

Amador County Unified School District

AMADOR COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION PROGRAM PROJECT

September 2026 | Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration



September 2026 | Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration

AMADOR COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION PROGRAM PROJECT

For Amador County Unified School District

Amador County Unified School District

Contact: Jared Critchfield, Superintendent
217 Rex Avenue
Jackson, California 95642
209.257.5353

Prepared by:

PlaceWorks

Malia Durand, Managing Principal
3 MacArthur Place, Suite 1100
Santa Ana, California 92707
714.966.9220
www.placeworks.com



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	7
1.1	Overview	7
1.2	California Environmental Quality Act.....	7
1.3	Initial Study	8
1.4	Mitigated Negative Declaration	9
1.5	Levels of Significance	9
2.	Project Description	11
2.1	Project Location	11
2.2	Environmental Setting.....	12
2.3	Project Characteristics	24
2.4	Required Permits and Approvals.....	38
3.	Environmental Evaluation.....	41
I.	Aesthetics.....	41
II.	Agriculture and Forestry Resources	48
III.	Air Quality	52
IV.	Biological Resources.....	66
V.	Cultural Resources	77
VI.	Energy	85
VII.	Geology and Soils.....	91
VIII.	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	103
IX.	Hazards and Hazardous Materials.....	106
X.	Hydrology and Water Quality	121
XI.	Land Use and Planning.....	137
XII.	Mineral Resources.....	138
XIII.	Noise	141
XIV.	Population and Housing.....	160
XV.	Public Services.....	163
XVI.	Recreation	172
XVII.	Transportation.....	174
XVIII.	Tribal Cultural Resources.....	190
XIX.	Utilities and Service Systems	193
XX.	Wildfire.....	202
XXI.	Mandatory Findings of Significance.....	210
4.	References	213

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5. List of Preparers	221
Lead Agency	221
PlaceWorks.....	221

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Air Quality, Energy, and Greenhouse Gases
Appendix B	Sacred Lands File Request
Appendix C	Noise Fundamentals
Appendix D	Transportation Technical Memorandum

List of Figures

Figure 1	Location Map and Existing Conditions.....	13
Figure 2a	Existing Elementary School Boundaries.....	15
Figure 2b	Existing Junior High School Boundaries	17
Figure 2c	Existing High School Boundaries.....	19
Figure 3a	Proposed School Closure/Consolidation	25
Figure 3b	Proposed Junior High School Boundaries	27
Figure 3c	Proposed High School Boundaries.....	29
Figure 4	Amador High School Site Improvements.....	33
Figure 5	Lone Junior High School Site Improvements.....	39

List of Tables

Table 1	Proposed Campus Changes.....	35
Table 2	Discretionary Approvals and Permits	38
Table 3	Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Lone Junior HS Project Site	110
Table 4	Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Amador HS Project Site	112
Table 5	Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Argonaut HS Project Site	113
Table 6	Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Jackson Junior HS Project Site	114

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table 7	Existing Roadway Traffic Noise Levels	143
Table 8	City of Sutter Creek Presumed Ambient Noise Levels.....	144
Table 9	City of Jackson Exterior Noise Standards.....	146
Table 10	City of Ione Exterior Noise Level Performance Standards for Non-Transportation Noise For New Projects.....	147
Table 11	City of Ione Noise Level Performance Standards for All Noise Sources, Including Transportation Noise, For New Projects.....	147
Table 12	Project-Related Construction Noise Levels at Nearest Receptors, dBA: Amador High School	151
Table 13	Project-Related Construction Noise Levels at Nearest Receptors, dBA: Ione Junior High School	152
Table 14	Project-Related Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet	154
Table 15	Project-Related Construction Vibration Damage Levels: Amador High School .	157
Table 16	Project-Related Construction Vibration Damage Levels	158
Table 17	Daily VMT per person, with and without the Proposed Project	184
Table 18	City of Sutter Creek Existing and Projected Wastewater Generation	196
Table 19	City of Jackson Existing and Projected Wastewater Generation.....	198

TABLE OF CONTENTS

This page intentionally left blank.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Amador County Unified School District Consolidation Program Project

Lead Agency Name and Address:

Amador County Unified School District
217 Rex Avenue
Jackson, CA 95642

Contact Person and Phone Number:

Jared Critchfield
209.257.5353

Project Location: Amador County Unified School District (ACUSD or District) is the only public school district serving Amador County. The county is 45 miles southeast of Sacramento in the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The county is surrounded by El Dorado County to the north, Alpine County to the east, Calaveras County to the south, San Joaquin County to the southwest, and Sacramento County to the west. The northeast portion of the county is in Eldorado National Forest. The proposed project would affect six of ACUSD's school campuses: Amador High School (HS), Independence HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Lone Junior HS, and Lone Elementary School (ES).

Project Sponsor's Name and Address:

Amador County Unified School District
217 Rex Avenue
Jackson, CA 95642

General Plan Designation: In the City of Sutter Creek, Amador High School and Independence High School have a land use designation of Public Service (PS). In the City of Jackson, Argonaut High School and Jackson Junior High School have a land use designation of Public (P). In the City of Lone, Lone Junior High School and Lone Elementary School have a land use designation of Public Service (PS).

Zoning: In the City of Sutter Creek, Amador High School and Independence High School are currently zoned as Public Service (P-S). In the City of Jackson, Argonaut High School and Jackson

Junior High School are zoned as Public. In the City of Lone, Lone Junior High School and Lone Elementary School are zoned as Public Facilities (PF).

Description of Project:

The District is proposing to consolidate six schools onto five campuses. This would require minor physical improvements at four campuses—Argonaut High School, Amador High School, Jackson Junior High School, and Lone Junior High School. The proposed project would not change the elementary school attendance boundaries but would change the junior high school boundaries and the high school boundaries.

Site improvements at the Amador HS campus would consist of relocating two existing portable classrooms, currently at Jackson Junior HS, to the Amador HS campus for the proposed districtwide high school that would total nearly 2,000 square feet of classroom space. The two portable classrooms would be relocated to the southern portion of the Amador HS campus and placed side-by-side. This relocation may require minor asphalt improvements to accommodate the classroom pads, as well as utility improvements to provide power. Site improvements at the Amador HS campus will also require limited site improvements to support operational and program needs and circulation associated with placement of the relocated portable classrooms and the reorganization of the campus.

The Argonaut High School campus would require minor modifications to support middle school programming associated with the consolidation of the District's junior high schools. These modifications would consist of program and operational adjustments. Physical improvements would include changes to interior classroom configurations, student support spaces, and circulation. These programs would not generate any exterior construction.

Site improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments to support the District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program that would be moved to the current Jackson Junior HS campus. These renovations include reconfiguration or adaptation of existing interior spaces and other minor interior improvements necessary to support adult learning environments.

Site improvements at the current Lone Junior High School campus would include constructing up to four new classrooms in a single classroom building, totaling up to 4,500 square feet, in the northern portion of the campus. To accommodate the new kindergarten/preschool classroom building and related site improvements, up to four trees would be removed. The northern parking lot would be reconfigured (restriped) to increase the parking capacity from 20 spaces to 68 spaces. The reconfiguration would be within the existing parking lot footprint and would not expand the paved surface area or include any demolition of the existing asphalt. Additional improvements would include age-appropriate playground equipment and a dedicated kindergarten pick-up and drop-off loop constructed at the eastern portion of the campus.

Construction for the site improvements at Amador HS would begin in Spring of 2027 and conclude in Summer of 2027. Construction for the site improvements at Lone Junior HS would begin in Fall of 2029 and conclude in Spring of 2030.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

The District's six school campuses are located within a range of surrounding land use settings. Amador High School in the city of Sutter Creek is primarily surrounded by single-family residential uses in all directions, with commercial development to the east and additional low-density residential properties to the west. Independence High School is in Sutter Creek city limits and is bordered largely by industrial uses to the east, south, southeast, and west, with a mix of high-density residential, public service, and recreational uses to the northeast.

Argonaut High School is in the city of Jackson and bounded by city limits to the west and south. Residential neighborhoods are directly north and further east of the campus, and professional office uses, including court and county facilities, are east of Argonaut Lane. Jackson Junior High School, which is also in Jackson, is surrounded primarily by residential uses to the south and west, with higher-density residential and professional office uses to the northwest. Commercial uses are north of Sutter Street, and commercial and open space or recreational uses are to the east near State Route 88.

Lone Junior High School is in the city of Lone and adjacent to low-density residential uses to the north, with industrial and heavy commercial uses to the southwest and limited general commercial development to the east. Lone Elementary School, also in Lone, is in a more mixed-use setting, with downtown transition and commercial transition uses to the north, high-density residential to the east, general commercial uses to the northeast and west, and parks and recreation uses directly to the south.

Other Public Agencies Whose Approval Is Required (e.g., Permits, Financing Approval, or Participating Agreement):

- **Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 5):**
 - Coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit for stormwater discharges associated with construction activities.
- **California Department of General Services, Division of the State Architect (DSA):**
 - Review and approval of school building plans for structural safety, fire/life safety, and accessibility compliance in accordance with Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

■ California Department of Education (CDE), School Facilities Planning Division:

- Review of school site layout and verification of compliance with educational facility design standards and siting criteria for the Amador HS, Argonaut HS, and Lone Junior HS campuses.

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

The proposed project would comply with tribal consultation requirements pursuant to Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52). The District will provide letters to the applicable Native American tribes inviting the individual Native American tribes to opportunity to consult on the proposed project per the requirements under Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project; that is, at least one impact is a “Potentially Significant Impact,” as indicated by the checklist for that factor in Chapter 3, *Environmental Evaluation*.

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

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☒ I find that although the proposed 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 proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed 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 proposed 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 proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature

Date

Jared Critchfield

9/1/2026

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

This page intentionally left blank.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Amador County Unified School District (ACUSD or District) is proposing to consolidate six schools onto five campuses. This would require minor physical improvements at four campuses—Argonaut High School, Amador HS, Jackson Junior HS, and Lone Junior HS. Improvements at the Argonaut High School campus would support its conversion to a districtwide junior high school, and upgrades at the Amador High School campus would include relocation of portable classrooms, and operational and circulation enhancements. At the Jackson Junior High School, improvements would support Adult Education and Transition programs, and the Lone Junior High School campus improvements would support the Lone ES students.

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the District, as lead agency, is preparing the environmental documentation for the proposed project to determine if implementation and associated discretionary actions would have a significant impact on the environment. As defined by Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines, an initial study (IS) is prepared primarily to provide the lead agency with information to use as the basis for determining whether an environmental impact report (EIR), negative declaration, or mitigated negative declaration (MND) would provide the necessary environmental documentation and clearance for the proposed project. This IS has been prepared to support the adoption of an MND.

1.2 CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

The environmental compliance process is governed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines (Public Resources Code [PRC], Section 21000 et seq.; California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). CEQA was enacted in 1970 by the California Legislature to disclose to decision-makers and the public the significant environmental effects of projects and to identify ways to avoid or reduce the environmental effects through feasible alternatives or mitigation measures. Compliance with CEQA applies to California government agencies at all levels: local, regional, and State agencies, boards, commissions, and special districts (such as school districts and water districts). The Amador County Unified School District is the lead agency for the proposed project and is therefore required to conduct an environmental review to analyze the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed project.

1. INTRODUCTION

PRC Section 21080(a) states that analysis of a project's environmental impact is required for any "discretionary projects proposed to be carried out or approved by public agencies...." In this case, the lead agency has determined that an Initial Study is required to determine whether there is substantial evidence that construction and operation of the proposed project would result in environmental impacts.

A "project" means the whole of an action that has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and that is any of the following:

- An activity directly undertaken by any public agency including but not limited to public works construction and related activities clearing or grading of land, improvements to existing public structures, enactment and amendment of zoning ordinances, and the adoption and amendment of local General Plans or elements thereof pursuant to Government Code Sections 65100 to 65700.
- An activity undertaken by a person which is supported in whole or in part through public agency contacts, grants, subsidies, loans, or other forms of assistance from one or more public agencies.
- An activity involving the issuance to a person of a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use by one or more public agencies. (14 CCR section 15378[a]).

The proposed discretionary actions by the project applicant constitute a "project" because the activity would result in a direct physical change in the environment and would be undertaken by a public agency. All "projects" in the State of California are required to undergo an environmental review to determine the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the project.

One of the primary objectives of CEQA is to enhance public participation in the planning process, so public involvement is an essential feature of CEQA. Community members are encouraged to participate in the environmental review process, request to be notified, monitor newspapers for formal announcements, and submit substantive comments at every possible opportunity afforded by the lead agency. The environmental review process provides several opportunities for the public to participate through public notice and public review of CEQA documents and at public meetings.

1.3 INITIAL STUDY

The purpose of the initial study is to 1) provide the lead agency with information to use as the basis for deciding the proper type of CEQA document to prepare; 2) enable the lead agency to modify a project, mitigating adverse impacts before an environmental impact report (EIR) is prepared, thereby enabling the project to qualify for a negative declaration; 3) assist in the

1. INTRODUCTION

preparation of an EIR, if one is required; 4) facilitate environmental assessment early in the design of a project; 5) provide documentation of the factual basis for the findings in a mitigated negative declaration (MND) or negative declaration (ND); 6) eliminate unnecessary EIRs; and 7) determine if a project is covered under a previously prepared EIR. When an initial study identifies the potential for immitigable significant environmental impacts, the lead agency must prepare an EIR (14 CCR section 15064); however, if all impacts are found to be less than significant or can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, the lead agency can prepare an ND or an MND, which incorporates mitigation measures into the project (14 CCR section 15070).

1.4 MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The MND includes information necessary for agencies to meet statutory responsibilities related to the proposed project. State and local agencies will use the MND when considering any permit or other approvals necessary to implement the project. A list of the environmental topics that have been identified for study in the MND is provided in the *Environmental Checklist* that precedes Chapter 1 of this initial study.

1.5 LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following terminology is used to describe the level of significance of impacts. Although the criteria for determining significance are different for each topic area, the environmental analysis applies a uniform classification of the impacts based on definitions consistent with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines:

- **No impact.** The project would result in no adverse effect on the environment.
- **Less than significant.** The project would not exceed the established significance criteria.
- **Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.** The project would exceed the established significance criteria without mitigation measures, but one or more mitigation measures would successfully reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.
- **Potentially significant.** The project would exceed the established significance criteria, and either no feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level, or more analysis is needed to determine if feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. If any impact is identified as potentially significant, an EIR is required.

Mitigation Measures. If, after incorporation and implementation of federal, State, and local regulations, there are still significant environmental impacts, then feasible and project-specific mitigation measures are required to reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. Mitigation measures must further reduce significant environmental impacts above and beyond compliance

1. INTRODUCTION

with federal, State, and local laws and regulations. Mitigation under CEQA Guidelines Section 15370 includes:

- Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment.
- Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

2.1.1 Regional Location

Amador County Unified School District (ACUSD or District) is the only public school district serving Amador County. The county is 45 miles southeast of Sacramento in the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The county is surrounded by El Dorado County to the north, Alpine County to the east, Calaveras County to the south, San Joaquin County to the southwest, and Sacramento County to the west. The northeast portion of the county is in Eldorado National Forest.

2.1.2 Project Site

The proposed project would affect 6 of ACUSD's school campuses: Amador High School (HS), Independence HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Lone Junior HS, and Lone Elementary School (ES). Figure 1, *Location Map and Existing Conditions*, shows the six campuses in their regional and local contexts.

AMADOR HIGH SCHOOL

Amador HS is at 330 Spanish Street, Sutter Creek, California, 95685, in the northern part of the city. The site has an Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) of 018-020-029-000. It is 0.3 miles east of State Route 49 (SR-49) and 1.4 miles north of Independence HS.

INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

Independence HS is at 525 Independence Drive, Sutter Creek, California, 95685, in the southwest part of the city. The site has an APN of 044-010-080-000. It is 0.18 mile north of SR-104 and 1.4 miles south of Amador HS.

ARGONAUT HIGH SCHOOL

Argonaut HS is at 501 Argonaut Lane, Jackson, California, 95642, in the northwest corner of the city. The site has an APN of 044-100-009-000. It is 0.4 mile west of SR-88 and 0.5 mile south of SR-49. The nearest campus is Jackson Junior HS, which is about 0.6 mile southeast of Argonaut HS.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

JACKSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Jackson Junior HS is at 747 Sutter Street, Jackson, California, 95642, in the western part of the city. The site has an APN of 020-161-001-000. It is 0.09 mile west of SR-88 and 0.6 mile southeast of Argonaut HS.

IONE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ione Junior HS is at 450 South Mills Street, Ione, California, 95640, in the southern part of the city. The site has an APN of 004-250-001-000. It is 0.08 mile west of SR-124. This campus is 0.1 mile west of Ione ES.

IONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ione ES is at 415 South Ione Street, Ione, California, 95640, in the southern part of the city. The site as an APN of 004-261-002-000. It is directly west of State Route 104 (SR 104) and approximately 0.1 miles east of SR 124. This campus is 0.1 miles east of Ione Junior HS.

Figures 2a through 2c (Figure 2a, *Existing Elementary School Boundaries*; Figure 2b, *Existing Junior High School Boundaries*; and Figure 2c, *Existing High School Boundaries*) show the existing attendance boundaries for the ACUSD schools.

2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

2.2.1 Existing General Plan Land Uses and Zoning

In the city of Sutter Creek, Amador HS and Independence HS are currently zoned as Public Service (P-S) with a land use designation of Public Service (PS) (Sutter Creek 2019a, 2019b). In the city of Jackson, Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS are zoned and have a land use designation of Public (Jackson 2014). Currently, the city of Jackson is in the process of adopting a General Plan Update. Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS are zoned and have a land use designation of Public (P) (Jackson 2023). In the city of Ione, Ione Junior HS and Ione ES are zoned as Public Facilities (PF) with a land use designation of Public Service (PS) (Ione 2009, 2018).

AMADOR COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION PROGRAM PROJECT
AMADOR COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

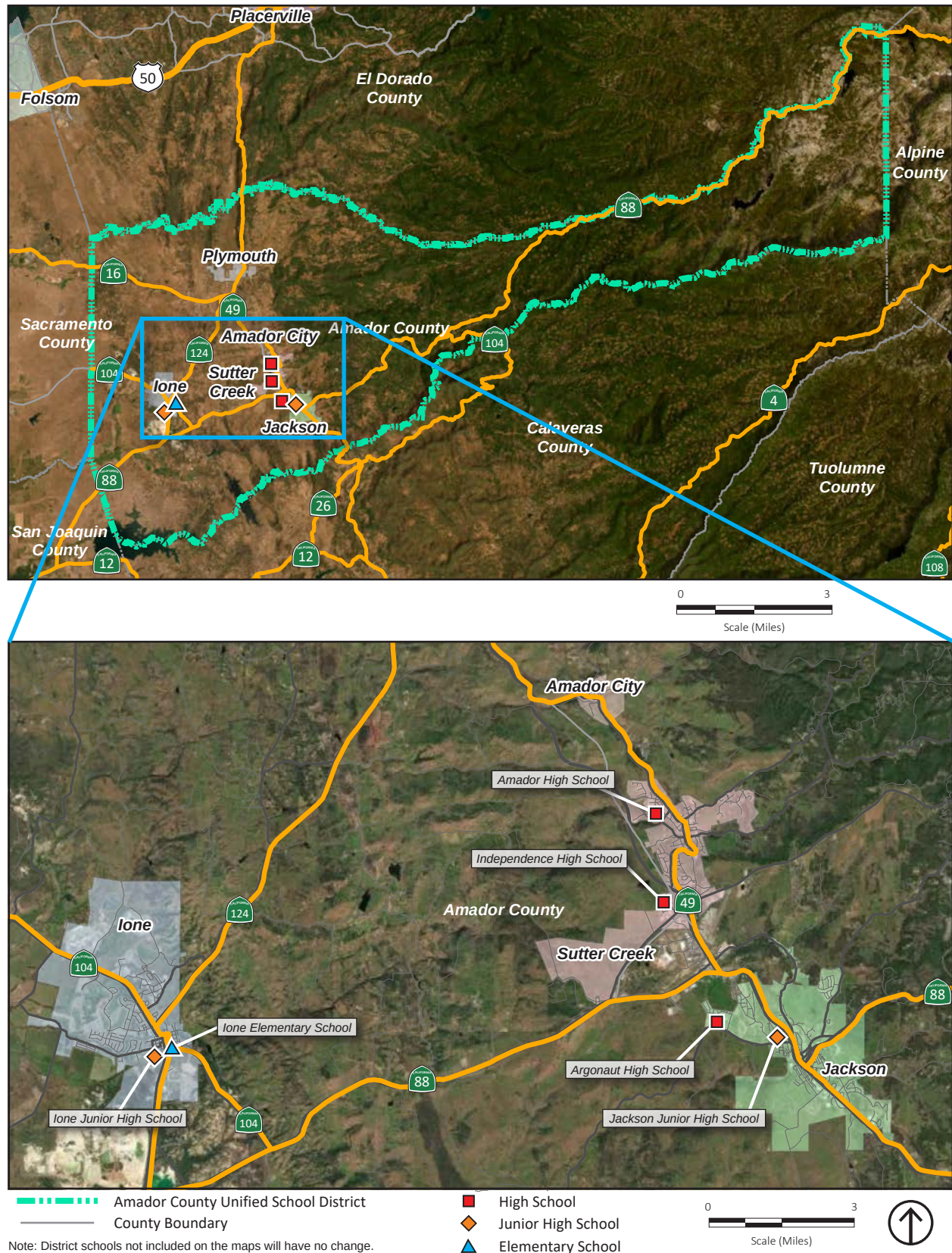
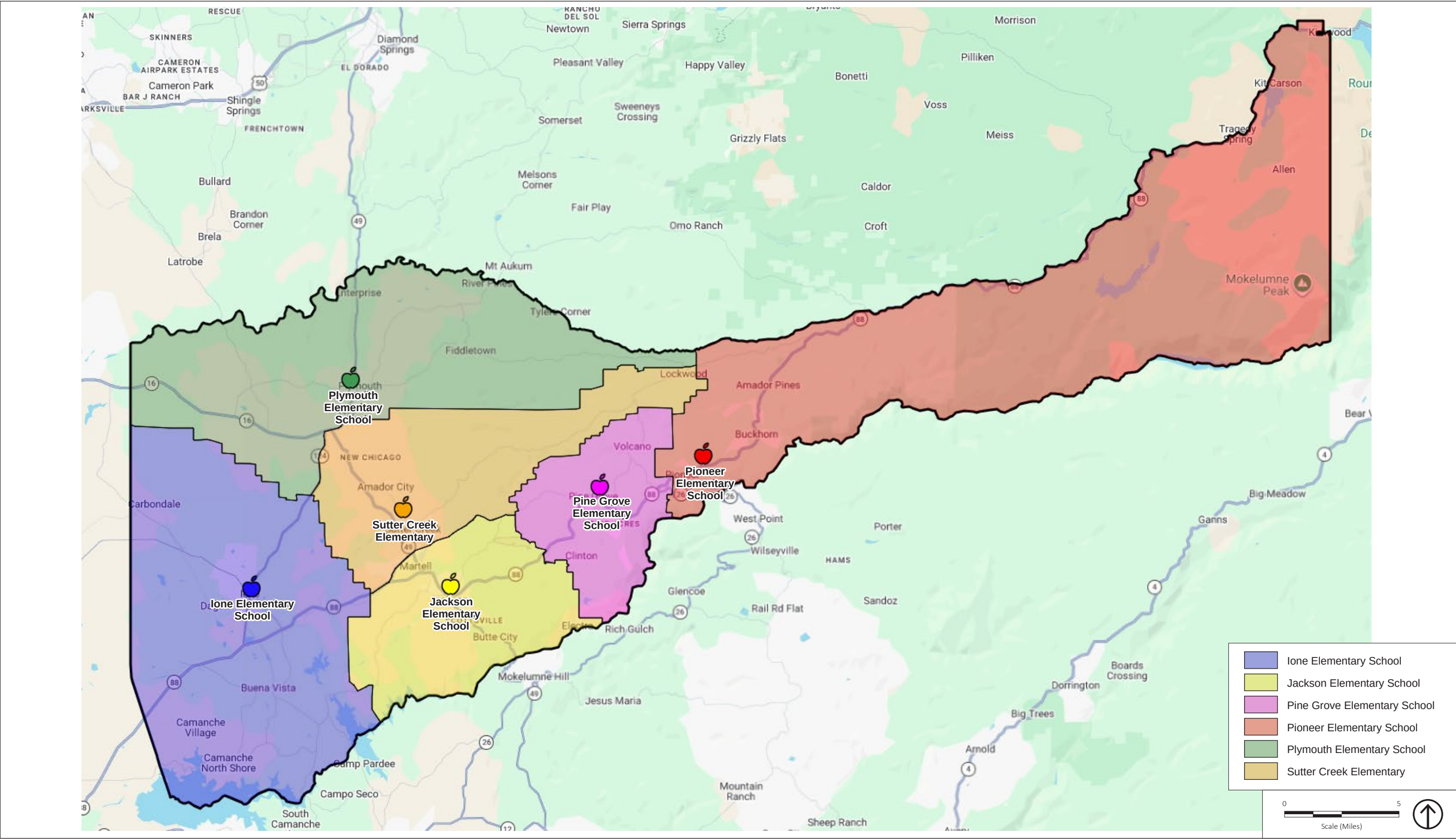


Figure 1
Location Map and Existing Conditions

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This page intentionally left blank.

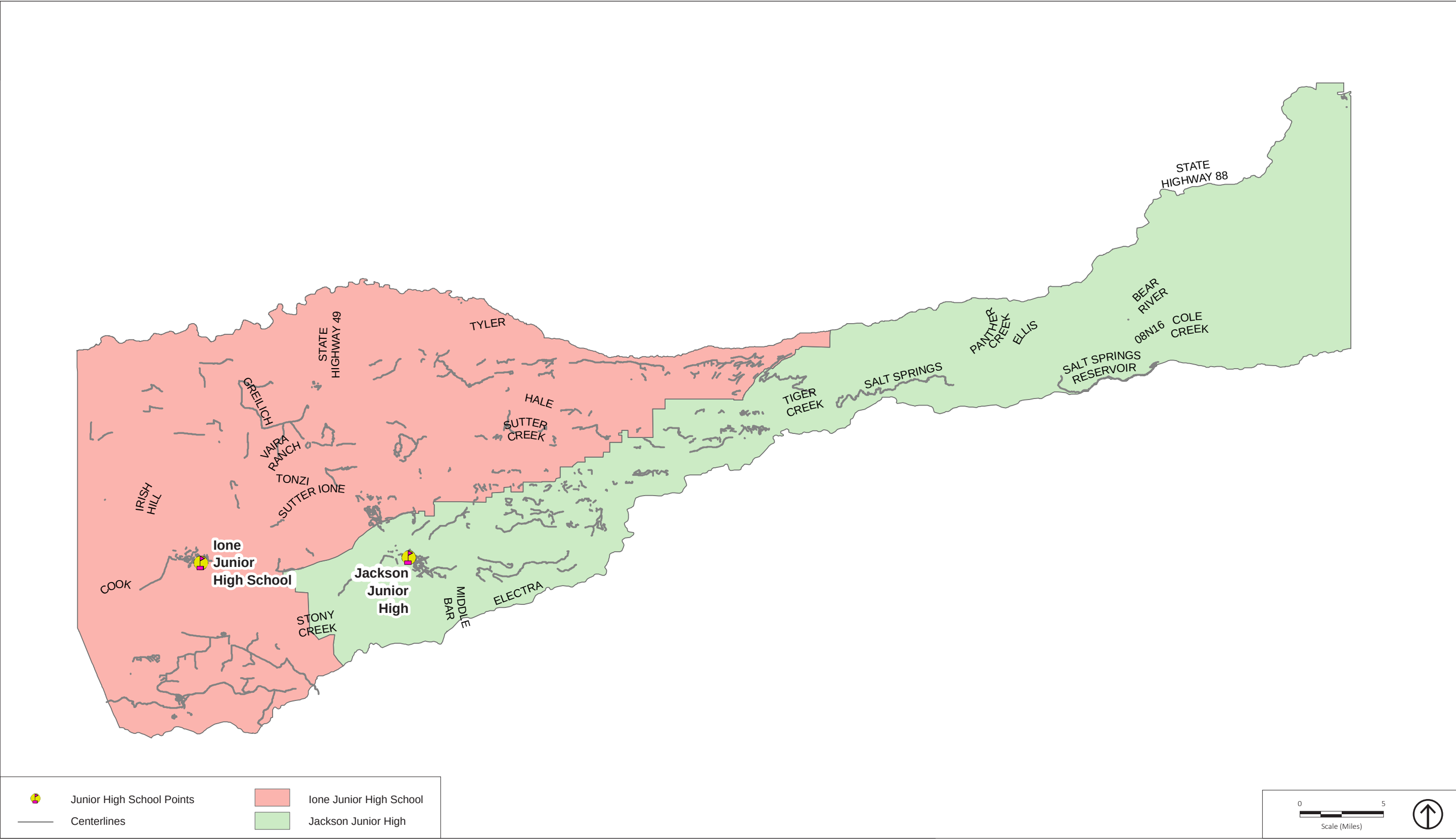


Source: ACUSD 2026.

Figure 2a
Existing Elementary School Boundaries

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This page intentionally left blank.

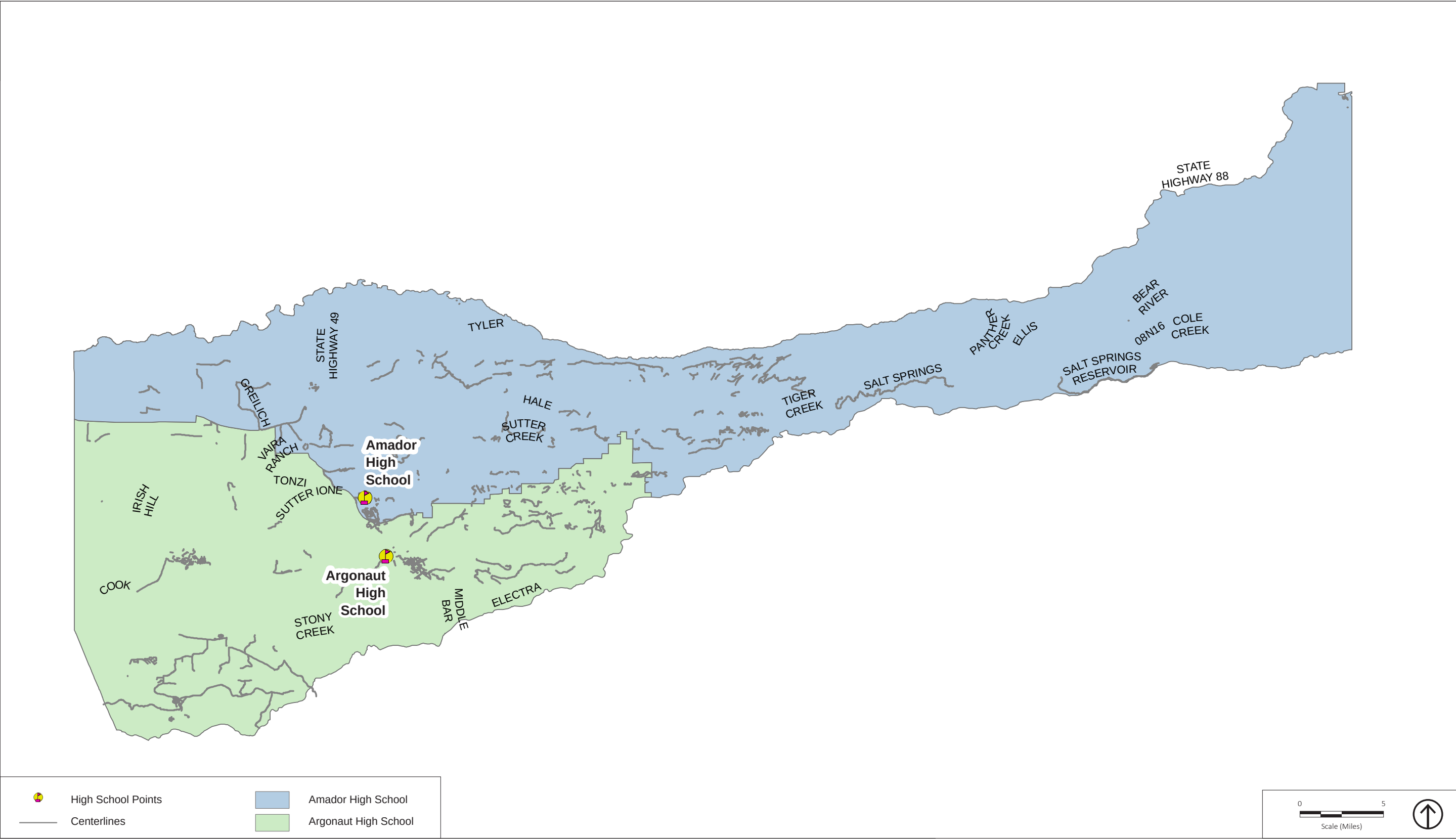


Source: ACUSD 2022.

Figure 2b
Existing Junior High School Boundaries

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This page intentionally left blank.



Source: ACUSD 2022.

Figure 2c
Existing High School Boundaries

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This page intentionally left blank.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.2.2 Existing Land Uses

Each campus is developed with school/academic uses. A description of each campus is provided below.

AMADOR HIGH SCHOOL

Amador HS is developed with and operates as a high school campus with 19 buildings (includes a combination of permanent and relocatable buildings). The buildings include various classrooms, gymnasium, cafeteria/arts & crafts, administration, and library (ACUSD 2022). The campus also includes four tennis courts, pool, two baseball fields, one softball field, one sports field with track and field, lawn areas, and three surface parking lots. One parking lot is in the eastern part of the campus; another parking lot is in the southeast corner of the campus; and the third parking lot is in the northwestern part of the campus, north of the football stadium. The buildings, pool, and tennis courts are on the east side of the campus; the sport fields are on the west side of campus. Primary access to the campus is provided from Spanish Street and Sutter Lone Road. The campus is partially fenced. The current enrollment is 573 students in 9th through 12th grade.

INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

Independence HS campus is at 525 Independence Drive. The campus is developed with seven buildings (combination of permanent and portable buildings) that include classrooms and an office. The campus has two surface parking lots, a multiuse play court, and a baseball/softball field. Current access to Independence HS is by Independence Drive that connects to SR-104, south of the campus. The campus is partially fenced. The current enrollment of Independence HS is 61 students in 10th through 12th grade, 40 students in the Adult Education Program, and 12 students in the Adult Transition Program. Additionally, the campus includes 14 students in the County Community School.

ARGONAUT HIGH SCHOOL

Argonaut HS campus located at 501 Argonaut Lane is developed with 28 buildings (combination of permanent and portable buildings) that include library/classrooms, office, gymnasium, and storage (ACUSD 2022). The campus also includes four tennis courts, one baseball field, two softball fields, one sports field with track and field, lawn areas, and surface parking lots. The buildings, surface parking lots and tennis courts are on the east side of the campus; the sport fields are on the west side of campus. Current access to Argonaut HS is by Argonaut Lane, northeast of Stony Creek Road, that connects to SR-88. The campus has a parking lot near the front of the campus, adjacent to Argonaut Lane and one behind the main campus, closer to the

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

athletic fields. The campus is partially fenced. The current enrollment is 535 students in 9th through 12th grade.

JACKSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Jackson Junior HS campus located at 747 Sutter Street is developed with 17 buildings (combination of permanent and portable buildings) that include administration/classrooms, gymnasium, and kitchen (ACUSD 2022). The campus also includes one sports field and surface parking lots. The buildings and surface parking lots are on the northeast side of the campus; the sports field is on the west side of campus. The campus can be accessed from Sutter Street, Rex Avenue, and SR-88, with parking lots available from all streets. The campus is partially fenced. The current enrollment is 275 students in 7th through 8th grade.

IONE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ione Junior HS campus at 450 Mills Street is developed with 18 buildings (combination of permanent and portable buildings) that include a multi-purpose building, library/classrooms, office, gymnasium, and band building (ACUSD 2022). The project site also includes a baseball field, track and field, swimming pool, lawn areas, and outdoor fitness and play equipment. Three surface parking lots are in the northern, northeastern, and southeastern portions of the campus. The buildings, surface parking lots, pool, and outdoor fitness area are on the east side of the campus; the sports fields are on the west side of campus. The campus can be accessed from South Mills Street and Sacramento Street, with parking lots available from both streets. The campus is partially fenced. The current enrollment is 396 students in 6th through 8th grade.

IONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ione ES campus at 415 S. Ione Street is developed with 28 buildings (combination of permanent and portable buildings) that include administration/classrooms, library, band room and platform, and multi-purpose and kitchen (ACUSD 2022). The campus also includes one sports field, two outdoor playgrounds and hardtop play areas, and a surface parking lot. The buildings, hardtop play areas, and surface parking lot are on the west side of the campus; the sports field is on the east side of campus. The campus can be accessed from Ione Street, which directly connects to SR-104. The campus is partially fenced. The current enrollment is 567 students in preschool through 5th grade.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.2.3 Surrounding Land Use

AMADOR HIGH SCHOOL

Amador HS is mainly surrounded by residential properties with the land use designation of Residential Single Family (RSF) and zoning of One Family Dwelling (R-1) in all directions. Commercial properties to the east have a land use designation of Commercial (C) and zoning of Commercial (C-2). More residential properties are located to the west of Oro Madre Way with the land use designation of Residential Low Density (RL) and zoning of Residential Low Density (R-L) with a Planned Development Overlay (Sutter Creek 2019a, 2019b).

INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

The north side of Independence HS borders the Sutter Creek city limits. Land uses to the northeast of the campus include industrial and institutional use with a land use designation of Residential High Density (RH), Public Service (PS), and Recreation (R) and zoning of Multiple Family (R-4), Recreation (R), and Public Service (P-S). Land uses to the east of the campus include industrial uses with a land use designation of Industrial (I) and a zoning of Light Industrial (I-1). Land uses to the south, southeast, and west of the campus include industrial uses with a land use designation of a Planned Development Overlay and a zoning of I-1 with a Planned Development Overlay (Sutter Creek 2019a, 2019b).

ARGONAUT HIGH SCHOOL

The west and south sides of Argonaut HS are in the Jackson city limits. Based on Jackson's General Plan Update, residential properties directly north have a land use designation and zoning of Residential Single Family (RSF), Residential Duplex (RD), and Residential Medium Density (RM). Land east of Argonaut Lane, including the Amador Superior Court and County Amador County Grand Jury, have a land use designation and zoning of Professional Office (PO) with a Planned Development Overlay. More residential uses are located further east with a land use designation and zoning of RSF (Jackson 2023).

JACKSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Based on the City's General Plan Update, residential properties to the south and west of Jackson Junior HS campus have a land use designation and zoning of RSF. Residential properties to the northwest of campus have a land use designation and zoning of Residential High Density (RH), RM, and PO. Commercial properties located north, beyond Sutter Street, have a land use designation and zoning of Limited Commercial (LC) and Commercial (C). Land to the east, bordering SR 88, has a land use designation and zoning of C and Open Space (OS) (Jackson 2023).

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

IONE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Residential properties directly north of Ione Junior HS have a land use designation of Low Density Residential (RL) and a zoning of One Family (6.7 du/ac max) (R-1b) and Limited Multiple Family (14.5 du/ac max) (R-2). Land to the southwest has a land use designation of Special Planning Area (SPA) and a zoning of Heavy Industrial and Mining (M-2), Limited Manufacturing and Industrial (M-1), and Heavy Commercial (C-3). There is a small portion of commercial properties with a land use designation of General Commercial (GC) and zoning of C-3 to the east of the campus (Ione 2009, 2018).

IONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Land directly north of Ione ES campus has a land use designation of Downtown Transition (DT) and zoning of Commercial Transition (C-T). The land to the east has a land use designation of High Density Residential (RH) and zoning of Planned Development (PD). Properties northeast of the campus, south of Foothill Boulevard, have a land use designation of GC and zoning of C-3. Open land directly south of campus has a land use designation of Parks and Recreation (PR) and zoning of Parks and Community Services (PCS). Commercial properties to the west have a land use designation of GC and zoning of C-3 and C-T (Ione 2009, 2018).

2.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

2.3.1 Proposed Land Use

The District is proposing to consolidate six school campuses onto five campuses. This would require minor physical improvements at four of the campuses—Argonaut HS, Amador HS, Jackson Junior HS, and Ione Junior HS. See Figure 3a, *Proposed School Closure/Consolidation Program*, which shows how the schools would be reconfigured.

The proposed project would not change the elementary school attendance boundaries. The proposed project would change the junior high school boundaries and the high school boundaries (see Figures 3b, *Proposed Junior High School Boundaries*, and 3c, *Proposed High School Boundaries*).

AMADOR COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION PROGRAM PROJECT
AMADOR COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

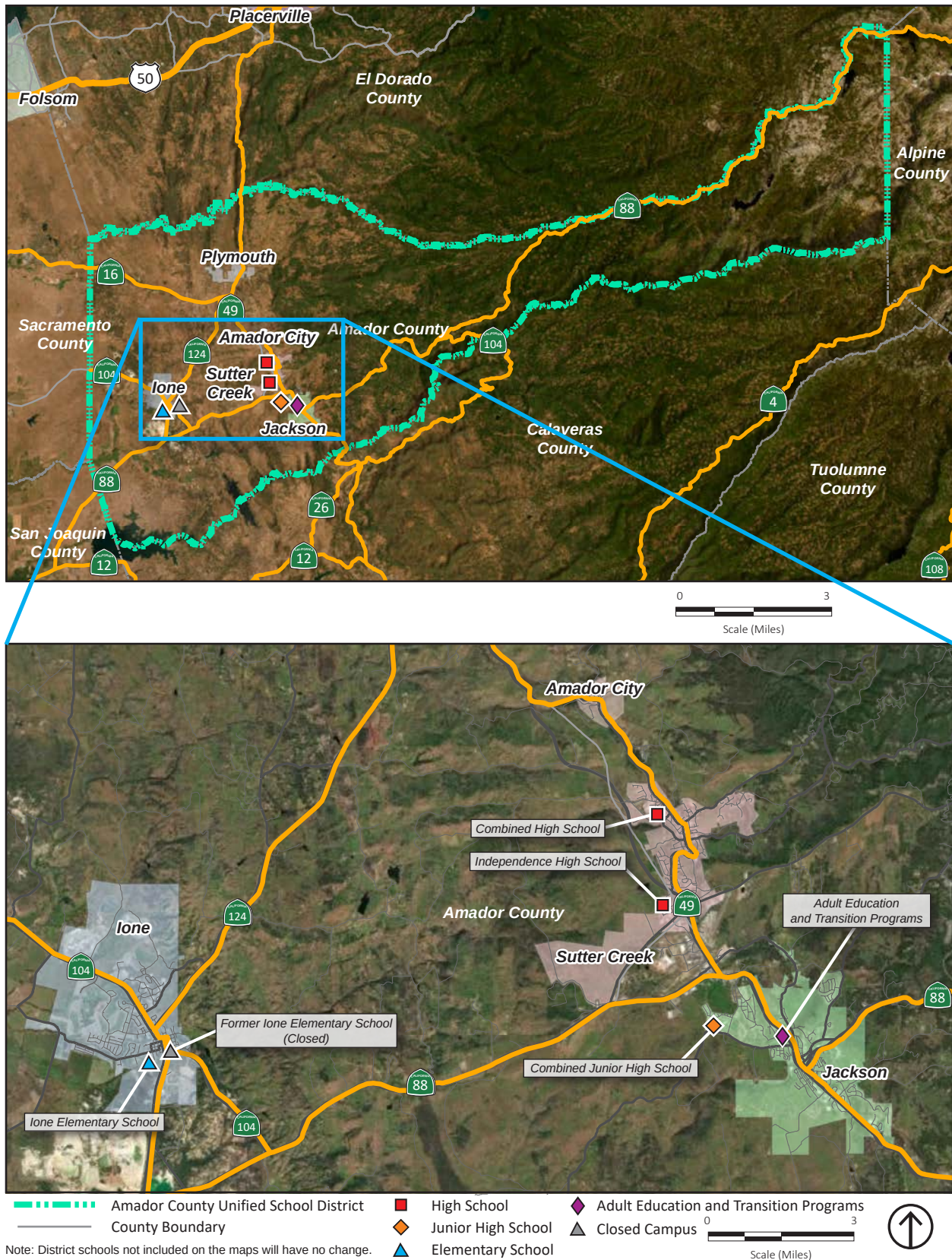
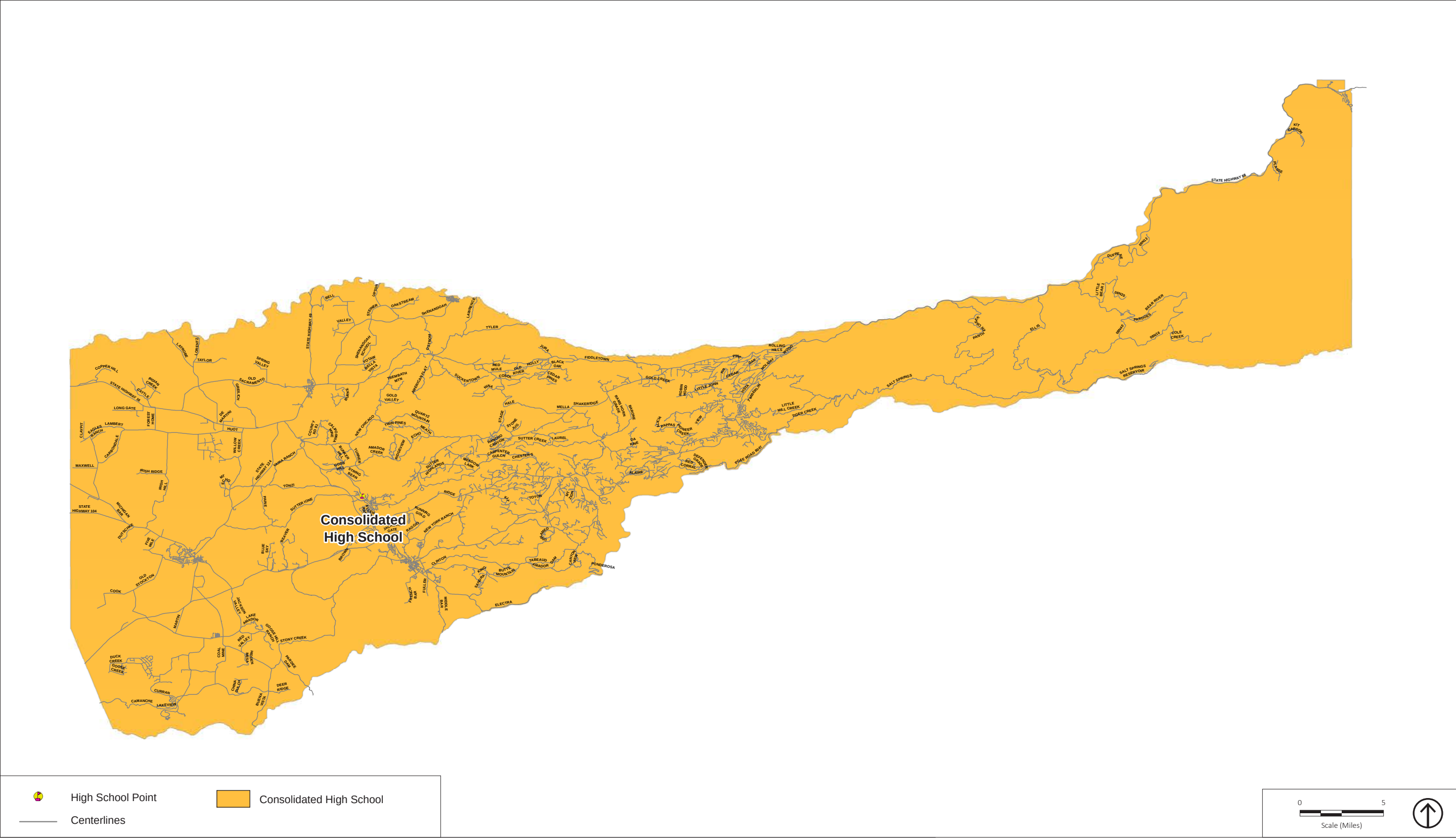


Figure 3a
Proposed School Closure/Consolidation

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This page intentionally left blank.

