

Lyons Canyon Ranch Draft Environmental Impact Report

5.12 SCHOOLS/EDUCATION

The project site is within the Newhall School District (Newhall District) and the William S. Hart Union High School District (Hart District). This section of the EIR evaluates impacts of the proposed project on schools in those districts that currently provide public elementary, junior high, and high school education in the project area.

5.12.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Newhall District provides elementary school service (grades K through 6), while the Hart District serves the project area for junior high education (grades 7 and 8) and high school education (grades 9 through 12).

NEWHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

There are a total of nine elementary schools within the Newhall District, with a total enrollment 6,716 students in the 2004/2005 school year.¹ State School Construction Bonds were approved by the California electorate in November 2002 authorizing \$13.2 billion of school facility construction funding which eliminated a backlog of approximately \$4 billion, and provides substantial additional funds for new construction. In addition, the Newhall District has voted to incur debt in order to fund future school construction. A new school will be opening in September, 2005 in the Westridge community. The shift of student populations will affect some capacity numbers and many enrollment numbers at various sites at that time. However, the schools closest to Lyons Canyon Ranch are experiencing student populations approaching or above capacity.

Wiley Canyon Elementary School, located approximately 0.9 miles east of the project site in Newhall, or Pico Canyon Elementary School, located approximately 0.3 miles northwest of the project site in Stevenson Ranch, would serve students living in the project area. As illustrated in Table 5.12-1, *Newhall District Enrollment/Capacity*, six of the elementary schools are over capacity, including Pico Canyon Elementary, and the remaining three elementary schools are near capacity.

¹ Per phone conversation with Mike Clear, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services for the Newhall School District, on November 10, 2004.

**Lyons Canyon Ranch
Draft Environmental Impact Report**

**Table 5.12-1
Newhall District Enrollment/Capacity**

School	Capacity	Current Enrollment
McGrath	624	695
Meadows	624	679
Newhall	744	712
Old Orchard	600	594
Peachland	576	626
Pico Canyon Elementary School	816	851
Stevenson Ranch	888	1,008
Valencia Valley	696	772
Wiley Canyon Elementary School	792	779

Source: Per written communication with Marc Winger, Ed.D., Superintendent, Newhall School District on March 18, 2004.

WILLIAM S. HART UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

There are a total of six junior high schools and six high schools within the William S. Hart Union High School District (Hart District). Total student capacity within the District is 23,298 students, including the temporary capacity provided by relocatable classrooms. Total student enrollment in the District as of October 2004 was 20,026 students. The District opened one new junior high school and two high schools in the fall of 2004. Golden Valley High School opened in the fall of 2004 with 35 classrooms and 25 relocatable classrooms for a total capacity of 2,600 students. West Ranch High School includes 35 classrooms and 25 relocatable classrooms with a total capacity of 2,600 students. Currently, West Ranch High School accommodates 9th and 10th Grades, and one grade will be added every year after that, with anticipated full buildout by the fall of 2007. Rancho Pico Junior High School opened with 23 classrooms and six relocatable classrooms for a total capacity of 1,200 students. These schools are being funded through SB 50 (discussed below) and Hardship funds under SB 50. In addition, the Hart District has voted to incur debt in order to fund future school construction.

Placerita Junior High School, located approximately 1.5 miles northeast of the project site, and Hart High School, located approximately 1.5 miles east of the project site, would potentially serve students living in the project area. As illustrated in Table 5.12-2, Hart District Enrollment/Capacity, only Hart High School is operating over capacity.

**Table 5.12-2
Hart District Enrollment/Capacity**

School	Capacity	Current Enrollment
Arroyo Seco Junior High School	1,589 ¹	1,302
La Mesa Junior High School	1,394 ¹	1,165
Placerita Junior High School	1,236 ¹	1,178
Rancho Pico Junior High School	1,200	642
Rio Norte Junior High School	1,568 ¹	1,121
Sierra Vista Junior High School	1,221 ¹	1,422
Canyon High School	2,538 ¹	2,747
Golden Valley High School	2,600	989
Hart High School	2,315 ¹	2,847

Lyons Canyon Ranch Draft Environmental Impact Report

Saugus High School	2,273 ¹	2,718
Valencia High School	2,764 ¹	3,217
West Ranch High School	2,600 ²	678 ²
Notes:		
1. Capacity includes temporary capacity provided by relocatable classrooms.		
2. Opened fall 2004 for 9 th grade only. Permanent campus with 35 classrooms and 24 relocatable classrooms will open in August 2005.		
Source: Per communication with Lorna Burrill, William S. Hart Union High School District. March 28, 2005.		

