Due diligence must be done at new Altama

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Folks in the community are right to be concerned about the placement of the next Altama Elementary School.

Several people — parents and environmental advocates alike — expressed their feelings on the matter recently at a public hearing of sorts about the school system’s plans for the much-needed replacement of one of the oldest elementary schools in the county.

They were most concerned with potential contamination in the soil at both potential locations. The No. 1 location currently being considered appears to be the ample amount of space available behind the building on the current campus. The secondary option is a lot behind the old Brunswick High School.

Neither location has the cleanest of environmental pasts. Both have tested positive for contaminants such as toxaphene previously.

Contaminants or any other words associated with environmental hazards understandably raise some eyebrows when associated with a school. They certainly do for us.

The school board’s hired experts, however, have said as recently as January that the sites have been tested and pose no current threat to students, faculty or staff. This may very well be true. We have no reason to doubt the experts who are far more experienced in such matters.

We also have no reason to believe the school board or anyone at Glynn County Schools would cut any corners on such a serious matter. Despite what some people may think, we are certain board members and administrators have the best interest of the children at heart. In fact, Altama’s teachers and administrators endorsed the plan to build on the same campus.

The folks who spoke at the meeting last Tuesday make good points; however, Construction will not begin on a new school at either location for months. That allows for ample time to do a little extra due diligence and to test, and retest, all over the site to ensure there is nothing that could harm our local
We need a new Altama Elementary. The multiple times students have had to be bused to Brunswick High for bathroom breaks because of plumbing problems is just one piece of evidence of that.

Wherever it is built, though, must be safe for all involved.