



Our students will shape and lead the future

News release

Oct. 29, 2015

Impact fees pay to build new schools, right?

No. Impact fees only cover a *very small portion* of the full cost of new schools or new classroom space.

This fact was clear on Oct. 20 when the school board received mitigation fees resulting from a 25-unit, new, single family development in the district's southern region.

The amount? \$53,741 – just about enough to cover one third of the cost of a new portable classroom.

Demographers calculate that 25 new, single family homes could add 14 new students in the district. That's 14 students who might be scattered in kindergarten through high school. If those students were all at one grade or at one school, they would about fill half of a portable classroom.

Last summer the district bought and installed 16 portable classrooms for schools in the central and southern portions of the district. Crews set the portables in place to meet this fall's enrollment increase. At approximately \$160,000 each, the 16 portables cost a total of \$2,560,000.



Forest View Elementary in the southern portion of the district is the district's newest school. It opened in 2007 because of population growth in that area. The district needs to build another elementary and another high school in that region.

"We are very grateful to receive mitigation and impact fees," said Executive Director of Facilities and Operations Mike Gunn. Gunn noted the fees are sometimes called 'mitigation' fees and sometimes called 'impact' fees. "Whatever the name, they are essentially the same," he said. "Developers pay different rates of fees based upon in which county or city jurisdiction their developments lie. For this district, the fees range from a low of about \$900 per unit to a high of about \$5,000."

(more)



Gunn acknowledged the irony evident in those numbers. The latest fee collection of \$53,741 for 25 units in the southern part of the district is not at the high end of the collection scale – for a development in an area that is growing fastest and where the schools are most crowded.

“The laws require developers to pay a small portion of new school costs,” Gunn emphasized. But the bulk of the cost for new schools comes from the residents of that school district. Owners of the newly developed properties also help pay those costs once they begin living here.”

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