SCHOOL FUNDING

The State of California has traditionally been responsible for the funding of local public schools. To assist in providing facilities to serve students generated by new development projects, the State passed Assembly Bill 2926 (AB 2926) in 1986. This bill allowed school districts to collect impact fees from developers of new residential and commercial/industrial building space. Development impact fees were also referenced in the 1987 Leroy Greene Lease-Purchase Act, which required school districts to contribute a matching share of project costs for construction, modernization, or reconstruction.

Senate Bill 50 (SB 50) and Proposition 1A (both of which passed in 1998) provided a comprehensive school facilities financing and reform program by, among other methods, authorizing a \$9.2 billion school facilities bond issue, school construction cost containment provisions, and an eight-year suspension of the Mira, Hart, and Murrieta court cases. Specifically, the bond funds are to provide \$2.9 billion for new construction and \$2.1 billion for reconstruction/modernization needs. The provisions of SB 50 prohibit local agencies from denying either legislative or adjudicative land use approvals on the basis that school facilities are inadequate and reinstate the school facility fee cap for legislative actions (e.g., general plan amendments, specific plan adoption, zoning plan amendments) as was allowed under the Mira, Hart, and Murrieta court cases. According to Government Code Section 65996, the development fees authorized by SB 50 are deemed to be “full and complete school facilities mitigation.” These provisions are in effect until 2006 and will remain in place as long as subsequent state bonds are approved and available.

SB 50 establishes three levels of Developer Fees that may be imposed upon new development by the governing board of a school district depending upon certain conditions within a district.

However, to accommodate students from the proposed development project, both the Newhall and Hart school districts have established School Facilities Funding and Mitigation Agreements with the project developer. These special resolutions and agreements have allowed the school districts to collect school mitigation funds in excess of the developer fees allowed under SB 50 for the purposes of funding permanent school facilities to service the additional elementary and secondary school students generated by the proposed project. Please refer to Appendix P of this Draft EIR for the full text of these school mitigation agreements.

**Lyons Canyon Ranch
Draft Environmental Impact Report**

5.12.2 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD CRITERIA

Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* contains the Initial Study Environmental Checklist form used during preparation of the project Initial Study, which is contained in Appendix A of this EIR. The Initial Study includes questions relating to schools/education. The issues presented in the Initial Study Checklist have been utilized as thresholds of significance in this Section. Accordingly, a project may create a significant environmental impact if one or more of the following occurs:

- ◆ Substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives.

5.12.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

NEWHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

- ◆ ***PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WOULD INCREASE STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN THE NEWHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: The Newhall District estimates that the proposed project would generate approximately 44 elementary age students.² Project elementary students would likely attend Wiley Canyon Elementary School or Pico Canyon Elementary School. As illustrated in Table 5.12-1, Wiley Canyon Elementary School has a current capacity of 792 students and as of the 2004/2005 school year, a total enrollment of 779 students. Newhall District projects enrollment for the 2007/2008 school year of 947 students. Therefore, it is projected that Wiley Canyon Elementary School would be over capacity by the year 2010 (anticipated project buildout).

As illustrated in Table 5.12-1, Pico Canyon Elementary School has a current capacity of 816 students and as of the 2004/2005 school year, a total enrollment of 851 students. Newhall District projects enrollment for the 2005/2006 school year to reach 868 students and a projected enrollment for the 2007/2008 school year of 1,044 students. Therefore, it is projected that Pico Canyon Elementary School would be over capacity by the year 2010 (anticipated project buildout).

Since neither Wiley Canyon Elementary School nor Pico Canyon Elementary School have capacity to accept additional students, students generated from the proposed project would likely have to be bussed to other schools within the District. However, as also illustrated in Table 5.12-

² Per written communication with Marc Winger, Ed.D., Superintendent, Newhall School District on February 26, 2004.

