

## IN OUR OPINION

# Yes on SKSD's Prop. 1 and 2

The needs are growing — as are the costs.

Monday, October 22, 2018 3:56pm | [OPINION](#) [SKSD SCHOOL PROPOSITIONS](#)

[SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT](#)



We have recommended passage of bond measures in the past to build a much-needed second high school in the South Kitsap School District. Our support remains strong this election cycle as the school district once again is asking voters to construct a new comprehensive facility on district-owned property at Old Clifton Road.

The reasons for voters to approve the \$184 million Proposition 1 bond measure, as with similar requests in past years, are compelling. South Kitsap High School is worn out, overcrowded and in need of technology and safety improvements. Anticipated growth in the district will squeeze it even more. Much of that growth will also impact elementary and middle schools, which are in similar straits as is the high school in accommodating its current student numbers.

A patchwork of sorts has been cobbled together to alleviate some of the deficits that exist at district facilities. Proposition 2 is a \$21 million capital projects levy that will fund a long list of renovation work and compliance requirements in the schools, provide technology catchup funds, as well as money for safety and security work, primarily to secure entrances at the district's middle schools. We also strongly support this measure.

If the reasons to create a better learning environment for our district's students aren't convincing — and they should be — the economics behind the measures is a no-brainer. That's because time continues to be an enemy. A booming regional economy has boosted costs of construction to double-digit increases over just a few years. Like a nagging toothache, ignoring the need to take action won't solve the problem. It only

guarantees the pain will continue and the damage will magnify.

The taxing formula for property owners makes it a tolerable commitment. With the McCleary decision capping the education programs levy at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, the rates resulting from approval of the two measures won't increase tax levels beyond what was assessed in 2017.

This is an opportunity for the South Kitsap community to reverse a trend of neglect and avoidance. By ignoring the fiduciary responsibility of our community to properly fund the operation and upkeep of its school system, we're not only cheating our future generations from a full, competitive educational experience, but we're handing them this intolerable burden to solve in future years.

It's a selfish dereliction of civic duty that needs to come to an end this election cycle.



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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# United for our schools

Tuesday, October 30, 2018 9:40am | [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#) [LETTER TO THE EDITOR](#)

[SOUTH KITSAP](#) [SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT](#)

Each day brings new stories and accounts of division amongst our nation, our region and some of our local communities.

Here in South Kitsap we, too, sometimes find reasons to disagree. But we've always remained united around the commitment to build a better community founded on respect for one another and the promise to the next generations to provide even greater opportunity and prosperity.

This year's South Kitsap school bond should be an overwhelming expression of our unity for that common vision, the chance to fulfill our promise to build a better place for our children and generations to come. The benefits of this investment include immediate returns as well: confident and equipped students who will quickly become the employees, business owners and families that will sustain our community's strength and growth.

Much has been discussed about the fiscal impacts and costs/benefits of the capital construction that the SK bond will fund. We are in strong agreement that the SK capital construction plan is sound and makes sense. Sometimes we lose sight of the greater good while debating issues that have been repeatedly resolved.

While our aging schools crumble around our students and faculty, we've let unfounded arguments confuse and distract us from our obligation to provide a safe and effective education for our children. It's time to unite around what is so clearly our common goal and vote "yes" for SK schools.

Please join us by voting to approve the SK bond – and "yes" for the SK capital levy – this election.

*Gary Anderson, G. Anderson Group*

*Bek Ashby, Port Orchard City Council*

*Kim Atwater, CPA*

*AnnaLee Baglio, SK real estate broker*

*Robert Baglio, BJC Group*

*Dave & Sue Baker, Sue's Fresh Juice Bar & Sandwich Shop*

*Jim Civilla, Westbay Auto Parts*

*Amy Creed, Amy's on the Bay*

*Barry Doll, AmFam Insurance*

*Stacey Frakes-Hayter, Pinch Eats*

*Rick Gehring, SK business owner*

*Morgan Hanley, Hanley Construction*

*Jennifer Hardison, SK Citizen of the Year*

*Coreen Haydock, The Dock Bar & Eatery*

*Ryan Hayter, Hayter Communications*

*Dawn Jake, CPA*

*Adele LaCombe, Debbie Macomber Inc.*

*Suanne Martin Smith, Home Made Café*

*Steve Politakis, CEO, Kitsap Bank*

*Rob Putaansuu, Port Orchard mayor*

*David Rill, SK graduate*

*Steve Sego, Waterman Group*

*Samantha Smith, Josephine's Mercantile*

*Nick Taylor, Dragonfly Cinema*

*Mark Trenary, Excel Business Systems*

*Jon Wall, Henderson Partners*

*Maureen Wheeler, community organizer*



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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

# School measures needed for growth

Monday, October 22, 2018 10:20am | **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT**

This November, voters in South Kitsap get to make an important decision for the future of this community; they will decide what kind of schools our children will attend.

Do we want our kids to attend safe, well-maintained schools where all kids have access to technology to help them learn? If so, then we need to vote “yes” to approve South Kitsap’s bond and levy.

Our high school can’t accommodate more students, and the fact is, our town is growing. Passage of the bond will pay for a second high school.

