

Riverside Unified School District Alternative, Occupational and Special Education

Background

Palm Center School on Magnolia Avenue and the Educational Options Center/Raincross High School on Lincoln Avenue are two of the three primary sites under the Adult Alternative and Continuing Education Services of the Riverside Unified School District. Palm Center School has been used as a school site since 1875. The present building was constructed in 1924.

Enrollment at these facilities averages more than 4,000 students annually. The primary source of funding for these programs comes from state apportionment. The remainder comes from state and federal grants.

Seventy-nine teachers are on staff at Palm Center. Many hold masters and doctorate degrees. Courses are designed to help students improve their reading, grammar, arithmetic and life skills. Students work at their own pace in the computerized literacy lab. Sixty networked touch-screen computers with interactive videos, CD ROMS and integrated audio provide learning services to students with remedial needs. GED certificates are awarded to those who qualify.

Life School for developmentally disabled adults, a part of Palm Center School, is located at the Palm Center campus. Life School currently provides a year-round, full day program developing job skills which leads to independent living in the community.

The Education Options Center on Lincoln Avenue in Riverside was designed to have a traditional classroom environment with business oriented on-the-job training such as:

1. The Roundup Restaurant which develops proficiency in cooking, cashiering, catering and management.
2. Merchandising in a classroom retail setting is taught in the General Store that carries gifts, cards, specialty items and supplies.
3. A limited number of other programs include a floral design/florist, graphic design, screen printing, desktop publishing and computer classes.

In 1947, the Riverside Unified School District Board of Education authorized plans for a special class for children with orthopedic problems residing in the surrounding area. The school for physically disabled children in the age range of three to ten years became a reality and was named Sunshine School. Late in 1990, the Sunshine School was

renamed the Sunshine Early Childhood Center and began providing service from prenatal to five years only.

School-age developmentally disabled/impaired students attend regular schools, while the adult developmentally disabled/impaired students attend the Life School at Palm Center.

Findings

1. A plaque, posted at the Palm Center School near the main entrance, warns the public that the building does not meet the structural standards for schools for earthquake safety. (Reference Ed. Code Sec. 15503.5)
2. At Life School (part of Palm Center School), approximately thirty-nine developmentally impaired adult students are in one classroom which tends to pose a serious control problem. This program is conducted by one teacher and two teachers' aides.
3. At Sunshine Early Childhood Center the present carpeting is old and frayed which could cause students, employees and visitors to trip.

Recommendations

The Riverside Unified School District:

1. Provide a suitable earthquake-safe building for students at Palm Center.
2. Limit class size at Life School to not more than twenty students each.
3. Replace carpeting at the Sunshine Early Childhood Center.