



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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CONTACT: Gail Pinsker
310.450.8338, ext. 70230
gpinsker@smmUSD.org

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SMMUSD Adopts Historical Resources Policy

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School Board of Education approved the district's first historical resources policy and administrative regulation at a special board meeting held February 9, 2021. This policy will guide the district through a multi-step process when considering facilities projects and modernization at all campuses in Santa Monica and Malibu.

District staff worked with the Santa Monica Conservancy to balance the interests of the community, as well as the educational needs of current and future students. The [full policy is online](#).

Ruthann Lehrer, representing the Santa Monica Conservancy expressed full support for the board policy and said, "We greatly appreciate your attention to these important historical resources issues and have appreciated a cooperative working relationship with staff." Lehrer expressed interest in including local ordinance criteria 1, 2, 4 and 5 (see link below) to the administrative regulation, which the board confirmed it would do. She added that she is happy to see the district taking steps to protect historical resources and looks forward to continuing to work together.

In developing the policy (BP 7113), SMMUSD is committed to the following, in summary:

- Engaging qualified professionals to prepare inventories of historical resources located at each SMMUSD school campus, initiating the historical review in a timely manner and adding identified historical resources to the school's historical resources inventory
- Satisfying all legal obligations for environmental review of future projects with respect to historical resources, including review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as applicable
- Engaging architects and engineers with demonstrated preservation expertise to consult and guide the planning and design process
- Consulting with interested third parties, including the Santa Monica Conservancy when potential impacts to identified historic resources are involved
- Renewing efforts to engage the school and broader community throughout the planning and design process for school campuses
- Encouraging, where feasible and warranted, the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of identified historical resources located on SMMUSD campuses consistent with the

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Rehabilitation when consistent with educational goals

- Fostering awareness and appreciation of SMMUSD's identified historical resources, including a program of commemorative plaques in cooperation with the Santa Monica Conservancy
- Expanding educational opportunities for students to study the history of the school facilities and develop a greater appreciation of preservation and local history through heritage education programming
- Feasibly mitigating impacts to historical resources (including studying alternatives to demolition) while SMMUSD creates new learning environments, as science and methodology of learning evolves
- Maintaining and repairing historical resources on SMMUSD campuses
- Striving to meet sustainable environmental goals, which could include the continued use of historical resources through historic preservation and adaptive reuse

Inventoring the district's historical resources will serve as a screening tool that will help inform campus planning and future improvement project decisions. The historical resources inventories for each school will inform the campus planning for Measure SMS and future projects.

"This robust historical resources policy will guide our facility work as we continue to modernize our campuses to accomplish our 21st-century education goals," Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati said. "SMMUSD is committed to historic preservation goals and to adaptive reuse wherever feasible as we uphold our paramount obligation to our educational mission."

SMMUSD is now one of only a few school districts in California with such a policy. These other districts undertake historic resource inventories in accordance with the criteria set forth in The National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources, as will SMMUSD.

The accompanying administrative regulation (AR 7113) adds that the [City of Santa Monica Landmarks Ordinance](#) criteria 1, 2, 4 and 5 may be considered with respect to Santa Monica schools. The school board expressed interest in upholding the district's mission to provide the best education and educational facilities for students, respect historical resources on campuses and acknowledge the preservation interests of the community.

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SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
1651 16TH Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404
ph: 310.450.8338; fax: 310.581.1138
www.smmusd.org Follow us on Twitter: @SMMUSD