Currently, our high school has had to install portables because there are already more students than the building was meant to hold. But portables aren’t a long-term solution. They are expensive and pose a safety risk since they are more susceptible to intruders than the main building.

The newest schools in our district are 27 years old. The South Kitsap School District has done an amazing job of keeping these aging buildings maintained, but it’s time for updates. The world has changed, and our schools need to change to keep our kids safe. South Kitsap’s capital levy would pay for important safety updates at all schools. That means that every child, current or future, will benefit.

Passing these measures is the right thing to do for our kids. Funds from the bond and levy can only be used for the proposed improvements and your tax rate will not increase if your property value increases.

Cammy Mills

Port Orchard



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# How many times will South Kitsap ask for a high school?

**Kitsap Sun editorial board** Published 5:13 p.m. PT Oct. 18, 2018



(Photo: Contributed / South Kitsap School District)

*Our View columns are the consensus opinion of the Kitsap Sun's editorial board, written by the editor. The 2018 board is David Nelson, editor; Jim Campbell, opinion editor emeritus, and community members Allen Banks, Lanell Borelli, Redge Campbell, Shelley Kneip, Paul Nash and Peggy Templeton.*

The votes have been narrow (two attempts were defeated by less than a percentage point each in 2016), the opposition growing (February 2017's vote missed by about 4 percent) and failures repeated (those three plus seven in a row for all bond requests by the South Kitsap School District the past 30 years).

But voters are being asked again whether to support a bond measure for a second high school in South Kitsap, this time to the tune of \$184 million over 25 years, in addition to a capital levy request for \$21 million over the next four years to add safety and security improvements, technology and other physical repairs.

Is anything different for the question that's becoming eternal for the South Kitsap school board? Here's what our board thought each voter should ask as you weight the issue this time.

## Are my taxes increasing to pay for this?

Sun reporter Chris Henry [did an excellent job earlier this week explaining the effect on taxpayers \(/story/news/2018/10/12/south-kitsap-voters-decide-november-6-school-bond-capital-levy/1570861002/\)](#) if the measures are approved, and whether the claim of a "stable tax rate" is accurate. Please read her story for a full explanation. Put simply, because state property taxes for schools have increased and local levies will be capped, homeowners in South Kitsap would be projected to see a break in 2019 on the overall rate paid for schools.

The two requests, estimated at a new \$1.74 per \$1,000 of assessed property value when combined, would bring the overall local tax rate to \$3.24 per \$1,000/ assessed value (or around \$6/\$1,000 in 219 when the state levy is included, though that state rate will increase in years to come). As Henry phrased it in her story, "South Kitsap is asking voters to forgo the decrease, in essence backfilling the void for a tax comparable — as the district's flier points out — to what voters approved in 2017."

In our view, that doesn't necessarily mean an increase, but it does mean taxpayers wouldn't see the same type of decrease that others districts may (though every other local district is now paying a bond, capital levy, or both). Nonetheless, you're still paying a lower rate than just two years ago. So do you want that further tax break? Or are you willing to go without a decrease immediately to fund something the community may need as it plans for the future? There lies the tax question.

## Why is this idea back on the ballot?

From the district's perspective the items listed in the capital levy are critical improvements to maintain buildings and because the existing high school is an inadequate size for current and future needs. As far as the bond goes that's been the argument all along — South Kitsap is one of the largest enrollments in the state for a 9-12 high school and [the school district is sitting on 57 acres west of Highway 16 \(/story/news/local/2017/02/03/how-south-kitsap-school-district-acquired-land-second-high-school/97451958/\)](#) that's close to where huge residential growth is occurring.

The vision for the potential facility has changed from previous iterations, however, likely in response to concerns that circulated during the failed votes. Rather than two distinct high schools in terms of enrollment and programming, the 2018 measure proposes similar, traditional, comprehensive 9-12 high schools. That shift is a positive aspect, in our opinion. Families may chose one school over the other for different reasons, but neither would feel short-changed nor students forced to commute across Highway 16 for special programming, which previous Sun editorial boards were leery of.

The other reason for the repeated election is because the school board says it's responding to the community. The narrow losses on previous requests led to an extensive survey and public meetings. A new high school remained the top priority from that process. In Superintendent Karst Bransma's words,

the district is asking voters to pay for what they've been told people want for their kids, grandkids or the generation to come.

**More in Our View:** [Here's why fire districts are on the ballot this fall, and what you should know \(/story/opinion/editorials/2018/10/15/our-view-what-know-2018-s-fire-levies/1618719002/\)](#)

**More in Our View:** [Island levy may be the only path to safer streets \(/story/opinion/editorials/2018/10/07/our-view-only-path-safer-streets/1537353002/\)](#)

**Why is a high school the priority?**

This is a good question and worth putting in perspective. After all, the district hasn't added new buildings for K-8 grades in decades either, and lower grades are using portable classrooms just as the high school does to ease crowding.

The district seems firm on the concept of 9-12 high schools, a setup it created at South by moving ninth graders there last year. It's far and away the common configuration in the state, avoids students starting high school graduation credits while at a middle-school and, according to district officials, has shown a statistically better job of graduating students on time.

The bond alleviates a pinch at the high school that doesn't exist at the elementary schools to the same extent, which officials estimate will only worsen in the coming decade as residential population is estimated to grow. That will happen at elementaries as well, but boundaries may be adjusted to balance K-8 capacity. You can't do the same with 9-12.