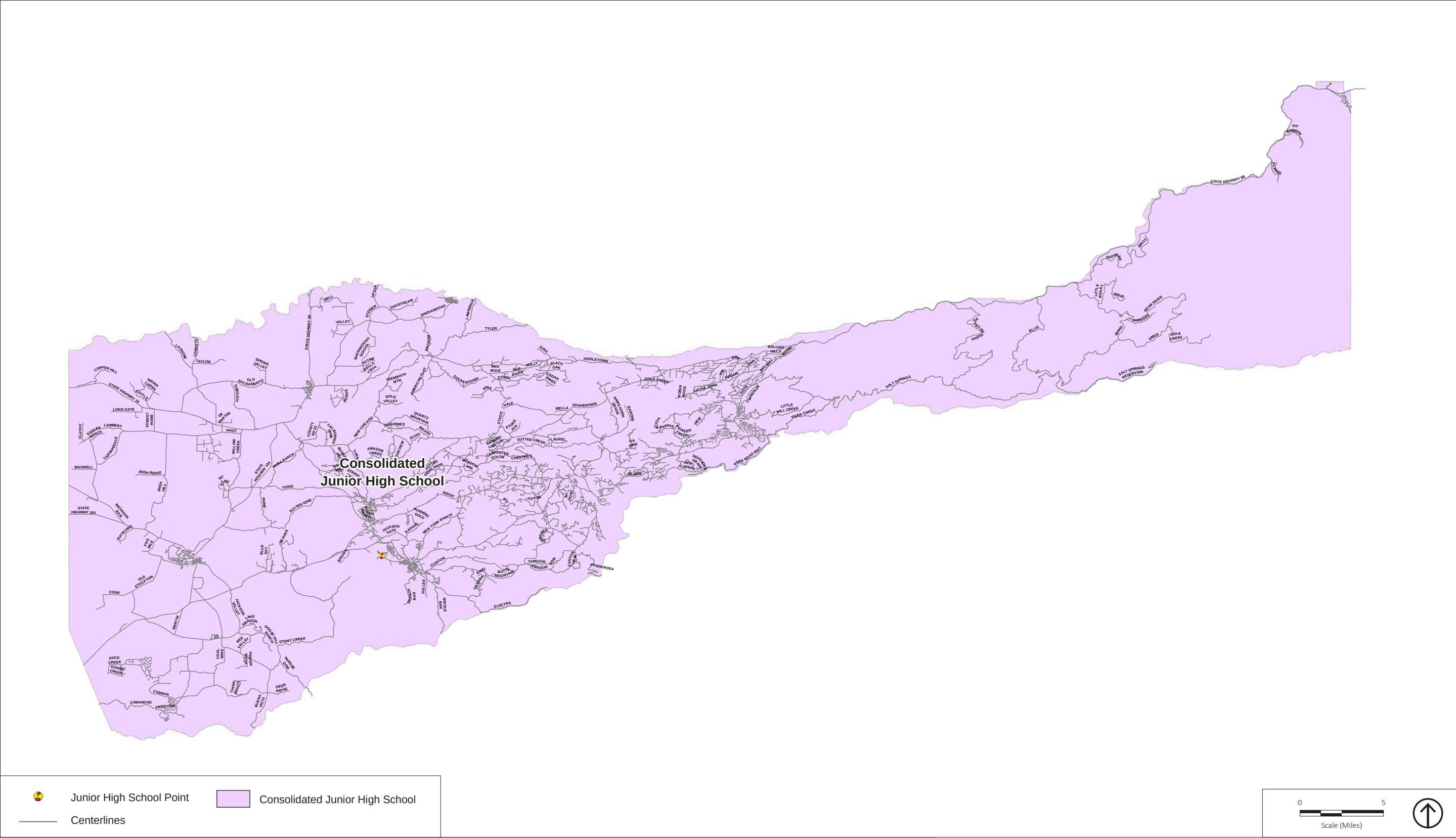


Source: ACUSD 2023.

Figure 3b
Proposed High School Boundary

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This page intentionally left blank.



Source: ACUSD 2023.

Figure 3c
Proposed Junior High School Boundary

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This page intentionally left blank.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SCHOOL CLOSURE/CONSOLIDATION PROGRAM

To address declining enrollment and improve operational efficiency, the District proposes a comprehensive school consolidation program that would reconfigure existing campuses to better align educational programs with current and projected student populations.

The District proposes to consolidate its two existing high schools, Amador HS and Argonaut HS, into a single districtwide high school located at the current Amador HS campus. Under this proposal, the Amador HS campus would serve grades 10 through 12. Northstar Academy, an existing independent study program located on the Amador HS campus, would remain in place. As a result of the consolidation, enrollment at Amador HS would increase from approximately 573 students to approximately 821 students, while enrollment at Argonaut HS would decrease from approximately 535 students to zero. Enrollment at Northstar Academy would remain approximately 47 students. Limited site improvements would be required at the Amador HS campus to accommodate operational and programmatic needs and improve campus circulation, as discussed further below.

The District also proposes to consolidate its two existing junior high schools, Jackson Junior HS and Lone Junior HS, into a single districtwide junior high school located at the current Argonaut HS campus. The reconfigured campus would serve grades 7 through 9. Northstar Academy, which currently operates on the Argonaut HS campus, would remain in place. As a result of the consolidation, enrollment at Jackson Junior HS would decrease from approximately 275 students to zero, and enrollment at Lone Junior HS would decrease from approximately 396 students to zero. The new districtwide junior high school would serve approximately 857 students. Enrollment at Northstar Academy would remain approximately 47 students. In addition, two classrooms on the Argonaut HS campus would continue to be dedicated to the State Preschool and Special Education Preschool programs. Site improvements would be required to accommodate the age-specific needs of middle-grade students, support expanded program offerings, and improve campus circulation, as discussed further below.

The District would continue to operate Independence HS and the County Community School program at the existing Independence HS campus. Enrollment for Independence HS would remain approximately 61 students and enrollment for the County Community School program would remain approximately 14 students. However, the District Adult Education Program and Adult Transition Program, which currently operate at the Independence HS campus, would be relocated to the Jackson Junior HS campus. Enrollment in the Adult Education Program would remain approximately 40 students, and enrollment in the Adult Transition Program would include approximately 12 students. No site improvements are proposed at the Independence HS campus.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Following relocation of junior high school students to the new districtwide junior high school, the Jackson Junior HS campus would be converted to accommodate the Adult Education Program and Adult Transition Program for students ages 18 to 22. The conversion would require interior renovations to support adult learning environments and age-appropriate accessibility improvements, as discussed further below.

Upon completion of the transition and relocation of all students, the existing lone ES campus would close and be retained for future disposition. The campus would remain secured by perimeter fencing, and security cameras would continue to operate for as long as the District retains ownership of the property. District staff would also conduct periodic site inspections to ensure security measures remain functional and the property is properly maintained.

As part of the proposed project, each elementary school and junior high school campus would have a campus supervisor responsible for overseeing a valet-style pick-up and drop-off program. Campus personnel would assist with loading and unloading students from vehicles and buses and meter departing traffic to facilitate efficient circulation onto adjacent roadways. At the high school campus, the campus supervisor would similarly meter departing vehicles during pick-up and drop-off periods.

AMADOR HIGH SCHOOL SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Site improvements at the Amador HS campus would consist of relocating two existing portable classrooms, currently at Jackson Junior HS, to the Amador HS campus for the proposed districtwide high school that would total nearly 2,000 square feet of classroom space. The two portable classrooms would be relocated to the southern portion of the Amador HS campus and placed side-by-side. This relocation may require minor asphalt improvements to accommodate the classroom pads, as well as utility improvements to provide power. Site improvements at the Amador HS campus will also require limited site improvements to support operational and program needs and circulation associated with placement of the relocated portable classrooms and the reorganization of the campus; see Figure 4, *Amador High School Site Improvements*.

ARGONAUT HIGH SCHOOL SITE IMPROVEMENTS

The Argonaut High School campus would require minor modifications to support middle school programming associated with the consolidation of the District's junior high schools. These modifications consist of program and operational adjustments. Physical improvements would include changes to interior classroom configurations, student support spaces, and circulation. These programs would not generate any exterior construction.



Source: California Design W

Figure 4
Amador High School Site Improvements

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This page intentionally left blank.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

JACKSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Site improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments to support the District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program that would be moved to the current Jackson Junior HS campus. These renovations include reconfiguration or adaptation of existing interior spaces and other minor interior improvements necessary to support adult learning environments.

IONE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Site improvements at the current Ione Junior High School campus would include constructing up to four new classrooms in a single classroom building, totaling up to 4,500 square feet, in the northern portion of the campus. To accommodate the new kindergarten/preschool classroom building and related site improvements, up to four trees would be removed. The northern parking lot would be reconfigured (restriped) to increase the parking capacity from 20 spaces to 68 spaces. The reconfiguration would be within the existing parking lot footprint and would not expand the paved surface area or include any demolition of the existing asphalt. Additional improvements would include age-appropriate playground equipment and a dedicated kindergarten pick-up and drop-off loop constructed at the eastern portion of the campus; see Figure 5, *Ione Junior High School Site Improvements*.

A summary of the proposed campus reconfigurations, including grade levels, enrollment changes, campus capacity, and site improvements, is provided in Table 1, *Proposed Campus Changes*.

Table 1 Proposed Campus Changes

Project Characteristics	Existing	Proposed
Amador High School, located in City of Sutter Creek Proposed Action: Combine Amador High School and Argonaut High School at Amador High School Campus		
Enrollment Capacity	875 students Grades 9–12	925 students Grades 10–12
Actual Enrollment	573 students Grades 9–12	821 students Grades 10–12
Teaching Stations	35	37
Site Improvements	--	Relocating two existing portable classrooms. Site improvements to support operational and programmatic needs and circulation.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Table 1 Proposed Campus Changes

Project Characteristics	Existing	Proposed
Independence High School, located in City of Sutter Creek Proposed Action: Move District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program to Jackson Junior High School Campus		
Enrollment Capacity	140 students Grades 7–12; Ages 18–22	140 students Grades 7–12
Actual Enrollment	Independence High School: 61 students, Grades 10–12; County Community School: 14 students, Grades 7–12; Adult Education Program: 40 students, Ages 18–22; Adult Transition Program: 12 students, Ages 18–22	Independence High School: 61 students, Grades 10–12; County Community School: 14 students, Grades 7–12
Teaching Stations	7	7
Site Improvements	--	None.
Argonaut High School, located in City of Jackson Proposed Action: Combine Jackson Junior High School and Lone Junior High School at Argonaut High School Campus		
Enrollment Capacity	925 students Grades 9–12	925 students Grades 7–9
Actual Enrollment	535 students Grades 9–12	857 students Grades 7–9
	37	37
Site Improvements	--	Program and operational adjustments. Physical improvements would include changes to interior classroom configurations, student support spaces, and circulation.
Jackson Junior High School, located in City of Jackson Proposed Action: Move District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program to Jackson Junior High School		
Enrollment Capacity	475 students Grades 6–8	425 students Ages 18–22
Actual Enrollment	275 students Grades 7–8	Adult Education Program: 40 students, Ages 18–22; Adult Transition Program: 12 students, Ages 18–22

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Table 1 Proposed Campus Changes

Project Characteristics	Existing	Proposed
Teaching Stations	19	17
Site Improvements	--	Construct interior renovations for adult learning environments.
Ione Junior High School, located in City of Ione Proposed Action: Move Grades Preschool through 5th Grade from Ione Elementary School Campus to Combine with 6th Grade at Ione Junior High School Campus		
Enrollment Capacity	775 students Grades 6–8	815 students Grades K–6
Actual Enrollment	396 students Grades 6–8	658 students Preschool, K–6
Teaching Stations	31	33
Site Improvements	--	Construct up to four new classrooms totaling up to 4,500 square feet. Remove up to four trees. Install age-appropriate playgrounds. Reconfigure (restripe) northern parking lot in same footprint to increase parking capacity and construct dedicated kindergarten pick-up and drop-off loop on east side of campus.
Ione Elementary School, located in City of Ione Proposed Action: Close Ione Elementary School Campus		
Enrollment Capacity	750 students Preschool through 5th Grade	0 students (campus to close)
Actual Enrollment	567 students Preschool through 5th Grade	0 (campus to close)
Teaching Stations	31	0 (campus to close)
Site Improvements	--	None.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.3.2 Construction

Construction for the site improvements at Amador HS would begin in Spring of 2027 and conclude in Summer of 2027. Construction for the site improvements at Lone Junior HS would begin in Fall of 2029 and conclude in Spring of 2030.

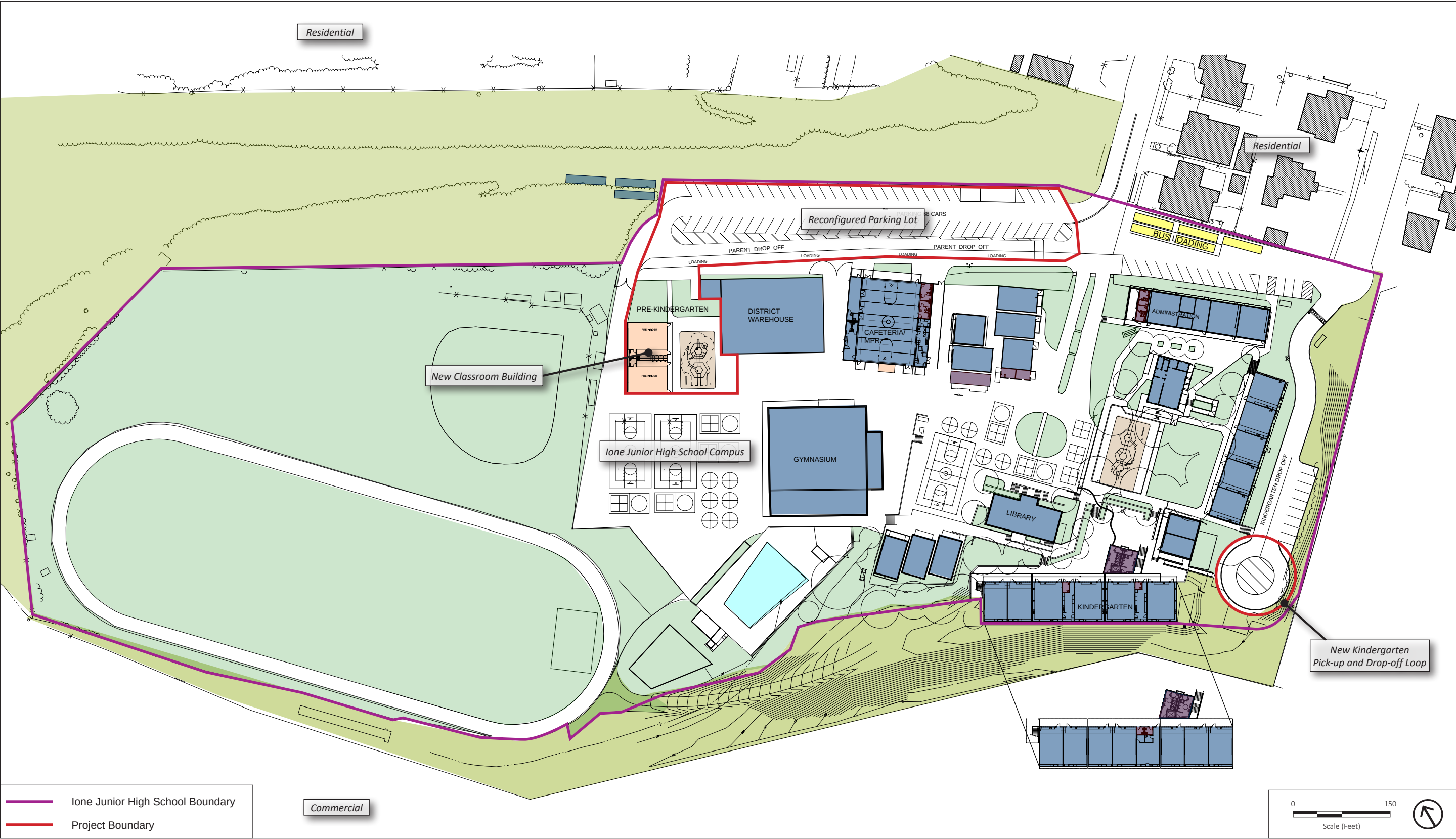
2.4 REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The District is the lead agency under CEQA and is carrying out the proposed project. The District Board of Trustees (Board) must approve the proposed project and adopt the IS/MND and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). The Board will consider the information in the IS/MND when making its decision to approve or deny the proposed project, or in directing modifications to the proposed project in response to the IS/MND's findings and mitigation measures. The IS/MND is intended to disclose to the public the proposed project's details, analyses of the proposed project's potential environment impacts, and identification of feasible mitigation that would lessen or reduce significant impacts to less-than-significant levels.

The District is the lead agency under CEQA and has approval authority over the proposed project. The proposed project would also require approval and/or coordination from responsible agencies. See Table 2, *Discretionary Approvals and Permits*.

Table 2 Discretionary Approvals and Permits

Lead Agency	Action
Amador County Unified School District	- Approve the proposed project - Adopt the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration - Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
Responsible Agencies	Action
Department of General Services, Division of State Architect	- Approval of construction drawings for the Amador HS, Argonaut HS, and Lone Junior HS campuses - Verify compliance with educational facility design standards and siting criteria
California Department of Education, School Facilities Planning Division	- Approval of school site layout - Verify compliance with educational facility design standards and siting criteria
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	- Review of Notice of Intent to obtain permit coverage - Issuance of general permit for discharges of stormwater associated with construction activity - Review of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan



Source: California Design West Architects 2023.

Figure 5
Lone Junior High School Site Improvements

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This page intentionally left blank.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

This section includes a checklist for each environmental topic, evaluates the significance criteria in the checklists, and, if necessary, provides mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts.

I. Aesthetics

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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 nonurbanized 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 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The Aesthetics analysis is organized by city because visual character, aesthetic resources, and applicable policies are defined by each local jurisdiction's General Plan and municipal code. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates the geographic context of each of the six campuses within its respective city, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential aesthetic impacts across all project sites.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

DISCUSSION

a) *Would the proposed project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*

City of Sutter Creek

Two campuses from the proposed project would be located in the city of Sutter Creek: Amador HS and Independence HS. The proposed improvements at the Amador HS campus would consist of relocating two existing portable classrooms and other limited site improvements to support operational and program needs and circulation. No site improvements would occur on the Independence HS campus.

According to the Sutter Creek General Plan, the Amador HS campus is not located within a Visually Sensitive Area (VSA), scenic ridgeline, Creekside Greenway, or Historic District. The General Plan concentrates its scenic resource protections on natural and undeveloped hillsides, prominent ridgelines, riparian corridors along Sutter Creek, and the historic downtown district. The Sutter Hill/Martell area, where Amador High School is located, is designated for commercial and industrial development and is not identified as possessing scenic values (Sutter Creek 2019). The campus is located within the developed area of the city, which maintains a rural character. The physical improvements proposed at Amador HS are limited in scope and would occur entirely within the existing developed footprint of the campus. The proposed project would not change the use of the campus nor introduce incompatible uses to the campus, and would not introduce new structures that could block or degrade views or alter the surrounding pastoral and residential visual character.

As stated above, no site improvements or physical changes would occur on the Independence HS campus, therefore no substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista would occur.

Therefore, impacts on scenic vistas are **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

City of Jackson

Two campuses from the proposed project would be located in the city of Jackson: Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS. The proposed improvements at Argonaut HS would consist primarily of minor program and operational adjustments, including potential changes to classroom configurations, student support spaces, and minor campus circulation or supervisory needs; no major structural construction is being proposed. Improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments for the incoming District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program students.

According to the City of Jackson General Plan, the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses are not located within Visual Corridor Overlay zones, which are areas that maintain visual town

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

boundaries and protect scenic views in Jackson (Jackson 2023). Both campuses are located within developed areas of the city. The physical improvements proposed at the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses are limited in scope and entirely within the existing developed footprint of the campuses. The proposed project would not change the use of the campuses or introduce incompatible uses, and would not introduce new structures that could block or degrade views or alter the surrounding residential visual character.

Therefore, impacts on scenic vistas are **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

City of Lone

Two campuses from the proposed project would be located in the City of Lone: Lone Junior HS and Lone ES. The proposed improvements at the Lone Junior HS campus would consist of the construction of up to four new classrooms in a single classroom building, removal of trees, reconfiguration of the northern parking lot to increase parking capacity, and other limited site improvements to support operational and programmatic needs and circulation. No site improvements would occur on the Lone ES campus.

According to the City of Lone General Plan, protected scenic views are located along SR-104 in the Q Ranch Policy Area. The Lone Junior HS campus is not located in the Q Ranch Policy Area (Lone 2023). The Lone Junior HS campus is located within a developed area of the city. The physical improvements proposed at the Lone Junior HS campus are limited in scope and entirely within the existing developed footprint of the campus. The proposed project would not change the use of the campus nor introduce incompatible uses, and would not introduce new structures that could block or degrade views or alter the surrounding residential visual character.

As stated above, no site improvements or physical changes would occur on the Lone ES campus, therefore no substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista would occur.

Therefore, impacts on scenic vistas are **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

- b) *Would the proposed project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?***

City of Sutter Creek

Two campuses from the proposed project would be located in the City of Sutter Creek: Amador HS and Independence HS. The closest designated state scenic highway is SR-88, which is approximately 19.4 miles east of the Amador HS campus and 20 miles east of the Independence HS campus. The closest eligible state scenic highway is SR-49, approximately 0.17 mile west of the Amador HS campus and 0.35 mile east of the Independence HS campus (Caltrans 2026).

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Due to the distance, topography, and intervening development, the Amador HS and Independence HS campuses are not visible from SR-88.

Additionally, the proposed improvements at the Amador HS campus would not occur on or around any rock outcrops or historic buildings, no trees would be removed, and there would be no improvements at the Independence HS campus.

Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Jackson

Two campuses from the proposed project would be located in the City of Jackson: Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS. The closest designated state scenic highway is SR-88, which is approximately 20 miles east of the Argonaut HS campus and 19.5 miles northeast of the Jackson Junior HS campus. The closest eligible state scenic highway is SR-49, which is located approximately 0.45 mile east of the Argonaut HS campus and 0.1 mile east of the Jackson Junior HS campus (Caltrans 2026). Due to the distance, topography, and intervening development, the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses are not visible from SR-88. Improvements at the campuses would be made on the existing school campus and would be visually compatible with the existing campuses.

Additionally, the proposed improvements at both campuses would not occur on or around any rock outcrops or historic buildings and no trees would be removed. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Lone

Two campuses from the proposed project would be located in the city of Lone: Lone Junior HS and Lone ES. The closest designated state scenic highway is SR-88, which is approximately 27.6 miles east of the Lone Junior HS campus and 26.8 miles northeast of the Lone ES campus. The closest eligible state scenic highway is SR-49, which is located approximately 7 miles east of the Lone Junior HS campus and 7.2 miles east of the Lone ES campus (Caltrans 2026). Due to the distance, topography, and intervening development, the Lone Junior HS and Lone ES campuses are not visible from SR-88. Improvements at Lone Junior HS would be made on the existing school campus and would be visually compatible with the existing campus.

The proposed improvements at the Lone Junior HS campus would not occur on or around any rock outcrops or historic buildings. However, up to four trees would be removed at the Lone Junior HS campus but none of the trees would be adjacent to a state scenic highway. Additionally, there would be no improvements at the Lone ES campus. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- c) ***Would the proposed project, in nonurbanized 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 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?***

The visual character of a project site includes scenic quality, scenic vistas, topography, and landscaping. A scenic vista generally refers to a view that possesses visual and aesthetic qualities of high value to the community. Aesthetic value is not limited to natural and rural viewsheds but can also be held in historic structures and districts, architectural design, and streetscapes.

An urbanized area, as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21071, is an incorporated city that either has a population of at least 100,000 persons or has a population of less than 100,000 persons and the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons. The cities of Jackson, Lone, and Sutter Creek are in a nonurbanized areas. According to the US Census Bureau, as of 2024, Jackson had approximately 5,709 people, Lone had 9,411 people, and Sutter Creek had 2,702 people (US Census Bureau 2024; Census Reporter 2024). Thus, this impact is analyzing if the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings.

Construction at the three campuses with site improvements (Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Lone Junior HS) would result in a temporary change in visual character. Construction activities would include site clearing, grading and tree removal, building, paving, and architectural finishings. Construction activities would require staging areas for stockpiles and construction equipment. Stockpiles and equipment would be staged on paved areas in the parking lots during the duration of construction. When not in use, stockpiles and equipment would be kept secure and generally out of view or reach from public rights-of-way with fencing and tarps. Construction of the proposed project would result in temporary views of typical construction activities. Therefore, construction impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Sutter Creek

Two campuses from the proposed project would be located in Sutter Creek: Amador HS and Independence HS. The proposed improvements at the Amador HS campus would consist of relocating two existing portable classrooms and other limited site improvements to support operational and programmatic needs and circulation. No site improvements would occur on the Independence HS campus. The Amador HS campus is already developed with multiple buildings, parking lots, and athletic facilities. Public views of the campus from surrounding roadways and neighborhoods are characterized primarily by residential views.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The improvements at Amador HS would support the consolidation of the District's high schools. The improvements would be made on the existing school campus and would be consistent with the current visual appearance of the campus. No major structural construction is anticipated. Therefore, the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the campus and its surroundings. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Jackson

Two campuses from the proposed project would be located in the City of Jackson: Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS. The proposed improvements at Argonaut HS would consist of minor modifications, primarily program and operational adjustments, including potential changes to classroom configurations, student support spaces, and minor campus circulation or supervisory needs; no major structural construction is being proposed. Improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments for the incoming District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program students. The Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses are already developed with multiple buildings, parking lots, and athletic facilities. Public views of the campus from surrounding roadways and neighborhoods are characterized primarily by residential views.

The improvements at the Argonaut HS campus are minor modifications to support middle school programming associated with the consolidation of the District's junior high schools, and consist primarily of program and operational adjustments. Improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only be interior modifications. The improvements would be made on the existing school campuses and would be consistent with the current visual appearance of the campuses. No major structural construction is anticipated. Therefore, the proposed project would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the campus and its surroundings. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Lone

Two campuses from the proposed project would be in Lone: Lone Junior HS and Lone ES. The proposed improvements at the Lone Junior HS campus would consist of the construction of up to four new classrooms in a single classroom building, removal of trees, reconfiguration of the northern parking lot to increase parking capacity, and other limited site improvements to support operational and programmatic needs and circulation. No site improvements would occur on the Lone ES campus. The Lone Junior HS campus is already developed with multiple buildings, parking lots, and athletic facilities. Public views of the campus from surrounding roadways and neighborhoods are characterized primarily by residential views.

The improvements at the Lone Junior HS campus would support the preschool and K-6 students on the campus. The improvements would be made on the existing school campus and would be consistent with the current visual appearance of the campus. Therefore, the proposed project

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the campus and its surroundings. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

d) *Would the proposed project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

Light and glare impacts can affect a project's exterior lighting on adjacent uses and areas. Glare can also be generated by light reflecting off passing cars and large expanses of glass windows or other reflective surfaces. Excessive sunlight and glare can impair vision, cause annoyance, affect sleep patterns, and generate safety hazards when experienced by drivers. A significant impact may occur if lighting as part of the proposed project exceeds adopted thresholds for light and glare, including exterior lighting or light spillover, or if the proposed project creates a substantial new light source or glow. Light and glare impacts are determined by comparing the existing light and glare sources with the light and glare generated from the buildout of the proposed project.

City of Sutter Creek

Two campuses are in Sutter Creek: Amador HS and Independence HS. No site improvements would occur on the Independence HS campus, and no new sources of light or glare would be created. The Amador HS campus is already developed with school facilities that include exterior lighting for safety, security, and nighttime activities such as sporting events. The surrounding area is characterized by residential neighborhoods and rural settings where ambient nighttime light levels are low.

The proposed project does not include the addition of new sources of light at the Amador HS campus. The proposed improvements do not include the introduction of highly reflective building materials such as extensive untreated metal siding or large expanses of glass that could create substantial daytime glare. Therefore, because the project would not introduce new sources of light or highly reflective materials that would create substantial daytime glare, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Jackson

Two campuses are in Jackson: Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS. The proposed improvements at Argonaut HS would consist of minor modifications, primarily program and operational adjustments, including potential changes to classroom configurations, student support spaces, and minor campus circulation or supervisory needs; no major structural construction is being proposed. Improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments for the incoming District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program students.

The Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses are already developed with school facilities that include existing exterior lighting for safety, security, and nighttime activities such as

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

sporting events. The surrounding area is characterized by residential neighborhoods and rural settings where ambient nighttime light levels are low.

The proposed project does not include the addition of new sources of light at the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses. The proposed improvements do not include the introduction of highly reflective building materials such as extensive untreated metal siding or large expanses of glass that could create substantial daytime glare. Because the project would not introduce new sources of light or highly reflective materials that would create substantial daytime glare, impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Lone

Two campuses are in Lone: Lone Junior HS and Lone ES. No site improvements would occur on the Lone ES campus, and no new sources of light or glare would be created. The Lone Junior HS campus is developed with school facilities that include exterior lighting for safety, security, and nighttime activities. The surrounding area is characterized by residential neighborhoods, open fields, and rural settings where ambient nighttime light levels are low.

The proposed project would involve limited new sources of light associated with the site improvements at the Lone Junior HS campus. The construction of a new classroom building would include a new interior lighting source, the scale of which would be consistent with typical school campus illumination and would not constitute a substantial new source of light. The proposed improvements do not include the introduction of highly reflective building materials such as extensive untreated metal siding or large expanses of glass that could create substantial daytime glare. The new classroom building would be consistent with the design and materials of existing campus buildings, which are not identified as sources of glare.

All new lighting would be required to comply with applicable regulations that minimize light pollution and glare. The California Building Code, as adopted by the City of Lone, includes the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen), which at Section 5.106.8 establishes specific requirements for light pollution reduction. This section requires that nonresidential development meet backlight, uplight, and glare (BUG) ratings to minimize the effects of light pollution on adjacent properties and the night sky. The City of Lone enforces the California Building Code and CALGreen through its municipal code (Lone Municipal Code Title 15), which includes the light pollution reduction standards of CALGreen Section 5.106.8. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

II. Agriculture and Forestry Resources

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than- Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than- Significant Impact	No Impact
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 non-agricultural 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 forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The Agriculture and Forestry Resources analysis is organized by campus to evaluate site-specific conditions related to agricultural lands, Williamson Act contract lands, and forest resources.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Each of the six campuses was evaluated individually, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts across all project sites.

DISCUSSION

- a) ***Would the proposed project 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 non-agricultural use?***

The proposed project would consist of minor physical improvements at four current campuses—Argonaut HS, Amador HS, Jackson Junior HS, and Lone Junior HS—in the cities of Sutter Creek, Jackson, and Lone. Improvements at Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS would not include any major structural construction, with most improvements consisting of interior improvements. Improvements at Amador HS and Lone Junior HS would include exterior site improvements. All six campuses are on land that is already developed with school facilities, including buildings, parking lots, athletic fields, and other improvements, as described in Section 2.2.2, *Existing Land Uses*.

The project sites are designated for public or public service uses by their respective cities. In Sutter Creek, Amador High School and Independence High School are zoned as Public Service (P-S) with a land use designation of Public Service (PS) (Sutter Creek 2019a, 2019b). In Jackson, Argonaut High School and Jackson Junior High School are zoned and have a land use designation of Public (Jackson 2014, 2023). In Lone, Lone Junior High School and Lone Elementary School are zoned as Public Facilities (PF) with a land use designation of Public Service (PS) (Lone 2009, 2018). These designations indicate that the land is already committed to urban uses and is not classified or mapped as agricultural land.

The California Important Farmland Finder is produced by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) pursuant to Section 65570 of the California Government Code. According to the FMMP, agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status and is divided into five categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance, Unique Farmland, and Grazing Land. The best quality land is Prime Farmland (DOC 2026a). Farmland of Statewide Importance is similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Unique Farmland is farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops.

The proposed project involves the consolidation of six schools onto five existing campuses, with minor physical improvements at Amador High School, Argonaut High School, Jackson Junior High School, and Lone Junior High School. These improvements consist of relocating existing portable classrooms, reconfiguring a parking lot within its existing footprint, constructing a

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

single new classroom building of modest size, and installing playground equipment. All improvements would be entirely within the existing developed footprints of the campuses. The project does not involve annexation of new land, acquisition of adjacent properties, or expansion of campus boundaries into areas that are currently in agricultural use.

Therefore, because all project sites are developed with school facilities, are designated for non-agricultural uses, and would not be mapped as agricultural land by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the proposed project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use, and **no impact** would occur.

b) *Would the proposed project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?*

All campuses are within incorporated city limits, are zoned for non-agricultural uses, and are currently developed and operate as schools. Williamson Act contracts are on parcels in active agricultural production, and all project sites are already developed with school facilities and are not subject to such a contract. There are two Williamson Act contract properties to the south and north of Argonaut HS; however, the proposed project would not affect these properties (DOC 2026b). The proposed improvements at each campus would occur entirely within existing developed footprints with no expansion into adjacent areas. Therefore, the project would not conflict with agricultural zoning or a Williamson Act contract, and **no impact** would occur.

c) *Would the proposed project 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))?*

All project sites are located within incorporated city limits, are already developed with school facilities, and are zoned for public or public service uses, including Public Service (P-S) in Sutter Creek, Public in Jackson, and Public Facilities (PF) in Lone (Sutter Creek 2019a; Jackson 2023; Lone 2009). None of the sites are zoned for forest land or timberland production, and they are not located in areas designated for such uses. The proposed project improvements would occur entirely within existing developed footprints with no expansion into adjacent areas. Therefore, the project would not conflict with forest land or timberland zoning, and **no impact** would occur.

d) *Would the proposed project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?*

The campuses are within urbanized areas of the Lone, Jackson, and Sutter Creek. The campuses are developed with school uses and do not contain forest land. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project, including the site improvements to the four campuses, would not result

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use, and no impact would occur. Therefore, the project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use, and **no impact** would occur.

- e) ***Would the proposed project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?***

All project sites are located within incorporated city limits, are already developed with school facilities, and are zoned for non-agricultural or non-forestry uses. The sites are not mapped as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, nor are they located on forest land. The proposed project improvements would occur entirely within existing developed footprints with no expansion into adjacent areas. The site improvements would not result in the conversation of farmland to a non-agricultural use or of forest land to a non-forest use. **No impact** would occur.

III. Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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 non-attainment 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The analysis in this section is based on information provided in Appendix A, *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Energy Background Information and ITE Trip Generation*, of this Initial Study.

This section addresses the potential impacts of the proposed project on ambient air quality and the exposure of people, especially sensitive individuals, to unhealthful pollutant concentrations. The primary air pollutants of concern for which ambient air quality standards (AAQS) have been established are ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), coarse inhalable particulate matter (PM₁₀), fine inhalable particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and lead (Pb). Areas are classified under the federal and California Clean Air Act as either in attainment or nonattainment for each criteria pollutant based on whether the AAQS have been achieved. Amador County is within the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB) and the portion of the air basin within Amador County is managed by the Amador Air District. Other county-level air districts manage areas of the MCAB contiguous to their county boundaries, including Plumas, Sierra, Nevada, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa, Placer (middle portion), and El Dorado (western portion) Counties. The MCAB is nonattainment area for California and National AAQS for O₃ (CARB 2026). Amador Air District has not adopted thresholds for air quality emissions. Therefore, the following analysis is based on the methodology recommended by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD), in lieu of available Amador Air District-specific guidance. However, development under the proposed project would be subject to Amador Air District rules and regulations.

Development projects below SMAQMD's regional significance thresholds are not expected to generate sufficient criteria pollutant emissions to violate any air quality standard, contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, or substantially contribute to health impacts. SMAQMD has developed screening criteria that can be used to qualitatively assess whether a project would exceed the significance thresholds. According to SMAQMD's *Guide to Air Quality Assessment in Sacramento County* (CEQA Guide), a project that does not exceed the screening level and meets all the screening parameters will be considered to have a less-than-significant impact on air quality (SMAQMD 2009). For construction phase impacts, projects that are 35 acres or less in size would not exceed SMAQMD's construction NO_x threshold of significance. In order to use the screening criteria for construction, the project cannot include any of the following parameters (SMAQMD 2020a):

- Buildings more than 4 stories tall
- Demolition activities
- Major trenching activities
- A construction schedule that is unusually compact, fast-paced, or involves more than 2 phases (i.e., grading, paving, building construction, and architectural coatings) occurring simultaneously
- Cut-and-fill operations (moving earth with haul trucks and/or flattening or terracing hills)

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- Import or export of soil materials that will require a considerable amount of haul truck activity

The high school land use screening levels for operational impacts are as follows. If a high school project is below these sizes, it is considered to result in operational emissions below the respective thresholds of significance for each pollutant including NO_x, Reactive Organic Gases (ROGs), PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} (SMAQMD 2018).¹

- **Ozone Precursors** (NO_x and ROG): 370,000 square feet or 2,780 students
- **PM**: 735,000 square feet or 5,525 students

SMAQMD notes that the operational screening criteria should not be used to evaluate operational emissions from projects that have one or more of the following characteristics (SMAQMD 2020b):

- The project will include wood stoves or wood-burning appliances
- The project does not include SMAQMD-recommended BMPs for PM emissions
- Project trip generation rates are expected to be greater than the default trip rates in CalEEMod
- The vehicle fleet mix for the project is expected to be substantially different from the average vehicle fleet mix for Sacramento County. For example, the fleet mix associated with an industrial land use project will likely consist of a higher portion of heavy-duty trucks
- The project will include mixed-use development
- The project will include any industrial land use types (possibly including stationary sources of emissions).

SMAQMD also notes that use of the screening levels for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} assume the project includes operational best management practices (BMPs). Because the BMPs recommended by SMAQMD are generally required by existing regulations, SMAQMD states that they should not be incorporated as mitigation measures. The full text of these BMPs and further information regarding the air quality regulatory setting can be found in Appendix A. The following summarizes requirements of the BMPs (SMAQMD 2020c):

- Compliance with District rules that control operational PM and NO_x emissions.

¹ Ozone is formed each day when emissions of ozone precursors, ROG and NO_x, react in the presence of sunlight. Therefore, SMAQMD uses a single screening level that applies to the significance criteria of both ROG and NO_x based on their role as ozone precursors. The PM screening levels represent PM₁₀ emissions since the PM₁₀ emissions level will exceed the significance threshold before PM_{2.5} emissions levels will be exceeded (SMAQMD 2018).

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- Compliance with mandatory measures in the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6)
- Compliance with mandatory measures in the California Green Building Code (Title 24, Part 11)
- Compliance with anti-idling regulations for diesel powered commercial motor vehicles²

Because the impacts related to air quality concern both regional and localized contexts, the scopes of impacts discussed in the following Air Quality analysis vary across the individual impact discussions. For example, impacts regarding consistency with Air Quality Management Plans and cumulatively considerable net increases in criteria air pollutants analyze the collective, cumulative impact of all actions under the proposed project because these impacts occur at a regional scale. However, impacts regarding exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and odors that adversely affect a substantial number of people are largely constrained to the local vicinity of a project site and are therefore analyzed at a campus-specific scale.

DISCUSSION

a) ***Would the proposed project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?***

A consistency determination plays an important role in local agency project review by linking local planning and individual projects to the Amador Air District portion of the California State Implementation Plan (SIP) (USEPA 2023).

The SIP plans and control measures are based on information derived from regional growth projections based on general plans developed by the County of Amador to forecast future emission levels in the MCAB. As such, projects that are consistent with the County's General Plan and propose development consistent with the anticipated growth for the region would be consistent with the SIP. Changes in population, housing, or employment growth projections have the potential to affect Amador Air District's demographic projections and therefore the assumptions in SIP. Typically, only large, regionally significant projects have the potential to affect regional growth projections.

The proposed project would require physical site improvements to occur at four ACUSD campuses to accommodate the consolidation of six schools onto five current ACUSD campuses. As discussed in Section XIV, *Population and Housing*, the students and staff that would occupy

² SMAQMD notes that this BMP is applicable to non-residential land use projects (primary retail and industrial). This BMP is not considered applicable to the proposed project because the project would not generate trips from vehicles of greater than 10,000 gross vehicular weight rating during operational activities (SMAQMD 2020c).

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

the proposed school buildings at each of the ACUSD campuses would be existing students within the ACUSD District and would not directly increase population growth in the project area. Furthermore, the proposed site improvements are minor and school facility improvements on existing school campuses. The cities' land use plans identify the campuses as public facilities or public services. Therefore, the proposed project would not affect the regional emissions inventory or conflict with strategies in the SIP.

Additionally, based on the scope and nature of the proposed project (i.e. consolidation), it would not generate new jobs. Therefore, the proposed project does not meet the criteria for a project of statewide, regional, or areawide significance established under CEQA Guidelines Section 15206(b)(2) (i.e. it would not generate 1,000 new jobs and it would not develop 500,000 square feet of new business floor space). Therefore, the proposed project would not affect the regional emissions inventory or conflict with strategies in the SIP. This impact would be **less than significant**.

b) *Would the proposed project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?*

As stated, the MCAB is designated under the California and federal AAQS as nonattainment for ozone (CARB 2026). Any project that produces a significant project-level regional air quality impact in an area that is in nonattainment adds to the cumulative impact. Because the Amador Air District has not published its own CEQA guidance or thresholds of significance, air quality impacts of the proposed project were evaluated based on SMAQMD's CEQA Guidelines and *Guidance to Address the Friant Ranch Ruling for CEQA Projects in the Sac Metro Air District* (SMAQMD 2009, 2020d). Development projects below the regional significance thresholds are not expected to generate sufficient criteria pollutant emissions to violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Projects that do not exceed SMAQMD's screening levels for construction and operational impacts and meet all the screening parameters are considered to have emissions below the regional significance thresholds and therefore have less than significant impacts on air quality (SMAQMD 2009). The following describes project-related impacts from short-term construction activities and long-term operation of the proposed project.

