

**Western Placer Unified School District**  
**Questions from November 5, 2025**  
**Facilities Needs Committee Meeting**

**What Questions Do You Have About New Development?**

**Q:** *You said that village 1 reclassified some of their area from age restricted to something different. Do they now have to pay the fees since they switched classification?*

**A:** Yes, when they pull a building permit they will have to pay the per square foot developer fee for single-family homes instead of the lower fee charged on age-restricted units.

**Q:** *When planning a school why not limit the footprint of the building by keeping it one building with different wings or levels (2 stories)? Why do California schools have the open hallways?*

**A:** This is always an option to design a school as a single building with various “offshoot” wings from a main central hub or building multi-level buildings. We specifically designed the Student Center building at Twelve Bridges High school as one large building combining essentially four separate areas (Gym and locker rooms, Performing Arts classrooms and theater, Kitchen, Seryery, and Eating Room, and Career Technical Education classrooms) in order to be more efficient with site improvement costs and land utilization. The downside to combining spaces into too large of a single building was there were some extra structural and fire life safety design components that the Division of the State Architect required which added some building costs. Enclosed hallways can cause congestion issues when dealing with a significant amount of students all at once, so having more open hallways and exterior corridors provide more room to move efficiently during passing periods.

**Q:** *What is the plan to maintain the schools when new sites are added since clearly maintenance and up keep is already an issue?*

**A:** The District allocates at least 3% of its General Fund each year for routine maintenance expenditures, equating to a budget of \$3,687,245 in 2025-26. The challenges the District faces with its aging schools goes well beyond maintenance. Due to the age of the schools, many of the systems and infrastructure have reached and exceeded their useful life. These systems and infrastructure need to be completely replaced in order to maintain functionality. Simply continuing to maintain them is not enough. The cost to replace outdated systems and infrastructure is more than the District can afford with its ongoing operating budget.

**Q:** *Does the use of solar reduce energy costs for the district, and if so could that energy savings be used to help fund new schools?*

**A:** The District has recently embarked on a project to install solar panels at several school sites. The sites that were selected were based on a comprehensive analysis of the cost to install and maintain the panels as compared to the potential for energy cost savings. Those sites whereby cost savings could be achieved were selected for implementation. Additionally, the District is replacing lighting and HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) systems to create some additional utility cost savings and avoided maintenance costs. The amount of savings generated was enough to fund some additional capital projects at existing school sites.

The District continuously has to balance the needs of existing schools with the need to add capacity for new development. Given the fact that there are very limited funding sources available to improve existing facilities, the District opted to apply the limited energy cost savings to high priority improvements on existing campuses.

With new schools, the District will consider the installation of solar panels. However, the cost savings cannot be directly applied to reduce the construction of the school because that cost savings is realized through a reduction in utility costs in the General Fund. The District would have to borrow against the future General Fund utility costs, which are unknown prior to when a school is built. The cost of the solar panels would actually add to the cost of school construction and could likely be mitigated in the future through utility cost savings.

**Q:** *Who sets the land aside for the school? The city? The developers?*

**A:** As part of the development planning process, including the creation of a Specific Plan, the land use agency (in this case the City of Lincoln) and the developers are required to designate land for a school if the local school district indicates a need for such land to support the development project. Ultimately, this approval is done by the land use agency when they adopt the Specific Plan or any maps related to the development project.

**Q:** *Has the district considered asking for a larger single plot of land to house an elementary and junior high or high school so it saves money on shared community facilities? Provides growth flexibility.*

**A:** We have looked into that as an option when investigating potential site designations in Village 5 at the various grade levels, especially Middle School and High School levels. Speaking with other Districts who have done more of the "Mega-School" or combined school site alternative, it required additional land in the end and more State review and requirements in order to ensure proper separation and coexistence of the grade level configurations. In addition, most developers do not want to set aside such a large block of land to accommodate two to three levels of grade configurations in one area and prefer to offer various standard plots of land that work within their overall plan in order to be economically feasible for them.

**Q:** *How many elementary students and middle school students are projected to go to the TK-8?*

**A:** The new TK-8 planned for Village 7 is intended to accommodate 1,200 students. However, it is difficult to actually operate schools up to 100% capacity due to how many students actually attend at each grade level and students changing classes at the middle school level.

**Q:** *The board voted to close First street- how does that affect capacity at other schools (i.e- does COES now need more \$ for more space? Do we now have to come up w/ money to tear down & expand GEMS?*

**A:** The closure of First Street Elementary will impact COES and Foskett Ranch. Both schools have sufficient capacity to accommodate the anticipated students from First Street based on existing available capacity. However, there could potentially be the need for additional future capacity at

COES. Six additional classrooms can be added to that campus if needed. These improvements can be funded from developer fees.

As far as GEMS, classrooms on the existing GEMS campus would not need to be torn down. The plan is to utilize the First Street footprint to expand GEMS. It is estimated that an additional 13 classrooms will be needed. The District is evaluating whether any of the existing portables on the First Street School campus can be improved or whether new buildings will need to be constructed. These improvements can be funded from Developer Fees because the improvements are directly tied to the need for additional middle school capacity.

**Q:** *It was mentioned that the additional middle school wasn't built because it wasn't needed at the time. Did the district still get the funds? If so can the funds be used NOW for a new campus?*

**A:** There was no dedicated funding for an additional middle school. When the District originally set up its Community Facilities Districts (CFDs), the language allowed for the construction of elementary middle and high school facilities. The amount of money that was ultimately generated from the CFDs was only enough to pay for Foskett Ranch Elementary, Lincoln Crossing Elementary, Twelve Bridges Elementary, and Twelve Bridges Middle. There is no additional funding that can be applied towards a new campus.