**How would we vote?**

The levy is a no-brainer for your "yes" vote, it's a minimal cost for a low number and years and completes very basic improvements. The district can't go without it.

The bond is more complicated, but the district's thinking about the future is appropriate and the timing is a better option than delaying the ask any further. That need isn't going away (and the price will only continue to increase), so phasing in a bond when it won't lead to a spike in property taxes is responsible. Our board — made up of conservatives and liberals, some in SK and some outside, some retired and others still working — unanimously agreed on a "yes" endorsement for that measure. It's time for South Kitsap schools to build a better future and here's no reason for this question to be asked again.

**Other voices:** [Can't keep giving more to South Kitsap schools \(/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/18/letters-cant-keep-giving-more-south-kitsap-schools/1685368002/\)](#)

**Other voices:** [We're a part of the community, and voting 'yes' for SK schools \(/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/18/letters-were-voting-yes-sk-schools/1685303002/\)](#)

**Other voices:** [It's the wrong time to pay for a second high school \(/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/18/letters-its-wrong-time-second-high-school/1677652002/\)](#)

**Other voices:** [The time is right to invest in South Kitsap schools \(/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/16/letters-time-right-invest-south-kitsap-schools/1661157002/\)](#)

**Other voices:** [What do we want for South Kitsap's future? \(/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/12/letters-what-do-we-want-south-kitsaps-future/1617185002/\)](#)

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Mr. Lemke, this is not about you

Friday, October 26, 2018 2:44pm | [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#) [LETTER TO THE EDITOR](#)

Chris Lemke was quoted in the Kitsap Sun in 2016 as saying, “I think the vast majority of the community supports it (the bond). They know the need, and I’m sure when the time comes, they will be asking the school board to run it again.”

Mr. Lemke was a big supporter of the bond. The needs have not changed. The only thing that has changed is Mr. Lemke is no longer on the South Kitsap School District board of directors. What Mr. Lemke is not understanding is this is not about him and how he wanted the bond and levy structured. This is about our children and the community.

South Kitsap High School is currently the largest high school in the state. The students, teachers and administrators at the high school make do with the large school, but they should not have to just “make do.” Passing this bond would allow this community and, most importantly, the kids, to have two similar sized high schools of approximately 1,500 students.

And, what about the other schools in our district? The capital levy will ensure that the other schools have the proper safety, security and technology upgrades needed for an equitable education.

Now is the time. We have a unique, one-time opportunity to pass both of these measures and have our local tax rate remain the same. Vote yes on the capital levy and vote to approve the bond. It’s time to make our children the priority.

Join me in voting yes on both measures.

*Brian Pickard*

*Port Orchard*

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# What do we want for South Kitsap's future?

Letters Published 1:06 p.m. PT Oct. 12, 2018

This November, voters in South Kitsap get to make an important decision for the future of this community; they will decide what kind of schools our children will attend. Do we want our kids to attend safe, well-maintained schools, where all kids have access to technology to help them learn? If so, then we need to vote yes to approve South Kitsap's bond and levy.

Our high school can't accommodate more students and the fact is, our town is growing. Passage of the bond will pay for a second high school. Currently, our high school has had to install portables because there are already more students than the building was meant to hold. But portables aren't a long term solution. They are expensive, and pose a safety risk since they are more susceptible to intruders than the main building.

The newest schools in our district are 27 years old. The South Kitsap School District has done an amazing job of keeping these aging buildings maintained, but it's time for updates. The world has changed, and our schools need to change to keep our kids safe. South Kitsap capital levy would pay for important safety updates at all schools. That means that every child, current or future, will benefit.

Passing these measures is the right thing to do for our kids. Funds from the bond and levy can only be used for the proposed improvements and your tax rate will not increase if your property value increases.

*Cammy Mills, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/12/letters-what-do-we-want-south-kitsaps-future/1617185002/>

# Community united: Vote yes for South Kitsap schools

Letters Published 11:35 a.m. PT Nov. 1, 2018

Each day brings new stories and accounts of division amongst our nation, our region and some of our local communities. Here in South Kitsap we too sometimes find reasons to disagree. But we've always remained united around the commitment to build a better community founded on respect for one another and the promise to the next generations to provide even greater opportunity and prosperity.

This year's SK School Bond should be an overwhelming expression of our unity for that common vision, the chance to fulfill our promise to build a better place for our children and generations to come. The benefits of this investment include immediate returns as well: confident and equipped students who will quickly become the employees, business owners and families that will sustain our community's strength and growth.

Much has been discussed about the fiscal impacts and costs/benefits of the capital construction that the SK Bond will fund. We are in strong agreement that the SK capital construction plan is sound and makes sense. Sometimes we lose sight of the greater good while debating issues that have been repeatedly resolved. While our aging schools crumble around our students and faculty we've let unfounded arguments confuse and distract us from our obligation to provide a safe and effective education for our children. It's time to unite around what is so clearly our common goal and Vote Yes for SK Schools. Please join us by voting to Approve the SK Bond – and Yes for the SK Capital Levy – this election.

