

COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 9, 2019

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION: **15**
BASIC SKILLS CENTER - CEQA NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
(Resolution No. 2019-10)

Status: *Action (Roll Call Vote)*

Presented by: Byron Woods
Dean, Facilities and Facilities Planning

Issue

The District is required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Basic Skills Center. The District has analyzed the activity pursuant to CEQA and determined that the activity is exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.3 and Senate Bill 226. The CEQA document must be filed with the State Office of Planning and Research and Tulare County Clerk's Office for the Basic Skills Center on the Visalia campus.

Background

The District is in the Planning Phase of the Basic Skills Center on the Visalia campus. This project consists of renovating/replacing the existing 20,000 sq. ft. Buckeye/Industrial Building into a 21,145 sq. ft. Basic Skills Center.

After an environmental evaluation of the project, an environmental consulting firm feels that this project is "Statutorily Exempt" from the CEQA review process. When a public agency determines that a project is exempt, the lead agency (the District) must file a "Notice of Exemption". This notice informs interested parties through the State Office of Planning and Research and the Tulare County Clerk's Office that the lead agency has determined that a project is exempt from CEQA review.

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees adopt Resolution 2019-10 authorizing the District to file the "Notice of Exemption" with the State Office of Planning and Research and the Tulare County Clerk's Office.

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF SEQUOIAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
TULARE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

In the Matter of Adopting an Exemption for)
the Basic Skills Center, Visalia Campus) RESOLUTION 2019-10

WHEREAS, the Sequoias Community College District (District), as Lead Agency, has prepared an Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the State CEQA Guidelines and procedures adopted by the District relating to environmental evaluation, for construction and operation of a Basic Skills Center to be constructed on the Visalia Campus.

WHEREAS, the District has analyzed the activity and the documentation of the Exemption pursuant to CEQA and determined that the activity is exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guideline Section 15061(b)(3).

WHEREAS, the District will file the Notice of Exemption with the Tulare County Clerk and the State Office of Planning and Research.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in compliance with CEQA, the State CEQA Guidelines and local procedures adopted by the District pursuant thereto, the Board of Trustees finds that the activity is approved herewith by the California Community College Chancellor's Office and is exempt under CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) and that said activity has no possibility of having a significant effect on the environment.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was adopted upon motion by Trustee _____, seconded by Trustee _____, at a regular meeting held on September 9, 2019, by the following vote:

- AYES:
- NOES:
- ABSENT:

I, Brent Calvin, secretary of the governing board of the Sequoias Community College District, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly passed and adopted by said Board, at an official and public meeting thereof, this 9th day of September, 2019.

Date

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Notice of Exemption**Appendix E**

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

County Clerk

County of: Tulare
221 S. Mooney Boulevard

Visalia, CA 93291

From: (Public Agency): College of the Sequoias
915 S. Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, California, 93277

(Address)

Project Title: Basic Skills Center

Project Applicant: College of the Sequoias

Project Location - Specific:

Southeast corner of College of Sequoias campus located at 915 S. Mooney Boulevard, Visalia, CA 93277.

Project Location - City: Visalia Project Location - County: Tulare

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Project consists of renovating / replacing the existing ~20,000 sq. ft. Buckeye/Industrial Building into a 21,145 sq. ft. Basic Skills Center. The new building will be on the site of the existing building (to be demolished). See Attachment A for additional information.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: College of the Sequoias

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: College of the Sequoias

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

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15302 and 15314
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

See Attachment A for specific information.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Byron Woods, Dean of Facilities Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (559) 730-3908

