



# Hematite Highlights

ISHPEMING SCHOOL DISTRICT

APRIL, 2010

## School Contacts

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**C.L. Phelps School**  
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Brian Veale, Director

## “Our Children, Our Vision, Our Future”

### SCHOOL ELECTION — BOND PROPOSAL

**Tuesday, May 4, 2010**

The Board of Education is asking for approval to sell bonds in the amount of \$11,240,000 for construction at the Birchview School. The project includes building 7 new classrooms, a library, a dedicated computer lab, fire suppression system, restrooms, a gymnasium, art room, and music room. The project also includes remodeling the existing gym into a cafeteria and full service kitchen and complete remodeling of the existing classrooms including fire suppression, security doors/classroom entry, flooring, technology upgrades, and equipment. When completed, the Birchview School will be a new school.

### BREAKING NEWS

## Taxpayers Will Save \$9,300,000 Through Bond Interest Award State and Federal Agencies Approve Ishpeming Project

The Board of Education has been notified that the Ishpeming Public Schools has been selected to participate in the Qualified School Construction Bond (QSCB) program. By participating in the QSCB program, the district will save on interest costs associated with financing the school renovations and new construction at Birchview School.

How will this work? If the voters approve the project, the Internal Revenue Service will pay the interest on \$10,000,000 of the project – which saves the voters \$9,300,000 in interest payments. This means that instead of paying for these bonds for nearly 30 years, voters will only pay back the bonds over a period of 15-17 years (the exact time period has yet to be determined.) Simply put, this is like the bank paying off part of your home mortgage interest.

Are we headed in the right direction with this project? The Department of Treasury, the Department of Education, and the IRS think so.

## Department of Treasury Says Yes to Board Plan

State Treasurer Robert Kleine has notified the Board of Education that the Treasury Department has studied, reviewed, and approved the plan to build at the Birchview School and reorganize teaching stations (preschool – grade 6 at the Birchview School and grades 7 and 8 at what is now the Central School side of Ishpeming High School). This means that the Board can place the \$11,240,000 bond proposal on the May 4 ballot and, if approved by the voters, the bonds will be guaranteed by the State.

The Treasury Department action supports the Board plan and the State guarantee makes the bonds more attractive to investors.

The election is on Tuesday, May 4, 2010. The polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Voting takes place at the Ishpeming Senior Center, the Phelps School, and the Ishpeming Township Hall. If you are not sure of where you vote, call Ishpeming City Clerk Jenifer Rajala (485-1091) or Ishpeming Township Clerk Susan Jandron (485-5411).

## What Will This Cost the Taxpayer?

If approved by the voters, the increase will be 2.95 mills. For a home with a true value of \$60,000 and a taxable value of \$30,000 this amounts to \$88.50 per year—24 cents per day or less than the cost of a cup of coffee or a can of pop per day. The proposal offers major improvements at a relatively low cost. Some other examples:

True Value	Taxable Value	Increase
\$60,000	\$30,000	\$88.50
\$50,000	\$25,000	\$73.75
\$40,000	\$20,000	\$59.00
\$30,000	\$15,000	\$44.25

For Senior Citizens, the Michigan Homestead Property Tax Relief Act allows for a refund of up to \$1,200 on a portion of property tax that exceeds 3.5% of household income.

### How can the funds be used?

The funds can only be used for the projects stated on the application to the Michigan Department of Treasury. The ballot clearly states that the funds cannot be used for salaries or operational expenses. The funds can be used for the construction/remodeling costs only.

### What is the long term impact?

This project will give Ishpeming a virtually new modern Birchview School in a prime location. The savings and efficiencies of consolidating down into 2 outstanding school sites will place the schools in a strong program and financial position for the foreseeable future.

### What happens to the Phelps School?

The Phelps School will no longer be used as a district school. The Board of Education will be looking for other organizations or entrepreneurs who would take over the Phelps School and put the building to a good use.

