The Lafayette Parish School Board selected the Lafayette firm Abell-Crozier-Davis Architects to design its new high school, which will sit on board-owned property in Youngsville.

A selection committee that included Superintendent Donald Aguillard named the firm as the top choice of three finalists for the job, which drew interest from eight firms that submitted their qualifications to the committee, said Kyle Bordelon, the school system's facilities planning director.

The other two finalists were Architects Southwest and MBSB Group. Bordelon said he and retired architect Allen Bacque sat on the committee, which included district chief financial officer Billy Guidry; Lee Francis, district purchasing agent; Sandra Billeaudeau, district planning administrator; and Joe Craig, district chief administrative officer.

The board accepted the committee's recommendation in an 8-0 vote. Board member Tehmi Chassion abstained from voting on the recommendation.

Board member Justin Centanni asked about Abell+Crozier+Davis Architects' experience in building schools.

Bordelon said the firm hasn't designed any schools for Lafayette Parish, but is working on a few projects for the school system, including a new cafeteria auditorium for L.J. Alleman Middle School. He added that the selection committee visited one of the firm's completed projects — a classroom addition and renovations at St. [See ARCHITECT, page 2B]

A new high school will be built on School Board property off Chemin Metairie Parkway near South Larriviere Road in Youngsville.
Cecilia School in Broussard.

The high school will accommodate up to 1,750 students and be located somewhere in the school system’s 600-acre site off Chemin Metairie Parkway near South Larriviere Road to be determined with the help of the architecture firm.

At a meeting in June, the board approved the high school and using a bond sale to finance it. The cost for the initial phase is estimated at $65 million, though the planning and design process will help pinpoint a better estimate, school officials have said.

The board recently approved a $10 million bond sale to help cover the cost of the high school project design. The bond sale also will be used to pay for the purchase of school buses, as the school system prepares to eliminate its bus vehicle leases to add to its own fleet.

On Wednesday, the board also approved buying 47 used, 2015 and 2016 model buses at a cost of more than $3.2 million.

Also, the board approved a reorganization of the sales tax department that adds six more positions to improve collections. The cost to the school district for the new jobs is $262,500 — half of the estimated personnel costs for the positions. The remaining $262,500 will be paid by taxes collected by other entities.

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