

✓ Live Oak school troubles detailed

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LIVE OAK School

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LIVE OAK — Rather than accept "a substandard product," the Live Oak school district has postponed moving into the \$16.4 million Shoreline Middle School in January as scheduled.

Floors and cabinets don't meet state specifications, Superintendent Steve Herrington advised trustees Tuesday night.

Both were "rejected by the district's inspectors and architects until they are corrected and comply with specification standards," he said.

Although those problems have not been resolved with the contractor, he promised "they will be."

A moving-in date has not been set. In a letter to parents, Herrington said he would let them know by Feb. 1 if a move would be feasible during the Presidents Day holidays. Another possibility is to wait until spring break in March.

"I want to assure members of the community that their local and state bonds will secure a quality facility for their tax dollars," Herrington emphasized, referring to the \$9 million bond passed four years ago.

Trustee Carolyn Bartz agreed the quality of the construction was important.

Herrington pointed out that Shoreline postponement will not affect the schedule to renovate the Del Mar Middle campus for elementary students, where plans go out to bid in March.

He acknowledged the disappointment of the delay — his son is one of students eager to move in — and asked for the community's patience and encouragement.

Getting permission to build the school was a six-year struggle. Construction, which began in 1994, has been difficult as well. The contractor, Brero of Santa Clara, was supposed to finish July 31, 1995. Now the company is in federal bankruptcy court, contesting an attempt by a creditor, Comerica Bank, to force it into a Chapter 11 reorganization.

Bids for another part of the project are due Jan. 8. This involves restoring and replacing wildlife habitat damaged when a channel on the property entering Swan Lake was filled in to create playing fields.

When county officials approved the construction in the wetland area three years ago, they required all restoration planting be done prior to the opening of the school.

"It's a condition of the permit," said county planner Kim Tschantz. "The business manager knows this needs to be done."

The district has asked the state for additional money since the project has gone over its original \$14 million budget. But reimbursements are given a lower priority by the state, which has a huge backlog of bids to review.