*Steve Sego, on behalf of the undersigned community leaders in Port Orchard.*

*Gary Anderson, G. Anderson Group*

*Bek Ashby, Port Orchard City Council*

*Kim Atwater, CPA*

*AnnaLee Baglio, SK Real Estate Broker*

*Robert Baglio, BJC Group*

*Dave & Sue Baker, Sue's Fresh Juice Bar & Sandwich Shop*

*Jim Civilla, Westbay Auto Parts*

*Amy Creed, Amy's on the Bay*

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*Stacey Frakes-Hayter, Pinch Eats*

*Rick Gehring, SK Business Owner*

*Morgan Hanley, Hanley Construction*

*Jennifer Hardison, SK Citizen of the Year*

*Coreen Haydock, The Dock Bar & Eatery*

*Ryan Hayter, Hayter Communications*

*Dawn Jake, CPA*

*Adele LaCombe, Debbie Macomber Inc.*

*Suane Martin Smith, Home Made Café*

*Steve Politakis, CEO, Kitsap Bank*

*Rob Putaansuu, Port Orchard Mayor*

*David Rill, SK Graduate*

*Steve Sego, Waterman Group*

*Samantha Smith, Josephine's Mercantile*

*Nick Taylor, Dragonfly Cinema*

*Mark Trenary, Excel Business Systems*

*Jon Wall, Henderson Partners*

*Maureen Wheeler, Community Organizer*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/11/01/letters-vote-yes-south-kitsap-schools/1848242002/>

# We're a part of the community, and voting 'yes' for SK schools

Letters Published 11:30 a.m. PT Oct. 18, 2018

My wife and I do not have kids. So we don't really have a stake in the South Kitsap School District levy and bond vote this fall...except we do. We are part of this community, and plan to be here for a long, long time. And between new development and the fast ferry coming before too long, our community is only going to grow more and more. And in my opinion, the best foundation for a growing community is a thriving and supported school system. So our "YES" vote is about strengthening the community we love and making South Kitsap a better place to live now and in the future.

The nay-sayers are all about fear, not facts. If your concerned about anything you've heard regarding the bond and levy vote, reach out to someone involved. Start a conversation. Supporters would be happy to talk to you about the facts. The need for a new high school won't go away, and now is the time to make it happen. Voting no only punishes the kids in our community.

The bottom line is that I trust the many people who champion and support this initiative. They live here, have kids here, and care about our community too. I love this community and want to see it look to the future. So I'm voting "YES" on the bond and levy measure this November. I hope you will too.

*Jason Brinton, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/18/letters-were-voting-yes-sk-schools/1685303002/>

# The time is right to invest in South Kitsap schools

Letters Published 11:31 a.m. PT Oct. 16, 2018

It is not often a time comes when we as a community can have such an impact. The proposed South Kitsap School District bond and levy allows for increased safety, security, and technology throughout all schools in South Kitsap. It builds a second high school that will allow students increased opportunities, and all without increases to the local tax rate. With the existing Operations Levy reducing in 2019, the capital bond (\$1.07) and capital levy (\$0.67) combine for a total rate of \$3.24 per thousand of assessed property value, which is the same rate SK voters approved in 2017.

I grew up in South Kitsap, taught in South Kitsap, and continue to work here as an elementary school principal. This has always been where my wife and I wanted our kids to grow up. We always felt a wonderful sense of community when we were kids. Though the area fell on tough times during the financial collapse years ago, just take a drive around town and out along old Clifton Rd and see the economic boom underway throughout Port Orchard. New homes are popping up at an astonishing rate, and more are being built. Once vacant shops are now occupied. I hear from more and more families moving here and work in Seattle, because of the affordable housing and being a ferry ride away from work.

Now is the time to invest in our community and schools. Vote yes to approve the Bond and Levy.

*Joe Riley, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/16/letters-time-right-invest-south-kitsap-schools/1661157002/>

# Thanks to our school district's elected leaders

Letters Published 10:55 a.m. PT Jan. 10, 2019

By proclamation of the governor, January is School Board Recognition Month. It's a great time to recognize our elected community members who selflessly give their time and energy in support of high-quality public schooling for our youth. School board members in South Kitsap School District are entrusted by this community with responsibility for an annual budget of \$151 million, 9,800 students, 1361 employees, and sixteen school buildings.

School boards are charged with making decisions that can sometimes be quite difficult or require sifting through a great deal of information. They also bear responsibility for developing a vision that will guide the school district for years to come. Through collaboration as a team, and with school district staff, their governance and advocacy are building the future of education in Washington state.

This January, we're encouraging all members of the community to thank a board member. Please thank them for volunteering their time and playing a critical civic role that helps form the bedrock of our democracy — public education. As a crucial bridge between the local community and the school district, their efforts are instrumental in helping all of us realize the hopes and dreams we have for the children of our community.

The men and women serving South Kitsap School District are President Rebecca Diehl, Vice President Keith Garton, Greg Wall, Liz Sebren, and Eric Gattenby. For more information about the South Kitsap School District School Board, visit [www.skschools.org/School Board](http://www.skschools.org/School Board).

*Karst Brandsma, South Kitsap School District Superintendent*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2019/01/10/letters-thanks-our-school-districts-elected-leaders/2538329002/>

# Students need the community's support

Letters Published 10:37 a.m. PT Oct. 22, 2018

In fall of 2019 my sons will enter South Kitsap High School. I don't worry that they will get lost in the shuffle. They are independently motivated and have been lucky to learn how to speak up and advocate for themselves and others, they are fortunate to have parents who have taught them these skills.

