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## **Consultant suggests St. Lucie schools increase impact fee by 61%**

**The St. Lucie County School Board will review the consultant's suggested increase at its Tuesday meeting, but the County Commission must approve any change.**

**By Margot Susca**  
staff writer

**June 10, 2005**

A 61 percent hike in education impact fees is in the works to fund St. Lucie County's booming student growth.

The recommended change — from \$3,061 to \$4,955 per single-family home — comes after a two-month review by University of Florida professor James C. Nicholas and will be reviewed by the School Board on Tuesday, said Marty Sanders, the School District's growth management director.

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Any impact fee change requires St. Lucie County Commission approval, and Sanders said it was expected to review the matter and conduct public hearings this summer.

Last year — four months after the last increase took effect — School District officials began considering rising land and construction costs not included in the impact fee.

Impact fees are one-time charges on new construction used to pay for capital costs such as buses and new schools.

Superintendent Michael Lannon, pitching facilities needs to parents and community organizations in a series of recent forums, has said the increase is part of a four-pronged approach to fund growth.

Nicholas' 16-page report says current fees are in the middle of the scale when compared to other counties. The jump would still put St. Lucie County behind Volusia, Orange, Lake and Osceola counties.

St. Lucie County enrollment is expected to grow from 34,544 this year to 42,798 by October 2007, according to a separate report done by Orlando-based demographer Fishkind and Associates Inc.

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