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TPS board chief calls for stricter construction rules

By Ignazio Messina
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The president of the Toledo Board of Education yesterday asked for tighter safeguards regarding the district's new school construction program.

Board President Darlene Fisher voiced her concerns during a finance committee meeting after it was revealed that construction of the new Leverette Middle School is three months behind schedule and that a wall at the construction site toppled over during a storm in June.

After the storm, officials realized construction crews used the wrong size cinder block to build the wall, said Dan Romano, the district's chief business manager.

"They did use the wrong-size block and, subsequently, it did blow down from the wind," he said. "There is no additional cost to the district. It's the cost of the contractor."

The specifications called for a 12-inch block, but an 8-inch block was used instead.

Ms. Fisher asked for a review of the construction program's guidelines for contractors.

Calls to J.L. Judge Construction of Detroit, which was hired in November for \$5.9 million to be the general trades contractor at Leverette, were not returned.

The new school on Manhattan Boulevard will be 80,000 square feet and cost about \$12 million. The estimated completion was at the time set for April, 2007, but has since been pushed back to July 10, 2007.

The school is part of the districtwide construction program that is 77 percent funded by the state.

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