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The article below discusses a Maury L. Carter & Associates, Inc. investor owned property. The transaction is being handled by Daryl M. Carter, president of Maury L. Carter & Associates, Inc.

Orlando Sentinel

New high school may be 6 stories

By **Annie Martin** Staff Writer

The Orange County school district is already planning for its next high school — six years before the school is expected to open — in the wake of battles with residents and county officials over other campus sizes and locations.

District leaders are looking at building a school that could be as tall as six stories on a parcel off Apopka Vineland Road in southwest Orange. The school will relieve Dr. Phillips and Freedom high schools, which each are at least 1,000 students over their capacity this year.

Spokeswoman Lauren Roth said the district is still in the process of purchasing land and hasn't made a final decision about the location. But one site near Dr. P. Phillips Community Park is favored because it's easily accessible and not immediately next to any houses. The cost and design of the 3,500-student campus are yet to be determined.

But if the district moves forward with that 50-acre site, it won't meet the county's minimum land requirements for school campuses, a sticking point between the district and county over the past couple of years.

School officials say they'd like more flexibility with campus sizes, and the school board and county commission met last year to discuss the matter. But the county commission hasn't changed the ordinances, which now call for high school campuses to be at least 65 acres in unincorporated areas.

Board member Pam Gould, who represents the area, said she was hopeful the county would approve the project after discussing it one-on-one with commissioners.

"No one has said, 'that's a horrible idea,?'" she said.

If the school is as tall as proposed, it would be the first to have a six-story classroom building in Orange. The Department of Education doesn't track the height of the state's campuses, but it's "not common" to see schools with more than three stories here, spokeswoman Alix Miller wrote in an email.

Gould said she saw the campus as a potential buffer between the residential and commercial properties in the area.

"We've had discussions in the county in the past about going more vertical with buildings in order to preserve green space and fit the communities around them," she said.

Scott Boyd, the county commissioner who represents the area, said he didn't expect the planned school to generate as much resistance from neighbors as the West Orange relief school, which is slated to open next August. In that case, the school district wanted to build a campus for 2,776 students in the West Windermere Rural Settlement.

Building a tall school in this location doesn't seem like a stretch, he said, saying the district could save money by building on a smaller site. He said most of the feedback he's received from residents has been positive.