

# School Facilities Use Study

## ***Cortland Enlarged City School District***

Board of Education Presentation

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# Purpose of the Study

"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?"



# Advisory Committee Members

Breck Aspinwall  
Anna Bennett  
Susan Byrnes  
Kevin Cafararo  
Nicole Dintino  
Rick Gamel  
Sister Harriett Hamilton  
Lisa Kaup  
Roberto Maniaci  
Stephanie Mitchell-Madden  
Amy Sundheim  
Karen Williams  
Mark Yacavone



thank you!

# Key Findings

*Finding 1:* The live birth rate in the Cortland City School district has declined somewhat from 2004 to 2016. (14)

*Finding 2:* The district's K-12 enrollment has declined from 2,637 in 2012-13 to 2,362 this current year. (15)

*Finding 3:* The projected enrollment for the school district is expected to continue to decline out to 2024-25 to approximately 2,007 students. (15)

*Finding 4:* All of the elementary schools have experienced a decline in enrollment since 2013-14 with Parker and Virgil seeing the largest drops. (16)



# Key Findings

**Finding 9:** Elementary class sizes in the district this year vary from 12 to 24 and the average class size compares favorably to other Cortland County school districts and New York State as a whole. (21)

**Finding 10:** Virgil is the smallest elementary school with only one section of a grade while Barry is the largest with some grades (1, 4, 5, 6) this year having three sections. (21)



Table 6.1 Elementary Class Sizes-2017-18							
Grade	Barry	Parker	Randall	Smith	Virgil	TOTAL	# of Sections
K	22, 22	19, 16	21, 19	16, 15	15	165	9
1	18, 19, 19	19, 19	21, 21	16, 18	12	182	10
2	20, 17	14, 16	19, 18	20, 20	18	162	9
3	24, 24	19, 17	24, 22	21, 20	15	186	9
4	19, 17, 20	20, 19	20, 23	18, 17	24	197	10
5	20, 21, 21	24	23, 22	20, 21	20	192	9
6	18, 20, 19	15, 14	19, 18	15, 14	12	164	10
TOTAL	360	231	290	251	116	1,248	66
Average common branch class size in Cortland County=18.9 (2017-18) Average common branch class size in NYS=22 (2015-16)							

**Finding 13:** Cortland Junior-Senior High School offers a very comprehensive program to its students. (24-28)

# Key Findings



**Finding 18:** Parker and Randall are the oldest school buildings in the district both having been built in 1928 while the Junior-Senior High is the newest built in 1964. (30)

**Finding 19:** Of the elementary schools, Barry is the largest (65,840 sq. ft.) and Virgil is the smallest (34,654 sq. ft.). (30)

Table 7.1 Overview of Cortland School Buildings						
Schools	Barry	Parker	Randall	Smith	Virgil	Jr-Sr High
Address	20 Raymond Avenue	89 Madison Street	31 Randall Street	33 Wheeler Avenue	1208 Church Street	8 Valley View Drive
Year of Original Building	1958	1928	1928	1957	1932	1964
Sq. Ft. in Current Building	65,840	50,573	55,480	56,358	34,654	270.878
Number of Floors	1	3	3	1	3	3
Grades Housed	K-6	K-6	K-6	K-6	K-6	7-12
Students Served	349	248	295	252	124	1,104
Architect	King & King					
NOTES: All information was taken from the NYS Building Conditions Survey completed in 2010 except the enrollments that were drawn from the 2016-17 academic year.						

# Key Findings

*Finding 20:* There are more rooms in the elementary schools than are needed to house the district's elementary students. (31-33)

*Finding 23:* The district total for capital work from the BCS to just complete priority 1 immediate needs is \$27,720,525. (38)

<b>Table 7.12</b>				
<b>Priorities from Building 2015 Condition Survey</b>				
Building	Priority 1 (1-2 Years)	Priority 2 (3-5 Years)	Priority 3 (6-10 Years)	Other
Barry	\$4,770,081	\$996,438	\$1,033,200	\$1,800,645
Parker	\$4,278,395	\$851,875	\$365,250	\$16,380
Randall	\$1,118,799	\$895,500	\$799,725	\$50,820
Smith	\$4,160,393	\$1,800,075	\$228,908	\$18,900
Virgil	\$638,935	\$587,813	\$329,805	\$71,400
Jr-Sr High	\$11,697,895	\$3,644,938	\$3,614,850	\$213,885
DO/Bus Garage	\$1,056,028	\$332,313	\$60,750	\$1,575
District Total	\$27,720,525	\$9,108,950	\$6,432,488	\$2,173,605





# Key Findings

***Finding 26:*** Staff savings from closing Parker Elementary School would be approximately \$801,685 in salary and benefits. (43)

