

Westlake school board decides to wait until spring to try bond issue

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WESTLAKE School officials elected this week to delay a potential bond issue aimed at addressing the district's building needs, citing the dismal economy and a lack of savings from a state bond program.

School board members decided Monday to defer the planned ballot issue until the spring.

Officials said the decision followed a discussion on balancing the current economic and employment situation against the need to address the district's aging structures.

"The board and many community members have spent time analyzing the challenges of our facilities but this economy makes putting a bond issue on the ballot, at this time, not the best option for our schools or community," said Andrea Rocco, school board president.

The district has been examining the facilities issue for more than a year, gathering input and data from community groups and architectural reports.

School administrators say the district must address aging and overcrowded facilities to maintain its status as an "Excellent" school district.

"Our facilities need to be addressed but we must also be responsible and accountable to the community with how tax dollars are being spent," Rocco said.

She said the school board and district leadership remain committed to developing a long-range vision for the community that will account for school facilities now and in the future.

"During this additional time we will look for ways to make this facilities plan more cost effective, and we hope the economy will improve," she said.

Residents are encouraged to stay informed on the facilities process by visiting the district Web site at wlake.org/facilities.