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: _____ Title: _____

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: _____

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College of the Sequoias

Basic Skills Center

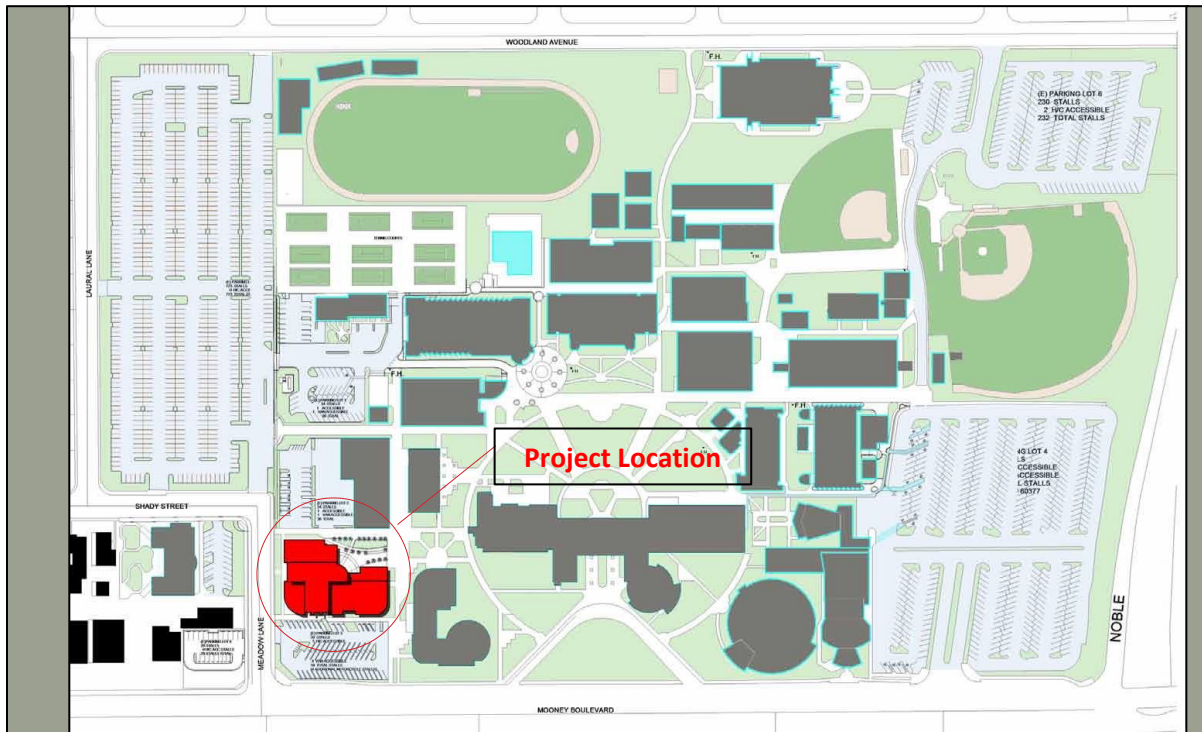
Categorical Exemption - Supplemental Information

This information is being provided to supplement the proposed Categorical Exemption for College of the Sequoias District's (COS or District) proposed Basic Skills Center Project.

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Project consists of renovating / replacing the existing ~20,000 sq. ft. Buckeye/Industrial Building with a 21,145 sq. ft. Basic Skills Center. The new building will be on the site of the existing building (to be demolished). In order to proceed with the project, the District will need to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which is the purpose and subject of this Categorical Exemption (CE).

The site is surrounded by existing COS facilities (parking lots, roadways, other campus structures) along Meadow Avenue at the southeast corner of the campus. A description of the Project is included below.



Project location within the campus

All of the improvements listed below will occur on previously disturbed and/or paved areas of the campus as follows:

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Demolition of the existing structures

The existing Buckeye/Industrial buildings on site were constructed in 1940 and 1963 and have been deemed to be well beyond their functional life-cycle and do not currently contribute to a safe and accessible educational environment (i.e. damaged concrete walkways, accessibility issues, hazardous building materials, etc.). Due to the age of the buildings, the District retained a qualified consultant to survey all buildings for hazardous materials including asbestos. Potentially hazardous materials such as asbestos and lead based paint may result in a significant public health hazard due to the potential exposure of construction personnel and future site occupants to these hazards if not properly remediated. In order to ensure that potential impacts associated with the exposure of existing on-site hazards remain less than significant, the District will be required to adhere to existing rules and regulations pertaining to handling and removal of potentially hazardous substances. This includes having any hazardous materials removed by a licensed hazardous materials contractor prior to demolition of the building. The hazardous materials contractor shall demonstrate the appropriate removal of these substances and shall ensure all hazardous materials and/or conditions are properly managed.

Under the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's Rule 4002, written notification to the Air District is also required for demolition and asbestos removal activities. Prior to initiating the replacement construction, the District will demonstrate that all asbestos containing material has been properly removed and demolition activities may proceed without exposing construction personnel to asbestos related-hazards.

