



FACT CHECK: PORTOLA HIGH SCHOOL

Irvine Unified School District

OVERVIEW

This August, the Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) will open Portola High School, Irvine's fifth comprehensive high school. We share the community's excitement about the opening of our new state-of-the-art school that will serve generations of Irvine students and their families for years to come. However, the District is concerned about the continued and deliberate dissemination of information that mischaracterizes IUSD's actions to ensure the safety of the school site. IUSD's Fact Check provides thorough factual information and corrections to set the record straight.

The District's priority is to ensure the safety of our students, their families, our staff and anyone on our school sites. Our job and promise is to provide the highest quality educational experience we can envision and that includes ensuring our students and school sites are safe.

For more information, including a comprehensive history of the Portola High School site, visit iusd.org/portolaconstruction.



MISLEADING STATEMENT:

No expert has declared the school site safe for children.



FACT CHECK:

The following agencies and experts have studied, tested and approved the land for the Portola High School site and determined it is safe for children, staff and the community:

- California Department of Education
- California Environmental Protection Agency Department of Toxic Substances Control
- Department of the Navy
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- California Environmental Protection Agency State Water Resources Control Board
- Nationally respected IUSD consultants, including soil scientists, geologists, toxicologists, engineers, environmental scientists and construction experts



MISLEADING STATEMENT:

The Portola High School site has not been comprehensively tested, including the center of the site.



FACT CHECK:

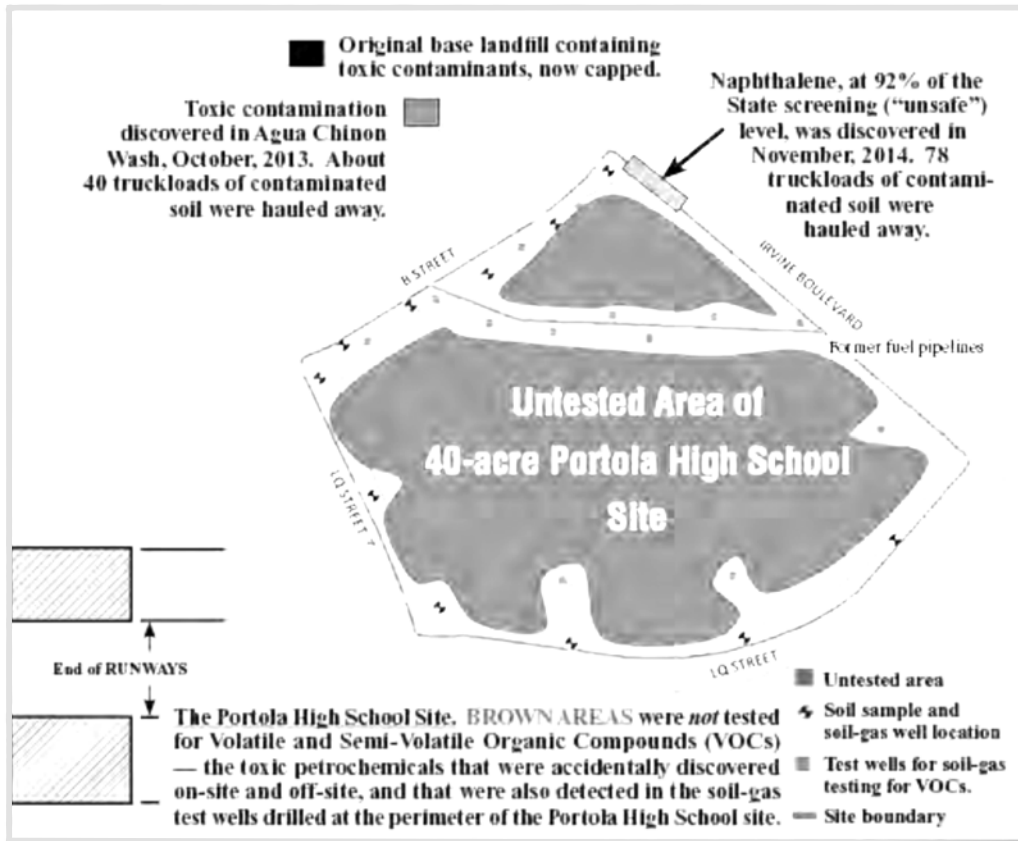
Under the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) oversight and in accordance with stringent California law, IUSD's consultants have conducted more than 200 tests throughout the school site. Test site locations are shown on the 2014 school-site map located on Page 2. Based on the results of the tests, the DTSC documented no threat to public health or the environment. Subsequently, in April 2014, both CDE and DTSC gave IUSD final approvals to build Portola High School. The requirements IUSD followed to ensure the safety of the school site are more rigorous than those required for residential developments.

