

Notice of Exemption

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

County Clerk
County of: Los Angeles
12400 Imperial Hwy.
Norwalk, CA 90650

From: (Public Agency): Lancaster School District
44711 Cedar Avenue
Lancaster, CA 93534

(Address)

Project Title: Nancy Cory Elementary School Modernization and New Construction Project

Project Applicant: Lancaster School District

Project Location - Specific:
3540 West Avenue K-4, Lancaster, Los Angeles, CA 93535

Project Location - City: Lancaster Project Location - County: Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The proposed project consists of modernizing the school's existing permanent classrooms, upgrading the library, limited improvements to selected portable classrooms, and constructing two new Title 5 kindergarten classrooms.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Lancaster School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Caldwell Flores Winter, Inc. (CFW)

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15303, 15304, 15314
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

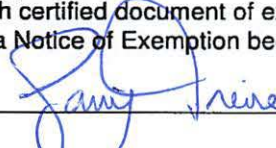
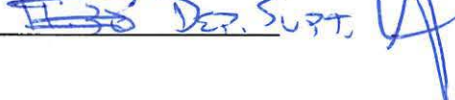

Reasons why project is exempt:

All aspects of the proposed project fall under one or more of the following Categorical exemptions: Class 3: New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land, 14: Minor additions to Schools.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Dean Furr Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (661) 816-3551

If filed by applicant:

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

Signature:  Date: 2/18/25 Title:  DEPT. Supt. 
Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

CEQA Notice of Exemption: Memorandum of Findings

Date: November 14, 2024

To: Lancaster School District
44711 Cedar Avenue
Lancaster, CA 93534

From: Kurt Schlyer and Isabel Ramos
Universal Engineering Sciences
3600 Pegasus Drive, Suite 11
Bakersfield, CA 93308
Email: kschlyer@teamues.com and iramos@teamues.com

Subject: Nancy Cory Elementary School Modernization and New Construction Project

The present memorandum substantiates the Nancy Cory Elementary School Modernization and New Construction project exemption from environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines for Categorical Exemptions classes 3, 4, and 14 (§15303 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, §15304- Minor Alterations to Land, and §15314- Minor Additions to Schools).

1.0 Project Location

The Nancy Cory Elementary School is at 3540 West Avenue K-4, Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California. The school site is located south along W Avenue K-4. The school was built and established in 1989 and occupies a 10-acre campus. The campus is made up of one main building occupied by 24 permanent classrooms, a multi-purpose room, library, and an administration office. To the north of campus is occupied by single-family residential homes; and to the east, south, and west of campus is undeveloped rural land recognized as Prime Desert Woodland Preserve.

2.0 Project Description

The proposed project consists of modernizing the school's existing permanent classrooms, upgrading the library, limited improvements to selected portable classrooms, and constructing two new Title 5 kindergarten classrooms. These new kindergarten classrooms are designed to meet current State code, District standards, and 21st-century educational program requirements, and are situated north of the existing kindergarten playground. Limited improvements to one of the portable classrooms include repurposing it as a music room. The project accommodates the school's current and projected enrollment of approximately 639 students.

The center of the campus is composed of one large building occupied by permanent classrooms, portables to the northeast, and southwest. The faculty parking structure is along the northern and western boundary. The total square footage of the campus is approximately 72,150 square feet. The proposed construction of two (2) kindergarten classrooms would provide 1,330 square footage each, for a total of 2,660 square feet. The new proposed construction would represent a 3% increase in instructional classrooms space on the Nancy Cory Elementary School.

See Figure 1: Site Plan for Nancy Cory ES Existing Conditions



See Figure 2: Site Plan for Nancy Cory ES Proposed Improvements



3.0 Exempt Status

As lead agency, Lancaster School District (LSD) has determined that the project is categorically Exempt from further environmental review requirements under CEQA, pursuant to the exemptions described below. The LSD further finds that the project would not significantly impact the environment and that none of the exceptions enumerated in CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 are applicable.

APPLICABLE EXEMPTIONS

Class 3 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

The Class 3 Categorical Exemption, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, consists of the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

Class 4 - Minor Alteration to Land

The Class 4 Categorical Exemption, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes.

Class 14 - Minor Additions to Schools

The Class 14 Categorical Exemption, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15314, 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.

FINDINGS

Class 3 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

The proposed project includes the construction of two new kindergarten classrooms approximately 1,330 square feet each in size, on the northern end of campus to the existing kindergarten playground. It, therefore, is exempt from CEQA under CEQA Class 3 Categorical Exemption.

Class 4 - Minor Alteration to Land

The project includes modernization and upgrades to the existing campus, along with the addition of two new modular kindergarten classrooms. These modernization activities and upgrades are not expected to disturb the land. The proposed location of new construction is east of the existing kindergarten playground, positioned between two existing trees and a fenced bike rack. Minor site alterations may be needed to prepare the area for installation. This project qualifies as a "minor public or private alteration in the condition of land" and does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, or scenic trees. Therefore, it is exempt from CEQA under Class 4.

