

Jamie Cain editorial

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State of the District 2017

This month marks a milestone for Port Huron Schools as we presented our second annual State of the District address. We began this program last year in an effort to engage the community in the current landscape of where we are as an organization. The agenda is designed to share our achievements, areas where improvement is needed, challenges to our district and opportunities that lie ahead for collaboration and progress. In a snapshot, it's not only the good news and bad news, but also the promise of our goals, mission and Blueprint plan. A video of the State of the District is available in its entirety on our district website (www.phasd.us) and social media for viewing.

There is no denying that we have come a long way from last February when I was giving this address on behalf of our district for the first time. Last year's presentation served as an introductory glimpse into the realities faced daily by our students, facilities and lack of public education funding. It also laid out the efforts we continue to make towards academic achievement goals, in spite of the aforementioned challenges. It was important that people walked away with a sense that there were a lot of positive, hopeful things happening in our district and the confidence that we are working hard with a strategic, intentional plan towards success.

This year, we focused on significant updates and strides we have made with improving our organization's facility plans from the bond, student achievement areas of progress and some of the risks public education is enduring in the current political climate. It was so heartening to have welcomed a strong audience of about 90 community leaders who attended this event. We need unwavering commitment to public education from our community to help support us as we continue to weather upcoming storms.

One of the highlights we were proud to share was the recent success of Crull Elementary as a National Title I Distinguished School. I will be recognizing the team from Crull tomorrow evening at our Board of Education meeting for this prestigious achievement. They exemplify some of the best progress points in our district and we look to use their success as a model we can replicate.

One of the opportunities that was presented will become an ongoing and developing dialogue. We need to blend our district's new instruction in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math interdisciplinary studies) with relevance and training for our local businesses and jobs. We look forward to engaging local partners in this endeavor and preparing our students to participate in building the workforce and economy right here in the Port Huron area. As our investments and professional opportunities grow in this region, so should the skills of our students adapt and be prepared to contribute and lead.

Port Huron Schools appreciates the support of our community partners in supporting the State of the District - the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Alliance. The spirit of collaboration between multiple local sectors of business and education is an exciting prospect that we look to build. Thank you to all those who attended and who continue to support local public education.