



SIERRA SANDS Unified School District

113 W. Felspar, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 | Phone: 760-499-1600 | ssusd.org

Dave Ostash, Ed.D., Superintendent

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Notice is hereby given that the Sierra Sands Unified School District (SSUSD or District), as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration and supporting Initial Study (MND-IS) for the proposed Richmond Elementary School Replacement Project, pursuant to the CEQA (Public Resources Code [PRC], Division 13, Section 21000 et seq. [CEQA Statute] and the California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq. [CEQA Guidelines]). Based on the IS, SSUSD determined that with mitigation the proposed project would have no significant adverse impacts on the environment and a MND is appropriate. The District is providing public notice in compliance with California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15072 and 15073, as amended.

BACKGROUND: Richmond Elementary School at 1206 Kearsarge Avenue, Ridgecrest is owned and maintained by the SSUSD on property leased from the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake (NAWSCL); inside the secure area. Built in 1953, the school buildings are 67 years old. During the July 4-5, 2019 earthquakes, the school sustained extensive damage. Since then, the campus was closed, and Richmond Elementary students and all operations were temporarily relocated to the Vieweg Adult Education Center at 348 Rowe Street until a new school is constructed.

PROJECT LOCATION: The new school site is along the west side of Richmond Road between Ridgecrest Boulevard and Gold Canyon Street, City of Ridgecrest (Assessor's Parcel Number 033-050-09). The site is on Federal land owned by the U.S. Navy at NAWSCL, outside the secure area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The new school would accommodate existing and future growth for students in TK through 6th grade with seats for up to 822 students. At full buildout, the campus would consist of a total of 99,853 square feet in five one-story buildings. Additionally, the campus would include: 8 basketball courts, track and turf play fields, hardcourt play areas with covered shade areas, Kindergarten playground, covered lunch shelter, and landscape and hardscape areas. Four retention basins would collect and hold stormwater runoff from impervious areas of the campus.

The campus would have a total of 172 parking spaces and 8 short-term visitor spaces. The student drop-off/pick-up zones would be accessed via the driveways off Richmond Road. Access to the campus for students that walk, and bike would be via local roadways to internal walkways. Additionally, a six-foot-wide, on-campus walkway would run from the Gold Canyon Street/Richmond Road intersection diagonally southwest to the bus area. Other roadway improvements would include:

- » Widen Gateway Boulevard to the east to its full secondary street design standard, with curb, gutter and 6-foot-wide sidewalk from Richmond Road to the new crosswalk (about 800 linear feet).
- » Widen Richmond Road to the west to its half-width collector road design standard, with deceleration and merge lanes for south bound traffic and designated turn lanes for northbound

traffic, curb, and gutter from about 400 feet south of Gold Canyon to Ridgecrest Boulevard. Roadwork also includes a 6-foot-wide sidewalk from the southernmost access driveway to Ridgecrest Boulevard (about 1,120 linear feet).

- » Install school area warning signs on Ridgecrest Boulevard, Richmond Road, and Gold Canyon Street that state “School – Speed Limit 25 – When Children Are Present” and install a school zone sign on Gateway Boulevard.
- » Re-paint the crosswalks at the Ridgecrest Boulevard/Richmond Road intersection with yellow or thermoplastic paint.

Project construction is anticipated to start in Summer 2021 and take about 24 months to complete, with occupancy in Fall 2023.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The MND is available for public review during regular business hours at the locations listed below.

- » Sierra Sands Unified School District: 113 West Felspar Avenue, Ridgecrest
- » Ridgecrest Public Library: 131 East Las Flores Avenue, Ridgecrest
- » The District’s website: <http://ssusd.org/>

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15073(a) the MND is available for public review and comment for 30 days, from April 9, 2021 to May 10, 2021.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Written comments on the proposed project must be received by May 10, 2021 at 4:00 pm, and should be directed to:

Pamela P. Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Business & Support Services
Sierra Sands Unified School District
113 West Felspar Avenue, Ridgecrest, CA 93555
E-mail: psmith@ssusd.org *(Please include “Richmond ES Replacement” in the subject line)*

BOARD MEETING: Additional information concerning the proposed project will be posted on the District’s website <http://ssusd.org/>. The SSUSD Board of Education will consider this the proposed project and adoption of the MND at a meeting tentatively scheduled for May 20, 2021 at 7:00 pm or soon thereafter as possible. Please check the SSUSD website to confirm the meeting date, time, and how to participate in the live stream broadcast. The meeting will be held at Ridgecrest City Council Chambers at 100 West California Avenue, Ridgecrest, CA.