

February 8, 2012

Dear Alameda High School, Alameda Adult School and AUSD District Office Communities,

I am writing to share information about a Seismic Evaluation Report we have received recently regarding Historic Alameda High School (HAHS). This letter will provide some background and then outline the steps we are taking in response to the Seismic Evaluation Report to ensure the safety of our students and staff who are currently in the buildings of HAHS.

### **Background to the 2012 Seismic Evaluation Report**

Historic Alameda High School was built in the 1920s along with Patton Gym. The buildings of HAHS currently house the vacant City library in the west wing, several AHS classrooms and Kofman Auditorium in the center building, the AUSD District Office in the east wing, and Alameda Adult School in the former science wing in the building next door towards the east, closest to Oak Street.

In 1998 AUSD completed a seismic retrofit of the center building of HAHS, the area currently housing AHS classrooms and Kofman Auditorium. Accordingly, AHS students and staff in classrooms in HAHS or at events in Kofman Auditorium are currently in a safe, retrofitted, State-certified building. This center building is in compliance with the Field Act, a State law passed in 1933 regulating school architecture for seismic safety. The Department of State Architecture (DSA) issues Field Act certifications.

In order to comply with the Field Act and to ensure student and staff safety, you may recall that Patton Gym was closed in the fall of 2010 when historic records confirming that Patton Gym was Field Act certified could not be located. DSA has since confirmed that Patton Gym is certified and it has reopened. Since the closure of Patton Gym, AUSD has continued to work closely and carefully with DSA and with structural engineers to investigate the seismic safety of the rest of HAHS. The Seismic Evaluation Report is the result of that investigation.

This week we will be posting this letter (including translated versions) and other information on a new page of the AUSD website: <http://www.alameda.k12.ca.us/index.php/district-information/55-status-of-facilities>. As we move forward with the next steps outlined below, we will continue to update this Status of Facilities page of our website with more information.

### **Next Steps for Alameda High School**

As explained above, AHS students and staff in the several classrooms or in Kofman Auditorium in the center building of HAHS are currently in a safe, retrofitted, State-certified, Field Act compliant building. Classes and activities in those rooms will continue. Based on the analysis of structural engineers, and out of an abundance of caution, we will be taking additional steps in coming weeks to improve the safety of exits and entrances to the building for students and staff so that those exits and entrances would be even better protected in the event of a large earthquake. Those improvements are likely to have a substantial effect on the cosmetic appearance of the exits and entrances. As we learn more, we will keep you updated.

### **Next Steps for Alameda Adult School**

Unlike the center building of HAHS, the building housing Alameda Adult School has not been retrofitted and is not currently a Field Act compliant building. Due to the lack of retrofitting, the Seismic Evaluation Report identifies building deficiencies in the Adult School building that "have the potential to lead to collapse during a large earthquake." Although DSA only requires Field Act compliance for buildings that house students, DSA has

now informed us that they consider adult students to be students under the Field Act. Due to DSA's position that the building is not in legal compliance with the Field Act, we will be moving the Adult School out of its current building in coming weeks.

We are working hard to determine which Adult School classes can continue this term and where and when those classes will be able to meet. Our hope is that nighttime classes will be able to continue this term with minimal disruption. Daytime classes may face greater disruption. As soon as we know more, we will provide more information. We are aiming to proceed responsibly and promptly but also thoughtfully in order to reduce the interruption of the Adult School educational program. As we learn more, we will keep you updated.

#### **Next Steps for AUSD District Office**

Like the building housing Alameda Adult School, the east wing of HAHS housing AUSD District Office has not been retrofitted and is not currently a Field Act compliant building. As with the Adult School building, the Seismic Evaluation Report identifies building deficiencies in the District Office building that "have the potential to lead to collapse during a large earthquake." Due to the risks identified in the Seismic Evaluation Report, and out of an abundance of caution, we will also be moving the AUSD District Office out of its current building.

We have begun the process of determining when and where to move the AUSD District Office. As we learn more, we will keep you updated.

#### **Next Steps for Facilities in AUSD**

With the sole exception of Adult School, all schools in AUSD are in State-certified, Field Act compliant buildings. We are in the process of finalizing a district-wide study of all our schools and facilities that should be completed this spring. That comprehensive assessment, including seismic evaluation, will help us to be proactive and plan for the long term. We will share the findings of that study and will follow up as warranted. We are also continuing to investigate what state and federal funds are available to upgrade facilities for seismic safety and for other modernization.

We will present more information about the Seismic Evaluation Report and our next steps in all these areas at the next two regular meetings of the Board of Education, on February 14 and February 28. As always, materials for those meetings will be available at the meetings and will be posted on the AUSD website ahead of the meetings here: <http://www.alameda.k12.ca.us/index.php/board-of-education/agendas-a-minutes>.

Since the safety of our students and staff is our highest priority, we will continue to take responsible steps to safeguard student and staff well-being in the short run and the long run. We will keep you updated as all of this moves ahead.

Sincerely,

Robert Shemwell  
Chief Business Officer