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## ***New site for MLK 'is perfect'***

### ***EACS would lease part of Village to Montessori***

**By Kelly Soderlund**

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King Montessori School stays in its current location downtown, students will have to put on their baseball gloves and get ready to catch fly balls.

The school, at the corner of Lewis and Webster streets, is where right field is scheduled to be as part of a downtown baseball stadium. But officials are hoping that an agreement can be reached with East Allen County Schools to lease classroom space at Village Elementary School.

The EACS board looked at the preliminary lease proposal during its meeting Tuesday night and plans to vote on it in June. The Montessori school would lease four classrooms at Village, 4625 Werling Drive, for \$4,900 a month, the contract stated. School officials must also put down a \$4,900 deposit.

"We feel the location is perfect for us," school director Mary Musson said.

The agreement will be beneficial to EACS because the district already runs a half-day pre-kindergarten program at Village for about 25 children, paid for by federal Title 1 money, which is earmarked for low-income students, EACS Superintendent Kay Novotny said. If those students transfer to the MLK program, that money is freed to be used in other areas, she said.

The lease agreement states that EACS students will be given priority registration. Musson expects to enroll about 100 children including any EACS students who choose to attend.

"We will have to turn students away," Musson said.

The proposal, drawn up by EACS officials, states the school could lease space for one year, but Musson would like the board to consider a three-year agreement. MLK students would be able to use the school's bathrooms, playground and cafeteria.

The school must also provide its own classroom furniture, but East Allen will take care of all utilities except phones and Internet. The district will pay for the addition of about 15 parking spaces, but the Montessori school must install an outside weather awning and a buzzer entry system to its part of the building.

"We're pretty excited about hopefully moving forward with that," Novotny said. "We think it's the right thing to do for the kids."

The city of Fort Wayne bought the building housing the Montessori school this year for \$1.5 million to make way for the \$130 million Harrison Square development, which, in addition to

the baseball stadium, will include a hotel, parking garage, condominiums and retail space. The school has until Aug. 31 to move.

[ksoderlund@jg.net](mailto:ksoderlund@jg.net)