**Q:** *Why would the district build schools in the past with the intension of not needing to ever expand? What is the thinking around that?*

**A:** Unfortunately, that decision was very short-sighted. They did not want to use portable classrooms any longer and believed that the best environment for a quality education was permanent buildings. Although that concept may be true, the decision created significant limitations related to an ever-changing student population.

**Q:** *When are the (\$7.08 sqft) fees collected? When the build is finished, when the developer begins build, etc.?*

**A:** Developer fees (currently set at \$7.08/sq. ft.) are paid to the District at the time a building permit is pulled on each home. So, if the development project is built over a 15 year period, the District will receive funding over 15 years.

### **What Questions Do You Have About the School Construction Process?**

**Q:** *What is the process for deciding what contractors are awarded the projects?*

**A:** State and local agencies (including school districts) are subject to California Public Contract Code that governs how contracts for public works are procured, bid, awarded, and administered. It sets the rules for competitive bidding to "responsive and responsible bidders" through public advertising, prequalification of bidders, and the final basis of award. There are various delivery methods that can be utilized such as the traditional Design-Bid-Build where the architect designs the project, the local agency publicly advertises for bids to contractors based on the final plans and specifications, the local agency awards the bid to the lowest "responsive and responsible" bidder, and the project is constructed. An alternative delivery method, which the District uses most frequently, is a Lease

Leaseback Contract where contractors are prequalified for bidding (based on past experience with school projects, financial strength and stability, past history of any claims or disputes, etc.), provide a price proposal for completion of the project based on the final plans and specifications, and awarded the contract based on a "best value" to the local agency. Upon award, a site or portion of a site is leased to the selected contractor, the contractor constructs the project, and leases back the site with improvements to the local agency through monthly lease payments equivalent to the cost of construction and necessary financing.

**Q:** *What does up to code mean?*

**A:** It refers to adherence to the California Building Code (Title 24) which is updated every three years to align with national/universal building codes as the base and amended to address regional concerns such as seismic activities and energy efficiency. When a structure or land improvement is constructed, it is reviewed, approved, and built to the most current adopted codes. When an existing structure and/or land improvement is renovated or updated, it triggers the need to be brought "up to code" or built according to the most recent building codes, etc.

**Q:** *When were the portables at COES built? Have they ever been modernized?*

**A:** There have been many phases to the addition of portables at Creekside Oaks Elementary and throughout the District. The currently installed portables range from 1993 as part of the original school construction to the last installation (MPR) in 2006 with installations in 1995, 1999, and 2002 as well. They have not been fully retrofitted and modernized as a whole building. They have had routine maintenance upgrades as needed.

**Q:** *Do charging stations generate income for the school/district?*

**A:** They could potentially generate some income for the District as the District must charge for the private use of the charging stations. This income would be incorporated into the District's operating budget. However, this is not a substantial funding source as it will mostly cover the energy cost to provide the charging stations with some minimal profit.

**Q:** *Where will the money come from to build/refurbish portables for COES? Where will they go? How will there be enough parking for more staff and parents? How will the cafeteria be big enough?*

**A:** To the extent additional portables are needed for COES, the District is able to use Developer Fees to fund the improvements. As described in the District's 2022 Facilities Master Plan, the improvement plan for COES is a complete reconfiguration of the campus to address many of the noted components. Right now the site itself is bifurcated by the long northern row of portables rendering the north turf and apparatus area not efficiently usable with visibility and supervision issues, so the intent would be to relocate and re-configure classrooms in the north turf and play area to create a useable academic area and open up an active area with better supervision visuals. The intent would also be to expand parking west to the former location of the western portables to accommodate existing and new parking needs. And of course, the intent would be construct a new larger permanent Multi-Purpose Room with kitchen facilities to the front of the campus to accommodate school day and school community needs, provide safer and efficient deliveries to the kitchen and general use, and allow focused use of the MPR without having to open up the whole school site.

## **What Questions Do You Have About School Construction Funding?**

**Q:** *You mentioned Roseville getting elementary schools funded. Roseville has a separate elementary and high school district. Does that have any effect?*

**A:** It does not technically have an impact since developers are required to pay fees for both elementary and high school facilities. However, in practice, development communities desire elementary and middle schools near their development project area and do not necessarily want high schools within their neighborhoods. Further, high schools are much more expensive to build than elementary or middle schools. As such, it is a bit easier to come to agreement on the funding for elementary and middle schools. However, in Roseville in particular, the City strongly encourages full mitigation for school construction from their local developers. The support from the land use agency is the main reason that their schools get funded at a higher level than many other school districts.

**Q:** *Do we have an application already submitted for prop 2?*

**A:** State funding applications can only be submitted for projects that have approved plans and specifications as well as dedicated "matching" funds. The District has a State funding application submitted for the recently completed Phoenix High School project. There are no other applications submitted because the District does not have funds to complete additional projects at this time. But, applications will be submitted expeditiously whenever there are eligible projects.

**Q:** *Can we look at the stage 2 of the Leaman school, is that anticipated to go to TK-8?*

**A:** There are not currently plans for Leaman Elementary School to be converted to a TK-8 campus. Based on the recommendation from the 2022 Facilities Needs Committee, Carlin C. Coppin and Foskett Ranch Elementary Schools were identified as the most likely options. In addition, there are site acreage and building limitations at Leaman. The school site itself is 9.4 acres which is within the acreage guidelines for elementary schools and does not lend itself to be able to accommodate a gymnasium with locker room building and additional playfields for 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. With a site the size of Leaman, all of the buildings would have needed to be two-story wings in order to accommodate the extra site acreage needs for middle school type buildings. The reason Coppin would be able to accommodate a TK-8 concept is the fact the proposal is to demolish the existing buildings and site improvements and completely start from the ground up and allow the two-story concept.