

# Los Angeles Unified School District

## Office of Environmental Health and Safety

AUSTIN BEUTNER  
*Interim Superintendent of Schools*

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*Director, Environmental Health and Safety*

### NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



**ORIGINAL FILED**  
DEC 21 2018  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY CLERK



**To:** County Clerk and Registrar-Recorder  
County of Los Angeles  
12400 Imperial Highway  
Norwalk, CA 90650

**From:** LAUSD OEHS  
333 South Beaudry Avenue  
21<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

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#### **Project Title:**

Wilson Senior High School Portable Building Removal and Replacement and Visual and Performing Arts Facilities Improvement

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#### **Project Location – Specific:**

The Wilson Senior High School Portable Building Removal and Replacement and Visual and Performing Arts Facilities Improvement Project (Project) will be located on the 38.6-acre Wilson Senior High School (HS) campus (Campus). Wilson HS is located at 4500 Multnomah Street, Los Angeles, CA 90032 and is bound by Multnomah Street to the northwest, Wilson Way to the north and east, and a residential community to the south. The surrounding neighborhood primarily consists of multi-family and single-family residences. The major streets near the Campus are North Eastern Avenue approximately 950 feet to the east, Soto Street approximately 1,800 feet to the west, and Valley Boulevard approximately 1,800 feet to the south.

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#### **Project Location – City:**

Los Angeles

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#### **Project Location – County:**

Los Angeles

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#### **Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:**

The Project includes the construction of a new 14,000 square-foot visual and performing arts facility, removal of four portable buildings with seven classrooms; construction/placement of a new portable building with two classrooms, of which approximately 1,900 square feet will be reconfigured to provide offices, exam rooms, and support spaces for the school's student health & human services (SHHS) program; infrastructure upgrades as required to support the new facilities; restoration of landscape, hardscape, and playground areas where portables have been removed; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance components to provide access to the new facilities.

The Project will be implemented per all applicable local and State regulations, as well as all District Standards and Specifications; such as those provided in LAUSD's Program Environmental Impact Report for the School Upgrade

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*Our Mission: To ensure a safe and healthy environment for students to learn, teachers to teach, and employees to work.  
Our Vision: To eliminate all environmental, health, and safety risks at schools.*



Program (Program EIR).<sup>1</sup> The Project will be constructed per Division of the State Architect (DSA) approved plans. The primary purpose of the Project is to replace portable buildings with permanent buildings and provide a visual and performing arts facility. The Project would not cause an increase in student capacity or enrollment and would not result in an increase in the intensity of use. The beneficiaries of the Project include students and staff at Wilson HS and the community at large who may request access to the school facilities and grounds pursuant to the Civic Center Act (CA Ed. Code Sections 38130 - 38139).

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**Name of Public Agency Approving the Project:**

Los Angeles Unified School District

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**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:**

Los Angeles Unified School District

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**Exempt Status: (check one below)**

- Ministerial [Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080(b)(1); CEQA Guidelines Section 15268<sup>2</sup>]:
- Declared Emergency [PRC Section 21080(b)(3); CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(a)]:
- Emergency Project [PRC Section 21080(b)(4); CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(b)(c)]:
- Categorical Exemption (PRC Section 21084; CEQA Guidelines Sections 15300 -15333):
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities*
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction*
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures*
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15311 – Accessory Structures*
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15314 – Minor Additions to Schools*
- Statutory Exemption:

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

Section 15301 – Existing Facilities

Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

The Project includes infrastructure upgrades, restoration of landscape, hardscape, and playground areas where portables have been removed, and ADA compliance components to provide access to the new facilities. These improvements constitute minor alterations of the existing facilities at Wilson HS. The Project will be installed completely within the boundaries of the existing Campus and will not require or result in the expansion of use beyond the existing Campus. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption.

Section 15302 Replacement or Reconstruction

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<sup>1</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Environmental Impact Report," <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>, Adopted by the Board of Education on November 10, 2015

<sup>2</sup> CEQA Guidelines can be found at California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 - Section 15387.



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

- Replacement or reconstruction of existing schools and hospitals to provide earthquake resistant structures which do not increase capacity more than 50 percent.
- Replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity.

The Project will replace classrooms in portable buildings with a lesser number of classrooms in a portable, earthquake resistant building at Wilson HS. The Project also includes ADA compliance components and infrastructure upgrades. These components of the Project qualify as the replacement or reconstruction of existing school structures and facilities. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements for a Class 2 Categorical Exemption.

#### Section 15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures. Examples of this exemption include, but are not limited to a store, motel, office, restaurant or similar structure not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and not exceeding 2,500 square feet in floor area.

The Project includes construction/placement of one relocatable building with two classrooms that will be reconfigured to provide offices, exam rooms, and support spaces for the school's SHHS program. The new portable building is approximately 1,900 square feet. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements for a Class 3 Categorical Exemption.

#### Section 15311 Accessory Structures

Class 11 consists of construction or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including, but not limited to, on premise signs and small parking lots.

The Project includes ADA compliance components to provide access to the new portable building. These components of the Project qualify as the construction or placement of minor structures accessory to existing school facilities. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements for a Class 11 Categorical Exemption.

