



Board Agenda Item 42

DATE: January 27, 2026

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Sally Gomez, County Librarian
David Rodriguez, Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission

SUBJECT: Historic Landmark: Centennial School, Sierra High School

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Approve designation and placement of Sierra High School on the County's Register of Centennial Schools; and**
- 2. Authorize the Chairman to execute the certificate for a Centennial School.**

Approval of these actions will allow Sierra High School to be placed on the County's Register of Centennial Places comprised of physical surroundings and localities used for special purposes with 100 years or more of activity in Fresno County. It would become the 355th landmark on the local register. The Historic Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission recommends historic sites and structures to be listed on the Fresno County's List of Historic Places. Approval by the Board of Supervisors encourages preservation of our County's history. Although this location pertains to a location in District 5, this item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board could choose to not approve these actions, which would result in the school district not being placed on the County's Register of Centennial Schools at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions.

DISCUSSION:

The Sierra Union High School District was organized on March 8, 1922. It has been in continuous use for over one hundred years at 33326 Lodge Road, Tollhouse at its original location. The high school originally operated as Sierra Union High School District (SUHSD) until 1973, when the school name was changed to Sierra High School (SHS). The SUHSD was established by uniting the following school districts: Big Sandy, Mountain View, Sentinel, Pleasant Vale, Manzanita, and Mechanicsville. This small rural school district became the central hub for the community and through its existence played a key role in the development of this specific part of Fresno County.

The first high school board of trustees included W.E. Maxwell, Academy; R.E. Moncrief, Prather; C.S. Scott, Prather; W.B. Weldon, Tollhouse; and W.H. Yancy, Tollhouse. With just two teachers at inception, rapid growth would later be experienced in the area, courtesy of the wealthy Southern California Edison Company hydroelectric projects. SUHSD became a joint district in 1938, with the addition of North Fork District in Madera County.

During the 1940s through the 1960s, the area continued to experience an influx of residents and in turn, the school district as well as the high school continued to expand.

Historically this district and, by extension, the high school has served students living long distances from the area. Some students had to ride a bus for up to five hours each day just to attend school. Students attending SUHSD would come from areas which were difficult to reach due to snow and bad weather conditions. During winter months, bus trips of up to one hundred miles were possible. A dormitory was created allowing for forty students to board throughout the week at the school and then return home for weekends. This dormitory was in use through the 1960s.

SHS is a comprehensive four-year high school with a rich history of service. It is currently located in a beautiful valley between the foothill communities of Tollhouse, Prather, and Auberry. The district is located in Fresno County and draws students from a 2,100 square mile with many students attending SHS living above the 7,000-foot elevation, and many living in the surrounding foothills, while others come from the San Joaquin Valley floor.

Owing to its length of service and rich history, this high school was unanimously voted for and approved by the Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission as a Centennial School via unanimous vote on November 13, 2025.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Historical Landmark Certificate

CAO ANALYST:

Mary Lu Valencia