Short-Term Construction Emissions

Construction activities would temporarily increase ROG, NO_x, CO, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} regional emissions in the MCAB. As described in Section 2.3, *Project Characteristics*, physical site improvements would occur at four ACUSD campuses to accommodate the consolidation of six schools onto five current ACUSD campuses. No site improvements are proposed at Independence HS, and Lone ES would close. Improvements at Jackson Junior HS would be limited to interior renovations. Construction activities associated with the improvements at

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Jackson Junior HS would largely be limited to use of hand-tools and would not involve use of off-road equipment or activities that would generate fugitive dust (i.e., demolition and earth movement).

Construction activities at Amador HS, Argonaut HS, and Lone Junior HS would involve site disturbance, including limited site preparation/grading activities and trenching to accommodate the installation of circulation improvements and/or classroom structures. Improvements at Lone Junior HS would also involve vertical construction of a new two-story classroom building of up to 4,500 square feet. While improvements at Amador HS would include relocation of existing portable classrooms to the campus, the proposed project would not include the construction of any other new buildings, outside of the two-story classroom building at Lone Junior HS, nor would it include demolition activities, major trenching³, an unusually compact construction schedule or overlapping phases⁴, cut-and-fill operations, or substantial haul truck use for soil import and export.⁵

As such, the proposed project would not include any activities that would eliminate its evaluation under SMAQMD's construction screening criteria. Additionally, neither the area of disturbance at each of the project sites nor the collective area of disturbance across all project sites would exceed 35 acres. SMAQMD notes that projects that are 35 acres or less in size generally will not exceed SMAQMD's construction NO_x threshold of significance. Nonetheless, SMAQMD has adopted construction-related significance thresholds for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in addition to NO_x. SMAQMD's PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} significance thresholds are zero pounds per day each, or 82 pounds per day and 80 pounds per day, respectively, if the project implements SMAQMD's Basic Construction Emission Control Practices. While the screening criterion of 35 acres does not apply to PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, the proposed project would result in minor groundwork and is not expected to exceed SMAQMD's significance thresholds for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} after implementation of SMAQMD's Basic Construction Emission Control Practices. Therefore, in order to ensure PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} construction emissions do not exceed SMAQMD's significance thresholds, the proposed project would be required to implement the Basic Construction Emission Control Practices under Mitigation Measure AIR-1.

Additionally, while Amador Air District does not regulate ROG emissions from architectural coatings and the SMAQMD does not have an adopted ROG significance threshold for construction, coatings used under the proposed project would be subject to the US

³ The utility trenching associated with the installation of portable classroom building at Amador HS and the construction of the new classroom building at Lone Junior HS would be largely limited to the footprints of these respective structures and their immediate vicinities.

⁴ Construction at Amador HS would begin in Spring of 2027 and conclude in Summer of 2027 while construction at Lone Junior HS would begin in Fall of 2029 and conclude in Spring of 2030.

⁵ The project sites are fully developed and ground disturbance would largely occur at surface-level with limited sub-surface work for installing utility connections. No cut-and-fill or soil import/export would be required.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Environmental Protection Agency's National Architectural Coatings Regulation under 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 59, Subpart D. Compliance with this statute and the limited amount of architectural coatings needed for the proposed project (i.e., coating for the new classroom building at Lone Junior HS campus) would ensure that ROG emissions are less than significant.

Overall, because the proposed project would meet SMAQMD's screening criteria and screening criteria parameters with implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-1, regional air quality emission impacts during construction would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Mitigation Measure AQ-1: The project shall implement the following Basic Construction Best Management Practices recommended by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) for construction work at all campuses that involve ground disturbance. Grading plans for the project shall clearly list these requirements:

- Water all exposed surfaces two times daily. Exposed surfaces include, but are not limited to, soil piles, graded areas, unpaved parking areas, staging areas, and access roads.
- Cover or maintain at least two feet of free board space on haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material on the site. Any haul trucks that would be traveling along freeways or major roadways should be covered.
- Use wet power vacuum street sweepers to remove any visible trackout mud or dirt onto adjacent public roads at least once a day. Use of dry power sweeping is prohibited.
- Limit vehicle speeds on unpaved roads to 15 miles per hour (mph).
- All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, and parking lots to be paved should be completed as soon as possible. In addition, building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.
- Minimize idling time either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the time of idling to five minutes (California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Sections 2449(d)(3) and 2485). Provide clear signage that posts this requirement for workers at the entrances to the site.
- Provide current certificate(s) of compliance for CARB's In-Use Off-Road Diesel-Fueled Fleets Regulation (California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Sections 2449 and 2449.1).

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- Maintain all construction equipment in proper working condition according to manufacturer's specifications. The equipment must be checked by a certified mechanic and determined to be running in proper condition before it is operated.

Long-Term Operational Emissions

The proposed project's consolidation of six schools into five existing campuses would result in a net decrease of long-term air pollutant emissions by area sources (e.g., landscape fuel use, aerosols, and architectural coatings) and energy use (natural gas) for the proposed project as a whole. The new energy and area sources introduced under the proposed project would be limited to the 4,500-square-foot new classroom building at Lone Junior HS, while under existing conditions, operation of Lone ES, which would be closed with implementation of the proposed project, generates emissions from 28 buildings. The portable classrooms relocated to Amador HS would not result in an increase in operational emissions since they are currently operational elsewhere in the District. Therefore, the proposed project results in a net decrease of building space would result in less overall emissions of area and energy compared to existing conditions.

However, because the proposed project would result in a new building at Lone Junior HS, a net increase in operational emissions at this campus would occur. Additionally, the proposed project would result in a 4.5 percent net increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) under the proposed project when compared to existing conditions, which would result in a marginal increase in mobile source emissions from existing conditions.

As noted above, SMAQMD has adopted operational screening criteria to determine whether the type and size of a project's net new development would have the potential to exceed SMAQMD's operational significance thresholds. The proposed project would result in 4,500 square feet of new building space and no net increase in student enrollment. Therefore, it would be below SMAQMD's operational screening criteria of 370,000 square feet and 2,780 students for NO_x and ROG emissions and 735,000 square feet and 5,525 students for PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} emissions. Use of these screening levels for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} assume the project would comply with SMAQMD's operational BMPs which include compliance with SMAQMD Rules and the mandatory measures in the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards and Green Building Standards Code. The proposed project would comply with the rules established by Amador Air District and would be required to comply with all applicable provisions in the California Building Standards Code.

Additionally, the proposed project would not include any characteristics that would invalidate the applicability of the screening criteria for use in evaluating operational air quality impacts under the proposed project. The proposed project would not use wood stoves or wood-burning appliances nor would it involve mixed-use or industrial land uses. The proposed project would

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

also comply with the operational BMPs, trips generated by the proposed project would be less than the default trip rates in CalEEMod because enrollment is decreasing, and the vehicle mix under the project would be similar to the average vehicle fleet mix for Sacramento County since it would not involve substantial heavy-duty trucks.

Furthermore, the proposed project would implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1 to ensure that VMT under the proposed project does not exceed VMT under existing conditions. These measures include implementing a “SchoolPool” program for encouraging ride sharing, ensuring existing school bus reliability, capping student parking permits, and subsidizing transit passes. As discussed in Section XVII, *Transportation*, implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would reduce VMT impacts to less than significant.

In summary, the proposed project would be below the applicable SMAQMD operational screening levels. Therefore, in accordance with SMAQMD’s methodology, regional operational air quality impacts under the proposed project would be **less than significant**.

c) *Would the proposed project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?*

The following analysis focuses on the health-based impacts from air quality emissions under the proposed project. With respect to the criteria air pollutants for which thresholds have been adopted (ROGs, NO_x, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}), SMAQMD notes that projects which exceed these significance criteria could contribute to elevating health effects associated with these criteria air pollutants (SMAQMD 2020d). Other pollutants of concern for health-based impacts include toxic air contaminants (TACs). TACs emitted during construction activities largely consist of diesel particulate matter from use of off-road construction equipment while potential sources of TACs emitted during operational activities are largely confined to industrial land uses, such as chemical processing and warehousing operations where substantial truck idling could occur onsite. Additionally, areas of vehicle congestion have the potential to create pockets of CO, called hotspots.

Health Risk

Lone Junior HS

SMAQMD does not require a health risk assessment to be conducted for short-term emissions from construction equipment and has not established a quantitative threshold of significance for construction-related TAC emissions (SMAQMD 2020e). Construction of the site improvements at Lone Junior HS would last approximately 9 months, which represents a short duration of exposure of on-site and off-site receptors to emissions of TACs during construction activities when compared to the 70-year averaging time for assessing cancer risk.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Additionally, operation of the new classroom building would not include stationary sources (i.e., generators, industrial boilers, gas-dispensing facilities, etc.) and would therefore not generate substantial emissions of TACs. As noted, land uses that have the potential to generate substantial stationary sources of emissions include industrial land uses where chemical are manufactured or substantial truck idling occurs onsite. Operation of the site improvements at Lone Junior HS would result in the occasional use of landscaping equipment and would not result in the operation of land uses expected to generate substantial amounts of TACs.

Furthermore, as explained in Impact Discussion b), the proposed project as a whole would be below SMAQMD's screening level during construction activities with implementation of the Basic Construction Emission Control Practices under Mitigation Measure AIR-1. The proposed project would also be below the operational screening levels, resulting in a less than significant impact with respect to operational emissions. As such, the improvements at Lone Junior HS would not contribute to elevating health risks associated with criteria air pollutants.

Amador HS

Improvements at Amador HS would include the relocation of portable classrooms from Jackson Junior HS to the Amador HS campus, resulting ground disturbance to accommodate the classroom pads and connect dry utilities to the portable building. While these activities would generate fugitive dust emissions and equipment exhaust, the approximately 3-month duration would limit exposure of sensitive receptors to these emissions. Limited on-site operational emissions would also occur from area sources; however, these emissions would not constitute substantial sources of TACs emissions. Additionally, because the proposed project would not exceed SMAQMD's screening level size for construction and operational emissions, emissions of criteria air pollutants would not result in health risk impacts.

Argonaut HS

Improvements at Argonaut HS could include limited ground disturbance and paving to accommodate changes to campus circulation needs in addition to interior work to change the configuration of the classrooms. The extent of the construction work proposed at this campus would also result in a duration of activities lasting less than a year, thereby resulting in a limited exposure time for sensitive receptors. The improvements at Argonaut HS would also not result in an increase in operational emissions. Furthermore, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts with respect to regional construction and operational emissions, which would also result in less than significant impacts with respect to health risks from criteria air pollutants, in accordance with SMAQMD's guidance.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Jackson Junior HS

Under the proposed project, improvements at Jackson Junior HS would be limited to interior renovations and would not include ground disturbance or use of off-road equipment resulting in emissions of fugitive dust or diesel particulate matter. This improvement would also result in no increase in operational emissions. As such, construction and operational activities at Jackson Junior HS would result in no increase in on-site health risk.

Independence HS

The proposed project would not include any physical site improvements at Independence HS; therefore, no emissions of criteria air pollutants or TACs would occur at this campus.

Lone ES

The proposed project would result in the closure of Lone ES; therefore, no emissions of criteria air pollutants or TACs would occur at this campus.

Summary

As described above, improvements at each individual campus would not generate substantial localized emissions that would result in health impacts. Therefore, impacts with respect to on-site health risk would be **less than significant**.

CO Hotspots

SMAQMD has developed two-tiered qualitative screening criteria to determine whether a proposed project would have the potential to exceed the AAQS for CO to result in a CO hotspot. The first tier of criteria is based on a project's impact on the level-of-service (traffic flow) of affected roadways; however, a level-of-service traffic analysis was not prepared for the proposed project. Therefore, SMAQMD's Tier 2 screening criteria for evaluating CO hotspots is used, which consists of the following (SMAQMD 2020b):

1. The proposed project would not result in an affected intersection experiencing more than 31,600 vehicles per hour.
2. The proposed project would not contribute traffic to a tunnel, parking garage, bridge underpass, urban street canyon, below-grade roadway, or other locations where horizontal or vertical mixing of air would be substantially limited.
3. The mix of vehicle types at the intersection is not anticipated to be substantially different from the County average.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Regarding the first Tier 2 criterion, based on trip generation information provided by Kittelson & Associates for the Transportation Analysis, the proposed project would result in a net increase of 486 AM peak hour trips and 265 PM peak hour trips, as provided Kittelson on June 26, 2026 (see Appendix A). While these trips are attributed to five different destinations (i.e., campuses) and would therefore be dispersed across different roadways in the County, it is conservatively assumed for the purposes of this analysis that these peak hour trips from all campuses could occur at any major intersection in the County and collectively contribute to a CO Hotspot. The Transportation Analysis collected traffic volumes at the intersection of State Route 49 and Sutter Lone Road. A total of 1,096 PM peak hour trips and 970 AM peak hour trips were counted at this intersection. Additionally, the 2024 Amador County Regional Transportation Plan notes that the highest average daily traffic volumes on the Amador County road network were located on State Routes 49 and 88, ranging from approximately 15,000 to 20,000 vehicle per day (ACTC 2024). Assuming that a tenth of the average daily trips at these segments are peak hour trips, a maximum of 2,000 peak hour trips occur at the County's busiest roads.

Therefore, even if all peak hour trips under the proposed project occurred at the busiest intersections in the County, they would not exceed the 31,600 vehicles per hour threshold for creating a CO Hotspot.⁶

Regarding the second criterion, there are no major tunnels, parking garages, bridge underpasses, urban street canyons, below-grade roadways near the vicinity of each of the ACUSD campuses within the school closure/consolidation program. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute significant traffic to these features or other locations where horizontal or vertical mixing of air would be substantially limited. Additionally, regarding the third criteria, the proposed project would mainly generate passenger vehicle trips (students and staff) and ACUSD would continue to provide a busing program. Therefore, the mix of vehicle types associated with the proposed project would be similar to existing conditions and would not be substantially different from the County average.

Since the proposed project meets Tier 2 screening criteria overall, the proposed project would not have the potential to substantially increase CO hotspots at intersections in the MCAB. Moreover, the potential for CO hotspots to be generated in the MCAB is extremely unlikely because of the improvements in vehicle emission rates and control efficiencies. Most land use development projects would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and analysis of CO hotspots is not warranted. Impacts regarding CO Hotspots would be **less than significant**.

⁶ The project's highest peak hour trips (486 AM trips) when added to the highest peak hour trips for a roadway in Amador County (2,000 trips), would not exceed 31,600 vehicles.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

d) *Would the proposed project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?*

The five consolidated ACUSD school campuses would continue to operate as schools and is not a type of land use that creates objectionable odors that would lead to a public nuisance. During construction activities, construction equipment exhaust, application of asphalt, and architectural coatings would temporarily generate odors. However, overall, any construction-related odor emissions would be low in concentration and temporary.

The type of facilities that are considered to have objectionable odors include wastewater treatments plants, compost facilities, landfills, solid waste transfer stations, fiberglass manufacturing facilities, paint/coating operations (e.g., auto body shops), dairy farms, petroleum refineries, asphalt batch plants, chemical manufacturing, and food manufacturing facilities. The proposed project does not fit into these types of facilities and would not generate objectionable odors that would lead to a public nuisance.

Odors would typically be confined to the immediate vicinity of the construction equipment. By the time such emissions reach any sensitive receptor sites, they would be diluted to well below any level of air quality concern. Furthermore, each project site would be required to comply with AAD Rule 205, *Nuisance*, which prohibits the discharge of air contaminants or other materials that would be a nuisance or annoyance to the public. In summary, construction-related odor emissions would be temporary, and the site improvements at the four ACUSD campuses are not considered the type of use that would generate odors that would affect a substantial number of people.

Lone Junior HS

The site improvements at Lone Junior HS would not result in a change in land use that would generate long-term objectionable odors. By the time construction-related odors would reach the off-site sensitive receptors, single-family residences to the north along S Mills Street and the Catholic Cemetery to the east, odors would be diluted to well below any level of air quality concern. As such, the site improvements at Lone Junior HS would not generate short-term or long-term odors that would affect a substantial number of people.

Amador HS

The site improvements at Amador HS would not result in a change in land use that would generate long-term objectionable odors. By the time construction-related odors would reach the off-site sensitive receptors, single-family residences to the north along Spanish Street to the east, Sutter Creek ES to the north, and Oro Madre Way to the west, odors would be diluted to well below any level of air quality concern. As such, the site improvements at Amador HS would not generate short-term or long-term odors that would affect a substantial number of people.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Argonaut HS

The site improvements at Argonaut HS would not result in a change in land use that would generate long-term objectionable odors. By the time construction-related odors would reach the off-site sensitive receptors, single-family residences to the north along Westview Drive, odors would be diluted to well below any level of air quality concern. As such, the site improvements at Argonaut HS would not generate short-term or long-term odors that would affect a substantial number of people.

Jackson Junior HS

The site improvements at Jackson Junior HS would be limited to interior renovations. Therefore, odors associated with construction activities would be localized to the immediate vicinity of the renovated buildings. Additionally, the proposed project would not result in changes to the campus's operational characteristics that would generate odors. In summary, the site improvements at Jackson Junior HS would not generate short-term or long-term odors that would affect a substantial number of people.

Independence HS

No site improvements would occur at Independence HS under the proposed project; therefore, no short-term odors would be generated. Additionally, the proposed project would not result in changes to the campus's operational characteristics that could generate odors.

Lone ES

Under the proposed project, Lone ES would close. Therefore, no odors would be generated.

Summary

As described above, the improvements at each campus under the proposed project would not result in the generation of odors that would adversely affect a substantial number of people. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

IV. Biological Resources

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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 or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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 state or 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The Biological Resources analysis is organized by campus because existing biological conditions and resource constraints are specific to each site. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates each of the six campuses individually, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential biological resource impacts across all project sites.

DISCUSSION

- a) ***Would the proposed project 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 or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?***

Special status species include those listed as endangered or threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act or California Endangered Species Act; species otherwise given certain designations by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife; and plant species listed as rare by the California Native Plant Society.

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The project site at the Lone Junior HS campus is already disturbed and developed and surrounded by urban development, and operation of the proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus would be similar to existing conditions. Amador County, including the project site, is not within a Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) (CDFW 2026a). The closest critical habitat for threatened and endangered species is approximately 4.3 miles northwest of the project site, for the vernal pool fairy shrimp (USFWS 2026a). Based on the BIOS6 mapper, the project site is not within a California essential habitat connectivity natural landscape block or a core reserve and corridor (CDFW 2026b). However, the BIOS6 mapper identified that the Lone Junior HS campus falls within predicted habitat for seven special-status animal species, with habitat suitability levels as follows: Nuttall's woodpecker (medium), Yellow-billed magpie (high), Oak titmouse (high), Lawrence's goldfinch (medium), Bullock's oriole (high), Pallid bat (medium), and Townsend's big-eared bat (low). In addition, the proposed project would remove up to four valley oak trees. The four trees that would be removed are not state or federally listed endangered, threatened, or rare plants, or on the Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW 2026c; 2026d). All other vegetation on-site is low-laying grasses within a disturbed area. Although the trees are not a protected species, the valley oak trees can provide a suitable habitat for the identified special status nesting and migratory birds and a roosting site for bats (not including structures on-site that can provide a roosting habitat).

To minimize impacts, implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 (MM BIO-1) and Mitigation Measure BIO-2 (MM BIO-2) would be required. MM BIO-1 states that tree removal activities should be conducted during the non-breeding season (September 1 to February 14) to limit

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

impacts to nesting birds. If vegetation clearing or tree removal activities need to take place during breeding season (February 1 through August 31), a preconstruction nesting bird survey(s) will be required to remain in compliance with the MBTA. The last survey should be conducted no more than three days prior to the start of work. Compliance with the MBTA, CDFW regulations, and implementation of MM BIO-1 would ensure that potential impacts to nesting and migratory birds resulting from the proposed project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. MM BIO-2 states that prior to any ground disturbing activities focused bat roost survey and habitat assessment, and determine the presence of roosting bats. MM BIO-2 prescribes measures to follow if roosting bats are found on-site and if avoidance is not possible. Implementation of MM BIO-2 would ensure that potential impacts to roosting bats would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Preconstruction Avian Survey. To minimize potential impacts to avian species, vegetation clearing and tree removal should be conducted during the non-breeding season (September 1–February 14) to the extent feasible. If vegetation clearing or tree removal activities need to take place during breeding season (February 1 through August 31), a pre-construction avian survey(s) will be required at project site(s) where vegetation clearing or tree removal activities are occurring. The last survey should be conducted a minimum of three days prior to the start of work. The District shall hire a qualified biologist to prepare the preconstruction avian survey.

If any bird listed under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act is found to be nesting within the project site or within the area of vegetation or tree removal activities, an adequate protective buffer zone shall be established by a qualified biologist to protect the nesting site. The distance shall be determined by a qualified biologist based on the site conditions (e.g., topography, if the nest is in a line of sight of the construction, and the sensitivity of the birds nesting). Additional protective measures shall include establishment of clearly delineated exclusion zones (i.e., demarcated by identifiable fencing, such as orange construction fencing or equivalent) around each nest location as determined by a qualified biologist, taking into account the species of birds nesting, their tolerance for disturbance, and proximity to existing development. The nest site(s) shall be monitored by a qualified biologist periodically to see if the birds are stressed by the construction activities and if the protective buffer needs to be increased. Once the young have fledged and are flying well enough to avoid project construction zones (typically by August), the project can proceed without further regard to the nest site(s).

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Special-Status Bats Roosting Survey and Habitat Assessment. Prior to any ground disturbing activities, a qualified biologist obtained by Amador County USD shall perform a focused bat roost survey and habitat assessment at the lone Junior High School, campus project sites. The initial survey shall be conducted as early in the planning process as possible to allow for avoidance of project-related impacts during

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

critical periods of the bat's life cycle. During the survey, potential roost sites shall be evaluated and inspected for presence or sign of roosting bats. Surveys may be aided by the use of night-vision goggles or acoustic equipment to determine if roosting bats are present and to help aid in species identification.

- If use of the lone project site by roosting bats is confirmed, identified bat roosting sites shall be avoided and protected in place to the extent feasible. A buffer area shall be established around the roost site to minimize disturbance of roosting bats. The size of the buffer area will depend on the species and type of roost present (e.g., maternity roost, day roost, hibernacula) and will be determined in consultation with CDFW.
- If avoidance is not possible and a tree or structure with bat roosting habitat must be removed, the applicant shall consult with CDFW regarding appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures. Measures may include restrictions on timing or methods of roost removal to avoid potential injury or death of individual bats as well as replacement of removed bat habitat features.
- In general, removal of bat roost sites shall be timed outside of the maternity roosting season (generally April 1 to August 31) and only when nighttime low temperature are above 45°F and rainfall is less than 0.5 inch in 24 hours. If a maternity colony is present, it shall remain undisturbed until the young are able to fly and the colony has dispersed, as confirmed by a qualified bat biologist.
- Where feasible, bat exclusion devices or one-way doors may be used to exclude bats from roost sites prior to removal.
- Trees with identified bat roosting habitat shall be removed using a two-phase removal process conducted over two consecutive days. On the first day, tree limbs and branches will be removed, using chainsaws only. Removal will avoid limbs with cavities, cracks, crevices, or deep bark fissures. On the second day, the entire tree will be removed.
- Standing dead trees or snags with habitat features should be removed over a single day by gently lowering the tree or snag to the ground. The tree or snag shall be left undisturbed on-site for the next 48 hours.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- Removal and trimming of trees with potential roosting habitat shall be conducted in the presence of a biological monitor.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

The project site at the Amador HS campus is already disturbed and developed and surrounded by urban development, and operation of the proposed project at the Amador HS campus would be similar to existing conditions. Amador County, including the project site, is not within a Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) (CDFW 2026a). The closest critical habitat for threatened and endangered species is for vernal pool fairy shrimp approximately 10.3 miles west of the project site, with proposed foothill yellow-legged frog critical habitat approximately 6.8 miles northeast of the project site (USFWS 2026a). Based on the BIOS6 mapper, the project site is not within a California essential habitat connectivity natural landscape block or a core reserve and corridor (CDFW 2026b).

BIOS6 mapper identified that the Amador HS campus falls within predicted habitat for seven special-status animal species, with habitat suitability levels as follows: Nuttall's woodpecker (medium), yellow-billed magpie (high), oak titmouse (high), Lawrence's goldfinch (medium), and Bullock's oriole (high). The proposed project at the Amador HS campus would not remove any trees or structures on-site as part of the project. However, the proposed improvements at the Amador HS campus could disturb nearby nesting birds. To minimize any potential impacts to birds, implementation of MM BIO-1 would be required. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

The project site at the Argonaut HS campus is already disturbed and developed and surrounded by urban development, and operation of the proposed project at the Argonaut HS campus would be similar to existing conditions. Amador County, including the project site, is not within a Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) (CDFW 2026a). The closest critical habitat for threatened and endangered species is for Foothill yellow-legged frog approximately 7.4 miles northeast of the project site (USFWS 2026a). Based on the BIOS6 mapper, the project site is not within a California essential habitat connectivity natural landscape block or a core reserve and corridor (CDFW 2026b).

BIOS6 mapper identified that the Argonaut HS campus falls within predicted habitat for seven special-status animal species, with habitat suitability levels as follows: Nuttall's woodpecker (medium), yellow-billed magpie (high), oak titmouse (high), Lawrence's goldfinch (medium), and Bullock's oriole (high). The proposed project at the Argonaut HS campus would not remove any trees or structures on-site as part of the project. However, the proposed exterior improvements at the Argonaut HS campus could disturb nearby nesting birds. To minimize any potential impacts to birds, implementation of MM BIO-1 would be required. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact biological resources. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The Independence HS and Lone ES campuses are already disturbed and developed with the existing educational campuses, and surrounded by urban development and operation of the proposed project at these campuses would be similar to existing conditions. The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

- b) *Would the proposed project 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?*

Sensitive natural communities are natural communities that are considered rare in the region by regulatory agencies; that are known to provide habitat for sensitive animal or plant species; or are known to be important wildlife corridors. Amador County, including the six campuses, are not within an HCP/NCCP (CDFW 2026a).

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

No federally designated critical habitat exists on-site or in the vicinity of the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus (USFWS 2026a). As discussed in Section IV(a), the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus is not within a California essential habitat connectivity natural landscape block or a core reserve and corridor (CDFW 2026b). The National Wetlands Mapper, maintained by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, identified a riverine habitat approximately 85 feet west of the Lone Junior HS campus (USFWS 2026b). The project site at the Lone Junior HS campus does not contain any riparian habitat and would not impact the riverine habitat because all project activities would occur on the Lone Junior HS campus boundaries. The project site does not contain any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community and would not impact riverine habitat or other sensitive natural community. Therefore, a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

No federally designated critical habitat exists on-site or in the vicinity of the project site at the Amador HS campus (USFWS 2026a). As discussed in Section IV(a), the project site at the Amador HS campus is not within a California essential habitat connectivity natural landscape

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

block or a core reserve and corridor (CDFW 2026b). The National Wetlands Mapper, maintained by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, identified a riverine habitat approximately 270 feet east of the Amador HS campus (USFWS 2026b). The project site does not contain any riparian habitat and would not impact the riverine habitat because all project activities would occur on the Amador HS campus boundaries. The project site at the Amador HS campus does not contain any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community and would not impact riverine habitat or other sensitive natural community. Therefore, a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

No federally designated critical habitat exists on-site or in the vicinity of the project site at the Argonaut HS campus (USFWS 2026a). As discussed in Section IV(a), the project site at the Argonaut HS campus is not within a California essential habitat connectivity natural landscape block or a core reserve and corridor (CDFW 2026b). The National Wetlands Mapper, maintained by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, identified a riverine habitat on the Argonaut HS campus (USFWS 2026b). However, the identified riverine habitat would not be directly impacted by the proposed improvements, as all ground-disturbing activities would be confined to previously developed and disturbed areas of the campus. The improvements at Argonaut HS would consist of minor campus circulation improvements. Additionally, the project site at the Argonaut HS campus does not contain a sensitive natural community and would not impact a sensitive natural community. Therefore, a **less than significant impact** would occur.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact biological resources. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground disturbing activities. The proposed operational uses at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

- c) ***Would the proposed project have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?***

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The Lone Junior HS campus is developed with an existing parking lot, campus buildings, paved walkways, and athletic fields. As discussed in Section IV(b), the National Wetlands Mapper

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

identified a riverine habitat approximately 85 feet west of the Lone Junior HS campus (USFWS 2026b). In addition, a freshwater pond that does not meet the criteria for a wetland exists approximately 330 feet south of the Lone Junior HS Campus. However, no wetlands exist within the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus or in the immediate area. The nearest wetland to the project site is approximately 0.38 mile southwest of the project site (USFWS 2025b). Additionally, all construction-related activities would be within the boundaries of the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on protected wetlands, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

The Amador HS campus is developed with an existing parking lot, campus buildings, paved walkways, and athletic fields. As discussed in Section IV(b), the National Wetlands Mapper identified a riverine habitat approximately 270 feet west of the Amador HS campus (USFWS 2026b). However, no wetlands exist within the project site or in the project's immediate area. The nearest wetland to the project site is approximately 0.4 mile southeast of the project site at the Amador HS campus (USFWS 2025b). Additionally, all construction-related activities would occur within the boundaries of the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on protected wetlands, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

The Argonaut HS campus is developed with library/classrooms, office, gymnasium, storage, sports fields, sports courts, lawn areas, and surface parking lots. As discussed in Section IV(a), the National Wetlands Mapper, maintained by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, identified a riverine habitat on the Argonaut HS campus (USFWS 2026b). However, the identified riverine habitat would not be directly impacted by the proposed improvements, as all ground-disturbing activities would be confined to previously developed and disturbed areas of the campus. The improvements at Argonaut HS would consist of minor campus circulation improvements. Therefore, a **less than significant impact** would occur.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact biological resources. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities. The proposed operational uses at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not impact any wetlands directly or indirectly. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- d) *Would the proposed project 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?*

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

Based on the CDFW BIOS6 data viewer, the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus is not within the Northern Sierra Nevada Foothills (NSNF) Wildlife Linkages, which are modeled wildlife corridors for focal species within the NSNF. In addition, the Lone Junior HS campus is not within the natural areas small – California Essential Habitat connectivity, and essential connectivity area -California essential habitat which represent areas essential for ecological connectivity to natural landscape blocks. However, the project site has a score of 4 “conservation planning linkage” for terrestrial connectivity meaning the area has been identified by state planners as important for wildlife movement at a regional or statewide scale, but it is not yet formally protected or established as a conservation corridor. (CDFW 2026b). No federally designated critical habitat exists on the project site or in the vicinity of the project site (USFWS 2026a).

The project site is in an urbanized area in the City of Lone and is surrounded by undeveloped open space to the west and south. The project site at the Lone Junior HS campus is developed, and to accommodate the proposed project, up to four valley oak trees would be removed, which could have a potential impact on nesting and migratory bird movement.

To minimize impacts, implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 (MM BIO-1) would be required. MM BIO-1 states that tree removal activities should be conducted during the non-breeding season (September 1 to February 14) to limit impacts to nesting birds. If vegetation clearing or tree removal activities need to take place during breeding season (February 1 through August 31), a preconstruction nesting bird survey(s) will be required to remain in compliance with the MBTA. The last survey should be conducted no more than three days prior to the start of work. Additionally, to minimize any potential impacts to bats, MM BIO-2 would be implemented. MM BIO-2 states that prior to any ground disturbing activities focused bat roost survey and habitat assessment, and determine the presence of roosting bats. MM BIO-2 prescribes measures to follow If roosting bats are found on-site and if avoidance is not possible. Implementation of MM BIO-2 would ensure that potential impacts to roosting bats would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Compliance with the MBTA, CDFW regulations, and implementation of MM BIO-1 and MM BIO-2 would ensure that potential impacts to nesting and migratory birds and bats resulting from the proposed project would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, impacts to nesting and migratory birds would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Amador HS Campus Improvements

Based on the CDFW BIOS6 data viewer, the project site is not within the NSNF Wildlife Linkages, and the natural areas small – California Essential Habitat connectivity. However, the project site is within an essential connectivity area -California essential habitat connectivity, which represents areas essential for ecological connectivity to natural landscape blocks, with a score of 4, which is considered less permeable (CDFW 2026b). In addition, the project site has a score of 4 “conservation planning linkage” for terrestrial connectivity, habitat connectivity, or the ability of species and ecological processes to move through the landscape. No federally designated critical habitat exists on the project site or in the vicinity of the project site (USFWS 2026a). The project site is in an urbanized area of Sutter Creek and is surrounded by residential uses and undeveloped land. The project site at the Amador HS campus is developed, and no trees would be removed. However, to minimize any potential impacts to migratory birds, MM BIO-1 would be implemented. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

Based on the CDFW BIOS6 data viewer, the project site is not within the NSNF Wildlife Linkages, and the natural areas small – California Essential Habitat connectivity. However, the project site is within an essential connectivity area -California essential habitat connectivity, which represents areas essential for ecological connectivity to natural landscape blocks, with a score of 4, which is considered less permeable (CDFW 2026b). In addition, the project site has a score of 4 “conservation planning linkage” for terrestrial connectivity, habitat connectivity, or the ability of species and ecological processes to move through the landscape. No federally designated critical habitat exists on the project site or in the vicinity of the project site (USFWS 2026a). The project site is in an urbanized area of Jackson and is surrounded by residential uses and undeveloped land. The project site at the Argonaut HS campus is developed, and no trees would be removed. However, to minimize any potential impacts to migratory birds, MM BIO-1 would be implemented. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact biological resources. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities. The proposed operational

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

uses at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not impact any migratory species or wildlife corridors. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

- e) *Would the proposed project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project would require the removal of four valley oak trees. The Lone Municipal Code Section 8.20 seeks to protect heritage trees, which are trees with a diameter of 16 inches or more, or any tree that is of historical significance (planning commission action) or has taken on an aura of historical appeal and which is indigenous to this area or has adapted exceptionally well to area climatic conditions.

None of the four trees have a diameter greater than 16 inches or have been determined to be historically significant by the planning commission or otherwise (see Section V, *Cultural Resources*). The development of the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable state laws and regulations governing the protection and preservation of biological resources, including trees. The proposed project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, and a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

Development of the site improvements at Amador HS would occur entirely within the campus. The site improvements would not require the removal of any trees. Development of the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable state laws and regulations governing the protection and preservation of biological resources, including trees. The proposed project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, and a **less than significant impact** would occur.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

Development of the site improvements at Argonaut HS would occur entirely within the campus. The site improvements would not require the removal of any trees. Development of the proposed project would be required to comply with all applicable state laws and regulations governing the protection and preservation of biological resources, including trees. The proposed project would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, and a **less than significant impact** would occur.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact biological resources. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground disturbing activities, or vegetation clearing. The proposed operational uses at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

f) *Would the proposed project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

Amador County, including the project sites at the Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES campuses, is not within a HCP/NCCP (CDFW 2026a). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with an adopted NCCP/HCP, and **no impact** would occur.

V. Cultural Resources

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 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 dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The Cultural Resources analysis is organized by campus because existing cultural resources conditions and resource constraints are specific to each site. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates each of the six campuses individually, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential cultural resource impacts across all project sites.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

DISCUSSION

a) ***Would the proposed project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?***

Section 15064.5 defines historic resources as resources 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:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values;
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

Lone Junior HS in the City of Lone was initially constructed in 1939 with additions in 1941, 1953, 1958, 1965, 1974, and portable classrooms in the 1990s. A multi-purpose room and classroom wings were added in the 2000s (ACUSD 2022). Lone Junior HS is not listed as a historical resource in the National Park Service’s (NPS) National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures under the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) (NPS 2026; OHP 2026). The closest historical resource identified by NPS and OHP is the Community Methodist Church of Lone approximately 0.15 mile northeast of the Lone Junior HS campus. The City of Lone Historical Landmarks identifies the Lone Junior HS as a local historical resource (Lone 2026). The project site includes constructing up to four new classrooms in a single classroom building, and the northern parking lot would be reconfigured within the existing parking lot footprint and would not include any demolition of the existing parking lot asphalt. The project site does not include any of the school classroom buildings that could potentially be historically significant, as no improvements are proposed to existing classroom buildings or structures. In addition, the proposed project would not demolish any classroom buildings or structures. Therefore, there are no historic resources on the project site that would be impacted by the proposed project, and no impacts to historically significant resources in pursuant to 15064.5 would occur. **No impact** to historical resources would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Amador HS Campus Improvements

Amador HS in Sutter Creek was initially constructed in 1959 with additions in 1964, 1971, 1974, and portable classrooms in the mid-2000s (ACUSD 2022). Amador HS is not listed as a historical resource in the NPS National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures under the OHP (NPS 2026; OHP 2026). The NPS and OHP identified the City of Sutter Creek as a historical landmark. The Sutter Creek General Plan stated that the city established historic districts rather than individual buildings, and a portion of the project site (eastern portion of campus) is in the City Historic District (Sutter Creek 2019). Although the project site is in the City Historic District and the city is identified as a historic resource, the project site contains a developed parking lot area and paved blacktop area for the relocated portable classrooms, with no structures on-site that could be a historical resource. The proposed project would be limited to the Amador HS campus and does not include any improvements to the school classroom buildings that could potentially be historically significant; no improvements are proposed to existing classroom buildings or structures. In addition, the proposed project would not demolish any classroom buildings or structures. Therefore, there are no historic resources on the project site that would be impacted by the proposed project, and no impacts to historically significant resources in pursuant to 15064.5 would occur. **No impact** to historical resources would occur.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

Argonaut HS in the City of Jackson was initially constructed in 1966 with additions in 1973, 1975 and portable classrooms in the mid-2000s (ACUSD 2022). Argonaut HS is not listed as a historical resource in the National Park Service's (NPS) National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures under the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) (NPS 2026; OHP 2026). The closest historical resource identified by NPS and OHP is the Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Church approximately 0.96 mile east of the Argonaut HS campus. The Jackson General Plan does not identify any historical resources on the campus (Jackson 2023). The project site includes classroom configurations, student support spaces, and minor campus circulation or supervisory needs. In addition, the proposed project would not demolish any classroom buildings or structures. Therefore, there are no historic resources on the project site that would be impacted by the proposed project, and no impacts to historically significant resources in pursuant to 15064.5 would occur. **No impact** to historical resources would occur.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

Jackson Junior HS in the City of Jackson was initially constructed in 1948 with additions in 1952, 1972 and portable classrooms in the late 1980s (ACUSD 2022). Jackson Junior HS is not listed as a historical resource in the National Park Service's (NPS) National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures under

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) (NPS 2026; OHP 2026). The closest historical resource identified by NPS and OHP is the Jackson Downtown Historic District approximately 0.32 mile southeast of the Jackson Junior HS campus. The Jackson General Plan does not identify any historical resources on the campus (Jackson 2023). The project at Jackson Junior HS would not include the demolishing of any classroom buildings or structures. The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications. Therefore, there are no historic resources on the project site that would be impacted by the proposed project, and no impacts to historically significant resources in pursuant to 15064.5 would occur. **No impact** to historical resources would occur.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior building improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities. Neither of the two campuses are listed as a historical resource in the NPS National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures under the OHP (NPS 2026; OHP 2026). Although the city of Lone identifies the Lone Elementary School Bell as a historical landmark, no construction activities would occur on-site as part of the proposed project (Lone 2026). Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

b) *Would the proposed project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?*

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

Implementation of the proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus in the City of Lone would result in limited ground disturbance, such as grading for a proper base for the proposed classroom building and playground area and utility trenching. Earthwork would generally be surface level since no subterranean levels are proposed. The project site at the Lone Junior HS campus is currently developed with an existing parking lot, storage area, and other paved areas.

The Lone General Plan does not identify any archeological resources within the campus (Lone 2023). Although there are no known archaeological resources within the project site, unknown archaeological cultural materials have the potential to exist. Ground-disturbing activities from the proposed project may uncover unknown archaeological resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure that, in the event archaeological resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, they would be recovered in accordance with state and federal requirements.

Additionally, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File (SLF) was searched and yielded a positive result, which indicates that known sacred sites or tribal cultural

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

resources (TCR) exist within the vicinity of the project site (Appendix B).⁷ However, the SLF District request to NAHC was for a search for TCRs in the whole county of Amador, which covers the District enrollment boundaries, so it is unknown if the TCRs identified in the search are located at or in proximity to an individual campus. Nevertheless, the potential for unearthing TCRs exists. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure that if any archaeological resource are found they are handled in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's standards, and that applicable Native American tribal contact(s) are contacted in the events significant Native American cultural resources are discovered. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 would reduce impacts to archaeological resources to **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1: Prior to initiating any ground-disturbing activities for the proposed project at the Lone Junior High School, Amador High School, and Argonaut High School campuses, the District shall ensure that an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's standards for professional archaeology has been retained for the project and will be on-call during all grading and other significant ground-disturbing activities. The qualified archaeologist shall ensure that the following measures are followed for the project:

- Prior to any ground disturbance, the qualified archaeologist shall provide worker environmental awareness protection training to construction personnel regarding regulatory requirements for the protection of cultural resources (prehistoric and historic). As part of this training, construction personnel shall be briefed on proper procedures to follow should unanticipated cultural resources be discovered during construction.
- In the event that unanticipated cultural material is encountered during any phase of project construction, all construction work within 100 feet of the find shall cease and the qualified archaeologist shall assess the find for importance. Construction activities may continue in other areas. If the discovery is determined to not be important by the qualified archaeologist, work will be permitted to continue in the area.
- If a find is determined to be important by the qualified archaeologist, he or she shall immediately notify the District. The qualified archaeologist shall

⁷ If an SLF search reveals a positive result for sacred lands and the potential of a native American cultural resource is in a project area, the NAHC does not provide the name or location of the sites. Instead, the NAHC gives the requesting party a list of the California Native American Tribes on its AB 52/SB 18 Tribal Consultation Lists that are traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area so that the CEQA lead agency can consult with the Tribes to discuss avoidance, preservation in place, or mitigation of impacts to any Native American cultural resources in a project area (NAHC 2026).

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

consult on a finding of eligibility and implement appropriate treatment measures if the find is determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). Work may not resume within the no-work radius until the qualified archaeologist and District, through consultation as appropriate, determine that either: (1) the site is not eligible for the CRHR; or (2) the treatment measures have been completed to their satisfaction.

- If significant Native American cultural resources are discovered, the archaeologist on call shall contact the applicable Native American tribal contact(s). If requested by the Native American tribe(s), the District or archaeologist on call shall, in good faith, consult on the discovery and its disposition (e.g., avoidance, preservation, reburial, return of artifacts to tribe).

Amador HS Campus Improvements

Implementation of the proposed project at the Amador HS campus in the City of Sutter Creek would result in limited ground disturbance such as utility trenching. Earthwork would generally be surface level since no subterranean levels are proposed. The project site at the Amador HS campus is currently developed with the existing parking lot, a paved internal parking area, and other paved areas.

As discussed in Impact V(a), the City of Sutter Creek established historic preservation districts citywide rather than identify specific buildings within the historic districts; this also applies to archeological resources. The Sutter Creek General Plan does not identify any known archeological resources, sites, or areas that have previously contained archeological resources (Sutter Creek 2019). Although there are no known archaeological resources within the project site, unknown archaeological cultural materials have the potential to exist. Ground-disturbing activities from the proposed project may uncover unknown archaeological resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure that, in the event archaeological resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, they would be recovered in accordance with state and federal requirements.

Additionally, the NAHC Sacred Lands File was searched and yielded a positive result, which indicates that known sacred sites or TCRs exist within the vicinity of the project site (Appendix B). The potential for unearthing TCRs exists. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 would reduce impacts to archaeological resources to **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

Implementation of the proposed project at the Argonaut HS campus in the City of Jackson would result in limited ground disturbance for the minor campus circulation improvements. Earthwork would generally be surface level since no subterranean levels are proposed. The project site at the Argonaut HS campus is currently developed with library/classrooms, office, gymnasium, storage, sports fields, sports courts, lawn areas, and surface parking lots.

As discussed in Impact V(a), the City of Jackson does not identify any known archeological resources, sites, or areas that have previously contained archeological resources (Jackson 2023). Although there are no known archaeological resources within the project site, unknown archaeological cultural materials have the potential to exist. Ground-disturbing activities from the proposed project may uncover unknown archaeological resources. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure that, in the event archaeological resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, they would be recovered in accordance with state and federal requirements.

Additionally, the NAHC Sacred Lands File was searched and yielded a positive result, which indicates that known sacred sites or TCRs exist within the vicinity of the project site (Appendix B). The potential for unearthing TCRs exists. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 would reduce impacts to archaeological resources to **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact archeological resources. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior building improvements, demolition, or ground disturbing activities. Since no ground-disturbing activities are proposed at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses there is no potential for unknown archeological resources to be unearthed and impacted. Therefore, **no impact** would occur at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses.