They, however, can't vote. My sons may not see a new high school, but their younger sister could.

Many of our current schools are in need of repairs, safety updates, better facilities. What are we telling our kids when we don't vote in their best interest? Our kids need opportunities, fair shots at athletic and academic scholarships. We have a real opportunity to create more success with this vote. Let's prioritize safety and education by reducing class sizes, stress and anxiety among our students. Let's help them put energy into their education instead of using up energy on navigating overcrowded spaces.

Our students and teachers can only be as successful as the community is who backs them. Don't be complacent. I know that if our youth had voting rights this wouldn't even be an issue. If you haven't talked to a SKHS student, that would be a great place to start, if you have middle school and elementary school aged students, think about increasing: access, safety, education, and support. It's a simple equation when you put students first.

Please remember to vote yes on the South Kitsap bond and levy, let's not go another round.

*Avery Powell, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/22/letters-south-kitsap-students-need-communitys-support/1729647002/>

# The South Kitsap bond remains the best and only option

Letters Published 12:31 p.m. PT Oct. 29, 2018

Once again, I'm surprised by the level of misinformation I'm hearing in the community about the proposed SKSD Capital Bond and Levy. A man who harassed school employees is leading the campaign against the measures; making things up, and impugning the integrity of supporters.

Another opponent, a former school board member and strong supporter of previous efforts, has now decided to come out against the bond because he didn't get re-elected.

Our taxes won't go up. Our community needs this. It's been 30 years. We have a unique opportunity to fund school construction without increasing our local taxes.

My kids won't even attend the new high school, yet like many other community members, I have spent hundreds of hours educating and informing our community about what these measures do, how they work, and why they're important. We do this because we all benefit from improving our schools.

I once thought, "There must be a better option," like I've heard so many people say. But there simply isn't. Anyone who has spent any time seriously looking at alternatives comes to the same conclusion. This is the best solution for our immediate and long term needs.

Our community has come so close, so many times. Two and a half years ago, we were 38 votes short... let's not let that happen again. If you haven't voted yet, vote today and remind your friends to do the same.

Every vote counts. Remember the 38. Vote today.

*Gerry Austin, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/29/letters-south-kitsap-bond-remains-best-and-only-option/1810934002/>

# Our responsibility to fund public schools

Letters Published 12:30 p.m. PT Oct. 23, 2018

It saddens me to see negative letters about South Kitsap School District's request for funding a second high school. I am not debating whether it will cost the tax payers of the district more money; it undoubtedly will over time. But we are citizens of a democracy that is founded on supporting the common good. That means schools, libraries, our infrastructure, fire and police departments, even governmental functions, are all our responsibility. Yes, these cost money; they are supported by the taxes we pay.

Anyone who has stepped inside South Kitsap High School can see how overcrowded it is. This is not healthy for young people; they need opportunities to seek leadership roles in student government, participate in sports, drama, music and technical programs. Those opportunities are extremely limited simply by the numbers of students vying for every "spot." A second high school would afford twice as many opportunities for students to grow and explore.

Most of us were educated through public school systems; taxpayers before of us paved the way with quality schools. Now it is our turn; the need is growing each year and I guarantee that building a new school now is more expensive than it would have been years ago, when the bond was first requested. Let us stand up and be responsible for providing good educational opportunities for all of our young people. My husband and I, both in our seventies, will vote yes; it is our responsibility to the next generation!

*Jo Reasons, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/23/letters-our-responsibility-fund-public-schools/1742038002/>

# Get involved with South Kitsap schools on next leader's hiring

Letters Published 1:13 p.m. PT Dec. 10, 2018

We as a school district community must demand an opportunity to participate in the hiring of the next superintendent for South Kitsap School District.

As a student, parent or taxpayer it is our civic responsibility to ensure the Board of Directors hears us very strongly.

This should have occurred last year. All of the steps were taken and thousands spent only to be abandoned by the Board of Directors. When asked why they rehired Karst Brandsma in a temporary role, the response was the Board President was "We have the power and we did it."

Keep in mind this man was not recommended for anything other than interim superintendent until a qualified superintendent could be found. So three years down the drain, with failed bonds and hundreds of thousands of cost over runs on a single capital project. I should also mention some questionable management positions, non-competitive promotions and untimely projects.

Get involved and demand your voice in the selection of the next SKSD superintendent hire.

*Chris Lemke, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/12/10/letters-get-involved-south-kitsaps-superintendent-search/2270384002/>

# Learn the facts on South Kitsap school request

Letters Published 11:42 a.m. PT Oct. 4, 2018

I am writing to show my support for approving the South Kitsap School District's bond and levy measures in the November election.

It has come up often and now I feel we really need to show our support for the children in our community. There is so much false information going around and I implore people to do their research.

Voting "Yes" will not raise your taxes; it is not a school for "rich people"; it does not only fit 500 children. My kids will go to South Kitsap High School if this passes and I am voting yes. The new school will take 1,500 kids from SKHS and house them in a new high school. The new high school is not better, it will just be new. SKHS will also get money if both of these are passed to help with much needed repairs.

