

As the 2022-2023 school year draws to a close, it can be argued that Central City Public Schools and the community of Central City is accomplishing unsurpassed success. The successes that are currently being enjoyed are topics of discussions across the state. 2022-2023 has been filled with milestones, but no school year is ever completed without difficulties.

For many, the highlight of the year was the opening of the Bison Activity Dome and the hosting of Husker Volleyball. For one weekend, the entire state had their eyes on Central City. This was a great event that will provide lifelong memories, but the more important thing is that these two major events brought people into our building. What they saw was equally impressive science rooms, industrial technology work spaces, and course offerings. Central City Public Schools is providing students with top-notch academic offerings that rival anyone in the state.

This year also marks another year in continued academic growth. It has been a journey to get this point, but the efforts of many continue to pay off as we continue to analyze our academic data. As a part of our efforts to provide students with the opportunity to find their niche, our Science Club continues to be remarkable in performance on the national level and in published professional literature. Very few schools support these types of programs and our students are flourishing. Our extension beyond the classroom also saw remarkable success in the areas of Quiz Bowl, Fine Arts, expansion of our FFA programs, and our athletic programs qualified for the state tournament in four team sports and sent individuals in two other sports.

The population of our school district also continues to grow, and we potentially could see our total enrollment surpass 800 students the next school year for the first time since 2000. Since the 2016-2017 school year, the district has grown by nearly 100 students. Enrollment numbers are important as we look at staffing, programing, and capacity of various programs as students look to enroll in our District.

We cannot let all the great things going on within our community and District be overshadowed by unfortunate situations engulfing public education. Public education is currently under attack by the media, created perceptions, and multiple other layers. The negative stigma that is being placed on public education is concerning at the least and catastrophic at its worst. Rural Nebraska schools continue to do the right thing and advocate for children and work for their betterment. Unfortunately, not everyone hears or understands the good rural Nebraska schools are doing. The negative stigma, the difficulty of the job, and our societal shift of attacking individuals without fact is greatly hampering the ability for schools to recruit teachers. The teacher shortage is very real, and many districts across the state are learning the meaning of it first-hand. If we do not quickly change the perception of education, provide support to our schools, and learn to respect the job that is done in the education profession, we will continue to lose quality teachers and administrators. This situation is already beyond crisis mode and could be catastrophic in the future. Education is the ultimate tool, and without quality education our society will begin to fail.

As this school year draws to a close, we should be extremely excited about what is taking place at Central City Public Schools. It has been a long ride to get to this point, but we are in a really

good spot. The changes in staffing, facilities, and offerings currently set us apart. The entire community has been given the keys to the car to continue everlasting improvements to what our community will look like five, ten, and fifty years from now. What we do with those keys will decide what exactly Central City will look like as those years pass. It has been a great year and thank you for your continued support. Go Bison!!!