- c) *Would the proposed project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?*

Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, and Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

A significant impact would occur if the proposed project at the Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, and Argonaut HS campuses would disturb previously interred human remains. Given that the project

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

site at the Lone Junior HS and Amador HS campuses is disturbed, it is unlikely to support conditions conducive to the discovery of human remains. However, there is a remote possibility that human remains could be encountered during excavation and grading activities associated with the proposed project at the Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, and Argonaut HS campuses.

If human remains are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 requires that disturbance of the site halt and remain halted. The county coroner would investigate the circumstances, manner, and cause of any death and recommend the treatment and disposition of the human remains to the person responsible for the excavation or to his or her authorized representative, in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the California Public Resources Code. The coroner is required to make a determination within two working days of being notified of the discovery of the human remains. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority or has reason to believe they are Native American, he or she would contact, by telephone within 24 hours, the NAHC, who will contact the “most likely descendant.” The most likely descendant would receive access to the discovery and will provide recommendations or preferences for treatment of the remains within 48 hours of accessing the discovery site. Disposition of human remains and any associated grave goods, if encountered, would be treated in accordance with procedures and requirements in Sections 5097.94 and 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code, Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

While unlikely, any accidental discovery of human remains during project construction and operation would be required to comply with all applicable laws and regulations establishing the proper handling of human remains. Compliance with these laws and regulations would ensure that proposed project would result in a **less than significant impact**.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could disturb human remains. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any ground disturbing activities. Since no ground-disturbing activities are proposed at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses there is no potential to uncover and disturb unknown human remains. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

VI. Energy

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The following discussion considers impacts associated energy consumption from all actions under the proposed project collectively. Energy impacts generally occur at a regional or statewide level, therefore the net change in energy consumption under the proposed project is an appropriate method for considering the project's energy impacts.

DISCUSSION

- a) ***Would the proposed project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?***

Short-Term Construction Energy Consumption

The proposed project would require physical site improvements to occur at four ACUSD campuses to accommodate the consolidation of six campuses onto five current ACUSD campuses. Construction of the site improvements at the four ACUSD campuses would create temporary increased demands for electricity and vehicle fuels compared to existing conditions and would result in short-term transportation-related energy use.

Electrical Energy

Construction activities associated with the proposed project would require electricity to power the construction equipment. The electricity use during construction would vary during different phases of construction. The majority of construction equipment during trenching and earth movement would be gas or diesel powered, and construction phases for interior construction

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

and architectural coatings would require electricity-powered equipment. Overall, the use of electricity would be temporary in nature and would fluctuate according to the phase of construction. Additionally, the majority of electric-powered construction equipment would be hand tools (e.g., power drills, table saws, compressors) and lighting, which would result in minimal electricity usage during construction activities. Therefore, construction activities of the proposed project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary electricity demands as electricity consumption would be limited to tasks necessary to complete project construction, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Natural Gas Energy

No natural gas demand is anticipated during construction. Therefore, there would be **no impact** with respect to natural gas usage during overall project construction.

Transportation Energy

Transportation energy use depends on the type and number of trips, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), fuel efficiency of vehicles, and travel mode. Additionally, transportation energy use during construction would come from the transport and use of construction equipment, delivery vehicles and haul trucks, and construction employee vehicles that would use diesel fuel and/or gasoline. The use of energy resources by these vehicles would fluctuate according to the phase of construction and would be temporary. The majority of off-road construction equipment, such as those used during trenching and site preparation, would be gasoline or diesel powered.

In addition, all construction equipment would cease operating upon completion of the proposed project's construction. Thus, impacts related to transportation energy use during construction would be temporary and would not require expanded energy supplies or the construction of new infrastructure. To limit wasteful and unnecessary energy consumption, the construction contractors shall minimize nonessential idling of construction equipment during construction, in accordance with section 2449 of CCR, Title 13, Article 4.8, Chapter 9, which limits nonessential idling of diesel-powered off-road equipment to 5 minutes or less.

Construction trips would also not result in unnecessary use of energy since the ACUSD campuses within the school closure/consolidation program are centrally located and served by regional roadways that provide direct routes from various areas of the region to the campuses. Thus, energy use during construction of the proposed project would not be considered inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary. There would be a **less than significant impact** with respect to transportation energy usage during project construction.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Long-Term Operational Energy Consumption

The proposed project includes the consolidation of six underutilized campuses into five campuses, which would result in a more efficient use of resources, such as electricity and natural gas. Due to the nature of the proposed project and the decrease in building square footage associated with the closure of Lone ES, operation of the proposed project would not create additional demands for electricity and natural gas as compared to existing conditions.

Electrical Energy

The proposed project would not increase student enrollment in the District (which could increase electricity use); instead, the proposed project is a school closure/consolidation program that would provide for a more efficient use of resources, including electricity. The closure of Lone ES would lead to an overall net decrease in electricity consumption compared to existing conditions.

Electrical service to the ACUSD campuses that are part of the proposed project would continue to be provided by PG&E through connections to existing off-site electrical lines. Moreover, the new classroom building at Lone Junior HS would be required to comply with the applicable Building Energy Efficiency Standards and CALGreen requirements. As the Building Energy Efficiency Standards mandate an increase in building energy efficiency every three years, the new building to be constructed would be more energy efficient. In other words, because the proposed school building would be designed in compliance with the latest Building Energy Efficient Standards and CALGreen requirements, they would be more energy efficient on a per-square-foot basis compared to prior building energy efficiency standards.

Additionally, as further described in Section VIII, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the proposed school buildings would be designed to be all-electric buildings, which would satisfy SMAQMD's applicable Tier 1 BMPs for all electric energy systems and electrical vehicle (EV) charging. Encouraging sustainable and energy-efficient building practices and using more renewable energy strategies will further minimize building-related energy consumption after buildout of the proposed project and move closer toward achieving zero net energy.

These features would promote the use of renewable energy and decrease reliance on fossil fuels to meet the electricity demands of the ACUSD. Because the proposed project would comply with these regulations and would provide features to decrease electricity use at the remaining five ACUSD campuses, it would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary electricity demands. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would result in a **less than significant impact** related to electricity.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Natural Gas Energy

The purpose of the proposed project is to consolidate school resources for efficient program administration and focus resources on fewer facilities, so the operation of the proposed project would more efficiently use natural resources. The decrease in building square footage from the closure of Lone ES would lead to an overall net decrease in natural gas consumption compared to existing conditions. Additionally, the proposed classroom building at the Lone Junior HS campus would be all-electric. The new buildings would be consistent with the requirements of the Building Energy Efficiency Standards and would not result in an increase in natural gas consumption compared to existing conditions.

As electricity consumed in California is required to meet the increasing renewable energy mix requirements under the State's RPS and accelerated by SB 100, greater and greater proportions of energy demand under the proposed project would continue to be sourced from renewable energy sources. Compliance with these codes would decrease overall reliance on fossil fuels and increase reliance on renewable energy sources for electricity generation. Therefore, overall operation of the proposed project would result in **less than significant impacts** with respect to natural gas usage.

Transportation Energy

The proposed project would result in the consumption of transportation energy during operation from the use of motor vehicles. The efficiency of the motor vehicles in use (average miles per gallon) is unknown and highly variable. Thus, estimates of transportation energy use are based on the overall VMT and related transportation energy use. The project-related VMT would primarily come from students, staff, and visitors commuting to each of the five ACUSD campuses.

As a result of the proposed project, the VMT per student and staff would increase by 4.5 percent (Appendix D). While per person VMT estimates would increase during operation of the proposed project, the transportation energy consumed for student, employee, and visitor travel would be necessary for people to travel to and from their respective campus and would not constitute wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy. As provided by Kittelson on June 26, 2026, the proposed project is expected to generate a total net increase of 1,333 daily vehicle trips on a typical weekday, including 486 vehicle trips during the AM peak hour and 265 vehicle trips during the PM peak hour (Appendix A). However, each of the five ACUSD campuses would continue to be local-serving land uses for the student population in the vicinity and provide circulation improvements to three of the ACUSD campuses, which would contribute to minimizing transportation-related fuel usage. Moreover, implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would reduce vehicle trips under the proposed project, and therefore reduce transportation fuel consumption.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Additionally, fuel efficiency of vehicles during the buildout year of 2030 would on average improve compared to vehicle fuel efficiencies experienced under existing conditions, thereby resulting in a lower per capita fuel consumption in 2030 assuming travel distances, travel modes, and trip rates remain the same. The improvement in fuel efficiency would be attributable to the statewide fuel reduction strategies and regulatory compliances (e.g., CAFE standards), resulting in new cars that are more fuel efficient and the attrition of older, less fuel-efficient vehicles. The CAFE standards are not directly applicable to land use development projects but to car manufacturers. Thus, the District students and staff do not have direct control in determining the fuel efficiency of vehicles manufactured and that are made available. However, compliance with the CAFE standards by car manufacturers would ensure that vehicles produced in future years have greater fuel efficiency and would generally result in an overall benefit of reducing fuel usage by providing the population of the ACUSD campuses' region more fuel-efficient vehicle options.

As electricity consumed in California is required to meet the increasing renewable energy mix requirements under the State's RPS, greater and greater proportions of electricity consumed for transportation energy demand envisioned under the proposed project would continue to be sourced from renewable energy sources rather than fossil fuels. Since vehicle fuel efficiencies would improve year over year through the buildout year of 2030 and result in a decrease in overall per capita transportation energy consumption, impacts would be **less than significant** with respect to operation-related fuel usage.

b) *Would the proposed project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?*

Energy Action Plan

The Energy Action Plan was last updated in 2008 and was developed by the California Public Utilities Commission, California Energy Commission, and California Power Authority to create a unified State energy policy framework. It serves as one of the State's strategies for planning for reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy procurement and supply. The Energy Action Plan further establishes a "loading order" in identifying priorities for statewide energy planning efforts, which translates into first prioritizing meeting existing demand with cost-effective energy efficiency and demand response efforts, then using renewable energy resources and distributed generation, and finally meeting the remaining energy demand with renewable or otherwise "clean" fossil-fuel power generation resources (e.g., renewable natural gas). Other priorities identified in the Energy Action Plan but not directly related to local agencies, include modernizing transmission and distribution infrastructure, enhancing reliability in electricity and natural gas markets, and ensuring affordable access to all Californians. Therefore, a project can be assessed for consistency with the Energy Action Plan by examining how the proposed development generally supports or conflicts with the strategies of the plan, such as promoting energy resource deployment consistent with the plan's loading order.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

As noted above, the proposed project would result in a net decrease in energy consumption. The proposed project would also include an all-electric building design which directly supports the goals of the Energy Action Plan by promoting clean energy use and improving energy efficiency. By eliminating the need for on-site fossil fuel combustion, the all-electric design aligns with strategies to transition to renewable electricity sources and decarbonize building operations. The proposed project would not include new paved parking and therefore would not be required to construct EV charging infrastructure. Therefore, the proposed project would contribute in its capacity to furthering CARB's goals for renewable energy production and the state's goal of transitioning to 100 percent carbon-free electricity. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict or obstruct the Energy Action Plan strategies and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan

The California Public Utilities Commission's Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan was last updated in 2011 and serves as the State's long-term roadmap to make energy efficiency a top priority in supporting California's grid harmonization and renewable energy integration efforts. The Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan serves as a living strategic document for State and local agencies and emphasizes the integration of energy efficiency policies and measures into planning efforts as a critical component to advancing the objectives of the plan. Therefore, a project can be assessed for consistency with the Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan by examining how its proposed development generally supports or conflicts with the strategies of the plan, such as green building standards and zero net energy readiness.

The proposed project would result in an overall net decrease in energy consumption due to the closure of Lone ES. The improvements under the proposed project would include new all-electric classroom building and does not include any actions that would require the implementation of new EV charging infrastructure at any campus. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct the Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan strategies, and impacts of the proposed project would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

VII. Geology and Soils

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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.	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) 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 direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The Geology and Soils analysis is organized by campus because existing geological and soils conditions and resource constraints are specific to each site. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates each of the six campuses individually, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts to geology and soils across all project sites.

DISCUSSION

- a) ***Would the proposed 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.**
 - ii) **Strong seismic ground shaking?**
 - iii) **Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?**
 - iv) **Landslides?**

Fault Rupture

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are regulatory zones surrounding the surface traces of active faults in California that have ruptured in the last 11,000 years (DOC 2026c). An active fault has the potential for surface rupture, and a structure for human occupancy cannot be placed over the fault but must be a minimum distance from the fault (generally 50 feet).

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

Based on the California Geological Survey's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation mapper, there are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones on or near the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus (DOC 2026d). The nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones is a segment of the West Tahoe-Dollar Point Fault Zone approximately 59 miles from the Lone Junior HS campus. Since no active faults or Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are on-site, surface rupture would not occur. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

Based on the California Geological Survey's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation mapper, there are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones on or near the project site at the Amador HS campus (DOC 2026d). The nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is a segment of the West Tahoe-Dollar Point Fault Zone approximately 52 miles northeast of the project site. Since

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

no active faults or Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are on-site, surface rupture would not occur. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Argonaut HS Improvements

Based on the California Geological Survey's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation mapper, there are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones on or near the project site at the Argonaut HS campus (DOC 2026d). The nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is a segment of the West Tahoe-Dollar Point Fault Zone approximately 52 miles northeast of the project site. Since no active faults or Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are on-site, surface rupture would not occur. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

Based on the California Geological Survey's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation mapper, there are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones on or near the project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus (DOC 2026d). The nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone is a segment of the West Tahoe-Dollar Point Fault Zone approximately 52 miles northeast of the project site. Since no active faults or Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones are on-site, surface rupture would not occur. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project includes closure of the Lone ES campus and would not expose people to potential fault ruptures. Although operational practices would be altered at Independence HS, overall District-wide enrollment would remain the same. The nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone to the campuses is a segment of the West Tahoe-Dollar Point Fault Zone over 52 miles northeast of the campuses. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Seismic Ground Shaking

As discussed above, the project site at all six campuses is not located within an established Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The project site at all six campuses is subject to ground movement associated with earthquakes along active faults. The degree of ground shaking and earthquake-induced damage depend on multiple factors, such as distances to causative faults, earthquake magnitudes, and expected ground accelerations. The proposed improvements at the Lone Junior HS and Amador HS campuses would be required to comply with the seismic design parameters of the California Building Code (CBC), which regulates all building and construction projects and implements a minimum standard for building design and construction that includes specific requirements for seismic safety and evacuation. The Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses would only include minor site improvements and would also comply with the seismic design parameters of the CBC. The Independence HS and Lone ES

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

campuses would not include the construction of any buildings or other school accessory uses. Compliance with the CBC would ensure that impacts related to seismic shaking would be **less than significant**.

Liquefaction

Liquefaction refers to loose, saturated sand or gravel deposits that lose their load-supporting capability when subjected to intense shaking. Liquefaction potential varies based on three main contributing factors:

- Cohesionless, granular soils having relatively low densities (usually of Holocene age).
- Shallow groundwater (generally less than 50 feet).
- Moderate to high seismic ground shaking.

Cohesionless and granular soils are sand or gravel, typically with little or no clay content. Soil liquefaction generally occurs in submerged granular soils and non-plastic silts during or after strong ground shaking. Based on the California Geological Survey's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation mapper, none of the six campuses (Lone Junior, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES) are within a liquefaction zone (DOC 2026d). Since no areas of liquefaction exist on-site, liquefaction would not occur. Therefore, a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Landslides

Based on the California Geological Survey's Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation mapper, none of the six campuses (Lone Junior, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES) are within a landslide zone (DOC 2026d). Since no areas of potential landslides exist on-site, landslides would not occur. Therefore, impact would be **less than significant**.

b) *Would the proposed project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?*

Erosion is a normal and inevitable geologic process whereby earthen materials are loosened, worn away, decomposed, or dissolved and removed from one place and transported to another.

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The project site at the Lone Junior HS campus contains relatively flat terrain and is developed, which would decrease the potential to accelerate erosion. Implementation of the proposed project would require limited earthwork, which would include grading for proper base and slope for the classroom building, playground area, and utility trenching. The proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus would not contain any subterranean levels and would not require extensive excavation, which could expose more soils to erosion. Because the project site at the

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

lone Junior HS campus encompasses an area of more than one acre, the proposed project would be subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements. These include the preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Monitoring Program. The SWPPP for the proposed project at the lone Junior HS campus would describe minimum and advanced construction best practices for erosion control at the site. Additionally, adherence with existing state and local laws regulating construction activities would minimize soil erosion. At project completion, the project site at the lone Junior HS campus would be developed with a classroom building, playground, a parking lot, and classroom buildings; thus, soil on-site would not be susceptible to substantial erosion. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil, and a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

The project site at the Amador HS campus contains flat terrain and is developed, which would decrease the project's potential to accelerate erosion. Implementation of the proposed project at the Amador HS campus would require limited earthwork. The proposed project does not propose any subterranean levels and would not require extensive excavation, which could expose more soils to erosion. In addition, because the project site could encompass an area of more than one acre, the proposed project could be subject to the NPDES permit requirements. These include the preparation of a SWPPP and Monitoring Program. The SWPPP for the proposed project would describe minimum and advanced construction best practices for erosion control at the site. Additionally, adherence with existing state and local laws regulating construction activities would minimize soil erosion. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil, and a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

The project site at the Argonaut HS campus contains flat terrain and is developed, which would decrease the project's potential to accelerate erosion. Implementation of the proposed project at the Argonaut HS campus would require limited earthwork. The proposed project does not propose any subterranean levels and would not require extensive excavation, which could expose more soils to erosion. In addition, because the project site could include an area of more than one acre, the proposed project could be subject to the NPDES permit requirements. These include the preparation of a SWPPP and Monitoring Program. The SWPPP for the proposed project would describe minimum and advanced construction best practices for erosion control at the site. Additionally, adherence with existing state and local laws regulating construction activities would minimize soil erosion. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil, and a **less than significant** impact would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

No grading, utility trenching, or ground-disturbing activities would occur at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses, and the proposed project would not expose soils to additional erosion. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil, and **no impact** would occur.

- c) ***Would the proposed project 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?***

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

As discussed in Section VII(a), the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus is not within a landslide or liquefaction zone, and impacts would be less than significant with adherence to the CBC.

Lateral spreading is a type of liquefaction-induced ground failure associated with the lateral displacement of surficial blocks of sediment resulting from liquefaction in a subsurface layer (Caltrans 2020). Since the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus is not in an identified liquefaction susceptibility zone and would comply with CBC policies, lateral spreading would not occur.

Subsidence occurs when the level of the ground decreases, as if the surface is sinking. Subsidence can either be sudden (as in a sinkhole) or happen gradually over time. It can be caused by mining, groundwater pumping, or fossil fuel extraction, creating empty underground spaces that can collapse and cause the soil above to drop. Erosion, natural cave collapses, and seismic activity can also cause subsidence. Based on the United States Geological Survey's mapping of land subsidence in California, the project site at Lone Junior HS is not in an area of land subsidence (USGS 2026).

The collapse of soils occurs with (1) an open, partially unstable, partially saturated fabric; (2) sufficient total stress to make the soil structure metastable; (3) the presence of a bonding agent or sufficient soil suction to stabilize the soil in the metastable condition; and (4) the addition of water, which reduces soil suction or softens/destroys the bonding agent, thereby causing shear failures at the inter-aggregate or inter-particle contacts (Caltrans 2024). The soils underlying the

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

campus includes Red Bluff-Mokelumne complex and Mokelumne-Xerofluvents (USDA 2026). The underlying Red Bluff-Mokelumne complex contains a low dry unit weight (1.41 grams per cubic centimeter), and the soil primarily includes sandy loam and clayous textures, which is considered well drained. Mokelumne-Xerofluvents contains the same low dry unit weight (1.41 grams per cubic centimeter), and primarily contains sandy loam, which is moderately well drained. Although the underlying soils exhibit characteristics of collapsible soils—such as an open structure (low bulk density) and the presence of silts—their classification in a lower hydrologic soil group indicates a reduced risk of collapse. In addition, the proposed project would be subject to site-specific geotechnical investigation and implementation of all recommendations regarding grading, moisture conditioning, and foundation design, in accordance with the California Building Code. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

As discussed in Section VII(a), the project site at Amador HS is not in a landslide or liquefaction zone, and impacts would be less than significant with adherence to the CBC.

Lateral spreading is a type of liquefaction-induced ground failure associated with the lateral displacement of surficial blocks of sediment resulting from liquefaction in a subsurface layer (Caltrans 2020). Since the project site is not in an identified liquefaction susceptibility zone and would comply with the CBC, lateral spreading would not occur.

Subsidence occurs when the level of the ground decreases, as if the surface is sinking. Subsidence can either be sudden (as in a sinkhole) or happen gradually over time. It can be caused by mining, groundwater pumping, or fossil fuel extraction, creating empty underground spaces that can collapse and cause the soil above to drop. Erosion, natural cave collapses, and seismic activity can also cause subsidence. Based on the United States Geological Survey's Area of Land Subsidence in California mapper, the project site at Amador HS is not in an area of land subsidence (USGS 2026).

The collapse of soils occurs with (1) an open, partially unstable, partially saturated fabric; (2) sufficient total stress to make the soil structure metastable; (3) the presence of a bonding agent or sufficient soil suction to stabilize the soil in the metastable condition; and (4) the addition of water, which reduces soil suction or softens/destroys the bonding agent, thereby causing shear failures at the inter-aggregate or inter-particle contacts (Caltrans 2024). The soils underlying the campus include Auburn very rocky silt loam and Exchequer very rocky silt loam (USDA 2026). However, the Exchequer very rocky silt loam is at the edge of the eastern boundary of campus, outside of the project site. The underlying Auburn very rocky silt loam complex contains a high dry unit weight (1.48 grams per cubic centimeter), and the soils are well drained and in a Hydrologic soil group D (i.e., soils having very slow infiltration rates). Although the underlying soils exhibit characteristics of collapsible soils—such as presence of silts—their classification in a

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

lower hydrologic soil group and the “closed”⁸ nature of the soils indicates a reduced risk of collapse. In addition, the proposed project would not be subject to site-specific geotechnical investigation because the proposed project would require limited earthwork and no buildings would be constructed. Therefore, this impact is **less than significant**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

As discussed in Section VII(a), the project site at Argonaut HS is not in a landslide or liquefaction zone, and impacts would be less than significant with adherence to the CBC.

Lateral spreading is a type of liquefaction-induced ground failure associated with the lateral displacement of surficial blocks of sediment resulting from liquefaction in a subsurface layer (Caltrans 2020). Since the project site is not in an identified liquefaction susceptibility zone and would comply with the CBC, lateral spreading would not occur.

Subsidence occurs when the level of the ground decreases, as if the surface is sinking. Subsidence can either be sudden (as in a sinkhole) or happen gradually over time. It can be caused by mining, groundwater pumping, or fossil fuel extraction, creating empty underground spaces that can collapse and cause the soil above to drop. Erosion, natural cave collapses, and seismic activity can also cause subsidence. Based on the United States Geological Survey’s Area of Land Subsidence in California mapper, the project site at Argonaut HS is not in an area of land subsidence (USGS 2026).

The collapse of soils occurs with (1) an open, partially unstable, partially saturated fabric; (2) sufficient total stress to make the soil structure metastable; (3) the presence of a bonding agent or sufficient soil suction to stabilize the soil in the metastable condition; and (4) the addition of water, which reduces soil suction or softens/destroys the bonding agent, thereby causing shear failures at the inter-aggregate or inter-particle contacts (Caltrans 2024). The soils underlying the campus include Bonanza-Loafercreek Gopheridge soil, Auburn silt loam, and Auburn very rocky silt loam (USDA 2026). The underlying soils are well drained and in a Hydrologic soil group D (i.e., soils having very slow infiltration rates). Although the underlying soils exhibit characteristics of collapsible soils—such as presence of silts—their classification in a lower hydrologic soil group and the “closed” nature of the soils indicates a reduced risk of collapse. In addition, the proposed project would not be subject to site-specific geotechnical investigation because the proposed project would require limited earthwork and no buildings would be constructed. Therefore, this impact is **less than significant**.

⁸ The soils are identified as “closed” or can be considered more compact due to the high dry unit weight.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior building demolition or ground-disturbing activities. Since the proposed project does not include any ground-disturbing activities or addition of new classroom buildings at these campuses, soils would not become unstable as a result of the project. In addition, the project site at the Independence HS campus is already developed and would continue to operate as educational uses while the Lone ES campus would be closed. Therefore, this impact is **less than significant**.

d) *Would the proposed project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?*

Expansive soils contain certain types of clay minerals that shrink when they dry out and swell when they become wet, resulting in the potential for cracking building foundations and, in some cases, structural distress of the buildings themselves.

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

Based on the web soil survey mapper, the underlying soil primarily contains Red Bluff-Mokelumne complex and Mokelumne-Xerofluvents (USDA 2026). Soil Plasticity Index (PI) identifies the soil's ability to change shape, and the IBC (International Building Code) states a PI of 15 or greater (IBC Section 1803.5.3) is considered an expansive soil. The Red Bluff-Mokelumne complex has a PI of 9.3 percent, and the Mokelumne-Xerofluvents has a PI of 13 percent. The PI for the underlying soils is less than 15 and therefore has a low potential for expansion. In addition, the presence of expansive soil is commonly and effectively reduced by various design techniques such as 1) proper design of foundations, slabs, streets, and other improvements subject to the influence of the soils; 2) overexcavation of the expansive soils/bedrock and replacement with less-expansive fill soils; 3) control of surface and subsurface drainages to prevent moisture variations; and 4) combinations of these various techniques (UFC 2004). The project would comply with the seismic design parameters of the CBC, ensuring impacts associated with expansive soils are **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Amador HS Campus Improvements

As discussed in Impact VII(c), the soils underlying the project site only includes Auburn very rocky silt loam. Auburn very rocky silt loam has a PI of 5 percent. The PI for the underlying soils is less than 15, and therefore has a low potential for expansive soils. In addition, the presence of expansive soil is commonly and effectively reduced by various design techniques such as 1) proper design of foundations, slabs, streets, and other improvements subject to the influence of the soils; 2) overexcavation of the expansive soils/bedrock and replacement with less-expansive fill soils; 3) control of surface and subsurface drainages to prevent moisture variations; and 4) combinations of these various techniques (UFC 2004). The project would comply with the seismic design parameters of the CBC, ensuring impacts associated with expansive soils are **less than significant**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

As discussed in Impact VII(c), the soils underlying the project site only includes Bonanza-Loafercreek Gopheridge soil, Auburn silt loam, and Auburn very rocky silt loam. Auburn very rocky silt loam and the Auburn silt loam have a PI of 5 percent and the Bonanza-Loafercreek Gopheridge soil has a PI of 12.4 percent. The PI for the underlying soils is less than 15, and therefore has a low potential for expansive soils. The PI for the underlying soils is less than 15, and therefore has a low potential for expansive soils. In addition, the presence of expansive soil is commonly and effectively reduced by various design techniques such as 1) proper design of foundations, slabs, streets, and other improvements subject to the influence of the soils; 2) overexcavation of the expansive soils/bedrock and replacement with less-expansive fill soils; 3) control of surface and subsurface drainages to prevent moisture variations; and 4) combinations of these various techniques (UFC 2004). The project would comply with the seismic design parameters of the CBC, ensuring impacts associated with expansive soils are **less than significant**.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could create a substantial direct or indirect risk to life or property. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior building demolition or ground-disturbing activities that would directly or indirectly increase the risk to life or property. The campuses would physically remain in their current state. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- e) *Would the proposed project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?*

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus would not require the installation or use of a septic tank or alternative wastewater disposal system. The proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus would connect to the existing sewer lines that serve the Lone Junior HS campus. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Amador HS campus would not require the installation or use of a septic tank or alternative wastewater disposal system. The proposed new building at the Argonaut HS campus would connect to the existing sewer lines that serve the Argonaut HS campus. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Argonaut HS campus would not require the installation or use of a septic tank or alternative wastewater disposal system. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

Jackson Junior HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Jackson Junior HS campus would not require the installation or use of a septic tank or alternative wastewater disposal system. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

No construction activities or the installation of a new septic tank would occur at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

- f) *Would the proposed project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?*

The Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES campuses are developed with educational uses and do not have a unique-geologic feature on-site. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

Paleontological resources or fossils are remains of ancient plants and animals that can provide scientifically significant information about the history of life on Earth. This sensitivity is determined by rock type, the history of the geologic unit in producing significant fossils, and fossil localities that are recorded from that unit.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

Based on the California Department of Conservation Geologic Map of California, the project site has a general lithology of nonmarine (continental) sedimentary rocks with an age of Eocene (DOC 2026e). The University of California Museum of Paleontology Localities (UCMP) identifies a total of 61 localities within Amador County and 39 of the 61 localities are from the Eocene period/Epoch (UCMP 2026). Although unlikely due to the disturbed nature of the project site and the developed campus at the Lone Junior HS campus, ground-disturbing activities have the potential to uncover unknown paleontological resources. The proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus shall comply with PCR Chapter 1.7, Section 5097.5, which prohibits persons from knowingly and willfully excavating upon, or removing, destroying, injuring, or defacing any vertebrate paleontological site, including fossilized footprints or other paleontological feature. Due to the developed nature of the Lone Junior HS campus, paleontological resources are not expected to be discovered during project construction; though it is possible that unknown paleontological resources could be discovered during earth work activities. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 (MM GEO-1), requiring the contractor to notify a qualified paleontologist to investigate paleontological resources in the event they are uncovered, would ensure that impacts associated with paleontological resources would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: In the event that fossils or fossil locality deposits are discovered during construction at the Lone Junior High School and Amador High School campuses, excavations within 50 feet of the fossil locality shall be temporarily halted until removal of the fossil localities. The contractor shall notify a qualified paleontologist to investigate its significance. If the fossil locality is determined to be significant by the qualified paleontologist, the paleontologist shall work with the District to follow accepted professional standards, such as further testing for evaluation or data recovery, as necessary. The paleontologist shall notify the appropriate agencies to determine procedures that would be followed before construction is allowed to resume at the location of the find. If the project proponent determines that avoidance is not feasible, the paleontologist shall prepare an excavation plan for mitigating the effect of the project based on the qualities that make the resource important.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

Based on the California Department of Conservation Geologic Map of California, the project site at the Amador HS campus has a general lithology of marine sedimentary and metasedimentary rocks, with an age of Jurassic (DOC 2026e). The University of California Museum of Paleontology Localities (UCMP) identifies a total of 61 localities in Amador County, and only two of those are from the Jurassic period/Epoch (UCMP 2026). Although unlikely because of the disturbed nature of the project site and the developed campus at the Amador HS campus, ground-disturbing activities have the potential to uncover unknown paleontological resources.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Implementation of MM GEO-1, requiring the contractor to notify a qualified paleontologist to investigate paleontological resources in the event they are uncovered, would ensure that impacts associated with paleontological resources would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

Based on the California Department of Conservation Geologic Map of California, the project site at the Argonaut HS campus has a general lithology of metavolcanic rocks, with an age of Mesozoic (DOC 2026e). The University of California Museum of Paleontology Localities (UCMP) identifies a total of 61 localities in Amador County with none from Mesozoic era (UCMP 2026). Although unlikely because of the disturbed nature of the project site and the developed campus at the Amador HS campus, ground-disturbing activities have the potential to uncover unknown paleontological resources. Implementation of MM GEO-1, requiring the contractor to notify a qualified paleontologist to investigate paleontological resources in the event they are uncovered, would ensure that impacts associated with paleontological resources would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact paleontological resources. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior building demolition or ground-disturbing activities that could impact unknown paleontological resources. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

VIII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Global climate change is not confined to a particular project area and is generally accepted as the consequence of global industrialization over the last 200 years. A typical project, even a very large one, does not generate enough GHG emissions on its own to influence global climate change significantly; hence, the issue of global climate change is, by definition, a cumulative environmental impact. Because impacts regarding GHG emissions occur on a global scale, the following discussion of GHG emissions impacts considers the collective actions of the proposed project as opposed to the individual changes occurring at each campus.

SMAQMD has created a tiered approach in evaluating operation-related GHG emissions impacts (SMAQMD 2021). Per SMAQMD's CEQA Guide, a project may be evaluated for consistency with a qualified GHG Reduction Strategy. If a project is determined to be consistent with the qualified GHG Reduction Strategy, it is considered to result in a less than significant GHG emissions impact. However, if a project is not consistent with an applicable qualified GHG Reduction Strategy, or there is no applicable qualified GHG Reduction Strategy, a project may be evaluated against the GHG operational screening levels.

The screening levels represent the size of development that would not generate operational emissions exceeding 1,100 metric tons of CO₂e per year (MTCO₂e/yr). If a project does not exceed the screening levels or generates emissions less than or equal to 1,100 MTCO₂e/yr after implementation of the SMAQMD's Tier 1 GHG Best Management Practices (BMP), it is determined to result in a less than significant GHG emissions impact. The Tier 1 BMPs prohibit use of natural gas and require a project to be designed and constructed without natural gas infrastructure and require a project to meet the current CALGreen Tier 2 EV ready standards.

DISCUSSION

a) *Would the proposed project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*

The proposed project would include physical site improvements at four ACUSD campuses to accommodate the consolidation of six campuses onto five current ACUSD campuses. This includes development of one new classroom building at Lone Junior HS of up to 4,500 square

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

feet and relocation of existing portables to the Amador HS campus to provide more classroom space. However, the closure of Lone ES would result in a net decrease in total building square footage. Additionally, while enrollment at Amador HS and Lone Junior HS would increase to accommodate the changes associated with the consolidation, , the proposed project is responding to declining enrollment across the District. Thus, the proposed project would result in an overall decrease in operational GHG emissions from area sources (e.g., consumer cleaning products), energy usage (i.e., natural gas and electricity), solid waste generation, and wastewater generation.

As noted in the Transportation Analysis, VMT per student and staff under the proposed project would increase by 4.5 percent when compared to existing conditions. As discussed in Section XVII, Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would be incorporated to reduce project trips so that per capita VMT is no greater than existing conditions by encouraging ride sharing, ensuring existing school bus reliability, capping student parking permits, and subsidizing transit passes. Therefore, VMT impacts after the incorporation of mitigation, would be less than significant.

SMAQMD has adopted GHG emissions screening levels based on project sizes to allow qualitative assessment of GHG emissions impacts. If a project's size is beneath the applicable screening level and it implements the Tier 1 BMPs, it is considered to be below SMAQMD's 1,100 MTCO₂e/yr threshold (SMAQMD 2021). The screening level applicable to the increase in building square footage proposed at Lone Junior HS and Amador HS is the High School land use screening level size of 53,000 square feet (SMAQMD 2018). The improvements under the proposed project whether considered individually or collectively would be below this screening level. Additionally, the proposed buildings under the proposed project would be designed to meet the current California Building and Energy Efficiency Standards, as well as be all-electric buildings. Therefore, the proposed project would satisfy SMAQMD's applicable Tier 1 BMP all-electric energy systems. Since the proposed project would not be adding new paved parking space, it would not be subject to the Tier 1 BMP electric-vehicle parking stalls requirement.

The proposed project would meet SMAQMD's screening criteria for GHG emissions impacts and therefore is considered to have **less than significant impacts** with respect to GHG emissions.

b) *Would the proposed project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?*

CARB's Scoping Plan

CARB's Scoping Plan is California's GHG reduction strategy to achieve the state's GHG emissions reduction target established by SB 32, which is to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 emission levels by year 2030. CARB subsequently adopted the 2022 Scoping Plan Update to achieve the state's carbon neutrality goals under EO B-55-18. The CARB Scoping Plan, including subsequent updates, is applicable to State agencies and is not directly applicable to

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Cities/Counties or individual projects (i.e., the Scoping Plan does not require the school district to adopt policies, programs, or regulations to reduce GHG emissions). However, new regulations adopted by the State agencies outlined in the Scoping Plan result in GHG emissions reductions at the local level. As a result, local jurisdictions benefit from reductions in transportation emissions rates, increases in water efficiency in the building and landscape codes, and other statewide actions that affect a local jurisdiction's emissions inventory from the top down. Statewide strategies to reduce GHG emissions include the low carbon fuel standard and changes in the corporate average fuel economy standards (e.g., California Advanced Clean Cars program).

Implementation of the proposed project would adhere to the programs and regulations identified by the Scoping Plan and implemented by State, regional, and local agencies to achieve the statewide GHG reduction goals of AB 32, SB 32, and AB 1279. In addition, the proposed buildings would be designed all-electric, which goes beyond the requirements of the current CALGreen and Building Energy Efficiency Standards in effect as of January 1, 2026. Furthermore, the proposed project would not increase student capacity at the District and would implement Mitigation Measure TRA-1 to ensure no net increase in VMT. Moreover, the proposed project would not exceed SMAQMD's GHG threshold, since its size is below SMAQMD's screening levels, which was developed to demonstrate consistency with SB 32 and statewide carbon neutrality by 2045. Therefore, the proposed project would not obstruct implementation of the CARB Scoping Plan, and impacts are considered **less than significant**.

IX. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than- Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than- Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The Hazards and Hazardous Materials analysis is organized by campus because existing biological conditions and resource constraints are specific to each site. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates each of the six campuses individually, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential hazards and hazardous materials impacts across all project sites.

DISCUSSION

- a) *Would the proposed project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Construction Phase: Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, and Jackson Junior HS Campuses

Construction of the proposed project at the Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, and Jackson Junior HS campuses would require the use of hazardous materials such as vehicle fuels, lubricants, grease, transmission fluids, and paints and coatings. The handling, use, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials during the construction phase of the proposed project would comply with existing regulations of several agencies—the EPA, Cal/OSHA, US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and USDOT.

The use, storage, transport, and disposal of construction-related hazardous materials would be required to conform to existing laws and regulations. Compliance with applicable laws and regulations would ensure that all potentially hazardous materials are used and handled in an appropriate manner and would minimize the potential for safety impacts. For example, all spills or leakage of petroleum products during construction activities must be immediately contained, the hazardous material identified, and the material remediated in compliance with state and local regulations. All contaminated waste would be collected and disposed of at an appropriately licensed disposal or treatment facility. Furthermore, the project would adhere to all emergency response plan requirements of Amador County, including the County's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and the Amador Fire Protection Authority (AFPA), throughout the project construction phase. Therefore, hazards to the public or the environment arising from the routine use of hazardous materials during project construction would be **less than significant**.

Operation Phase: Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, and Independence HS Campuses

Operation of the proposed project would transport, use, store, and dispose of small amounts of hazardous materials typical of school facilities, such as cleaning and maintenance supplies (cleaners, gasoline, paint, and pesticides). The proposed project includes various improvements to campus buildings, the addition of new buildings, and accessibility improvements that would use cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities that are not typically considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. No manufacturing, industrial, or other uses utilizing large amounts of hazardous materials would occur on the campus. Compliance with applicable federal and State laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure that all potentially hazardous materials are used and handled in an appropriate manner and would minimize the potential for safety impacts to occur. Therefore, the proposed project would not create substantial hazards to the public or the environment. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Lone ES Campus

The proposed project includes the closure of the Lone ES campus. Closure of the Lone ES campus would not require the use or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, and **no impact** would occur.

b) *Would the proposed 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?*

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires referencing a list of hazardous materials sites, hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Resources Control Board has issued certain types of orders, public drinking water wells collecting detectable levels of organic contaminants, underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases, and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated.

Seven environmental lists were searched for hazardous materials on the project site:

- GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB 2026)
- EnviroStor. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2026a)
- EnviroStor. Cortese List (DTSC 2026b)
- Cortese List Data Resources. CalEPA (CalEPA 2026a)
- California EPA. CalEPA (CalEPA 2026b)
- Solid Waste Information System (SWIS). California Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (CalRecycle 2026a)
- Well Finder. Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM)(DOC 2026f)

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

As shown in Table 3, *Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Lone Junior HS Project Site*, GeoTracker, EnviroStor, and CalEPA identified five hazardous waste sites in the vicinity of the project site at Lone Junior HS. GeoTracker identified a LUST cleanup site on the Lone Junior HS campus. The LUST cleanup site on campus and the cleanup program site have a status of “completed-case closed,” and no further action is warranted. The historical program site has a needs evaluation status since 1988 but is considered inactive and would not impact the site in any way. The two sites identified as a chemical storage facility utilize and store hazardous chemicals in accordance with federal, State, and local policies (see Impact IX(a)) and would not present a hazard to the public. The site at 8631 California has been identified as an unregulated regulation-measure type by CalEPA and shall be brought into compliance with federal, State, and local policies. In addition, GeoTracker erroneously identified a military UST Site (T0603191981) at the Lemoore Naval Air Station within 0.25 mile of Lone Junior HS;

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

however, the Lemoore Naval Air Station is approximately 155 miles south in Kings County and was not included in Table 3. No other hazardous material sites were identified in the vicinity of the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus. Based on the above information, there is no foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials in the environment.

Table 3 Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Lone Junior HS Project Site

Location	Database	Identifier	Cleanup Status	Proximity to Site
450 South Mill Street, Lone, CA	GeoTracker	LUST Cleanup Site	Completed - Case Closed: 9/2/2004 (T0600550494)	On Campus
	CalEPA			
	CalEPA	Chemical Storage Facility	Routine	
Mill Street & Marlette, Lone, CA	GeoTracker	Cleanup Program Site	Completed - Case Closed: 12/1/2010 (SL0600504718)	0.12 mile northeast
	CalEPA	Cleanup Program Site		
8631 California, Lone, CA 95640	CalEPA	N/a	Unregulated	0.15 mile southeast
End of Depot Road, Lone, CA 95640	EnviroStor	Historical	Inactive – Needs Evaluation: 2/28/1988	0.19 mile west
315 Depot Road	CalEPA	Aboveground Petroleum Storage, Chemical Storage Facilities, Hazardous Waste Generator	Routine	0.25 mile west

Sources: SWRCB 2026; CalEPA 2026b; DTSC 2026b.

As discussed in Impact IX(a), construction activities would require the use of hazardous materials, which include vehicle fuels, lubricants, grease, and transmission fluids as well as paints and coatings. The use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials would be in accordance with regulatory standards and manufacturers' specifications. Hazardous materials would be used in small quantities and properly stored, so they do not reasonably pose health and safety hazards. Operation of the proposed project would transport, use, store, and dispose of small amounts of hazardous materials typical of school facilities, such as cleaning and

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

maintenance supplies (such as cleaners, gasoline, paint and pesticides). Operation of the proposed project would use cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities, which is not typically considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The use of hazardous materials during construction and operation would be at small quantities and would not 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. Compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure impacts would be **less than significant**.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

Table 4, *Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Amador HS Project Site*, identifies three hazardous waste sites in the vicinity of the project site at Amador HS. GeoTracker and CalEPA identified a LUST cleanup site on the Amador HS campus. The LUST cleanup site on campus has a status of “completed-case closed,” and no further action is warranted. In addition, the Amador HS campus and the Sutter Creek Public Pool (at 300 Spanish Street) are identified as chemical storage facilities, which means the sites utilize and store hazardous chemicals in accordance with federal, State, and local policies (see Impact IX(a)) and would not present a hazard to the public. The Lincoln Mine Center site at SR-49, next to Sutter Creek Fire Department Station, is considered inactive, and the voluntary cleanup agreement was terminated on 8/1/2016. Following termination of the voluntary cleanup agreement, the regulatory agency may initiate enforcement actions or transfer the site to an oversight program (DTSC 2026c). Based on the above information, there is no foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials in the environment.

As discussed in Impact IX(a), construction activities would require the use of hazardous materials, which include vehicle fuels, lubricants, grease, and transmission fluids as well as paints and coatings. The use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials would be in accordance with regulatory standards and manufacturers’ specifications. Hazardous materials would be used in small quantities and properly stored, so they do not reasonably pose health and safety hazards. Operation of the proposed project would transport, use, store, and dispose of small amounts of hazardous materials typical of school facilities, such as cleaning and maintenance supplies (such as cleaners, gasoline, paint and pesticides). Operation of the proposed project would use cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities, which is not typically considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The use of hazardous materials during construction and operation would be at small quantities and would not 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. Compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Table 4 Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Amador HS Project Site

Location	Database	Identifier	Cleanup Status	Proximity to Site
330 Spanish St, Sutter Creek, CA 95685	GeoTracker	LUST Cleanup Site	Completed - Case Closed: 12/15/2011 (T0600552287)	On-Site
	CalEPA			
	CalEPA	Chemical Storage Facilities	Routine	
330 Spanish St, Sutter Creek, CA 95685	CalEPA	Chemical Storage Facilities	Routine	0.10 mile south
State Route 49, Next to Sutter Creek Fire Department Station	EnviroStor	Voluntary Cleanup	Inactive – needs Evaluation: 2/22/2009 Voluntary Cleanup Agreement: Terminated on 8/1/2016	0.20 mile northeast

Sources: SWRCB 2026; CalEPA 2026b; DTSC 2026b.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

Table 5, *Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Argonaut HS Project Site*, identifies one hazardous waste site in the vicinity of the project site at Argonaut HS. The campus was identified as a chemical storage facility to utilize and store hazardous chemicals in accordance with federal, State, and local policies (see Impact IX(a)) and would not present a hazard to the public. Based on the above information, there is no foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials in the environment.

