

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Issued By: Superintendent Sean McPhetridge (510) 337-7060 and
Board President Gary K. Lym (510) 337-7187

**AUSD Board of Education Votes
to Move Students Off Lum Campus**

Alameda, Calif. — May 24, 2017 — The Board of Education for the Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) voted unanimously last night to move students off the Lum Elementary School campus for the 2017-18 school year.

Board members based their decision on analyses from three geotechnical engineering firms, two structural engineering firms, and an architectural firm, all of which concluded the Lum building foundations cannot withstand the significant soil liquefaction that is likely to occur in the event of a strong earthquake. Because a foundation failure could lead to partial or total building collapse, the structural engineers recommended the district make plans to move students off the campus.

"This has been a difficult process for all," said Board President Gary Lym. "As board members we have listened carefully to the voices of families and teachers who don't want to leave this campus. But as board members we also cannot ignore the scientific findings and recommendations of firms that have significant experience with K-12 facilities in earthquake country and with state rules and regulations that govern school site safety.

"It's important for all of us to remember that we aren't closing the school permanently," he added. "We are relocating our children, staff, and parent volunteers to safer facilities while our community and school district explore options to resolve seismic conditions and liquefaction risks at the site."

Based on a survey sent to Lum families about their preferences, district staff are currently working on a plan to assign Lum students who will be in grades K-3 next year to nearby elementary schools. The Board of Education also gave direction to staff to explore an option wherein 4th and 5th graders will potentially have a separate, elementary program on the Wood Middle School campus to help minimize transitions while helping those families stay close to their current campus. Lum families will receive their new school assignments in the first week of June.

"I know this is extremely hard, and I know some families will be unhappy with this decision," said Superintendent Sean McPhetridge. "But as a public school district, we have a legal, moral, and professional duty to protect the safety of students and staff. AUSD will work to make the upcoming transition as smooth as possible, and we will collaborate with our other schools and our community partners to harness the great power, resilience, and optimism of this community. I have seen AUSD families come together to help each other time and time again in this town. I know we can do it."

District staff are currently working with the district's employee organizations to determine the best way to reassign Lum teachers and staff to new schools, and Superintendent McPhetridge shared

how he plans to recommend Lum Principal Jesse Woodward for appointment as the new principal of Ruby Bridges Elementary School at the next Board of Education meeting (June 13). "Mr. Woodward has considerable experience engaging and empowering highly diverse school communities, having served as a principal of a Title I school that also received Gold Ribbon recognition from the California Department of Education in 2016 before coming last fall to work with us here in Alameda."

McPhetridge added, "Mr. Woodward is extremely tech savvy and also has a strong interest in STEAM education, which is a central theme of the innovative program proposal Ruby Bridges has recently presented to the Board of Education. Thus, I think he is an excellent fit for that school."

Background on the soil and foundation issues at Lum Elementary School are available on the district's [Lum Seismic](#) webpage. Updated information on the enrollment plans for Lum Elementary School will be posted on that page, as well as on the district's [Enrollment](#) page.

###

Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) serves more than 9400 students in Alameda, California, an island community in the San Francisco Bay Area. For more information, please visit the [AUSD website](#), follow [@AUSDNews](#) on Twitter, or subscribe to our [email communications](#). Questions? Contact Susan Davis, Senior Manager, Community Affairs, at sdavis@alameda.k12.ca.us.