Our community is amazing, so let's all get together on this and show our kids and the rest of Kitsap County how much we care by saying "Yes" to the bond and levy this Nov. 6!

*Brenda Walls, Southworth*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/04/letters-learn-facts-south-kitsap-school-request/1523704002/>

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# 'Kill this bloated turkey'

Tuesday, October 16, 2018 1:36pm | [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#) [LETTER TO THE EDITOR](#)

I guess we serfs had better learn our place, as our nobles will keep making us vote on the South Kitsap bond measure until we give in. Sorry, lords and ladies, but it's time to not just kill this bloated turkey, but to replace all the members of the School Board that are pushing it.

First, the \$184 million cost (yes, really, \$184,000,000 to build a school) of this "white elephant" is insane. Are they using gold bricks? Who profits from this? Second, the centrally-planned, industrial scale, one-size-fits-all educational philosophy behind this monstrosity is a proven failure. The future belongs to small-scale, customized education, tailored to meet the unique needs of each student.

Enough is enough: kill this turkey and retire those who keep insisting on it.

*Mark Friedman*

*Port Orchard*



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# Fix South Kitsap schools without raising our levy rate

Letters Published 10:10 a.m. PT Oct. 1, 2018

Our community has an amazing opportunity this November to improve our school facilities without increasing the local tax rate. I've heard some skepticism about this claim, so I'd like to explain how this is possible.

In 2017, voters passed a levy rate of \$3.24 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Recently, due to the McCleary decision, our levy rate will be capped at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value; a \$1.74 decrease.

The combined cost of both the levy and bond on this year's ballot is \$1.74, which is how we can pass both measures without increasing the local tax rate from what voters approved in 2017.

Because the state is contributing more to the operations of our schools, we can finally take care of facilities without increasing the local tax rate.

At the state level, the tax rate does fluctuate as part of this complicated settlement, and next year will be \$0.30 less than this year. In 2020, it will go back to what it was this year. This is not something we control locally, and is not the basis of the SKSD's claim that "local taxes will not increase." Olympia is impossible to predict, but this local bond and levy are for a set amount and a fixed duration, which means payments will not increase if your property value goes up. And, we know exactly what these funds will be used for.

It's been 30 years since we've approved capital funding in this district. It's time.

*Gerry Austin, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/01/letters-fixing-south-kitsap-schools-without-raising-our-levy-rate/1488319002/>

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

# Too many questions, too few answers

Monday, October 22, 2018 10:13am | [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)

[SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT](#)

Let me see if I understand this correctly. The bond is needed due to overcrowding at South Kitsap High School and for “projected growth” in the area, due to houses that have not yet been built or sold.

What happens if there is another financial meltdown and the houses are not built or sold? Also, as I understand it, the crowding in the current high school was caused all or in part from moving ninth-grade students from middle school.

That being said, what happens if the school board decides it wants a shiny new middle school? Will they move ninth-graders back to whatever school they deem necessary in order to create overcrowding as required?

Asking the South Kitsap School Board how much money they need to run the schools is like asking one of the students how much his or her weekly allowance should be.

*SJ Wallace*

*Port Orchard*



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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# SKSD measures do nothing for K-5

Monday, October 22, 2018 2:56pm | [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#) | [SKSD SCHOOL PROPOSITIONS](#)[SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT](#)

Joe Riley knows better than most the importance of the first four years of a child's education (letter to the editor, Oct. 19, "It's time to approve SK's school bond, levy"). It is one of the most accurate predictors of graduation success.

Joe also likely is aware of how vulnerable his students and many in the other nine grade schools are because of 30 to 40 portable classrooms. The bond does nothing for our most vulnerable to get them out of harm's way into secure one-entry safe buildings. The bond does nothing for future growth in the K-5 where the class size is the smallest. Also on the horizon is a push for pre-kindergarten. The new housing starts will bring young families with young children.

I am tired of seeing propaganda that continues to say "no new tax" when local and state collections are the highest in history. The local rollback, if it occurs, does not roll back the state tax increase or other huge tax increases for county, fire [services], etc.

Our existing high school is very capable of housing students and adding capacity without disruption.

*Chris Lemke*

*Port Orchard*



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# It's the wrong time to pay for a second high school

Letters Published 11:34 a.m. PT Oct. 18, 2018

It's the wrong time to invest in same misguided second high school bond and capital levy in South Kitsap. The local levy of \$24 million and the state's \$17 million support are the highest in history. Local tax payers are also paying the highest school taxes in history.

The school district and its campaign arm preach no new taxes. As a member of South Kitsap School Board I fought for and supported school district funding for the McCleary lawsuit. The intent of this suit was to remove the high levy tax rates from 295 school districts. Now settled, the district would remove this relief to further burden local citizens.

Worst of all, this bond is a want, not a need. What is needed is relief at the elementary level for safety and academic reasons. These 10 schools are feeling the impact from all-day kindergarten and student growth. This state-mandated decision has created a need for one additional elementary school. Continuing to add portable classrooms only exasperates safety issues defending them and putting pressure on the schools core.

