

New Home Construction and What It Means for the School District

I understand that there are many conflicting and confusing stories about how the district is prepared to handle the student growth that will occur as a result of new developments within our district boundaries. The purpose of this message is to provide some basic information about how new school construction is funded when there is student growth due to new developments. In addition, I hope to clarify some of the information or misinformation regarding decisions about moving to all K-8 schools.

School districts are entitled to collect impact fees for all new construction done within the district boundaries. The amount per square foot is established by the state and varies from one district to the next. Generally, the impact fees generated by the price per square foot are not sufficient to build the facilities needed to serve the students generated by the large housing project. If a large number of homes are being built, the school district can negotiate with the developer to form a Community Facilities District (CFD) Special Tax Bond which is paid annually by the new home owners. In Rio Vista, the new developer and the district approved a mitigation agreement that will provide adequate funding to build new school facilities. These funds will enable the district to provide school improvements at each of the school sites where the additional students will be served.

The fees collected must be used for school facilities and cannot be used for other operating expenses in the district. For example, these impact fees cannot be used for salaries and benefits, hiring new staff or other operating expenses.

As with any negotiations, prior to finalizing the agreement, it is prudent to have some initial plans regarding how the district plans to accommodate the new students. We have discussed a number of options one of which is the transformation of the schools in both Isleton and Rio Vista to a K-8 configuration. This is the most cost-effective method of housing the additional students.

However, I want to stress, the K-8 configuration is only one of the ideas that has been discussed as a possibility. There have been no final decisions regarding school configuration or how we will house the students.

As the pace of development and the increase in student enrollment becomes more clear, we will be able to provide more information. In addition, we will solicit community input on both the configuration of schools, and the design of the new facilities to house the growth. I expect that these meetings will begin in the fall of 2019.

If you have any questions, please feel free to send an email to me at dbeno@rdusd.org.