Through a public records request in April 2015, those behind a local political publication, responsible for disseminating misleading information, received scientific documentation from IUSD that the school site had been thoroughly tested (see actual testing map on Page 2). However, the publication printed a map claiming the majority of the school site was "untested" (see misleading map on Page 2). Factual information was actively deleted from the map that has appeared in print for nearly a year. In the interest of providing accurate information for the public to consider, IUSD has provided both maps on the following page.

COMPARISON OF IUSD SITE MAP AND MISLEADING MAP

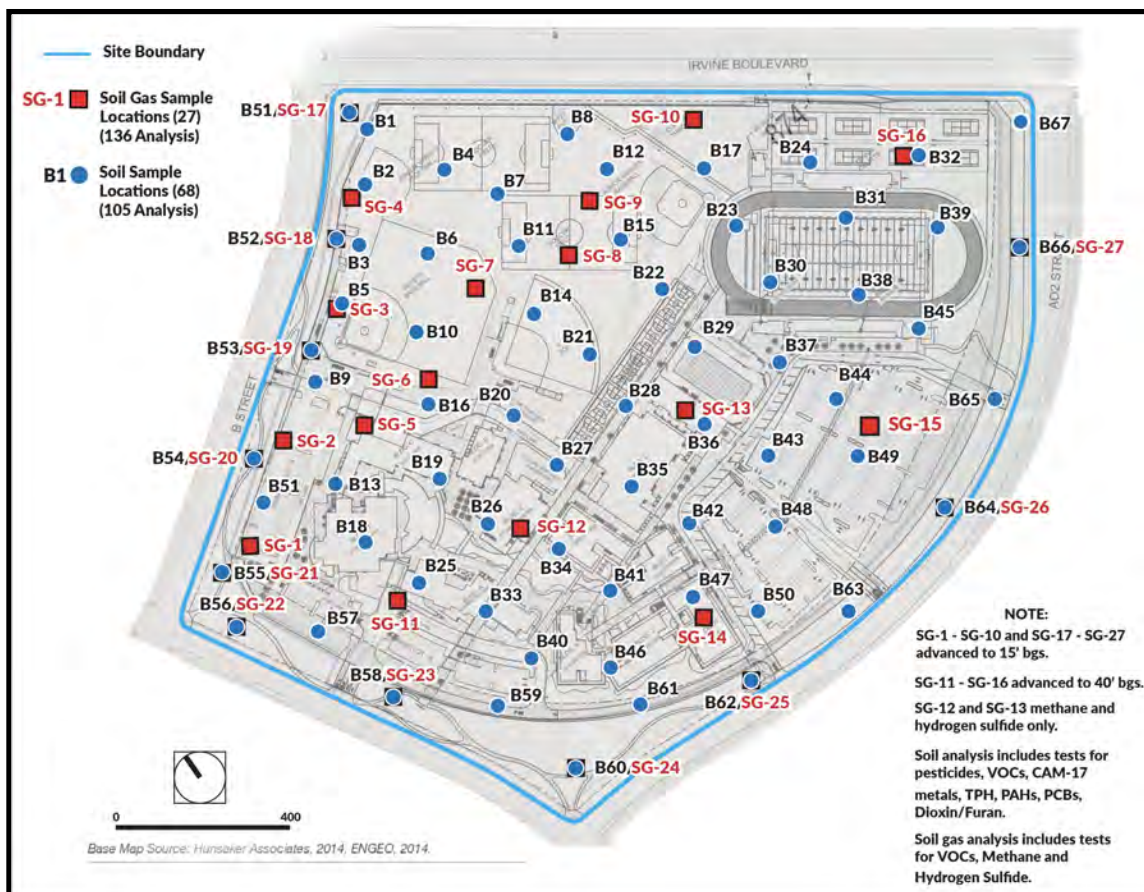
MISLEADING MAP:

