

West Contra Costa Unified School District

School Consolidation/
Closure Review

MGT of America, Inc.
January 27, 2009



West Contra Costa Unified School District School Consolidation/Closure Review Final Report

**Prepared by:
MGT of America, Inc.**



**West Contra Costa Unified School District
Board of Education
Richmond, California**

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Section 1.0: Introduction

Project Description and Objectives

In 2008, the West Contra Costa Unified School District (“WCCUSD”) determined there was a need to review the number of school facilities the district operates to address issues including declining enrollment, funding reductions, facility utilization, and program equity. In order to ensure a thorough analysis prior to making decisions regarding school closures, the district developed criteria, examined school capacities and enrollments, reviewed program needs, examined facility condition data and studied the projected demographics of each community, and held numerous public meetings to receive input from the WCCUSD community. In addition to developing alternative solutions themselves, the Board asked that an outside review of the information take place. This report is the result of that outside review conducted by MGT of America, Inc (“MGT”). The objective of this review was to examine the data available, using the criteria established by the district, and develop a plan for school consolidation that efficiently utilizes resources while maintaining effective educational programs.

Project Methodology

The work plan for this review included a review of the district’s facility and educational program data, the application of the data to recognized facility standards and the district-adopted criteria, and the development of possible scenarios. An on-site examination of facilities was then conducted prior to finalizing any recommendations. Specific tasks included in the study methodology included:

- ◆ Review of existing information.
- ◆ Initial meeting with staff to discuss facility issues, current and projected programs, and study objectives.
- ◆ Review of district-adopted criteria for school closure and collection of information needed in order to apply the criteria (collection of data included both data review and on-site inspection).
- ◆ Determination of alternative solutions for maximizing facility utilization while maintaining program requirements.
- ◆ Discussion of possible solutions with district staff.
- ◆ Preparation and presentation of final report and recommendations.

Section 2.0: Scoring Criteria

A critical component of the review was the application of the district-adopted *Scoring Guide for School Closure* to each of the schools that could be considered for closure (recently renovated schools or those scheduled for renovation were not to be included in the review). The list below reflects the actual district-adopted criteria with a description of the data and/or methodology used by MGT to apply the criteria to each school.

- 1. Facility Condition** - Conditions include all items considered to be part of the physical plant, playgrounds, accessibility, and grounds. Only school facilities not previously modernized or recently constructed will be considered for closure. This would include the facilities in the various planning stages of Measure J.

1	2	3	4
Extensive list of repairs needed; substantial issues with key systems, windows, electrical, plumbing etc	Extensive list of repairs but awaiting funding in the state emergency repair program.	Repairs underway or recently completed.	Schools have recently been renovated, rebuilt or funded in Measure J.
MGT Data/Methodology: Condition score was determined through a review of the district's facility master plan, the <i>Measure M</i> facilities evaluation report, and site visits.			

- 2. Enrollment** - School enrollment, current and projected, will serve one criteria. Board Policy 5116 establishes guidelines for school sizes (see *Exhibit 2-1*). Schools that are larger than minimum size at each level may also be considered for consolidation / closure.

- Elementary: 450-800*
- Middle: 900-1200*
- High School: 1200-1800*

1	2	3	4
Far below threshold, elementary below 350, middle below 800, high schools below 1000	Far below threshold, elementary >350 but <450; middle schools >800 but <900 and high schools >1000 but < 1200	At or Above Threshold; elementary >450 <600; All middle< minimum high schools >1200 <1500	Far Above Threshold; elementary >600; All middle< minimum high schools >1500

MGT Data/Methodology: Enrollment data was taken from CBEDS 2008-09 data as reported on the District School Matrices.

3. **Low Capacity Utilization** - Site enrollment, current and projected, below optimal utilization will be one criterion for consolidation/closure. Schools considered for consolidation will be ranked using enrollment as a percent of student capacity of the facility.

1	2	3	4
Utilization < 60%	Utilization >60% < 75%	Utilization >75% < 90%	Utilization >90%

MGT Data/Methodology: Utilization was determined by applying the enrollment as determined in criteria #2 above and facility capacities as reported in the district’s facilities master plan prepared by Jack Schreder & Associates.

4. **Available Capacity within Family or Adjacent Family** - Schools considered for consolidation should be adjacent to other sites with available capacity. Adjacent sites must be expandable (have available land/space for classrooms), using modular building installations.

1	2	3	4
Adjacent capacity > 1500	Adjacent capacity >1000 <1500	Adjacent capacity >500 < 1000	Adjacent capacity <500

MGT Data/Methodology: Available Capacity was determined through capacity calculations as described in criteria #2 above, site acreages obtained from the facilities department and through on-site reviews.

