

# BUILDING FUTURES

FROM THE FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS OFFICE  
OF THE SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Summer 2023



## McKinley Elementary School

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) has completed some major milestones towards modernizing McKinley Elementary School and is launching into the next phase.

From renovating classrooms with state-of-the-art technology to upgrading and modernizing the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, changes in every corner of the school can be seen and experienced. SMMUSD is in the process of transforming McKinley into a progressive, cutting-edge campus for 21st-century learning.

### **Division of State Architects Approval**

The District expected approval from DSA by the start of summer 2023. DSA approval is required to begin construction. The glut of public works construction projects that came in prior to the code change in January 2023 swamped the Los Angeles DSA office. The District hopes to have approval from DSA by the end of August 2023. While the District can often complete some demolition and site work prior to DSA approval, the District was not permitted to do so on this project.

Construction on the new classroom and administration building was scheduled to begin mid-July. However, there was a delay in receiving approval from the Division of State Architects (DSA), additional environmental testing was required, and the bids for construction came in over budget. The project is on hold.

We appreciate your support as we make improvements that are paid for with funds from bond measure SMS.

*Thank You!*



## New classroom building and administration building:

The new two-story, 24,000- square foot classroom and administration building will provide eight new classrooms with break-out rooms and outdoor learning spaces. The new building will have a designated drive-through drop-off and pick-up, along with a secure entrance to the school, thus, promoting a safer school experience for students, staff and parents. Temporary bungalows will be replaced with large new classrooms with connected outdoor learning spaces that will foster collaborative 21st-century teaching and learning. The new administration building will also provide a health office, reception area, elevator and volunteer office/conference room. The renovation of the school library is currently planned for construction alongside the new classroom building.



*Rendering of new classroom and administration building.  
Please note that project renderings are  
subject to change.*

The new building is estimated to be completed by August 2025.

Prior to starting construction projects that necessitate excavation, the District is required to complete environmental testing. Concentrations of several Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) including tetrachlorethylene (PCE) were identified in soil vapor samples at both 5- and 15-foot depths below ground surface, in excess of California published risk screening levels. Screening levels provide conservative standards against which chemicals detected in soil can be compared to determine preliminary exposure risk and the need for closer evaluation. While the source of the PCE contamination is uncertain, the adjacent dry cleaner is a possibility. It is also possible the contaminants migrated through the sewer lines from nearby properties. Given the age and historic use of the school site, it is not likely that the school property is the source of the VOCs. In addition, results from soil sampling indicated that concentrations of arsenic (above California published screening levels for soil) were present in soils beneath the project area. NV5, the District's environmental specialist, are investigating whether the arsenic in the soil is naturally occurring, or if additional remedies will be required.

While the VOCs would not cause a health hazard for students and staff outdoors due to the low concentrations detected and dilution by outdoor air, there was a concern that the soil vapor had migrated beneath the existing structures. NV5 expeditiously conducted indoor air sampling within the existing classroom buildings to evaluate the potential for sub-slab vapor intrusion. The results did not identify evidence of vapor intrusion negatively impacting the indoor air quality at the school. Furthermore, statistical evaluation of the data also determined that there was no significant difference between the indoor air and outdoor air quality at the school. In the preschool building, nearest to the off-site dry cleaner, in an abundance of caution, adjustments are being made to the ventilation system to reduce the potential for exposure. This was completed prior to the start of school.

## Environmental testing: continued

The District has engaged with the Santa Monica Fire Department (SMFD) and the California Department of Toxic Substance Controls (DTSC) to review the sampling reports, pursue the source and to provide guidance moving forward. NV5 has determined that the new early education building will require the construction of a vapor intrusion mitigation system (VIMS) beneath the new building. The vapor barrier will ensure that the VOC vapor plume will not leech into the new building. The design, approval and public comment period to the vapor barrier has the potential of delaying the project by a few months.

The District will continue to work with NV5, SMFD and DTSC to ensure that the school is safe for students and staff before, during and after construction.

### Construction Costs

The District contracted with Balfour Beatty Construction to be the general contractor to construct the new classroom building. During the bidding of the sub-contractors, the bids received were both more than estimated for several trades and Balfour Beatty received fewer bids than expected in part due to the amount of public works contracts and scarcity of labor. In some cases, the sub bids came in 40% or more over the estimated costs. Balfour Beatty is rebidding the work. The District, architect and contractor are also developing value engineering savings to reduce the costs. This process will take another month as the District seeks to bring the project closer to budget. More to come on this.

## Relocated parking, pick-up and drop-off:

### Relocated parking, pickup and drop off

To make space for the new two-story building, staff parking and student drop-off / pickup areas needed to be relocated.

The staff parking lot will be relocated to the Eastbound side of Arizona Avenue. Drop-off and pick up location and instructions will be changed and will be communicated prior to the impact.

We understand that construction is challenging. The District is working diligently to limit distractions and safety is the top priority.

The work described is being done with funds from voter-approved measure SMS.

Thank you for your support!

