

## Bond proposal would benefit students and seniors

Are our children really going to get the “state-of-the-art” education that they need to survive?

Today’s work environment is in stark contrast to what it was when our local schools were built back in the 1970s. Check out our schools! They’re far outdated. Building technology has changed tremendously since the 1970s when our schools were built. The May 6 bond proposal is designed to bring our schools into the 21st century.

The main part of my letter touches on a different topic, though. It’s about the possibility of our community obtaining a larger facility for the Bedford Senior Center. Did you know that our Bedford seniors stand to gain a larger facility if this bond issue is passed?

The present facility at Jackman and Samaria Rds. is in bad shape. Everything is scrunched up beyond capacity. Multiple activities have to use common areas. It makes things difficult, and there is no room for any expansion of programs whatsoever. The mechanics of the building are shot! The first thing I noticed when I became involved with Bedford Senior Center was that everything that I looked at showed extreme wear and age.

Senior centers offer a venue for formal learning. A large number of seniors want credentialed programs to advance their knowledge. Another 69 percent seek informal learning such as clubs, activity groups, crafts, conferences, guest speakers or seminars

## Invest in our youths’ future by maintaining schools

Some of the world’s greatest universities proudly maintain some of the world’s oldest buildings. Students study in the very same room as have world-renowned scientists, writers and mathematicians throughout history. Properly maintained brick buildings often last a century or even much longer, as these universities and even some local homes prove.

Yet, the viability of some much newer Bedford Township school buildings seems to be in question. Haven’t they been properly maintained and appropriately upgraded along the way? If not, who’s responsible and can our losses be recouped?

Modern classrooms are still basic rectangles with desks. Today’s classroom electronic devices generally draw less current, putting less strain on existing electrical systems. Drafty and energy-inefficient rooms are generally updated with insulation and caulk. Standard maintenance should keep a basic classroom comfortably functional for a century or more.

The burdensome cost of building teardown and replacement would have an oppressively adverse effect on everyone, especially our students. When a family pays more property tax, there’s simply less remaining for other family needs. Yet utility, mortgage and car companies aren’t going to accept less, so the money is going to have to come from personal needs,

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on a wide variety of topics.

Caregiving is another important aspect. Sixty-five million Americans provide care for a chronically ill, disabled or aged family member or friend. Senior centers help to alleviate this problem bringing meaning and dignity to the lives of seniors everywhere. The number of people needing these services is destined to rise rapidly.

As a synergistic effect of this bond, the board of education will allow the Bedford Senior Center to move to a larger facility. It will have the vital space needed to offer an expanded senior population the love and care that they deserve for the foreseeable future. The building will need some limited renovation. Are you ready for the good news? The funding will not come from additional local tax dollars. Operation of the senior center is separate from the school budget.

Indeed, passing the school bond issue will assure that Bedford Township will remain a sustainable and viable community.

**Larry Thompson**  
**Temperance**

including those of students.

We’re not looking at a one-time cost but a large, ongoing expense. No matter how you see it, it’s going to add up to thousands a family, resulting in a negative effect on students and parents alike. Furthermore, all our homes would be harder to sell because of the large, undesirable property tax levied for decades to come.

Manufacturing, transporting and assembling building materials consumes a great deal of fossil fuel, which further adds to pollution and greenhouse gasses. Remaking a school building burns this vast amount of fuel all over again. Wasting and polluting by tearing buildings down and rebuilding seems unconscionable. The people destined to suffer most are the very students said to be benefiting.

As citizens, we are expected to carefully manage our finances, properly maintain our homes and be good examples to our children. It would seem reasonable to expect the same of our local school officials. To invest in our schools is to take care of them, not to tear them down. To invest in our students’ future is to conserve energy by reducing waste, to reduce pollution by conserving energy and reduce family financial losses by wiser use of tax revenue.

**David Warner**  
**Temperance**

## Bettering schools is worth sacrifice

I am voting in favor of the upcoming levy vote, and I encourage you to seriously consider doing the same. My youngest child will be done with Bedford Public Schools before the proposed changes, but this isn’t about my kids — it’s about our community and it’s about planning for a successful future.

I do not agree with all of the proposed plans, and perhaps there is some expenditure you do not support. However, that does not mean the proposal should be rejected. The reinvention is urgently needed, and we should voice our concerns and desires on what is most important to us for the next phase of this project as details are finalized.

The amount of money requested is significant and may seem difficult for some to afford. While \$10-\$25 extra a month sounds like a lot of money, I urge you to ask yourself how you justify paying ever-increasing fees for things like cable TV and cell phone bills but you can’t find a way to support better schools and athletic facilities. Replacing one night out to dinner a month could pay for the costs of this levy.

To date, I believe BPS has done a tremendous job by doing more with less, however, I am confident the trend will not continue without some major improvements. As homeowners, we all win if the school system’s reputation keeps our property values high. If we need to continue cutting teachers and services to pay for inefficient buildings, we all lose.

I have met with the new superintendent and attended informational meetings to learn what has gone into the decision to undertake this major overhaul. It is clear to me that it is not possible to stop the current trend of major, costly repairs and inflated utility bills without a significant upgrade.

If this proposal fails, the next step is to ask for more money to keep putting band-aids on the current schools. \$70-plus million sounds like a lot of money, but if eliminating a data plan on one cellphone or eliminating the HD channels on cable is the trade-off for a great school system, it seems well worth it to me.

I ask you to vote yes and then get involved. This may be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a significant, positive change in Bedford.

**Bruce Gonring**  
**Lambertville**

### Letters are welcome

Full name, address and telephone number are required. Letters are limited to 400 words. The e-mail address is [letters@monroenews.com](mailto:letters@monroenews.com).