5. **Special Schools/Programs** - Where possible, special programs or schools will be consolidated into regular schools, programs, or classes. For special education, this means moving more rapidly toward more inclusive practices. Alternative programs, such as continuation schools, necessary small schools, pre-school and adult education, will be considered for consolidation into other buildings. Funding for QEIA and the transferability of those funds will also be a consideration.

1	2	3	4
Few special programs to be moved or programs at the school easily transferred to other sites.	Some programs that would need to be transferred together to another school.	Multiple programs that could not easily be separated or transferred.	Multiple programs that are unique and moving them would result in loss of external funding.

MGT Data/Methodology: The degree of special programs were determined through use of the district-provided special education listing. Special programs included non-severely handicapped classrooms, transition education programs, severely handicapped classrooms, resource specialist classrooms, full inclusion programs, hearing-/visually-impaired classrooms, and motor rooms. Speech and occupational therapy rooms were not included since they are included at all sites. *Few* programs (score of 1) was defined as less than 3, *Some* programs (score of 2) was defined as 3 or 4 programs, and *Multiple* (score of 3) was defined as 5 or more programs. A score of 4 (multiple programs, unique, loss of funding) were determined through discussion with district staff.

6. **Grade Configurations** - In order to maximize the number of consolidations/closures, alternate grade configurations, in addition to current grade configurations, will be considered including K-8 and 6-12. Configuration changes must be cost neutral to the operating budget.

1	2	3	4
Due to neighborhood enrollment, school lacks space within the building and acreage to add portables to expand to K-8 or 6-12. School not located where additional middle school seats needed when middle school(s) close.	Due to transfer enrollment, schools lacks space within the building and acreage to add portables to expand to K-8 or 6-12. School not located where additional middle school seats are needed when middle school(s) close.	School is located where additional middle school seats are needed and has acreage to expand to K-8 or 6-12 but portable classrooms would need to be added.	School is located where additional middle school seats are needed, has acreage to expand to become K-8 or 6-12 and has available seats so that few if any portables would be needed.

MGT Data/Methodology: It was determined that grade configuration was not applicable to this level of review because it would be determined as possible solutions were applied.

7. **Geographic Equity** - To the degree possible, consolidation/closure proposals will allow the district to operate schools/programs to serve the geographic areas of the district. Equity considerations include the distance from school, geographical limitations and safe paths to schools.

1	2	3	4
Closing this school would not impact geographic program equity and would only minimally add to the distances that students travel to school.	Closing this school would have a moderate impact on program equity and overall would add a moderate amount of walking distance to school.	Closing this school would have a larger impact on program equity and would add significantly to walking distance.	Closing this school would result in key programs or levels not being accessible in one geographic area of the district and/or would add significant walking distance.

MGT Data/Methodology: Geographic equity was determined through an examination of district maps and on-site review.

8. **Academic Performance** - Academic performance, including API scores and API growth, will be criteria in the consolidation/closure process. The faculty/staff of a high performing school that was closed could replace or augment the staff at a low performing school that remained open (subject to statute and collective bargaining agreement limitations). These decisions for school reconstitution would follow (or come at a time after) the decision of which school would be closed.

1	2	3	4
API scores <600 and 6-year growth <40	API scores >600 <700 and 6-year growth >40 <70	API scores >700 <750 and 6-year growth >70 <90	API scores >800 and 6-year growth >90

MGT Data/Methodology: API scores and growth rates were taken from district provided data.

9. Improved Conditions for Students/Student Mobility - To the degree possible, school closure plans will include moving students from non-renovated to new or recently renovated facilities. Plans will be evaluated for the number of students moved.

1	2	3	4
Closing this school would result in students moving to a renovated school and the total scenario would move fewer than 1200 students.	Closing this school would result in a majority of the students moving to a renovated school and the total scenario would move >1200 but <1400 students	Closing this school would result in all the students moving to a non-renovated school and the total scenario would move >1400 < 1700 students	Closing this school would result in all the students moving to a non-renovated school and the total scenario would move > 1700 students
<p>MGT Data/Methodology: Improved Conditions was determined through a review of the facility improvements completed, improvements planned and enrollments as described in criteria #2 above.</p>			

10. Financial Advantage - Since school closure is one aspect of the overall financial solvency plan, closing schools on properties that will bring a greater market value will be a factor.

