

# 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: Sonoma

585 Fiscal Drive, #103F

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

**From:** (Public Agency): Santa Rosa City Schools

211 Ridgeway Ave.

Santa Rosa, CA 95401

(Address)

Project Title: Helen Lehman Elementary School Classrooms Project

Project Applicant: Santa Rosa City Schools

Project Location - Specific:

1700 Jennings Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Project Location - City: Santa Rosa Project Location - County: Sonoma

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project would consist of installation of three new 90 x 30- foot classroom buildings (total 6400 sq. ft. of interior space - 6 classrooms) on an open lawn area at the south side of the existing school. Three existing single-classroom portable buildings totaling 2880 sq. ft., would be removed. New

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Santa Rosa City Schools

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Santa Rosa City Schools

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: Class 3, 15303(c) and (e); Class 14, Section 15303
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed project would qualify for the Class 3 and Class 14 Categorical Exemptions as the project would not exceed 25% of the existing classrooms and the new buildings would not exceed 10,000 sq. ft. None of the exceptions to the exemptions would apply (See attached Discussion).

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mr. Erik Oden Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (707) 967-2701

**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: Erik Oden Digitally signed by Erik Oden  
DN: c=US, E=erikoden@sarc.k12.ca.us, O=Santa Rosa City Schools, CN=Erik Oden  
Date: 2025.08.18 12:53:30-0700 Date: 8/18/25 Title: Director, Maintenance and

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: \_\_\_\_\_

## **HELEN LEHMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS PROJECT CEQA NOTICE OF EXEMPTION DISCUSSION**

### **Project Description**

#### Existing Facilities

Helen Lehman Elementary School, located at 1700 Jennings Ave., Santa Rosa, is owned and operated by Santa Rosa City Schools. The school has a current enrollment of approximately 480 students.

The school is in the north-east area of Santa Rosa, and is bordered by single-family residential development on the north, west, south, and part of the east side, with the remainder of the eastern side bordering Jennings Park, which is a large turf field. The primary access to the school is off of Jennings Avenue.

#### Proposed Project

The project would consist of installation of three new 90 x 30-foot classroom buildings (total 6,400 sq. ft. of interior space - 6 classrooms) on an open lawn area at the south side of the existing school. Three existing single-classroom portable buildings totaling 2880 sq. ft., would be removed. New playground facilities, an outdoor education area, and new parking also would be constructed. No trees would be removed as part of this project.

The project would be constructed over a 39-week period from November 10, 2025 to August 11, 2026.

### **Categorical Exemption Analysis**

#### Class 3 Exemption

The CEQA Class 3 Exemption applies to 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. In urban areas, structures of up to 10,000 sq. ft and carports/garages/canopies would be subject to this exemption (per CEQA Guidelines Sections 15303(c) and (e)). The project's proposed gross increase of around 8100 sq. ft. (exterior) and net increase of about 3500 sq. ft. of new classroom space would conform to this exemption.

#### Class 14 Exemption

The CEQA Class 14 Exemption (Minor additions to schools (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15314)) applies to minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than twenty-five (25) percent or ten (10) classrooms, whichever is less.

The project would add a net of three classrooms to the 26-classroom school, for an increase of about 12%, well below the 25% and 10-classroom thresholds. It would minimally increase school capacity.

Exceptions to the Exemptions

Per CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2, exceptions to these categorical exemptions can apply where the following occur:

- The location is environmentally sensitive (Class 3 only)
- Cumulative impact of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.
- Damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a state scenic highway.
- Hazardous Waste Sites included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.
- A substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.
- Significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

As summarized below, none of these exceptions appear to apply to this project and therefore these exemptions would apply:

- The project is proposed on an existing school playfield, which is not an environmentally sensitive location.
- The project area is a small project in a developed school campus, and no cumulative development is likely to occur nearby.
- Construction would be at the south side of the existing school campus and views of the structure would be available from nearby houses on Manhattan Way and New York Drive. The project may change some views, however the proposed new portables and landscaping would not be considered a significant adverse visual impact because the buildings would be single-story and similar in scale and type to existing school portables. One house on New York Drive would have a full view of the structure, however the shade structures would be unobtrusive and lower than the existing nearby school buildings. Therefore no significant impact to visual resources is expected.

- The site is not on or near a listed hazardous waste site (database search performed August 5, 2025) <sup>1</sup>
- The proposed project would not demolish or substantially alter any historic structures. The project would require construction on a portion of a previously graded open area. Therefore no historic resources would be affected.
- There do not appear to be any unusual circumstances that could result in significant environmental impacts at the site.

### Common Sense Exemption

Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to environmental review. In such cases, the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. (See CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)). As described above, the proposed project does not have the potential to result in a significant impact to the physical environment. Therefore this exemption would apply.

### Conclusions

As discussed above, the project is within the parameters of the Class 3 and 14 Categorical Exemptions. Further, as detailed above, none of the exceptions to the exemption would apply. As described above, the project also would be consistent with the CEQA Common Sense Exemption.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?myaddress=Helen+Lehman+elementary+school+santa+rosa>