The Quad Community Press
Guest Column
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Making room for community questions

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Over the coming weeks, Centennial residents will receive information about the two school referendum questions on the November ballot. Those materials explain the proposed operating levy and facilities bond, what each would fund, and the estimated property tax impact.

As superintendent, I know that providing information is only part of our responsibility. We also need to make room for questions.

School districts use terms that are familiar to those of us who work in education but may need explanation outside it. A project description can identify a proposed improvement without fully explaining the problem it is intended to address. A tax estimate can show a dollar amount and still leave someone wondering how it applies to their property.

Sending information does not automatically mean we have answered the questions people have.

Residents also bring different experiences to this conversation. Some know our schools through daily contact with teachers and staff. Others know them through community activities, their own years as students, or children who graduated long ago. No one should need to follow every School Board meeting or read every district publication to understand what is being proposed.

We have a responsibility to explain our work clearly, including how priorities were identified and what choices were made. That also means revisiting an explanation when it leaves something unclear.

In our classrooms, we recognize that students bring different experiences and questions to their learning, and we use a variety of approaches to help them understand. That same

attention to communication matters beyond the classroom. Residents should have different ways to explore information and find answers.

On the Centennial Forward website, a series of short videos takes a closer look at individual topics, from student support and classroom programs to school safety and building maintenance. Residents can choose a topic they want to understand better and hear an explanation focused on that subject.

The website also includes a frequently asked questions page that we continue to update as questions arise. It is a place to start when you are looking for an answer, and I encourage you to check back as the conversation continues. If your question has not been addressed, please reach out.

For residents who would find it helpful to see some of the spaces firsthand, a community walking tour of Centennial High School and Centennial Elementary is scheduled for October 8 at 6 p.m. We will meet in the CHS Learning Commons, 4757 North Road in Circle Pines. The tour offers an opportunity to see identified facility needs and ask questions about the proposed work.

Find videos, FAQs, specific improvements proposed for each school, tour information, and more at isd12.org/centennial-forward. To connect with someone directly, call the district office at 763-792-6000 or email centennialforward@isd12.org.

My responsibility is to help residents understand the proposals and the reasoning behind them. The decision belongs to voters. Whether you read, watch, visit, or call, I want you to feel comfortable asking the questions that matter to you.