

Howard schools close deal on Elkridge site

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Elkridge will get a new elementary school for the 2013-2014 academic year now that the sellers of a 10.1-acre site on Ducketts Lane have settled a dispute in court.

The Howard County school system was supposed to close the deal with Ducketts Ridge LLC in October, but a shareholder refused to release a lien to the sellers. The \$2.64 million deal was put on hold, leaving the school system without property needed to alleviate overcrowding in the northeast and causing the system to file a lawsuit in December.

Ducketts Ridge LLC, which includes members Hugh F. Cole Jr. and John F. Liparini, and the Brantly Development Group, based

in Columbia, made an arrangement in court with the lien-holder, Barry Mehta, said Joel Gallihue, manager of planning for the Howard County school system.

"I'm relieved. It's very good to get this done, to be able to turn our attention to redistricting for this school," he added.

The school system had entered into an agreement to purchase the property Oct. 3 after investing a quarter of a million dollars in the project in acquisition expenses, despite a pending lawsuit between the lien-holder and the sellers.

"We continued to plan for Ducketts, even though we didn't own it. We kept the engine running," Gallihue said, adding that school offi-

cials hope to open the 600-seat elementary school in August 2013.

The school system has also acquired property at Oxford Square, which was donated by David P. Scheffenacker Jr. of Preston Scheffenacker Properties Inc., to help alleviate crowding along the U.S. 1 corridor.

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