

MEMORANDUM

To: Joint Consolidation Committee
From: Subcommittee on Facilities
RE: Status & Recommendations

I. Background

The Facilities Subcommittee has met approximately 10 times and recently toured Alleghany High School and Covington High School. As part of our review and discussions, we included the input of members of the Joint Consolidation Committee and the administration of the school districts from Alleghany County and the City of Covington.

We approached our analysis without a predisposition for one plan over another. Our meetings have results in the discussion of different options to best leverage our existing facilities and we have made several decisions.

II. Criteria & Findings

The following criteria, findings, and observations are made both with a personal review of the facilities and the assistance of RRMM Architects' review of the facilities and their preparation of a facilities study assessment.

Elementary Schools:

It is the unanimous recommendation of the Facilities Subcommittee that we do not want to close any elementary schools. We have talked about the possibility of reconfiguring some of the grade levels of different buildings although we have not decided on a concrete alignment of grades; nevertheless, this would not result in the closing or consolidation of any of the Elementary Schools.

One Middle and One High School:

The Facilities Subcommittee is in agreement that it would be in the best interest of our students to have one high school and one middle school.

As part of this analysis, it was understood that Middle School is the age when students begin being able to make decisions on their class choices. The Subcommittee recommends that having students in the same grade level allows for more class options for all students.¹

¹ The future use of any middle schools that are currently in use that would be vacated under a consolidation would be determined by the Consolidated School Boards and governing bodies of the respective localities.

The best options available are to use Covington High School and Alleghany High School as the middle and high schools. These are some of the considerations and criteria:

Location

Covington High School :

- The most centrally located building in the community. It is in the center of Alleghany County and the center of Covington.
- It is in close proximity to the business district of Covington and could be beneficial to students taking part in internships and after school jobs
- Adjacent to the athletic facilities of Casey Field²

Alleghany High School

- Located off of the interstate access roads from the East and the West and is a fifteen-minute bus ride from Covington High School.
- Close proximity to JRTC. A lot of committee members (including Mr. Spangler JRTC director) feel that students would be more inclined to take advantage of courses at JRTC if it were just a walk up the hill instead of a bus ride away.
- Closer proximity to DSLCC and the governor's school.

Facilities Improvements

After review of the report from our outside consultants and a personal review of the facilities, we note the following in our review and evaluation of the existing facilities. Within the past ten years both AHS and CHS have had major improvements.³ Both schools are air conditioned and both appear to be in fairly good shape. Both buildings have undergone asbestos abatement.

Covington High School:

- CHS is a historical building and certainly has a sense of charm that is not duplicated in today's structures.
 - Marble and hardwood floors
- The athletic facilities that adjoin CHS are superior.
- It would be the recommendation of the committee to play all varsity baseball and football events at CHS regardless of which school is used for which grades.
- Capacity
 - Current enrollment of 332 students in grades 8-12.
 - 9th Grade: 65
 - 10th Grade: 60

² The Subcommittee is in agreement that, regardless of school choice, CHS's athletic facilities should be the location for varsity football and baseball contests. The other varsity and junior varsity athletics would be divided between the locations as appropriate and agreed by a Consolidated Board.

³ The Subcommittee adopts and incorporates and attaches the reports from RRMM.

- 11th Grade: 68
- 12th Grade: 62
- School student capacity is **742**

Allegheny High School

- 25 years newer
- Potentially larger onsite accommodations
 - More modern CVT tiles
 - Larger cafeteria/food service ability
- Capacity
 - Current enrollment of 616 students in grades 9-12.
 - School student capacity is **1103**
- Allegheny has had significant upgrades to the IT infrastructure as a result of the 1 to 1 initiative.

Miscellaneous

- Leveraging JRTC
 - JRTC is a three-year program set up for students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. If all of the area's students in 10,11,12 were at AHS there is the potential for more students from both Allegheny and Covington to take advantage of the opportunities of JRTC.
 - Currently, approximately 55% of eligible AHS students take classes at JRTC and approximately 25% of CHS students take classes at JRTC. Since AHS and CHS demographics are very similar, it is likely that the percentage of CHS students taking advantage of JRTC is limited by two factors:
 - Students not wanting to travel from their home school (CHS)
 - Students not having enough flexibility in their schedule

Public Opinion

Unsurprisingly, public opinion is a continued driving force in making an ultimate determination. The Subcommittee recognizes that many in the general public view the prospect of consolidation through the lens of which high school might ultimately be chosen. For some, Covington High School is known as the "identity" of the community while others consider our strong working-class nature the "identity" of the community. Neither opinion is wrong and any decision will require additional community outreach where we focus on the best educational opportunities for the students as a community. With either choice, there will be difficulty in accepting a new normal.

III. Recommendations

Ultimately, a majority (but not consensus) of the Subcommittee determined that the prevailing criteria of consolidated school choice is based upon the continued success and utilization of the career and technical education facilities at JRTC. Without the State subsidizing a move of JRTC, there are no options for which to consolidate the high schools *and* fully leverage participation within JRTC without housing the consolidated high school at Alleghany and the middle school in CHS. The recommendation is also consistent with Alleghany being the building capable of holding a larger capacity (the consolidated school system would have an average of about 215 per grade).

It is also the recommendation that should the schools be consolidated as proposed herein, the schools be renamed in the spirit of new traditions and shared future.

It is further the unanimous opinion of the Subcommittee, that CHS is an important symbol in the community and should continue to be utilized for the education of the community's students for as long as possible.