In order to comply with existing regulations, the District will be required to abate any lead based paint prior to demolition. Where lead-based paint is observed within existing buildings and the surrounding area, all peeling and flaking lead-based paint shall be removed and properly disposed of separately from building debris, in accordance with current Department of Toxic Substances Control polices. All site soils contaminated by lead-based paint shall be removed and properly disposed prior to any construction activities. Prior to initiating the replacement construction, the District will submit written evidence that all lead-based paint has been properly removed and that no further health hazards related to lead-based paint exist on-site.



Buckeye Building (to be demolished)

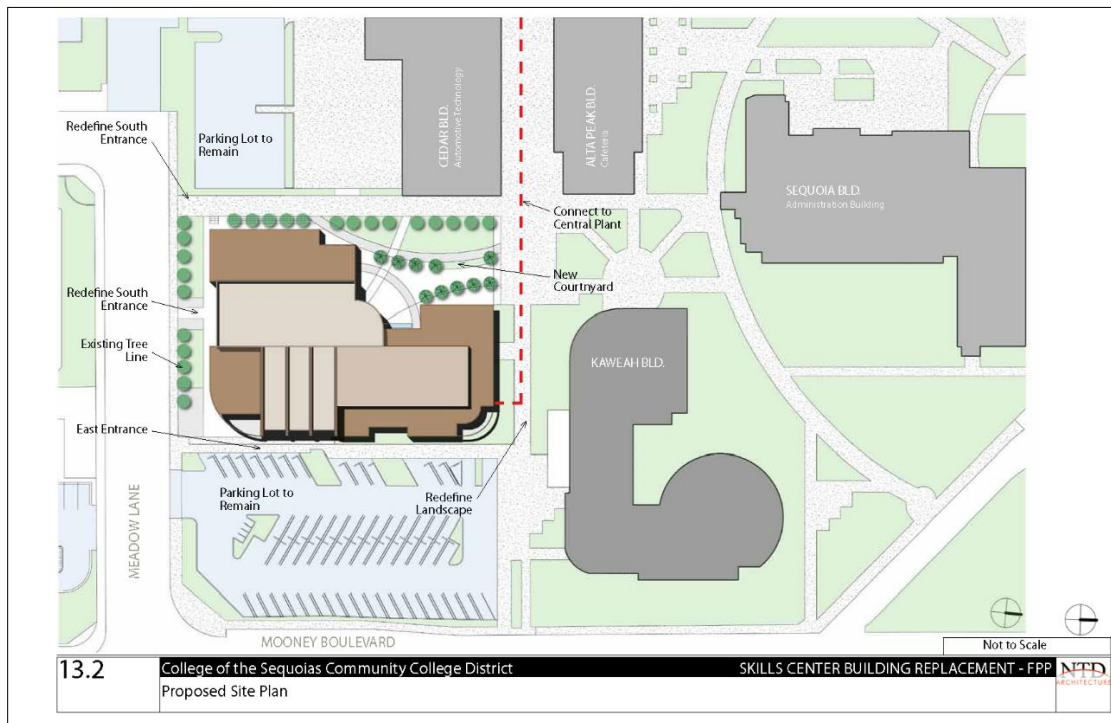
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Buckeye Building (to be demolished)

