

Estes backs school book

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The Dallas Independent School District, on the recommendation of Supt. Nolan Estes, will consider purchasing the Texas School Book Depository to create a museum-like facility of Dallas cultures named the John F. Kennedy Cultural Heritage Center.

But the district would have to buy it from the county, which paid \$400,000 Tuesday for the structure from which Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly fired the shots that killed the former president.

The downtown building, according to

a memo by Estes, would centralize the district's efforts at establishing smaller, single-culture heritage centers across the city. In response to the April 1976, desegregation order, the DISD formulated a Plan of Action that called for the creation of Mexican-American, Afro-American, European-American and Native-American cultural centers "to promote racial understanding and cooperation."

Two such centers already have been established — the Mexican-American Cultural Heritage Center at the L.G. Pinkston Annex and the African-Ameri-

can Cultural Heritage Center in the East Oak Cliff Education Complex. Both centers are staffed with curators and contain collections of art objects representative of the cultures, as well as resource information.

Though Estes' proposal names and favors the depository, it said possible locations "near" the Elm and Houston site also could be considered. A building that houses the JFK Museum across the street was one possibility, as well as the current Fair Park location of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Estes said after the meeting.

depository purchase

County Judge John Whittington said he considered it "very unlikely" the county would sell the depository.

"The determination was made that there was a need for county operations to get an option," said Whittington, "and I see every reason for the need."

He said he expected the county to move its supply office from the criminal courts building to the depository within 60 to 90 days because the criminal courts building is cramped for courtroom space.

But Estes said a downtown consolidated center would create for Dallas "a

good statement for this city . . . a pluralistic statement right in our business district."

His plan was presented to a Board of Education subcommittee, which authorized the DISD administration to research the matter and issue a progress report Jan. 18.

The proposed project could be funded through the recently formed Foundation for Quality Education, Inc., a non-profit entity devoted to raising funds for Dallas public schools, Estes told trustees. Donations from local and national sources and interest from the district's

bond funds also could be used, he said.

James Bond, president of the Foundation, said the project idea was new to him.

"I got a call from Estes about an hour before the meeting," Bond said immediately after Wednesday's session. But the foundation "could" raise enough money for a purchase or possibly finance a purchase, he said.

"I think it's a good idea, a museum," he said. "That appeals to a lot of givers. If I think I can get (the depository) at a reasonable price, then I'll go back to Estes."