

CARLSBAD: School board considering ballot measures

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Carlsbad Unified School District trustees asked district officials Wednesday to gather more information about possibly putting a bond or parcel tax on the ballot next year.

The school board unanimously decided to look into how much it would cost to poll voters on a potential bond or tax and how feasible each would be.

"I just view it as our due diligence in listening to a creative idea," said board President Kelli Moors.

One or both measures could go before voters next year, either in June or November.

The district could use money for a parcel tax to pay for anything, including salaries and operating expenses. However, parcel taxes require two-thirds of the votes cast in order to pass.

A general obligation bond, on the other hand, can only be used for certain costs, such as school construction and technology upgrades.

It could be possible to borrow money and invest in another California municipality, creating an endowment that would bring money each year for technology upgrades, said Tim Carty, a consultant who spoke to the board Wednesday.

No San Diego County school districts have taken such an approach, but several others in the state have, he said.

Superintendent John Roach brought both ideas to the board for consideration, but didn't recommend either.

In 2006 voters approved Proposition P, a \$198 million bond measure that paid for renovation work at several campuses and helped build Sage Creek High School. The new high school will be the last of those projects.

Recently, district officials have looked for ways to bring in more money and cut costs to help close a budget shortfall estimated at \$10 million next year.

Also at Wednesday's meeting, the board discussed how to replace Roach, who has said he will retire at the end of the school year.

Three of the trustees ---- Kelli Moors, Elisa Williamson and Lisa Rodman ---- said they wanted to let Roach organize the search with the help of consultants, while Ann Tanner and Veronica Williams said they'd rather the district hire a search firm. They hadn't made a decision by 10 p.m.

Hiring a search firm would cost roughly \$25,000, while doing some of the work in-house would cost less than half that, Roach said.