Lyons Canyon Ranch

Draft Environmental Impact Report

1, all the other schools are currently either near or over capacity. In addition, the Newhall District has stated that they would not displace currently assigned neighborhoods to accommodate new students, resulting in significant impacts.³

Pursuant to SB 50, payment of fees to the Newhall District is considered full mitigation for project impacts, including impacts related to the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives for schools. Therefore, the Newhall District has required the project applicant to enter into a mitigation agreement that would require payment of fees in excess of the statutory limit, so that space can be constructed at the nearest sites to accommodate the impact of project-generated students. Project participation in the mitigation agreement would reduce impacts to the Newhall District to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

- SE1 Project participation in a mitigation agreement with the Newhall District fully mitigates project specific impacts on this district. This agreement would provide full funding of the costs to construct new facilities necessary to house the additional students generated by the project. Therefore, the developer shall enter into a School Facilities Funding and Mitigation Agreement with Newhall School District prior to issuance building permits for the first residential unit.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

HART DISTRICT

- ◆ ***PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WOULD INCREASE STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN THE HART DISTRICT.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: The Hart District provides student generation rates based upon the type of residential development. As illustrated in Table 5.12-3, Hart Student Generation Rates, the proposed project would result in a total of 16 junior high school students and 23 high school students.

³ *Ibid.*

**Lyons Canyon Ranch
Draft Environmental Impact Report**

**Table 5.12-3
Hart Student Generation Rates**

School	Student Generation Factor	Single-Family Detached	Project Total ¹
Junior High School	0.1713	95	16
High School	0.2466	95	23
Notes:			
1. Project Total assumes that 95 single-family detached units 95 senior units would be developed. The 95 senior units were assumed to have no school impact.			
Source: Student generation rates adopted by the Governing Board on March 16, 2005.			

Project junior high school students would likely attend Placerita Junior High School and high school students would likely attend Hart High School. As illustrated in Table 5.12-2, Placerita Junior High School only has capacity for an additional 58 students. In addition, Hart High School is already over capacity. Since neither Placerita Junior High School nor Hart High School have capacity to accept additional students, students generated from the proposed project would likely have to be bussed to other schools within the District. However, as also illustrated in Table 5.12-2, most of the other schools are currently either near or over capacity. In addition, the Hart District has stated that they would not displace currently assigned neighborhoods to accommodate new students, resulting in significant impacts.

Pursuant to SB 50, payment of fees to the Hart District is considered full mitigation for project impacts, including impacts related to the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, or other performance objectives for schools. The Hart District therefore has required the applicant to enter into a fair share mitigation agreement so that space can be constructed at the nearest sites to accommodate the impact of project-generated students. Compliance with the fee payment requirements as specified within fair share mitigation agreement would reduce impacts to the Hart District to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures:

- SE2 Project participation in the fair share mitigation agreement with the Hart District fully mitigates project specific impacts on this district. This agreement would provide full funding of the costs to construct new facilities necessary to house the additional students generated by the project. Therefore, the developer shall enter into a School Facilities Funding and Mitigation Agreement with the William S. Hart School District prior to issuance building permits for the first residential unit.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.

5.12.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- ◆ ***DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND OTHER RELATED PROJECTS WOULD INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES WITHIN THE NEWHALL AND HART SCHOOL DISTRICTS.***

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation: Significant Impact.

Impact Analysis: A significant cumulative impact could occur if a project does not contribute its fair share to mitigate adverse effects on school facilities. However, the school funding agreements into which the project applicant has entered with respective school districts are intended to mitigate the project impacts so that it will not contribute to education impacts. Cumulative impacts on schools may be mitigated through the school facilities funding agreements between the districts and proposed project applicant, or through other mechanisms, such as SB 50, the Valley-Wide Joint Fee Resolution, and/or future facilities funding agreements between the districts and the developers of new residential projects. Assuming such mechanisms are implemented for each new residential development included in the related projects, cumulative impacts on schools caused by other future residential development would be mitigated to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: Refer to Mitigation Measures SE1 and SE2. No additional mitigation is required as prescribed by State Law.

Level of Significance After Mitigation: Less Than Significant Impact.