Table 8.5 Staff Savings from Closing Parker*			
# of FTE	Position	Salary/FTE	Salary Savings
1	12 Month Clerical	\$52,344	\$52,344
1	10 Month Clerical	33,904	33,904
3	Custodian/Cleaner	44,158	132,474
2	Food Service Workers	20,580	41,160
1	Nurse	45,335	45,335
1	Principal	157,613	157,613
4.05	Teacher (.5 Art, 1.0 Library, 1.0 Vocal Music, .35 Instrumental Music, .2 String Music, 1.0 Physical Education)	83,668	338,855
Total Savings			\$801,685
* Assumes that the following positions will remain: all teacher aides, all teaching assistants, all special education teachers, all AIS reading and math teachers, all psychologists, all speech therapists, and all social workers			





# Key Findings

**Finding 27:** Staff savings from closing Virgil Elementary School would be approximately \$592,888 in salary and benefits. (44)

Table 8.6 Staff Savings from Closing Virgil*			
# of FTE	Position	Salary/FTE	Salary Savings
1	12 Month Clerical	\$52,344	\$52,344
2	Custodian/Cleaner	44,158	88,316
2	Food Service Workers	20,580	41,160
0.7	Nurse	45,335	31,735
1	Principal	157,613	157,613
2.65	Teacher (.3 Art, 1.0 Library, .4 Vocal Music, .25 Instrumental Music, .2 String Music, .5 Physical Education)	83,668	221,720
Total Savings			\$592,888
* Assumes that the following positions will remain: all teacher aides, all teaching assistants, all special education teachers, all AIS reading and math teachers, all psychologists, all speech therapists, and all social workers			

**Finding 30:** To some degree, the district's transportation routes are organized around the elementary attendance zones, however the district has a very complex transportation system that has regular bus routes stopping at multiple schools. (45)

# Key Findings

**Finding 33:** Cortland residents have passed school budget votes in nine of the past ten years. (49)

Table 10.1 District Budget Vote History			
Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Total Votes
2017	399	84	483
2016	456	95	551
2015	281	189	470
2014	328	177	505
2013	400	166	566
2012	685	319	1004
2011	365	1137	1502
2010	363	308	671
2009	549	218	767
2008	457	417	874
2007	346	136	482

**Finding 34:** Cortland residents have supported capital project votes on two recent occasions (2007 and 2014) in recent years as well as 11 of 12 bus propositions since 2005. (49)



# Key Findings



**Finding 35:** The district's restricted fund balance has been declining the last three years which is not a positive sign. (51)

Table 10.3 Restricted Fund Balance: A Five Year Summary					
Category	6/30/13	6/30/14	6/30/15	6/30/16	6/30/17
Unemployment	\$368,012	\$368,496	\$360,542	\$347,224	\$347,489
Retirement	\$3,031,976	\$3,036,918	\$2,248,554	\$1,483,450	\$1,336,819
Tax Cert	\$809,222	\$810,352	\$811,123	\$811,895	\$853,791
Liability	\$877,668	\$879,000	\$379,835	\$30,126	\$30,163
Emp Benefits	\$1,823,774	\$1,540,505	\$1,289,413	\$965,696	\$714,362
Capital	\$1,503,910	\$1,506,368	\$1,508,252	\$1,510,141	\$2,284,332
Workers Comp	\$0	\$1,570,000	\$786,896	\$576,892	\$356,209
Insurance	\$2,004,191	\$2,007,458	\$2,009,969	\$2,012,487	\$243,078
Repair	\$0	\$0	\$466,364	\$466,545	\$685,207
Total	\$10,932,618	\$12,232,962	\$11,473,813	\$9,318,373	\$6,851,450

**Finding 36:** The \$291,137 Cortland had at the end of last year in its unassigned fund balance is only .6% of this year's general fund budget. This is an extremely low amount to maintain. (51)

# Key Findings

*Finding 37:* Cortland used \$535,000 of its fund balance to hold down the tax rate this year, therefore it will need to come up with this same amount next year to do the same or it will experience a fiscal challenge. (51)

*Finding 38:* In June 2017 the State Comptroller's office found the district is financing operating deficits with fund balance and reserves which is adversely impacting the district's finances. (52)



# Key Findings

**Finding 39:** The district has principal and interest payments on existing capital debt that extend through the 2031-32 school year. (54)

Table 10.5 Capital Debt After Aid Received 2016-17 to 2031-32			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Principal &amp; Interest</i>	<i>Estimated Aid</i>	<i>Estimated Local Share</i>
2016-17	\$3,430,575	\$2,704,214	\$726,361
2017-18	\$3,671,250	\$3,218,110	\$453,140
2018-19	\$3,667,650	\$3,218,110	\$449,540
2019-20	\$3,660,125	\$3,218,110	\$442,015
2020-21	\$3,657,150	\$3,218,110	\$439,040
2021-22	\$3,658,250	\$3,218,110	\$440,140
2022-23	\$3,662,925	\$3,218,110	\$444,815
2023-24	\$3,660,675	\$3,218,110	\$442,565
2024-25	\$3,661,500	\$3,218,110	\$443,390
2025-26	\$3,664,925	\$3,218,110	\$446,815
2026-27	\$870,425	\$916,096	-\$45,671
2027-28	\$867,525	\$916,096	-\$48,571
2028-29	\$863,225	\$916,096	-\$52,871
2029-30	\$547,500	\$779,907	-\$232,407
2030-31	\$545,900	\$643,718	-\$97,818
2031-32	\$543,400	\$513,896	\$29,504
Total	\$40,633,000	\$36,353,013	\$4,279,987



# Conclusion

As consultants we have concluded that there are several options for arranging the grades and schools to achieve the stated purposes outlined above. While several “feasible” options were explored in depth, only a few provide a “desirable” direction in our opinion for the district to pursue in light of the desire to maintain or improve the education of Cortland students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayer.



