

# District moves forward with bond plans

## Coppell Middle School West faces possible renovation into ninth grade center

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Currently, Coppell High School has roughly 3,200 students, resulting in crowded hallways and some classes with upwards of 40 students. By the 2018-19 school year, enrollment is expected to rise to 3,600 students, and in the 2020-21 school year, enrollment is projected to reach 3,900 students.

While accommodating close to 4,000 students at the CHS campus may be possible, there is a strong recommendation against it by various district officials because of parking and overcrowding issues. To deal with the growing population of students, the Coppell Independent School District Board of Trustees held a special meeting in October. They unanimously approved six recommendations given by the district staff, and have started to plan for a possible bond election in May 2016.

However, according to Assistant Superintendent for Business and Support Services Sid Grant, nothing is definite at this point.

"The Board will have to make that final decision and will have to hold the bond election to pay for the cost of making renovations, should they choose to make [CMSW] into a ninth grade center," Grant said.

An architectural firm, Stantec, Inc. has been approved as the lead architecture and engineering firm for any bond projects that will need an architecture design.

"We have our architects working with a committee of teachers that will decide what that kind of needs to look like," Grant said. "The fine arts-- like band, choir and drama area-- would likely be

renovated, and probably increased in size.

Overall, the CMSW building would require more space, including an increased number of classrooms, science labs and an increase in the size of the cafeteria.

"We've had four bond tours c o m e

through the school to look at the facilities and assess what the campus would possibly need," CMSW Principal Emily Froese said. "Some of the possible modifications

include updates to the science labs, since the campus is not equipped for high school science courses."

Other recommendations presented to the Board: to build new

sidered as a much better site, as NTH@C would require more parking spots and renovations.

The CMSW campus was also considered ideal because it has a good existing space for drama, band, choir and athletics programs. With renovations to the current space, the new ninth grade center would be able to accommodate 1,200 students. CHS Principal Mike Jasso also hopes that if a ninth grade center were constructed, it would help to alleviate some of the traffic problems that have recently arisen.

"One of the reasons that West was considered a viable option is because there's no alternative to build another exit or entry onto the [CHS] campus as it is," Jasso said. "So the fact that we're already overcrowded and we

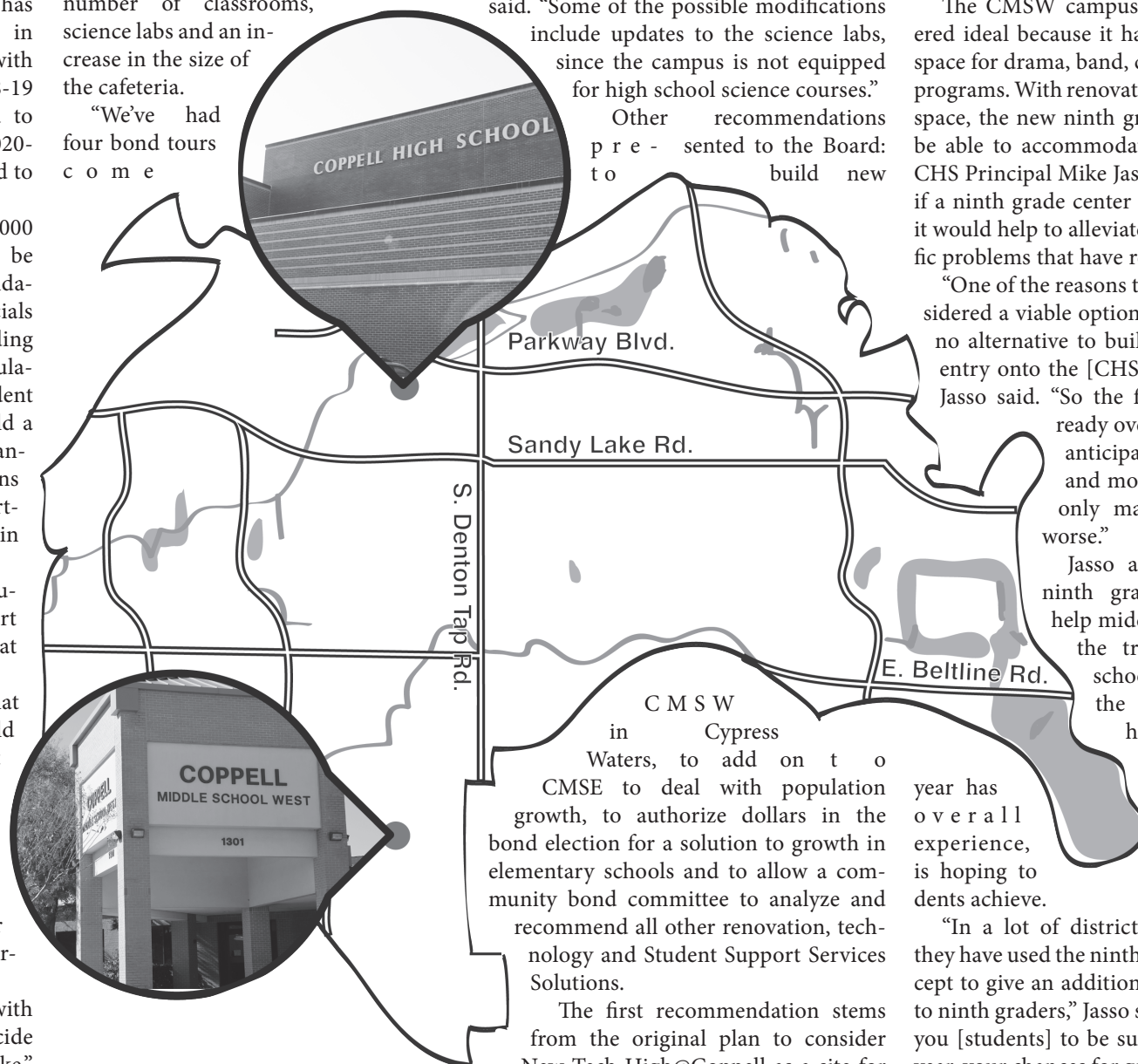
anticipate getting more and more students would only make that problem worse."