This map has been used in a local political publication, in a concerted effort to mislead the public. It has omitted 82 test locations and more than 200 tests conducted.



ACTUAL TESTING MAP

This map shows 95 specific test sites with more than 200 tests – multiple tests were conducted at each location. The “Note” on the map details the type of testing conducted. However, it is not an indication these substances were found on the site.



⚠ MISLEADING STATEMENT:

The DTSC has asked for additional testing because they are concerned that the site is unsafe.

✓ FACT CHECK:

DTSC Division Chief Dot Lofstrom clarified the intent of DTSC Director Barbara Lee's March 2, 2016 letter, which requested additional confirmation samples. In the following two emails to IUSD, Chief Lofstrom made it clear the safety of the site is not in question and that IUSD has cooperated with DTSC at every phase of the project.

March 4, 2016 email posted on iusd.org/portolaconstruction

"...This letter (Barbara Lee letter) is directed at collecting conformational (sic) samples, not reopening the investigation. I will clarify that I believe this work can be done quickly with minimal disturbance and with little or no impact to your schedule. I will clarify that site safety is not in question. Finally, I will be clear that we will work closely with you on developing a work plan that will then be available to interested stakeholders prior to final submittal and implementation."

March 9, 2016 email posted on iusd.org/portolaconstruction

"Thank you for meeting us yesterday at the future Portola High School. I appreciate the spirit of cooperation you and your team showed, not just yesterday but throughout all phases of the project. Together we walked the site and selected potential areas for both soil and soil gas sampling that will reap the maximum benefit in providing additional information. I am anticipating that this sampling exercise will answer the questions that have been raised with respect to Portola High School, and that this work can be completed quickly in the next couple of months."

⚠ MISLEADING STATEMENT:

Sampling and testing of the site has not been "independent," "transparent" or "professional."

✓ FACT CHECK:

The testing process at the Portola High School site has been independent, transparent and professional since the commencement of the project. IUSD's consultant geologists and soil scientists collected the samples under DTSC oversight. The samples were then sent to a state certified accredited laboratory, which conducted the testing. IUSD's consultant and the laboratory documented the chain of custody for sample handling as outlined in DTSC guidelines and regulations. Testing results from the laboratory were sent to DTSC and IUSD's consultant for review.

All testing of the site has been done under DTSC oversight and in accordance with DTSC guidelines and state law. This independent process is the same for every school district in California.

Through a public records request in April 2015, those behind a local political publication received this information from IUSD. However, it has been purposely omitted and mischaracterized in the publication and related rhetoric.



Photo Above: Artist rendering of Portola High School

⚠ MISLEADING STATEMENT:

