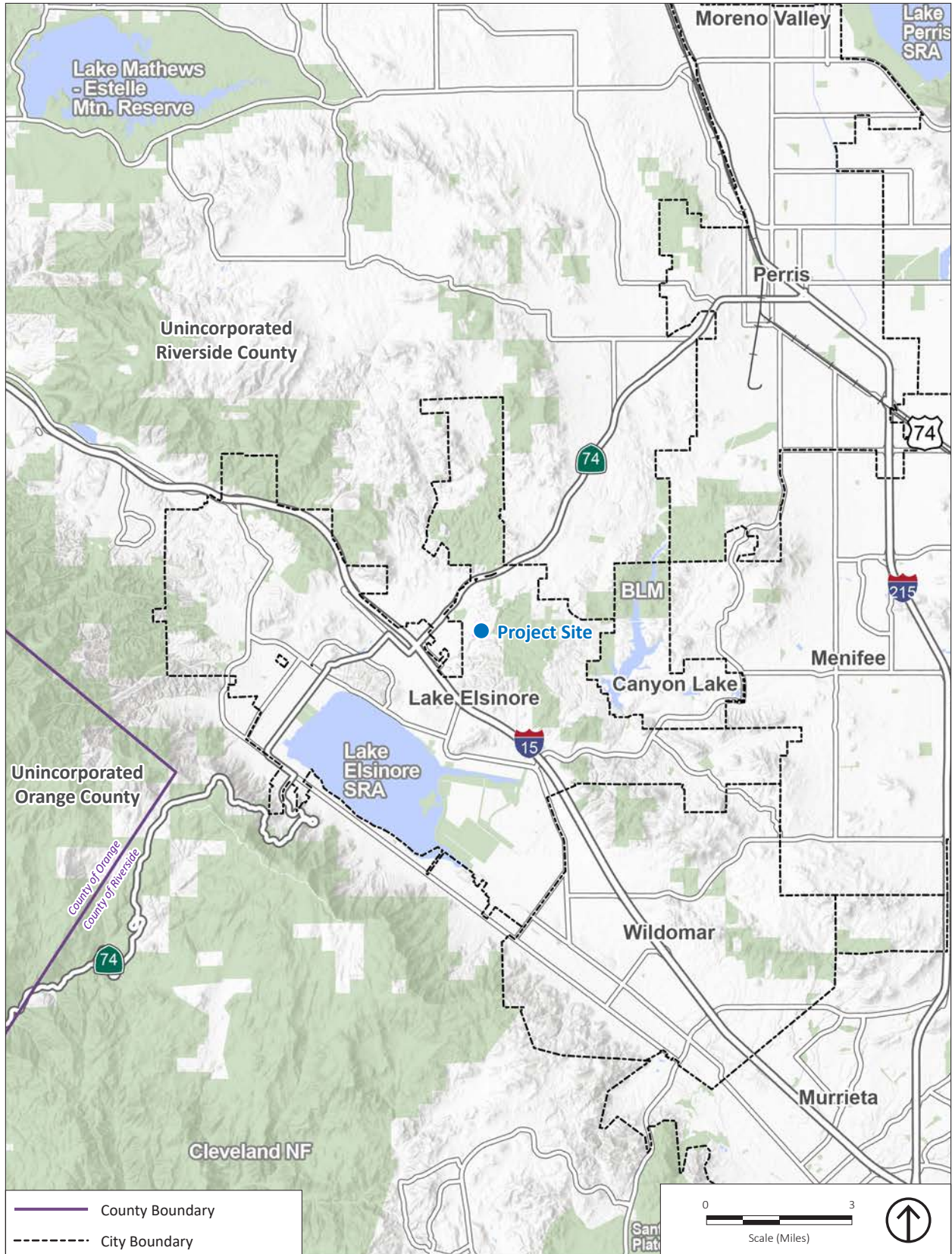
Earl Warren Elementary School

According to the California Department of Education, Earl Warren ES is a TK to 5th grade elementary school with a 2025–2026 enrollment of 834 students (CDE 2026b).