#### Section 15314 Minor Additions to Schools

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

The Project includes the construction of a new 14,000 square-foot visual and performing arts facility and placement of a portable building with two new classrooms that is approximately 1,900 square feet. The two new classrooms will replace seven classrooms in portable buildings that will be removed as part of the Project. The visual and performing arts facility is expected to provide three specialized classroom spaces. Therefore, with the removal of seven classrooms in portable buildings and the addition of two new classrooms in a new portable building and three specialized classrooms in the new visual and performing arts facility, the Project would result in the total removal of two classrooms on the Campus.



As the Project would not increase the student capacity of the school, the construction of the visual and performing arts facility and the placement of the new portable building would qualify as minor additions to a school and, therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements for a Class 14 Categorical Exemption.

#### Section 15300.2 – Exceptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines, Exceptions, provides conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable. Review of the Project indicates that it will not violate any of the exceptions, as described in the following section.

1. *The project will occur in certain specified sensitive environments or locations;*

The Project would be located on the existing Campus. The Campus is fully developed and situated within an urban community.<sup>3</sup> The Project site has not been designated as a biologically sensitive location. The nearest sensitive environment to the Project site is the Puente Hills Significant Ecological Area (SEA), located approximately 5.4 miles southeast of the Campus.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the Project will not impact sensitive environments or locations.

2. *Cumulative impacts will be considerable because successive projects of the same type will occur at the same place over time;*

LAUSD is planning to implement portable replacement projects at other LAUSD campuses and may also pursue visual and performing arts facilities at other LAUSD campuses. So, while there will be successive projects of the same type, they will not occur at Wilson HS. Therefore, there will be no cumulative impacts because of successive projects of the same type occurring at the same place over time.

3. *There is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances;*

There are no known unusual circumstances associated with the Project that will have a significant effect on the environment. If the Project scope changes to include the removal of trees, LAUSD's Office of Environmental Health & Safety (OEHS) must be notified immediately. District policy requires consultation with an arborist to determine if the trees are a protected native species. Additionally, written approval from the school principal will be required before any trees can be removed. If tree removal is scheduled to occur between February 1 and August 31, a nesting bird survey would be performed prior to removal activities, per standard condition (SC) of approval SC-BIO-3 of the Program EIR.<sup>5</sup>

The Project will require ground disturbance associated with grading, infrastructure upgrades, landscaping, and hardscaping. These activities are not considered unusual circumstances for the classes of projects under which an exemption is claimed. Nevertheless, consideration must be given to the management of pavement removal and excavated soils associated with earthwork activities for the Project. As the Project involves the removal of pavement, soil sampling and testing for characterization is required prior to demolition and removal of the paving materials. Excavated soils will only be reused onsite if they are placed beneath paved areas. If construction or earthmoving activities require import or export of soils and materials, OEHS must be notified to provide oversight to ensure that these activities are conducted in compliance with the requirements of District Specification 01 4524,

<sup>3</sup> City of Los Angeles Planning Department, *Zoning and Information Management System*, <http://zimas.lacity.org>, accessed November 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, [http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3\\_Public/Viewer.html](http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html), accessed November 2018.

<sup>5</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Environmental Impact Report," <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>, Adopted by the Board of Education on November 10, 2015.

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relevant provisions of South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 1466, and other applicable environmental agency rules and requirements.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, as set forth in standard conditions of approval SC-CUL-13, SC-CUL-15, SC-CUL-18, and SC-CUL-19 of the Program EIR, construction activities must be stopped immediately and OEHS notified upon discovery of subsurface features, such as buried resources (i.e., paleontological resources, archaeological resources), tanks or seepage pits or stained/odoriferous soils.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1 of the Program EIR.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the Project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

4. *The project may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway;*

Wilson HS is located approximately 10.8 miles south of State Route 2 (SR 2), the nearest officially designated State Scenic Highway.<sup>9</sup> The Campus is not visible from and does not provide views to SR2. Therefore, the Project will not result in damage to scenic resources or similar resources within a highway that is officially designated as a State Scenic Highway.

5. *The project is located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code; or*

The Project will occur on an existing school campus which is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the Project will not have an impact related to being located on a hazardous waste site.

6. *The project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource.*

The main building on the Wilson HS Campus was constructed in 1970 and therefore meets the 45-year age criterion for consideration as a historic resource. Wilson HS is ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources as determined in the 2014 Historic Schools Survey<sup>11</sup> and the 2018 Historical Resources Evaluation Report.<sup>12</sup> The Campus and their buildings do not meet the standards described in the Los Angeles Unified School District Historic Context Statement, 1870-1969 for eligibility under any applicable criteria related to LAUSD, nor do they represent an outstanding or distinctive example of architectural design or the work of a master architect.<sup>13</sup> Research conducted to date did not reveal that the Campus was the site of a significant event or pattern of development or that the Campus was associated with a person of significance in the community, state, or nation.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the Project does not have the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in a historic resource.

<sup>6</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", [http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file\\_id=219798234&show\\_all\\_versions\\_p=t](http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t)

<sup>7</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Environmental Impact Report," <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>. Adopted by the Board of Education on November 10, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/); accessed November 2018.

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese\\_List.cfm](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm), accessed November 2018.

<sup>11</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "Historic Resources Survey Report," June 2014.

<sup>12</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "Historic Resources Evaluation Report," November 2018.

<sup>13</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "Historic Context Statement, 1870 to 1969," <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>, March 2014.

<sup>14</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "Historic Resources Survey Report," June 2014.

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Prepared By:

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Signed by:



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Carlos A. Torres  
CEQA Officer of the Los Angeles Unified School District

Date:

12/13/18