



*"Committed to Excellence"*

*Superintendent: Michael J. Hoose*

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

---

January 9, 2018

Dear Staff and Cortland Community,

As the Board of Education Facility Study winds down I would like to give you an update about the study and remind you about the purpose and reasons for the study.

There are several reasons as to why the Board of Education commissioned a study. There has been a strong desire to embrace the middle school philosophy and create a 6-8 program. Another reason is the increase in expenses is greater than our ability to raise revenue. The Comptroller's Office has designated Cortland as one of nine "moderately fiscally stressed" districts in the state. The financial burden of having five elementary schools with excess capacity is not sustainable. An independent firm, Castallo & Silky, Inc., was hired by the BOE to conduct a study to answer the following essential questions:

*"What options exist to arrange the grades and school buildings to maintain, and perhaps enhance, the education of Cortland City School District students while ensuring fiscal responsibility to the taxpayer? How could the grades and schools be organized?"*

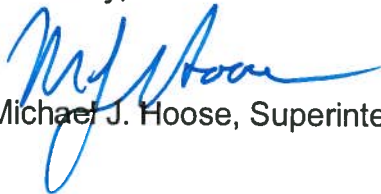
The Board of Education (BOE) was committed to a transparent process, so a committee of stakeholders was convened to advise the consultants as they conducted their study. The committee of stakeholders met six times, once each in our six school buildings. Presentations and minutes from each meeting continue to be available at our website under "Quick Links" and then "Facility Study." Each district newsletter, as well as social media, have provided updates about the committee meetings to the educational community. At this time, the consultants are recommending that either Parker Elementary or Virgil Elementary be closed with the students distributed to the other elementary buildings. Their reasoning behind their recommendations will be included in the final report to the Board of Education.

The consultants will present their final report with their recommended options to the Board of Education at its regular meeting on January 23 at 6:30 in the JSHS auditorium. Because this is a regular meeting, the BOE will not include a time for the public to comment on the report at that meeting. There will be a better opportunity for the community to speak to the BOE at a special meeting on February 6 at 6:30 in the JSHS auditorium. This will give the BOE and the public time to read the final report and consider the information before meeting with you. Please remember that the consultants' report is advisory in nature and serves as only one of the tools that the BOE will use to make some difficult decisions. Your comments and feedback, including information gathered at the February 6 meeting, will also inform the Board.

No one wants to close a neighborhood school; please know that the BOE and administration are aware of the emotion surrounding such sensitive issues and difficult decisions. Everyone involved is dedicated to doing what is best for the education of our students coupled with the long-term financial health of the district.

Thank you for your dedication to the students of Cortland.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Hoose, Superintendent