

**For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Mary Whitrock, Superintendent

WhitrockM@ripon.k12.wi.us

(920) 748-4600

**Results Announced from the RASD Facilities Planning Survey**

**Ripon, WI** - Results from the recent district-wide facilities planning survey were presented to the Board, district administration and the community at the May 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting. The data was gathered from the 990 surveys completed during the two week survey window. School Perceptions, an independent Wisconsin-based firm with expertise in conducting community education surveys, presented the results.

The feedback collected from the questionnaire and compiled confidentially by School Perceptions will be invaluable to the facility planning process. Survey results have helped gather a wide array of information ranging from the issues important to the community to narrowing down possible facility options even further. About 45% of the surveys were completed by RASD parents, and 55% were completed by those who do not have children attending the district schools. This information was also reflected in survey results. The top five factors considered very important for future planning included:

- developing employability skills for students;
- helping students prepare for life after high school;
- adapting school programs for students with disabilities;
- offering programming for struggling students at risk of not graduating;
- improving school safety and security.

Providing access to new technology and operating energy efficient buildings were also among top concerns.

As the Board looks ahead to the future of the district's facilities and programs and positioning the District to be a "District of Choice", it was important to learn the community's opinion on the facility planning options. Four options were presented in the survey narrowed down from a variety of vetted options (Plan A: Build New High School; Plan B: Build New Middle School; Plan C: Combine Middle/High School; and Plan D: Rebuild Middle School). Based on

survey results, the most popular option is **Plan C: Combine Middle School and High School** at one location. 50% of all residents approved this plan. In reply to a general question about giving advice to the Board, a majority (59% of all residents) recommended the Board consider closing the middle school and investing in a new location. Furthermore, a portion of voters only selected one option and the plan to combine schools was selected most often amongst these survey participants.

The District's referendum debt will be reduced significantly in 2016, which will decrease property taxes by approximately \$127 for each \$100,000 of a home's value. This drop will reduce the tax impact of any new spending and is reflected in the tax-impact calculations. The tax impact for the combined middle/high school is \$123.00 for each \$100,000 of a home's value. An additional funding for operations inquiry asked residents if they would likely support the continuation of the current \$500,000 operational referendum which would maintain the current tax rate. 69% of all residents supported continuing a replacement referendum to address the budget shortfall.

The survey found 82 percent of respondents were satisfied with the communication from the district. Parents prefer receiving news from the district through Email and the District website. Those without children at the Ripon schools preferred district newsletters and mailings. Residents also find *Ripon Commonwealth Press* as a preferred source of information. The Board and administration hope to continue using a wide variety of media outlets to keep the community informed during this process.

The community has played a major role in the facility planning process and will continue to be a valuable resource. All survey results are posted on the District website at [www.ripon.k12.wi.us](http://www.ripon.k12.wi.us). The data collected will guide the Board with making short and long-term facility decisions at the upcoming Board Workshops on May 27<sup>th</sup> and June 9<sup>th</sup>. Their decisions will ultimately reflect the needs of the entire District, and will be communicated as we continue to develop a future plan.

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