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Contact: Bill Billingsley, (760) 731-5405

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### **NEW SCHOOL UNDER WAY FOR MILITARY-DEPENDENT STUDENTS AT CAMP PENDLETON**

*Expansion to provide space for improved science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs and computer labs with wireless internet*

**MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON** — The foundation has been poured for a new school that has been years in the making for the Fallbrook Union Elementary School District.

Work on the brand-new San Onofre School got under way even before the official groundbreaking ceremony in December, but an increase in activity over the past weeks has really shown a modern campus taking shape.

The new construction is going on adjacent to the existing school, which was built in 1974 to serve the Marine Corps base's families. A second phase was added three years later.

San O's students, known as the Panthers, will continue to attend class in the current facilities while the new school is being built. When it's done, the old buildings will be replaced with a playground.

A \$72 million federal grant awarded to the district to expand its two schools located aboard the military base — the other schools is Mary Fay Pendleton School — will enhance student learning by providing space for new technology, art and music, as well as improved drop-off areas and sports fields.

The Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment monies fund the majority of the project, while 20 percent matching state funds make up the rest.

The modern, two-story campus will boast a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment that features improved science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs and computer labs with wireless internet. The school will also expand grades, moving from K-6 to K-8.

The student-led groundbreaking ceremony held Dec. 14 began with a welcome message from fifth-graders Seth Kessler and Angelyka Dilling. Honored guests included the governing board and Col. Joseph Williams, the Marine Corps Installations West chief of staff. Remarks delivered by Valentina Ugalde, who is in the third grade, and Kendall Breslin, a fifth-grader, put student leadership skills on center stage.

"Thinking of one word to sum up the San O community, I thought of kindness," Kendall said. "Everyone here is loved, everyone is important and we practice kindness."

Valentina pointed to the close-knit community's support of each other as one of the school's unique qualities.

"We are not afraid to face challenges," she said. "Because you know you're not alone."

Construction of the new school is expected to be complete within two years.

Once open, it will be able to serve up to 900 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. About 480 students in Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through sixth grade are currently enrolled.

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*Governing Board*

Darryl Buntin

Patty de Jong

Lisa Masten

Patrick Rusnell

Siegrid Stillman

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