

## Real Estate Deal Watch

### Special-ed school to take 65K SF

Cooke Center for Learning and Development closing in on lease for defunct Catholic school on Lower East Side after taking smaller space on the West Side.

By Amanda Fung on September 6, 2011

In a pair of transactions, the Cooke Center for Learning and Development is adding nearly 65,000 square feet in Manhattan. In the larger of the two deals, it is close to consolidating two schools into a 57,600-square-foot building on the Lower East Side. And in the second, the center has found office and classroom space in Chelsea for one of its programs.

Founded in 1987, the provider of special-education services to city residents ages 3 to 21 is close to signing a lease for the entire building at 219 Stanton St., at Pitt Street. There, the Cooke Center plans to bring its elementary and middle school students into one space in time for the 2012 school year. Currently, its middle school is located in the Upper West Side at the School of the Blessed Sacrament, while its elementary school is housed at Our Lady of Pompeii School in Soho.

“This will be the last year we will be co-locating with our partner schools,” said Patti Schaefer, the Cooke Center’s vice president of advancement. “This was the best route in terms of efficiency and curriculum development.”

The 57,600-square-foot Lower East Side building was formerly home to Our Lady of Sorrows School, which the Archdiocese of New York shuttered late last year.

In addition to that deal, the Cooke Center has signed a 10-year lease for 7,250 square feet at 252 W. 29th St., between Seventh and Eighth avenues. Asking rent for the entire fourth-floor space was \$36 per square foot.

“The space fits their needs perfectly,” said Alan Cohen, the ABS Partners broker who, along with colleague Amy Murawski, represented the tenant. The space was formerly occupied by Learning Spring School, so it was already properly outfitted for classrooms, he added. ABS is not involved in the pending Lower East Side building deal.

Roughly 35 students enrolled in the school’s SKILLS program, which caters to students under 21 who graduated from the Cooke Center’s high school, will move in this fall. These students “require additional support and programming,” Ms. Schaefer said. Previously those students were divided between the Cooke Center’s high school in SoHo and space provided by New York University.

David Glassman of Cushman & Wakefield Inc. represented the landlord of 252 W. 29th St., Charand & Associates.