As discussed in Impact IX(a), construction activities would require the use of hazardous materials, which include vehicle fuels, lubricants, grease, and transmission fluids as well as paints and coatings. The use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials would be in accordance with regulatory standards and manufacturers' specifications. Hazardous materials would be used in small quantities and properly stored, so they do not reasonably pose health and safety hazards. Operation of the proposed project would transport, use, store, and dispose of small amounts of hazardous materials typical of school facilities, such as cleaning and maintenance supplies (such as cleaners, gasoline, paint and pesticides). Operation of the proposed project would use cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities, which is not typically considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The use of hazardous materials during construction and operation would be at small quantities and would not 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. Compliance with applicable federal and

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

state laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure impacts would be **less than significant**.

Table 5 Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Argonaut HS Project Site

Location	Database	Identifier	Cleanup Status	Proximity to Site
501 Argonaut Lane, Jackson, CA 95642	CalEPA	Chemical Storage Facilities	Routine	On-site

Sources: CalEPA 2026b.

Jackson Junior HS Campus Improvements

Table 6, *Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Jackson Junior HS Project Site*, identifies 11 hazardous waste sites in the vicinity of the project site at Jackson Junior HS.

Within 0.25 mile of the Jackson Junior HS campus, GeoTracker and CalEPA identified several LUST cleanup sites, all of which have been closed: 217 Rex Avenue (closed August 20, 2010), 315 Sutter Street (closed June 11, 1997), 505 Sutter Street (closed June 5, 2000), 645 Highway 88/49 (closed November 22, 2004), and a private residence (closed July 14, 2003). The 315 Sutter Street property is also identified as a chemical storage facility and hazardous waste generator operating under routine status. The 645 Highway 88/49 property is additionally identified in EnviroStor as a historical site referred to another agency as of October 3, 1995, and in GeoTracker as a cleanup program site closed December 7, 2009.

Two sites at or near the intersection of Sutter Street and Argonaut Drive remain active: a Voluntary Cleanup Agreement active as of January 26, 2023, and a State Response or National Priorities List (Superfund) site active as of October 11, 2016, both located approximately 0.15 mile west of the project site. These active sites should be noted as recognized environmental conditions (RECs) and monitored for any changes in status that could affect the project site. Though a Superfund site is located within 0.25 mile of the project site, the improvements at Jackson Junior HS would be limited to the campus and would consist of internal classroom improvements, would not include construction of any buildings or structures, and would not include any ground disturbing activities. Additionally, the internal classroom improvements would not disturb, mobilize, or interact with existing contamination at the Superfund site that is located approximately 0.15 mile west. Based on the above information, there is no foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials in the environment.

As discussed in Impact IX(a), construction activities would require the use of hazardous materials, which include vehicle fuels, lubricants, grease, and transmission fluids as well as paints and coatings. The use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials would be in accordance with regulatory standards and manufacturers' specifications. Hazardous materials

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

would be used in small quantities and properly stored, so they do not reasonably pose health and safety hazards. Operation of the proposed project would transport, use, store, and dispose of small amounts of hazardous materials typical of school facilities, such as cleaning and maintenance supplies (such as cleaners, gasoline, paint and pesticides). Operation of the proposed project would use cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities, which is not typically considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The use of hazardous materials during construction and operation would be at small quantities and would not 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. Compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure impacts would be **less than significant**.

Table 6 Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Jackson Junior HS Project Site

Location	Database	Identifier	Cleanup Status	Proximity to Site
217 Rex Avenue, Jackson, CA 95642	CalEPA	LUST Cleanup Site	Completed – Case Closed: 8/20/2010 (T0600500026)	0.08 mile east
	GeoTracker			
315 Sutter Street, Jackson, CA 95642	CalEPA	LUST Cleanup Site	Completed – Case Closed: 6/11/1997 (T0600500025)	0.12 mile north
	GeoTracker			
315 Sutter Street, Jackson, CA 95642	CalEPA	Chemical Storage Facilities	Routine	0.12 mile north
315 Sutter Street, Jackson, CA 95642	CalEPA	Hazardous Waste Generator	Routine	0.12 mile north
Sutter Street and Intersection of Argonaut Drive,	EnviroStor	Voluntary Agreement	Active: as of 1/26/2023	0.15 mile west

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Table 6 Hazardous Material Sites On-Site or Within 0.25 Mile of the Jackson Junior HS Project Site

Location	Database	Identifier	Cleanup Status	Proximity to Site
Jackson, CA 95642				
Argonaut Lane, Jackson, CA 95642	EnviroStor	State Response or National Priorities List	Active: as of 10/11/2016	0.15 mile west
505 Sutter Street, Jackson, CA	CalEPA	LUST Cleanup Site	Completed – Case Closed: 6/5/2000 (T0600500015)	0.17 mile east
	GeoTracker			
645 Highway 88/49, Jackson, CA 95642	CalEPA	LUST Cleanup Site	Completed – Case Closed: 11/22/2004 (T0600593573)	0.19 mile northeast
	GeoTracker			
645 Highway 88/49, Jackson, CA 95642	GeoTracker	Cleanup Program Site	Completed – Case Closed: 12/7/2009 (SL0600518985)	0.19 mile northeast
645 Highway 88/49, Jackson, CA 95642	EnviroStor	Historical	Refer to Other Agency: 10/3/1995 (03750001)	0.19 mile northeast
Private Residence, Jackson, CA 95642	CalEPA	LUST Cleanup Site	Completed – Case Closed: 7/14/2003 (T0600593989)	0.21 mile southeast
	GeoTracker			

Sources: SWRCB 2026; CalEPA 2026b; DTSC 2026b.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project includes the closure of the Lone ES campus. Closure of the Lone ES campus would not require construction activities or the use or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

As discussed in Impact IX(a), operation of the proposed project at Independence HS would transport, use, store, and dispose of small amounts of hazardous materials typical of school facilities, such as cleaning and maintenance supplies (such as cleaners, gasoline, paint and pesticides). Operation of the proposed project would use cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities, and these are not typically considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The use of hazardous materials during operation would be in small quantities and would not 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. Compliance with applicable federal and State laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure impacts would be **less than significant**.

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

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus would be limited to the boundaries of the existing campus. Lone ES is 0.17 mile east of Lone Junior HS. However, the proposed project would result in the relocation of students from the Lone ES campus to the Lone Junior HS campus and the closure of the Lone ES campus. Therefore, no active school campuses would be within 0.25 mile of Lone Junior HS campus.

As discussed in Impact IX(a), construction and operation of the proposed project would handle hazardous materials typical of construction activities and school activities (during operation). The use, transport, and storage of hazardous materials would be required to comply with all applicable State and federal regulations, which would ensure the proper handling of such materials. As discussed in IX(b), all hazardous materials sites near the project site at Lone Junior HS have been determined to not pose a risk; therefore, the potential for a hazardous materials release or threatened release at project site or within a 1,500-foot radius of the project site is less than significant. The proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste. Thus, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Amador HS campus would be limited to the boundaries of the existing campus. Amador HS is adjacent to Sutter Creek ES. As discussed in Impact IX(a), construction and operation of the proposed project would handle hazardous materials typical of construction activities and scholastic activities (during operation). The use, transportation, and storage of hazardous materials would be required to comply with all applicable State and federal regulations, which would ensure the proper handling of such materials. As discussed in

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Impact IX(b), all hazardous materials sites have been determined to not pose a risk; therefore, the potential for a hazardous materials release or threatened release at project site or within a 1,500-foot radius of the project site is less than significant. Thus, the proposed project would not emit hazardous materials and would adhere to State and federal regulations while handling hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste. Impacts to Sutter Creek ES would be **less than significant**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Argonaut HS campus would be limited to the boundaries of the existing campus. There is no school within 0.25-mile of the Argonaut HS campus. As discussed in Impact IX(a), construction and operation of the proposed project would handle hazardous materials typical of construction activities and scholastic activities (during operation). The use, transportation, and storage of hazardous materials would be required to comply with all applicable State and federal regulations, which would ensure the proper handling of such materials. As discussed in Impact IX(b), all hazardous materials sites have been determined to not pose a risk; therefore, the potential for a hazardous materials release or threatened release at project site or within a 1,500-foot radius of the project site is less than significant. Thus, the proposed project would not emit hazardous materials and would adhere to State and federal regulations while handling hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Jackson Junior HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Jackson Junior HS campus would be limited to the boundaries of the existing campus. There is no school within 0.25-mile of the Jackson Junior HS campus. As discussed in Impact IX(a), construction and operation of the proposed project would handle hazardous materials typical of construction activities and scholastic activities (during operation). The use, transportation, and storage of hazardous materials would be required to comply with all applicable State and federal regulations, which would ensure the proper handling of such materials. As discussed in Impact IX(b), all hazardous materials sites have been determined to not pose a risk; therefore, the potential for a hazardous materials release or threatened release at project site or within a 1,500-foot radius of the project site is less than significant. Thus, the proposed project would not emit hazardous materials and would adhere to State and federal regulations while handling hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project includes the closure of the Lone ES campus. Closure of the Lone ES campus would not require construction activities or the use or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, **no impact** would occur at Lone Jr HS, which is within a quarter mile.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

There are no school campuses within 0.25 mile of the Independence HS campus. As discussed in Impact IX(a), operation of the proposed project would transport, use, store and dispose of small amounts of hazardous materials typical of school facilities, such as cleaning and maintenance supplies (such as cleaners, gasoline, paint and pesticides). Operation of the proposed project would use cleaners and other chemicals in relatively small quantities, which is not typically considered hazardous materials that could result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment. The use of hazardous materials during operation would be at small quantities and would not 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. Compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure impacts would be **less than significant**.

d) *Would the proposed 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?*

Seven environmental lists were searched for hazardous materials on the project site:

- GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB 2026)
- EnviroStor. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2026a)
- EnviroStor. Cortese List (DTSC 2026b)
- Cortese List Data Resources. CalEPA (CalEPA 2026a)
- California EPA. CalEPA (CalEPA 2026b)
- Solid Waste Information System (SWIS). California Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (CalRecycle 2026a)
- Well Finder. Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM)(DOC 2026f)

Ione Junior HS Campus Improvements

As discussed in Section IX(b), the campus was identified with two hazardous waste identifiers (which includes the project site). The project site is identified as a former LUST cleanup site with a status of “completed-case closed,” and is identified as a site that stores chemical/hazardous materials on-site. However, this is typical of all public schools due to the use of cleaning and maintenance supplies, which would be stored in accordance with federal, state, and local policies. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a hazard to the public because of a hazardous materials site compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Amador HS Campus Improvements

As discussed in Section IX(b), the campus had two hazardous waste identifiers. The project site is identified as a former LUST cleanup site with a status of “completed-case closed,” and is identified as a site that stores chemical/hazardous materials on-site. However, this is typical of all public schools due to the use of hazardous materials such as cleaning and maintenance supplies, which would be stored in accordance with federal, state, and local policies. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a hazard to the public because of a hazardous materials site compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

As discussed in Section IX(b), the campus had one hazardous waste identifier. The project site is identified as a site that stores chemical/hazardous materials on-site. However, this is typical of all public schools due to the use of hazardous materials such as cleaning and maintenance supplies, which would be stored in accordance with federal, state, and local policies. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a hazard to the public because of a hazardous materials site compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Jackson Junior HS Campus Improvements

As discussed in Section IX(b), the campus had two hazardous waste identifiers. The project site is identified as a former LUST cleanup site with a status of “completed-case closed,” and is identified as a site that stores chemical/hazardous materials on-site. However, this is typical of all public schools due to the use of hazardous materials such as cleaning and maintenance supplies, which would be stored in accordance with federal, state, and local policies. Therefore, the proposed project would not create a hazard to the public because of a hazardous materials site compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project includes the closure of the Lone ES campus. Closure of the Lone ES campus would not require construction activities or the use or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

The proposed project at Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior building demolition or ground-disturbing activities and no improvements at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would occur and would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Therefore, a **less than significant** impact would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- 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 proposed project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?*

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

Lone Junior HS is not in the vicinity of an airport. The closest airport, the Ranch Airstrip, is approximately 2.3 miles southwest of the Lone Junior HS. Therefore, the proposed project at Lone Junior HS would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise at the Lone Junior HS campus. **No impact** would occur.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

Amador HS is approximately 1.7 miles northwest of Westover Field (Amador County Airport). However, the project site is not within the Airport Safety Area, as shown on Figure 4-2, Land Use Overlay Diagram, of the Sutter Creek General Plan (Sutter Creek 2019). Therefore, a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Argonaut HS

Argonaut HS is approximately 1.1 miles south of the Westover Field (Amador County Airport). The project site is within the airport height restriction zone and airport influence area (Amador County 2026). The proposed project at Argonaut HS includes internal classroom improvements and would not include construction of any buildings or structures that would exceed the height restriction of an Airport Land Use Plan. Therefore, a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Jackson Junior HS

Jackson Junior HS is approximately 1.6 miles southeast of the Westover Field (Amador County Airport). The project site is within the airport height restriction zone and airport influence area (Amador County 2026). The proposed project at Jackson Junior HS includes internal classroom improvements and would not include construction of any buildings or structures that would exceed the height restriction of the Airport Land Use Plan. Therefore, a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Independence HS

Independence HS is approximately 0.7 miles west of the Westover Field (Amador County Airport). The project site is within airport safety zone Area 3, proposed safety zone 6, airport height restriction zone, and airport influence area (Amador County 2026). The proposed project at Independence HS includes internal classroom improvements and would not include construction of any buildings or structures that would exceed the height restriction of the Airport Land Use Plan. Although the proposed project would not result in an overall net change

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

in enrollment, enrollment at Independent HS would be reduced. Therefore, the proposed project would reduce the number of students within an airport safety zone, and a **less than significant** impact would occur.

Lone ES Campus

The proposed project includes the closure of the Lone ES campus. The closest airport, the Ranch Airstrip, is approximately 2.6 miles southwest of the Lone ES campus. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

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

Please refer to Section XX(a), *Wildfire*, for discussion on interference with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. A **less than significant** impact to an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan was identified.

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

The project site is in a developed and urbanized residential area in the cities of Lone, Sutter Creek and Jackson.

As discussed in Section XX, *Wildfire*, according to the Lone General Plan and CalFire mapper, the project site at all six campuses are not within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) (Lone 2023; CalFire 2026). The proposed project would not expose any additional persons or structures directly or indirectly to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involved by wildland fires. **No impact** would occur.

X. Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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 a 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 offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The Hydrology and Water Quality analysis is organized by campus because existing biological conditions and resource constraints are specific to each site. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates each of the six campuses individually, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential hydrology and water quality impacts across all project sites.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

DISCUSSION

a) *Would the proposed project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?*

Urban runoff from storms or nuisance flows (runoff during dry periods) from development projects can carry pollutants to receiving waters. Runoff can contain pollutants such as oil, fertilizers, pesticides, trash, and sediment. This runoff can flow directly into local streams or into storm drains and continue through stormwater pipes until it is released untreated into a local waterway and eventually the ocean. Untreated stormwater runoff degrades water quality in surface waters and groundwater and can affect drinking water, human health, and plant and animal habitats. The construction and operational phases of the proposed project could have the potential to impact water quality. The following is a discussion of the potential impact that the construction and operational phases of the proposed project could have on water resources and quality.

Ione Junior HS, Amador HS, and Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

Construction

Clearing, grading, and construction activities associated with the proposed project may impact water quality through soil erosion and increasing the amount of silt and debris carried in runoff. Additionally, the use of construction materials such as fuels, solvents, and paints may present a risk to surface water quality. Finally, the refueling and parking of construction vehicles and other equipment on-site during construction may result in oil, grease, or related pollutant leaks and spills that may discharge into the storm drain system.

The proposed project at the Ione Junior HS, Amador HS, and Argonaut HS campuses would be required to comply with all applicable regulatory requirements governing water quality. The proposed project would be required to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit (CGP) (2022-0057-DWQ). The CGP requires the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that incorporates best management practices (BMP) to control sedimentation, erosion, and hazardous materials contamination of runoff during construction. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) mandates that projects that disturb one or more acres of land must obtain coverage under the Statewide CGP. Prior to the start of construction activities, the project applicant must file Permit Registration Documents (PRD) with the SWRCB, which includes a Notice of Intent, risk assessment, site map, annual fee, signed certification statement, SWPPP, and post-construction water balance calculations. The construction contractor is required to maintain a copy of the SWPPP on-site at all times and implement all construction BMPs identified in the SWPPP during construction activities. Prior to the commencement of a grading activities, the project applicant is required to provide proof of filing of the PRDs with the SWRCB.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The SWPPP must describe construction BMPs that address pollutant source reduction and provide measures/controls to mitigate potential pollutant sources. These include, but are not limited to:

- Erosion controls (e.g., earth dikes and swales, mulching, slope drains, compost blankets)
- Sediment controls (e.g., silt fence, sediment trap, sandbag or straw bale barriers)
- Tracking controls (e.g., stabilized construction entrance/exit, tire wash)
- Nonstorm water management (e.g., dewatering practices, vehicle and equipment cleaning)
- Materials and waste management (e.g., material storage, hazardous waste management, soil management)
- Good housekeeping practice

Submittal of the PRDs and implementation of the SWPPP and its associated BMPs throughout the construction phase would result in an impact of **less than significant**.

Operation

The District is not currently known to be an enrolled permittee under a municipal MS4 stormwater permit in the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. However, project construction activities may be subject to the CGP if applicable thresholds for land disturbance are met. In addition, the project would incorporate site design, source control, and treatment control BMPs, as appropriate, to reduce stormwater runoff volume and pollutant loading from the site. Compliance with applicable state and local stormwater requirements would ensure impacts related to stormwater runoff quality and drainage would be **less than significant**.

Site Design BMPs

Site design BMPs would be incorporated into the project's design to reduce the potential impacts on surface and groundwater quality. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Maximizing pervious areas and minimizing directly connected impervious areas.
- Using on-site ponding areas (i.e., at-grade detention basins).
- Constructing hardscape with permeable materials and implementing hydrologically functional landscape design.
- Incorporating trees, open space, and landscaping to mitigate urban heat island impacts.
- Including mostly native plants and drought-tolerant plants in landscaping plans.
- Using effective irrigation systems to minimize water usage.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Source Control BMPs

Source control BMPs effectively minimize the potential for typical urban pollutants to contact stormwater, thereby limiting water quality impacts downstream. Source control BMPs would be incorporated into the proposed project and implemented throughout the operation of the campus. These BMPs could include the following:

- Educational uses related to urban runoff provided to all employees, and staff.
- Inspection and maintenance of site BMPs—catch basins, grate inlets, etc.
- Providing storm drain stenciling or signage on all storm drain inlets and catch basins.
- Properly designing and inspecting all trash storage areas, loading docks, outdoor storage areas, and outdoor work areas on a regular basis.

Site design BMPs would be incorporated into the proposed project's design to reduce the potential impacts on surface and groundwater quality. Source-control BMPs effectively minimize the potential for typical urban pollutants to contact stormwater, thereby limiting water quality impacts downstream. Source-control BMPs would include educational materials; inspection and maintenance of site BMPs (catch basins, grate inlets, etc.); compliance with Uniform Fire Code; providing storm drain stenciling or signage on all storm drain inlets and catch basins; and designing and regularly inspecting all trash storage areas. As discussed in Section IX, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, compliance with applicable federal and State laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials would ensure impacts would be **less than significant**.

The District would adhere to the requirements of the City of Ione Municipal Code for the Ione Junior HS Campus improvements, specifically Section 18.16.180, Stormwater management, which requires implementation of BMPs into landscape and grading design plans to minimize runoff and encourage infiltration (i.e., rain gardens, cisterns, and other landscape features and practices that increase rainwater capture and infiltration). The District would adhere to the requirements of the Sutter Creek Municipal Code for the Amador HS Campus improvements, specifically Section 14.04.230, Storm or Drainage Water and the Introduction of Toxic and Other Harmful Wastes into the Sewer System—Prohibited, which prohibits the discharge of non-stormwater discharges to the City's drain system. Additionally, the District would adhere to the requirements of the City of Jackson Municipal Code for the Argonaut HS campus, specifically Section 17.40.040.15, Stormwater Management and Rainwater Retention which recommends stormwater best management practices. With the implementation of the BMP features described and compliance with State, County, and local regulations and code requirements, the proposed project would have a **less than significant** impact on surface or groundwater quality during the operational phase.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact water quality. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior building demolition or ground-disturbing activities. No improvements at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would occur. The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

b) *Would the proposed project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?*

The Amador Water Agency's (AWA) primary source of water to the campuses is surface water (91 percent) via the Mokelumne River. AWA does not import or purchase water, and groundwater (9 percent) supplies are used for the communities of La Mel Heights and Lake Camanche Village (AWA 2021). The AWA does not use groundwater to service the cities of Jackson, Lone, or Sutter Creek or the campuses; therefore, overall groundwater demand is not expected to increase or change. The proposed project would increase students at the Amador HS, Argonaut HS, and Lone Junior HS campuses; decrease student enrollment at the Independence HS, and Jackson Junior HS campuses; and close the Lone ES campus. Overall, the proposed project would result in no net changes to student enrollment in the District and AWA's service area.

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The project site at the Lone Junior HS campus is disturbed and developed with an existing parking lot, storage area, and other paved areas. The project site includes existing hardscape/impervious surfaces (i.e., parking lot and paved areas). The proposed project would construct a classroom building within the existing paved storage area, and reconfiguration of a parking lot, which would not result in an expansion of the paved surface area or the demolition of the existing asphalt. The proposed new classroom building may result in a minor increase in impervious areas, with the removal of four trees and vegetation. Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially increase the impervious surfaces on campus since the majority of the project site is already paved.

Stormwater runoff from the project site would be directed to stormwater inlets and into the public right-of-way. Stormwater runoff from new impervious areas would be directed to the existing storm drain system on-site and can percolate into the ground. No natural water features

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

(e.g., streams or creeks) that serve as primary groundwater recharge sources are located in the immediate project vicinity. The project site is not currently used, nor is it designated, as a significant or important groundwater recharge area. And the minor increase in impervious surfaces would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge. The proposed project does not include the construction of groundwater extraction wells and would not interfere with groundwater supplies or a groundwater management plan. Therefore, impacts on groundwater recharge and supplies would be **less than significant**.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

The project site is disturbed and developed with an existing northern parking lot, classroom buildings, and paved areas. The project site includes primary hardscape/impervious surfaces with paved walkways or surfaces within the campus, and some of the northern parking lot is paved. Implementation of the proposed project would not increase the impervious surfaces on campus since the majority of the project site is already paved.

Stormwater runoff from the project site would be directed to stormwater inlets and into the public right-of-way. Stormwater runoff from new impervious areas would be directed to the existing storm drain system on-site and can percolate into the ground. No natural water features (e.g., streams or creeks) that serve as primary groundwater recharge sources are located in the immediate project vicinity. The project site is not currently used or designated as a significant or important groundwater recharge area, and the minor increase in impervious surfaces would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge. The proposed project does not include the construction of groundwater extraction wells and would not interfere with groundwater supplies or a groundwater management plan. Therefore, impacts on groundwater recharge and supplies would be **less than significant**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

The project site is disturbed and developed with library/classrooms, office, gymnasium, storage, sports fields, sports courts, lawn areas, and surface parking lots. Implementation of the proposed project would not significantly increase the impervious surfaces on campus.

Stormwater runoff from the project site would be directed to stormwater inlets and into the public right-of-way. Stormwater runoff from new impervious areas would be directed to the existing storm drain system on-site and can percolate into the ground. No natural water features (e.g., streams or creeks) that serve as primary groundwater recharge sources are located in the immediate project vicinity. The project site is not currently used or designated as a significant or important groundwater recharge area, and the minor increase in impervious surfaces would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge. The proposed project does not include the construction of groundwater extraction wells and would not interfere with groundwater supplies or a groundwater management plan. Therefore, impacts on groundwater recharge and supplies would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact groundwater supplies or recharge. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any construction related activities that would increase impervious areas that would decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge. The proposed project at Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not impact groundwater recharge. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

- c) ***Would the proposed 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 a 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?**

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

Erosion and Siltation

Erosion and siltation impacts that could result from the alteration of drainage patterns would, for the most part, occur during the proposed project's construction phase, which would include site preparation and grading activities. Environmental factors that affect erosion include topography, soil type, wind, and rainfall. Siltation is associated with sediment transport and deposition in waterways. The proposed project would not involve the alteration of any natural drainage channels or any watercourse. As discussed in Section IV, *Biological Resources*, no wetlands or riverine habitat exist on the project site at the Lone Junior HS campus. The project site is developed with an existing parking lot, storage area, and other paved areas. Following the proposed project, the campus would continue to operate as an educational facility consistent with existing conditions.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The proposed project's construction at the Lone Junior HS campus includes grading, utilities trenching, and building construction. If not controlled, the transport of these materials and soils to local waterways would temporarily increase suspended sediment concentrations and release pollutants attached to sediment particles into local waterways. As discussed in Impact X(a), the proposed project would be required to comply with water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, and the Lone Municipal Code (Section 18.16.180, Stormwater Management) and submit PRDs and a SWPPP to the SWRCB for approval prior to the commencement of construction activities. The SWPPP would specify BMPs for reducing or eliminating soil erosion from the site during project construction and operation. Erosion-control measures implemented as part of BMPs may include the placement of sandbags around basins; use of proper grading techniques; appropriate sloping, shoring, and bracing of the construction site; using mulch, geotextiles, hydroseeding, swales, and earthen dikes; and covering topsoil stockpiles. Implementation of SWPPP BMPs would ensure the proposed project does not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

On- and Off-Site Flooding and Capacity of the Storm Drain System

The project site is already built out with the existing Lone Junior HS, which includes impervious surfaces (i.e., storage area, parking lot, and hardscape) and pervious surfaces (i.e., landscaping). The proposed project would occur within the boundaries of the Lone Junior HS campus and areas that currently contain hardscape, storage containers, and vegetation (trees). The increases in impervious surfaces would be negligible. The proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would cause flooding. As discussed throughout this section, construction and operation of the proposed project would be required to implement BMPs that control the amount and quality of stormwater leaving the project site.

Construction and operation of the proposed project would use small quantities of hazardous materials, such as fuels, solvents, paint, and concrete additives during construction, and typical cleaning and maintenance chemicals during operation. All potentially hazardous materials used on-site are typical of construction activities and of educational uses. All such materials would be properly handled, stored, used, and disposed of in accordance with the SWPPP and standard regulations and would not represent a substantial new source of pollution. Therefore, impacts related to stormwater drainage and on-site flooding are **less than significant**.

Flood Flows

As identified by the FEMA flood map service, Lone Junior HS is within the 100-year flood zone (AE) with an established base flood elevation (BFE) and Flood Zone X (0.2 percent Annual Chance Flood Hazard) (FEMA 2026). The project has been designed in accordance with FEMA and City of Lone requirements to minimize the potential for on-site and off-site flooding. The

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

proposed project would be designed and constructed to be consistent with CBC and other building requirements. With adherence to the CBC and federal, State, and local policies, the proposed project would not substantially alter the drainage of the project site, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner that impedes or redirect flood flows. Specifically, the Lone Municipal Code Chapter 18.04, Floodplain Management, requires a floodplain development permit before construction begins in a 100-year floodplain. The proposed development's floodplain development permit must be certified by a registered civil engineer or architect and approved by the Floodplain Administrator at the City of Lone. Section 18.04.130 of the Lone Municipal Code sets forth standards for any development within a flood hazard zone that would minimize flood hazard risks, including anchoring, construction materials and methods, elevation, and flood-proofing. These measures would minimize the potential for flooding and thus reduce impacts associated with impeding or redirecting flood flows to less than significant. Additionally, Lone Junior HS is not within a dam inundation area, and there are no nearby aboveground water storage tanks that could cause flooding in the unlikely event of a tank failure (CDWR 2026a; USACE 2026). Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

Erosion and Siltation

The proposed project's construction includes grading, utilities trenching, and the placing of portables. If not controlled, the transport of these materials to local waterways would temporarily increase suspended sediment concentrations and release pollutants attached to sediment particles into local waterways. As discussed in Section X, the proposed project would be required to comply with water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, and PRDs and submit a SWPPP to the SWRCB for approval prior to the commencement of construction activities. The SWPPP would specify BMPs for reducing or eliminating soil erosion from the site during project construction and operation. Erosion-control measures implemented as part of BMPs may include the placement of sandbags around basins; use of proper grading techniques; appropriate sloping, shoring, and bracing of the construction site; using mulch, geotextiles, hydroseeding, swales, and earth dikes; and covering topsoil stockpiles. Implementation of SWPPP BMPs would ensure the proposed project does not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

On- and Off-Site Flooding and Capacity of the Storm Drain System

The project site at the Amador HS campus is already built out with the existing Amador HS, which includes impervious surfaces (i.e., storage area, and paved areas) and pervious surfaces (i.e., a disturbed gravel area). The proposed project would occur within the boundaries of the

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Amador HS campus and areas that currently contain hardscape, or an disturbed gravel area. The increases in impervious surfaces would be negligible.

The proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would cause flooding. As discussed in Section X(a), construction and operation of the proposed project would be required to implement BMPs that control the amount and quality of stormwater leaving the project site. Construction and operation of the proposed project would use small quantities of hazardous materials, such as fuels, solvents, paint, and concrete additives during construction, and typical cleaning and maintenance chemicals during operation. All potentially hazardous materials used on-site are typical of construction activities and of educational uses. All such materials would be properly handled, stored, used, and disposed of in accordance with the SWPPP and standard regulations and would not represent a substantial new source of pollution. Therefore, impacts related to stormwater drainage and on-site flooding are **less than significant**.

Flood Flows

As identified by the FEMA flood map service, the Amador HS campus is not within the 100-year flood zone (FEMA 2026). Additionally, the Amador HS campus is not within a dam inundation area, and there are no nearby aboveground water storage tanks that could cause flooding in the unlikely event of a tank failure (CDWR 2026a; USACE 2026). The proposed project site is not within a flood hazard area, and implementation of the proposed project would not place new structures within a flood hazard area or redirect flood flows. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

Erosion and Siltation

The proposed project's construction includes minor campus circulation improvements. If not controlled, the transport of materials to local waterways would temporarily increase suspended sediment concentrations and release pollutants attached to sediment particles into local waterways. As discussed in Section X, the proposed project would be required to comply with water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, and PRDs and submit a SWPPP to the SWRCB for approval prior to the commencement of construction activities. The SWPPP would specify BMPs for reducing or eliminating soil erosion from the site during project construction and operation. Erosion-control measures implemented as part of BMPs may include the placement of sandbags around basins; use of proper grading techniques; appropriate sloping, shoring, and bracing of the construction site; using mulch, geotextiles, hydroseeding, swales, and earth dikes; and covering topsoil stockpiles. Implementation of SWPPP BMPs would ensure the proposed project does not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site in a

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

On- and Off-Site Flooding and Capacity of the Storm Drain System

The project site at the Argonaut HS campus is already built out with the existing Argonaut HS, which includes impervious surfaces (i.e., sports courts, and paved areas) and pervious surfaces (i.e., lawn areas). The proposed project would occur within the boundaries of the Argonaut HS campus and areas that currently contain hardscape, or an disturbed gravel area. The increases in impervious surfaces would be negligible.

The proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would cause flooding. As discussed in Section X(a), construction and operation of the proposed project would be required to implement BMPs that control the amount and quality of stormwater leaving the project site. Construction and operation of the proposed project would use small quantities of hazardous materials, such as fuels, solvents, paint, and concrete additives during construction, and typical cleaning and maintenance chemicals during operation. All potentially hazardous materials used on-site are typical of construction activities and of educational uses. All such materials would be properly handled, stored, used, and disposed of in accordance with the SWPPP and standard regulations and would not represent a substantial new source of pollution. Therefore, impacts related to stormwater drainage and on-site flooding are **less than significant**.

Flood Flows

As identified by the FEMA flood map service, the Argonaut HS campus is not within the 100-year flood zone (FEMA 2026). Additionally, the Argonaut HS campus is not within a dam inundation area, and there are no nearby aboveground water storage tanks that could cause flooding in the unlikely event of a tank failure (CDWR 2026a; USACE 2026). The proposed project site is not within a flood hazard area, and implementation of the proposed project would not place new structures within a flood hazard area or redirect flood flows. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could impact the existing drainage pattern of the project site. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project at the Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would not include any exterior building demolition or ground-disturbing activities that would result in additional impacts associated with erosion or siltation, surface runoff, exceeding the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems, or providing substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Additionally, the proposed operational uses at Independence HS and Lone ES campuses would result in **no impact**.

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

Tsunami

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements, Amador HS Campus Improvements, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES campuses

The campuses at Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES campuses are within Amador County, which is not within a tsunami hazard area (DOC 2026g).

Flood Hazards

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

As identified by the FEMA flood map service, the project site is within FEMA flood zone AE and is subject to inundation by the 100-year flood with a BFE (FEMA 2026). Therefore, the project could potentially release pollutants due to flood hazards. As part of the site design, the finished floor elevation of the buildings would be required to adhere to FEMA and local regulations, and the Lone Municipal Code Chapter 18.04, Floodplain Management. Section 18.04.130 of the Lone Municipal Code requires a floodplain development permit before construction begins in a 100-year floodplain. The proposed development within the 100-year floodplain zone structure must be certified by a registered civil engineer or architect and approved by the Floodplain Administrator of the City of Lone. Section 18.04.130 of the Lone Municipal Code sets standards for any development within a flood hazard zone that would minimize flood hazard risks, including anchoring, construction materials and methods, elevation, and floodproofing. These measures would minimize the potential for flooding and thus the risk of pollutant release. With adherence to FEMA and local regulations, impacts would be reduced to **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Amador HS Campus Improvements, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project includes the closure of the Lone ES campus, and no potentially hazardous materials would be utilized that would result in the risk of releases of pollutants. No impact would occur.

As discussed in Impact X(c), the project site at Amador HS is not within a FEMA 100-year flood zone (FEMA 2026). In addition, the Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, and Independence HS campuses are not within a FEMA 100-year flood zone. The proposed improvements and operational uses at the Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, and Independence HS campuses are expected to use small amounts of hazardous materials during construction and operation (e.g., paints, cleaners, oils, etc.), the construction and operation of the proposed project would be required to comply with applicable regulations for proper handling, usage, and storage of potentially hazardous materials (see Section IX, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*).

With adherence to State and local policies and Division of the State Architect (DSA) review, the proposed project would not release pollutants in the event of project inundation or flood. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

Seiche Zones

Amador HS Campus Improvements, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES Campuses

A seiche is a surface wave created when a body of water is shaken, usually by earthquake activity. Seiches are of concern relative to water storage facilities because inundation from a seiche can occur if the wave overflows a containment wall, such as the wall of a reservoir, water storage tank, dam, or other artificial body of water.

Although there are no large water tanks in the area of the six campuses that could impact the proposed project site at the six campuses, there are dams in the region that could create flooding impacts. The project site at the six campuses is not within a dam inundation area or potential inundation zone (CDWR 2026a; USACE 2026). Although the proposed project at the six campuses is expected to use small amounts of hazardous materials during construction and operation (e.g., paints, cleaners, oils, etc.), the construction and operation of the proposed project would be required to comply with applicable regulations for proper handling, usage, and storage of potentially hazardous materials (see Section IX, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*). With adherence to State and local policies and DSA review, the proposed project at the six campuses would not release pollutants in the event of project inundation or flood. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- e) *Would the proposed project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?*

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

According to the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Basin Prioritization Dashboard, the city of Lone is part of the San Joaquin Valley groundwater basin, Cosumnes subbasin, which is characterized by DWR as a medium-priority subbasin covered under the 2021 Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Cosumnes Subbasin (CDWR 2026b, 2026c). The groundwater basin is not adjudicated. The AWA, which has the authority to provide water services within Amador County and is allowed to pump water from the Cosumnes subbasin, primarily uses surface water (91 percent) to service residences in the county. Groundwater is used for the communities of La Mel Heights and Lake Camanche Village. The GSP provides management criteria to ensure that the sustainable yield of the groundwater basin is not exceeded. Although the proposed project would increase enrollment at the Lone Junior HS campus, the proposed project would result in no net changes to District-wide enrollment, and no changes in AWA water demands are expected (see Section XIX, *Utilities and Service Systems*). As discussed in Impact X(b), although the proposed project would result in a minor increase in impervious surfaces, such increases would not result in a substantial increase of impervious surfaces and would not interfere with groundwater recharge. The project site is not currently used or designated as a significant or important groundwater recharge area. In addition, no groundwater is used to service Lone; therefore, no additional groundwater would be necessary for this proposed project, and the proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus would not interfere with the implementation of the GSP.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board monitors surface water quality and groundwater through the implementation of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins. Implementation of the SWPPP and adherence to the Lone's BMPs and municipal code requirements, the NPDES, and CGP, as described in Impact X(a), would ensure that surface and groundwater quality are not adversely affected during construction. In addition, the implementation of BMPs at the site would ensure that water quality is not impacted during the operational phase of the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan and would result in a **less than significant** impact.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

According to the DWR Basin Prioritization Dashboard, there are no large underground storage basins and no large-scale development of groundwater resources in the city of Sutter Creek (DWR 2026a). AWA provides water services to the project site. As discussed in Impact X(b), although the proposed project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces, such increases would not be considered a substantial increase and would not interfere with

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

groundwater recharge. In addition, the project site is not currently used or designated as a significant or important groundwater recharge area. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan and would result in a **less than significant** impact.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

According to the DWR Basin Prioritization Dashboard, there are no large underground storage basins and no large-scale development of groundwater resources in Jackson (DWR 2026a). AWA provides water services to the project site. As discussed in Impact X(b), although the proposed project would result in an increase in impervious surfaces, such increases would not be considered a substantial increase and would not interfere with groundwater recharge. In addition, the project site is not currently used or designated as a significant or important groundwater recharge area. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan and would result in a **less than significant** impact.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The project site at the Jackson Junior HS campus would only consist of interior modifications and would not include any exterior improvements, demolition, or ground-disturbing activities that could conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS and Lone ES Campuses

The proposed project includes the closure of the Lone ES campus. Closure of the Lone ES campus would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. **No impact** would occur.

According to the DWR Basin Prioritization Dashboard, there are no large underground storage basins and no large-scale development of groundwater resources in the city of Sutter Creek (DWR 2026a). Therefore, the improvements and operational changes at Independence HS would have **no impact** related to obstructing the implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

XI. Land Use and Planning

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The Land Use and Planning analysis considered the jurisdictional context of each campus, including the applicable city general plan, zoning, and land use setting, to assess potential impacts across all sites, including campuses with proposed improvements and those without.

DISCUSSION

a) *Would the proposed project physically divide an established community?*

The proposed project involves the consolidation of six schools onto five existing campuses and includes physical improvements such as relocating portable classrooms, reconfiguring a parking area within an existing footprint, constructing a single new classroom building, and installing playground equipment. All improvements would be entirely within the boundaries of existing school campuses, which are already developed and integrated with their surrounding neighborhoods. The project does not include construction of new roads, highways, or other linear infrastructure that could bisect or separate residential areas, nor does it involve acquiring and developing land that would create a physical barrier between community facilities or neighborhoods. The proposed changes to attendance boundaries and grade configurations are administrative in nature and would not alter the physical layout or accessibility of the campuses or surrounding areas. Therefore, the project would not physically divide an established community, and **no impact** would occur.

b) *Would the proposed project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?*

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

As stated in Section 2.2.1, *Existing General Plan Land Uses and Zoning*, the project sites have land use designations and zoning classifications that allow for educational uses. In Sutter Creek, Amador High School and Independence High School are designated Public Service (PS) and zoned as Public Service (P-S) (Sutter Creek 2019). In Jackson, Argonaut High School and Jackson Junior High School are designated and zoned Public (Jackson 2023). In Lone, Lone Junior High School and Lone Elementary School are designated Public Service (PS) and zoned as Public Facilities (PF) (Lone 2018). These land use designations and zoning classifications allow for educational uses, which is consistent with the proposed project's continued operation of school facilities. The proposed project consists of physical improvements, including relocating portable classrooms, constructing a single new classroom building, and installing playground equipment. The proposed project would not alter or modify any campus's current land use or zoning designations. Development of the proposed project would comply with all applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, and **no impact** would occur.

XII. Mineral Resources

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The Mineral Resources analyzed campus because existing conditions and resource constraints are specific to each site. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates each of the six campuses individually, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts to mineral resources across all project sites.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

DISCUSSION

a) ***Would the proposed project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?***

In 1975, the state legislature adopted the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act, which designated mineral resources zones (MRZ) of statewide or regional importance. The classifications used to define MRZs are:

- **MRZ-1:** Areas where available geologic information indicates that little likelihood exists for the presence of significant mineral resources.
- **MRZ-2a:** Areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic data indicate that significant measured or indicated resources are present. MRZ-2 is divided on the basis of both degree of knowledge and economic factors. Areas classified MRZ-2a contain discovered mineral deposits that are either measured or indicated reserves as determined by such evidence as drilling records, sample analysis, surface exposure, and mine information. Land included in the MRZ-2a category is of prime importance because it contains known economic mineral deposits.
- **MRZ-2b:** Areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic information indicates that significant inferred resources are present. For this report, areas classified MRZ-2b contain discovered mineral deposits that are significant inferred resources as determined by their lateral extension from proven deposits or their similarity to proven deposits. Further exploration work could result in upgrading areas classified MRZ-2b to MRZ-2a.
- **MRZ-3a:** Areas containing known mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. Further exploration work within these areas could result in the reclassification of specific localities into MRZ-2a or MRZ-2b categories. MRZ-3 is divided on the basis of knowledge of economic characteristics of the resources.
- **MRZ-3b:** Areas containing inferred mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. Land classified MRZ-3b represents areas in geologic settings that appear to be favorable environments for the occurrence of specific mineral deposits. Further exploration work could result in the reclassification of all or part of these areas into the MRZ-2a or MRZ-2b categories.
- **MRZ-4:** Areas of no known mineral occurrences where geologic information does not rule out either the presence or absence of significant mineral resources.

The California Geological Survey classifies lands based on mineral resource potential through MRZs. According to the Mineral Land Classification Map of the Sutter Creek 15-minute Quadrangle, Lone Elementary School and Lone Junior High School are in MRZ-2b(i), which identifies areas with underlying deposits containing industrial minerals where geologic information indicates significant inferred resources of rock suitable for use as a marketable

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

product are present (DOC 1983). However, both campuses are already developed with existing school facilities and operate as schools, with no mineral extraction activities on-site or being proposed.

The remaining campuses, including Amador High School, Argonaut High School, and Jackson Junior High School, are in MRZ-4(i), where geologic information is insufficient to determine the presence or absence of industrial mineral resources, and these campuses are similarly developed with school facilities (DOC 1983). None of the six campuses include mineral extraction activities, and the proposed project would not alter the availability or accessibility of any underlying mineral resources. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of known mineral resources, and **no impact** would occur.

b) *Would the proposed project 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?*

The project sites are located within areas designated as MRZ-2b(i), which indicate the potential for mineral resource deposits, and MRZ-4(i), which indicate that insufficient information is available to determine the presence or absence of mineral resources (DOC 1983). Although mineral resources may occur in the vicinity of some campuses, none of the project sites are identified by their respective jurisdictions as areas designated for mineral extraction or as locally important mineral resource areas. Specifically, Jackson Junior High School and Argonaut High School are designated Public Facilities under the Jackson General Plan (Jackson 2014); Lone Junior High School is designated Public Facilities (PF) and is not zoned Heavy Industrial and Mining (M-2) under the City of Lone Zoning Map (Lone 2018); and Amador High School is designated Public Services (PS) and is not located within lands designated for Mining (M) under the Sutter Creek General Plan (Sutter Creek 2019b). In addition, all project sites are fully developed with existing school facilities and are currently operating as schools, with no mineral extraction activities occurring on-site. Accordingly, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region or residents of the state, nor a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

XIII. Noise

Would the project result in:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than- Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than- Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Noise is defined as unwanted sound. It is known to have several adverse effects on people, including hearing loss, speech and sleep interference, physiological responses, and annoyance. Based on these known adverse effects of noise, the federal government, State of California, and Amador County have established criteria to protect public health and safety and to prevent disruption of certain human activities. Additional information on noise and vibration fundamentals is contained in Appendix C.

Sensitive Receptors

Certain land uses are particularly sensitive to noise and vibration. These typically include residences, hospitals, schools, guest lodging, libraries, and religious institutions where quiet environments are necessary for the enjoyment, public health, and safety of the community.

As previously described, the project proposes the consolidation of six schools onto five campuses which would require minor physical improvements at four campuses. These four campuses include Argonaut HS, Amador HS, Jackson Junior HS, and Lone Junior HS that span three cities. The nearest off-site noise sensitive receptors to each campus are identified below:

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Amador HS: Single-family residences to the north across Sutter Lone Road, to the east across Spanish Street, and to the west along Oro Madre Way. Sutter Creek Elementary School adjacent to the north along Spanish Street and a cemetery adjacent to the south of Amador HS.

Independence HS: Generation Life Church to the east across Independence Drive.

Argonaut HS: Single-family residence to the north along Westview Drive.

Jackson Junior HS: Single family residences and Amador County Special Education School to the east along Rex Avenue. Single-family residences to the west and south along Hoffman Street.

