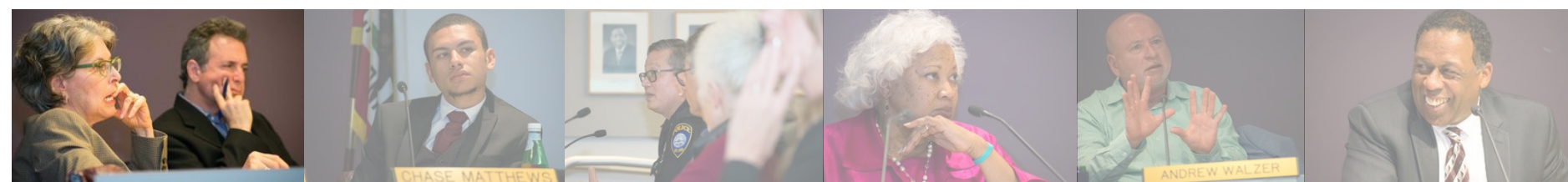


# SMC Board of Trustees Approves \$21 Million Contract for Early Childhood Lab School Construction

Reed Curtis · April 4, 2018



Three weeks after the official ground-breaking ceremony, the Santa Monica College Board of Trustees on Tuesday, April 3rd voted unanimously to award the contract to build the new Early Childhood Lab (ECL) School to the Nazerian Group for \$21.7 million. The City of Santa Monica will provide \$6.7 million for the construction, while SMC will be responsible for the remainder.

Architect and onsite construction manager for the project, [Jeffrey Weinstein](#), gave his recommendation to the Board to award the bid to Nazerian based on the recommendation of "multiple K-12 school districts, including Pasadena, Long Beach, Simi Valley, and El Monte." [Weinstein](#) is a representative for Vanir Construction Management, the company contracted by SMC to oversee the ECL project, including the construction bidding process.

The ECL, a three-building, approximately 24,100 square foot project which includes "extensive" outdoor play areas, was proposed as part of the City of Santa Monica's Civic Center Specific Plan. The plan called for a new vision for the Civic Center and recently acquired RAND land near city hall, including a "quality childcare with priority given to residents and employees of the area," which the ECL is planned to fulfill. The day to day operation of the ECL will be handled by local preschool The Growing Place.

The Nazerian Group is a construction company that has been family operated in Southern California for over 40 years that has previously built and rehabilitated local schools and public works. Recent projects by Nazerian include the construction of a new campus for Century High School in Alhambra and the renovation of La Mirada Library in the city of La Mirada.

According to Nazerian Group President Vic Nazerian, the group "specializes in public schools and municipal buildings," and the Board of Trustees mentioned multiple times that the group's experience in these kinds of projects encouraged their decision to choose them to build the ECL. The main incentive, however, as mentioned by [Jeffrey Weinstein](#), was the fact that their bid came in at just shy of \$22 million, roughly \$2 million less than the only other "responsible bidder." A "responsible bid" is a criterion used by the City of Santa Monica which ensures that a bidder on any city project is fully prepared, certified, and vetted before their bid may be considered.

Due to delays in previous projects of a similar nature, such as the proposed SMC Malibu Campus, Trustee Rob Rader asked if the bid has any contingency planning for potential delays and cost overruns. Mr. Weinstein assured the board that there was "a 10-percent contingency limit on the project," meaning that SMC would not be liable for any cost overruns that exceeded 10-percent of the overall budget.

Construction on the ECL is set to begin this year, with the center planned to open in 2020.