The existing Earl Warren ES campus contains a variety of permanent and portable structures that support educational and extracurricular functions. The campus includes six classroom buildings, an administration building, a library, and a multipurpose facility in the center of the campus, and six modular classrooms on southeastern portion of the campus. Outdoor facilities include athletic fields and hard courts on the southern and western portion of the campus, and an outdoor activity area for the kindergarteners.

The campus is currently fully developed with on-site circulation, parking, and utilities features, as well as hardscaping and landscaping. Infrastructure (water, sewer, storm drainage, electrical, lighting, walkways) is already in place and supports current operations.

EARL WARREN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODULAR CLASSROOMS PROJECT
LAKE ELSINORE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



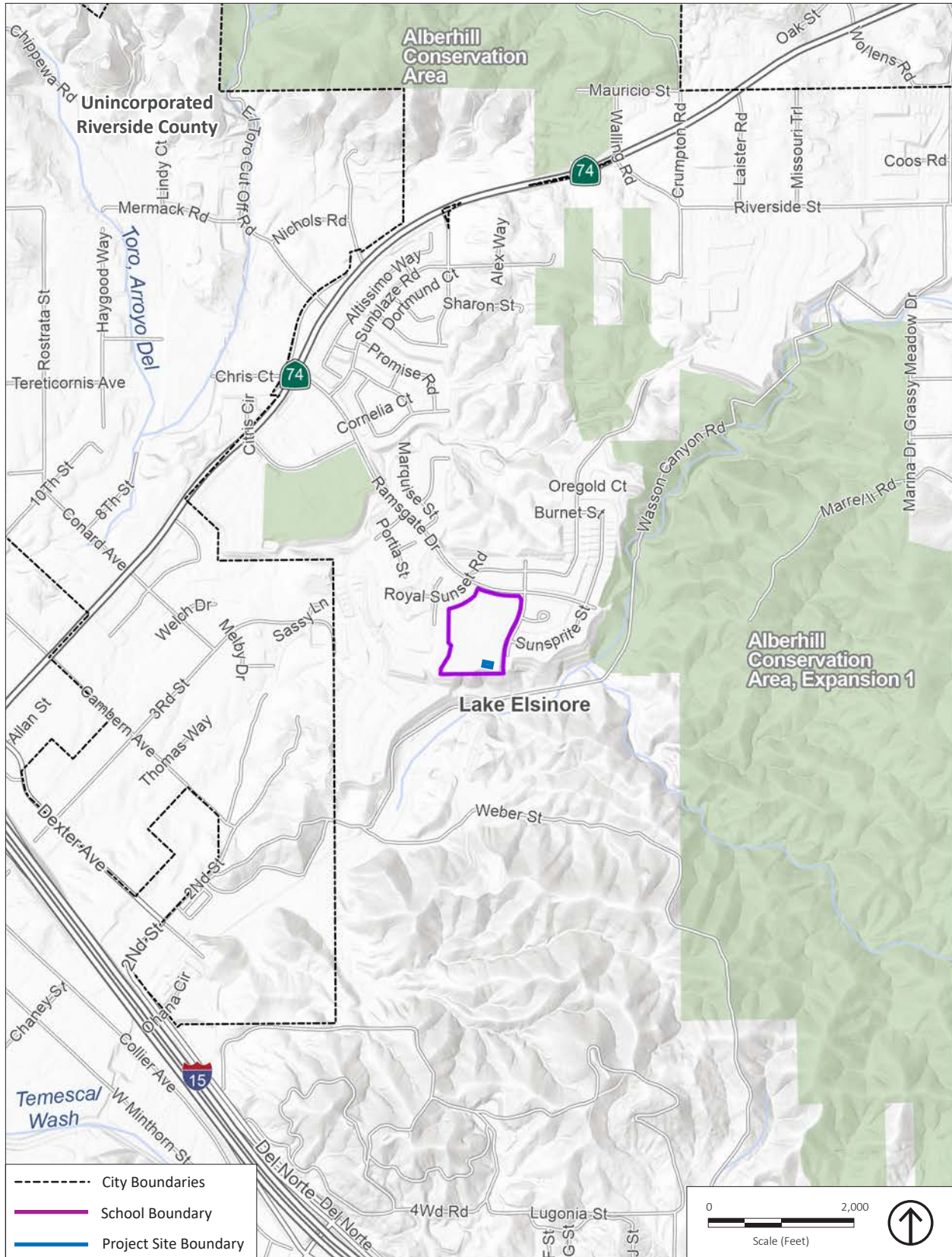
Source: Generated using GIS Pro 2026.

