

## **Karen Acres Elementary Renovation And Addition Project Takes First Step Toward Completion**

*Urbandale Community School District Board of Directors approved a contract with Larson & Larson Construction to move forward with an almost \$5 million renovation and addition project*

**URBANDALE, Iowa – August 24, 2015** – The [Urbandale Community School District \(UCSD\)](#) is pleased to announce that on Monday, August 17, 2015, the Board of Directors approved a contract with Iowa-based Larson & Larson Construction, LLC to move forward with an almost \$5 million renovation and addition to [Karen Acres Elementary](#). This is the first step in support of the UCSD Facilities Plan for improving, securing and updating schools which is the result of an overwhelming majority of district residents, 80 percent, voting to pass the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) this past February. The PPEL will enable the district to improve safety and security, remodel classrooms, add gym space in elementary buildings and enhance facilities for use by both student activities and community programs.

“Two years of extensive research and planning went into creating our District Facilities Plan to ensure it addresses the needs of our students, teachers, families and community members,” said Chris Gunnare, President of the Board of Directors. “The Board is excited about taking this first step and seeing the Karen Acres Elementary project get underway knowing we have more projects on the horizon that will be completed over the next 12 to 15 years.”

The Karen Acres Elementary construction project is anticipated to take approximately 18 months to complete. When finished, the building will have two additional classrooms, will have redesigned classroom spaces to better support collaboration and facilitate instruction based on the unique needs of each student, will provide greater access to ever-changing technological resources, will improve safety and security by adding more comprehensive security features and will add a gymnasium to better support educational use during school hours and allow for greater community use after hours.



Proposed DRAFT drawing, northwest view, Karen Acres Elementary.

For over five years, the UCSD has been focusing on transforming education in order to increase engagement, improve achievement and ignite a renewed passion for learning throughout the district. Redesigning classroom spaces that better support collaboration, innovation and participation of all students is directly related to the district’s vision to bring learning to life for everyone. Well-maintained and improved facilities contribute to effective learning environments as well as the overall improvement of neighborhoods. With a high school graduation rate above 98%, in combination with the highest

achievement scores the district has seen for over a decade, this positive shift in education is delivering results. To learn more about how Urbandale is transforming education, visit:

[Showcase.UrbandaleSchools.com](http://Showcase.UrbandaleSchools.com)

### **About Urbandale Community School District**

The Urbandale Community School District includes portions of Des Moines and Urbandale, Iowa. The district serves over 3,900 students in six elementary schools, one middle school and one comprehensive high school. The Urbandale district supports an increasingly diverse student population where over 51 languages are spoken. Building on the existing foundation of excellence in education, Urbandale is transforming education throughout the district. By implementing innovative [Quality/Continual Improvement](#) strategies that create learning environments that more fully engage, challenge and motivate students, Urbandale is taking transformation from theory into practice. Urbandale prepares students for becoming lifelong learners and is a school district that brings learning to life for everyone. To learn more, visit: [www.UrbandaleSchools.com](http://www.UrbandaleSchools.com)

Urbandale Community School District  
11152 Aurora Avenue  
Urbandale, IA 50322

### **Contact:**

Dena Soenke  
Communications Partner  
Urbandale Community School District  
[soenked@urbandaleschools.com](mailto:soenked@urbandaleschools.com)  
(515) 868-1879

###