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Sent: Tuesday, December 11, 2018 6:35 AM

To: John Holic <JHolic@Venicegov.com>; City Council <CityCouncil@Venicegov.com>; Lori Stelzer <LStelzer@Venicegov.com>

Subject: More Housing for Venice - Vicenza & Cielo - High School Capacity Exceeded

Good Morning John,

How can Council approve more housing given today's Trib article (Attached) on the High School capacity being exceeded?

Mike Rafferty member
Venice Tax Watch

New school slated for Venice

VENICE

School Board touts plan for another high school rather than adding wing

By Elizabeth Djinis

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Venice High School's overcrowding problems should be solved by a high school complex, rather than a 400-student wing added to the current facility, the Sarasota County School Board determined Monday.

The School Board decided to go with the new school concept after several meetings at district schools in the Venice area. The community consensus was clear: parents wanted the new complex — and soon.

"The vast majority wanted a new school over a wing and 97 percent do not want to wait for a new school. They want it yesterday," said Kathie Ebaugh, the district's planning director. "In fact, when they saw these were the choices we gave them, we had a number of people say, 'Where's the less-than-fiveyears option?' We said, 'We

can't get you a school now.' We're being somewhat realistic, but the vast majority do not want to wait for a school."

Venice High currently holds nearly 2,250 students, but its capacity is set for only about 2,100 students. In the next five years, the school is projected to be over capacity by about 300 students. While the district had initially proposed building a wing that

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could house 400, community members and some School Board members did not feel that was the best option.

Ebaugh offered the School Board a variety of options to deal with the capacity issue, presenting six scenarios. They ranged from building a new school that would be ready in the next 13 to 15 years, constructing a school that could have elementary, middle and high school students, building a 400-student wing and delaying the school, building a new school through district funds, which would eliminate the need for state approval, or entering into a public-private partnership, and, finally, redrawing school boundaries to send some Venice students to North Port.

The latter option, said Superintendent Todd Bowden, would be the "Tallahassee" choice, implying it is one state officials would turn to before spending money on a new school.

"This is the Tallahassee option," Bowden said. "If they're just student numbers, they don't have faces, they don't have families, what's the answer? It would be this option here."

Ebaugh said that a number of parents told her they moved to Venice from North Port specifically to have their children attend Venice schools rather than North Port.

the outcome could be close.

"Could that be accomplished in five years? I don't think that's the case. Could we break ground in five years and open in seven to eight? Yes," Bowden said.

The board agreed to advise district staff to pursue planning for a new school rather than a new wing. The next step will be to discuss funding sources. But Zucker noted that the community had been heard on this issue.

"The scenario we're talking about right now is right in line with what the community wants," she said. "We've heard the community, and we're listening."

Venice High School currently holds nearly 2,250 students, but its capacity is set for only about 2,100 students. In the next five years, the school is projected to be over capacity by about 300 students. [STAFF PHOTO / EARLE KIMEL]

School Board Member Caroline Zucker, who attended many of the community meetings, asked whether a school could be built in the next five years using district funds, rather than a combination of local and state money. Bowden said that wasn't entirely possible, but