

For Immediate Release

Monday, July 14, 2014

Contact: Mary Whitrock, Superintendent

WhitrockM@ripon.k12.wi.us

(920) 748-4600

Facility Planning Update Held at Community Engagement Session and Board Workshop

Ripon, WI – District Administration along with CG Schmidt Construction and Plunkett Raysich Architects presented a facility planning update at a joint Community Engagement Session and Board of Education Workshop on Monday, July 14. This seventh Community Engagement Session covered survey results with comments analysis, feedback from Ripon city staff, budget verification, scope of work with schedule milestones, and the roadmap to referendum on November 4, 2014.

Of the four plans presented to the community, Plan C was approved by 50% of district residents and the final proposed referendum budget is \$29.1 million. District Administration has engaged staff, teachers, city officials, parents, business leaders, civic organizations, and the community on the day-to-day operations of the buildings and the improvements needed to make Ripon a school district of choice. The facility planning team continues to address concerns identified by all stakeholders including site drainage, campus traffic and parking, building proximity to Ingalls field and railroad tracks, ability to expand if enrollment increases, tornado safety and shelter, building sprinkler systems driven by code compliance, building and site evacuation routes in the event of an emergency or disaster, and utility connections and load capacity.

“Community participants have had seven opportunities to provide feedback to the planning team that have focused on both the operational, space, and educational deficiencies at all schools, but now are mainly focused on discussing Plan C with the combined middle and high school,” said Mary Whitrock, Superintendent.

The Board of Education and District Administration continued their work moving forward with Plan C and finalizing the operational and facility building/remodeling referendum at the Monday, July 14

Board Workshop. The Board heard a Financial and Tax Impact Presentation presented by Carol Wirth with the Wisconsin Public Finance Professionals. The presentation centered on a historical comparison of the revenue limits, state aid, and tax levy amounts since 2008. The revenue limit determines how much revenue the District has to pay for operating expenses.

The next step for the School Board is to adopt the resolution, and prepare to go to referendum with two ballot questions. The Board reviewed a draft of the official operational and building/remodeling language that will appear on the November 4 referendum ballot. The \$29.1 million in borrowed funds, at an estimated interest rate at 4.5%, cannot be used to pay operating expenses, and state law limits repayment of borrowing to 20 years.

As the process continues, the District will be meeting with city officials, staff, and hosting additional Community Engagement Sessions and buildings tours. If the Board votes to proceed to referendum, the deadline for the Board to approve the resolution is August 18. The Board encourages the entire community to participate and offer feedback during this exciting process. Any comments or suggestions, please contact Mary Whitrock at (920) 748-4600.

###