1	2	3	4
School is in the top 25% of market value properties.	School property value is >25% and <50% of market value properties.	School property value is >50% <75% of market value properties.	School property is in the bottom quarter of all market value properties.
<p>MGT Data/Methodology: Determination of financial advantage was completed through the on-site reviews.</p>			

Exhibit 2-1 below shows the application of the above criteria to each of the schools included in the review. It is important to note that the lower the score, the more the school meets the closure criteria. The scores were used to prioritize schools for closure. Final recommendations would be made using the scores and school utilization/capacity data and school locations. Schools that are highlighted in yellow are exempt from consideration due to being recently renovated.

**Exhibit 2-1
West Contra Costa Unified School District
Board Scoring Criteria**

School	Facility Condition Rating	Enrollment Rating	Utilization Rating	Adjacent Available Capacity	Special Schools/ Programs	Grade Configs.	Geographic Equity	Academic Performance	Student Mobility	Financial Advantage	Total
Elementary Schools											
El Sobrante	1	1	1	4	3	NA	2	2	1	1	16
Highland	1	1	2	4	3	NA	3	3	1	1	19
Olinda	1	2	4	4	1	NA	1	4	1	1	19
Valley View	1	2	4	4	1	NA	1	4	1	1	19
Murphy											
Sheldon											
Bayview											
Castro	2	1	1	4	2	NA	1	3	1	1	16
Fairmont	2	2	4	4	4	NA	1	3	1	1	22
Stege	1	1	2	3	1	NA	1	2	1	2	14
Harding											
Kensington											
Madera											
Coronado	2	3	4	3	1	NA	1	4	1	4	23
Wilson	1	3	4	4	2	NA	2	3	1	4	24
King											
Lincoln											
Mira Vista											
Nystrom											
Riverside											
Washington											

Exhibit 2-1
West Contra Costa Unified School District
Board Scoring Criteria
(continued)

School	Facility Condition Rating	Enrollment Rating	Utilization Rating	Adjacent Available Capacity	Special Schools/ Programs	Grade Configs.	Geographic Equity	Academic Performance	Student Mobility	Financial Advantage	Total
Elementary Schools											
Collins	1	2	1	4	4	NA	2	3	1	1	19
Shannon	1	1	1	4	1	NA	1	3	1	2	15
Ellerhorst											
Montalvin Manor											
Stewart (K-8)											
Tara Hills											
Elementary Schools											
Grant	1	3	2	4	2	NA	1	2	1	4	20
Lake	1	1	2	4	1	NA	1	2	1	4	17
Chavez											
Dover											
Downer											
Ford											
Peres											
Verde											
Elementary Schools											
Hanna Ranch											
Lupine Hills											
Ohlone											

**Exhibit 2-1
West Contra Costa Unified School District
Board Scoring Criteria**

Middle/Junior High School	Facility Condition Rating	Enrollment Rating	Utilization Rating	Adjacent Available Capacity	Special Schools/ Programs	Grade Configs.	Geographic Equity	Academic Performance	Student Mobility	Financial Advantage	Totals
Middle Schools											
Adams Middle	1	2	3	1	1	NA	1	2	1	1	13
Crespi Junior High	1	1	1	1	1	NA	1	2	1	2	11
Portola Middle	1	1	1	1	2	NA	2	2	1	4	15
Helms Middle											
Hercules Middle											
Lovonya DeJean Middle											
Pinole Junior High											
High Schools											
Kennedy	1	1	1	1	1	NA	2	1	3	2	13
Pinole Valley	2	4	3	1	2	NA	1	2	4	1	20
Richmond	1	3	2	1	1	NA	3	1	4	4	20
De Anza											
El Cerrito											
Hercules											

Source: MGT of America, Inc.

Section 3.0: Conclusions and Recommendations

School Closure Recommendations

The process for determining the closure recommendations began with an examination of the scenarios that would result by looking first at school closures of those facilities that scored the lowest, as shown in *Exhibit 2-1*. The final recommendations were based on the scores, on the availability of nearby space for students that would be moved from the schools to be closed, and on the geography of the schools and their attendance zones. *Exhibit 3-1* below provides the listing of school closure recommendations and the schools that will receive the displaced students.

It is important to note that enrollments at the schools recommended for closure are shown both for current enrollments and the projected 2013-14 enrollments based on the methodology defined in *Section 2.0* previously. The rationale for looking at both enrollment calculations is:

- ◆ The development of a facility plan should be planned with a look toward the future in order to make good decisions regarding the ultimate use of facilities.
- ◆ While building a facility plan for the future, there is the reality that students will need to be housed during the interim period. Therefore it is important to know what the immediate numbers are.