Class 14 - Minor Additions to Schools

The proposed project includes the construction of two new classrooms, modernization upgrades to existing classrooms & library to meet 21st- century standard, and limited improvements to existing portables. These additions constitute as: "placement of minor structures accessory to existing institutional facilities"; and " 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" and is, therefore exempt from CEQA under Class 14.

EXCEPTIONS TO CATEGORICAL EXEMPTIONS

CEQA Guidelines Section §15300.2 identifies exceptions or conditions under which categorical exemptions do not apply. The exceptions that are relevant to consideration under Class 3, 4, and 14, are:

Location: The Class 3, 4, and 14 exemptions are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located - a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may, in a particularly sensitive environment, be significant. Therefore, Class 3, 4, and 14 exemptions apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

Cumulative Impact: The exemptions would be inapplicable if the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place is significant.

Significant Effect: A Categorical Exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will significantly affect the environment due to unusual circumstances.

Scenic Highways: A Categorical Exemption shall not be used for a project that may damage 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. This does not apply to improvements required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

Hazardous Waste Sites: A Categorical Exemption shall not be used for a project on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Section §65962.5 of the Government Code.

Historical resources: A Categorical Exemption shall not be used for a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

The following discussions evaluate whether these exceptions to the CEQA Categorical Exemption classes 3, 4, and 14 would apply to the proposed project.

Location

The proposed project site is a built-out elementary school campus in an urbanized neighborhood zoned as public use in Lancaster, California. According to Los Angeles Planning and Zoning information, Lancaster is recognized as an incorporated city. No environmental resources of critical concern- such as threatened or endangered species or habitats thereof or critical habitat designated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act- are present onsite (USFWS 2024). Nancy Cory Elementary School is not a hazardous materials site (see Hazardous Waste Sites below). The Location exception does not apply to the proposed project.

Cumulative Impacts

The proposed project activities include modernizing and improving the existing campus to meet 21st-century standards, and the constructing of two new kindergarten classrooms. These uses are consistent with the existing uses. Due to the limited scope of building modifications (during construction and operation) and consistency with allowable site uses, the proposed project would not result in significant cumulative impacts. The proposed project would continue to operate southwest of Lancaster School District. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

Significant Effect/Unusual Circumstances

No unusual circumstances on or next to the school would cause significant environmental impacts. No unusual circumstances are anticipated with the project construction. The nearest sensitive receptors to noise and hazardous air emissions are residential homes

located approximately 120 feet north, 0.16 miles to the east, and 0.25 miles to the south and 0.30 miles to the west of the project site. Project construction and operation would not cause any unusual circumstances resulting in significant environmental impacts. The significant effects exception does not apply to the proposed project.

Scenic Highways

The nearest designated State Scenic Highway are State Route (SR) 2, approximately twenty-eight (28) miles south of the project site. Project development would not damage scenic resources along SR 2. Therefore, the Scenic Highways exception does not apply to the proposed project.

Hazardous Waste Sites

According to 14 CCR 15300.2(e), "[a] categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code." A review of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) ENVIROSTOR database confirms that the project site, as well as the surrounding area within a one-mile search radius, is not identified as a hazardous waste facility (DTSC 2024). Consequently, the proposed project would not involve activities that could disturb or release hazardous materials from any known hazardous waste sites. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

Historical Resources

Nancy Cory Elementary School is not listed on the California Register of Historical Resources (OHP 2024) or the National Register of Historic Places (NPS 2024); therefore, it is not a historical resource under CEQA. Additionally, the project constructions and structural additions would not result in adverse changes to the existing developed site. No known historic archaeological resources are located at the proposed project site, and no impact related to historical resources would occur. The proposed project would not impact historical resources, and this exception does not apply.

4.0 Conclusion and Summary

The proposed project consists of modernizing the school's existing permanent classrooms, upgrading the library, limited improvements to selected portable classrooms, and constructing two new Title 5 kindergarten classrooms. As demonstrated in this Notice of Exemption (NOE), the Lancaster School District has determined that Nancy Cory Elementary School Project is exempt from environmental review under CEQA pursuant to the provisions of CEQA Guidelines for Categorical Exemptions §15303- New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, §15304 - Minor Alterations to Land, and §15314 - Minor Additions to Schools.

5.0 References

California Department of Toxic Substance Control. 2024. EnviroStor - Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List. Available: <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?myaddress=3540+W+Ave+K+4>

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2024, October. California Highway System. Available: <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>

General Plan 2030 City of Lancaster. Available: [General Plan 2030 | City of Lancaster](#)

Lancaster School District (LSD) 2024. Request for Statement of Qualifications and Proposal: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Compliance Services for School Modernization and New construction at Nancy Cory Elementary School.

Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. (n.d.). *GIS-NET Public: Interactive GIS map viewer*. Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. 2024, from https://rpgis.isd.lacounty.gov/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=GISNET_Public.GIS-NET_Public

Office of Historic Preservation. 2024. California Historical Resources. Sacramento County. Available: <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=name&criteria=nancy+cory+elementary+school>

National Park Service (NPS). 2024. National Register of Historic Places. Available: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>

Universal Engineering Sciences (UES) 2024. Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Nancy Cory Elementary School, 3540 West Avenue K-4 Lancaster, Los Angeles, CA 93535

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services (USFWS). 2024. Critical Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species. Available: [Critical Habitat for Threatened & Endangered Species \[USFWS\]](#)



Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
02/04/2025 05:00 PM
Park View Educational Complex Board Room
808 W. Avenue J | Lancaster, CA 93534
www.lanclsd.org

Printed : 2/5/2025 3:35 PM PT

ITEM : 12.d. Adoption of Resolution No. 2024-25:26 Making Environmental Findings in Connection with Nancy Cory TK-5 School Modernization and New Construction Project (v)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees adopt Resolution No. 2024-25:26 - Making Environmental Findings in Connection with the Nancy Cory TK-5 School Modernization and New Construction Project.

Rationale

The District is proceeding with the construction of two (2) new Kindergarten classrooms and modernization of the existing permanent classrooms at the Nancy Cory Elementary School.

Universal Engineering Sciences (UES) has prepared a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis report for the project indicating that the project is eligible for Class 3, Class 4, and Class 14 Categorical Exemptions, under CEQA Sections 15303, 15304 and 15314. The District has determined that the Nancy Cory Elementary School Project is exempt from environmental review under CEQA pursuant to the provisions of CEQA Guidelines for Categorical Exemptions §15303- New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, §15304 - Minor Alterations to Land, and §15314 - Minor Additions to Schools. The State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 provides conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable. The CEQA report reviewed the project and indicated that the project will not violate any of the conditions. The purpose of this resolution is to confirm the findings that the project qualifies for Categorical Exemption from CEQA. Upon Board approval, a Notice of Exemption will be subsequently filed with the County of Los Angeles.

Contact Person

Larry Freise, Ed.D. / Mary Ellen Butterworth

Supporting Documents

[Nancy Cory ES CEQA Exemption Resolution 2024-25.26](#)
[CEQA NOE Lancaster SD- Nancy Cory ES](#)

Goals

Fiscal Stewardship

Type

Individual, Business

Created on 1/27/2025 at 10:04 AM PT by Mary Ellen Butterworth
Last Modified on 1/27/2025 at 12:18 PM PT by Jerri Munney

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-25:26

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE LANCASTER SCHOOL DISTRICT MAKING ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS IN CONNECTION WITH NANCY CORY TK-5 SCHOOL MODERNIZATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Lancaster School District (“District”) is constructing two (2) new Kindergarten classrooms and modernizing the existing permanent classrooms at Nancy Cory Elementary School located at 3450 Ave K, Lancaster, CA 93536 (“Project”);

WHEREAS, the District’s consultant, Universal Engineering Sciences (UES), has prepared a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis report for the project indicating that the project qualifies for Class 3, Class 4, and Class 14 Categorical Exemptions, under CEQA Sections 15303, 15304, and 15314;

WHEREAS, the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 provides conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable and the CEQA report prepared by UES reviewed the project and indicated that the project will not violate any of the conditions;

WHEREAS, the project would result in the construction and location of a limited number of new facilities and repurpose of existing facilities;

WHEREAS, the project would not increase the student capacity by more than 25%, nor would the project implement more than 10 classrooms;

WHEREAS, the project would not result in cumulative development, would have no unusual circumstances, would not damage scenic resources, is not located on a hazardous site, and would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Trustees of the Lancaster School District hereby finds, determines, declares, orders, and resolves as follows:

- (1) All of the recitals set forth above are true and adopted as a part of the District’s official record;
- (2) The Board of Trustees of the Lancaster School District (“Board”) has reviewed the Project and finds that pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15303, 15304, and 15314, the Project qualifies as a Class 3, Class 4, and a Class 14 Categorical Exemption and no further analysis is required;
- (3) The Board approves the filing and recordation of a CEQA Notice of Exemption;
- (4) This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage; and
- (5) the District’s Superintendent or their designee is authorized to take such actions and execute such agreements and documentation necessary to affect the intent of this Resolution;

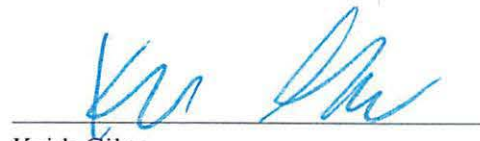
APPROVED, PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Trustees of the Lancaster School District on this 4th day of February, 2025, by the following vote:

Board of Trustees:	Ayes:	Nays:	Abstentions:	Absences:
President Pamela Starlson	X			
Vice President Greg Tepe	X			
Clerk Keith Giles	X			
Trustee Jullie Eutsler	X			
Trustee Duane Winn	X			



Pamela Starlson
President of the Board of Trustees
Lancaster School District

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was duly and regularly introduced, passed and adopted by the members of the Board of Trustees of the Lancaster School District at a public meeting of said Board held on February 4, 2025.



Keith Giles
Clerk of the Board of Trustees
Lancaster School District