Figure 1
Regional Location

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EARL WARREN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODULAR CLASSROOMS PROJECT
 LAKE ELSINORE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



Source: Generated using GIS Pro 2026.

Figure 2
 Local Vicinity

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2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

New Modular Buildings

The proposed project includes the installation of two new modular classrooms, southwest of the existing modular classrooms on the southeast portion of the campus (see Figure 3, *Project Site Plan*). The modular classrooms would meet the current needs of the campus and would not increase the student capacity of Earl Warren ES. The proposed project would not require the demolition or relocation of any existing buildings or structures.

Project Construction

The proposed project would be constructed in one phase over approximately one month, occurring during Summer 2026. Less than one acre of the project site would be disturbed during the installation of the new modular structures. The demolition of existing buildings or structures would not be required. The proposed project would include utility trenching that would connect to existing utility lines at the existing campus. Additionally, no trees will need to be removed during construction.

The proposed project would be required to comply with all construction noise regulations of the Lake Elsinore Municipal Code, including Section 17.176.080, Prohibited Acts, which states that construction activities on the site are permitted only between the hours of 7:00 am and 7:00 pm (except in emergency situations). All project improvements would occur within the existing campus, and no off-site improvements would be required as part of the proposed project.

3. REASONS WHY THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT

Article 19 (Categorical Exemptions) of the CEQA Guidelines includes, as required by CEQA Statute Section 21084 (List of Exempt Classes of Projects; Projects Damaging Scenic Resources), a list of classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and, as a result, are exempt from review under CEQA.

This section describes how the proposed project qualifies for a CEQA Exemption under Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and Class 14 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 and Section 15314, respectively.

Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures)

CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 states:

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Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

Section 15303 provides a list of example projects that would qualify for a Class 3 exemption; the list of examples is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of all qualifying projects. Examples provided include up to three single-family residences in an urbanized area; a multifamily residential structure with no more than four units; a 2,500-square-foot store, motel, office, or restaurant; accessory structures such as garages, carports, and patios; utility extensions and street improvements to serve such construction; and others.

The proposed project consists of the installation of two modular classrooms and associated electrical utility lines. The proposed modular classrooms would be minor additions to the existing Earl Warren ES campus that would fit within the scale of projects exempt under the Class 3 categorical exemption. In addition, the proposed classrooms would provide support facilities for the current student population without increasing student capacity. As such, the proposed project meets the requirements of the Class 3 exemption.