**Exhibit 3-1
West Contra Costa Unified School District
School Closure Recommendations**

Recommended School to Close	Current - Projected Enrollment	Number of Students to Migrate	School to Receive Students
El Sobrante ES	217 - 165		
		217 - 165	Murphy ES**
Castro ES	234 - 174		
		40 - 30	Fairmont ES
		194 - 144	Stege ES
Coronado ES	390 - 454		
		326 - 380	Nystrom ES
		64 - 74	King ES
Shannon ES	317 - 269		
		317 - 269	Collins ES
Lake ES	468 - 388		
		229 - 190	Highland ES**
		167 - 140	Dover ES
		72 - 60	Bayview
Grant ES	612 - 508		
		105 - 87	Chavez ES**
		193 - 160	Peres ES**
		111 - 92	Ford ES
		120 - 100	King ES
		86 - 71	Downer ES
Adams MS	817 - 805		
		100	DeJean MS
		405	Helms MS
		312 - 300	Crespi MS
Portola MS	553 - 577		
		553 - 577	Castro ES*

* Castro ES renovated to become MS

** This school may need portables in the short term to accommodate migrating students.

Exhibit 3-1
West Contra Costa Unified School District
School Closure Recommendations
(continued)

Recommended School to Close	Current - Projected Enrollment	Number of Students to Migrate	School to Receive Students
Kennedy HS	923 - 796		
		262 - 225	De Anza HS
		200 - 175	El Cerrito HS
		261 - 223	Richmond HS
		200 - 173	Pinole Valley HS

* Castro ES renovated to become MS

** This school may need portables in the short term to accommodate migrating students.

Source: MGT of America, Inc., 2009.

In general, the recommendations above follow the results of the scoring methodology (within each high school family) with the following two exceptions:

- ◆ While Stege is one of the lower scoring elementary schools it was important to keep this school open due to the fact that Castro is the logical location for Portola Middle School (being relocated due to seismic conditions). With the Castro site repurposed to a middle school, it is necessary to keep Stege open in order to have capacity in that area.
- ◆ While Crespi scored slightly lower than Adams, it makes more sense to close Adams due to its geographical location and physical condition.

Resulting Facility Utilization

Exhibits 3-2 through 3-4 below provide the resulting utilization for elementary, middle, and high schools, respectively. It is also recommended that the district consider converting Crespi and Pinole Junior Highs to grades 6-8. This would move 6th grade students and result in less short term overcrowding concerns. Schools that are highlighted in yellow are exempt from consideration due to being recently renovated and schools highlighted in red are schools recommended to be closed.

**Exhibit 3-2
West Contra Costa Unified School District
Resulting Utilization
Elementary Schools**

School	Grade Levels Served	Modernized or Started Modernization	Middle School Family	High School Family	2008-09 Enrollment*	Projected 2013-14 Enrollment*	Usable Acreage	Capacity	Current Utilization	Projected Utilization
El Sobrante	K-6	No	Crespi	De Anza	0	0	6.3	0		
Highland	K-6	No	Crespi	De Anza	755	577	9.3	637	119%	91%
Olinda	K-6	No	Crespi	De Anza	361	535	9.6	422	86%	127%
Valley View	K-6	No	Crespi	De Anza	408	419	13.5	385	106%	109%
Murphy	K-6	Yes	Crespi	De Anza	512	435	10.9	441	116%	99%
Sheldon	K-6	Yes	Crespi	De Anza	356	321	8.4	460	77%	70%
Bayview	K-6	Yes	Crespi	Richmond	635	711	9.2	649	98%	110%
Total					3027	2998		2994	101%	100%
Castro	K-6	No	Portola	El Cerrito	0	0	9.1	0		
Fairmont	K-6	No	Portola	El Cerrito	369	464	3.3	473	78%	98%
Stege	K-5	No	Portola	El Cerrito	514	466	2.7	497	103%	94%
Harding	K-6	Yes	Portola	El Cerrito	328	398	4.5	413	79%	96%
Kensington	K-6	Yes	Portola	El Cerrito	554	580	10	649	85%	89%
Madera	K-5	Yes	Portola	El Cerrito	398	500	3.5	385	103%	130%
Totals					2163	2408		2417	89%	100%
Coronado	K-5	No	DeJean	Kennedy	0	0	2.9	0		
Wilson	K-5	No	Adams	Kennedy	505	566	3.5	385	131%	147%
King	K-5	Yes	DeJean	Kennedy	532	530	3.7	538	99%	99%
Lincoln	K-5	Yes	DeJean	Kennedy	377	272	3.7	523	72%	52%
Mira Vista	K-6	Yes	Adams	Kennedy	405	380	16.3	422	96%	90%
Nystrom	K-5	No	DeJean	Kennedy	675	674	4.8	680	99%	99%
Riverside	K-6	Yes	Adams	Kennedy	378	475	4.4	380	99%	125%
Washington	K-6	Yes	Portola	Kennedy	472	532	3.2	482	98%	110%
Totals					3344	3429		3410	98%	101%

Source: MGT of America, Inc., 2009.

