

Jamie Cain editorial
May 15, 2016

Today, I speak from the heart. I speak as a man who cares deeply about our children and our community. Like many of you, I'm struggling to accept this setback from the goal we worked so hard and earnestly to achieve on May 3. My heart is broken for our students and families who so richly deserve what our bond proposal would have provided. We have regrouped and we will move forward. There is no other option. We must not allow our community to become the next Detroit, Flint or any other similar community that has allowed their public education system to fail. You, as community members, have a voice of local control with regards to financially supporting our public schools. In a day and age where local control is scarce, please understand we need your help. If there was another way to raise the dollars we need for our schools we would seek it, but going to the voters in the form of tax increase support is our only option provided by the State of Michigan. We didn't come right back in August to upset people, as an act of arrogance or to try to force a tax increase. We came back out of a responsibility for our students and families.

We know that this bond initiative 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.

I think it is vitally important that we use the setback from May 3 to draw closer together and unify our resolve to advocate for our children in this school district and community. I'll do whatever it takes to help all of us move forward. I'm so grateful for all of you who have participated in this effort with us.

I don't represent the past of Port Huron Schools, rather it's my responsibility to represent the present and the future. I wasn't here to witness the previous factors that the community has told us led them to vote "No" on May 3. My leadership team and our entire district is asking you to please let go of those past frustrations and give us an opportunity to serve well and lead well. We are asking you to hold us accountable but for that to happen, we need you to give us the support we need first.

I believe our people are our strength as a school district and a community. Our community has been through much in the past decade in terms of economic and leadership challenges in many of our organizations. I can tell you, after campaigning as actively as we did, I am assured that we are living in an environment of hope. The right people are leading our charge for change and prosperity. This bond would have assisted them with providing the tools to develop our area as a more relevant, sought after location to live, work, attract new businesses and raise families.

During the recent campaign, our district participated in over 80 community events in person, along with countless conversations on social media regarding the pros and cons of our recent

proposals. We have analyzed and reflected on all of the input from our community and it is reflected in our new proposal. On behalf of our students and community, I say with urgency the time is now. We continue to listen because the details are important and should be factored into the final August proposal. Over the next month we are very interested in hearing more from our community ... especially those who did not support Port Huron Schools on May 3. We will do this through small and large group discussions. We are encouraging all stakeholders to provide feedback in a survey located on the homepage of www.phasd.us

We have positive momentum and our entire community is educated about the challenges and realities of our district more than ever before. We want to continue the dialogue to increase support of the vision for our district and community. We feel the timeline for this revised bond is pressing and urgent. We also feel the community should have the ability to focus on this issue exclusively, rather than considering it with other partisan, political issues that accompany a presidential election in November. This ballot in August is about our schools and community.

With deep appreciation,

Jamie Cain