**For Immediate Release**

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**Referendum Public Information Sessions Continue**

**Ripon, WI -** The Ripon School Board and District Administration hosted three public information sessions over the past two weeks: Wednesday, October 8, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Ripon High School; Friday, October 10, from 11:15 am to noon in the lower level of City Hall; and Tuesday, October 14, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall. The first session included a brief tour of the high school facility, while the second and third sessions were presentations for citizens of the Ripon area.

 At both sessions, community members heard an update on the referendum process from the building consultants. People also had the opportunity to ask questions and interact with board members, administration, teachers, staff and high school students. A wide range of information was shared with the public from referendum details, the project scope, benefits of a combined middle school and high school facility, to voting information.

Additionally, new information was presented about the growing popularity of combining middle schools and high schools at one location. Ripon Area School District will enter a new athletic conference for the 2015-2016 school year, and many of the schools in this conference have implemented the combined configuration. Four of the six other districts offer or plan to offer their middle and high school at one facility. Those four districts are Berlin, Campellsport, Waupun and Winneconne. Furthermore, many schools are making efforts to upgrade their facilities. Four of the six other districts in the conference have also either recently completed construction or are planning building improvements. This includes Berlin, Campellsport, Plymouth and Winneconne.

As a reminder, Election Day is November 4th, and Ripon district residents will vote on two referendum questions. The first question concerns the plan to construct an addition and renovate the high school to create a combined middle school/high school; demolish the existing middle school and convert the lot to parking and tennis courts; while adding safety and security upgrades to all schools. The community is also requested to vote on continuing with the $500,000 Operating Referendum to update curriculum and technology; perform maintenance repairs; and replace vehicles.

 “We are making every effort to ensure the community is able to make an informed decision on Election Day,” said Superintendent, Dr. Mary Whitrock. The District has created and distributed countless resources providing residents with factual information as they prepare to contribute to Ripon’s future. “It’s a very inspiring process that, as a community, we get the chance to shape the future of our schools,” High School Principal, Seth Meinel, added.

If residents still want a building tour, it’s not too late. The District is hosting three additional Open Houses at both the middle school and high school for taxpayers to take a guided or self-guided building tour. Both schools will be open on the following dates:

* **Monday, October 27th--- 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.**
* **Tuesday, October 28th --- 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.**
* **Wednesday, October 29th --- 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.**

District residents should watch their mailbox for additional information regarding the combined middle school and high school plan, building open houses, and voting information. Please refer to the district website at [www.ripon.k12.wi.us](http://www.ripon.k12.wi.us) for a countdown to referendum clock, tax impact calculator, referendum fact sheet (a Spanish translation is also offered), site and floor plans, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), and voting locations.

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