**Exhibit 3-2
West Contra Costa Unified School District
Resulting Utilization
Elementary Schools
(continued)**

School	Grade Levels Served	Modernized or Started Modernization	Middle School Family	High School Family	2008-09 Enrollment*	Projected 2013-14 Enrollment*	Usable Acreage	Capacity	Current Utilization	Projected Utilization
Collins	K-6	No	Pinole	Pinole Valley	743	690	10.9	737	101%	94%
Shannon	K-6	No	Pinole	Pinole Valley	0	0	10.3	0		
Ellerhorst	K-6	Yes	Pinole	Pinole Valley	441	453	11.1	449	98%	101%
Montalvin Manor	K-6	Yes	Pinole	Pinole Valley	471	520	9	387	122%	134%
		Yes	Pinole Valley HS							
Stewart (K-8)	K-8	Yes	Pinole	Pinole Valley	519	527	9.2	504	103%	105%
Tara Hills	K-6	Yes	Pinole	Pinole Valley	500	605	9	468	107%	129%
Totals					2674	2795		2545	105%	110%
Grant	K-6	No	Adams	Richmond	0	0	5	0		
Lake	K-6	No	Helms	Richmond	0	0	9.3	0		
Chavez	K-5	Recently Constr.	Adams	Richmond	696	515	4.7	595	117%	87%
Dover	K-5	Yes	Helms	Richmond	734	708	5	725	101%	98%
Downer	K-6	Yes	Helms	Richmond	764	612	4.9	993	77%	62%
Ford	K-5	Yes	Adams	Richmond	532	435	2.1	532	100%	82%
Peres	K-6	Yes	Helms	Richmond	694	574	7	586	118%	98%
Verde	K-6	Yes	Helms	Richmond	323	338	8	366	88%	92%
Totals					3743	3182		3797	99%	84%
Hanna Ranch	K-5		Hercules	Hercules	449	485	5	442	102%	110%
Lupine Hills	K-5		Hercules	Hercules	408	422	6	428	95%	99%
Ohlone	K-5		Hercules	Hercules	459	467	9.2	638	72%	73%
Totals					1,316	1,374		1508	87%	91%

Source: MGT of America, Inc., 2009.

Exhibit 3-3
West Contra Costa Unified School District
Resulting Utilization
Middle Schools

Middle/Junior High School	Grade Levels Served	Modernized or Started Modernization	High School Family	2008-09 Enrollment*	Projected 2013-14 Enrollment*	Usable Acreage	Capacity	Current Utilization	Projected Utilization
Adams Middle	6-8	No	Kennedy	0	0	15			
Crespi Junior High	7-8	No	De Anza	864	865	14.1	1118	77%	77%
Portola Middle**	6-8	No	El Cerrito	553	577	11.1	600	61%	64%
Helms Middle	6-8	Yes	Richmond	1,164	982	15.4	1343	87%	73%
Hercules Middle	6-8	Recently Constructed	Hercules High	766	762	33.06	812	94%	94%
Lovonya DeJean Middle	6-8	Recently Constructed	Kennedy	765	757	13.2	833	92%	91%
Pinole Junior High	7-8	Yes	Pinole Valley	719	724	9.36	858	84%	84%
Total				4,831	4,667		5864	82%	80%

* Includes students migrated from closed school(s)

**New Portola MS located at old Castro ES and renovated for capacity of 600.

Source: MGT of America, Inc., 2009.

Exhibit 3-4
West Contra Costa Unified School District
Resulting Utilization
High Schools

High School	Grade Levels Served	Modernized or Started Modernization	2008-09 Enrollment*	Projected 2013-14 Enrollment*	Usable Acreage	Capacity	Current Utilization	Projected Utilization
Kennedy	9-12	No	0	0	17.9	0		
Pinole Valley	9-12	No	1,852	1,830	25	1837	101%	100%
Richmond	9-12	No	1,989	1,518	12	1853	107%	82%
De Anza	9-12	Yes	1,214	820	41.2	1200	101%	68%
El Cerrito	9-12	Yes	1,408	1,231	15.7	1600	88%	77%
Hercules	9-12	Recently Constructed	1,107	1,017	*33.06	1167	95%	87%
Total			7,570	6,416		7657	99%	84%

Source: MGT of America, Inc., 2009.