Jasso also stated that a ninth grade center could help middle schoolers with the transition to high school. According to the statistics Jasso has considered, a better freshman

led to a better high school which Jasso help his stu-

year has overall experience, is hoping to dents achieve.

"In a lot of districts, like Lewisville, they have used the ninth grade center concept to give an additional step of support to ninth graders," Jasso said. "If we can get you [students] to be successful freshman year, your chances for graduating successfully from high school are a lot stronger than if you struggle your freshman year."



graphic by Rachel Buigas-Lopez

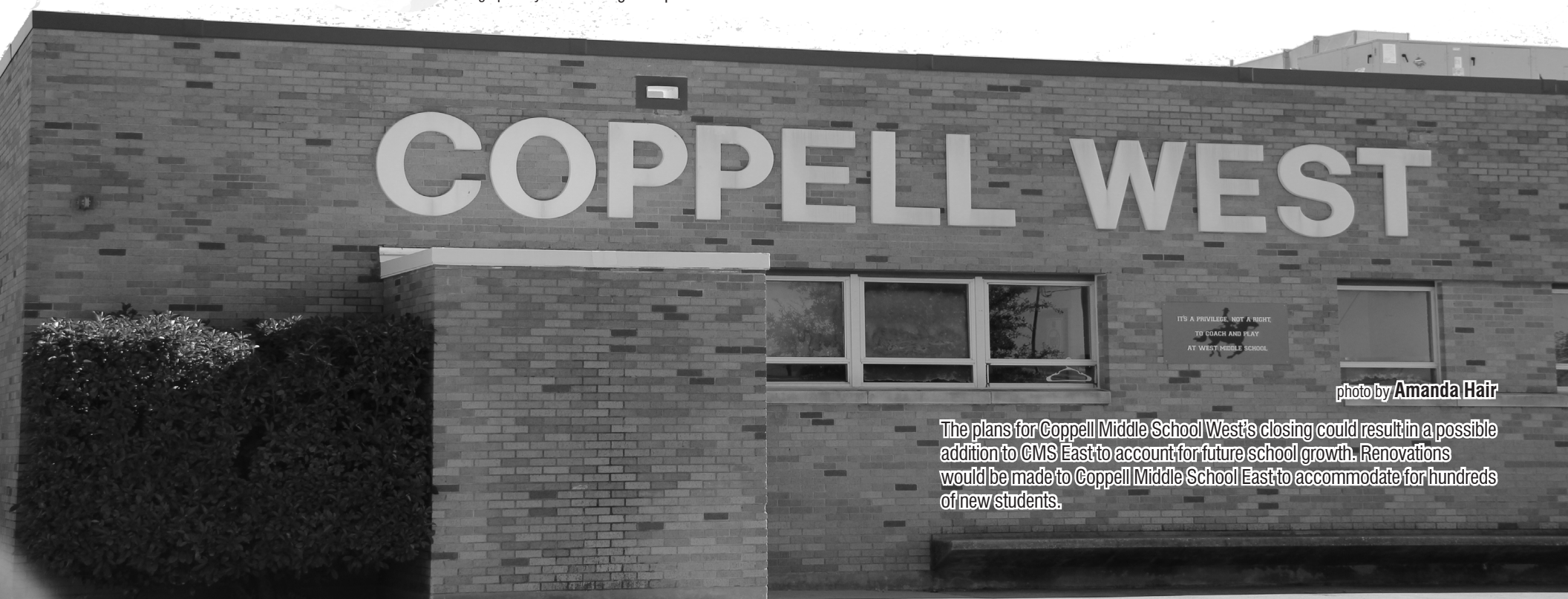


photo by Amanda Hair

The plans for Coppell Middle School West's closing could result in a possible addition to CMS East to account for future school growth. Renovations would be made to Coppell Middle School East to accommodate for hundreds of new students.