

# DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

## DEXTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPLACEMENT FORT MOORE, GA

### 1 Introduction

Fort Moore has prepared this environmental assessment (EA) to examine the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects of building a new elementary school in the Main Post Cantonment Area at Fort Moore, Georgia. This EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA); the regulations of the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ); United States (U.S.) Department of the Army (Army) Regulation 200-1, and Army NEPA Regulation (32 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 651).

This EA is a public document that will be used to determine and evaluate the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action, identify possible/potential mitigation measures to lessen or eliminate adverse effects, and examine reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action. The intended audience of the EA is Army decision-makers, interested government agencies, non-governmental organizations, federally recognized Native American Tribes, and members of the public. The effects analyses in this EA are based on a variety of sources and the best available information at the time of preparation. The information contained in this EA will be reviewed and considered by the Army prior to a final decision on how to proceed with the implementation of the Proposed Action, if at all.

### 2 Purpose and Need

Fort Moore is experiencing student capacity issues, and existing schools within the installation, such as at Dexter Elementary School, are aging and requiring more frequent maintenance and repair to expired and failing systems. The existing substandard environment will not be able to support curriculum requirements and will continue to impair the overall education program for students, thus not meeting the necessary learning objectives. Additionally, the required maintenance and repair of expired and failing systems will continue to strain maintenance capabilities and budgets.

The increased number of elementary school age children, including special education and full day or universal pre-kindergarten students residing on Fort Moore, has resulted in student capacity issues within Dexter Elementary School. As a result, there is a need to create a school environment that: meets the 600-student capacity need, supports 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning objectives, provides for overall consolidation, and decreases DoDEA's footprint within the Fort Moore installation.

The goal of DoDEA is “*provide an exemplary education that inspires and prepares all DoDEA students for success in a dynamic, global environment*”. This goal requires schools of the future to be flexible and adaptable, allowing adjustments to new and innovative ways to deliver instruction, and meet the needs of all students. Facility design should satisfy the functional requirements and criteria to meet DoDEA’s 21<sup>st</sup>-century school learning objectives that include innovation in education, curriculum delivery, use of technology, and the requirements for sustainability and energy conservation.

If the Proposed Action were not implemented, this would hinder the implementation of DoDEA 21<sup>st</sup>-century school initiatives to enhance educational opportunities with the continued use of outdated facilities that are undersized, lack optimal functionality for curriculum delivery and use of technology, require extensive maintenance and/or repairs, and do not meet Army mandated requirements for sustainability and energy conservation.

### 3 Description of the Proposed Action

The proposed action involves the replacement of the current Dexter Elementary School in the Main Post Cantonment Area with a new school. The new school will be designed per the standards of DoDEA’s “21<sup>st</sup>-century education specifications” and have the capacity to accommodate a population of 600 students. The proposed new elementary school will be a two-story facility that will consist of improvements to signage, fencing, landscaping, exterior lighting, and utilities. It will also include the development of three playgrounds, hardcourts for basketball, a bicycle trail, and an open grassed field area. All classrooms and supporting facilities will be designed to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible and meet Anti-terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) requirements.

The facilities of the current Dexter Elementary School in the Main Post Cantonment Area would require extensive repair and maintenance to remain in operation as an elementary school facility. Based on DoDEA’s current design standards, the configuration of the current Dexter Elementary School does not meet DoDEA design standards and educational initiatives in terms of space quantity, functional adjacencies, and required spatial relationships.

### 4 Description of the Alternatives

The NEPA, CEQ, and Army NEPA Regulations require a range of reasonable alternatives to be considered and evaluated. The Army used screening criteria to determine which Alternatives were reasonable. For purposes of analysis, an Alternative was considered reasonable if it enabled Fort Moore to accomplish the primary mission of providing an elementary school for the student population, while identifying financially feasible alternatives and the least disturbance to students’ education. Per the screening criteria discussed in the EA, all the Alternatives determined to be reasonable include:

- Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative/Proposed Action)- Replace Dexter Elementary School at the Zuckerman Ave. Site: The proposed location of the alternative is at the Zuckerman Ave. Site. The total proposed acreage impacted by this Alternative project is 14 acres.
- Alternative 2- Replace Dexter Elementary School at the Existing School Site: The proposed location for this alternative is at the southern end of the current Dexter Elementary School site on the 18-acre property. The total proposed acreage impacted by this Alternative project is approximately 7.5 acres.
- No Action Alternative: Under this Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented.

While the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the purpose of or need for the Proposed Action, the No Action Alternative reflects the *status quo* and served as a benchmark against which the Action Alternatives were evaluated.

## 5 Summary of Potential Environmental Effects and Proposed Mitigation

Resources Analyzed	No Action	Alternative 1: Replace Dexter Elementary School at the Zuckerman Ave. Site (Proposed Action)	Alternative 2: Replace Dexter Elementary School at the Existing Site
Utilities	Long-term, negative impacts as a result of aging and failing infrastructure.	Negligible, short-term impacts as a result of utility construction. Long-term, beneficial impacts resulting from energy and conservation measures incorporated into the design of the school.	Same as Alternative 1.
Air Quality	Long-term, minor adverse impacts as a result of emissions and energy use from outdated HVAC systems.	Negligible, short-term impact resulting from construction activities. Negligible to minor long-term adverse impacts	Same as Alternative 1.

