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## Several visions for Tacoma's new science school

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Tacoma's Science and Math Institute, already a school with a reputation for innovation, could become as well-known for its campus as for its curriculum.

SAMI, which is set to graduate its first seniors this year, is one of the beneficiaries of the \$500 million bond measure approved last month by Tacoma voters.

Since it opened in 2009, the school has been housed in a string of portable buildings near the main entrance of Point Defiance Park. But when it's rebuilt, it might not stay there.

School district and Metro Parks officials are in talks to determine whether the new SAMI will be housed in a single spot in the park or in multiple locations.

Part of the concept behind SAMI is to utilize the park as a giant outdoor classroom. At the same time, said Steve Murakami, director of planning and construction for Tacoma Public Schools, the district and Metro Parks are talking about whether new SAMI facilities could be used as community learning centers.

"It would be a true community asset," Murakami said. "It could be unlike anything we've ever done."

The Tacoma School Board last week approved the selection of McGranahan Architects for the conceptual design of a new SAMI at a cost of \$200,000.

"We haven't identified locations, and we haven't identified whether it will be one building or five," Murakami said. He added that the architects will be asked to look at a range of ideas.

He also emphasized that the school district wants to respect the park's natural spaces and current uses as it develops possible locations for SAMI's new home.

Also on Thursday, the School Board agreed to pay NAC Architecture \$500,000 for the conceptual design of the remaining phase of the modernization at Wilson High School.

Washington-Hoyt Elementary School will be the first of 14 major projects completed with bond funds. It is scheduled to open in September 2014; planning and design are under way.

SAMI and Wilson are the next projects in line, according to a schedule adopted by the school board, with a new SAMI campus scheduled to open in September 2015 and Wilson slated for completion by September 2016.

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