

## South Kitsap School District made offer on property 'to accommodate future expansion'

Chris Henry, Kitsap Sun

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(Photo: Larry Steagall)

SOUTH KITSAP — South Kitsap School District hoped to buy a property adjacent to South Kitsap High School "to accommodate future expansion of school facilities," but another buyer got there first.

Space is at a premium at the high school, where enrollment is around 2,800. South Kitsap School District has a bond for a second high school on the Nov. 6 ballot, but the attempted land purchase isn't directly related, Superintendent Karst Brandsma said Thursday. The district could use additional space on the current high school campus regardless of whether the bond passes, he said.

The school board on Sept. 19 approved a resolution authorizing the district to purchase a property on Wolves Road next to a school district parcel with three modular classroom buildings. The portables, which opened in February, house six classrooms.

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The school board's resolution referenced a tentative purchase agreement with the seller and a maximum purchase price of \$325,000 to come from the district's capital projects fund.

The resolution also noted the seller had two other offers on the property. "Time is of the essence with the existing real estate market," the resolution states.

One of the other two offers was accepted, however. The property, with one-third acre and a single story home, sold Oct. 9 for \$262,500, according to Redfin.

"The board deliberated and made an offer on it, but we were too late," Brandsma said.

The property would have been an ideal place to put a crosswalk to the portables, Brandsma said. Among other uses that were considered was relocating the district's Explorer Academy, a K-12 online hybrid program with some classwork on campus. The program is now in a facility above the baseball field and near the high school's "farm," for agriculture classes.

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Another crowded part of the campus is the Armory, a building across Mile Hill Drive from the main high school campus that the district has leased for years for its Naval Junior ROTC program. With increased enrollment at the high school, the Armory now houses offices for career and technical education staff and serves as storage for the music program. New this year at the Armory is the district's online graduation support program.

The district has also considered moving Discovery Alternative High School from its location in Madrona Heights, a building designed as an elementary school, to the South Kitsap High School campus.

The fate of the bond was not the main driver in the board's discussion of the property but it factored in, Brandsma said. If the bond doesn't pass, the district will likely need additional space at South Kitsap High School as early as next fall. Even if the bond does pass, the new high school would not be complete until 2025.

The district will keep looking, although it's not actively shopping for property, Brandsma said.

"I think the district is always looking forward to the future, and if something else comes along, we'll look at that, too," Brandsma said.

Proposition 1 on the Nov. 6 ballot would authorize property taxes for a \$184.7 million bond to build a second high school "similar to South Kitsap High School" on 57 acres the district owns off Old Clifton Road. The 240,000-square-foot high school would accommodate up to 1,500 students with the capacity for later expansion up to 1,800.

The district is also running a capital projects levy that would raise \$21.7 million over four years for building renovations, enhanced security and new technology throughout the district.

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