

Thursday May 20, 2016

To the Corbett School Board of Directors and Others,

As our public body, elected to represent our taxpayers I respectfully ask that you consider the following letter and add it to the public record.

At the Wednesday, May 18th 2016 school board meeting, Superintendent Trani read a statement in which he detailed his fears of staff and children being crushed in the rubble of the middle school and giving his formal recommendation to the board to close the middle school. In part he said:

“The specter of hundreds of lives severed and then entombed in the hollow clay tile sarcophagus of excuses and promises to address the problem some time in the future - after a myriad of ever changing demands from various contingencies have been met - drive my consideration of all these unsavory solutions” – Randy Trani

The Superintendent went on to say that he had no faith that a future GO Bond would pass. He then offered his list of “unsavory solutions” upon closing the middle school to the board. Here are a few:

- 1. **Creating make shift classrooms in the Gymnasium.** He stated that this would result in the loss of extra curricular activities. Both points may also result in many students withdrawing from CSD.*
- 2. **Eliminating 250 students from the campus through attrition.** He stated that this would cost the district \$1.7-\$1.9 million dollars in lost revenue and higher class sizes across the district. This solution could actually take years as the large majority of students today have been OPEN ENROLLED. This means that our district is legally obligated to house these students until they graduate.*
- 3. **Taking out loans to buy additional properties where a school could be built OR we take out a loan to replace the building with general fund dollars.** Is this even legal? Isn't this essentially by-passing the taxpayers and the voting majority as well?*

PRIORITIES? SAFETY OF STUDENTS IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

2011 SPRINGDALE SCHOOL: The Superintendent told the board (and the public in his notes on the CSD web site in August 2011) that the million dollar QSCB loan could only be used at the Springdale School. **In fact the loan could have addressed our middle school. Please see the 10/19/2011 school board meeting minutes.** (page 10. A complaint was also filed against the Superintendent about this same issue and was stamped received on 9/29/11 at the district.

2011 SELP LOAN (State Energy Loan Program). The money applied to the middle school was suggested by the Superintendent to be kept at a minimum - unless the payback could be made in 3-5 years. He also mentioned at that time that the middle school would be needing to be torn down and replaced in the next ten years. See board notes here: <http://corbettoregon.com/forum/index.php?topic=516.0>

IF THE SCHOOL BOARD VOTES TO CLOSE THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Before making this decision, please consider the following:

- 1. After the failure of the [November 2014 school bond](#), the Superintendent wanted to form a task force (comprised of only staff).** When asked what their job would be, the Superintendent stated it would be to: **“discuss plans to close the building in conjunction with a bond campaign.”** The district and school board made no efforts to pass a bond in 2015. **Was it not as urgent or dangerous last year?**
- 2. If the board votes to close the middle school: Corbett citizens will expect the building to be officially condemned by the appropriate agencies. Documentation of this should be made public.**
- 3. Lastly, if you do vote to close the middle school, then the school board should either invest in (or rent) portable classrooms for students and staff or explore converting CAPS to a new middle school.** Portables would be safe, comfortable and then the board could focus on building consensus with the community on what to do with the current middle school without fear being the driver of discussions. *There should be no issue about funding to keep children safe as CSD received about 2.6 million one time dollars last year from a loophole in Oregon Law*

SUPERINTENDENTS SOLUTION #3 - GENERAL FUND LOANS VS. GO BOND

The board must investigate the legalities of building with general funds. Also, the ratio of debt a district may acquire before it is considered bankrupt should be determined. *How will you pay for these loans? With more students? Why wasn't some of the 2.6 million dollars CSD received last year applied to facilities or options for improving safety?*

CSD skipped the taxpayers again (exploring general fund loans) when we opened Springdale in 2012. *The Superintendent convinced the board to take out loans to refurbish an empty building vs. address needs on the main campus. This decision allowed for more out of area growth.*

RECAP OF THE PAST FOUR CSD FAILED BONDS

1st BOND – 15 MILLION (NOV 2013) – 20,000 SF HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING PLUS...

The Nelsen survey clearly showed that: Voters would have passed a bond to improve the facilities (replacing the middle and taking care of campus wide safety/seismic as the priority) and would be more likely to vote for a bond if assurances were made about limiting out of area growth.

Instead CSD asked for \$15 million, which was twice the need. This included projects like a \$5-6 million dollar gym expansion - which the Nelsen Survey showed there was very little support for. Audio and survey results here: <http://corbettpost.com/news/csd-bond-in-2013>

2nd BOND – 9.4 MILLION (MAY 2014) – 25,000 SF BLDG – MAYBE TWO BUILDINGS? ONE FOR STEM? NO CLEAR PLAN. MANY SAFETY CLAIMS THAT WERE QUESTIONABLE.

3rd BOND – 8.5 MILLION (NOV 2014) – CSD OPEN ENROLLED 470+ CHARTER STUDENTS (AFTER TELLING VOTERS THE BOND WAS NOT FOR CHARTER). THIS BOND WAS ONLY FOR THE LARGER BUILDING. CAMPUS WIDE SAFETY WOULD HAVE BEEN PUT OFF.

4th BOND – 15.9 MILLION (MAY 2016 – WITH \$4 MILLION MATCHING) – PHASE ONE OF \$25 MILLION BUT NO COST BREAKDOWN PROVIDED. THE NEW DESIRED SQUARE FOOTAGE WAS 3-4 TIMES THE SQUARE FOOTAGE CURRENTLY IN USE.

1. **Growing the size of our campus has been the priority in each CSD Bond.**
2. **The only compromise has been different bond amounts. The size has only increased.**

At the February 10, 2016 board meeting the Superintendent explained his top priority was square footage and a larger building. (3 times the existing sf in use). The Superintendent said something to the effect of **No one dies from not having ADA or Title IX. No one sleeps on campus over-night so fire-life-safety was also not critical etc.** Audio recording of his statements here: <http://corbettpost.com/csd/priorities-take-a-listen>

The superintendent's statement at this week's school board meeting, including that he has given up on passing another GO Bond and his belief that there is just "*a myriad of ever changing demands from various contingencies*", is simply not reflective of the truth. Audio available at www.corbettsos.com.

The Save Our Schools group wants to keep children safe and improve facilities. We are not your enemy and it is unfortunate that we have been allowed to be characterized as such by many in the 'school community'. We are advocating (for the 4th time) to keep the district's currently used square footage in place. We are asking that a bond prioritize campus wide safety and needed upgrades over spending money on larger buildings. We expect a clear bond (not language left open to interpretation) to help build consensus prior to another measure on the ballot.

Our taxpayers do have valid reasons to be concerned about the non-sustainable growth of our district. There is a trust issue from years of questionable "calculated risks" made by district leadership that has put us in crisis after crisis situation. I do thank you for your time and service to our school district.

Respectfully,

Karina Lande

Corbett Save Our Schools
www.corbettsos.com