The Board is estimating a savings of \$400,000 per year that can be directed toward existing student programs.

### What about the 7th and 8th grade Students at the Ishpeming High School?

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be at what is now the Central School for the core curriculum academic classes. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will have their own lunch period. The students will have access to the modern industrial technology, music, computer, and physical education facilities at the Ishpeming High School.

Schools such as Munising, Houghton, Hancock, Norway, and Gwinn (in process) all have 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades at their high school buildings.

### Why does the Board want to do this?

As a small school district dependent on State funds for operating (90% of the school district operating funds come directly from the State not local taxes), the district must consolidate internally into 2 building sites to efficiently maximize available funds. If approved by the voters, the Board’s plan is to move children in grades 5 and 6 to the Birchview School and have all children in grades pre-school through grade 6 at the Birchview School. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be moved to what is now the Central School side of the Ishpeming High School. This will give us 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained classrooms at the Birchview School and will more efficiently use teaching staff at the Ishpeming High School and will give the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students access to the modern industrial technology, art, music, and physical education facilities at the Ishpeming High School.

### Why build a new gymnasium at the Birchview School?

The Ishpeming gymnasium facilities are in use virtually every day, every evening, and most weekends with classes, team practices, team games, city league, elementary teams/travel teams, Special Olympics, basketball and wrestling tournaments, and Community Schools. We are very fortunate to have available gym space in contrast to what many other schools face. For example, Negaunee has just completed the construction of a new gym at the Negaunee Middle School in order to accommodate the demand for gym time.

When the Phelps School gym is no longer available, it is important to have a full-sized gym replacement (similar to the existing Phelps gym) in order to accommodate the demand for gym time in our community. Ishpeming has wonderful facilities and we want to maintain that leadership position in Marquette County.

## Why is This Needed?

As a school district dependent on State funds for operating (90% of the school district operating funds come directly from the State not local taxes), the district must consolidate internally into 2 building sites to efficiently maximize available funds. If approved by the voters, the Board's plan is to move children in grades 5 and 6 to the Birchview School and have all children in grades pre-school through grade 6 at the Birchview School. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be moved to what is now the Central School side of the Ishpeming High School. This will give us 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained classrooms at the Birchview School and will more efficiently use teaching staff at the Ishpeming High School and will give the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students access to the modern industrial technology, art, music, and physical education facilities at the Ishpeming High School.

School districts such as Munising, Negaunee, NICE, Gwinn, and Hancock have already consolidated internally into fewer operational sites. In February, the voters in the Escanaba Schools approved a \$21,000,000 bond issue to remodel as schools are being closed.

Ishpeming has great schools (all "A" rated by the State and I.H.S. is a U.S. News & World Report best in the country high school) with wonderful academic and extracurricular programs for students. In order to continue this tradition, it is necessary to consolidate into 2 outstanding school sites at the Birchview School and the Ishpeming High School in order to operate efficiently and direct funds to classrooms and student programs.

