

Jamie Cain editorial  
December 18, 2016

Port Huron Schools will be making major announcements on the progress of its bond planning at this month's Board of Education meeting on Monday, December 19. As an organization, we continue to emphasize transparency, communication and collaboration throughout the implementation process. Phase I planning has been taking place since the bond's passing in August. This work involves plans for five buildings plus our new, state of the art, Early Childhood Center. I encourage you to visit our website ([phasd.us](http://phasd.us)) or tune to Comcast channel 6 to view the Monday night board presentation in its entirety this week.

This first phase of the bond work is large in scale and aggressive in timeline, with the construction of the Early Childhood Center, a centerpiece that will drastically change the landscape of education for our youngest learners in the community and region. This project, while currently in the design and development stage, has had planning completed for the conceptual site design, the connection between the new construction and existing McKinley building, and the separate bus and car drop-off areas. A typical classroom layout has been selected and is continuing to be developed with regards to instructional elements. We are eager to break ground in late spring of 2017!

Upgrades will also begin at Crull, Michigamme and Woodrow Wilson Elementary schools. These projects are currently in the construction documentation phase. Planning for the new safe and secure entrances, "learning commons" areas, teacher collaboration spaces and updated kindergarten rooms has been finalized and these areas are now being documented and detailed. Existing kindergarten spaces are being updated with expanded footprints and enhanced student storage. New kindergarten classrooms are being added as needed and include new ADA accessible bathrooms and student storage. These upgrades at our first phase of elementary buildings will provide for modern learning environments and new and enhanced learning opportunities while continuing to put an urgent priority on early childhood education in Port Huron Schools.

Holland Woods Middle School and Port Huron Northern High School are both currently in the construction documentation phase. Planning for the new safe and secure entrances, "learning commons" areas, S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) labs, expanded science rooms and teacher collaboration spaces has been finalized and these areas are now being documented and detailed.

The S.T.E.A.M. labs are part of the overall district plan that will create regionally exclusive and critically needed S.T.E.A.M. learning environments in all three of our middle schools and at both PHN and PHHS. Again, we cannot stress enough the revolutionary nature of the bond work and its impact on student learning and opportunity pathways.

In all three elementary schools in Phase I, along with HWMS and PHN, infrastructure updates including exterior window replacements, interior door replacements, new vertical unit ventilators in each classroom and ceiling and lighting upgrades throughout the buildings are being documented and detailed.

For our athletic programs, new tennis courts are being constructed at both high schools (8 each). New gym floors will be installed at PHHS and FGMS. New bleachers are being added to the gymnasiums at PHN, PHHS and FGMS and Memorial stadium seating is being replaced as part of Phase I.

Our district has been working on the concepts for these plans with teachers and administrators in our district to ensure each school's enhancement is tailored to the needs of their students and community. We strive daily to meet *all* the needs of our students and families and appreciate our educators' involvement in this massive project and its long term impact.

In closing this month, I wish to express - on behalf of Port Huron Schools - the gratitude of our students, staff and community for the work of Board of Education Trustees Rasha Demashkieh and Garth Kriewall. December will be their last Board of Education meeting as they conclude their terms and we welcome new members in January 2017. Thank you Mrs. Demashkieh and Mr. Kriewall for the countless hours and effort you have dedicated to improving education in our district. Your actions and contributions have made an immeasurable impact on the lives of so many. We are very appreciative of your service to Port Huron Schools.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season!

With Appreciation,  
Jamie Cain