**For Immediate Release**

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**RASD Final Facility Improvement Plans Unveiled**

**Ripon, WI –** The Ripon Area School Board and Administration are pleased to reveal the final plans for the upcoming construction projects approved by voters during the November 2014 Referendum.

Additions and renovations to the existing high school building include STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) spaces; an agriculture room; a community room; a MS/HS music suite; separate middle and high school entrances, commons, administrative offices, and classrooms; a new high school gymnasium; upgrades to the existing auditorium and pool; and additional parking.

 Following the passing of the referendum questions, PRA architects and CG Schmidt Construction have taken several steps to finalize plans and design. Recently, they collaborated with RASD faculty and staff to refine the layout for the 6-12 facility while remaining within the approved $29.1 million scope. The District also hosted a Facilities Update Session on January 26, where community members were able to provide some of their own feedback and ideas. The community ranked interior and exterior facilities images and selected words and feelings they wanted the new facility to embody. Consensus identified four key themes “Contemporary,” “Timeless,” “Warm,” and “Welcoming” to be most important to Ripon community members.

The community also expressed interest in expanding the athletic space to a three station, although only a two station gymnasium was approved within the referendum scope. According to Superintendent Whitrock, “While the Board is fully committed to adhering to the approved $29.1 million referendum amount and serving as good stewards of the tax payer dollars, the Board hasn’t ruled out expanding the gym in the future or exploring more immediate options including alternative funding, grants, and corporate sponsors.” Finally, the District administration and the consultants have met with city officials and conducted a traffic survey. All of this information has been used to shape the final plans, which will be approved by the Board at the February 16th meeting.

A second Facilities Update Session will be held on March 2 at 6:00 p.m. at Ripon High School room 167 to provide community members with an opportunity to review the final plans and elevations as well as learn about the detailed construction timeline. Construction is set to begin in April. The phasing of the project work is planned heavily for the summer months over the next two years to minimize disruptions to class time, school events and normal operations. The work areas will be separated from the student areas to maximize safety and security for the students and staff. Project updates will be posted to the district website and shared with staff, parents, and the broader community on a regular basis. Please contact Dr. Mary Whitrock at (920) 748-4600 with any comments or concerns.

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