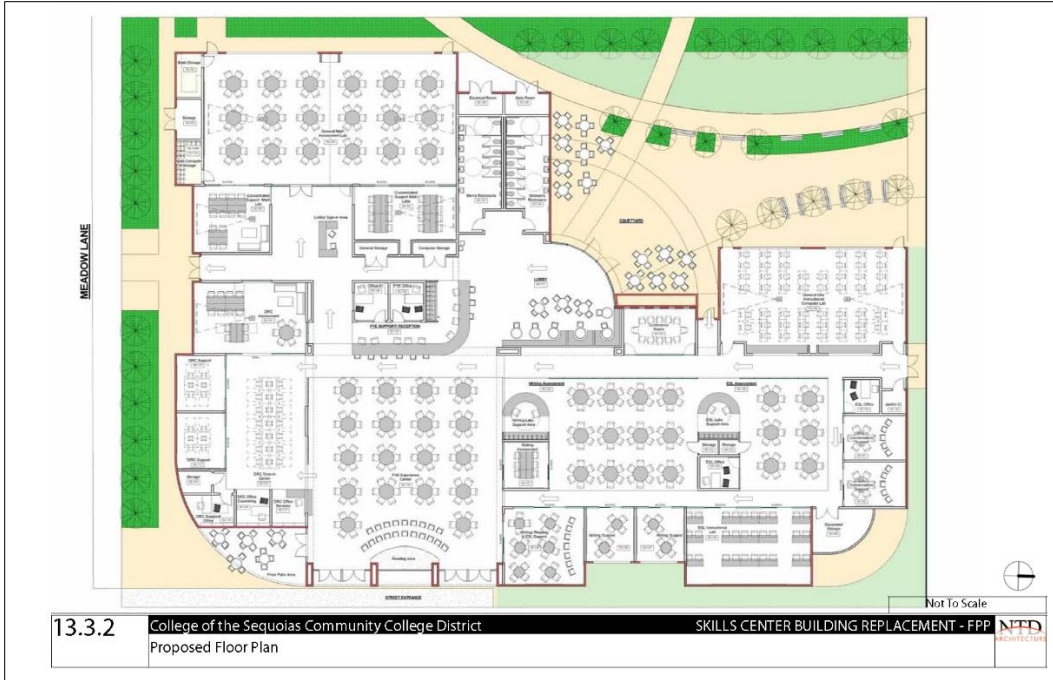
Construction of Replacement Building (Basic Skills Center)

The proposed new 21,145 GSF Basic Skills Center building is designed to host the Language Lab, Writing Center, Math Lab, Learning Skills Lab, Student Success Programs, Access & Ability Programs and related programs under one roof. The project program entails 9,148 square feet of various lab space, 660 square feet of office-related space and more than 5,000 square feet of support space. The Project includes necessary site work improvements and supporting utility infrastructure for the building.

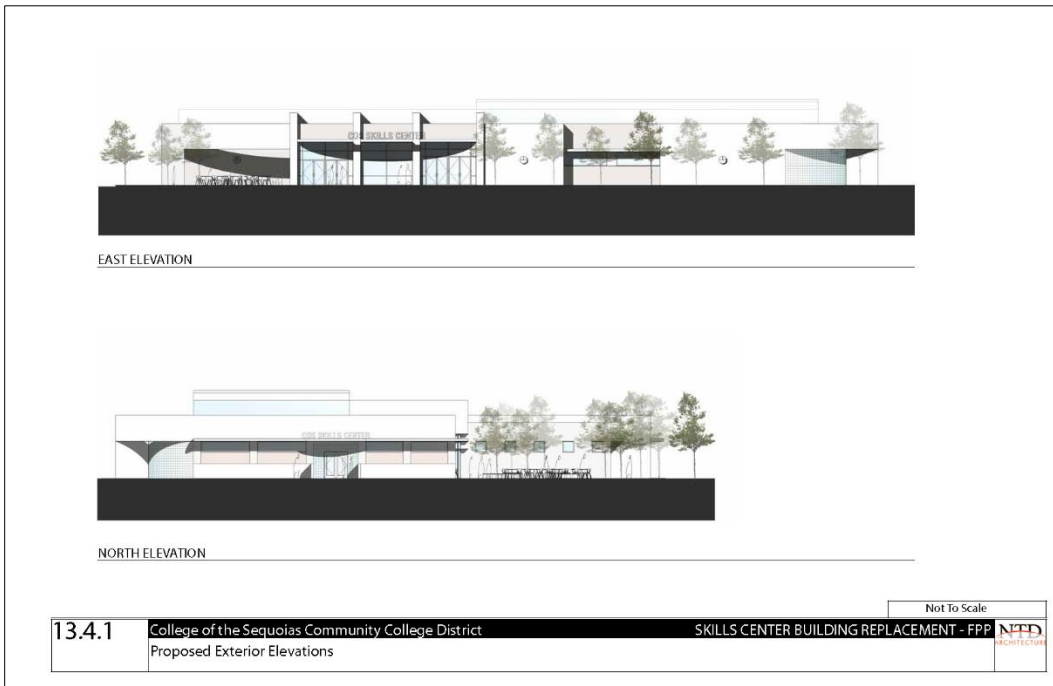


Proposed Site Plan

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Proposed Floor Plan



Proposed Exterior Elevation (east and north)

Construction is expected to occur from 2021 - 2023.