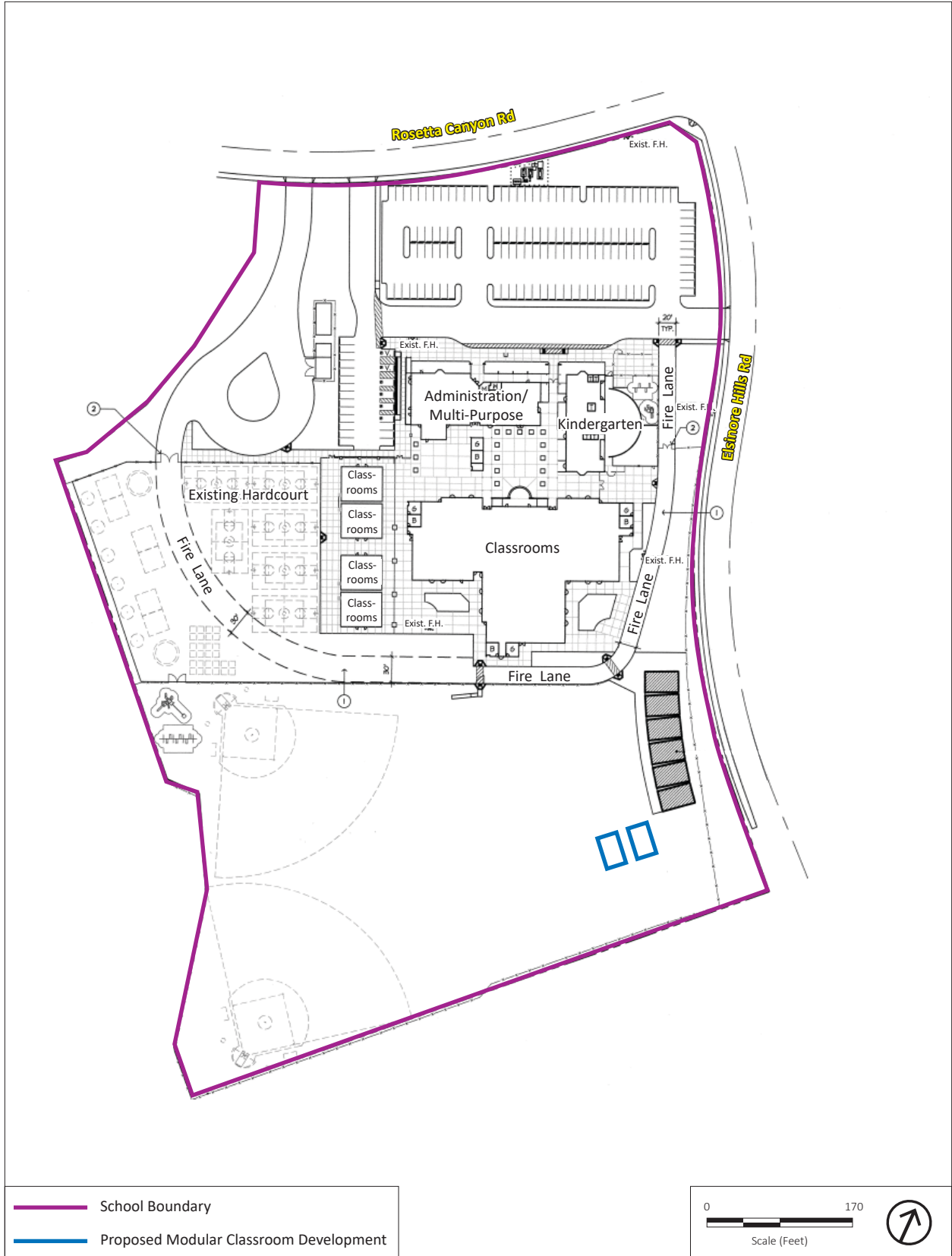
Class 14 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures)

CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 states:

Class 14 consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption.

The proposed project involves the addition of two portable classrooms to serve the existing student population without increasing student capacity. Additionally, the project is located entirely within the existing school grounds. As such, the proposed project meets the requirements of the Class 14 exemption.

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Source: Nearmap 2026.

Figure 3
Project Site Plan

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4. REVIEW OF EXCEPTIONS TO THE CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

The proposed project has been reviewed under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, Exceptions, for any characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate findings that the proposed project qualifies for a categorical CEQA exemption. Each exception is listed below followed by an assessment of whether that exception applies to the proposed project.

Location. Classes 1, 3, 11, and 14 are qualified by consideration of where the project would be located—a project that ordinarily has no significant impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may have an impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

The project site is located on the existing Earl Warren ES campus, which includes buildings, concrete walkways, athletic fields, parking lots, and ornamental landscaping. Due to the school's developed nature and frequent human disturbance, it does not contain any sensitive biological species or habitat. Two waterways run through or adjacent to the project site. As stated in the Existing Conditions, there is an R4SBC beginning on the southwestern portion of the hardcourts on the campus and an R4SBC approximately 0.09 mile south of the project site (USFWS 2026a). There are no critical habitats on or within one mile of the project site that are supported by the on-site or off-site R4SBC. All proposed improvements will occur on the southwest portion of the campus where the streambeds will not be impacted. Additionally, there is no evidence of hazardous materials or substances on the campus (see item [e], Hazardous Waste Sites). The project site is not considered to be a particularly sensitive environment. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

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

There are no other projects proposed on the campus at this time, and no off-campus improvements would occur as part of the proposed project. The proposed project would not increase student capacity or otherwise result in changes outside of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not have the potential to result in any cumulative effects when combined with proposed development projects near the campus or elsewhere in the District. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

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

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The project site is on an existing elementary school campus that is already fully developed. The project site does not contain any unique features that would be affected by the proposed project or otherwise cause significant effects on the environment. Under oversight of the District, the construction manager would execute construction activities per current local, state, and federal laws, regulations, construction best management practices, and District standards and guidelines. Therefore, no unusual circumstances exist for the proposed project, and this exemption does not apply to the proposed project.

