

SLV trustees endorse master plan for Boulder Creek middle school

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FELTON — The San Lorenzo Valley school board likes the idea of a new school in Boulder Creek for grades six, seven and eight.

The school board unanimously approved a master plan Thursday night for a new "middle school" to lighten the enrollment load at Boulder Creek Elementary School.

Schools Superintendent John Prieskorn guessed the new campus would not be built until the 1986-87 school year. "We will certainly need it by then," said Prieskorn.

Prieskorn said recent studies show no dramatic differences in the academic achievements of middle schoolers compared to the achievements of pupils who attend a first through sixth grades elementary school, then seventh and eighth grades at junior high school.

However, Prieskorn said middle schoolers tend to be more emotionally prepared for high school than junior high students.

At a time in a student's life when puberty is dramatically affecting emotions, the three-year middle school program offers more stability than the two-year junior high curriculum, said Prieskorn.

Prieskorn said the greatest need for new elementary school classrooms is in Boulder Creek, which encompasses 40 percent of the district's elementary school children.

By the time the middle school is built, there will be two more classrooms at today's elementary school campus. Prieskorn said these new classrooms are badly needed.

This year's projected enrollment in Boulder Creek was 692, said Prieskorn, "but we already have 710."

By the time the new classrooms are built, there will be an estimated enrollment of 828.

"The enrollment projections are only one year old and they are already too low," said Prieskorn.

A jump in the birth rate in Santa Cruz County two years ago is causing the overcrowding. There also will be more crowding at Quail Hollow and San Lorenzo Elementary schools in

three years, said Prieskorn, but the impact will be most severe in Boulder Creek.

The new school will not only lessen the load at Boulder Creek elementary, but also lessen overcrowding at San Lorenzo Valley Junior High School. One third of the junior high students live in Boulder Creek, said Prieskorn.

In the meantime, plans are under way for new classrooms at the junior high campus in 1984. The district has received a state construction grant of \$2 million for the addition.

The classrooms are now planned for a playground area. An original site to the west of the campus was moved after geologists said that site was too unstable for construction.

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