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Reasons Why Project is Exempt:

1. The Project qualifies for CEQA 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction, which states:

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...

Response: As mentioned previously, the Project will result in a replacement/reconstruction of an existing ~20,000 sq. ft. facility with a 21,145 sq. ft. facility on the same footprint. The function of the buildings will remain similar to previous uses in that they will be used for classrooms, labs and some general administrative space. Because of these factors, the Project qualifies for this exemption.

2. The Project qualifies for CEQA 15314 – Minor Addition to Schools, which states:

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.

Response: The Project includes less than ten additional classrooms (it only includes up to 7 classroom/labs) and will not result in an increase of original student capacity by more than 25% (the District's FTES is 10,300).

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 (Exceptions), a Categorical Exemption cannot be used if the Project will result in, or have an impact upon the following:

- a. **Cumulative Impact** – CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(i) states that a Lead Agency shall consider whether the cumulative impact of a project is significant and whether the effects of the project are cumulatively considerable. The assessment of the significance of the cumulative effects of a project must, therefore, be conducted in connection with the effects of past projects, other current projects, and probable future projects. Due to the nature of the Project and consistency with environmental policies, incremental contributions to impacts are considered less than cumulatively considerable. The proposed Project would not contribute substantially to adverse cumulative conditions, or create any substantial indirect impacts (i.e., increase in population could lead to an increase need for housing, increase in traffic, air pollutants, etc.). The various improvements will occur within the existing footprint of the building that will be demolished and will be similar in size and function.
- b. **Significant Effect** – An evaluation of potential environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed Project was conducted. The existing campus is highly disturbed with buildings, paved parking lots, concrete/asphalt walkways, lawns and landscaping. Because of the nature of the improvements, the District determined that the Project would not result in significant impacts to any of the impact areas outlined in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G as follows:

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- I. Aesthetics – The Project will be similar in nature to the existing buildings on campus and will not impact any scenic vistas or aesthetic resources. Any new lighting will be shielded and directed downward so as to minimize glare. No significant impacts.
- II. Agriculture/Forest Resources – No farmland or forests occur on site or in the City. No significant impacts.
- III. Air Quality – Air emissions were calculated using the *CalEEMod Version 2016.3.1*. All Project related emissions were well below established Air District thresholds. However, the School District’s contractor will be required to adhere to standard Air District rules and regulations such as dust control measures. No significant impacts.
- IV. Biological Resources – No significant vegetation will be impacted by the Project and there are no biological resources on the campus due to the highly disturbed nature of the site. No significant impacts.
- V. Cultural Resources – There are no known cultural resources on the Project site. However, in the event that undiscovered cultural resources are unearthed during ground disturbing activities, the District will be required to adhere to standard measures that include work stoppage and contacting local Native American Tribes and/or County Coroner so that potential cultural resources can be identified, preserved or removed. No significant impacts.
- VI. Geology and Soils – The District will be required to adhere to State and local building design guidelines pertaining to seismic hazards, soil stability and related geotechnical issues. No significant impacts.
- VII. Energy – The District will be required to adhere to state-mandated energy efficiency regulations. In addition, the school is likely to benefit from a minor reduction in energy use as a result of some of the proposed modernization efforts.
- VIII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published a rule for the mandatory reporting of greenhouse gases from sources that in general emit 25,000 metric tons or more of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year. The Project is estimated to produce less than 1% of the reporting total. Additionally, emissions from construction are temporary in nature. The SJVAPCD has implemented a guidance policy for development projects within their jurisdiction. This policy, “Guidance for Land-use Agencies in Addressing GHG Emission Impacts for New Projects under CEQA,” does not address temporary GHG emissions from construction, nor does this policy establish numeric thresholds for ongoing GHG emissions. AB 32 requires that emissions within the State be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020. These construction emissions are minimal and temporary therefore, construction-generated GHGs are less than significant.

