

School Facilities Use Study

Cortland Enlarged City School District

Advisory Committee Meeting
January 3, 2018



Castallo and Silky LLC
Alan Pole and Bill Silky, Consultants

1

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?"



Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

Updates From November 8th Meeting



Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

3

District Estimated Debt Payments for Converting Jr-Sr High to 6-8 MS \$10,000,000

District Debt Repayment Schedule-\$10,000,000				
<i>Year ending 6/30</i>	<i>Balance Outstanding</i>	<i>Total (P&I) Payment</i>	<i>Est. State Aid</i>	<i>Net Local Share</i>
0	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
1	\$10,000,000	\$875,000	\$661,642	\$213,358
2	\$9,725,000	\$876,063	\$661,642	\$214,420
3	\$9,165,000	\$877,863	\$661,642	\$216,220
4	\$8,585,000	\$874,013	\$661,642	\$212,370
5	\$7,990,000	\$874,675	\$661,642	\$213,033
6	\$7,375,000	\$874,688	\$661,642	\$213,045
7	\$6,740,000	\$874,050	\$661,642	\$212,408
8	\$6,085,000	\$877,763	\$661,642	\$216,120
9	\$5,405,000	\$875,663	\$661,642	\$214,020
10	\$4,705,000	\$877,913	\$661,642	\$216,270
11	\$3,980,000	\$874,350	\$661,642	\$212,708
12	\$3,235,000	\$875,138	\$661,642	\$213,495
13	\$2,465,000	\$875,113	\$661,642	\$213,470
14	\$1,670,000	\$874,275	\$661,642	\$212,633
15	\$850,000	\$877,625	\$661,642	\$215,893

Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

4

District Estimated Debt Payments for Converting Jr-Sr High to 6-8 MS \$8,000,000

District Debt Repayment Schedule-\$8,000,000				
<i>Year ending 6/30</i>	<i>Balance Outstanding</i>	<i>Total (P&I) Payment</i>	<i>Est. State Aid</i>	<i>Net Local Share</i>
0	\$8,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
1	\$8,000,000	\$700,000	\$29,314	\$170,686
2	\$7,780,000	\$702,850	\$29,314	\$173,536
3	\$7,330,000	\$698,225	\$29,314	\$168,911
4	\$6,870,000	\$698,275	\$29,314	\$168,961
5	\$6,395,000	\$702,838	\$29,314	\$173,524
6	\$5,900,000	\$701,750	\$29,314	\$172,436
7	\$5,390,000	\$700,175	\$29,314	\$170,861
8	\$4,865,000	\$698,113	\$29,314	\$168,799
9	\$4,325,000	\$700,563	\$29,314	\$171,249
10	\$3,765,000	\$702,363	\$29,314	\$173,049
11	\$3,185,000	\$698,513	\$29,314	\$169,199
12	\$2,590,000	\$699,175	\$29,314	\$169,861
13	\$1,975,000	\$699,188	\$29,314	\$169,874
14	\$1,340,000	\$703,550	\$29,314	\$174,236
15	\$680,000	\$7-2,100	\$29,314	\$172,768

Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

5

Utility Costs by Building

Table 7.13 2016-17 Utility Costs						
Utility	Elem Schools					Jr.-Sr. High School
	Barry	Parker	Randall	Smith	Virgil	
Electric	\$34,172	\$29,458	\$37,707	\$26,736	\$26,159	\$248,233
Gas/Oil	\$27,043	\$24,392	\$22,271	\$30,755	\$16,448	\$63,630
TOTAL	\$61,215	\$53,850	\$59,978	\$57,491	\$42,707	\$311,863
Savings @ 40%	\$24,486	\$21,540	\$23,991	\$22,995	\$17,043	n/a



Castallo & Silky-Education Consultants

6

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

Castallo & Silky-Education Consultants

Summary of Cost Implications with Various Options



7

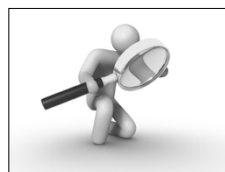
Key Findings

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

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

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

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



Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

8

Key Findings



Finding 5: Home-schooled students in Cortland average about 45-50 per year while the number of non-resident students attending the district has dropped from 23 in 2013-14 to just six this year.

Finding 6: Approximately 40 students a year from Cortland attend schools elsewhere.

Finding 7: Cortland County's population has dropped since 2005 and the U.S. Census Bureau projects the county's population will continue to drop through 2040.

Finding 8: The median age of Cortland County residents is increasing and the typical childbearing age group (25-44) is declining.

Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

9

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.

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.

Finding 11: The elementary special area subject offerings are quite similar in terms of the amount of time students receive per week, except there are some differences from one building to the next.

Finding 12: Elementary school student performance on the NYS tests in grades 3-8 for the past four years are quite similar across buildings.

Finding 13: Cortland Junior-Senior High School offers a very comprehensive program to its students.



Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

10



Key Findings

Finding 14: Junior High students can accelerate in math and science and they have the opportunity to gain first year credit in a foreign language.

Finding 15: The High School curriculum offers two foreign languages, an array of business courses, a number of technology courses, and other curriculum opportunities many school districts have eliminated.

Finding 16: Cortland students have the opportunity to take career and technical education classes at the OCM BOCES and in fact 28% of seniors and juniors did so.

Finding 17: The district has 337 students current in need of special education services up from 291 in 2012-13; this represents approximately 14% of the overall district enrollment.

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.

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

Finding 20: There are more rooms in the elementary schools than are needed to house the district's elementary students.

Finding 21: The Junior-Senior High School is only used at approximately 54% capacity.

Finding 22: The 2015 building conditions survey (BCS) shows that all the schools need improvements.

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

Key Findings

Finding 24: Utility costs for each of the elementary schools vary from \$42,707 at Virgil to \$61,215 at Barry. Closing any school usually results in about 40% savings on utility bills.

Finding 25: With respect to instructional staff, Cortland has 250 teachers, 31 teaching assistants, 47 teacher aides and nine building principals.

Finding 26: The percentage of salary, on average, for district employees is 47% for benefits.

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

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

Finding 28: Cortland uses a double trip bussing system to get students to and from school each day



Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

13

Key Findings



Finding 29: Currently, the district has some students that walk to school-for grades 7-12 who live within 1.5 miles of the Jr-Sr High School and K-6 students living within .9 mile from their respective elementary school.

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.

Finding 31: Cortland transports students out of the district for their education program to the McEvoy Center, Homer Central School District, CCA, and St. Mary's. In addition, the district transports students to special education program locations in Solvay UFSD, T-S-T BOCES, George Junior Republic, and a residential school in Rochester.

Finding 32: The district provides one bus each day at 3:15 for high school students that get extra academic assistance and a 4:30 bus for student athletes. Additionally, there is a 4:30 late bus run for elementary students in the Extended Day Program.

Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

14

Key Findings

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

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.

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

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.



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.

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.

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



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.



Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

17

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 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.



Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

18

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.

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.

Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

19

Recommendations

3. 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.

4. 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.

Recommendations

Castallo & Silky LLC-Education Consultants

20

Questions????