- c. Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

According to the California Department of Transportation California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the nearest officially designated state scenic highway is State Route 47, from Post Mile (PM) 48.288 to PM R92.34, approximately 1.1 miles west of the project site. The nearest eligible state scenic highway is Interstate 15, from PM R46.474 to PM 41.488, approximately 1.12 miles southwest, and State Route 74, from PM 0.000 to PM R92.34, approximately 1.11 miles west of the project site (Caltrans 2025). The project site is not visible from any of these eligible or designated scenic highways due to intervening vegetation, terrain, and distance. Therefore, the proposed project will not affect any scenic resources along any officially designated or eligible scenic highways, and this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- d. Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to compile, maintain, and update specified lists of hazardous release sites. CEQA requires the lead agency to consult the lists compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 to determine whether a project and any alternatives are identified. The required lists of hazardous material release sites are commonly referred to as the "Cortese List" named after the legislator who authored the legislation.

Because the statute was enacted more than 20 years ago, some of the provisions refer to agency activities that were conducted many years ago and are no longer being implemented and, in some cases, the information required in the Cortese List does not exist. Those requesting a copy of the Cortese Lists are now referred directly to the appropriate information resources contained on internet websites hosted by the boards or departments referenced in the statute, including, but not limited to, California Department of Toxic Substance Control's online EnviroStor database and the State Water

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Resources Control Board's online GeoTracker database. These two databases include hazardous material release sites, along with other categories of sites or facilities specific to each agency's jurisdiction.

The project site is not included on the following data resources, which are compiled by CalEPA to meet Cortese List requirements:

- **EnviroStor.** Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2026a)
- **GeoTracker.** Leaking Underground Storage Tank Sites. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB 2026)
- **CalEPA.** Solid Waste Disposal Sites Identified by the Water Board with Waste Constituents above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside the Waste Management Unit (CalEPA 2026a)
- **CalEPA.** List of Active Cease and Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from the Water Board (CalEPA 2026b)
- **Hazardous Waste Facilities Subject to Corrective Action.** Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2026b)

Because the project site is not identified as a hazardous materials site on a list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- e. **Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. Under Public Resource Code Section 21084.1, a historical resource is a resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Additionally, historical resources included in a local register of historical resources are presumed to be historically or culturally significant, and a lead agency can determine whether the resource may be a historical resource.

Earl Warren ES is not listed as a historical resource in the National Register of Historic Places (NPS 2025). Additionally, the campus is not listed in the California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures (OHP 2025a, 2025b). Neither the school nor any adjoining properties are listed as historic resources or potential historic resources by the City of Lake Elsinore. The closest historical resources are the Armory Hall and Grand Army of the Republic Building, approximately 1.84 miles south; Crescent Bathhouse, approximately 2.04 miles south; Elsinore's Women's Club, approximately 2.11 miles southwest; and Elsinore's Hottest Sulphur Springs, approximately 1.69 miles south from the project site. Construction of the proposed project would occur entirely within the existing campus, and no structures on campus or

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off campus would be altered during construction of the proposed project. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

5. CONCLUSION

As substantiated in this document, the proposed project at El Warren ES is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 and Section 15314. Additionally, no exceptions identified in Section 15300.2, *Exceptions*, of the State CEQA Guidelines apply to the proposed project. Thus, the project is categorically exempt under from CEQA review and a Notice of Exemption may be used for the proposed project.

6. REFERENCES

- California Department of Education (CDE). 2026a. DataQuest. Enrollment Report. Enrollment Multi-Year Summary by Grade. Lake Elsinore Unified School District Report. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sdprofile/details.aspx?cds=3375176000000>.
- CDE. 2026b. DataQuest. Enrollment Report. 2024-2025 Enrollment by Grade. Earl Warren Elementary School. <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/enrgdlevels.aspx?agglevel=School&year=2025-26&cds=33751760113100>.
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