

# Fruitport School District Voters: Is a New High School Really Necessary?

The following information may help you decide.

Fruitport School District Voters,

By now you have probably received information pertaining to the November 8th school bond election proposal. Most of the information you have received has come from the school administration and their supporters. This information has been all about why you should support the bond proposal. **However, there is information available that gives the other side of the story.** Some of that information is included in this correspondence. **We are asking you to consider this new information before you mark your ballot.**

When a school district begins planning for a bond issue, the Michigan Department of Treasury says that a citizen's committee be involved in the planning process. This is why school districts involve community members.

You are being told that a facilities committee made up of parents, community members, and staff began a study of the Fruitport Community Schools facilities in November, 2013. What you are not being told is that this original committee was comprised of 23 members; 7 were parents, 2 were students, 2 were community members, and **12** were either school board members or school staff. This should be repeated. More than half of this committee were school board members or school staff! [information obtained from school website]. It appears that this committee's outcome was a foregone conclusion. And, of particular interest to **many** of us, only **one** person on this original committee, who was not a school board member or school staff member, was a senior citizen. It is interesting that two students, probably 16 or 17 years of age, and only **one** independent senior citizen, were on this original committee, giving input on a 51.3 million dollar project. **Many** seniors have years and years of financial management experience, obtained from running a household or business, raising families on tight budgets, and surviving countless financial crises. Also, seniors are the **one** group that will probably be more adversely affected by this bond proposal than any other part of our community. We believe that more than one senior citizen should have been included on the original committee. We have been told that some senior citizens did volunteer to be on the committee, but were never acknowledged, i.e. never informed of

meeting times or dates. It might be possible that a senior was added to the committee at a later date. However, we do not know this for sure because the school administration has only put the names of the original committee members on their website. The minutes of this facilities committee's meetings were also not made available to the public.

Our committee has recently been informed by individuals who had placed "Vote NO" signs on their property, that these signs are being stolen or vandalized, and in some cases, replaced by "Vote YES" signs. The "Vote YES" committee has had their signs out for many months, with no reported incidents. "Vote NO" signs have been out only a few days and they are being targeted, presumably by "Vote YES" individuals who do not want opposing points of view expressed. **How sad!**

In 1991 and 1992, a hand-picked facilities committee, similar to this current facilities committee, recommended two different millage proposals to Fruitport school district voters. Both were soundly defeated. As a result of those defeats, a citizens committee which was representative of the entire Fruitport community was appointed by the school administration, and put together a realistic proposal which was overwhelmingly approved by voters in 1997. In 2009, a hand-picked facilities committee, similar to this current facilities committee, recommended a millage proposal to Fruitport school district voters. This proposal was soundly defeated. Now we are again being asked to approve a bond proposal recommended by yet another **hand-picked** facilities committee.

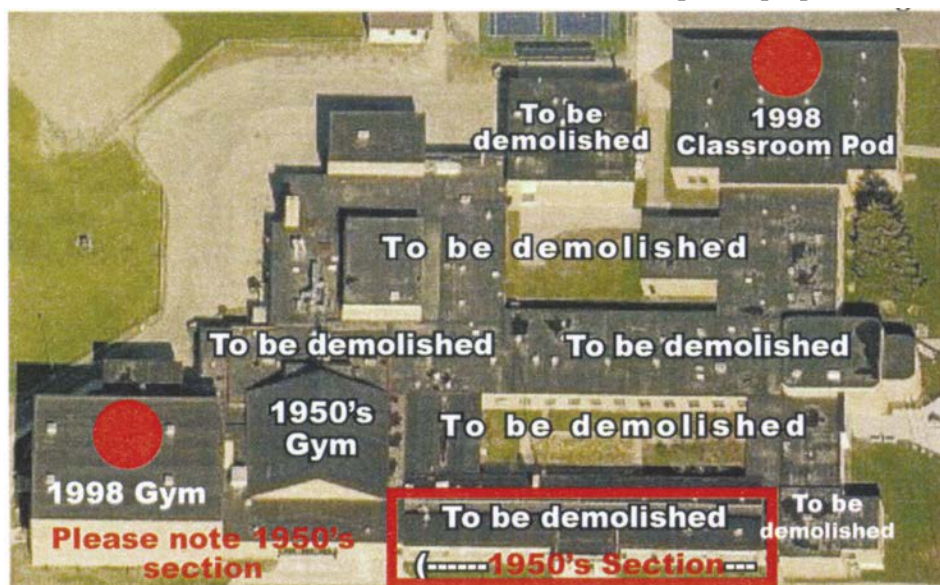
This school administration says that the facilities committee created the facilities master plan for the Fruitport school district. Many people in our community do not believe this. These people believe that the school administration, staff members, and school board members, who made up a majority of the facilities committee, actually created this facilities master plan and this bond proposal, and are merely using the community members and parents on the committee to rubber-stamp their proposal.

## MICHIGAN SCHOOL BOND ELECTION RESULTS SINCE 1996-----MUSKEGON AREA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT [Michigan Dept of Treasury]

SCHOOL DISTRICT		BOND TOTAL
<b>Fruitport</b>	4 elections-3 passed [75%]	\$29,990,000
<b>Holton</b>	2 elections-2 passed [100%]	\$18,140,000
<b>Mona Shores</b>	2 elections-1 passed [50%]	\$13,110,000
<b>Montague</b>	11 elections-6 passed [55%]	\$49,450,000
<b>Muskegon</b>	1 election-1 passed [100%]	\$12,500,000
<b>Muskegon Heights</b>	1 election-1 passed [100%]	\$26,170,000
<b>North Muskegon</b>	5 elections-5 passed [100%]	\$22,865,000
<b>Oakridge</b>	5 elections-2 passed [40%]	\$26,290,000
<b>Orchard View</b>	2 elections-1 passed [50%]	\$47,200,000
<b>Ravenna</b>	3 elections-2 passed [67%]	\$29,795,000
<b>Reeths-Puffer</b>	6 elections-3 passed [50%]	\$49,805,000
<b>Whitehall</b>	4 elections-2 passed [50%]	\$41,260,000

As can be seen from the above list, Fruitport school district voters have **always** been quite willing to approve school bond millage requests and support our kids and grand kids when the bond requests have been reasonable, realistic, sensible, carefully thought out, and beneficial for our kids, our grand kids, and ourselves. The school administration's bond proposal is **none** of these.

If this bond proposal is passed, our school bond indebtedness level would be over **\$81,000,000** in just the last 20 years, more than **\$31,000,000 higher** than the second highest school district in Muskegon County. Folks, we must face reality. Fruitport does not have a large industrial or commercial tax base as some of our neighboring school districts have. We are still basically a small residential community where individual homeowners comprise the largest part of our property tax base. Fruitport is still a working class community, composed mostly of single-family residences, where people work hard for what they have.



**"The new construction would connect to the 1998 classroom pod and 1998 gymnasium"**  
(Quote from Special Election Edition-Fruitport Focus)