

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cortland Facilities Study Advisory Committee
FROM: Alan Pole and Bill Silky
RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of May 17, 2017
DATE: May 18, 2017

Attendance:

Committee Members: Anna Bennett, Kevin Cafararo, Nicole Dintino, Rick Gamel, Sister Harriett Hamilton, Lisa Kaup, Roberto Maniaci, Amy Sundheim, Karen Williams, and Mark Yacavone

Consultants: Alan Pole and Bill Silky

Observers: Michael Hoose, Jeff Craig, Judi Riley, Kimberly Vile, Tom Dovi, Christine Gregory, Bob Martin, Betty Bentley, and Douglas Pasquerella

Location: Barry Elementary School

1. Superintendent Michael Hoose welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the study consultants. After the consultants provided their backgrounds, committee members were asked to introduce themselves and discuss their connection with the school district.

2. Alan Pole reviewed the purpose of the study that is to answer the following question:

"Now and in the future, is there a better way 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? If so, how should the grades and schools be organized?"

3. Meetings of the Advisory Committee will be held from 6:30-8:30 pm as follows:

Date	Topic	Location
May 17	General overview of the study process including the committee's role; student enrollment projections	Barry School Library
June 14	The instructional program; facilities review	High School Room 133A
August 2	Begin exploring possible future facility options; transportation implications of options	Parker School Library
September 13	Staffing implications of options; Continued implications of options	Randall School Library
October 4	Financial implications of options; Continued implications of options	Smith School Cafeteria
November 8	Review of draft report and tentative recommendations	Virgil School Gym
December 13	Presentation of final report to the Board of Education	Board Room

While the meetings of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 pm, optional tours of the schools will be held before each of the meetings beginning at 5:45 pm. These tours are for committee members and for anyone that will be observing the business meeting that will follow. The tours will begin at each building's main office.

4. A contact list of the members of the advisory committee was shared with email addresses. Members of the group were asked to verify the accuracy of the information since email will serve as the primary means of communication between the consultants and the committee members. Meeting materials will be emailed to all committee members prior to the meeting. Paper copies of the materials will also be made available at each meeting.

5. Meeting notes will be provided after each meeting. The notes will be emailed to all committee members and copied to the superintendent. It will be the responsibility of the superintendent to distribute the notes within the district, as he deems appropriate. It is anticipated that, at a minimum, notes will be provided to board members and posted on the district's website. The Power Point that is used at each meeting will also be posted on the district's website after the meeting occurs. Facilities study materials that are posted on the district's website will be under the "Quick Links" tab.

6. All meetings of the advisory committee will be open. Members of the public will be welcome at these meetings. At the conclusion of each meeting, the observers will have the opportunity to offer comments or ask questions.

7. Alan Pole presented a Power Point overview of the study process and the role of the advisory committee. He indicated that the function of the committee is to advise the Board of Education and the consultants and to communicate with the public about the process. In addition, the committee will add a cultural context for Cortland as the various aspects of the study emerge. The superintendent is not a member of the committee but serves as a resource to the committee. Committee members are expected to attend all committee meetings, freely express their points of view, be key communicators with stakeholder groups, and be a respectful, contributing member of the committee.

He emphasized that the consultants bring an outside, unbiased perspective and will ensure that the process is open. They will produce meetings notes after each committee meeting and will be responsible for the final report. The recommendations in the report will benefit student learning and will be educationally sound and fiscally responsible. They will also be independent of special interest groups.

8. Bill Silky presented an overview of past enrollments for Cortland as well as projected future enrollments for the district. The study begins by reviewing enrollment trends since enrollments influence all decisions regarding staffing, class and curricular offerings, facilities, transportation, and finances.

Enrollment has been declining since at least 2011-12 when the analysis began. Since 2011-2012, the enrollment in Cortland has declined from 2,627 students to 2,383 students in the 2016-17 school year, a decline of 9.3%.

To predict future enrollment, the consultants employ the Cohort Survival Projection method that uses information on the number of births in the school district over a period of years and calculates patterns of enrollment. A cohort survival ratio is developed that tracks how each cohort of students changes as it moves through the grade levels. This ratio, used with the live birth information, predicts what the enrollment will be for a period of years given consistent and predictable conditions. It does not take into account significant economic development changes such as a major employer leaving or entering the area and other similar changes. However, it is not anticipated that either of these conditions will be taking place in Cortland.

Using this method, the enrollment in Cortland is predicted to decrease from 2,383 in 2016-17 to 2,026 students in the 2023-2024 school year, an additional decline of 15%. The number of home schooled students, non-resident students, and resident students enrolled in non-public schools are all factors that are considered in projecting enrollment. It does not appear that any of these factors will significantly influence the enrollment projections that were made for Cortland. Bill also reviewed demographic information for Cortland County as well as the major towns and villages within the school district. This review clearly demonstrated that the population trend in Cortland County has decreased, the county is aging, and a slight decrease in the population is anticipated for the future.

9. Bill Silky reviewed the “take-aways from the meeting which included the following:

- ❖ The purpose of the study is to answer the question, "Now and in the future, is there a better way 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? If so, how should the grades and schools be organized?"
- ❖ The study process will be open to ensure there is not a perception it is being conducted behind closed doors.
- ❖ The Advisory Committee was formed to assist the consultants throughout the process, but the final recommendations will be the consultants’.
- ❖ The district has seen declining enrollments and will likely continue to see enrollments drop slightly.

10. The meeting was opened up to the observers for questions and comments. One observer asked if age ranges of the population could be shown by town....Bill will check into this. Another observer emphasized the importance of having significant communication with the community about this study.

11. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 14, 2017 at the junior-senior high school. An optional tour of the school will begin at 5:45 for anyone who is interested. The business meeting of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on May 17. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact me. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on 6.14.17. The tour will begin at 5:45 and the meeting will start at 6:30!!

C: Michael Hoose