

New Tustin high school gets green light from board

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TUSTIN -- Construction of Tustin Unified's third high school was approved Monday night by the district board, but the next step rests with California voters.

Arnold O. Beckman High School is scheduled for completion by fall 2004 if voters approve a \$25.3 billion bond measure in November. Some \$66 million would go to Tustin Unified for construction of Beckman and Hicks Canyon Elementary School.

"This community has waited for (Beckman) for too long," school board President Jonathan Abelove said. "We have got to move forward."

The 4-0 vote was followed by applause by parents in the audience, many of whom had moved to homes in Northpark, Northpark Square and West Irvine with the promise of a new high school. Board member Francine Scinto was absent.

"I'm so thrilled to hear what we heard tonight," said Lyann Collins, one of four parents who spoke at the meeting Monday night. Collins has spearheaded SIMBY, or Schools in My Back Yard, to help push for school funding.

Beckman High would be in the city of Irvine but lie within the Tustin Unified School District.

Hicks Canyon and Beckman were to open in fall 2003, but state funding fell through.

If Proposition 47 fails, the district would build a scaled-down high school using funds in hand, developer fees and savings from a bond refinancing.

Tustin Unified's two high schools are crowded. Tustin High has a capacity of 1,692 students but uses 18 portable classrooms to help serve 2,073. Foothill High has a 1,773- student capacity and serves 2,227.