Lone Junior HS: Single-family residences to the north along South Mills Street and South Sacramento Street, to the southeast along CA-124, and to the west along Depot Road, and the church and cemetery adjacent to the east along CA-124.

Lone ES: Single-family residences to the north across SR-104 and to the west along South Church Street.

Existing Conditions

The four campuses where physical improvements would occur span three cities located in Amador County. The most common and significant source of noise in Amador County as well as in the three cities of Sutter Creek, Jackson, and Lone, is mobile noise generated by transportation-related sources traveling on local roadways and rail lines. Other sources of noise are the various land uses (i.e., residential, commercial, and industrial) that generate stationary-source noise. The six campuses are all existing school campuses in developed areas that are surrounded mainly by residential land uses.

Existing Traffic Noise

The traffic noise levels for the proposed project were estimated using a version of the FHWA Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model (FHWA 1978). Average daily traffic volumes were calculated based on the existing peak hour intersection movements provided by Kittelson & Associates (2026).

Traffic noise levels for existing conditions at 50 feet from the roadway centerline along analyzed roadways are presented in Table 7, *Existing Roadway Traffic Noise Levels*.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Table 7 Existing Roadway Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway	Segment	Existing Average Daily Traffic Noise Levels, dBA CNEL
CA-49	To the north	64
CA-49	To the south	64
Sutter Ione Road	To the east	51
Sutter Ione Road	To the west	57

Source: FHWA Highway Noise Prediction Model (FHWA-RD-77-108) in Appendix C. Based on traffic volumes provided by Kittelson & Associates, (see Appendix D)

Applicable Noise Standards

City of Sutter Creek

Amador HS campus and Independence HS campus are located in the City of Sutter Creek. The City of Sutter Creek General Plan Noise Element addresses noise through goals, objectives, and policies designed to provide noise-compatible land use relationships by establishing noise standards that guide design and siting which minimizes noise impacts from significant noise generators. Those applicable to the project are presented below:

Goal N-1: Prevent exposure of Sutter Creek citizens to unacceptable noise levels.

Goal N-2: Alleviate noise exposure problems where feasible.

Objective N-1.1: The prevention and mitigation of exposure to unacceptable noise levels.

- **Policy N-1.1.2.** The outdoor noise standard for residential developments shall apply only to backyards of single-family residences and recreation areas of multifamily developments. The outdoor noise standard shall also not apply to residentially designated properties or existing noise sensitive land uses within the current 60+ dB contour shown on Volume III Figure 6-2.
- **Policy N-1.1.4.** The City shall protect existing (ambient) noise levels of existing residential neighborhoods and other existing noise sensitive land uses. If a developed area is currently below an adopted noise standard, an increase in noise up to the standard should not necessarily be allowed.
- **Policy N-1.1.5.** The City may require that new land use proposals be modified, mitigated, or not be carried out if they will cause the Ldn of an existing developed area to experience an increase of 3 dBA or more or if they could generate noise levels that would be expected to generate significant adverse community response.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- **Policy N-1.1.6.** Large trucks should be discouraged on Old Highway 49 (except possibly for deliveries or when large trucks operate from a base located in the City).

The City of Sutter Creek regulates and enforces noise standards through Chapter 10.50, Noise Regulations, of the City of Sutter Creek Municipal Code. Specifically, Section 10.50.020 establishes presumed ambient noise levels for land uses within the City, as shown in Table 8, *City of Sutter Creek Presumed Ambient Noise Levels*.

Table 8 City of Sutter Creek Presumed Ambient Noise Levels

Zone	Time	Sound Level A, Decibels Community Environment Classification		
		Very Quiet (rural)	Quiet (Suburban)	Slightly Noisy (urban)
One Family Dwelling and Two Family Dwelling	10:00 pm to 7:00 am	35	40	45
	7:00 pm to 10:00 pm	40	45	50
	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	45	50	55
Limited Multiple Family and Multiple Family	10:00 pm to 7:00 am	40	45	50
	7:00 am to 10:00 pm	45	50	55

Source: City of Sutter Creek Municipal Code Section 10.50.040

The City of Sutter Creek Municipal Code Section 10.50.110 restricts any machinery, equipment, pump, fan, air conditioning apparatus or similar mechanical device noise levels from exceeding ambient noise levels by more than 5 decibels with the following corrections for time duration and character of noise:

- Add one and only one of the following corrections for time duration:
 - Noise persists for more than five minutes out of any one hour: 0
 - Noise persists for more than one minute but not more than five minutes out of any one hour: -5
 - Noise persists for one minute or less out of any one hour: -10
- Add one and only one of the following corrections for unusual character:
 - Noise has no unusual character :0
 - Noise contains a piercing pure tone: +5

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- Noise is impulsive or rattling in nature: +5
- Noise carries speech, music or other information content: +5

Section 10.50.120 of the City of Sutter Creek Municipal Code establishes that it is unlawful for any person within a residential zone, or within a radius of five hundred feet therefrom, to operate equipment or perform any outside construction or repair work on buildings, structures or projects or to operate any pile driver, power shovel, pneumatic hammer, derrick, power hoist or any other construction-type device, between the hours of 7:00 pm of one day and 7:00 am of the next day.

Additionally, Section 10.50.200 of the City of Sutter Creek Municipal Code utilizes the following standards in determining a violation of noise standards:

- The level of the noise;
- The intensity of the noise;
- Whether the nature of the noise is usual or unusual;
- Whether the origin of the noise is natural or unnatural;
- The level and intensity of the background noise, if any;
- The proximity of the noise to residential sleeping facilities;
- The nature and zoning of the area within which the noise emanates;
- The density of the inhabitation of the area within which the noise emanates;
- The time of the day or night the noise occurs;
- The duration of the noise;
- Whether the noise is recurrent, intermittent or constant; and
- Whether the noise is produced by a commercial or noncommercial activity.

City of Jackson

The existing Argonaut HS campus and Jackson Junior HS campus are in the City of Jackson. The Noise Element of the General Plan appraises noise problems in the community and identifies policies and implementation measures to minimize the scale of nuisance. Those applicable to the project are as follows:

- **Policy N 1.2.** Require development projects and changes to existing uses to be consistent with the standards indicated in Table N-1 (of the City of Jackson General Plan Noise Element) to ensure acceptable noise levels for existing and future development.
- Require new development to reduce excessive noise to the standards indicated in Tables N-1 and N-2 (of the City of Jackson General Plan Noise Element) through best practices, including building location and orientation, building design features, placement of noise-

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

generating equipment away from sensitive receptors, shielding of noise-generating equipment, placement of noise-tolerant features between noise sources and sensitive receptor, and use of noise-minimizing materials.

Additionally, the City of Jackson's regulations with respect to noise are in Chapter 17.44, Noise, of the City of Jackson Municipal Code. Specifically, Section 17.44.040 establishes exterior noise standards as presented in Table 9, *City of Jackson Exterior Noise Standards*.

Table 9 City of Jackson Exterior Noise Standards

Cumulative number of minutes in any hour	7:00 am to 10:00 pm	10:00 pm to 7:00 am
Hospital, Library, Religious Institution, Residential, or School Uses		
30 ¹	55	50
15	60	55
5	65	60
1	70	65
0	75	70
Commercial Uses		
30	65	60
15	70	65
5	75	70
1	80	75
0	85	80

Source: City of Jackson Municipal Code Section 17.44.040

Further, Section 17.44.070 the City of Jackson's Municipal Code defines construction noise sources as exempt from the provisions of Chapter 17.44, provided that the activities do not take place before 7:00 am or after 9:00 pm on any day except Sunday, or before 9:00 am or after 6:00 pm on Sunday.

City of Lone

The existing Lone Junior HS campus and Lone Elementary School campus are located in the City of Lone. The City of Lone General Plan Noise Element addresses noise through goals, policies, and actions designed to ensure the safety of residents and to provide an environment free of excessive noise disturbances. The following policies are applicable to the proposed project:

Policy NS-1.1: Establish the Noise Level Performance Standards in Table 6-2 and Table 6-3 (Table 10, *City of Lone Exterior Noise Level Performance Standards for Non-Transportation Noise For*

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

New Projects and Table 11, City of Ione Noise Level Performance Standards for All Noise Sources, Including Transportation Noise, For New Projects) to govern maximum allowable sound levels in all new and existing developments.

Table 10 City of Ione Exterior Noise Level Performance Standards for Non-Transportation Noise For New Projects

Land Use Type	Maximum Noise Exposure Level (dBA)	
	7:00 am to 10:00 pm	10:00 pm to 7:00 am
Single-Family Homes	55	45
Multi-Family Residential	60	45

Source: City of Ione General Plan Noise Element

Table 11 City of Ione Noise Level Performance Standards for All Noise Sources, Including Transportation Noise, For New Projects

Noise-Sensitive Land Use	Maximum Noise Exposure Level (dBA)	
	Outdoor Activity Areas ¹	Interior Spaces
Residential	60 ²	45
Churches	60 ²	45
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	70	–
Schools, Libraries, Museums	–	45
Nursing Homes/Hospitals	60 ²	45

Source: City of Ione General Plan Noise Element

1. Outdoor activity areas are property locations where an individual spends the most outdoor time or where people are likely to congregate. Where the outdoor activity area is unknown, the exterior noise level standard shall be applied to the property line of the receiving land use. Where it is not practical to mitigate exterior noise levels at patio or balconies of apartment complexes, a common area such as a pool or recreation area may be designated as the outdoor activity area.

2. Where it is not possible to reduce noise in outdoor activity areas to 60 dBA or less using a practical application of the best available noise reduction measures, an exterior noise level of up to 65 dBA may be allowed provided that available exterior noise level reduction measures have been implemented and interior noise levels are in compliance with this table. The City may impose noise level standards which are more or less restrictive than those specified above based upon determination of existing low or high ambient noise levels.

- **Policy NS-1.2.** Locate, construct, and/or shield indoor and outdoor areas of new projects away from noise sources to comply with the City's noise standards.
- **Policy NS-1.3.** Ensure that proposed development and proposed infrastructure projects do not create noise disturbance, including to existing noise-sensitive areas.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- **Policy NS-1.4.** Minimize or prohibit obtrusive, discretionary noise generated from residences, motor vehicles, commercial establishments, and/or industrial facilities.
- Limit construction activity to the hours of 7:00 am to 7:00 pm weekdays and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm weekends, when construction is conducted in proximity to residential land uses.
- Restrict the hours of operation of loading docks, trash compactors and other noise-producing uses in commercial areas with the potential to significantly impact noise-sensitive land uses.
- **Policy NS-1.5.** Mitigate noise created by the construction of new transportation noise sources to the maximum extent feasible to comply with the City's standards.

The City of Ione regulates and enforces noise standards through Chapter 9.16, Noise Control, of the City of Ione Municipal Code. Section 9.16.030 of the City of Ione Municipal Code utilizes factors to determine whether a violation of noise standards exists. These factors include but shall not be limited to the following:

- The volume of the objectionable noise;
- The volume and intensity of the background noise, if any;
- The day of the week;
- The number of persons affected;
- The proximity of the noise to residential sleeping facilities;
- The nature and zoning of the area within which the noise emanates;
- The density of the inhabitation of the area within which the noise emanates;
- The time of day or night the noise occurs;
- The duration of the noise and its tonal, informational or musical content;
- Whether the nature of the noise is usual or unusual;
- Whether the origin of the noise is natural (i.e., not caused or produced by a person or persons) or unnatural;
- Whether the noise is continuous, recurrent or intermittent; and
- Whether the noise is produced by a commercial or non-commercial activity.

Section 9.16.050 of the City of Ione Municipal Code exempts the following from the Municipal Code noise standards:

- School bands, school athletic and school entertainment events;
- Activities typically conducted on public parks, public playgrounds, and public or private school grounds, including, but not limited to, playing sports, running, jumping, yelling, BBQ's, equestrian activities, playing music, concerts, fireworks displays, or other organized

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

community activities, provided said activities take place between the hours of 7:00 am and 9:00 pm on any given day;

- Noise sources associated with construction, repair, remodeling, or grading of any real property, provided said activities take place between hours of 7:00 am and 9:00 pm on any day.
- Mobile noise sources including but not limited to operational noise from trains, or automobiles or trucks traveling on roadways and aircraft;

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Guidelines

The cities of Sutter Creek, Lone, and Jackson do not have regulatory standards for construction or operational noise and vibration sources. As such, the FTA guidelines for construction noise at residential uses of 80 dBA L_{eq} , a vibration standard of 0.2 inches per second (in/sec) peak particle velocity (PPV) not be exceeded to protect normal residential buildings, and a standard of 0.08 in/sec PPV not be exceeded to protect old or historically significant structures is used to determine compliance.

DISCUSSION

- a) ***Would the proposed project result in the 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?***

Construction Noise

The proposed project includes the consolidation of six school campuses onto five current District campuses. This would require minor physical improvements at four current campuses which include Argonaut HS, Amador HS, Jackson Junior HS, and Lone Junior HS. Construction for the site improvements at Amador HS would begin in Spring of 2027 and conclude in Summer of 2027. Construction for the site improvements at Lone Junior HS would begin in Fall of 2029 and conclude in Spring of 2030. Construction activities include relocating two existing portable classrooms on the Amador HS campus and the construction of up to four new classrooms in a single classroom building totaling up to 4,500 square feet on the Lone Junior HS campus. Physical improvements at the Argonaut HS campus would include changes to interior classroom configurations, student support spaces, and circulation while physical improvements at Jackson Junior HS would consist of reconfiguring or adapting of existing interior spaces and other minor interior improvements necessary to support adult learning environments. No nighttime work or the use of pile-driving equipment is proposed.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Noise generated during construction is based on the type of equipment used, the location of the equipment relative to sensitive receptors, and the timing and duration of the noise-generating activities. Noise levels from construction activities are dominated by the loudest piece of construction equipment. The dominant noise source is typically the engine, although work piece noise (such as dropping of materials) can also be noticeable.

The noise generated during each construction phase is conservatively determined by combining the L_{eq} contributions from the three loudest pieces of equipment used at a given time while accounting for the ongoing time variations of noise emissions (commonly referred to as the usage factor). Heavy equipment, such as a dozer or a loader, can have maximum, short-duration noise levels of up to 85 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet. However, overall noise emissions vary considerably, depending on what specific activity is being performed at any given moment.

Noise attenuation due to distance, the number and type of equipment, and the load and power requirements to accomplish tasks at each construction phase would result in varying noise levels due to construction activities at a given receptor. Since noise from construction equipment is intermittent and diminishes at a rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance (conservatively disregarding other attenuation effects from air absorption, ground effects, and shielding effects provided by intervening structures or existing masonry walls). Average noise levels at noise-sensitive receptors could vary considerably, because mobile construction equipment would move around the site (area of each development phase) with different equipment mixes, loads, and power requirements.

Average noise levels from project-related construction activities are calculated by conservatively modeling the three loudest pieces of equipment per activity phase on the campuses where major site improvements would occur. Equipment for building construction and architectural coating are measured from the edge of the proposed construction areas or new buildings to the nearest sensitive receptors. Additionally, paving is measured from the edge of the nearest paving areas to the nearest sensitive receptors. The expected construction equipment mix was categorized by construction activity using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Roadway Construction Noise Model (RCNM). RCNM modeling input assumptions and output worksheets are included in Appendix C.

Amador High School

Site improvements at the Amador HS campus include relocating two existing portable classrooms, currently at Jackson Junior HS to the current Amador HS campus for the proposed districtwide high school at Amador HS. The associated noise levels, grouped by construction activity for Amador HS, are summarized in Table 12, *Project-Related Construction Noise Levels at Nearest Receptors, dBA: Amador High School*.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Table 12 Project-Related Construction Noise Levels at Nearest Receptors, dBA: Amador High School

Construction Activity Phase ¹	Noise Levels in dBA L _{eq}				
	RCNM Reference Noise Level	Receptor to North	Receptor to East	Receptor to South	Receptor to West
<i>Distance (feet)</i>	50	525	750	160	575
Building Construction	73	52	49	62	51
Exceeds 80 L_{eq} Standard?		No	No	No	No

Source: FHWA's RCNM software. See Appendix G

Note: Distance measurements were taken using Google Earth (2026) from the boundary of work areas to the nearest receptors.

The nearest sensitive receptor to project construction activities are the single-family residences to the west along Oro Madre Way. Receptors to the west would be exposed to temporary, periodic, short-term noise levels of up to 79 dBA L_{eq} during paving activities. The proposed project's construction activities would occur within the noise standard exempt time frame identified in the City of Sutter Creek Noise Ordinance, 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. The proposed project's construction activities would not exceed FTA's construction noise standard at the nearest noise sensitive uses (80 dBA L_{eq}). Therefore, the proposed project's construction-related noise impacts at Amador HS would be **less than significant**.

Independence High School

Changes at Independence HS include the relocation of the District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program to Jackson Junior High School. There would be no construction activities at the existing Independence HS campus. Therefore, the project would not generate construction-related noise at this site, and there would be **no impact** related to construction noise.

Lone Junior High School

Site improvements at the Lone Junior HS campus include constructing up to four new classrooms in a single classroom building, totaling up to 4,500 square feet in the northern portion of the campus, installation of age-appropriate playgrounds and reconfiguration (restripe) of northern parking lot in same footprint to increase parking capacity and construct dedicated kindergarten pick-up and drop-off loop. The associated, aggregate sound levels, grouped by construction activity for Lone Junior HS, are summarized in Table 13, *Project-Related Construction Noise Levels at Nearest Receptors, dBA: Lone Junior HS*.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Table 13 Project-Related Construction Noise Levels at Nearest Receptors, dBA: Lone Junior High School

Construction Activity Phase ¹	Noise Levels in dBA L _{eq}		
	RCNM Reference Noise Level	Receptor to North	Receptor to South
Distance (feet)	50	235	550
Building Construction	83	69	62
Architectural Coating	74	60	53
Exceeds 80 L _{eq} Standard?		No	No

Source: FHWA's RCNM software. See Appendix G

Note: Distance measurements were taken using Google Earth (2026) from the boundary of work areas to the nearest receptors.

The nearest sensitive receptor to project construction activities are the single-family residences along West Marlette Street located to the north of project site. Receptors located north of the project site would be exposed to temporary, periodic, short-term noise levels of up to 69 dBA L_{eq} during the building construction hours exempted by the City of Lone Noise Ordinance (7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.). The proposed project's construction activities would not exceed FTA's construction noise standard at the nearest noise sensitive uses (80 dBA L_{eq}). Therefore, the proposed project's construction-related noise impacts at Lone Junior HS would be **less than significant**.

Argonaut High School and Jackson Junior High School

Site improvements at the Argonaut HS campus and Jackson Junior HS campus would not require major structural construction. Site improvements at the Argonaut HS campus minor modifications to support middle school programming associated with the consolidation of the District's junior high schools. These modifications would consist primarily of program and operational adjustments, including potential changes to classroom configurations, student support spaces, and minor campus circulation or supervisory needs. Additionally, site improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments to support the District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program that would be moved to the current Jackson Junior HS campus. These renovations would include reconfiguration or adaptation of existing interior spaces and other minor interior improvements necessary to support adult learning environments.

Interior improvements of this nature typically involve limited activities such as minor demolition, framing, electrical work, and finish installation conducted entirely within enclosed structures. These activities do not require the use of heavy construction equipment (e.g., graders, loaders, or jackhammers) that are typically associated with elevated noise levels. All

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

work would occur within existing buildings; exterior building walls would provide substantial attenuation of construction-related noise. As a result, any noise generated during interior construction would be minimal and would not be expected to be audible or perceptible at off-site sensitive receptors. In addition, the proposed project's construction activities would occur within the noise standard exempt time frame identified in the City of Jackson Noise Ordinance, 7:00 am to 8:00 pm on weekdays that are not holidays, between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm on Saturdays, and between 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on Sundays. The proposed project's construction activities would not exceed FTA's construction noise standard at the nearest noise sensitive uses (80 dBA L_{eq}). Therefore, the proposed project's construction-related noise impacts at Argonaut HS and Jackson HS would be **less than significant**.

Lone Elementary School

No construction activities are proposed at Lone ES, as the Lone ES campus would close. Therefore, the project would not generate construction-related noise at this site, and there would be **no impact** related to construction noise.

Operational Off-Site Traffic Noise

A project will normally have a significant effect on the environment related to traffic noise if it substantially increases the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas. Most people can detect changes in sound levels of approximately 3 dBA under normal, quiet conditions, and changes of 1 dBA to 3 dBA under quiet, controlled conditions. Changes of less than 1 dBA are usually indiscernible. A significant impact would occur if the following traffic noise increases occur relative to the existing noise environment:

- 1.5 dBA in ambient noise environments of 65 dBA CNEL and higher
- 3 dBA in ambient noise environments of 60 to 64 dBA CNEL
- 5 dBA in ambient noise environments of less than 60 dBA CNEL

Traffic volume data for the new trips associated with the project are provided by Kittleson & Associates (2026). With project trip additions, noise levels along all analyzed roadway segments would increase by 2 dBA or less. Sutter Lone Road represents a typical County collector roadway within the project area and project-related traffic noise increases would be considered representative for other similar sized roadways that would also be exposed to project-related traffic noise increases. Table 14, *Project-Related Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet*, shows that the addition of proposed project trips would not result in a 3 dBA increase over existing conditions. Therefore, project-related traffic noise impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Table 14 Project-Related Increases in Traffic Noise, dBA CNEL at 50 Feet

Roadway	Segment	Average Daily Traffic Noise Levels, dBA CNEL		
		Existing	Existing Plus Project	Project Increase
CA-49	To the north	64	64	<1
CA-49	To the south	64	64	<1
Sutter Lone Road	To the east	51	53	2
Sutter Lone Road	To the west	57	57	1

Source: FHWA Highway Noise Prediction Model (FHWA-RD-77-108) in Appendix C. Based on traffic volumes provided by Kittelson & Associates, (see Appendix D).

Operational On-Site Noise

Amador High School

Mechanical Equipment Noise

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems would be installed on the roof of the proposed portable classrooms on the southwestern portion of the project site. The nearest sensitive receptor property line to the proposed portable classroom buildings is the cemetery located 155 feet to the south. Rooftop HVAC units would generate noise levels of up to 67 dBA at 5 feet (Carrier 2026). At 155 feet from the proposed buildings to the nearest sensitive receptor to the north, noise levels would attenuate to 37 dBA L_{max} or less. The proposed project's parking lot noise would not exceed the City of Sutter Creek's presumed ambient noise levels for one family and two-family dwellings from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm in a suburban environment. Therefore, project-related mechanical equipment noise at the Amador HS campus would be **less than significant**.

Independence High School

Operational activities at the campus would remain generally consistent with existing conditions following relocation of the Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program to Jackson Junior High School Campus. The proposed project would not introduce new operational noise sources or substantially increase the intensity of existing school activities. Therefore, operational noise levels at the campus would remain similar to existing conditions, and there would be **no impact** to operational noise.

Argonaut High School

The Argonaut HS campus would require minor modifications to support middle school programming associated with the consolidation of the District's junior high schools. These modifications would consist primarily of program and operational adjustments, including

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

potential changes to classroom configurations, student support spaces, and minor campus circulation or supervisory needs. No major structural construction would occur at Argonaut High School.

The Argonaut High School improvements would allow for an increase in student capacity; however, no expansion of outdoor activity areas or introduction of new noise-generating uses is proposed. Operational noise at school campuses is primarily generated by student and staff activity (e.g., voices during passing periods, lunch periods, and other outdoor gatherings), which is typical of institutional land uses. Although student capacity would increase, the overall character, timing, and distribution of these activities would remain consistent with existing conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels at nearby sensitive receptors, nor would it exceed applicable standards in Chapter 9.48, Noise Control, of the Jackson Municipal Code. Project-related on-site operational noise at the Argonaut HS campus would be **less than significant**.

Jackson Junior High School

The Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments to support the District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program that would be moved to the current Jackson Junior HS campus. These renovations would include reconfiguration or adaptation of existing interior spaces and other minor interior improvements necessary to support adult learning environments. No major structural construction is anticipated. The Jackson Junior HS improvements would allow for an increase in student capacity; however, no expansion of outdoor activity areas or introduction of new noise-generating uses is proposed. Operational noise at school campuses is primarily generated by student and staff activity (e.g., voices during passing periods, lunch periods, and other outdoor gatherings), which is typical of institutional land uses. Although student capacity would increase, the overall character, timing, and distribution of these activities would remain consistent with existing conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels at nearby sensitive receptors, nor would it exceed applicable standards in Chapter 9.48, Noise Control, of the Jackson Municipal Code. Project-related on-site operational noise at the Jackson Junior HS campus would be **less than significant**.

Lone Junior High School

Parking Lot Noise

The proposed project would increase the capacity of the Lone Junior HS northern parking lot by reconfiguring (restriping) the existing parking lot. The residences to the north of the project site along West Marlette Street and South Mills Street could be exposed to noise due to vehicles idling, doors opening and closing, and voices in the driveways. These activities would occur for

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

short periods of approximately 10 to 20 minutes during student drop-off in the morning and student pick-up in the afternoon. However, these periods are short term and would occur only during the daytime. Based on measurements conducted from a previous project by PlaceWorks, during student drop-off at an elementary school for a similar project, the average noise level measured 55 dBA L_{eq} at 40 feet. The distance from the nearest drop-off area to the nearest residential receptor along South Mills Street (150 feet) would result in school drop-off noise levels of 44 dBA L_{eq} at the nearest residential property lines to the north. The proposed project's parking lot noise would comply with the City of Lone exterior noise standards for non-transportation noise of 55 dBA during daytime hours, per the City of Lone's General Plan Noise Element. Therefore, project-related parking lot noise impacts at the Lone Junior HS campus would be **less than significant**.

Mechanical Equipment Noise

HVAC systems would be installed on the roof of the proposed new classroom building in the northern portion of the Lone Junior HS campus. The nearest sensitive receptor property line to the proposed new classroom building is approximately 235 feet to the north. Rooftop HVAC units would generate noise levels of up to 67 dBA at 5 feet (Carrier 2026). At 235 feet from the proposed building to the nearest sensitive receptor to the north, HVAC noise levels would attenuate to 34 dBA L_{max} or less. The proposed project's mechanical equipment noise would comply with the City of Lone exterior noise standards for non-transportation noise of 55 dBA during daytime hours, per the City of Lone's General Plan Noise Element. Therefore, project-related mechanical equipment noise at the Lone Junior HS campus would be **less than significant**.

Lone Elementary School

With closure of the campus, school-related operational activities, including student, staff, and visitor traffic, outdoor activities, and maintenance operations, would cease. As a result, operational noise levels at the site would decrease compared to existing conditions, and the proposed project would not result in a significant operational noise impact. There would be **no impact**.

b) *Would the proposed project result in the generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?*

Potential vibration impacts associated with the projects are usually related to the use of heavy construction equipment. Construction can generate varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the construction procedures and equipment. The use of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish with distance from the source. The effect on buildings in the vicinity of the construction site varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and receptor-building construction. The effects from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, to slight structural damage at the highest levels. Vibration from construction activities rarely reaches the levels that can damage structures.

Amador High School

Table 15, *Project-Related Construction Vibration Damage Levels: Amador High School*, summarizes vibration levels for typical construction equipment at a reference distance of 25 feet. Typical construction equipment for the proposed Amador HS improvements can generate vibration levels ranging up to 0.210 in/sec PPV at 25 feet at the northern parking lot improvements. As shown in Table 15, the proposed construction activities at Amador HS would not exceed the 0.2 in/sec PPV FTA standard. In addition, the proposed project would not include any new operational vibration sources. Therefore, project-related vibration impacts would be **less than significant**.

Table 15 Project-Related Construction Vibration Damage Levels: Amador High School

Equipment	Levels, PPV (in/sec)				
	FTA Reference at 25 Feet	Receptor to North 545 feet	Receptor to East	Receptor to South 140 feet	Receptor to West 570 feet
Loaded Trucks	0.076	0.001	NA	0.006	0.001
Equipment	FTA Reference at 25 Feet	Receptor to North 125 feet	Receptor to East 530 feet	Receptor to South 200 feet	Receptor to West 900 feet
Vibratory Roller	0.210	0.019	0.002	0.009	0.001
Large Bulldozer	0.089	0.008	0.001	0.004	0.000
Loaded Trucks	0.076	0.007	0.001	0.003	0.000
Jackhammer	0.035	0.003	0.000	0.002	0.000
Small Bulldozer	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Exceed 0.2 in/sec PPV Standard?		No	No	No	No

Source: FTA 2018. See Appendix G.

Note: Distance measurements were conducted using Google Earth (2026) from the boundary of work areas to the nearest receptors. NA = Not applicable.

Independence High School

The relocation of the District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program to Jackson Junior High School Campus would not require construction activities at the

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Independence HS campus. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate construction-related vibration at this site, and **no impacts** would occur related to construction vibration.

Lone Junior High School

Table 16, *Project-Related Construction Vibration Damage Levels: Lone Junior High School*, summarizes vibration levels for typical construction equipment at a reference distance of 25 feet. Typical construction equipment for the proposed project can generate vibration levels ranging up to 0.210 in/sec PPV at 25 feet. As shown in Table 16, the proposed construction activities at Lone HS would not exceed the 0.2 in/sec PPV FTA standard. In addition, the proposed project would not include any new operational vibration sources. Therefore, project-related vibration impacts would be **less than significant**.

Table 16 Project-Related Construction Vibration Damage Levels

Equipment	Levels, PPV (in/sec)		
	FTA Reference at 25 Feet	Receptor to North 185 feet	Receptor to South 490 feet
Large Bulldozer	0.089	0.004	0.001
Loaded Trucks	0.076	0.004	0.001
Jackhammer	0.035	0.002	0.000
Small Bulldozer	0.003	0.000	0.000
Exceed 0.2 in/sec PPV Standard?		No	No

Source: FTA 2018. See Appendix G.

Note: Distance measurements were conducted using Google Earth (2026) from the boundary of work areas to the nearest receptors.

Argonaut High School and Jackson Junior High School

Site improvements at the Argonaut HS campus and Jackson Junior HS campus would not require major structural construction. As discussed above, site improvements at the Argonaut HS campus would require minor modifications to support middle school programming associated with the consolidation of the District's junior high schools. Additionally, site improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments to support the District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program that would be moved to the current Jackson Junior HS campus. Therefore, there would be no construction activities at the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses that would exceed the 0.2 in/sec PPV FTA standard. In addition, the proposed project would not include any

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

new operational vibration sources. Therefore, project-related vibration impacts would be **less than significant**.

Lone Elementary School

No construction activities are proposed at the campus since the campus would close. Therefore, the project would not generate construction-related vibration at this site, and **no impact** would occur related to construction vibration.

- c) ***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 proposed project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?***

As described above, the proposed project would include improvements at four school campuses, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, and Lone Junior HS.

Amador High School

The nearest airport to Amador HS, Amador County Airport, is located approximately 1.4 miles to the southeast. Amador HS is located outside of the 60 dBA CNEL noise contour for Amador County Airport.

Independence High School

The nearest airport to Independence High School, Amador County Airport, is located approximately 0.6 miles to the east. Amador HS is located outside of the 60 dBA CNEL noise contour for Amador County Airport.

Argonaut High School

The nearest airport to Argonaut HS, Amador County Airport, is located approximately 1.0 miles to the south. Argonaut HS is located outside of the 60 dBA CNEL noise contour for Amador County Airport.

Jackson Junior High School

The nearest airport to Jackson Junior HS, Amador County Airport, is located approximately 1.5 miles to the southeast. Jackson Junior HS is located outside of the 60 dBA CNEL noise contour for Amador County Airport.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Lone Junior High School

The nearest airport to Lone Junior HS, Amador County Airport, is located approximately 7.6 miles to the east. Lone Junior HS is located outside of the 60 dBA CNEL noise contour for Amador County Airport.

Lone Elementary School

The nearest airport to Lone ES, Amador County Airport, is located approximately 7.4 miles to the east. Lone Junior HS is located outside of the 60 dBA CNEL noise contour for Amador County Airport.

Each of the schools included in the proposed project would be outside of 60 dBA CNEL contours for the nearest airport, therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in increased exposure of people working at or visiting the project site to aircraft noise. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

XIV. Population and Housing

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned 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 people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The Population and Housing analysis considered the jurisdictional context of each campus to assess potential impacts across all sites, including campuses with proposed improvements and those without.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

DISCUSSION

- a) *Would the proposed project induce substantial unplanned 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)?*

The proposed project does not include the construction of housing units; therefore, the proposed project would not result in direct population growth.

Construction Phase

The proposed project would consolidate six existing schools onto five existing District campuses and include minor physical improvements such as relocation of portable classrooms, reconfiguration of a parking area within an existing developed footprint, construction of one new classroom building, and installation of playground equipment. The proposed project does not include new residential development, housing, or commercial uses that would directly induce population growth in the area.

The proposed project would not extend roadways or utilities, nor would it construct infrastructure that could facilitate development of undeveloped land. All proposed improvements would occur within the existing developed boundaries of current school campuses, which are already served by existing roads, utilities, and public services.

Construction of site improvements at Amador HS would begin in Spring 2027 and conclude in Summer 2027. Construction of site improvements at Lone Junior HS would begin in Fall 2029 and conclude in Spring 2030. Construction labor would be drawn from the existing local and regional workforce. In addition, construction employment would be temporary and limited to the duration of the construction periods. As such, the proposed project would not create a sustained increase in employment opportunities or attract substantial numbers of new residents.

Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce substantial unplanned population growth in the project area, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Operational Phase

The proposed project would not induce substantial population growth, either directly or indirectly. The project consists of the consolidation and reconfiguration of existing District educational facilities in response to declining enrollment trends and would not result in an overall increase in the student population served by the District.

As described in Section 2.3.1, Proposed Land Use, the project would consolidate existing educational programs onto fewer campuses through the establishment of a districtwide high

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

school at the Amador HS campus, a districtwide junior high school at the Argonaut HS campus, relocation of the Adult Education Program and Adult Transition Program to the Jackson Junior HS campus, and conversion of the Lone Junior HS campus into the new Lone ES. While enrollment at individual campuses would change as students and programs are relocated, the overall number of students served by the District would remain substantially the same.

The project would not include construction of housing, extension of roadways, expansion of utility infrastructure, or other improvements that could facilitate residential or commercial growth. In addition, the project would not create new educational demand or attract substantial new population to the area, as it is intended to accommodate existing students within a reorganized campus structure rather than increase District enrollment.

Furthermore, the project would remain consistent with existing land use designations and zoning for public school uses and would not require amendments to local general plans or zoning ordinances that could facilitate growth. Accordingly, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce substantial unplanned population growth in the cities of Lone, Jackson, or Sutter Creek. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

b) *Would the proposed project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

The proposed project would be implemented entirely on existing developed school campuses and would not involve the acquisition of residential properties, removal of housing, or displacement of residents. The project consists of consolidating existing educational programs and students onto fewer campuses, along with limited improvements within the boundaries of existing school sites. No new campuses or expansion of campus boundaries are proposed. In addition, the project would not result in the demolition or conversion of any residential units. Although operations would cease at the existing Lone ES campus, the site would remain under District ownership and would be secured and maintained pending future disposition. Accordingly, the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

XV. Public Services

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The Public Services analysis considered the jurisdictional context of each campus to assess potential impacts across all sites, including campuses with proposed improvements and those without.

DISCUSSION

- a) *Would the proposed 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:*

Fire protection?

City of Sutter Creek

Two campuses from the proposed project would be located in Sutter Creek: Amador HS and Independence HS. The proposed improvements at the Amador HS campus would consist of

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

relocating two existing portable classrooms and other limited site improvements to support operational and program needs and circulation. Amador HS would combine with the existing Argonaut HS at the Amador HS campus to become the districtwide high school for grades 10 through 12. As a result, student enrollment at the Amador HS campus would increase from 573 students to 821 students, an increase of 248 students in the City of Sutter Creek.

Additionally, no site improvements would occur on the Independence HS campus. However, the Adult Education Program and Adult Transition Program would move to Jackson Junior HS. Overall enrollment at the Independence HS campus would decrease by 52 students. Therefore, the City of Sutter Creek would see an overall increase of 196 students.

The Sutter Creek Fire Protection District (SCFPD) operates a single station at 350 Hanford Street in Sutter Creek and provides fire protection services to Amador HS and Independence HS. The SCFPD is 0.16 mile to the northeast of the Amador HS campus and approximately 1.5 miles to the north of the Independence HS campus. Though the students at the campus would be students from the District's existing service boundaries, additional students would need fire protection services from SCFPD.

However, the proposed project would not change the use of the campus nor introduce incompatible uses to the campus. Construction of the proposed campus improvements at Amador HS and the operations at both campuses would comply with the most current adopted California Fire Code and fire and life safety standards of the State of California. As part of the project review process, the DSA and SCFPD would review and approve building plans for site plan and emergency access. Additionally, the DSA and SCFPD would review site plans and design plans to ensure adequate fire requirements are met (the number and locations of fire hydrants, etc.) and emergency access is met.

The project would increase enrollment in the City of Sutter Creek by 196 students. This incremental increase would occur within an existing developed school campus served by the SCFPD. The increase in occupancy would be minor relative to the citywide service population, and the project would not require construction of a new fire station, expansion of facilities, or additional staffing. Existing fire protection infrastructure, emergency access, and response services would continue to serve the site.

Therefore, project implementation would not require expansion of fire protection services, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Jackson

Two campuses from the proposed project are in Jackson: Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS. The proposed improvements at Argonaut HS would consist of minor modifications primarily consisting of program and operational adjustments, including potential changes to classroom

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

configurations, student support spaces, and minor campus circulation or supervisory needs. No major structural construction is being proposed. The Argonaut HS campus would be the site for the new districtwide middle school serving grades 7 through 9. As a result, student enrollment at the Argonaut HS campus would increase from 535 students to 857 students, an increase of 322 students in the City of Jackson.

Additionally, improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments for the incoming District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program students. Overall enrollment at the Jackson Junior HS campus would decrease by 223 students. Therefore, the city of Jackson would see an overall increase of 99 students.

The Jackson Fire Department (JFD) operates two stations in Jackson and provides fire protection services to the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses. The closest fire station to the Argonaut HS campus is Station #132, approximately 0.5 mile northeast of the campus. The closest fire station to the Jackson Junior HS campus is Station #131, which is 0.26 miles southeast of the campus. While the students at the campuses would be students from the District's existing service boundaries, the additional capacity would result in an increase of students needing fire protection services.

However, the proposed project would not change the use of the campus nor introduce incompatible uses to the campus. Only the Argonaut HS campus would include exterior site improvements, and the operations at both campuses would comply with the most current adopted California Fire Code and fire and life safety standards of the State of California. As part of the project review process, the DSA would review and approve building plans for site plan and emergency access. Additionally, the DSA would review site plans and design plans to ensure adequate fire requirements (the number and locations of fire hydrants, etc.) and emergency access.

The project would increase enrollment in the City of Jackson by 99 students. This incremental increase would be within an existing developed school campus served by the JFD. The increase in occupancy would be minor relative to the citywide service population, and the project would not require construction of a new fire station, expansion of facilities, or additional staffing. Existing fire protection infrastructure, emergency access, and response services would continue to serve the site.

Therefore, project implementation would not require expansion of fire protection services, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

City of lone

Two campuses from the proposed project are in lone: lone Junior HS and lone ES. The proposed improvements at the lone Junior HS campus would consist of the construction of up to four new classrooms in a single classroom building, removal of up to four trees, reconfiguration of the northern parking lot to increase parking capacity, and other limited site improvements to support operational and program needs and circulation. The current lone Junior HS campus would be converted into the new lone ES through a three-year phased transition process. On completion of the three-year transition, total enrollment at the new lone ES campus (current lone Junior HS campus) would increase from 396 students to approximately 658 students, an increase of 262 students in the City of lone. Students enrolled at lone Junior HS would combine with the existing Jackson Junior HS at the Argonaut HS campus in Jackson, which will become the districtwide junior HS for grades 7 through 9.

Additionally, no site improvements are planned for the current lone ES campus. Total enrollment at the current lone ES campus would decrease from 567 to zero students. Therefore, the City of lone would see an overall decrease of 305 students.

The lone Fire Department (IFD) provides fire protection services to the lone Junior HS and lone ES campuses. The IFD operates two stations: Station 2 is at 22 Jackson Street, approximately 0.2 mile northeast of the lone Junior HS campus. While the students at the campus would be students from the District's existing service boundaries, the project would result in a decrease in the number of students needing fire protection services.

Additionally, the proposed project would not change the use of the campus nor introduce incompatible uses to the campus. Construction of the proposed campus improvements at lone Junior HS and subsequent operations would comply with the most current adopted California Fire Code and fire and life safety standards of the State of California. As part of the project review process, the DSA and IFD would review and approve building plans for site plan and emergency access. Additionally, the DSA and IFD would review site plans and design plans to ensure adequate fire requirements (the number and locations of fire hydrants, etc.) and emergency access.

The project would increase enrollment on the lone Junior HS campus by 262 students. This incremental increase would occur within an existing developed school campus served by the IFD. The increase in occupancy would not require construction of a new fire station, expansion of facilities, or additional staffing because the City of lone would see an overall decrease in students by 305 students which would require less services from IFD. Additionally, existing fire protection infrastructure, emergency access, and response services would continue to serve the site.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Therefore, project implementation would not require expansion of fire protection services, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Police protection?

City of Sutter Creek

Two campuses from the proposed project are in Sutter Creek: Amador HS and Independence HS. As discussed in Section XV(a), the Amador HS campus would include improvements while the Independence HS campus would not. Enrollment at the Amador HS campus would increase by 248 students, while enrollment at the Independence HS campus would decrease by 52 students, with an overall increase of 196 students in Sutter Creek.

The Sutter Creek Police Department (SCPD) operates a single station located at 18 Main Street and provides police protection services to Amador HS and Independence HS. The SCPD is approximately 0.5 mile southeast of the Amador HS campus and approximately 1 mile northeast of the Independence HS campus. While the students at the campus would be students from the District's existing service boundaries, the additional capacity would result in an increase of students needing police protection services.

However, the proposed project would not change the use of the campus or introduce incompatible uses. The campus would continue to be fenced, controlling access, and a campus supervisor would oversee a valet program to manage vehicle circulation. The campus would comply with the Amador High School Comprehensive School Safety Plan, which includes life and safety protection objectives and specialized procedures for controlling traffic at the school (ACUSD 2024a). Construction of the proposed campus improvements at the Amador HS campus and the operations at both campuses would comply with the most current adopted California Fire Code and fire and life safety standards of the State of California. As part of the project review process, the DSA and SCFPD would review and approve building plans for site plan and emergency access.

While the proposed project would increase enrollment by 196 students, the increase would be within an existing developed school campus served by the SCFPD. The increase in occupancy would be minor relative to the citywide service population, and the project would not require construction of a new police station, expansion of facilities, or additional staffing. Existing police protection infrastructure, emergency access, and response services would continue to serve the site.

Therefore, project implementation would not require expansion of police protection services, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

City of Jackson

Two campuses from the proposed project are in Jackson: Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS. As discussed in Section XV(a), the proposed project at the Argonaut HS campus would consist of minor campus modifications while improvements at the Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations. As a result of the proposed project, the Argonaut HS campus would see an increase in student enrollment of 322. The proposed project at Jackson Junior HS would see a decrease in student enrollment of 223. Overall, the City of Jackson would see an overall increase of 99 students.

The Jackson Police Department (JPD) operates from one station in Jackson and provides police protection services to the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses. The JPD station is at 33 Broadway, approximately 1.1 miles and 0.4 miles southeast of the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses, respectively. While the students at the Argonaut HS campus would be students from the District's existing service boundaries, the additional capacity would result in an increase of students needing police protection services. The campus would continue to be fenced to control access and would comply with the Argonaut High School Comprehensive School Safety Plan, which includes life and safety protection objectives and specialized procedures for controlling traffic at the school (ACUSD 2024b). The proposed project would not change the use of the campus nor introduce incompatible uses to the campus. As part of the project review process, the DSA and JPD would review and approve building plans for site plan and emergency access.

The project would increase enrollment by 99 students. The increase would occur within an existing developed school campus served by the JPD. The increase in occupancy would be minor relative to the citywide service population, and the project would not require construction of a new police station, expansion of facilities, or additional staffing. Existing police protection infrastructure, emergency access, and response services would continue to serve the site.

Therefore, project implementation would not require expansion of police protection services, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Lone

Two campuses from the proposed project are in Lone: Lone Junior HS and Lone ES. As discussed in Section XV(a), the proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus would consist of campus improvements while the current Lone ES campus would be closed. As a result of the proposed project, the Lone Junior HS campus would see a 262-student increase. No students would be on the Lone ES campus because it would close. Overall, Lone would see a 305-student decrease.

The Lone Police Department (IPD) provides police protection services to the Lone Junior HS and Lone ES campuses. The IPD operates out of a single station at 1 East Main Street, approximately

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

0.25 mile northeast of the Lone Junior HS campus and approximately 0.25 mile north of the Lone ES campus. The overall number of students needing police protection services from IPD would decrease.

