

# School Board OKs tech wing changes

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The Grand Island School Board on Monday agreed on a slightly altered design for the new technology wing at the high school to lower the amount that part of the \$51 million capital project is above the maximum cost allowance.

When estimated in the schematic design phase, the new tech wing was about \$1.1 million above the maximum cost allowance.

After viewing a couple of options suggested by the project's architects, CannonDesign, the board agreed to drop the space for professional development. Kept intact is the roughly 21,000 square feet of classrooms/labs and a fusion studio, all of which is eligible for state aid.

The professional development offices will be relocated somewhere within the portions of the high and middle school complex on Ransom Road slated for renovations.

Nonclassroom space, including corridors, restrooms and offices, are not eligible for state aid, a roughly 80 percent reimbursement on building projects.

So the tech wing, an estimated \$4 million project, will still be about \$870,000 above the cost allowance, which according to very preliminary estimates could translate to an additional increase of 8 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value on a \$200,000 home spread over 15 years.

In another matter, the board learned that a vacant parcel off Baseline Road that is tentatively being considered as part of a new bus access road to the transportation center behind Sidway School is already under contract for sale.

The board is studying three design concepts for changes to the current site at Sidway, which includes a 65-year-old building that needs extensive repairs. All three designs include a new road to the north of the school and adjacent to St. Martin-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church that would turn south at the rear of the school leading to the transportation center and bus fueling and parking.

Several Baseline Road residents have objected to that location, which is across from several residences, saying it will devalue their property and increase traffic congestion.

The board asked its consultants to explore locating the bus road to the south of the school on vacant land between the U.S. Post Office and a drugstore.

But Joseph Giarrizzo, district finance director, said Monday he learned from the property owner that there is a sales contract on the land. He said he has been in contact with the potential buyer and developer about the school district's interest in the site, but has heard nothing back.