

For Immediate Release

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Revised Facility Plans and Community Survey Presented to Ripon School Board

Ripon, WI – The Ripon School Board and District Administration reviewed the revised facility plans and second draft of the community survey at the March 24 School Board meeting.

Following six community engagement sessions, and months of staff and board feedback the initial seven facility options have been narrowed and reduced in cost. The direction moving forward acknowledges urgent maintenance issues in all four schools for \$16.6 million and four proposed plans, designated as plan A, B, C, and D, that include portions of the 16.6 million with remodeling and/or new construction. Ultimately, these plans need to reflect the priorities of taxpayers and the Board needs to test the viability of these solutions through a community-wide survey.

Plan A features a new middle school on a new site (location yet to be determined) and remodels the high school for \$33.9 million. Plan B builds a new high school on a new site and repurposes the existing high school to serve as the middle school for \$39 million. Plan C builds an addition onto the high school to create a combined middle/high school at an estimated cost of \$29.1 million. Plan D suggests building a new middle school at the existing site for \$35.5 million. All four plans include \$1.5 million in elementary maintenance repairs.

The advantages and disadvantages of each of these plans were discussed and are being evaluated by the Board. Long-term solutions, operational efficiencies, collaboration,

maximizing the reuse of existing spaces, and creating flexible learning environments are specific criteria the Board considered when evaluating these plans.

The Board has also worked diligently with the planning consultants to identify solutions to reduce costs that are reflected in the new estimates. Cost-saving measures include, deferring the new high school auditorium, reducing the maintenance budget at Barlow Park Elementary School by deferring the EFIS repair, excluding the renovation of a portion of the current middle school for locker rooms and other community use and reducing the remodeling items based on secondary principals' recommendations.

The maintenance only plan and plans A-D reflect the Board's original options 2-6. Option 1 and option 7 are not reflected in the second survey draft. Option 1 or status quo would result if the community does not support one of the other plans. Option 7, build a new 6-12 school on a new site at a cost of over 60 million, is beyond the District's allowable debt limit.

"The next step in the facility planning process is to test the tolerance of our taxpayers," said David Scott, Board President. While the Board and facility planners have worked diligently to narrow the facility plans to find the best fit for the district, the next step in the decision-making process is to hear from the Ripon community.

"The Board has heard many ideas on how to move forward, but wants the long-range facilities plan to reflect the priorities of taxpayers and families," said Mary Whitrock, Superintendent. "Therefore, prior to making any decisions, the District is urging all residents to participate in an important community-wide survey." The final survey review by the Board will take place on April 7, with the survey window opening from April 21 through May 5.

The survey will consist of basic demographic information, background information on the facility plans, advantages and disadvantages for each plan option and preferred site locations for any future middle school or high school construction. All survey responses are kept confidential and returned directly to School Perceptions, an independent Wisconsin-based firm with expertise in conducting community education surveys.

All revised facility plans are available on the District website. Any questions concerning the community survey process may be directed to Mary Whitrock, Superintendent.

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