Additionally, the improvements to the Lone Junior HS campus would comply with the Lone Junior High School Comprehensive School Safety Plan (ACUSD 2024c). The proposed project would not change the use of the campus nor introduce incompatible uses to the campus. As part of the project review process, the DSA and IFD would review and approve building plans for site plan and emergency access.

Therefore, project implementation would not require expansion of police protection services, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Schools?

Amador County Unified School District

As stated in Section 2.1.1, the Amador County Unified School District is the only school district in Amador County. The proposed project would include the consolidation and closure of schools in the District. Site and building improvements are proposed at the Lone Junior HS and Amador HS campuses, with minor improvements at the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses. No improvements are proposed at the Independence HS campus, and the Lone ES campus would be closed. The proposed project would not increase the number of students within the District's boundaries but would relocate them to other schools in the District to consolidate school resources for efficient program administration and focus of resources on fewer facilities to better serve students. An evaluation of the proposed project's potential impacts to the environment during construction and operation is provided throughout Chapter 3, *Environmental Evaluation*, of this IS/MND. New or physically altered school facilities would not be necessitated beyond the scope of the proposed project. As such, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Parks?

City of Sutter Creek

Sutter Creek owns and maintains approximately 4.9 acres of active parklands and 196.2 acres of recreational uses (Sutter Creek 2019). The nearest park to the Amador HS campus is Minnie Provis Park, approximately 0.5 mile southeast.

An increase in demand for parks is created by the development of new housing and/or population-generating actions. Amador HS would also combine with the existing Argonaut HS at the Amador HS campus to become the districtwide high school for grades 10 through 12. As a result, student enrollment at the Amador HS campus would increase by 248 students. No site

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

improvements would occur on the Independence HS campus; the Adult Education Program and Adult Transition Program would be moved to Jackson Junior HS. Overall enrollment at the Independence HS campus would decrease by 52 students. Therefore, Sutter Creek would see an overall increase of 196 students at the Amador HS campus. The proposed project would not increase the number of students within ACUSD's boundaries but would relocate them to other schools in the District to consolidate school resources. This redistribution would not introduce new residents or population growth; proposed campus improvements are intended to serve existing students enrolled in the District.

At Amador HS, existing recreational facilities include tennis courts, a pool, baseball fields, a softball field, and a sports field with track and field which would continue to operate without expansion. Although the City of Sutter Creek would experience a localized increase of 196 students at the Amador HS campus, this increase would be within an existing developed school facility. The project does not involve residential development that would generate a new population requiring park services. The incremental increase in student activity would represent a minor change relative to the City's existing population and service base and would not create the need for new or expanded park facilities. Because the proposed project would not induce population growth, students are expected to use parks near their existing residences and/or facilities at Amador HS and Independence HS.

Therefore, project implementation would not require expansion of parks, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Jackson

Jackson owns and maintains four park facilities (Jackson 2026). The nearest park to the Argonaut HS campus is Deter Park, approximately 0.6 mile east.

An increase in demand for parks is created by the development of new housing and/or population generating actions. The Argonaut HS campus would be the site for the new districtwide middle school serving grades 7 through 9. As a result, student enrollment at the Argonaut HS campus would increase by 322 students, and overall enrollment at the Jackson Junior HS campus would decrease by 223 students. Therefore, Jackson would see an overall increase of 99 students within the City of Jackson. The proposed project would not increase the number of students within ACUSD's boundaries but would relocate them to other schools to consolidate school resources. This redistribution would not introduce new residents or population growth; proposed campus improvements are intended to serve existing students enrolled in the District.

At Argonaut HS, existing recreational facilities including tennis courts, baseball fields, softball fields, and a sports field with track and field would continue to operate without expansion. Although Jackson would experience a localized increase of 99 students at the Argonaut HS

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

campus, this increase would be within an existing developed school facility. The project does not involve residential development that would generate a new population requiring park services. The incremental increase in student activity would represent a minor change relative to the existing population and service base and would not create the need for new or expanded park facilities. Because the proposed project would not induce population growth, students are expected to use parks near their existing residences and/or facilities at Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS.

Therefore, project implementation would not require expansion of parks, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Lone

The City of Lone owns and maintains 93.5 acres of park facilities (Lone 2023). The nearest park to the Lone Junior HS campus is Charles Howard Park, approximately 0.2 mile east.

An increase in demand for parks is created by the development of new housing and/or population generating actions. The current Lone Junior HS campus would be converted into the new Lone ES, with total enrollment increasing by 262 students. Students currently enrolled at Lone Junior HS would combine with the existing Jackson Junior HS at the Argonaut HS campus in the City of Jackson to become the districtwide Junior HS for grades 7 through 9. Total enrollment at the current Lone ES campus would decrease from 567 to zero students. Therefore, Lone would see an overall decrease of 305 students. Additionally, the proposed project includes the installation of age-appropriate playground equipment at Lone Junior HS as part of its conversion to an elementary school. This playground equipment would be on school grounds and would serve students during school hours. The proposed project would not increase the number of students within ACUSD's boundaries but would relocate them to other schools. This redistribution would not introduce new residents or population growth; proposed campus improvements are intended to serve existing students enrolled in the District.

The project does not involve residential development that would generate a new population requiring park services. The incremental increase in student activity at the Lone Junior HS campus would represent a minor change relative to Lone's existing population and service base and would not create the need for new or expanded park facilities. Because the proposed project would not induce population growth, students are expected to use parks near their existing residences and/or facilities at the future Lone ES campus.

Therefore, project implementation would not require expansion of parks, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

Other public facilities?

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The proposed project involves the consolidation of six schools onto five District campuses, with minor physical improvements including relocating portable classrooms, reconfiguring a parking area within an existing footprint, constructing a single new classroom building, and installing playground equipment. All improvements would be within the existing developed boundaries of the campuses. The proposed project does not involve residential or commercial development that would generate new population requiring additional public facilities such as libraries, community centers, or other government services.

The existing public facilities in the cities of Jackson, Sutter Creek, and Lone, including libraries, community centers, and other government buildings, are currently serving the existing population. The proposed project does not include the construction of new public facilities or the expansion of existing facilities. Though school enrollment would increase at some campuses and decrease at others, the students are already residents in the District's service area and already served by existing public facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would not create new demand that would require the construction of new or physically altered public facilities, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

XVI. Recreation

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The Recreation analysis considered the jurisdictional context of each campus to assess potential impacts across all sites, including campuses with proposed improvements and those without.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

DISCUSSION

- a) ***Would the proposed project 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?***

Typically, residential projects increase the demand for park and recreational facilities. As discussed in Chapter XIII, *Population and Housing*, the proposed project would not induce population growth in the cities of Lone, Jackson, or Sutter Creek. The proposed project involves the consolidation of six schools onto five existing campuses with minor physical improvements including relocating portable classrooms, reconfiguring a parking area within an existing footprint, constructing a single new classroom building, and installing playground equipment. All improvements would be within the existing developed boundaries of the campuses and would not increase demand for park facilities beyond existing levels. The project does not involve residential development that would generate new population requiring park services.

The proposed project includes the installation of age-appropriate playground equipment at Lone Junior HS as part of its conversion to an elementary school. This playground equipment would be on school grounds and would serve students during school hours, but it is not a public park facility. However, the playground equipment would be available to authorized community groups during weekends and outside school hours, subject to the District's facility use policies and the Civic Center Act.

While school enrollment would increase at some campuses and decrease at others, the students are already residents within the District's service area and are already served by existing park facilities within the cities of Lone, Jackson, and Sutter Creek. Because the proposed project would not induce population growth, students are expected to use parks and recreational facilities near their existing residences and/or facilities at the five campuses. While some students may go to parks and recreational facilities around Lone Junior HS, such use of the facilities would be expected to be on a short-term basis, after school, and not to a degree that would cause substantial physical deterioration to the park and/or recreational facility. Because the proposed project is a school project that would not induce population growth and because facilities for use by its students would be provided on-site, the proposed project would not generate a substantial increase in demand for existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

- b) ***Does the proposed project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?***

The proposed project includes the installation of age-appropriate playground equipment at Lone Junior HS as part of its conversion to Lone ES. At Lone Junior High School, existing recreational

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

facilities, including a baseball field, track and field, swimming pool, and outdoor fitness equipment, would continue to operate with the addition of new playground equipment. The proposed playground equipment would be within the existing developed footprint of the campus and would serve the incoming elementary school students.

At Amador HS, existing recreational facilities include tennis courts, a pool, baseball fields, a softball field, and a sports field with track and field, which would continue to operate without expansion. At Argonaut HS, existing recreational facilities, including tennis courts, baseball fields, softball fields, and a sports field with track and field, would continue to operate without expansion. At Jackson Junior HS, improvements would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments to support the District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program and would not include recreational improvements. All existing recreational facilities at Jackson Junior HS would continue to operate without expansion.

All recreational improvements would be on land already developed with school facilities and would not involve conversion of undeveloped land, removal of significant natural resources, or construction that would result in substantial environmental impacts. The installation of playground equipment is a minor improvement that would not result in significant adverse physical effects such as substantial grading, substantial vegetation removal beyond four existing live oak trees on the Lone Junior HS campus, or a substantial increase in impervious surfaces beyond existing conditions.

Typically, residential projects result in an increased demand for recreational facilities. The proposed project would not induce population growth and would not require the construction, expansion, or alternation of new or existing parks or recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

XVII. Transportation

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than- Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than- Significant Impact	No Impact
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION

- a) *Would the proposed project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*

School Closure/Consolidation Program

The proposed project includes consolidating six campuses into five campuses. Since all improvements would be made within existing school sites with the same number of students districtwide, the proposed project would not cause conflicts with proposed programs or plans to improve the circulation system for users including the vehicles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. Amador County and the cities of Lone, Jackson, and Sutter Creek have general plans that guide each jurisdiction's long-term growth and vision for its future, including circulation. Further, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) from the Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC) aligns regional transportation, sustainability and land use planning. The proposed project's consistency with the applicable goals, objectives, and/or policies of the General Plans and RTP are provided below.

Regional Transportation Plan

The ACTC's RTP includes goals and policies aimed at improving all modes of transportation to reduce congestion, optimize connectivity, enhance safety, preserve existing infrastructure, communities, and the environment, support economic development, and require new developments to mitigate their potential traffic impacts (Goals 1A and 1B; Policies 1A, 1B, 2C, and 2F). The proposed project would not reconfigure the existing roadway network or interfere with ACTC's planned improvements to bicycle, pedestrian, or transit infrastructure, as it proposes only to redistribute where students attend school across several existing District campuses. The proposed project would not interfere with the implementation or integration of improvements to all modes of transportation because the proposed project would occur solely on the District campuses and would not include any off-site improvements. The proposed

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

project is not considered a new development but is a campus consolidation project that would consolidate six campuses onto five campuses and would not be required to provide onsite facilities or contribute toward offsite facilities. However, the proposed project provides onsite improvements that enhance the traffic circulation, such as improvements to internal circulation, parking, and student pick-up/drop-off areas at selected school campuses. In addition, though the proposed project is not a new development, the District has prepared this project-specific transportation analysis to evaluate the proposed project's transportation impacts and identify mitigation measures where necessary, consistent with the intent of Policy 2C.

The RTP also includes goals and policies aimed at improving opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian travel and fulfilling the mobility needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in a manner that reduces safety conflicts, improves connectivity, and enhances community character (Goals 6A and 6B; Policies 6A through 6D). Implementation of the proposed project would occur solely on existing District campuses and would not interfere with ACTC's, the cities', the County's, or Caltrans's ability to implement planned pedestrian and bicycle improvements, including those identified in the Amador Countywide Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, General Plan Circulation Elements, transportation Capital Improvement Programs, local building standards, regional roadway projects, or Caltrans' State Highway Operation and Protection Program. Specifically, the proposed project would not impact non-motorized transportation facilities or increase safety conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists because the proposed project would not include any off-site improvements and the proposed project would continue to remain as a school use. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the RTP's goals and policies.

Amador Countywide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan

The 2017 Amador Countywide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, prepared by ACTC in coordination with its member agencies (Amador City, City of Sutter Creek, City of Jackson, City of Plymouth, City of Lone, and Amador County), serves as the foundation for the pedestrian and bicycle component of the RTP and organizes high-priority pedestrian and bicycle projects to compete for federal, state, and regional funding. The plan includes goals aimed at promoting an efficient network of bikeways and pedestrian facilities throughout the county, improving bicyclist and pedestrian safety and security, integrating pedestrian and bicycle needs into transportation planning activities, and maximizing capacity for implementation of pedestrian and bicycle projects, programs, and plans (Goals 1 through 4).

Implementation of the proposed project would occur solely on existing District campuses and would not construct any new roadways, reconfigure the existing roadway network, or decrease pedestrian safety. The proposed project would not interfere with the promotion of an efficient network of bikeways and pedestrian facilities throughout Amador County because the proposed project would be located within each of the campus boundaries. The proposed project would not include any off-site improvements that could interfere with bicyclist and pedestrian safety and security, hinder local planning efforts to encourage and increase walking and biking, or

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

impede the implementation of pedestrian and bicycle projects, programs, and plans. Therefore, the proposed project would not interfere with ACTC's or its member agencies' ability to implement the pedestrian and bicycle network improvements identified in the plan, and would not conflict with the plan's goals.

Amador County General Plan

The Amador County General Plan includes goals and policies aimed at maintaining adequate regional and local transportation facilities and a safe, efficient, and comprehensive traffic circulation system, including planning for infrastructure maintenance and expansion, encouraging connectivity between communities, and directing regional traffic around historic community centers (Goals CM-1 and CM-2; Policies CM-1.3 through CM-1.5; Policies CM-2.1 through CM-2.4). The proposed project would not construct any new driveways, roadways, or school campuses, and implementation would be limited to existing campuses. The proposed project would not interfere with any future maintenance and expansion of roadway, trail, and other circulation infrastructure. Since the proposed project would not include any off-site improvements, the proposed project would not interfere with connections between unincorporated communities and would not redirect regional traffic away from historic centers. The proposed project is a school consolidation project and would not interfere or conflict with the County's policy to plan, build, and maintain a multimodal and hierarchical transportation system or to apply creative management measures to improve circulation. The proposed project redistributes which grade levels are served at existing campuses and changes the number of students expected at those campuses. The proposed project does not construct any new school campuses and would not be considered new development. The location of the schools is easily accessible through the existing transportation network, with close proximity to state routes, arterial and collector roadways, and transit stops near some of the schools.

The Amador County General Plan also includes goals and policies aimed at providing transportation alternatives to the automobile and maintaining and improving air quality, including expanding bicycle and pedestrian facilities, coordinating with Amador Transit, and promoting land use patterns that reduce automobile dependence (Goals CM-3 and C-9; Policies CM-3.1 through CM-3.7; Policy C-9.6). The proposed project does not interfere or conflict with the County's priorities for the expansion of bicycle and pedestrian transportation, and transit improvements. The school campuses are accessible through the existing transportation network, and the District provides school bus service as an alternative to single-occupant vehicle travel that would improve air quality. Additionally, as discussed in Section III, *Air Quality*, impacts to air quality from the proposed project would be less than significant. The proposed project would occur solely on the District campuses and would not include off-site improvements. As such, the proposed project would not interfere with the expansion of bicycle and pedestrian transportation, Capital Improvements Planning for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, or the ability of the County to provide or improve public transit or maintain viable

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

public transportation options in Amador County and provide transit connections. As the proposed project is a consolidation project, the proposed project would not interfere with the County's ability to promote and use patterns which place residents near activity centers and essential services or to work cooperatively with Caltrans and local jurisdictions to identify priority alternative transportation improvements for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit users for state routes.

Lastly, the Amador County General Plan includes goals and policies aimed at reducing GHG emissions from automobile travel and energy use, minimizing noise conflicts from transportation sources, and reducing fire risks to structures through roadway access standards (Goals C-10, N-2, and LU-12; Policies C-10.3, C-10.4, N-2.4, and LU-12.2). As further discussed in sections VI, *Energy*, and VIII, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, the proposed project results in a less than significant impact to transportation energy and greenhouse gas emissions. Further, the proposed project would improve the overall efficiency of school operations by consolidating educational programs onto fewer campuses and closing one existing campus, reducing building energy and electricity use associated with operating multiple facilities. The proposed project's land use context supports a range of travel modes that would help minimize traffic noise. Because the proposed does not include any new roadways or roadway improvements, it would not conflict with the County's roadway access standards for firefighting. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the County's goals related to GHG reduction, noise, or fire risk.

Jackson General Plan

The Circulation Element in the Jackson General Plan includes policies aimed at ensuring safe and functional internal circulation for new development and minimizing circulation conflicts during special events, including provisions for pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, parking, bus facilities, Neighborhood Electric Vehicles, and shuttle service (CIRC 2.3 and 2.6). The proposed project would occur on existing school campuses and would continue to provide safe internal circulation for pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, parking, and school buses. The proposed project would not interfere with the City's efforts to improve circulation or minimize conflicts during special events.

The Circulation Element also includes policies aimed at encouraging alternatives to single-occupant vehicle trips, promoting ridesharing, park-and-ride facilities, and transit use, and improving the pedestrian and bicycle environment through sidewalks, bicycle lanes, walking routes, bicycle storage, and coordination between bicycling and transit (CIRC 5.1–5.4 and CIRC 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.7, 6.8, 6.10, and 6.12). The proposed project supports alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel by providing school bus service. The proposed project is not considered a new development project and the proposed project would occur solely within the existing boundaries of each of the developed campuses. As the proposed project is a school consolidation project, the proposed project would not interfere with the City's ability to

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

promote ride sharing and the use of park-and-ride facilities, promote the use of transit during special community events, implement best practices to improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment, construct sidewalks or pedestrian walkways along Highways 49 and 88, promote use of walking routes, walkways, and hiking trails, encourage existing businesses and employers to provide bicycle storage and lockers or encourage the coordination bicycle use with mass transit. Additionally, the proposed project would not include any off-site improvements, including roadway improvements, that would interfere with the City's ability to eliminate barriers to bicycle traffic or construct bicycle lanes along new or reconstructed arterial and collector routes.

Additionally, the Circulation Element includes policies aimed at reducing VMT through land use strategies, employer-based commute programs, and monitoring of new transportation technologies, as well as coordinating with Amador County, ACTC, Caltrans, and Amador Transit on transportation planning, funding, and transit service improvements (CIRC 8.1–8.3, CIRC-2a, CIRC-2i, CIRC-2e, and CIRC-5a through 5e). The proposed project is a school consolidation project that would not interfere with the City's ability to support increased densities and mixed uses to reduce VMT and promote walking, biking, and transit; encourage employers to provide programs for carpooling, transit, biking, and walking subsidies, bicycle facilities, ridesharing, telecommuting, and working from home; or monitor the deployment of new transportation technologies and services and develop related policies. Additionally, the proposed project would not interfere with the City's coordination with ACTC, Caltrans, or other transportation agencies in the planning and implementation of transportation improvements, as the proposed project would not include any off-site improvements or generate the need for new roadway infrastructure that would require such coordination. The proposed project would also not interfere with the City's implementation of the countywide five-year Transit Development Plan, including fixed route express service between Jackson, Martell, Sutter Creek, and Sacramento, deviated transit routes for seniors, youth, and disadvantaged individuals, or the Transit Design Guidelines Manual, as the proposed project would not include any off-site improvements or transit facilities and would occur solely within the existing boundaries of the developed campuses. Similarly, the proposed project would not interfere with the City's continued expansion of Amador Transit public transit service, including special event shuttle service during significant Main Street activities, or with the City's coordination with Amador Transit and other regional transit providers to advance service to employment centers, service centers, government centers, and regional destinations. The proposed project would also not interfere with the City's ability to enhance transit stops through improved shelters and timetables, or to consider alternatives to conventional bus systems such as micro-transit, on-demand transit services, or transportation networking company services.

Finally, the Circulation Element includes policies aimed at implementing the Amador Countywide Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan and regional bikeway connections, as well as adopting VMT thresholds and screening criteria for environmental review and exploring

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

VMT impact fee programs (CIRC-6a through 6e and CIRC-8a through 8c). The proposed project would not interfere with the City's coordination with ACTC to implement the Amador Countywide Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Design Guidelines and Recommended Standards, or planned improvements such as new roads for bicyclists and pedestrians, a designated bicycle route stop with bike racks and lockers along SR 49 in downtown Jackson, pedestrian-actuated signal crossings at key locations such as the Busi Municipal Parking Lot, French Bar Road, and Sutter Street, trailhead parking facilities, safe walking routes, an over- or underpass walkway between the Central Business District and the Busi Parking Lot, or bicycle lanes along new or reconstructed arterial and collector routes, as the proposed project would not include any off-site improvements and would occur solely within the existing boundaries of the developed campuses. Additionally, the proposed project would not interfere with the City's implementation of recommendations from the Amador Countywide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, its coordination with other agencies to implement a regional bikeway system connecting the city to other communities and recreation destinations, or its pursuit of funding for bikeway and sidewalk construction and maintenance, including off-road bikeways. The proposed project would also not interfere with the City's ability to add planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities in conjunction with road rehabilitation, reconstruction, or re-striping projects, as the proposed project does not include any roadway rehabilitation, reconstruction, or re-striping.

The proposed project would not interfere with the City's adoption or periodic review of VMT thresholds and screening criteria for environmental impact analysis, or its exploration of a VMT impact fee program to fund transportation demand management strategies. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with goals and policies of the Jackson General Plan.

Lone General Plan

The Lone General Plan includes goals and policies aimed at developing a roadway system that accommodates future land use, coexists with other travel modes such as biking, walking, and golf carts, safeguards residential areas from excessive traffic, and enhances connectivity across the City's residential, Downtown, commercial, office, and industrial areas (Goal CIR-1; Policies CIR-1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, 1.11, and 1.12). The proposed project would occur on existing school campuses and would not change any existing land uses or public facilities. Also, the proposed project would not interfere with the City of Lone's ability to develop a roadway system that accommodates future land use at the desired level of service, coexists with other travel modes such as biking, walking, and golf carts, protects residential areas from excessive traffic, contributes to the quality, safety, and connectivity of the City's residential, Downtown, commercial, office, and industrial areas, or encourages a reduction in VMT, as the proposed project would not construct any new roadways or reconfigure the existing roadway network and would occur solely within the existing boundaries of the District campuses. The proposed project would not interfere with the City's implementation of the Circulation Plan or its

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

facilitation of new development infrastructure improvements, as the proposed project would not include any off-site infrastructure improvements. Additionally, the proposed project would not interfere with the City's efforts to foster an easily navigable road system or its requirements for perpendicular or roundabout intersection design at new development projects, as the proposed project does not include the design or construction of any new road intersections.

The proposed project would not interfere with any development patterns that enhance the quality, safety, and connectivity of the city's residential Downtown, commercial, office, and industrial areas. The proposed project would not interfere with the City's support for golf carts as a mode of transportation or its efforts to expand the roadways on which golf carts are allowed, as the proposed project would not modify any City roadways or golf cart routes. The proposed project would not interfere with the City's coordination with regional agencies and transit providers to support transit programs, as the District would continue to provide school bus service and the proposed project would not include any off-site improvements requiring such coordination. Finally, the proposed project would not interfere with the City's evaluation of potential crossings of Sutter Creek to alleviate traffic levels on existing roadways, as the proposed project would not affect traffic levels on City roadways or the feasibility of such crossings.

The General Plan also includes goals and policies aimed at establishing an extensive, interconnected pedestrian and bicycle network that safely connects neighborhoods, parks, schools, employment areas, and retail centers, including requirements for bicycle and pedestrian connections to transit stops and activity centers (Goal CIR-2; Policies CIR-2.3 and 2.7). Implementation of the proposed project would occur solely on existing District campuses and would not include any off-site improvements that would interfere with the City's established pedestrian or bicycle networks. Additionally, the proposed project would not interfere with the City's ability to establish an extensive, complete, smooth, interconnected, and continuous pedestrian and bicycle network, require bicycle and pedestrian connections to public transit systems at stops; carpool/vanpool park-and-ride lots; and activity centers, or provide bicycle lanes or other bicycle facilities along all arterials, connectors, and local roadways.

Finally, the General Plan includes goals and policies aimed at conserving natural resources by reducing local and global air quality and greenhouse gas impacts, including promoting infill development to limit vehicle trips and supporting State greenhouse gas reduction goals (Goal CO-6; Policies CO-6.1 and CO-6.3). The proposed project would not interfere with the City's efforts to reduce air quality and GHG impacts or limit vehicle trips. As noted in Section III, the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact with regard to air quality. Additionally, the proposed project would not result in a significant impact with regard to greenhouse gas emissions.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Sutter Creek General Plan

The primary goal of the City of Sutter Creek Circulation Element is to ensure that public safety and adequate levels of service are maintained through a variety of available transportation modes as the city grows (Goal C-1). Supporting policies address roadway improvements and safety, including dedication and construction of the Easterly Bypass Collector Road, traffic signals at warranted intersections, street improvements and extensions, intersection safety improvements, parking restrictions on arterials and collectors lacking adequate shoulders, and road design standards addressing grading, drainage, and curb/gutter requirements (Policies C-1.1.1, C-1.2.1, C-1.3.2, C-1.4.1, and C-1.5.4 through C-1.5.6). Both Amador HS and Independence HS are located within the City of Sutter Creek. The redistribution of students attending schools at the existing campuses would not interfere with the City's ability to provide a roadway network for all modes of travel or to implement its planned roadway safety and capacity improvements because the proposed project would solely occur within the boundaries of each of the campuses and would not include off-site improvements. Additionally, the proposed project would not include any off-site improvements that would interfere with the City's ability to dedicate and construct the Easterly Bypass Collector Road, provide traffic signals at intersections, improve existing streets and make extensions, provide improvements at intersections to improve safety and traffic flow, or implement road design requirements. Each of the campuses include parking areas that would not require students, staff, or visitors to park off-campus. Specifically, the proposed project at Lone Junior HS would provide additional parking on-campus for staff and visitors.

The Circulation Element also includes policies aimed at maximizing public transit use, encouraging carpooling and staggered work hours, and coordinating with ACTC and Amador Regional Transit System on the review of projects that may generate significant traffic volumes (Policies C-1.6.1, C-1.6.2, C-1.8.1, and C-1.9.1). The proposed project would not interfere with the City's efforts to reduce dependence on the private automobile, as the District would continue to provide school bus services to District students. The proposed project is a school consolidation project that would not generate or attract, individually or cumulatively, large, or moderate volumes of traffic because the proposed project would not increase student enrollment or school capacity. Additionally, the proposed project would not interfere with the City's ability to encourage carpooling or encourage employers to provide staggered work hours for employees.

Finally, the Circulation Element includes policies aimed at expanding bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including bicycle lanes or paved shoulders on new arterial and collector roadways, pedestrian walks for access to public services and facilities, safe crossings on Old Highway 49, walking paths along Old Sutter Hill Road and Sutter Creek-Volcano Road, and ADA compliance for public facilities (Policies C-1.10.1 through C-1.10.4 and C-1.10.6). The proposed project would not interfere with the City of Sutter Creek's requirement for bicycle lanes or paved

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

shoulders on new arterial and collector roadway facilities, as the proposed project would not construct any new arterial or collector roadways. Similarly, the proposed project would not interfere with the City's requirement for development projects to construct pedestrian walks for access to public services and facilities, as the proposed project would not include any off-site improvements requiring such construction and is not considered a new development project. The proposed project would not interfere with the City's efforts to urge the creation of safe crossings on Old Highway 49, including toward Sutter Hill, at the intersection of Old Highway 49 and Sutter Hill Road, at the foot of Sutter Oaks and Mount Pleasant, and near Spanish Street, or with the City's efforts to require new development proposals to help create walking paths or lanes along Old Sutter Hill Road and Sutter Creek-Volcano Road, as the proposed project would occur solely within the boundaries of the District campuses and would not include any off-site roadway or walkway improvements. Finally, the proposed project would comply with the ADA in the design of any public and pedestrian facilities, consistent with the City's design standards.

Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

b) *Would the proposed project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?*

Methodology

Significance criterion “b” is related to the implementation of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the primary performance metric. The State of California has provided no recommended method of analyzing the VMT impacts for schools. Therefore, the following methodology was applied to assess the impact related to VMT:

- Schools are most similar to the way an office operates with the majority of trips coming into the office in the morning and most trips going out again in the afternoon. The general practice is to assess an office project’s potential effect by analyzing vehicle miles traveled per employee. The evaluation of the school consolidation used a similar metric but used vehicle miles traveled per person (employees being equated to school staff and students) as the efficiency metric.
- There are no established significance criteria for schools, as such this analysis uses “no increase in the VMT per person” for the VMT impact criterion. The consolidation of schools as proposed by the project is not increasing the number of students attending the schools in Amador County but could potentially change how far students need to travel to reach school. Therefore, no increase in VMT per person is an appropriate metric for determining whether the proposed project would cause an increase in regional VMT and thus result in a significant impact due to VMT.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Calculating VMT for schools requires shifting focus from standard commuter travel patterns to student-centric travel patterns. When accounting for school bus/van and public transportation ridership, the VMT methodology employed to evaluate the proposed project applies a “transit reduction” to the baseline personal vehicle travel.

Using the methodology described in the Transportation Technical Memorandum (Appendix D), the daily VMT per person with and without the proposed project was calculated and can be seen in Table 17, *Daily VMT per person, with and without the Proposed Project*.

Table 17 Daily VMT per person, with and without the Proposed Project

VMT Calculation Steps	Population	Existing Conditions	Proposed Project Conditions	% Change
Baseline Daily VMT (students)	3,888 Students	51,114	54,786	7.2%
Adjusted Daily VMT (bus)	3,888 Students	46,419	49,899	7.5%
Adjusted Daily VMT (bus + siblings)	3,888 Students	44,271	47,637	7.6%
Adjusted Daily VMT (bus + siblings + walk)	3,888 Students	44,244	47,626	7.6%
Adjusted Daily VMT (bus + siblings + walk + combination trips)	3,888 Students	42,898	45,802	6.8%
Adjusted Daily VMT (bus + siblings + walk + combination trips + elementary bus stops)	3,888 Students	38,657	40,511	4.8%
Final Adjusted Student Daily VMT	3,888 Students	38,657	40,511	4.8%
Staff Daily VMT	463 Staff	9,079	9,268	2.1%
Total Daily VMT (Students + Staff)	4,351 Total	47,736	49,779	4.3%
Daily VMT per Person (Students + Staff)	4,351 Total	11.0	11.5	4.5%

Source: Kittelson & Associates (see Appendix D).

VMT Analysis

The proposed project would result in the VMT per person increasing from 11 miles to 11.5 miles representing a 4.5 percent increase, as seen in Table 17. This analysis uses “no increase in the

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

VMT per person” for the VMT impact criterion. The total VMT increase from the proposed project when compared to the existing conditions is 2,043 miles. Since VMT per person increases compared to existing conditions, this would require the implementation of transportation demand management (TDM) measures to reduce the impact to less than significant. The “Transportation Demand Management Plan” Mitigation Measure TRA-1, outlined below, would reduce vehicle miles traveled and ensure that the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact with implementation of mitigation. Further, ACUSD has noted declines in student enrollment over time. This reduction in enrollment lowers overall school demand, resulting in fewer daily student trips and a corresponding long-term decrease in aggregate VMT associated with school district operations.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would include transportation demand management (TDM) measures to reduce the impact to less than significant. Based on the student household data provided by the District and the required VMT reduction of 2,043 miles, achieving the required reduction would require carpool participation from 626 households. This would include removing 313 individual vehicle trips from the roadway to mitigate the increase in VMT. This represents about 8 percent of the student population in the schools affected by the consolidation. The combined effect of the various strategies implemented as part of the TDM program would result in a reduction in VMT and vehicular trips by offering services and actions that are aimed at encouraging use of alternative transportation modes as compared to single occupancy vehicles (e.g., school bus, carpool, public transit, etc.). Annual reporting would track and demonstrate the effectiveness of the TDM Plan. If TDM tracking and reporting show that the TDM Plan is not achieving the required VMT reduction, corrective action plans are required. Implementation of the TDM Plan along with the TDM Plan tracking and reporting, and implementation of corrective actions (if needed) as described in Mitigation Measure TRA-1 would ensure that the proposed project’s VMT impacts are reduced to a less than significant level.

Therefore, implementation of Mitigation Measures TRA-1 would reduce impacts from VMT to **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Mitigation Measure TRA-1: Within two years of project approval, ACUSD shall prepare and implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan to reduce VMT associated with the proposed project.

Tracking, Compliance, and Reporting: ACUSD shall track the effectiveness of the TDM Plan through annual parent commute surveys, school bus ridership tracking, subsidized transit pass distributions, and other appropriate monitoring methods. The District Superintendent shall submit annual monitoring reports to the School Board following implementation of the TDM Plan. These monitoring reports shall summarize implementation of the TDM measures and evaluate whether the TDM Plan is achieving the required VMT reduction. If annual monitoring indicates that the TDM Plan is not achieving the required VMT reduction, ACUSD shall prepare and implement corrective

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

action plans, to include such measures as increasing school bus routes, increasing transit subsidies, and deploying targeted school shuttles. Once achieved and to ensure long-term TDM Plan effectiveness, ACUSD shall be required to demonstrate target VMT reduction for three consecutive years.

The TDM Plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following measures:

“SchoolPool” program: ACUSD shall develop and implement a “SchoolPool” program that would encourage carpooling among students and households. Rural areas feature long commute distances and low walkability; hence, targeted school carpooling is an effective strategy that capitalizes on shared regional travel patterns to capture massive VMT reductions. A comprehensive rural “SchoolPool” strategy involves the following components to ensure high participation and VMT reduction:

- **Software-Assisted Matching** (such as a Ridematch app): The goal of the program is to provide parents with information on neighboring students who are interested in carpooling to and from school, and to encourage parents to establish a carpool. Carpooling is voluntary, and no financial incentive is offered to parents. A carpool ridematch app could be developed which provides access to parents with students attending public schools throughout the County (Pre-K through high school). The app will help parents find other student or household matches they could consider carpooling with.
- **Decentralized Park and Ride “Satellite Hubs”:** ACUSD shall partner with community nodes, e.g., churches, community centers, public libraries, to create designated park and- ride spots. This strategy would help parents drive short distances from isolated properties to designated satellite hubs, where participating households could consolidate trips into a single carpool vehicle to transport multiple students to their respective schools.
- **Preferred Carpool Lanes:** ACUSD shall dedicate priority, rapid drop-off/pick-up lanes strictly for vehicles holding two or more students to bypass long waiting lines.

School Bus Reliability: ACUSD shall commit to no longer canceling school bus routes, thereby increasing school bus reliability. Preventing route cancellations acts as an effective VMT mitigation measure by replacing individual car trips with bus rides, lowering the VMT as well as traffic congestion near schools. Consistent bus availability and route reliability builds trust with the community and eliminates extra work-commute deviations for families. ACUSD expects that based on the existing 14 bus routes and the capacity, the lone routes could potentially accommodate approximately

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

150 additional students to take to junior high and high schools, with route adjustments as needed. These projections were considered when calculating the VMT for the proposed Project conditions as part of the VMT Methodology subsection above.

Parking Management: ACUSD shall commit to capping the number of student parking permits issued at the high school and, to the extent permitted by applicable law, prioritize parking permits for students who participate in carpools.

Capping parking permits is a land use-based VMT reduction strategy that limits the supply of on-campus parking and encourages students to use alternative travel modes, such as school bus service or carpooling. To prevent spillover parking in adjacent neighborhoods, ACUSD shall also implement supporting parking management measures, including:

- Prioritizing parking permits for students participating in carpools, to the extent permitted by applicable law;
- Implementing "No Parking" restrictions on Oro Madre Way and Spanish Street; and
- Constructing a fence that would prevent students from parking in the high school neighborhood and conveniently walking to and from campus.

Transit Pass Program: ACUSD shall work with Amador Transit to distribute low-cost or free public passes to high school students and staff to encourage transit use and to reduce reliance on personal vehicles for school travel.

Tiered Bell Schedule: ACUSD shall look to implement tiered school start and dismissal times to maximize the efficiency of the school transportation system. Tiered bell schedule and highly reliable bus networks encourage parents to switch from individual student drop-offs to shared bus transportation or to make use of elementary school bus stops, thereby reducing VMT in the area.

School Resource Officer: ACUSD shall hire a School Resource Officer (SRO) who will be assigned to the consolidated high school and consolidated junior high school campuses to support the implementation of the TDM Plan, campus safety, security, and student monitoring. The presence of an SRO is intended to improve the overall safety and security of the school environment.

- c) *Would the proposed project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?*

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The proposed project does not represent an incompatible traffic/transportation use and is located in close proximity to other operating schools. The proposed project is not proposing to make off-site improvements to the local transportation network that would result in sharp curves, dangerous intersections, or other hazards.

The design of the proposed internal drive aisles, access driveways, and other circulation improvements would be required to adhere to the CDE and DSA guidelines for site design and circulation. Compliance with CDE and DSA established design standards and implementation of signage and pedestrian circulation features to be implemented by all the Cities in Amador County would ensure that hazards due to design features would not occur and that the placement of the circulation improvements would not create a conflict for motorists, pedestrians, or bicyclists traveling within or around the project site.

Vehicle queuing was analyzed as part of the operational analysis prepared and submitted to ACUSD in October 2024 with the old project description, included in Appendix A. The prior study included thoroughly calibrated SimTraffic microscopic simulation, which provided robust, stochastic vehicle queue quantification by modeling driver behavior and lane changing dynamics. The results of the October 2024 analysis in combination with a slightly different project description (the proposed project) were used to estimate how vehicle queuing would be expected with the proposed project.

For the SR 88/Sutter Street/Hoffman Street intersection, the queue lengths are within the available storage, except for the northbound left-turn movement in AM and PM peak hours for both existing and existing plus project conditions. With the changes to the project description, the northbound left-turn project volumes at the intersection changed from 247 and 72 vehicles (old project description) to 210 and 86 vehicles (current project description) in the AM and PM peak hours, respectively. Similarly, for the SR 88/SR 49 intersection, the queue lengths are within available storage in the existing conditions but exceed the available storage for southbound left and right turns in the existing plus project AM peak conditions. The southbound left-turn movement project volumes at this intersection changed from 190 and 55 vehicles (old project description) to 120 and 50 vehicles (current project description) in the AM and PM peak hours, respectively.

These changes in traffic volumes at intersections near school campuses are relatively minor, and the conclusions related to vehicle queuing in the prior study are comparable to the queuing that would be expected with the current project description. The other study intersections in the vicinity of Amador High School and Argonaut High School had queues that are within the available storage in the existing and existing plus project conditions and that would be expected with the proposed project conditions as well.

While the project would redistribute vehicle trips on local roadways and freeway facilities in the project area, the redistribution of vehicles to the roadway network itself does not constitute a safety hazard (i.e., some roadways would experience increases in traffic volumes and queuing

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

and others would experience decreases in traffic volumes). It is expected that drivers are attentive when driving and obey traffic laws. It is both common for drivers to need to exercise awareness and caution when driving where other vehicles and/or bicyclists or pedestrians are present and also incumbent upon drivers to exercise increased awareness and caution in areas with more congested traffic conditions. The addition of vehicles to an existing congested roadway segment or intersection does not, by itself, constitute a transportation safety hazard.

Since the project constitutes changes in student enrollment and operations at school campuses that already exist among the campuses' surrounding land uses, there are no off-site infrastructure improvements. All on-site improvements would be designed and constructed in accordance with the applicable CDE and DSA design standards. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to transportation hazards, and no mitigation would be required.

d) *Would the proposed project result in inadequate emergency access?*

Emergency response requires a balance between emergency response times, evacuation needs, and other community considerations, such as urban design and traffic calming. At the Argonaut High School campus, the proposed project would consist of minor modifications to support middle school programming associated with the consolidation of the District's junior high schools. These modifications would include program and operational adjustments, changes to interior classroom configurations, student support spaces, and circulation, and would not involve exterior construction. At the Lone Junior High School campus, site improvements would include construction of up to four new classrooms, reconfiguration of the existing northern parking lot to increase parking capacity, installation of age-appropriate playground equipment, construction of a kindergarten pick-up and drop-off loop on the east side of the campus. These improvements would enhance on-site circulation while maintaining adequate emergency access. No public roadway improvements are proposed as part of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a **less-than-significant impact** related to emergency access, and no mitigation would be required.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☒	☐	☐

The Tribal Cultural Resources analysis includes analysis for campus because existing tribal cultural conditions and resource constraints are specific to each site. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates each of the six campuses individually, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts to tribal cultural resources across all project sites.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

DISCUSSION

- a) *Would the proposed project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 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)?**

City of Lone

The Lone Junior HS and Lone ES campuses are located in the City of Lone. As discussed in Section 3(a), neither the Lone Junior HS nor the Lone ES campus is listed as a historical resource in the National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures databases maintained by the National Park Service and the California Office of Historic Preservation. No tribal cultural resources (TCRs) are listed for either campus (NPS 2026; OHP 2026). The City of Lone does recognize the Lone ES School Bell and Lone Junior HS (formerly Lone HS) as local historical landmarks (Lone 2026); however, no construction activities are proposed at Lone ES, and the proposed project at Lone Junior HS does not involve improvements to or demolition of any classroom buildings that could be considered historically significant. Furthermore, the proposed project would not impact any TCRs listed on federal, state, or local registers of historic resources. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Jackson

The Jackson Junior HS and Argonaut HS campuses are in the City of Jackson. As discussed in Section 3(a), neither the Jackson Junior HS nor the Argonaut HS campuses are listed as a historical resource in the National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures databases maintained by the National Park Service and the California Office of Historic Preservation. No tribal cultural resources (TCRs) are listed for either campus (NPS 2026; OHP 2026). The Jackson General Plan does not identify any historical resources or TCRs within the campuses. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Sutter Creek

The Amador HS and Independence HS campuses are in the City of Sutter Creek. As discussed in Section 3(a), the Independence HS campus is not listed as a historical resource in the National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or State Historic Structures databases maintained by the National Park Service and the California Office

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

of Historic Preservation. However, the NPS and OHP identified the City of Sutter Creek as a historical landmark. No tribal cultural resources (TCRs) are listed for either campus (NPS 2026; OHP 2026). Additionally, the Sutter Creek General Plan does not identify any historical or TCRs within the campuses. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

- 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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe?**

A Sacred Lands File (SLF) search conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) returned a positive result, indicating the potential presence of Native American cultural resources, including sacred sites, within the vicinity of the project area (Appendix B). The SLF District request to NAHC was for a search for TCRs in the whole county of Amador, which covers the District enrollment boundaries. The proposed project has the potential to disturb subsurface deposits that may be of traditional or tribal cultural significance. Accordingly, Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) tribal consultation was conducted as part of the proposed project.

AB 52 requires meaningful consultation with California Native American tribes on potential impacts to tribal cultural resources, as defined in PRC Section 21074. Tribal cultural resources are sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either eligible or listed in the California Register of Historical Resources or local register of historical resources. As part of the AB 52 process, Native American tribes must submit a written request to the District (lead agency) to be notified of projects within their traditionally and culturally affiliated area. The District must then provide written, formal notification to those tribes, and the tribe must respond to the lead agency within 30 days of receiving this notification if they want to engage in consultation on the project. When these steps are completed, the District must begin the consultation process within 30 days of receiving the tribe's request. Consultation concludes when either 1): the parties agree to mitigation measures to avoid a significant effect on a tribal cultural resource, or 2) a party, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes mutual agreement cannot be reached. Pursuant to AB 52, the Amador County Unified School District invited a total of 11 tribes to consult based on the District's AB 52 list, which includes the Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Calaveras Band of Mi-Wuk Indians, California Valley Miwok Tribe, Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Ione Band of Miwok Indians, Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwok Indians, Nashville Enterprise Miwok-Maidu-Nishinam Tribe, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, Tule River Indian Tribe, United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria, and the Wilton Rancheria. The invitation letters were sent to tribes on April 15,

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

2026, via mail to the available addresses and email to the available email addresses. No tribes requested to consult with the District regarding the proposed project. Tribal consultation pursuant to AB 52 concluded on May 15, 2026, for the proposed project.

In the unlikely event human remains are encountered during ground-disturbing activities the human remains would be treated in accordance with procedures and requirements in Sections 5097.94 and 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code; Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code; and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

Due to the potential of unearthing unknown TCRs at the Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, and Argonaut HS campuses, Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would ensure potential impacts to tribal cultural resources are minimized. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-1 would require all ground disturbing activities to halt in the event cultural resources are encountered and allow a qualified archaeologist to excavate or contact the appropriate Native American tribal contact to excavate such resources, which would reduce potential impacts to archaeological resources to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant with mitigation measures**.

XIX. Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
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 reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Result in a determination by the waste water 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The Utilities and Service Systems analysis considered the jurisdictional context of each campus, including the applicable utilities providers, to assess potential impacts across all sites, including campuses with proposed improvements and those without.

DISCUSSION

- a) ***Would the proposed project 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?***

Water

Water is currently provided to the Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES campuses by AWA. Potable water would be provided to the new building at Lone Junior HS through connections to the existing water mains.

