

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: San Diego

1600 Pacific Highway

San Diego, CA 92101

From: (Public Agency): Grossmont Union High School District

1100 Murray Drive El Cajon, CA 92020

(Address)

Project Title: Helix Charter High School Press Box Replacement Project

Project Applicant: Grossmont Union High School District

Project Location - Specific:

7323 University Ave, La Mesa, CA. 91941

Project Location - City: La Mesa Project Location - County: San Diego County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Please see Attachment A.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Grossmont Union High School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Grossmont Union High School District

Exempt Status: (check one):

☐ 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: 15302 and 15314

☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

Please see Attachment A.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Dena Johnson

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 619-644-8150

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Signature: Dena Johnson

Date: 7/21/2026

Title: Interim Exec

Director of Facilities

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Helix Charter High School Press Box Replacement Project Notice of Exemption (NOE)

The Grossmont Union High School District (District), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) proposes to replace the existing press box and construct a new smaller and taller press box within the Helix Charter High School (HS) campus (hereinafter referred to as the “proposed project”).

Project Location:

The proposed project is located on the Helix Charter HS campus at 7323 University Ave, La Mesa, CA. 91941. The proposed project would occur within the existing boundaries of the school. Access to the site is available via Orien Avenue through the existing stadium.

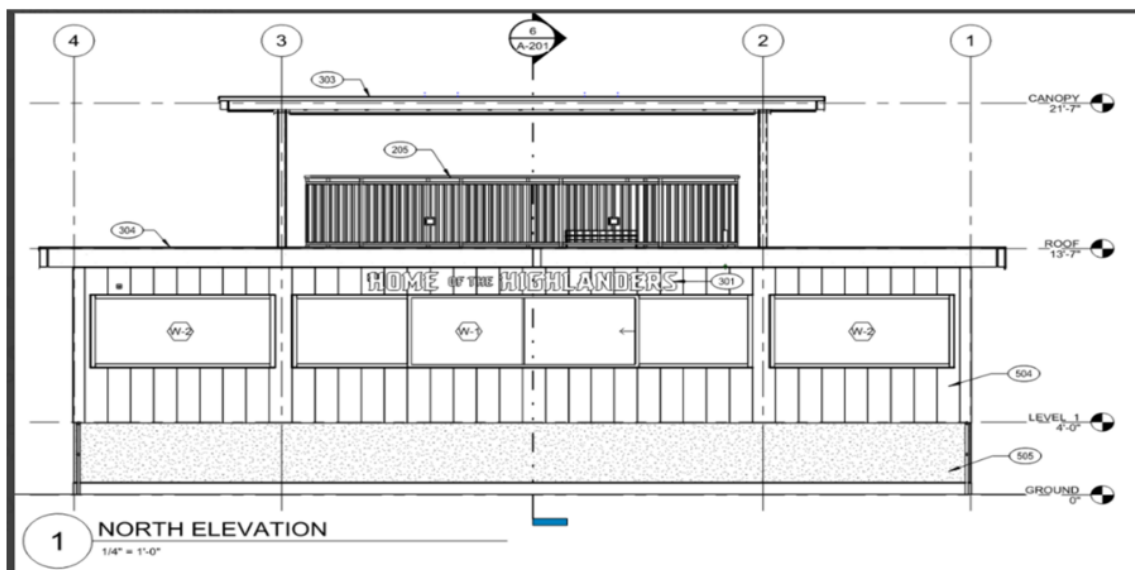
Existing Conditions:

Helix Charter HS is located within an urbanized area and surrounded by commercial and residential uses. The school serves ninth through twelfth grades. The athletic field is an existing facility that is used for multiple events and sports for the school.

Description of Project:

The proposed project would include the following:

- Demolition of existing press box at the athletic field;
- Construction of a new 410-square foot (sf) press box at the same location, which would be smaller than the existing 483-sf press box but approximately 9.7 feet higher than the existing 12-foot-tall press box; and
- Construction of a new press box canopy to provide shade covering over the top of the press box (see elevation below).



The proposed project would serve the existing student enrollment and would not result in an increase in student or program capacity, nor would the project result in an increase of employees at the project site. In addition, there would be no off-site circulation or traffic changes and construction activities would take place on campus.

Applicability of Exempt Status:

The proposed project is subject to CEQA, because it meets the definition of a 'project' under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. However, the proposed project is categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction, and Section 15314 – Minor Additions to Schools. The following discussion describes the reasons why the proposed project is considered categorically exempt.

Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2)

Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced, including but not limited to (CEQA Guidelines Section 15302).

The proposed project would include the replacement and reconstruction of the existing press box. The new structure would be 72 sf smaller in square footage and approximately 9.7 feet taller than the existing structure to accommodate a roof canopy. The project would maintain the same purpose and capacity as is currently present at Helix Charter HS. No change in student capacity is contemplated by this project. Therefore, the proposed project would be Categorical Exempt under Class 2.

Minor Additions to Schools (Class 14)

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 percent or 10 classrooms, whichever is less.

The proposed project would include the replacement and reconstruction of the existing press box. The proposed improvements are intended to serve the existing student body, which would not induce any increase in student enrollment. In addition, the proposed project does not include the construction of any new classrooms or other facilities that would increase the student capacity of the campus by more than 25 percent. As noted above, no increase in student enrollment or staffing would occur as a result of the proposed project.

Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2):

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 identifies exceptions that, if triggered, would prohibit a project from relying on a categorical exemption. The following summarizes the determination that the proposed project does not have the potential to trigger any of the exceptions identified in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 prohibiting the use of a categorical exemption.

- (a) **Location.** This exception states that Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on

the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. The proposed project would occur entirely within the boundaries of an existing high school campus in an urbanized community. As such, all areas on the school site are either paved or disturbed, and therefore are not environmentally sensitive. Surrounding land uses consist of residential and commercial uses. However, the proposed project would not extend into any offsite areas. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.

- (b) **Cumulative Impact.** For this exception, 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 known future projects on the campus or within the surrounding community that, when combined with the proposed project, would result in a cumulatively considerable effect on the environment. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.
- (c) **Significant Effect.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. There is no reasonable possibility that the proposed activity would have a significant effect on the environment as a result of unusual circumstances. The proposed project would serve an existing school and would not increase student capacity or the number of classrooms. Furthermore, the proposed project would not change the existing operations at the school. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.
- (d) **Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. The proposed project would not result in the removal of existing structures or the construction of new facilities that would directly or indirectly affect an officially designated scenic highway or scenic resources near a scenic highway. The nearest officially designated state scenic highway is a segment of State Route 125 between Interstate-8 and State Route 94, located approximately 1.5 miles east of the project site (California Department of Transportation 2026). Due to intervening topography and distance, the project would not impact scenic resources within an officially designated state scenic highway. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.
- (e) **Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. A review of the State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker website and the Department of Toxic Substances Control Envirostor website was conducted on June 30, 2026. Based on the review, the site is not on a list of hazardous materials and all clean up and facilities sites near the project site have closed cases. The proposed project would only require minor ground disturbance. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.
- (f) **Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. No buildings or other structures considered a historical resource at the Helix Charter HS site will be demolished as part of this project. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse

change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines, and this exception does not apply to the project.

References:

California Department of Transportation. 2026. California State Scenic Highway System Map.

Available:

<https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>. Accessed June 30, 2026.

California Department of Toxic Substances. 2026. Envirostor. Available:

<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>. Accessed June 30, 2026.

State Water Resources Control Board. GeoTracker. Available:

https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?global_id=T0607302824. Accessed June 30, 2026.