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**New Liberty, Prospect schools in plan  
Projects would relieve crowding**

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Oldham County plans to build a new Liberty Elementary and Middle School in the next three years and aims to buy land in the Prospect area for an elementary, middle and high school campus.

That's according to a new facility plan the school board approved last month.

It will be presented during a public hearing on Feb. 28, then be considered by the Kentucky Board of Education.

School districts must have their facility plans approved every four years.

Oldham's plan details all major construction for the school district through 2010.

The plan was created by a 17-member committee that included parents, teachers, school administrators, community leaders, planning and zoning officials and Jim Ewalt, the district's director of facilities management.

Superintendent Paul Upchurch also sat on the committee as a nonvoting member.

Ewalt said the district's biggest priority is the Liberty schools project. The board has bought land adjacent to the present Liberty Elementary School on U.S. 42 in Goshen.

Ewalt declined to say whether Liberty, which was built in 1920 and is the district's oldest school, would be demolished.

The new Liberty Elementary would cost around \$9 million, cover more than 65,000 square feet and accommodate 700 students. The middle school would be 97,000 square feet, cost \$13 million and serve up to 800 students.

The schools will relieve crowding at the district's middle and elementary schools. Administrators expect them to open within the next three years. Elementary and middle school students would be redistricted to accommodate the schools.

On Monday, the school board will vote on a redistricting plan created in response to the new Locust Grove Elementary on the East Oldham campus and the replacement of Crestwood Elementary. Both schools will open next school year.

Oldham's school district has been growing by an average of around 400 students each year. Five of the school district's 10 elementary schools are over capacity.

Six schools have been built in the past decade and two more are planned in the next five years.

Also, two of the county's three main high schools are being renovated to add space.

After the new Liberty schools are built, depending on costs, the district will work to build another elementary school and preschool center, according to the plan. That location has not been determined, Ewalt said.

The district also hopes to buy land for a new campus in the Prospect area -- the plan specifies an area near Ky. 329 and Prospect.

"There's a lot of growth on the Louisville side of the county," Ewalt said. "It seems to us ... a campus on the west side of the county would be a good thing for us. We want to find property that would make a good school site before everything is gobbled up by developers."

The plan also details major renovations to seven schools totaling more than \$20 million. That includes things such as replacing lockers at South Oldham Middle School, replacing the phone system at La Grange Elementary and replacing windows at Buckner Alternative High School.

Those projects likely will take place after 2009.

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