

# District kicks off 'master plan' process

■ Goal is to provide operations framework for next five to 10 years

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Alameda school officials have kicked off their effort to develop a "master plan" for the district, setting a framework for its operations for up to the next 10 years.

Among the proposals that could emerge from the plan is to boost the number of charter schools in the district, which now has three.

"We are using this time to make a plan for the future," Superintendent Kirsten Vital said. "But we also want to develop a situation so that we are not relying on things like Measure H or having to face additional cuts."

Measure H is the parcel tax for local schools that Alameda voters passed in November. Some residents have sued the city, saying the tax is unfairly applied, and a trial date has been set for Sept. 17.

District officials are plan-

ning three community workshops to help develop the master plan, with the first set for May 20 at Haight Elementary School.

It will focus on whether the district can continue to educate its approximately 10,000 students on the \$5,575 it annually receives for each student from the state in Average Daily Attendance money.

"Basically, can we live on what the state gives us?" Vital said.

The workshop also is expected to explore other issues, such as whether music, art and other programs must be cut to achieve a balanced budget, as well as the overcrowding at schools in the city's east end and the declining enrollment in the west end.

The issue of charter schools will be taken up during a June 2 meeting at Edison Elementary School.

Along with looking at whether it would generate more state money for the district, the meeting is expected to review the law surrounding charter schools and how

district officials would monitor achievement if more of the schools were here.

Vital noted that many schools in New Orleans became charter campuses following Hurricane Katrina, when officials used the rebuilding effort to radically overhaul the school system.

Supporters say the changes in Louisiana have led to rising test scores and lower drop-out and expulsion rates.

But critics say they fear charter schools exclude students who are traditionally low-achievers — an issue that also arose in Alameda when the Board of Education approved the Nea school charter in November.

The final master plan meeting is set for Aug. 18 at Wood Middle School. It will look at what the total cost is to educate a student here, including support programs and extracurricular activities.

The target for having the proposed master plan is Dec. 15. Each of the upcoming meetings will take place from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

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