

For Immediate Release

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Ripon School Board Holds Workshop to Review Referendum Survey Results

Ripon, WI – The Ripon School Board and District Administration gathered on Monday, July 6 to review the community survey results regarding the operational referendum planned for November 2020. The Board started the workshop by hearing the survey analysis prepared by Joe Donovan from the Donovan Group. Donovan shared two data sets with the Board, the first set of data reflected the responses of all completed surveys. The second set of data indicated responses from a comparison group of District residents who are not current parents of preschool or school-aged students, employees, or students. The comparison group comprised 22% of the total respondents.

The results showed that of the 481 respondents who completed the survey, support for technology, curriculum materials, and facilities maintenance was relatively high, with 80% who would definitely or probably support the referendum in the whole group and about 70% in the comparison group. A proposed referendum that increases taxes toward an endowment fund for Ingalls Field sees support drop to just 51.98% of all respondents and 38.39% in the comparison group. This represents a considerable decline from the previous question. Respondents preferred the referendum to focus more on education and less on athletics/Ingalls Field and indicated an interest in knowing more about how Ripon College contributes to Ingalls Field expenses. Currently, Ripon College pays for 30% of all Ingalls Field expenses for maintenance and upgrades.

The survey gave the Board an opportunity to gauge opinions on topics besides the referendum. Most respondents give the district a high rating. With a rating of “10” representing an extreme likelihood of recommending the district to another individual, more than 70% of respondents answered with an “8”, “9” or “10”. There were many positive responses recognizing areas where RASD excels. One respondent noted “Our district offers a variety of courses, extra-curricular activities, and schools to meet the needs of all students. The teachers and administration team continually pursue methods that will advance learning. I feel confident that our students are prepared for the workforce or post-education opportunities upon graduating.”

As is typical with a survey of this kind, some respondents provided feedback on areas in which the district could improve. Comments included: “It is basically a good school district and a person doesn't have to question sending their child to its schools. However, I do wish that as much attention would be given to academics as to sports.” Another respondent suggested, “the school needs to be focused more on one-on-one teaching, especially for students who need additional assistance”.

More than 92% of respondents indicated they are pleased with the communications coming from the district which is up from 82% in 2014. This suggests the district is doing a good job communicating with its stakeholders and should continue these efforts as it engages the community around the need for a replacement referendum and the Return to Learning Plan for this fall. For older adults and those not connected to the district through children who are current students, the Ripon Commonwealth Press is a popular source for respondents to gain information about the district. District and school mailings, websites, and newsletters also appear to be important informational resources. Facebook is the most highly cited social media

platform for district-related inform

Ripon Superintendent Mary Whitrock shared “I am pleased the survey results provide a definitive path for the Board in terms of what the community supports moving forward. There is clear support for continuing with the existing referendum, but the community is signaling to the Board a preference for the district to finance the next turf replacement through the regular operational budget. The Board asked district leadership to develop such a plan.”

[Complete survey results](#) are available on the 2020 Referendum Page under the Community tab on the district website at www.ripon.k12.wi.us As the process continues, the School Board will review drafts of potential referendum questions at their July meeting with final approval of the referendum ballot question format occurring at their August meeting.

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