

# DAILY JOURNAL

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## WHERE THEY STAND: Center Grove school board candidates

Following is what Center Grove school board candidates had to say about the \$126 million high school project:

### Scott Alexander

Does not support the project as it is now. Supports the new hallways and pieces of the project that increase safety and ease congestion. School officials haven't articulated well enough how this project will expand on academics. Wants to know how the project will increase basic education such as reading, writing and arithmetic. Thinks the project goes beyond the school district's original goals. Doesn't have enough detail to say he's opposed to anything about the project in particular. A vote should be delayed. The public hasn't had an opportunity to digest a project this size.



### Tom Heermann

Does not support the proposal as it is now. Doesn't understand the miscommunication between the board and administration. The board was astounded to learn the cost of the project had nearly doubled. School officials had some sort of communication dysfunction. Wants to look at the original \$69 million proposal to see what was added. Approves of small learning community redesign and added space for areas that need it, such as choir, cafeteria and locker rooms. Instruction areas are key, and that's where most of the money needs to be spent. The project goes beyond its original intent of improving congestion and making room for small learning communities. The project looks like a big, overblown monstrosity that does not take the public's input into account.



### Rich Mickel

Does not support the project as it is now. Spending this kind of money during this kind of economic time is not in the best interest of school district or taxpayers. Wasn't enough oversight when architects sat down with department heads and asked for wish lists. Does the school really need moving bulkheads for the swimming pool? Is artificial turf really necessary? The project has a lot of fluff that could be removed. Supports redesign for small learning communities, but most of the cost is athletics facilities. The school district is so focused on construction issues that it's lost track of the original intent to form small learning communities.



### Ron Rose

Does not support the \$126 million scope of the project. Favors expenses that lead to higher academic achievement, such as small learning communities. Also favors parts of the proposal that minimize congestion. The project goes beyond the original goal of the high school renovation. This is a pork barrel project for the wealthy and well connected. Vote should be delayed. People need reasonable time to review information. The public needs transparent disclosure of all the facts, including the cost of items such as furniture or other fixtures.



### Jack Russell

Supports changes to the high school but not necessarily the \$126 million renovation plan. Not sure how he would vote if he were on the board. Need to look at what will enrich academics first. Wants more detailed



cost breakdowns, especially for academic side. Vote should be delayed. School officials need to have more public meetings, but the public has to go to those meetings. School officials can't call every individual and explain what's going on.

### Harold Sisson

Does not support the project as it has been presented. Was under the impression that the redesign would include changes to ease crowding and create small learning communities. Those are acceptable parts of the projects because those parts of the project have been discussed and proposed before. Questions all newly added components to the project that brought the cost up. They were added at the last minute or last hour. Questions whether they are all needed. The project goes way beyond what the public was expecting. The public needs more time to review the proposal.



### John Steed

Doesn't support the project as it stands now. Would vote no. Franklin built a whole new high school for less money. Very little in the project that he favors. Some of the athletics components make sense, but not others. For example, he's not in favor of the bleachers but would be willing to look at a press box. Would support a locker room as long as it was minimal and not a showcase. This was clearly the administration's plan and not the board's or public's. A vote should be delayed until more feedback is gathered from the public. The \$126 million project as it is now would not pass a



referendum. The public would shoot it down.

### Carol Turney

Doesn't have enough information to give a good response. Wants to hear from academic department heads about what their needs are. The \$69 million proposal probably addressed many of the school district's needs, including for athletics. Wants more information to be sure. Favors locker rooms for student athletes to have a place to change. Parts of the project would have to be prioritized. Items such as new soccer turf would probably be low on the priority list. Wants to know if these requests are pie-in-the-sky type things. Were department heads told to dream big? Wants breakdown of needs vs. wants. A vote should be delayed to give a chance for more input and more community involvement.



### Bill Woodman

Not sure whether he supports the project. A project of this size is probably necessary to go from being a good school system to being a great school system, if the definition of a great school system includes great facilities. At the same time, superior and excellent teaching can happen in modest facilities. Should delay a decision because the price went up. The community needs time to absorb it and figure out what the financial impact is to their own pocket books. If he were on the board and forced to vote yes or no for the project as it is now, he would vote no, simply because of the way the project was presented, almost doubling in cost and taking the public by surprise with its price tag.

