

## Step Towards the Future

As many of you know, a Career Pathway Initiative has been a major priority for the school district. This priority is a major project and one that cannot be accomplished overnight. Since June of 2015, Career Education has appeared as a part of the District's goals. In the previous years, immediate and intermediate goals have been accomplished and long-term goals have now moved to immediate and intermediate goals.

What this means is that a Career Pathway Initiative is nearing completion. Middle school career education has been adopted, graduation requirements have been modified, pathway focuses have been developed, and dual credit opportunities have been expanded. Dual credit opportunities exist in several districts via on-line or distance learning, but students receive great advantages when the instruction is actually provided by an instructor in the district. During the 17-18 Academic Year, Central City Public Schools is currently offering 16 credits or 4 classes for dual credit from a district instructor. In 18-19, the district will begin offering 46 credits or 15 courses as dual credit. The district is also working with a local college to possibly add an additional 19 credits and 9 more courses prior to the start of the next school year. This is a huge advantage for Central City students and their parents as academic and financial benefits are gained through this opportunity.

With the talk of the Career Pathway Initiative, discussions of facility needs have also taken place. In a district this size, the maintenance and upkeep of facilities will always exist. Along the lines of maintenance and upkeep, the needs for modern educational space, equipment, and resources will be persistent. Last year, the district underwent a "facilities needs assessment" to help with long-term planning. Educational spaces of concern were noted with current agriculture, industrial technology, and science classrooms. Safety, code, and/or space issues were noted with offices, sprinklers, locker rooms, commons area, parking, and the weight room. Programming efficiencies exist with special education, and the growth of the community demands greater early childhood education. All planning should focus on keeping the long-term in mind.

How to correct facility needs and aging facilities is currently the great debate of discussion. There are currently four options to address facility issues and make the Career Pathway Initiative a reality. The Board of Education has done an exceptional job of bringing patrons in on the front-end of the decision making process to gather information. As you can see in previous goals, articles, and communication, the Career Pathway Initiative is nothing new to the district, but as it becomes close to reality, it has created a lot of discussion regarding facilities when the focus needs to continue to be on Career Education. Continued discussions regarding Career Education and facilities have been very valuable and have utilized stakeholders.

Growing communities outside of Omaha and Lincoln are a rarity in the State of Nebraska. This district has shown growth over consecutive years and the

community is showing a dedication to improving the standard of life for their citizens. Amenities, housing, and improved quality of life conveniences are imperative to growth. The decisions that are made today and tomorrow will continue to shape what the community of Central City looks like in the future. Too often, we focus on what is wrong with our community, but by focusing on what is right, we can continue to help this community and district continue to grow. Sometimes, discussions on being progressive are difficult, but those discussions are much easier than the alternative of watching the population disappear.