The proposed project would include construction of a new classroom building, relocation of portable classrooms, parking lot and circulation enhancements at Lone Junior HS as well as internal improvements at Argonaut HS and Jackson Jr HS. Although the proposed project would alter operational and programmatic needs at all six campuses, no net changes to student enrollment within the District would occur. The proposed project would result in closure of Lone ES, which would decrease amount of water demanded from the Lone ES campus, however

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

student enrollment would increase at the Amador HS, Argonaut HS, and Lone Junior HS campuses. Therefore, the proposed project is not expected to increase overall water demand within the AWA service area.

The proposed water system improvements would be designed and constructed in accordance with the CBC and CALGreen requirements, such as CALGreen Division 5.3, Water Efficiency and Conservation, including those of Sections 5.303, Indoor Water Use, and 5.304, Outdoor Water Use. As further discussed under Section XIX(b), the AWA has sufficient water capacity to serve the proposed project. The proposed project would not require the construction of new or expanded water facilities that could cause significant effects. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Wastewater

City of Lone

This analysis evaluates whether the proposed project at Lone Junior HS and Lone ES would require expansion of the city of Lone's wastewater treatment facilities. The proposed project at Lone Junior HS would include construction of a new classroom building, reconfiguration of a parking lot, and installation of new playground equipment. The new classroom building would connect to the existing on-site sewer lines. Construction impacts associated with the installation of the sewer lines would primarily involve trenching to place the lines below the surface and would be limited to the project site. The District proposes to convert the current Lone Junior HS campus into the new Lone ES serving preschool through 6th grade, with some students from Lone Junior HS going to the Argonaut HS campus to a districtwide Junior HS serving grades 7 through 9, while the Lone ES campus would close for later disposition. Total enrollment at the new Lone ES campus (current Lone Junior HS campus) would increase from 396 students to approximately 658 students, an increase of 262 students. Due to the existing Lone ES closing, enrollment would decrease from 567 to zero students. Therefore, the city of Lone would see a net decrease of 305 students.

The proposed project would result in a net decrease in students in Lone. The proposed project would generate a net decrease of sewage that would be treated at the Lone secondary wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), which has an average daily flow of 0.35 million gallons per day (mgd) and a capacity of 0.55 mgd, which means that there is a residual capacity of 0.2 mgd (Lone 2009). Due to Lone ES closing and the transfer of students in grades 7 through 9 from Lone Junior HS to the Argonaut HS campus, there would be an overall decrease in sewer services to the Lone secondary WWTP as part of the proposed project. The proposed project would not contribute to an increase in sewage flow. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

City of Sutter Creek

This analysis evaluates whether the proposed project at Amador HS and Independence HS would require expansion of Sutter Creek's wastewater treatment facilities. The proposed project at Amador HS proposes to relocate two existing portable classrooms and other site improvements to support operational and program needs and circulation. The project at Amador HS would not include utility trenching or connecting to the on-site sewer lines. The District proposes to consolidate its two existing high schools, Amador HS and Argonaut HS, and reconfigure Amador HS to serve as the districtwide high school for grades 10 through 12. In addition, the District proposes to move the District Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program from Independence to Jackson Junior High School Campus. The proposed project would result in a net increase of 248 students in Sutter Creek.

As shown in Table 18, *City of Sutter Creek Existing and Projected Wastewater Generation*, Independence HS would generate a decrease of 936 gallons per day (gpd) of waste water, but the proposed project would generate a net increase of approximately 3,528 gpd of wastewater in Sutter Creek due to the consolidation of two high schools at Amador HS. A sewer generation rate of 18 gpd/student⁹ was used, per the "Institutional" wastewater unit flow factor in the City of Sutter Creek and Amador Regional Sanitation Authority's Wastewater Master Plan Update (Sutter Creek 2017).

Table 18 City of Sutter Creek Existing and Projected Wastewater Generation

School Name	Existing Student Enrollment	Proposed Student Enrollment	Sewer generation Rate (gpd/student)	Existing Sewer Generation (gpd)	Proposed Sewer Generation (gpd)
Independence HS	127	75	18	2,286.0	1,350.0
Amador HS	573	821	18	10,314.0	14,778.0
Total	700	896	-	12,600	16,128.0

Notes: gpd = Gallons per day

The proposed project would comply with the Sutter Creek connection fee requirements to provide financing for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the sanitary sewer systems, including capital replacement costs. The payment of such fees would ensure wastewater facilities are well equipped to receive and process the increased amount of wastewater entering

⁹ The wastewater generation rate used in this analysis is highly conservative and relates to peak flow rates used for the design of sewer lines.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Sutter Creek's Wastewater Conveyance System. Therefore, Impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Jackson

This analysis focuses on whether Jackson would need to expand its wastewater facilities to handle the demand generated by the proposed project at Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS. The District proposes to combine Jackson Junior HS and Lone Junior HS at the Argonaut HS campus, and students from Argonaut HS would be transferred to the county high school at Amador HS. The proposed project would require minor modifications to Argonaut HS to support middle school programming associated with the consolidation of the District's junior high schools. In addition, site improvements at the current Jackson Junior HS campus would consist of interior renovations to accommodate adult learning environments to support the District's Adult Education Program and the Adult Transition Program, which would be moved to the current Jackson Junior HS campus. The project at Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS would not include utility trenching or connecting to the on-site sewer lines. The proposed project would result in a net increase of 322 students in Jackson.

As shown in Table 19, *City of Jackson Existing and Projected Wastewater Generation*, though Jackson Junior HS would generate a decrease of 4,014 gpd of wastewater, the proposed project would generate a net increase of approximately 3,528 gpd of wastewater in Jackson due to the consolidation of two junior high schools at Argonaut HS. This would result in a net delta increase of 1,782 gpd in Jackson. A sewer generation rate of 18 gpd/student was used per the "Institutional" wastewater unit flow factor in the City of Sutter Creek and Amador Regional Sanitation Authority's Wastewater Master Plan Update (Sutter Creek 2017).

The proposed development would comply with the City of Jackson connection fee requirements to provide financing for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the sanitary sewer systems, including capital replacement costs. The payment of such fees would ensure wastewater facilities are well equipped to receive and process the increased amount in wastewater entering Jackson's Wastewater Conveyance System. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Table 19 City of Jackson Existing and Projected Wastewater Generation

School Name	Existing Student Enrollment	Proposed Student Enrollment	Sewer generation Rate (gpd/student)	Existing Sewer Generation (gpd)	Proposed Sewer Generation (gpd)
Argonaut HS	535	857	18	9,630.0	15,426.0
Jackson Junior HS	275	52	18	4,950.0	936
Total	810	909	-	14,580.0	16,362.0

Notes: gpd = Gallons per day

Stormwater Drainage

As substantiated in Section X(c), impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Electrical Power

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provides electricity to the campuses by the existing electrical transmission lines. Implementation of the proposed project would not generate an increase in electricity since no net change in student enrollment within the District would occur, and the District's natural gas demand would remain the same. Therefore, PG&E would not need to expand its supply and transmission facilities to handle the demand generated by the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Natural Gas

Implementation of the proposed project would not generate an increase in natural gas since no net change in student enrollment within the District would occur, and the District's natural gas demand would remain the same. Therefore, PG&E would not need to expand its supply and transmission facilities to handle the demand generated by the proposed project. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Telecommunications

The proposed project would not require additional telecommunications facilities demand. The proposed project would not require off-site construction or relocation of utilities, and therefore **no impact** would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

b) *Would the proposed project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?*

The proposed project includes consolidating six schools onto five District campuses. The six campuses are in three different cities (Ione, Sutter Creek, and Jackson), but all are within AWA's service area and utilize AWA's water supply. The AWA Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) determined that there is adequate water supply to service area through 2045 during normal years, single-dry years, and multiple-dry years (AWA 2021).

As discussed in Section XIX(a), the proposed project is not expected to generate an increase in water demand because the proposed project would result in no net changes to student enrollment in the District or AWA service area. The proposed water system improvements would be designed and constructed in accordance with the CBC and CALGreen requirements, such as CALGreen Division 5.3, Water Efficiency and Conservation, including Sections 5.303, Indoor Water Use, and 5.304, Outdoor Water Use. Since Sutter Creek, Jackson, and Ione are served through interconnected regional water infrastructure operated by AWA and the project would not create an increase in water demand, AWA contains adequate water supplies to meet the water demands of the proposed project and the respective cities during normal, dry, and multiple dry years, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

c) *Would the proposed project result in a determination by the waste water 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?*

As discussed in Impact XIX(a), the six existing schools associated with the proposed project are serviced by three sewer systems within three different jurisdictions that convey wastewater to three different wastewater treatment plants.

City of Ione

Wastewater from the Ione Junior HS and Ione ES campuses and Ione would be treated at the Ione secondary WWTP, which has an average daily flow of 0.35 mgd and a capacity of 0.55 mgd, which means that there is a residual capacity of 0.2 mgd (Ione 2009). As discussed in Impact XIX(a), an overall decrease in wastewater and sewer services to Ione secondary WWTP would be due to a net decrease in student enrollment following the closure of Ione ES. The proposed project at the Ione Junior HS campus would not contribute to an increase in sewage flow. Additionally, wastewater from the school uses proposed by the project would not contain substances of any types and amount prohibited by Ione discharge limits. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

City of Sutter Creek

Wastewater from the Amador HS and Independence HS campuses and Sutter Creek would be treated at the Sutter Creek wastewater treatment plant. The Sutter Creek wastewater treatment plant is required by federal and state law to meet applicable standards of treatment plant discharge requirements subject to NPDES No. 94-152. Based on the 2023 annual report, the Sutter Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant contains a design capacity of 0.022 mgd and a yearly average daily flow of 0.458 mgd, which would result in a residual capacity of 0.022 mgd or 22,000 gpd (Sutter Creek 2023). As discussed in Impact XIX(a), an increase of 3,528 gpd in wastewater to the Sutter Creek wastewater treatment plant would result from the proposed project. The Sutter Creek wastewater treatment plant would have a residual capacity of 18,472 gpd with the addition of the proposed project and existing operational wastewater generation. As of September 15, 2025, the Sutter Creek City Council approved a design-build agreement with Schneider Electric for a new wastewater facility to expand infrastructure needs (Sutter Creek 2025). Additionally, the proposed project would comply with Sutter Creek connection fee requirements to provide financing for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the sanitary sewer systems, including capital replacement costs. The payment of such fees would ensure wastewater facilities are well equipped to receive and process the increased amount in wastewater entering Sutter Creek's Wastewater Conveyance System. Furthermore, wastewater from the school uses proposed by the project would not contain substances of any types and amount prohibited by Sutter Creek discharge limits. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

City of Jackson

Wastewater from the Argonaut HS and Jackson Junior HS campuses and Jackson would be treated at Jackson's wastewater treatment plant. Jackson's wastewater treatment plant is required by federal and state law to meet applicable standards of treatment plant discharge requirements subject to NPDES No. 94-152. Based on the California Water Board, the Jackson wastewater treatment plant has a permitted design capacity of 0.71 mgd (CDWR 2023). As discussed in Impact XIX(a), the proposed project would result in an increase of 16,362.0 gpd. The increase in wastewater would account for approximately 2.3 percent of the Jackson wastewater treatment plant's overall capacity. Therefore, due to the negligible increase in wastewater generation compared to the capacity of the treatment plant, no new or expanded water reclamation plant facilities would be needed. Additionally, the proposed project would comply with Jackson connection fee requirements to provide financing for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the sanitary sewer systems, including capital replacement costs. The payment of such fees would ensure wastewater facilities are well equipped to receive and process the increased wastewater entering Jackson's Wastewater Conveyance System. Furthermore, wastewater from the school uses proposed by the project would not contain substances of any types and amount prohibited by Jackson discharge limits. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

d) *Would the proposed project 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?*

The Amador County Integrated Solid Waste Management Regional Agency provides solid waste transportation services to Amador County, including the cities of Lone, Sutter Creek, and Jackson. All solid waste in the three cities is processed through Pine Grove Transfer Station and Warf–Buena Vista Transfer Station and then disposed of in Sacramento Landfill (Kiefer) or Forward Landfill (Amador 2016). The Sacramento Landfill (Kiefer) has a remaining disposal capacity of approximately 102.3 million cubic yards as of 2023 and has an estimated operation date until 2080 (CalRecycle 2026b). The Forward Landfill has a remaining disposal capacity of approximately 24.7 million cubic yards as of 2020 and has an estimated operation date until 2036 (CalRecycle 2026c). Implementation of the proposed project would not generate an increase in solid waste during operation since no net change in student enrollment within the District would occur, and the District’s solid waste demand would remain the same. Solid waste facilities would be able to accommodate project-generated solid waste. The proposed project would not 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. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

e) *Would the proposed project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?*

The proposed project would comply with the following federal, state, and local laws and regulations that govern solid waste disposal.

- The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 and the Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965, which govern solid waste disposal.
- AB 939 (Integrated Solid Waste Management Act of 1989; Public Resources Code 40050 et seq.), which requires diversion of 50 percent of waste from landfills and requires each county to provide landfill capacity for a 15-year period.
- AB 1327 (California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991) requires local agencies to adopt ordinances mandating the use of recyclable materials in development projects.

The District would continue to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste, such as the California Integrated Waste Management Act and local recycling and waste programs. As discussed in Section XIX(d), the proposed project’s solid waste is adequately accommodated within area landfills serving the project site. The District and its construction contractor would continue to comply with all applicable laws and regulations and make every effort to reuse and/or recycle the construction debris that would otherwise be taken to a landfill. CALGreen Section 5.408, Construction Waste Reduction, Disposal, and

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Recycling, requires that at least 65 percent of the nonhazardous construction and demolition waste from nonresidential construction operations be recycled and/or salvaged for reuse. Therefore, with adherence with federal, state, and local laws, impacts would be **less than significant**.

XX. Wildfire

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

According to CAL FIRE, the wildland-urban interface (WUI) is subdivided into the intermix zone (where houses and wildland vegetation mingle), the interface zone (housing adjacent to wildland vegetation, but not mingled with it), and the influence zone (areas of wildfire-susceptible vegetation surrounding the other zones) (CAL FIRE 2019). The interface and intermix zones carry the highest risk for wildfires affecting developed areas. Unlike wildfire in wildland

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

areas, fires in WUI areas are more likely to damage or destroy buildings and infrastructure that support populations, the economy, and key services.

The Wildfire analysis is organized by campus because existing wildfire conditions and resource constraints are specific to each site. Accordingly, the analysis evaluates each of the six campuses individually, including campuses with proposed improvements and campuses without physical changes, to ensure a comprehensive assessment of potential wildfire impacts across all project sites.

DISCUSSION

a) *Would the proposed project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

The proposed project would increase students at the Amador HS, Argonaut HS, and Lone Junior HS campuses; a decrease in student enrollment at the Independence HS, and Jackson Junior HS campuses; and closure of the Lone ES campus. Overall, the proposed project would result in no net changes to student enrollment within the District.

The County's LHMP describes the mitigation strategy process and action plan for the County, which includes communicating hazard information, implementing the action plan recommendations, implementing existing laws and regulations, and monitoring multi-objective management opportunities for funding (Amador County 2025). The LHMP is a multi-jurisdictional plan includes the County and the incorporated communities of Amador City, Lone, Jackson, Plymouth, and Sutter Creek. However, the LHMP does not include any evacuation routes. In addition, the Amador EOP is the primary document that discusses how disasters will be managed by the County but does not identify any evacuation routes (Amador County 2024).

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Lone Junior HS campus would include construction of a new classroom building, reconfiguration of a parking lot, and installation of new playground equipment, to accommodate incoming kindergarten/preschool students. Based on the Lone General Plan the campus is not within a very high fire hazard severity zone (FHSZ) or a WUI area (Lone 2023). However, CAL FIRE designates the campus as partially within Moderate and High FHSZs within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA) (CalFire 2026).

The Lone General Plan states that Lone does not have designated evacuation routes (Lone 2023). However, the proposed project would not conflict with the LHMP or EOP (multi-jurisdictional plans for disaster and evacuations); the surrounding roadways would continue to provide emergency access to the campus and surrounding properties during construction and operational activities. The proposed project would reconfigure the existing parking lot to increase parking capacity and construct a dedicated kindergarten pick-up and drop-off loop,

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

which would reduce congestion on the surrounding roadways in the event of an emergency. As part of the project review process, the campus site design and building plans would be reviewed and approved by the DSA and the Lone Fire Department. This process would ensure that the project site includes adequate emergency access and circulation. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at Amador HS would include relocating two existing portable classrooms and minor site improvements to support operational and program needs and circulation. CAL FIRE designates the campus as partially within Very High and High FHSZs of a LRA (CalFire 2026). Additionally, Amador HS is in a WUI interface zone (CalFire 2019).

The Sutter Creek General Plan does not identify any evacuation routes (Sutter Creek 2019). However, the proposed project at the Amador HS campus would not conflict with the LHMP or EOP (multi-jurisdictional plans for disaster and evacuations); the surrounding roadways would continue to provide emergency access to the campus and surrounding properties during construction and operational activities. Additionally, as part of the project review process, the campus site design and building plans would be reviewed and approved by the DSA and the Sutter Creek Fire Department. This process would ensure that the project site includes adequate emergency access and circulation. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

The proposed project at the Argonaut HS campus would include improvements from a high school to a junior high school campus to accommodate the age-specific needs of students. The proposed project does not include any vehicular circulation improvements. The project site and campus are not within a Very High FHSZ, but in a High FHSZ of a LRA (CalFire 2019).

The Jackson General Plan Safety Element states that if evacuation is necessary “the state highways running to the east and south, 88 and 49, are the only major roads available” (Jackson 1981). However, the proposed project would not conflict with the LHMP, EOP, or Jackson General Plan; the surrounding roadways would continue to provide emergency access to the campus and surrounding properties during construction and operational activities. As part of the project review process, the campus site design would be reviewed and approved by the DSA and the JFD. This process would ensure that the project site includes adequate emergency access and circulation. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Jackson Junior HS Campus Improvements

Jackson Junior HS is in a local responsibility area (LRA), and the Jackson General Plan does not map Very High FHSZs; however, CAL FIRE shows the campus is within an unmapped LRA, Moderate FHSZ, and High FHSZ of a LRA (CalFire 2026). The campus is surrounded by a

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

Moderate FHSZ. Additionally, the western portion of campus is in an interface zone of the WUI (CalFire 2019).

The Jackson General Plan Safety Element states that if evacuation is necessary, “the state highways running to the east and south, 88 and 49, are the only major roads available” (Jackson 1981). However, the proposed project would not conflict with the LHMP, EOP, or Jackson General Plan; the surrounding roadways would continue to provide emergency access to the campus and surrounding properties during construction and operational activities. As part of the project review process, the campus site design would be reviewed and approved by the DSA and the JFD. This process would ensure that the project site includes adequate emergency access and circulation. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Independence HS

The proposed project at the Independence HS campus would not include any site improvements, including no vehicular circulation improvements. CAL FIRE shows the campus is not within a Very High FHSZ; however, the campus is within a High FHSZ of a LRA (CalFire 2026). Independence HS is in interface and intermix zones of the WUI (CalFire 2019).

The Sutter Creek General Plan does not identify any evacuation routes (Sutter Creek 2019). However, the proposed project would not conflict with the LHMP or EOP; the surrounding roadways would continue to provide emergency access to the campus and surrounding properties during construction and operational activities. As part of the project review process, the campus site design and building plans would be reviewed and approved by the DSA and the Sutter Creek Fire Department. This process would ensure that the project site includes adequate emergency access and circulation. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Lone ES Campus

The proposed project includes closure of Lone ES campus. Following the closure of the campus, only District personnel would be allowed on-site for periodic site visits to ensure that safety and security measures remain functional and that the campus is properly maintained. Closure of the Lone ES campus would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and no further analysis is warranted. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

- b) *Would the proposed project, due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?***

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The campus is developed with the existing Lone Junior HS. The project site is generally flat with a gradual west-to-east slope. Lone does not have high-speed prevailing winds, and average wind speeds are approximately six miles per hour during the windiest time of year (Weather Spark

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

2026a). Neither the campus nor surrounding area is in a Very High FHSZ or a WUI (Ione 2023). However, the project site is partially within a CAL FIRE Moderate and High FHSZ (CalFire 2026). Additionally, as part of the project review process, the campus site design and building plans would be reviewed and approved by the DSA and the Ione Fire Department. Development of the site improvements at the Ione Junior HS campus would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope and prevailing winds that would expose project occupants to elevated particulate concentrations. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

The campus is developed with the existing Amador HS campus. The project site has slight grade changes across the campus. Sutter Creek does not have high-speed prevailing winds, and average wind speeds are approximately six miles per hour during the windiest time of year (Weather Spark 2026b). Neither the campus nor surrounding area is in a Very High FHSZ, but is within a High FHSZ (CalFire 2026a). However, Amador HS is in a WUI interface zone; therefore, future development under the proposed project would be required to comply with the requirements in Chapter 49 of the California Fire Code (CFC), including requirements for fire protection plans (CalFire 2019). Additionally, as part of the project review process, the campus site design and building plans would be reviewed and approved by the DSA and the Sutter Creek Fire Department. Development of the site improvements at Amador HS would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope and prevailing winds that would expose project occupants to elevated particulate concentrations. A **less than significant impact** would occur.

Argonaut HS Campus Improvements

The campus is developed with the existing Argonaut HS. The project site has slight grade changes across the campus. Jackson does not have high-speed prevailing winds, and average wind speeds are approximately six miles per hour during the windiest time of year (Weather Spark 2023c). Neither the campus nor surrounding area is in a Very High FHSZ, but is in a High FHSZ (CalFire 2026a). However, Argonaut HS is in an interface zone of the WUI; therefore, future development under the proposed project would be required to comply with the requirements in Chapter 49 of the CFC, including requirements for fire protection plans (CalFire 2019). Adherence to the applicable requirements of the CFC would be ensured through the DSA's review of building permits. Development of the site improvements at Argonaut HS would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope and prevailing winds that would expose project occupants to elevated particulate concentrations. A **less than significant impact** would occur.

Jackson Junior HS Campus Improvements

The campus is developed with the existing Jackson Junior HS. The project site has grade changes across the campus with steeper slopes. Jackson does not have high-speed prevailing winds, and average wind speeds are approximately six miles per hour during the windiest time of year

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

(Weather Spark 2023c). The campus is partially unmapped, Moderate FHSZ, and High FHSZ (CalFire 2026). However, the western portion of campus is in an interface zone of the WUI; therefore, future development under the proposed project would be required to comply with the requirements in CBC Chapter 49, including requirements for fire protection plans (CalFire 2019). Adherence to the applicable requirements of the CFC would be ensured through the DSA's review of building permits. Development of the site improvements at Amador HS would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope and prevailing winds that would expose project occupants to elevated particulate concentrations. A **less than significant impact** would occur.

Independence HS

The campus is developed with the existing Independence HS. The project site is primarily flat with a gentle north-to-south slope. Sutter Creek does not have high-speed prevailing winds, and average wind speeds are approximately six miles per hour during the windiest time of year (Weather Spark 2026b). Neither the campus nor surrounding area is in a Very High FHSZ but is within a High FHSZ (CalFire 2026a). Independence HS is in interface and intermix zones of the WUI; therefore, existing development had previously complied with the requirements in Chapter 49 of the CFC, including requirements for fire protection plans (CalFire 2019). No development at Independence HS would occur. The proposed project at Independence HS would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope and prevailing winds that would expose project occupants to elevated particulate concentrations. A **less than significant impact** would occur.

Lone ES Campus

The proposed project includes closure of Lone ES campus. Following the closure of the campus, only District personnel would be allowed on-site for periodic site visits to ensure that safety and security measures remain functional and that the campus is properly maintained. Closure of the Lone ES campus would not expose any additional occupants to fire related risk, and no further analysis is warranted. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

- c) ***Would the proposed project 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?***

None of the campuses are within a Very High FHSZ (CalFire 2026a). The proposed project at all campuses would be served by the existing utilities, including water sources and power lines, that currently serve the campus. The proposed project would not require roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources. Therefore, the proposed project would not require installation of new infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

- d) *Would the proposed project 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?*

Lone Junior HS Campus Improvements

The campus is developed with the existing Lone Junior HS campus and is not in a Very High FHSZ (Lone 2023). However, the project site is partially within CAL FIRE Moderate and High FHSZs (CalFire 2026a). The project site has is generally flat with a gradual west-to-east slope. As discussed in Section VII(a), the Lone Junior HS campus is not in a landside zone (DOC 2026d). However, as discussed in Section X(c), Lone Junior HS is in the 100-year flood zone AE with an established BFE and Flood Zone X (0.2 percent Annual Chance Flood Hazard) (FEMA 2026). Construction activities related to the proposed project would be subject to compliance with the CBC and CFC and would include best management practices, which may include but are not limited to covering the soil; use of dust-inhibiting material; landscaping; and grading in a pattern that slows stormwater flow and reduces the potential for erosion, landslides, and downstream flooding. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

Amador HS Campus Improvements

The campus is developed with the existing Amador HS campus and is partially within Very High and High FHSZs (CalFire 2026a). The project site has slight grade changes across the campus. As discussed in Section VII(a), the Amador HS campus is not in a landside zone (DOC 2026d). As discussed in Impact X(c), the project site is not in a FEMA 100-year flood zone (FEMA 2026). Construction activities related to the proposed project would be subject to compliance with the CBC and CFC and would include best management practices that may include but are not limited to covering the soil; use of dust-inhibiting material; landscaping; and grading in a pattern that slows stormwater flow and reduces the potential for erosion, landslides, and downstream flooding. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

Argonaut HS Improvements

The campus is developed with the existing Argonaut HS campus and is not in a Very High FHSZ but is in a High FHSZ (CalFire 2026a). The project site has slight grade changes across the campus. As discussed in Section VII(a), the Argonaut HS campus is not in a landside zone (DOC 2026d). As discussed in Impact X(c), the project site is not in a FEMA 100-year flood zone (FEMA 2026). Construction activities related to the proposed project would be subject to compliance with the CBC and CFC and would include best management practices that may include but are

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

not limited to covering the soil; use of dust-inhibiting material; landscaping; and grading in a pattern that slows stormwater flow and reduces the potential for erosion, landslides, and downstream flooding. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

Jackson Junior HS Improvements

The campus is developed with the existing Jackson Junior HS campus and is not in a Very High FHSZ (CalFire 2026a). The campus is partially unmapped and in Moderate and High FHSZs. The project site has grade changes across the campus with steep slopes. As discussed in Section VII(a), the Jackson Junior HS campus is not in a landside zone (DOC 2026d). As discussed in Impact X(c), the project site is not in a FEMA 100-year flood zone (FEMA 2026). Construction activities related to the proposed project would be subject to compliance with the CBC and CFC and would include best management practices. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

Independence HS

The campus is developed with the existing Independence HS campus and is not in a Very High FHSZ (CalFire 2026a). However, the campus is in a High FHSZ. The project site is primarily flat with a gentle north-to-south slope. The project site has grade changes across the campus with steep slopes. As discussed in Section VII(a), the Independence HS campus is not in a landside zone (DOC 2026d). As discussed in Impact X(c), the project site is not in a FEMA 100-year flood zone (FEMA 2026). Therefore, the proposed project would not 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. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

Lone ES Campus

The proposed project includes closure of Lone ES campus. Following the closure of the campus, only District personnel would be allowed on-site for periodic site visits to ensure that safety and security measures remain functional and that the campus is properly maintained. Closure of the lone ES campus would not expose any occupants to fire-related risk, and no further analysis is warranted. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

XXI. Mandatory Findings of Significance

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially 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, substantially 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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.)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

DISCUSSION

- a) ***Does the proposed project have the potential to substantially 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, substantially 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?***

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

As discussed in Sections IV, *Biological Resources*; V, *Cultural Resources*; VII, *Geology and Soils*; and XVIII, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, with the incorporation of mitigation measures the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts to biological resources (including special species and nesting birds), paleontological resources, and cultural and tribal cultural resources. As discussed in Section IV, *Biological Resources*, although the campuses are developed and contain limited vegetation for migratory species, nesting birds have the potential to be on the project site, and construction activities may impact the species if they are on-site. Impacts to nesting birds would be less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1. In addition, impacts to roosting bats would be reduced to less than significant with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-2.

As discussed under Sections V, VII, and XVIII, the project sites at Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, and Argonaut HS have been previously disturbed by the existing campus and are within an urbanized areas of the cities of Lone, Sutter Creek, and Jackson. Although the project site received a positive SLF result, since the project site at all campuses have been previously disturbed, it is unlikely that buried TCRs, archaeological, and paleontological resources would be encountered. In addition, the SLF District request to the NAHC included a search for TCRs within the entire County of Amador, which covers the entire District enrollment boundaries. As such, TCRs are unlikely to be located at an individual campus. Nevertheless, Mitigation Measures CUL-1, and GEO-1 include processes to follow in the unlikely event that TCR, archaeological, or paleontological resources are encountered at the Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, and Argonaut HS campuses which would include physical exterior improvements. With incorporation of Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and CUL-1, impacts to TCR, paleontological, and archaeological resources would be less than significant at the Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, and Argonaut HS campuses.

With identified mitigation measures, the proposed project would not have the potential to substantially 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, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal nor eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. A **less than significant** impact would occur with the incorporation of mitigation measures.

b) *Does the proposed 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.)*

The potential for cumulative impacts occurs when the independent impacts of a given project are combined with the impacts of related projects in proximity to the project site that would create impacts that are greater than those of the project alone. The proposed project is part of

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

the District's consolidation plan to maintain District financial stability as District enrollment fluctuates. As a top priority, the District proposes to consolidate six campuses into five while maintaining existing educational programs.

The project includes the proposed actions and improvements at the Lone Junior HS, Amador HS, Argonaut HS, Jackson Junior HS, Independence HS, and Lone ES campuses which would occur in one or multiple phases and may overlap. However, construction at the Lone Junior HS and Amador HS campuses would be executed individually and on different construction schedules. All construction equipment and activities would be within the boundaries of the campus and will not extend to other campuses. The proposed project does not include subterranean levels and does not include extensive earthwork. Given the distances between the campuses and the staggered construction timeline, construction activities at one campus would not combine with those at another to produce effects beyond those already analyzed for each component.

As discussed previously in this IS/MND, the proposed project would have no impact, a less than significant impact, or a less than significant impact with mitigation measures to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, GHG emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. Therefore, the proposed project will not combine with the other projects to create a cumulative impact during operation; and all impacts are individually limited and would not result in any cumulatively significant impact. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation measures are required.

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

The proposed project would comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws governing general welfare and environmental protection. The implementation of required mitigation measures specified in this IS/MND would reduce impacts to less than significant. The proposed project would not directly or indirectly result in environmental effects that could cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. A **less than significant** impact would occur.

4. REFERENCES

- Amador, County of. 2016, July. Amador County General Plan Environmental Impact Report. <https://www.amadorcounty.gov/departments/planning/general-plan-update-draft-environmental-impact-report-and-draft-general-plan>.
- Amador County. 2024. Amador County Emergency Operations Plan. <https://www.amadorcounty.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/56243/638977507749370000>.
- Amador County. 2025, October. Amador County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. <https://www.amadorcounty.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/57304/639089149584200000>.
- Amador County. 2026, April 30 (accessed). Amador County General Purpose Viewer. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/aa71b74eb34347d9b54a60dcb568f2ba/>.
- Amador County. 2026, July 8 (accessed). Amador Air District Rulebook. <https://www.amadorgov.org/home/showpublisheddocument/41448/637782875137670000>.
- ACTC (Amador County Transportation Commission). 2024. 2024 Amador County Regional Transportation Plan. https://actc-amador.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024_Final-Adopted-RTP.pdf.
- ACUSD (Amador County Unified School District). 2022, February. Facilities Utilization Master Plan. <https://www.amadorcoe.org/facilitiesandprojects>.
- ACUSD. 2024a. Amador High School Comprehensive School Safety Plan. https://files.smartsites.parentsquare.com/4612/2024-25_amador_high_safety_plan.pdf.
- ACUSD. 2024b. Argonaut High School Comprehensive School Safety Plan. https://files.smartsites.parentsquare.com/4612/2024-25_argonaut_school_safety_plan.pdf.
- ACUSD. 2024c. Lone Junior High School Comprehensive School Safety Plan. https://files.smartsites.parentsquare.com/4612/2024-25_ione_jr_safety_plan.pdf.
- AWA (Amador Water Agency). 2021, June. 2020 Urban Water Management Plan. <https://amadorwater.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2020-Urban-Water-Management-Plan.pdf>.

4. REFERENCES

- California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2026, July 7 (accessed). Area Designations Maps/State and National. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/maps-state-and-federal-area-designations>.
- CalEPA (California Environmental Protection Agency). 2026, April 19 (accessed). CalEPA. <https://siteportal.calepa.ca.gov/nsite/map/help>.
- CalEPA. 2026, April 19 (accessed). Cortese List Data Resources. <https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/>.
- CalFire (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection). 2019. Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). <https://34c031f8-c9fd-4018-8c5a-4159cdf6b0d-cdn-endpoint.azureedge.net/-/media/calfire-website/what-we-do/fire-resource-assessment-program---frap/pdf-maps/wildland-urban-interface-2019.pdf?rev=e44c740c777940c6bda816c42c886c87&hash=52A9A0873B1CBF3E468DC52D4E5CB5B5>.
- CalFire. 2026, April 21 (accessed). Find Your Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ). Online viewer. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/5065c998b4b0462f9ec3c6c226c610a9>.
- CalRecycle (California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery). 2026a, April 19 (accessed). SWIS Facility/Site Search. <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search>.
- CalRecycle. 2026b, April 21 (accessed). SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details: Sacramento County Landfill (Kiefer) (34-AA-0001). <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/2070?siteID=2507>.
- CalRecycle. 2026c, April 21 (accessed). SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details: Forward Landfill, Inc. (39-AA-0015). <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/1434?siteID=3106>.
- Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2020, January. Caltrans Geotechnical Manual. <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/engineering/documents/geotechnical-services/202001-gm-lateralspreadingexample-a11y.pdf>.
- Caltrans. 2024, February. Collapsible Soil. https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/engineering/documents/geotechnical-services/202402-gm-collapsible-soil-a11y.pdf?utm_source.
- Caltrans. 2026, March 20 (accessed). Statewide Scenic Highway. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/47e2009986264718a5a13a2c81382774>.

4. REFERENCES

- Carrier. 2026, June 11 (accessed). Product Data. <https://assets-f02205d260.cdn.insitecloud.net/348cf726d4353c1/26TPA8-01PD.pdf>.
- CDFW (California Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2026a, April 13 (accessed). Conservation Plan Boundaries: HCP and NCCP. <https://data-cdfw.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/CDFW::conservation-plan-boundaries-hcp-and-nccp-ds760/explore?location=38.118483%2C-120.827881%2C8>.
- CDFW. 2026b, April 13 (accessed). BIOS6. <https://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/bios6/?bookmark=648>.
- CDFW. 2026c, April 13 (accessed). State and Federally Listed Endangered and Threatened Animals of California. <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=109405>.
- CDFW. 2026d, April 13 (accessed). Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List. <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=109383&inline>.
- CDWR (California Department of Water Resources). 2026a, April 16 (accessed). California Dam Breach Inundation Map Web Publisher. https://fmds.water.ca.gov/webgis/?appid=dam_prototype_v2.
- CDWR. 2026b, April 16 (accessed). SGMA Basin Prioritization Dashboard. <https://gis.water.ca.gov/app/bp-dashboard/final/>.
- CDWR. 2026c, April 16 (accessed). Amador County Groundwater Management Authority GSA. <https://sgma.water.ca.gov/portal/gsa/print/193>.
- CDWR. 2026d, April 21 (accessed). Notice of Applicability (NOA): Municipal Wastewater Dischargers That Meet Objectives/Criteria at the Point of Discharge to Surface Water Order R5-2023-0025 (Municipal General Order): National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) CAG585001: City of Jackson, City of Jackson Wastewater Treatment Plant, Amador County. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb5/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2017-0085_noas/r5-2023-0025-002_noa.pdf.
- CDWR. 2023, November 27. NOTICE OF APPLICABILITY (NOA); MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER DISCHARGERS THAT MEET OBJECTIVES/CRITERIA AT THE POINT OF DISCHARGE TO SURFACE WATER ORDER R5-2023-0025 (MUNICIPAL GENERAL ORDER), NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES) CAG585001; CITY OF JACKSON, CITY OF JACKSON WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT, AMADOR COUNTY. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb5/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2017-0085_noas/r5-2023-0025-002_noa.pdf.

4. REFERENCES

- Census Reporter. 2024. Sutter Creek, CA. <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US0677392-sutter-creek-ca/>.
- DOC (California Department of Conservation). 1983. Mineral Land Classification Map Sutter Creek 15-Minute Quadrangle. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/minerals/>.
- DOC. 2026a, April 14 (accessed). California Important Farmland Finder. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciff/>.
- DOC. 2026b, April 14 (accessed). California Williamson Act Enrollment Finder. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/WilliamsonAct/>.
- DOC. 2026c, April 6 (accessed). Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones. <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/alquist-priolo>.
- DOC. 2026d, April 6 (accessed). Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/eqzapp/>.
- DOC. 2026e, April 19 (accessed). Geologic Map of California. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/gmc/>.
- DOC. 2026f, April 19 (accessed). Well Finder. <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/findwells/>.
- DOC. 2026g, April 19 (accessed). Tsunami Hazard Area Map. https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/ts_evacuation/.
- DTSC (Department of Toxic Substances Control). 2026a, April 19 (accessed). EnviroStor. <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>.
- DTSC. 2026b, April 19 (accessed). Cortese List. <https://dtsc.ca.gov/dtscs-cortese-list/>.
- DTSC. 2026c, April 19 (accessed). Chapter 3: Site Mitigation Process. <https://dtsc.ca.gov/get-involved/policies-procedures-public-participation-program/pp-manual-ch3/>.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). 2026, August 16 (accessed). FEMA's Natural Flood Hazard Layer Viewer. <https://hazards-fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b0adb51996444d4879338b5529aa9cd&extent=-120.93834453305949,38.345963507960235,-120.93109183988322,38.35017058575859>.
- FHWA (Federal Highway Administration). 1978, December. Federal Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model. U.S. Department of Transportation (DoT) Report No. FHWA-RD77-108.

4. REFERENCES

- FHWA. 2006. Roadway Construction Noise Model.
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Environment/noise/construction_noise/rcnm/rcnm00.cfm.
- FTA (Federal Transit Administration). 2018, September. Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual. United States Department of Transportation.
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.
- HydroScience. 2017, December. City of Sutter Creek and Amador Regional Sanitation Authority Wastewater Master Plan Update.
- Ione, City of. 2009, June. City of Ione General Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR). <https://www.ione-ca.com/media/1201>.
- Ione. 2023, May. Ione General Plan. <https://www.ione.ca.gov/media/4796>.
- Ione. 2026, April 29 (accessed). Historical Landmarks. <https://www.ione.ca.gov/about-ione/page/historic-landmarks>
- Jackson, City of. 1981. Jackson General Plan Safety Element. https://cms8.revize.com/revize/jacksonca/Document%20Center/Government/Planning%20Commission/General%20Plan%20Elements/1981_Safety_Element.pdf?t=202007231943390&t=202007231943390.
- Jackson. 2008, November. "Circulation Element." In City of Jackson General Plan.
https://cms8.revize.com/revize/jacksonca/November_2008_Adopted_Circulation_Element.pdf.
- Jackson. 2023, October 23. City of Jackson General Plan. https://cms8.revize.com/revize/jacksonca/Jackson%20General%20Plan_Adopted%2010-23-23.pdf.
- Jackson. 2026, April 28 (accessed). Parks and Recreation. https://www.ci.jackson.ca.us/public_works_wastewater_department/parks_recreation.php.
- NAHC (Native American Heritage Commission). 2026, April 29 (accessed). Environmental and Cultural Department. <https://nahc.ca.gov/environmental-and-cultural-department/>.
- National Parks Service (NPS). 2026, April 14 (accessed). National Register Database and Research. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm#table>.

4. REFERENCES

- Office of Historic Preservation, California (OHP). 2026, September 15 (accessed). California Historical Resources.
<https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=3>.
- SMAQMD (Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District). 2009. Guide to Air Quality Assessments in Sacramento County (CEQA Guide),
<https://www.airquality.org/businesses/ceqa-land-use-planning/ceqa-guidance-tools>.
- SMAQMD. 2018, April. CEQA Guide Chapter 4 Appendix: Operational Screening Table.
<https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/Ch4+Ch6OperationalScreening4-2018.pdf>.
- SMAQMD. 2019, July. CEQA Guide Chapter 3 Appendix: Best Construction Emission Control Practices (Best Management Practices).
<https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/Ch3BasicEmissionControlPracticesBMPSFinal7-2019.pdf>.
- SMAQMD. 2020a. April. CEQA Guide Chapter 3: Construction-Generated Criteria Air Pollutant and Precursor Emissions.
<https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/Ch3Construction4-30-2020.pdf>.
- SMAQMD. 2020b. October. CEQA Guide Chapter 4: Operational Criteria Air Pollutant and Precursor Emissions.
<https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/Ch4OperationalFinal10-2020.pdf>.
- SMAQMD. 2020c. October. CEQA Guide Chapter 4 Appendix: Operational Best Management Practices for Particulate Matter Emissions from Land Use Development Projects.
<https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/ch4OperationalBMPS-PMFinal10-2020.pdf>.
- SMAQMD. 2020d. October. CEQA Guide: Guidance to Address the Friant Ranch Ruling for CEQA Projects in the Sac Metro Air District.
<https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/SMAQMDFriantRanchFinalOct2020.pdf>.
- SMAQMD. 2020e. CEQA Guide Chapter 5: Toxic Air Contaminants.
<https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/Ch5TAC4-2020.pdf>.
- SMAQMD. 2021, February. CEQA Guide Chapter 6: Greenhouse Gases Emissions.
<https://www.airquality.org/LandUseTransportation/Documents/Ch6GHG2-26-2021.pdf>.

4. REFERENCES

- Sutter Creek, City of. 2019, July 15. General Plan. Volume I: Policy Document.
<https://www.cityofsuttercreek.org/media/9986>.
- Sutter Creek. 2023. WWTP Annual Report Overview.
<https://www.cityofsuttercreek.org/media/8601>.
- Sutter Creek. 2025, September 15. City Council Minutes. <https://mccmeetingspublic.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/suttrcrkca-meet-dd2cb95133bf4270949b0a950d595f97/ITEM-Attachment-001-f2e1d2de9f764589b79929b7c851cabb.pdf#:~:text=City%20Manager%20Tom%20DuBois%20presented%20a%20design%2Dbuild,a%2030%2D40%20year%20investment%20for%20the%20city>.
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2026, April 19 (accessed). GeoTracker.
<http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>.
- UCMP (University of California Museum of Paleontology). 2026, April 21. UCMP Locality Search.
<https://ucmpdb.berkeley.edu/loc.html>.
- USACE (United States Army Corps of Engineers). 2026, April 16 (accessed). National Inventory of Dams. <https://nid.sec.usace.army.mil/nid/#/>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2024, July 1. QuickFacts: Population Estimates. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/ionecitycalifornia,jacksoncitycalifornia,US/PST045224>.
- USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). 2025, April 21 (accessed). Web Soil Survey.
<https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>.
- USEPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency). 2023, June 9 (updated). EPA – Approved Amador County Air District Regulations in the California SIP.
<https://www.epa.gov/air-quality-implementation-plans/epa-approved-amador-county-air-district-regulations-california-sip>.
- USFWS (US Fish and Wildlife Service). 2026a, April 13 (accessed). Critical Habitat for Threatened & Endangered Species [USFWS]. https://fws.maps.arcgis.com/home/pages/Account/accept_conditions.html#client_id=arcgisonline&redirect_uri=https://fws.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=9d8de5e265ad4fe09893cf75b8dbfb77.
- USFWS. 2026b, April 13 (accessed). National Wetlands Inventory Surface Waters and Wetlands.
<https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/wetlands/apps/wetlands-mapper/>.
- USGS (United States Geologic Survey). 2026, April 21 (accessed). Areas of Land Subsidence in California. https://ca.water.usgs.gov/land_subsidence/california-subsidence-areas.html.

4. REFERENCES

Weather Spark. 2026a, April 21 (accessed). Climate and Average Weather Year Round in Lone.
<https://weatherspark.com/y/1349/Average-Weather-in-lone-California-United-States-Year-Round>.

Weather Spark. 2026b, April 21 (accessed). Climate and Average Weather Year Round in Sutter Creek.
<https://weatherspark.com/y/1361/Average-Weather-in-Sutter-Creek-California-United-States-Year-Round>.

Weather Spark. 2026c, April 21 (accessed). Climate and Average Weather Year Round in Jackson.
<https://weatherspark.com/y/1350/Average-Weather-in-Jackson-California-United-States-Year-Round>.

5. LIST OF PREPARERS

LEAD AGENCY

Jared Critchfield, Superintendent

PLACEWORKS

Mariana Zimmermann, Associate Principal

Jared Bradford, Associate

Angel Castro, Project Planner

Joseph Ruiz, Planner

Chris Shields, Senior Associate, Noise and Vibration

Nikki Heredia, Associate, Noise and Vibration

Lance Park, Senior Associate, Air Quality/GHG

Lexie Zimny, Associate, Air Quality/GHG

Cary Nakama, Graphic Designer

5. LIST OF PREPARERS

This page intentionally left blank.