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- IX. Hazards & Hazardous Materials – Any hazardous materials used during construction are required to be transported and stored in compliance with applicable standards and regulations established by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The site is not listed as being on or near a hazardous materials site. The existing buildings on the site were constructed in 1940 and 1963 and have been deemed to be well beyond their functional life-cycle and do not currently contribute to a safe and accessible educational environment (i.e. damaged concrete walkways, accessibility issues, hazardous building materials, etc.). Due to the age of the buildings, the District has had a certified asbestos consultant survey the structure for hazards on-site such as asbestos removal and oil based paint removal. These may result in a significant public health hazard due to the potential exposure of construction personnel and future site occupants to these hazards if not properly remediated. In order to ensure that potential impacts associated with the exposure of existing on-site hazards remain less than significant, the District will be required to adhere to existing rules and regulations pertaining to handling and removal of potentially hazardous substances. This includes having any hazardous materials removed by a licensed hazardous materials contractor prior to demolition of the building. The hazardous material contractor shall demonstrate the appropriate removal of these substances and shall ensure all hazardous materials and/or conditions are properly managed. See full discussion of demolition impacts on page 2.
- X. Hydrology & Water Quality – The college receives its potable water from the City of Visalia. The Project does not propose any uses that will substantially impact water use or water quality. No significant impacts.
- XI. Land Use & Planning - The Project will be built out within the existing campus footprint. The Project has no characteristics that would physically divide the City of Visalia. The Project is consistent with the City's General Plan and there are no plans that the Project conflicts with. No significant impacts.
- XII. Mineral Resources – There are no known mineral resources on or around the school site. No significant impacts.
- XIII. Noise - Noise from schools is primarily associated with intermittent sounds of student's voices while outside, landscape/maintenance noise, and vehicular operation throughout the day. The improvements and new construction associated with the project are not expected to generate new sources of noise within the campus. Noise generated from construction will be temporary and will be limited to hours identified by the City of Visalia. No significant impacts.

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- XIV. Population & Housing – The Project will not induce population growth. No significant impacts.
- XV. Public Services - Public services are currently provided to the District by the City of Visalia. The Project has no design, construction or operational characteristics that would necessitate the need for new or expanded facilities related to fire protection, police protection, parks, or other public facilities. There is no housing related or population inducing component of the Project. No significant impacts.
- XVI. Recreation - The Project has no design, construction or operational characteristics that would necessitate the need for new or expanded facilities related to recreational facilities, which themselves could cause an environmental impact. No significant impacts.
- XVII. Transportation & Traffic – The campus is located in an area of the City surrounded by intense commercial and residential uses. Access to and from the site will not change and traffic is not expected to substantially increase as a result of the Project. No parking lot modifications are required. No significant impacts.
- XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources – Tribal consultation is not a requirement under CEQA when preparing a Categorical Exemption. No significant impacts.
- XIX. Utilities & Service Systems - Visalia provides existing wastewater collection, treatment and disposal for the wastewater generated by the campus. Wastewater collection is provided through a series of existing sanitary sewer mains and trunk sewers that convey wastewater from the Project site and areas surrounding the campus to the City’s existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). The WWTP currently serves the campus and has adequate capacity to serve the minimal amount of wastewater generated by the Project. Given the nature of the wastewater generated by the Project (sinks, urinals, toilets) it is not anticipated that the quality of effluent will result in exceedance of Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements nor will it impact any waste discharge requirements. The Project has no design, construction or operational characteristics that would necessitate the need for new or expanded facilities related to water or wastewater facilities, which themselves would cause an environmental impact. No significant impacts.
- XX. Wildfires – The location of the campus and lack of vegetation surrounding the campus precludes the possibility of impacts from or impacts to wildfires.
- c. **Scenic Highways** –There are no designated scenic highways located within the City.
- d. **Hazardous Waste Sites** – According to the Department of Toxic Substances Control *EnviroStor* database, the nearest hazardous cleanup site is a dry cleaning facility located at 1841 S. Mooney Boulevard. As of January 2017, the site’s cleanup status is listed as “active”. The Project is located

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approximately 1 mile north of the facility and is separated from this facility through intervening land uses. Therefore, there are no significant impacts.

- e. **Historical Resources** – The site is heavily disturbed and has been for decades. In the unlikely event that cultural or historical resources are discovered during construction, the District will be required to adhere to standard measures that include work stoppage and contacting local Native American Tribes and/or the County Coroner so that potential cultural resources can be identified, preserved or removed. No significant impacts.

Conclusion

Based on the information contained herein, the District has determined that the proposed Project qualifies for the two exemptions discussed previously and the District will adopt and file this Notice of Exemption in accordance with CEQA Guidelines.