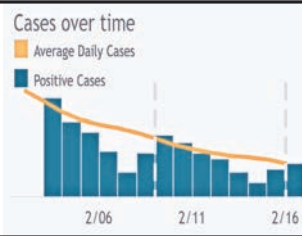




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RASD may discontinue Catalyst

By Joe Schulz

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Declining enrollment has put the future of Ripon's Catalyst Charter School in jeopardy.

While Ripon Middle School (RMS) isn't going anywhere, the Catalyst Charter School Governance Council will vote on the future of the charter school contract Tuesday, March 1.

If the governance council votes to discontinue the Catalyst charter contract with the Ripon Area School District (RASD), the Ripon School Board would then vote to formally accept the decision at its meeting Monday, March 21.

The school board discussed the possibility Monday, reviewing a memo from Ripon Middle School/Catalyst Principal Rick Bunge and Catalyst President Candie Baker.

Superintendent Mary Whitrock said it was important for the district to make sure parents and the School Board were aware that the conversations surrounding Catalyst were going on.

"It makes it challenging with the number of students in terms of teachers and support [staff], but also for the students themselves to be able to group [together] and have some of the great conversations that are so important as part of project-based learning," she said. "We certainly wanted to make sure ... parents are aware of the conversation — not only Catalyst

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Slime time!

HAYDEN OLM AND physical education teacher Dale Nehls drop a bucket of slime on Barlow Park/Journey Elementary School Principal Tanya Sanderfoot during a Kids' Heart Challenge (formerly Jump Rope for Heart) event that celebrated students raising \$13,220.26 for the American Heart Association. For more information and photos, see page 7 and visit www.RiponPress.com. Jonathan Bailey photo

RC plans major building projects

By Joe Schulz

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Ripon College is planning a few major infrastructure projects over the next two to five years, aimed at making an impact on student life.

The college plans to remodel Farr Hall of Science, modernize residence halls and is in the early conceptual stages of developing an on-campus sports stadium.

No timeline has been set for the proposed infrastructure projects as the college is planning to take the next six months to begin discussing the projects and to solicit leadership gifts.

"When thinking about what total project goals look like for this, it's going to be very dependent on the work that we're able to do from a fundraising side," said Shawn Karsten, Ripon College vice president for advancement, marketing and communications. "But we feel confident, given what we've heard from our donors to this point, that there's a lot of interest in these types of projects."

Candidate forum takes center stage in Ripon's Fond du Lac County Board District 1 campaign

By Joe Schulz

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Ripon's Fond du Lac County Board District 1 candidates are similar, while being very different.

Timothy Bachleitner and Kat Griffith both chose to homeschool their children. Both have experience with community organizations. Both have a deep religious faith. And both have a mutual respect for each other.

Their differences, however, begin to emerge when comparing their views on candidate forums.

Earlier this month, the League of Women Voters of the Ripon Area announced that it would not host a candidate forum for the County Board seat vacated by Marty Farrell. Bachleitner declined the league's invitation, while Griffith accepted.



Timothy Bachleitner

Griffith is an advocate for candidate forums, believing they give voters the opportunity to see both candidates address the issues facing the community in a respectful, candid and fair way.

"It's good for democracy, for voters and candidates to meet and be able to ask questions and interact and see each other in-person," she said. "I think it's important that it be as unmediated as possible. I think it's really good when people



Kat Griffith

can hear directly from somebody what they think."

Meanwhile, Bachleitner believes there are enough avenues to deliver a campaign message that candidate forums aren't essential.

"They [voters] can call me. That's just one mechanism," he said. "That's just one method to get those questions out. There are many different ways. ... My counsel, with everybody that I've talked to, does not necessarily think that

this is something that is even that important."

The language used in their campaigns also helps to illustrate the differences between candidates.

Bachleitner's campaign website addresses what some may describe as partisan policy positions, while Griffith's campaign messaging has not touched on partisan politics.

Bachleitner's website said he strongly supports the Second Amendment and "medical freedom," while desiring to make Fond du Lac County a "sanctuary county for the unborn," which are policy positions that largely mirror those of the Republican Party on a state and national level.

"Those aren't partisan issues," said Bachleitner, who recently became chairman of the Republican Party of Fond du Lac County. "The right to life is not a partisan issue."

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"We're trying to really identify what are going to be the most impactful projects for the college to take on."

Interim RC President Andrea Young

The efforts of the next six months are meant to lay the foundation for a potential comprehensive fundraising campaign, which would be spearheaded by the next Ripon College president.

Beyond infrastructure, the campaign will address other priorities like access to higher education and academic/curriculum innovation, Karsten added.

Last spring, the college conducted a campus feasibility study to examine fundraising operations and receive feedback from Ripon College's donor pool.

Making education accessible

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