



Enlarged City School District

"Committed to Excellence"

Superintendent: Michael J. Hoose

*Board of Education: Janet S. Griffin, President; Judith E. Murphy, Vice President; Christine A. Gregory,
David K. Lemon, Peter L. Rogoff, Alane M. Van Donsel*

April 20, 2018

Dear Elementary Families,

As we get closer to a vote by the Board of Education (BOE) on possible school closures, I felt it necessary to bring you up to date on the process.

The BOE held an additional Public Forum on April 16, 2018 to hear additional comments and questions from the community regarding the possible closure of Parker and/or Virgil Elementary. At that meeting the question was raised as to whether this decision rests with the BOE or if it was a public referendum. I submitted the question to our school attorney and his response was:

The statute does not provide for an up or down vote by the electorate on the closing of a school. Rather, The Commissioner of Education has held, "Decisions about school district reorganization and the closing of school buildings are within the discretion of a board of education and will not be set aside unless they are shown to lack a rational basis.

Thus, any public vote would be advisory to the Board. Here is what the Commissioner has said regarding advisory propositions: "I reiterate that advisory propositions and referenda are discouraged because they may improperly infer voter determination of the issue submitted for consideration. The law gives responsibility on the closing of school buildings to the Board alone. No public vote is required. On the contrary, public votes are discouraged. (There is) a Commissioner decision (No. 14,225) with similar issues regarding reorganization and school closing to those presented in your District. Please note the Commissioner ruled in favor of the District ..."

Your Board of Education has been, and remains, dedicated to making this difficult decision in a transparent and collaborative manner. Their sole interest is in trying to find a pathway to financial sustainability while enhancing the teaching and learning process for both students and staff.

The BOE will hold one additional work session on May 1, 2018 at the Kaufman Center to discuss items related to the last Public Forum. The actual decision will be made prior to the end of the school year. As was said at the Public Forum, the BOE and I acknowledge this community's passion and the professionalism that has been exhibited. The vast majority of people have been

respectful in their suggestions and generous with their time and thoughts and we "thank you." Please refer to the District website for a Q&A document and other information.

We are not alone in experiencing declining enrollment and revenue while expenses continue to rise. Everyone looks forward to the day when Cortland Enlarged City School District is financially healthy, can start improving (rather than maintaining) our facilities, and creating amazing opportunities for our students and community.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Hoose, Superintendent



Janet S. Griffin, Board of Education President