

South Coast schools look to restore portables

By Julia Reis [julia@hmbreview.com] | Posted: Thursday, March 6, 2014 10:52 am

La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District is looking for the green light from the California Division of the State Architect to restore two portables for classroom use by next school year.

District administrators contracted with the San Francisco-based DSK Architects last June to create drawings to submit to the Division of the State Architect. The district is required to get state approval since the portables, which were used for classrooms several years ago, are currently being used for storage. Such structures often are preapproved by the state architect but must be approved for use at a particular location.

“We are working to bring a portable at (Pescadero High School) and a portable at (Pescadero Elementary School) back to classroom use to alleviate space issues,” said La Honda-Pescadero Unified Superintendent Amy Wooliever in an email. “Current space restrictions at PHS has resulted in teachers sharing classrooms (not teaching at the same time) and made scheduling difficult. At PES, we were recently able to move our library and small teaching spaces out of our multi-use room but have had to combine our fifth-grade students at La Honda (Elementary School) for reasons of space as well as class sizes.”

Wooliever added that the district is working to bring its fifth-grade elementary school students back to Pescadero Elementary, but additional class space will be necessary to make this possible.

The district is waiting on two additional documents and approval of the \$500 application check from the San Mateo County Office of Education. Wooliever expects it will submit its application to DSA within a week. If DSA approves the use of the portables for classes, the district would then need to put in new carpets and do other improvement work.

Wooliever did not know the portables’ ages, though she said they were placed on district property between 1997 and 2001.

One item that remains to be seen is whether the district needs a Coastal Development Permit.

Wooliever said the district received occupancy clearance for the portables when they were used as classrooms five years ago and that she would check with the county as to whether one was necessary now.

County planner Melissa Ross said the department would have to see the district’s plans to know for certain.

“It is possible they might need a coastal development permit or (have) potential for exemption,” Ross said. “They should go through the county and come in with a proposal so we can take a look at it.”

Local Coastal Program policies dictate that all development in the coastal zone requires either a coastal development permit or exemption.