The Glynn County Board of Education tentatively plans to vote at its next meeting on whether to begin the site approval process for the Altama Elementary School replacement project.

The school board discussed the plan for the project at a facilities committee and work session meeting Thursday. District leadership has recommended building the new school on the same site as the current building, located at 5505 Altama Ave.

Virgil Cole, superintendent of Glynn County Schools, updated school board members on the feedback he heard at a community forum held on Tuesday for the school’s families.

Some parents and community members, including Daniel Parshley, the project manager for the Glynn Environmental Coalition, expressed concern at the forum that more testing needed to be done on the current site to determine that a nearby former Hercules landfill, which the Environmental Protection Agency placed on a national priority list for contamination in 1984.

The school system conducted testing over the past several months, and the tests came back negative for dangerous chemicals on the 18-acre school property.

“One thing we came to some resolution on toward the end of the meeting was that I think if we put some sentinel wells as a precaution, which are not expensive, just to kind of monitor just in case,” Cole said.

Sentinel wells monitor ground water.

“We feel like we can go ahead and do some sentinel wells on our own ... just again, to be safe, and if we ever see anything we can deal with it,” Cole said. “Again, there’s been nothing on our site. We’ve had the school here for 54 years.”
Cole said no meeting participant Tuesday told him afterward not to build the new school on the current site. He said he recommends the board vote to begin the site approval process at its next meeting on April 10.

School board member Millard Allen asked the board members if anyone felt uncomfortable moving forward with that action. None said they felt that way.

In other business, the school board also plans to vote at its April 10 meeting on whether to approve a purchase of additional security cameras and access control technology for several schools.

The purchase would be part of an ongoing effort to improve school security.

“We're looking to try to add security cameras to seven of the elementary schools, as well as at strategic locations at Glynn Academy and then also to add some access control mechanisms to the middle schools to allow for a buzzing in of those particular schools,” said Jim Pulos, assistant superintendent for student achievement. “This is one of the initiatives to increase security all around.”

The cameras at Glynn Academy will be strategically placed based on a recent security assessment done at the school, Pulos said.

The total cost of the purchase would be more than $214,600. The money would come from the technology line of the Education Special Purpose Local Option Tax, or ESPLOST, budget.