		from school emissions.	
Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Analysis	No impacts	Minor, short-term effects from construction of the school. Minor, long-term benefits from more efficient school systems.	Same as Alternative 1.
Wildlife and Migratory Bird Resources	No impacts	Negligible effects as a result of potential habitat loss.	Same as Alternative 1.
Vegetation Resources	No impacts	Minor, long-term effects as a result of vegetation removal. Minor, long-term benefits as a result of plantings.	Same as Alternative 1.
Threatened and Endangered Species	No impacts	No impacts	Same as Alternative 1.
Historical and Cultural Resources	No impacts	No adverse effect. Impact of new construction minimized and mitigated by design. The Army Alternate Procedures, as outlined in the 2018 Historic Properties Component, will be followed.	No adverse effect. Historic structures are present within the viewshed of the project area. Recent modern development has already impacted the integrity of the area, so no adverse effects are anticipated.
Noise	No impacts	Short-term, minor impacts as a result of construction activities.	Same as Alternative 1.
Geology and Soils	No impacts	Short-term, minor impacts as a result of ground disturbances.	Same as Alternative 1.
Traffic and Transportation	Long-term, adverse impacts as a result	Long-term, minor impacts as a result	Long-term, moderate impacts

	of congestion with traffic and limited pedestrian access.	of construction activities. Long-term benefits as a result of reduced traffic in the area and increased pedestrian opportunities.	as a result of construction activities and traffic increase in an already congested and busy area.
Water Resources	Long-term, minor impacts as a result of inadequate stormwater runoff.	Short-term, minor adverse impacts as a result of construction activities. Significant long-term, benefits as a result of stormwater management.	Same as Alternative 1.
Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste	No impacts	Negligible to minor effects from hazardous material storage and handling during construction.	Negligible effects from hazardous material storage and handling during construction.
Land Use	No impacts	Negligible, short-term impact during construction. Positive, long-term impact due to relocation of dog park and additional recreational opportunities at the new school.	Same as Alternative 1.
Safety	No impacts	Negligible, short-term impacts during construction.	Same as Alternative 1.

## 6 Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

The EA titled “Environmental Assessment for the Dexter Elementary School Replacement, Fort Moore, Georgia,” was prepared and evaluated pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (Public law 91-190, 42 USC. 4321 et seq.). This EA concluded that the proposed action does not constitute a “major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the natural and human environment,” when considered individually or cumulatively in the context of the proposed action, including

both direct and indirect impacts. Therefore, the preparation of a more detailed environmental document, an Environmental Impact Statement, was not required.

## 7 Public Availability

The EA and this Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) are available to the public for a 30-day public comment period. An announcement that these documents are available was published via a Notice of Availability (NOA) circulated to individuals and organizations on the distribution list and posted in the Citizen of East Alabama, Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, and The Journal. Hard copies of the EA and Draft FONSI have been made available for public review at four libraries in the region: Phenix City-Russell County Library, Columbus Public Library, Cusseta-Chattahoochee Public Library, and Milton E. Long Library on Fort Moore. These documents are also available on the Fort Moore website at <https://www.moore.army.mil/Garrison/DPW/EMD/Legal.html>.

The NOA of the EA and Draft FONSI has been mailed and e-mailed to all agencies/individuals/organizations on the Fort Moore NEPA distribution (mailing) list, as identified in Section 9 of the EA. As part of the Fort Moore's on-going, established process and dialogue with the Federally recognized Native American Tribes affiliated with the Fort Moore area, the Army has provided each Tribe with a copy of these documents for consolidation via review and comment.

Written public comments should be addressed to:

**Mr. Britt Horton**; NEPA Program Manager; AMIM-MOP-EP; 6650 Meloy Drive; Building 6, Room 309; Fort Moore, Georgia 31905; or via-email at [Brittnea.i.horton.civ@army.mil](mailto:Brittnea.i.horton.civ@army.mil)

For further information or to request a copy of the documents, please contact **Mr. Britt Horton**; 6650 Meloy Drive; building 6, Room 309; Fort Moore, Georgia 31905; or email [Brittnea.i.horton.civ@army.mil](mailto:Brittnea.i.horton.civ@army.mil)

Consider including deadline for comment in this section

## 8 Conclusions

Based on this EA, it is concluded that Alternative 1, Proposed Action Alternative, with its associated facility construction, would meet the purpose and need for a neighborhood elementary school. Potential adverse effects are similar among all the alternatives. Alternative 1 has been selected as it best meets the purpose and need for the proposed action. This alternative would address the needs of the current and future planned neighborhoods on Main Post and would provide 21st- century learning objectives to include innovation in education, curriculum delivery, use of technology, and the requirements for sustainability and energy conservation. The Zuckerman Ave. site, due to its proximity to the neighborhoods that it would serve, would provide better access to the community, including pedestrian access. No short or long-term significant

adverse impacts are anticipated under this alternative. Sustainability measures for energy and water conservation are incorporated into the design which further reduces the impacts to resources. The site design has included a 25-foot buffer to avoid impacts to water resources on site. Additionally, impacts to historic and cultural resources are addressed. The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need for providing an elementary school to serve the student population of the Main Post Cantonment Area.

Pursuant to NEPA, CEQ, and Army NEPA Regulations, the implementation of Alternative 1 for the Proposed Action would not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment. As such, a "Finding of No Significant Impact" is warranted for this Proposed Action and will not require the preparation on an Environmental Impact Statement.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:

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Date

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Jerel D. Evans  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Garrison Commander