

James Cain Editorial  
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## Port Huron Schools - The Answer is “Yes, Yes”

This past month our district leadership team has made over 60 community, parent and Port Huron Schools staff presentations to offer facts about the upcoming May 3, 2016 bond election. We will continue to strive towards our goal of educating people about what is specifically being requested, how and why the two-proposal question on the ballot was developed, and what the effects of passing the bond could be for our district and our entire region. We invite people to visit the website [www.phsbtt.com](http://www.phsbtt.com) (Port Huron Schools - Building Tomorrow, Today) to explore the resources and details presented about the bond. I also encourage questions and feedback at [YourVoiceMatters@phasd.us](mailto:YourVoiceMatters@phasd.us). Simply put, we are asking people to consider a vote of “Yes” on proposal 1 and “Yes” on proposal 2.

The Bond will affect four primary areas that are in desperate need of upgrades and enhancements in our district:

- Learning Environment-focused upgrades to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century educational and technology requirements and transform learning and teaching;
- Improvements to address the aging infrastructure of all buildings;
- Safety and Security Upgrades that build upon security initiatives already in place and assure optimal safety for all students at all times;
- Energy initiatives to improve the operational efficiency of buildings and reduce operational expenses.

The cost of bringing 17 school buildings and our instructional tools into a competitive, relevant, modern era is approximately \$13.32 per month to homeowners with an average market home value of \$90,000 in our district’s boundaries. As the district in the region with the greatest volume of need and the lowest current millage rate, this investment in education is a much needed support for our students and staff, who comprise the second largest employee group in St. Clair County.

If you agree, your vote on May 3 should be “Yes, Yes.” If you don’t agree, you are voting against something of great consequence to our school district and our community. One of the questions I have been continually asked as the Chief Executive Officer of Port Huron Schools, is “What may happen if the bond does not pass?” The answer is inevitable. Our buildings are wearing out their life cycle. With our current inadequate funding we do not have the money to continue to maintain personnel, programs and over 1.3 million square feet of space across the 20 facilities we operate. We would be forced to operate in a strictly reactive mode and would struggle to survive when our students and community need us to thrive.

As we have been talking to community groups, it has been outstanding to hear about the continually developing growth and opportunity in our area. Many of those successful organizations in both the private and public sectors have had to make strategic decisions to benefit the sustainability of their workforce and growth of their market. So does the school district. These two proposals on the May 3 Bond, support the positive momentum our district has built on over the past two years. Our strategy is aligned and our educators are ready. Our students are ready. Our community is *ready*.

To compete, to continue to improve, to service our families across the Port Huron District, the stakes are high and the answer must be, "Yes, Yes."