



CHAMPAIGN CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL  
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“Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right things.” ~ Peter Drucker

In some ways, I don't envy the job of the Tier 2 Facilities Committee, as the tasks given to them are extremely difficult and touch on issues that are polarizing depending on viewpoints of different members of the community. However, in other ways, I think of their job as exciting because they have a laser-like focus on balancing all of the needs of Champaign Unit 4 in relation to facilities and determining the best path. They must certainly balance efficiency and effectiveness.

There is another “E” word, though, that I don't want anyone to lose sight of – Equity. Since the middle to late 1960's, Champaign Central High School has not had equity in Unit 4. Everyone paying attention to the facilities discussions over the last decade should hopefully understand there are definite needs at both Champaign high schools. The intent, though, of this letter is to underscore the issues at Central which have been allowed to exist for decades causing inequity. The intent certainly is not to downplay the very necessary needs of Centennial High School or other schools in the District.

#### Needs Unique to Central High School:

- The auditorium with inadequate storage, staging areas, backstage, acoustics, dressing rooms, etc. Yet, in comparison to some high schools doing two to three shows, Central performs seven to nine shows per year.
- The band room is designed for 50 students, but housing band numbers above 50 and exceeding 200 in the fall with marching band; severe lack of storage; no marching band practice field. Yet, our bands consistently outperform other high school bands nationwide.
- The art program is taught in outdated spaces with little natural light; one art space has no windows or ventilation and is built around the boiler room. Yet, our art program has expanded from one full time to almost three full time teachers in the last eight years.
- Physical education spaces are outdated and lack storage (inside) and outside physical education spaces do not exist on Central property. Yet, our physical education department has moved quickly forward in the last three to five years toward a fitness focus, hopefully engaging students in lifelong learning about their physical well-being.

- Many athletic facilities are off-site. Yet, Maroon pride and involvement in athletics is maintained at a high level.
- The parking lot does not fit our entire staff; no parking for students.
- Classrooms lack air conditioning; early outs in the fall are becoming common with the rising heat indices and the earlier starts in August.
- Classrooms have one or two outlets; District-provided technology uses them all.
- Restrooms are outdated and embarrassing; there is one men's room that has a trough as if this were a stadium.

Again, this list represents issues that highlight current inequity. It is not the list of high school needs across both schools (e.g. updated and additional science spaces). I highlight this because I'm hopeful this helps the Tier 2 Committee understand decisions going forward should continue to address inequity as much as possible. Since the 1960's, our students at Central have had to show grit and persistence despite barriers and inequity of facilities. In the last couple of years as two referendums have failed, our students are voicing that they are weary of what they perceive to be broken or empty promises. Through activities to garner their voice over the years, they've made it very clear: Central students do not want to be seen as less important and they want to have the same "home pride" as any other high school student in the area.

Adults are coming around to the idea that garnering public support of a high school with all facilities on one campus is a monumental task, so central location options have to be made viable. Students, hopefully, will begin seeing the same. However, when a decision needs to be made to narrow down options, please do not do it in such a way that would cause our students to feel as though they are second class. If the current Central site is used, renovated, expanded upon, etc., there are tradeoffs (i.e., limited to no student parking). When given a choice such as building for 1500 or 1700 students, why not choose the equitable version? Again, more people are becoming used to and even excited about keeping Central central. However, our understanding of that phrase was that it referred to location. Please do not let it mean keeping Central in a situation where we feel as though we are the second fiddle high school in town.

In closing, thank you for your time and energy. Thank you for your persistence and grit. You have a hard job ahead of you, but it certainly can be exciting and motivating. It could bring a community divided into a community united. That would be effective.

Sincerely,

Joe Williams  
Principal