



NEWS RELEASE

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Enhancements to infrastructure in store for Walden West Science Center

SAN JOSE, CA – Building renovations and site enhancements are on deck at the Walden West Science Center in Saratoga as part of the 2015-16 Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) budget. Eight specific projects, ranging from replacing dormitories to extending the fire road, are scheduled to be completed during this new school year at a budgeted cost of \$870,000.

“With some original construction dating back to the 1950s, these upgrades to enhance the facility infrastructure will support the long-term viability of the Walden West program and allow us to continue to ensure a high quality outdoor education experience for students,” said Jon R. Gundry, Superintendent of Schools.

While the original proposal for these enhancements was drafted late this past winter as part of the annual budget planning process, the project was delayed while the SCCOE convened a special task force to examine the policies and procedures following the arrest of a former employee on sexually related charges. The budgeted amount now includes \$50,000 set aside for any safety enhancements that may be recommended by the Walden West Management Task Force.

The plan calls for the demolition and replacement of one building and the complete renovation of another. In addition to the physical improvements, these upgrades will also reallocate and maximize the efficiency of space. Other upgrades include the drilling of a second well, a back-up generator and an extension to the fire road to the rear of the facility. Other additional emergency preparedness recommendations are also being evaluated.

The projects will be prioritized and go through the formal bid process, which is expected to commence soon.

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