There are now less than 10,000 students to house. The district housed 11,680 in the past. Keep in mind that six additional classrooms were just added at the high school and this building is in good condition by state inspection standards. With a 38 percent free or reduced priced meals for struggling parents and many local taxpayers on fixed incomes, this request is unacceptable.

*Chris Lemke, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/18/letters-its-wrong-time-second-high-school/1677652002/>

# Property values are also increasing in SK

Letters Published 2:48 p.m. PT Oct. 22, 2018

Rhetoric and opinions aside lets look at the question everyone is asking: "Will my current school taxes and my overall tax bill go up?"

Using the numbers from the SKSD brochure and the voting ballot itself, the current levy for 2018 remains in place regardless of how you vote but is capped at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation thru 2021, down from the current rate of \$3.17. The second levy earmarked as a "Capitol Projects" levy will also stay in place if you vote "Yes" thru 2021, at a rate of \$.67 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Finally the separate high school bond will add \$1.07 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to your tax bill through 2044 if you vote "Yes." This brings your total levy and bond cost to \$3.24 per \$1,000 of value. The 2018 McCleary state tax increase stays in place indefinitely.

There is a "wildcard" that neither the school district nor recent articles have addressed, and that's the 12-15 percent added valuation on homes in Kitsap County that we were notified about this past spring. That, along with the existing levy and two "Yes" votes, will increase your 2019 and beyond tax bill. One or more "No" votes will lower your current tax bill because the current levy goes down. Since local real estate values are climbing at record levels this must be factored into the final amount you should consider.

*Mike Dalgaard, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/22/letters-property-values-also-increasing-sk/1733878002/>

# Can't keep giving more to South Kitsap schools

Letters Published 11:38 a.m. PT Oct. 18, 2018

How can the South Kitsap School District justify another levy? Sure, it is called by a different name (Capital Projects Levy, instead of a Maintenance and Operations Levy) but the result is still the same. Saying it won't cost us more than we are paying now is not a reason to pass it.

Consider the state school tax on homeowners doubled this year. This state tax will continue to be levied against homeowners. Besides, it will probably be raised since the governor and plaintiffs in the recent McCleary decision have stated that they aren't sure that this totally answers McCleary. By the way, how much money is the school district now receiving from the state compared to before McCleary? Why isn't the \$99.5 million levy decreased since the state is picking up a portion of it? And please, don't tell me all of McCleary went to raising teacher salaries, even though it appears much of it did.

In 2017 the voters gave approval to the SKSD for \$99.5 million for an M&O levy. But they aren't satisfied. They are now asking for another \$21.7 million for a Capital Projects Levy. On top of this they are once again attempting to pass a new high school bond issue to the tune of \$184.7 million.

We have been assured that this new high school won't raise our taxes beyond what they are now. Hard for me to believe anyone believes this. Please vote no on both issues for the sake of homeowners' wallets.

*Dave Dahlke, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/18/letters-cant-keep-giving-more-south-kitsap-schools/1685368002/>

# South Kitsap's wish for more local tax money

Letters Published 7:00 a.m. PT Jan. 2, 2019

Have you ever attended a South Kitsap School District board meeting? Did you know the SKSD Board is planning to approve a resolution to lobby state legislators to delay/stop reduction in local school levy taxes to \$1.50 per \$1,000 property valuation?

They certainly know the law permits them to lobby, but is it really ethical? They say the funding reduction for local levies puts too much strain on SKSD budget. Their success could result in an increase in our property taxes. Where is their gratitude for the \$21.7 million in a four-year capital levy we just approved? And what about the 20 percent pay raises they gave to teachers?

They know that only 13 of the 332 school districts in Washington State fail to pass school bonds. Maybe they should be asking the other 319 school districts what they are doing right!

It's time to write your state legislators. Tell them to vote no on Senate Bill 6246. SKSD and the other 12 school districts failing to pass their bonds should not result in taxing consequences for all the other districts. Let them know we are tracking how they vote on this bill.

The 60 percent supermajority requirement to pass bonds was adopted by our legislators to protect property owners from the "Tyranny of the Majority." Will lowering the approval threshold best serve the welfare and safety of all property owners? How about the minority group of property owners, those who are elderly, on fixed incomes, or disabled? Shouldn't we be protecting these property owners to the greatest extent that the law allows?

*Dave Kimble, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2019/01/02/letters-south-kitsaps-wish-more-local-tax-money/2450835002/>

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Don't let this 'tax horse' get afoot

Monday, October 22, 2018 10:33am | [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)[SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT](#)

Approving the latest South Kitsap School District bond and levy is akin to lighting a fuse on a tax bomb.

There seems to be no end to this tax nightmare, and now the district is employing a new taxation strategy. They have seen how other taxing jurisdictions pass capital levies when they have failed to pass bonds.

The district knows all they need is 50 percent plus one vote to pass a levy, so they figure if they can't get a bond to pass, they will get their money using capital levies. Capital levies can be used to build schools. It will take a lot of them, but rest assured the district won't be shy; they won't desist from continuing to employ this new taxation strategy.

There is no limit to the number of capital levies the district can file. Before you vote, think about how these continued taxing efforts by the district can affect your neighbors. Some folks may in time be forced out our houses. The path the district is now following is "taxation by a thousand cuts."

Do not be a party to your neighbor losing their home. Don't let this "tax horse" get its nose into the tent! Vote "no" on both the bond and the capital levy.