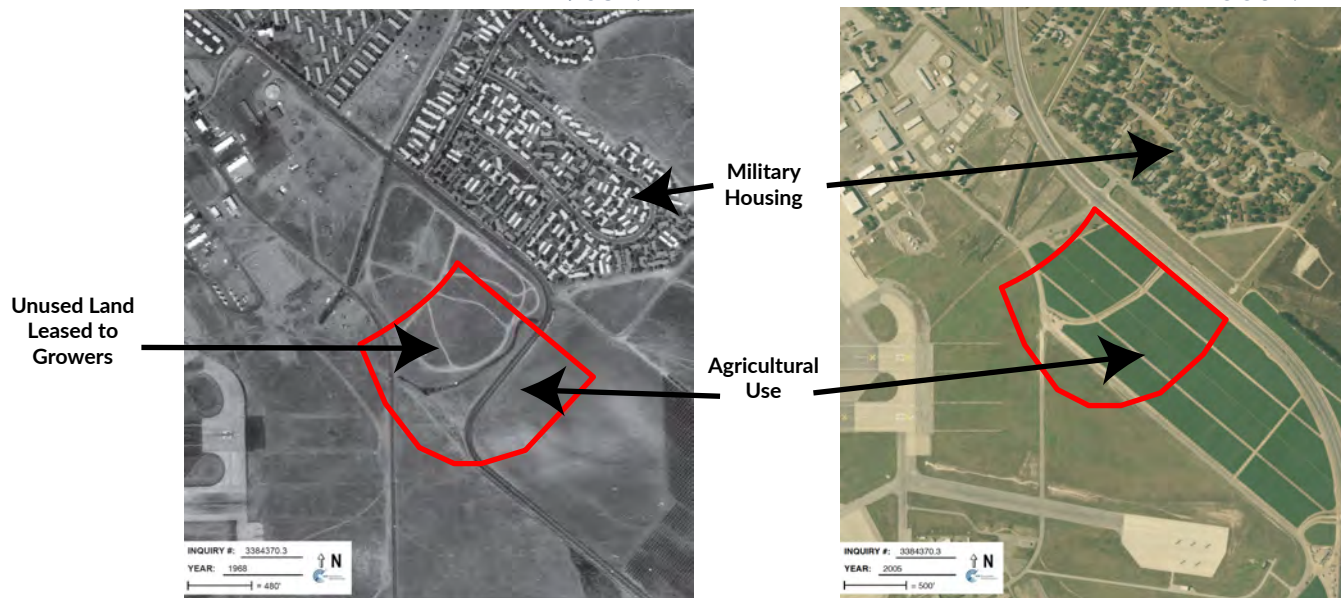
The historical use of the site is unknown.

✓ FACT CHECK:

As part of the April 2015 public records request, IUSD sent those behind a local political publication documentation that the land was leased to farmers for agricultural purposes from the 1950s through 2013. For many of those years, the site was used for organic farming. In addition, to the north of the site, was extensive military housing, in which families lived and children were raised for decades. See aerial maps below. This information has been actively omitted from the political publication and from related rhetoric.

1968 MAP

2005 MAP



⚠ MISLEADING STATEMENT:

Significant quantities of toxic contamination have been found on the school site.

✓ FACT CHECK:

Toxic soil has never been found on the school site. Small amounts of non-hazardous stained soil, which did not originate on the school site, were found on the northern edge of the property. The soil was tested and determined to be non-hazardous by two independent testing labs. Although IUSD was not required to do so, the District removed the stained soil out of an abundance of caution.

According to geotechnical soil and testing experts working on the school site, no unknown materials have been found on the site. These experts have observed all grading, excavation and backfill operations site wide. This is particularly significant given that there have been more than 300 deep excavations throughout the entire site, with some excavations as deep as 30-40 feet. The extensive work on the site further supports the comprehensive testing and historical use reports conducted by IUSD consultants and numerous federal, state and local agencies.

NEXT STEPS:

IUSD has been and remains committed to the safety of our students, staff and the community. When misleading information is disseminated, the District will respond and keep the IUSD community informed. We believe the public should have the facts as the community prepares to celebrate the opening of Portola High School.

IUSD will work collaboratively with the DTSC to collect confirmation samples under the agency's oversight. During this process, the District will continue to be transparent and open about the process and our next steps.

A public meeting will be held March 22 at 7 p.m. at the District Office. You are invited to attend to learn more about the Portola High School site and to provide public comment. If you cannot attend in person, the meeting will be broadcast live on Cox Cable channel 39 and through AT&T U-verse channel 99.