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Pasco County Commission to begin school impact fee process



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The Pasco County Commission embarks this week on what could become a lengthy procedure for considering a near doubling of school impact fees.

Commissioners will consider Tuesday the creation of a 10-member school infrastructure funding committee, with the assignment of reviewing the School Board's request to increase the fees on new home construction. The panel of builders and citizen/parent representatives, to be selected by the commission with School Board input, is projected to meet four or five times over close to half a year.

It would then make its presentation to commissioners in one or more workshops, after which the commission would decide if it wants to proceed with public hearings and a vote.

"At this time, the entire process is anticipated to take approximately 10-11 months," according to a memo by assistant county attorney David Goldstein.

School district officials have called for a faster time line. They are wanting to get the impact fee increase approved as quickly as possible to begin collecting the added money, which they would spend on new campuses to ease crowding in fast growing areas.

Superintendent Kurt Browning has said he would prioritize a new Cypress Creek Middle School on Old Pasco Road in Wesley Chapel. Many east Pasco parents have questioned the district's ability to get that new school built in four years, as Browning has suggested, given the unknowns associated with the impact fees.



Times file photo
Increased impact fees would allow the Pasco School Board to accelerate plans to build new schools.

Browning has justified his proposal for new attendance zones in the area partly based upon getting Cypress Creek Middle constructed quickly. Until it is built, middle school students in the zone will attend a new high school building that opens in the fall.

The School Board continues to be inundated with emails from parents over the rezoning issues, which are scheduled for a final public hearing and vote on Jan. 17.

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