

Board opts to close School 1

School 1

Cobbs Hill Park facility to be renovated

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After months of debate, proposals and counter-proposals regarding the future of the School 1 building, the Rochester school board settled the question definitively Thursday without even taking a vote.

Martin B. Anderson School 1 will be closed after this school year. The students in its specialized autism program will be transferred to Children's School of Rochester (School 15), which is currently in swing space on Upper Falls Boulevard.

After the School 1 building at Cobbs

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Hill Park is renovated, School 15 will move there, probably in the 2018-19 school year.

That was the original plan that the school board had approved in March before reconsidering. Without any alternate plan approved Thursday, it stands without further board action.

"Everybody on this dais would like some additional time, but we don't have it," Board President Van White said. "We are out of time, and it's time for the adults to make a decision."

The time crunch was accentuated by a letter from Allen Williams, chairman of the Joint Schools Construction Board that oversees the entire scope of renovations. He said that if the school board didn't take action Thursday night, the construction board would consider the original March resolution as the final decision.

The decision dashed the hopes of School 1 parents, who were hopeful after hearing a proposal Nov. 3 that would have kept them intact at Cobbs Hill Park.

"We haven't been included in the process," School 1 parent Walida Monroe-Sims said. "Our children have become casualties of a political and economic war, and it's not fair."

The district spent the summer and fall going through contortions to try to make School 1 and School 15 happy, eventually dragging a number of other schools into the situation. As late as Thursday, Chief of Operations Mike Schmidt unveiled a new proposal that would have permanently kept School 15 on Upper Falls Boulevard and School 22 at the Franklin campus, after extensive renovations.

When asked her opinion before the vote, Superintendent Barbara Deane-Williams said she wasn't comfortable recommending any of the proposals. "As superintendent, I would want to keep all my schools

intact,” she said. “But I’d also want to make sure we keep the (renovation) project moving forward for the good of all the schools in the city.”

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The Martin B. Anderson School 1 building on Hillside Avenue in Rochester.

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