# Criteria for Building Closures

1. Smallest enrollment-impacts the fewest students, staff, and families;  
*--Virgil has the smallest enrollment; Parker has the second smallest enrollment*
2. Age of building;  
*-- Parker and Randall are the oldest buildings; Virgil is the 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest; Barry and Smith are 25-30 years newer*
3. Square footage of building to accommodate new students;  
*--Virgil is the smallest school; Parker is the second smallest*
4. Geographic proximity to other schools to facilitate transportation and sharing of students and staff;  
*--Virgil is the most isolated school building*
5. Site considerations for parking and a bus loop;  
*--Parker has the most challenging site*
6. Cost of Priority 1 items from the Building Condition Survey;  
*--Barry, Parker and Smith are approximately \$4,000,000, Randall is approximately \$1,000,000, and Virgil is approximately \$650,000. Building aid is available for these costs*
7. Number of floors, single story is better;  
*--Virgil, Parker, and Randall have 3 floors; Barry and Smith have one*



**Table 12.25**  
**Financial Summary of Options**

Option #	Description	# of buildings	Number of sections K-5	Number of sections K-6	Local share cost of Middle School	Annual savings from building closure	Annual classroom teacher impact from change in section #'s	Total Savings or Cost
1	Current arrangement	6	(56)	(66)	0	0	0	0
2	Close Virgil; 2 grade centers- K-2 Randall & Smith; 3-5 Barry & Parker; 6-8 middle school	5	50	-	+\$215,000	-\$592,888	-\$507,480	-\$885,368
3	Close Parker; 2 grade centers- K-2 Barry & Virgil; 3-5 Randall and Smith; 6-8 middle school	5	51	-	+\$215,000	-\$801,685	-\$422,900	-\$1,009,585
4	Close Virgil; Keep 4 K-5 elementary schools; 6-8 middle school	5	59	-	+\$215,000	-\$592,888	+\$253,740	-\$124,148
5	Close Parker; Keep 4 K-5 elementary schools; 6-8 middle school	5	54	-	+\$215,000	-\$801,685	-\$169,160	-\$755,845
6	Close Virgil; Keep 4 K-6 elementary schools	5	-	68		-\$592,888	+\$169,160	-\$423,728
7	Close Parker; Keep 4 K-6 elementary schools	5	-	62		-\$801,685	-\$338,320	-\$1,140,005
8	Close Parker; 2 grade centers- K-2 Smith & Virgil; 3-6 Barry & Randall	5	-	59		-\$801,685	-\$592,060	-\$1,393,745
9	Close Virgil; 2 grade centers- K-2 Randall & Smith; 3-6 Barry & Parker	5		60		-\$592,888	-\$507,480	-\$1,100,368

# Options



# Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the district convene a facilities planning committee whose role it will be to develop and monitor a long term facilities plan for the district. This will include the closure of one or more of the school buildings, the scope of work to be performed from the Building Condition Survey, the long term the design of appropriate school facilities and the financing of these initiatives. This committee should be comprised of both school staff and members of the community. (84)



# Recommendations



2. It is recommended that the Board of Education consider the following options as both “feasible” and “desirable” as it looks to the future. (84-85)

Option 6: Close Virgil and keep the remaining elementary schools open as K-6 buildings; maintain the current 7-8, 9-12 Junior-Senior High School configuration.

Option 7: Close Parker and keep the remaining elementary schools open as K-6 buildings; maintain the current 7-8, 9-12 Junior-Senior High School configuration.

Option 8: Close Parker and form grade centers as follows: K-2 at Smith and Virgil and grades 3-6 at Barry and Randall.

Option 9: Close Virgil and form grade centers as follows: K-2 at Randall and Smith and grades 3-6 at Barry and Parker.

# Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the district use the attrition method for reducing staff should any staff reductions be realized from this initiative. (86)
4. It is recommended that the Board of Education conduct at least one public hearing/comment period on these options for the general public to express opinions. (86)
5. It is recommended that the district implement these options in the 2019-20 school year. This will allow for adequate time to conduct one or more hearings to allow the public to make concerns and comments known about each of the options under consideration and for sufficient planning time to finalize implementation details so that the transition is as smooth as possible. (86)

*Recommendations*

# Questions????

