

**Position Statement by Superintendent Dr. Steven Stephanoff  
Regarding Proposed Construction Projects**

---

March 16, 2009

After speaking with several Center Grove area community groups regarding the proposed construction projects, I have discovered a common theme. Many of our community members believe that completing the projects would be beneficial to our school district; however, they are concerned about timing. Even though there is strong support for the projects, genuine concern also exists among area taxpayers regarding the future of our local and national economy.

When we began the planning of the high school expansion nearly three years ago and the long range facility planning more than 15 months ago, our nation was in a very different economic situation. Today, some of our neighbors have been impacted by the recession and Americans are wondering when the economy will begin to recover.

We must consider the question, "Is this the right time to complete a major school construction project that will, although temporarily, raise taxes?"

After careful consideration of the economic climate and the views of various groups and individuals in our community, I believe that it is our responsibility to be responsive to the community. *Therefore, it is my recommendation that the proposed construction projects be delayed, and removed from the referendum ballot during the May election.*

Even so, the safety and education of our students is paramount, and I am committed to developing a viable alternative to meeting those needs. I am confident that we can work together to address our most crucial facility concerns, yet keep spending in balance with taxpayers' economic means. To that end, *I recommend that we form a community task force to evaluate and prioritize the proposed projects, to identify the tax impact, and determine which components can be completed without raising taxes.*

This is a tremendous opportunity to unite our community in support of action that addresses the emerging needs of our school district as well as projected enrollment growth. When school construction projects are required, it is often evidence of community development and pride. This is a time for us to come together with a singular purpose. Our students, teachers, the school district, and our entire community will be the benefactors.

We must remember that everyone is on the same side. All of us want the best schools that we can affordably provide. This is our chance to work together to develop a plan that will result in the continued distinction in academics, the arts, and athletics that Center Grove school district residents expect and deserve.

The implementation of Small Learning Communities at Center Grove High School will move forward, with some modification regarding facilities. We believe that SLC's are the best way to provide students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in preparation for continued education and entering the work force in a global economy.

I would like to thank the rest of the administration and the School Board for being proactive in addressing the needs of our district, while remaining sensitive to existing circumstances. Should the Board accept these recommendations, I am looking forward to our community coming together to ensure that the needs of our students are met, to perpetuate improvement, and to continue the tradition of excellence at Center Grove.

---

---

Summary of Recommendations:

1. It is my recommendation that the proposed construction projects be delayed, and the proposed questions be removed from the referendum ballot during the May election. (This will require that we file a letter with the Johnson County Election Board)

2. I recommend that we form a community task force to evaluate and prioritize the proposed projects, to identify the tax impact, and determine which aspects can be completed without raising taxes. At the next school board meeting, I will bring a proposed time line for the task force and the composition of its members.