

*Ridgewood High School Creates Jobs & Saves Tens of Thousands in Energy Costs*

*NORRIDGE, IL (December 20, 2011)* – Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) visited Ridgewood High School yesterday to talk with students about the importance of civic engagement and tour the soundproofing renovations designed to mitigate the noise from nearby O’Hare International Airport. In addition, the renovations are expected to reduce the school’s energy costs by 25%. Schakowsky helped secure the funding for the project.

“After ten years of effort, the sound insulation at Ridgewood became a reality only after we received the support of Representative Schakowsky,” **said Dr. Robert Lupo**, Superintendent of Ridgewood District 234. “Because of her tenacity and commitment to our cause, Ridgewood’s students will have a school building that will be more conducive to learning and much more energy efficient. All of the members of our community – present and future - owe a debt of gratitude to Rep. Schakowsky.”

School officials say the new improvements of the 52-year old compound will help reduce distractions, facilitate a better learning environment, and estimate the school will see between \$75,000 to \$100,000 a year in energy cost savings. Ridgewood High School is also planning to install a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education Coalition lab for a STEM program to begin next fall. About 30 to 40 construction workers have been employed to complete the renovations including installing new flooring and cabinets.

“Not only do these building improvements enrich the learning environment for Ridgewood students, they will create local construction-related jobs,” **said Rep. Jan Schakowsky**. “The school will also save money in the long run, once again showing why it is so important to make sure our schools and buildings are energy-efficient.”

The funding for the renovation come from the School Sound Insulation program run by the O’Hare Noise Compatibility Commission. This program, the largest of its kind in the world, is funded through the City of Chicago’s Department of Aviation and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Earlier this year, Schakowsky and President Obama included provisions in their respective job creation bills – The Emergency Jobs to Restore the American Dream Act and the American Jobs Act – designed to create hundreds of thousands of jobs modernizing and repairing schools across the country. In the wake of a jobs crisis, fixing up American schools can provide meaningful work while addressing critical educational and environmental needs.

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