

For Immediate Release

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**Journey Governance Council Considering
Replacing State Charter with Local Agreement**

RIPON, Wis. — At their March 28, 2022 meeting, the Journey Governance Council and Journey teachers reviewed their contract with the Ripon School Board to determine whether or not Journey Charter School still requires any state level exemptions. Because the school appears to no longer require any state level exemptions, Journey Governance Council will take a vote at their April 11 meeting to recommend the Journey Governance Council and Ripon School Board enter into a local agreement in lieu of a state charter agreement. If approved by the Council in April, the item would be up for a vote by the School Board at their April 18 School Board meeting.

If approved, Journey Charter School, which is projected to have an enrollment of approximately 100 students for the 2022-2023 school year, would become Journey Project School. Journey Project School would continue to function just as it is functioning now. Project-based Learning (PBL) best practices would remain the method of instruction for all students, the school would continue to run with Governance Council oversight, and there would be no change in staffing. The benefits for families include less enrollment paperwork for parents, no lottery, and the ability for Journey Project School to act as the non charter option at the K-2 level for the District. Under a state level agreement, Journey is subject to utilizing lotteries if more students apply to the school than there are open spots which impacts enrollment options for families.

Journey's potential change from having a state charter to having local agreement would not impact Barlow Park Charter Elementary which has a projected enrollment of 150 students for the 2022-2023 school year. It would impact Barlow Park Legacy School which had an enrollment of 74 students in 2020-2021 and 65 students in 2021-2022. Just under 35 students were initially slated to attend Barlow Park Legacy for the 2022-2023 school year.

Because of the low enrollment, Barlow Park Legacy families were offered an option to move their children from Barlow Park Legacy to either Barlow Park Charter or Journey. Some families opted to move. This dropped Barlow Park Legacy enrollment down to 23 students across three grade levels. Principal Dr. Tanya Sanderfoot and Barlow Park Legacy teachers note this span of grades in one classroom would be challenging and not ideal for the teacher or students.

If the local agreement presented by the Governance Council is approved by the RASD School Board as a replacement for the current charter, Journey will become the non charter school option for Ripon Area School District's K-2 students beginning with the 2022-2023 school year and Barlow Park Legacy School would close. The Journey Charter Governance Council invites parents, teachers and the Board to attend the in-person meeting on April 11 at 6:00pm in the Barlow Park Journey library to share their thoughts during the public comment section and then hear the conversation of the Council as they look to make this important decision. Council members also have their emails posted on the district's website should someone want to share their thoughts with council members prior to the meeting.

In April 2013, when the Board of Education granted an initial five-year charter to the Journey Charter School Governance Council, PBL was a newer alternative approach to learning which could not easily be implemented within a traditional school framework. Since then, RASD staff have acquired the necessary training and implementation experience. In 2016, RASD's Charter Task Force report heavily supported PBL and inquiry-based instruction as methods leading to student achievement. Following that report, the RASD School Board expressed the desire for these practices to be carried into the District's non charter schools, which has occurred to a great extent.

Any comments or questions, please contact Principal Dr. Tanya Sanderfoot at (920) 748-1550 or sanderfoott@ripon.k12.wi.us.

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