

Sullivan BOE picks Architects for Schools

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BLOUNTVILLE — Sullivan County school officials have chosen a local architectural firm, in cooperation with a North Carolina firm, to design a new high school.



And a Knoxville architectural firm has the board's nod to design a new middle school.

Choosing from among four finalists out of 11 that responded to a request for qualifications, the seven-member Sullivan County Board of Education Monday night unanimously chose CainRashWest Architects of Kingsport/LS3P of North Carolina to design a new high school to be located somewhere around Exit 63 of Interstate 81.

However, in a split vote of 4-3, the Board of Education chose Cope Architecture of Knoxville to design a new middle school, which is likely to be in the Piney Flats community.

The other two finalists the board also interviewed last month were Community Techtonics and the Lewis Group, both from Knoxville.

In related action, the board approved a contract for Interstate Realty of Bristol, Tenn., to be a buyer's agent for sites for the new schools. The search for a new high school site near Exit 63 of Interstate 81 is to start immediately, while the middle school site selection near Piney Flats is to start after the board decides if it wants to make an offer on the Chad Baker property in Piney Flats without considering other options.

Both searches are to take 60 days and result in five alternatives. BOE member Jerry Greene said the board should meet quickly after five sites for either school are identified. The high school site is to be at least 65 acres, the middle school site at least 35 acres.

Board Chairman Dan Wells and Director of School Evelyne Rafalowski said Wells would meet with representatives of Cope and CainRashWest in the next two weeks, although Wells said the design fees and costs might be hard to hammer out without sites chosen first.

All seven board members voted for CainRashWest to do the high school design, while Todd Broughton, Michael Hughes, Randall Jones and Jane Thomas voted for Cope for the middle school project and Wells, Greene and Vice Chairman Jack Bales voted for CainRashWest.