

Jamie Cain editorial
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Change Is Coming

On August 2 the voters of the Port Huron Area School District will make history. We need them to make a statement of support for the entire community by voting “yes” for the Port Huron Schools bond proposal. When you go to the polls, the question of whether to support the school bond will be on the back side of the ballot. The school bond in question before voters is a critical priority and the outcome will change and impact not just our schools, but our entire community.

I’ve stated many times that this bond proposal is not just about building improvements or raising taxes. Rather, it is about our students - both current and future - and the type of schools and community in which we want them to grow up.

Please don’t believe that our community and region can thrive without a relevant, modern, competitive public school district. Investment and support of public services in a community are crucial for its prosperity. Port Huron is not immune to this reality. The need in our public schools is great and regardless of your political affiliation, beliefs, values, and personal choices or views related to education, it cannot be ignored that Port Huron Schools is a large, critical public service agency in our greater community.

The May 3, 2016 bond proposal was successful in gaining positive momentum, informing the public, and gaining support for the school district. We listened every step along the way, and the bond proposal in front of voters on August 2 realizes a 51% reduced impact on a community member’s property taxes from the May 3 ask, while preserving the vision and meeting extensive needs across our entire school district in every building. We are asking the average homeowner to spend less than \$7 a month to completely transform education in our region.

These needs include modernizing close to 20 aging facilities and enhancing educational programming for the thousands of students the district serves each day. As a district, we have worked hard to deliver quality education with outdated resources and buildings for too long. With the current funding system for public education, the only way our district can generate the revenue we need to be relevant, modern, and competitive is through a bond proposal. There is no other way.

It’s clear and simple, education lays the foundation to creating a competitive, prosperous community. It creates a prepared workforce and college-going student population. It inspires teachers to do their very best with opportunity to grow in their profession. It attracts businesses and families interested in living somewhere with good schools. When is the last time you heard a real estate agent or business professional tell you that the quality of education was not an important factor in their ability to develop a prosperous community and economic climate? Quality, relevant, competitive schools significantly influence a community’s economic prosperity.

If the August 2 bond is not passed, the consequences will be dire. This is not a message intended to instill fear. It is the plain and simple truth.

Looking at the finances, outdated facilities, and lack of modern instructional tools and spaces along with our continual fight as a district to stabilize enrollment numbers, this organization cannot continue in its current status quo. Failure of the community to support this bond will usher in an era of change that will require many brutal, difficult, reactive decisions that will harm our students and community. I am being as frank and earnest as possible to level with you, the voter, as you consider the magnitude of what this election means for our district and community.

We can move forward together and support our most precious asset, our children and their futures, or we can leave a cloud of uncertainty and deal with the consequences that will follow.

The choice is yours and I believe the good people of this community will step up. We are ready to build the school district of tomorrow - let's hope we don't have to instead dismantle the district of today.

Jamie Cain
Superintendent of Port Huron Schools