## Going Green! Birchview School Will Become LEED Certified

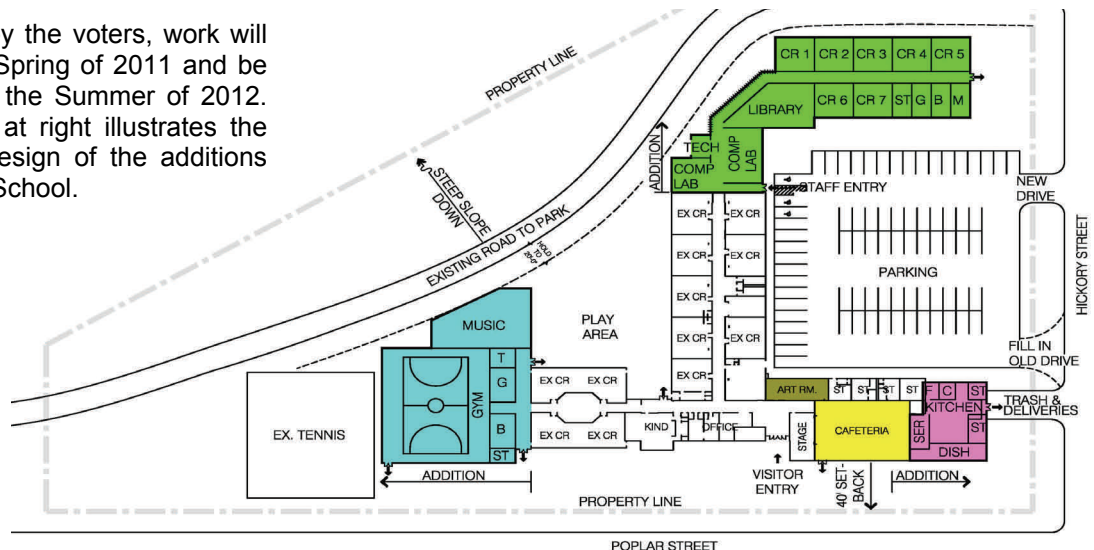
If the bond issue is approved by the voters, Birchview School will become a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certified building. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED provides nationally accepted benchmarks for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings.

How would Birchview become LEED certified? Some options that are currently being explored include:

- Reduce water usage through high-efficiency plumbing fixtures.
- Create on-site renewable energy through photovoltaic panels to power the Building Addition's light fixtures.
- Create on-site renewable energy through wind energy generators (vertical type, small residential rooftop units).
- Recycle construction waste (concrete, masonry, steel, etc.) instead of disposing in a landfill.
- Utilize materials with recycled content such as carpet, floor tile, concrete, steel, etc.
- Utilize regionally harvested/extracted and manufactured materials to support the use of indigenous resources (lumber, ore, etc.) and reduce the environmental impact of transportation.
- Utilize materials that do not emit odorous, irritating and/or harmful contaminants such as Adhesives, Sealants, Paints, Coatings, Flooring, etc.

## When Will it be Completed & What Will it Look Like?

If approved by the voters, work will begin in the Spring of 2011 and be completed in the Summer of 2012. The drawing at right illustrates the preliminary design of the additions to Birchview School.



### When is the Vote?

The election is on Tuesday, May 4, 2010.

It is important that all registered voters, whether for or against the bond proposal, exercise the right to vote.

### Where do I Vote?

The election is being run by the County Clerk, City Clerk, and Ishpeming Township Clerk. Voters will vote at their regular polling place. In the City of Ishpeming voters will go to either the C.L. Phelps School (precinct 1) or the Senior Center (precinct 2). Voters who live in the Ishpeming Township portion of the district will vote at the Ishpeming Township Hall.

### Informational Open House Planned

Please plan to attend the informational Open House that will be held at the Birchview School on Thursday, April 22, 2010 from 6 to 8 p.m. Members of the Board of Education, the Superintendent and the Business Manager will be available to answer questions and provide voters with additional information. Tours of the proposed building site will also be made available to guests.

### What will we be voting on?

The Board of Education is asking for approval to sell bonds in the amount of \$11,240,000 for construction at the Birchview School. The construction includes 7 classrooms, a library, a dedicated computer lab, remodeling the existing gym into a cafeteria/full service kitchen, fire suppression system, remodeling the existing areas of the school, a music room, an art room, restrooms, and a gymnasium. When completed, the Birchview School will be a new school.

The Michigan Department of Treasury has reviewed and approved the project and has authorized the Board to place the proposal on the ballot. The State of Michigan will guarantee the bonds for investors.

### Questions?

If you would like additional information, please contact Superintendent Stephen Piereson at 485-5501. Additional information can also be found on the district's website at [www.ishpemingschools.com](http://www.ishpemingschools.com) or on Facebook at "Our Children, Our Vision, Our Future".

POSTAL ROUTE  
BOXHOLDER

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