*David Kimble*

*Port Orchard*



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*Dave Kimble, Port Orchard*

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# Will we continually be asked for a capital levy?

Letters Published 2:04 p.m. PT Oct. 11, 2018

To approve the South Kitsap School District's proposed bond and levy is no different than dropping a tax bomb in property owner's laps, and it won't be a dud!

I am thinking that the fourth time is also not going to be a charm for SKSD on this ever-growing, humongous bond. We also remain diligent on the new methods of taxation that SKSD has learned from other taxing jurisdictions. Sticking a massive capital levy into this mix is just a test by SKSD. They assume because only 50 percent plus one majority is needed to pass this levy that it is going to be a shoe in. And since they are sure they can at least get the levy to pass, then it will be a sure fire method to continue to put capital levies on the ballots each and every time there are other ballot measure up for our votes.

I fear we will all soon be suffering from "taxation from a thousand cuts" as SKSD continues to pile on more and more capital levies, because they can and because they continue to fail to pass these humongous bonds. Don't let this happen!

Vote no for on this proposed capital levy the same time you vote no for the bond.

*Dave Kimble, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/11/letters-we-continually-asked-capital-levy/1605841002/>

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

### **School bonds and shell games**

A recent Kitsap Sun story quoted South Kitsap School District officials asking for a bond and capital levy to fund building a second high school. Superintendent Karst Brandsma clarified that we won't see a tax increase this year if both the bond and levy pass. That's true, collection will start January 1, 2019. The state will cap school levy taxes at \$1.50 per \$1,000 on all levies after January 1. We are now paying \$3.73 for the current levy.

This "No Tax Increase" from the district is a tax increase, however, unless there is no dollar amount attached to it.

The district is stating a false fact to "offset" the increased \$6.20 tax if the bond and capital levy are passed this November. Off course the offset makes it look like bond and levy won't raise our taxes. This is smoke and mirrors, slight of hand by the district.

The fact is if both the bond and capital levy are approved by voters, your tax rate will rise to \$6.20 per \$1,000 of property valuation in 2019, and beyond for the life of the bond and capital levy.

Will you bet that the state will not raise your property tax again after 2019? When will the state be in full compliance with McCleary to fully fund K-12 education? Never?

Don't be conned into the false promise that your taxes will not increase if you vote for the SKSD bond and capital levy this November.

*Lucinda Kimble-Tharp, Port Orchard*

truth in Congress, bear the insults of a misfit president. The honor is McCain's.

*Al Gunby, Poulsbo*

Monday, 09/03/2018 Pag.A06

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# SKSD measures do nothing for K-5

Monday, October 22, 2018 2:56pm | [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#) | [SKSD SCHOOL PROPOSITIONS](#)[SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT](#)

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*Chris Lemke*

*Port Orchard*



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Worst of all, this bond is a want, not a need. What is needed is relief at the elementary level for safety and academic reasons. These 10 schools are feeling the impact from all-day kindergarten and student growth. This state-mandated decision has created a need for one additional elementary school. Continuing to add portable classrooms only exasperates safety issues defending them and putting pressure on the schools core.

There are now less than 10,000 students to house. The district housed 11,680 in the past. Keep in mind that six additional classrooms were just added at the high school and this building is in good condition by state inspection standards. With a 38 percent free or reduced priced meals for struggling parents and many local taxpayers on fixed incomes, this request is unacceptable.

*Chris Lemke, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/18/letters-its-wrong-time-second-high-school/1677652002/>

# South Kitsap's looking for legislative relief

Letters Published 3:16 p.m. PT Jan. 10, 2019

Did you know the South Kitsap School District Board voted unanimously during the Dec. 19, 2018 board meeting to lobby our state Legislature regarding funding shortfalls resulting from the change in local levies, which places a cap of \$1.50 per \$1000 of assessed property value. Additionally, the board's letter states the South Kitsap School District (SKSD) is being "held ransom in partisan politics" regarding facility needs and is asking our elected representatives to support a statewide constitutional amendment to change the current bond approval process from a supermajority (60 percent) to a simple majority (50 percent). This letter comes on the heels of an annual increase of \$20 million in state funding and an additional \$21 million in local funding over the course of four years approved by voters to support capital projects relating to building maintenance, technology, and security.

One has to ask how the district was planning to build a second high school on a promise that property taxes would remain at the 2017 levy tax rate.

To get involved and learn more about SKSD upcoming school board meetings go to [www.skschools.org](http://www.skschools.org). A copy of Resolution 1281 can be viewed at the above website, under the agenda for the Dec. 19, Action Item No. 9.02.

*Kim Krumvieda, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2019/01/10/letters-south-kitsaps-looking-legislative-relief/2542131002/>

# South Kitsap bond and levy will cost you more

Letters Published 10:16 a.m. PT Sept. 4, 2018

Our Supreme Court ordered the state to fully fund K-12 education. The state has not yet fully complied. This will mean more state tax increases for education. The state promises a one-time tax break in 2019. This temporary relief is a one-time good deal.

Expect the state to continue to raise taxes for education after 2019 and beyond. South Kitsap School District officials aren't dealing from the top of the deck when they talk about the upcoming bond and levy costs.

How does it work? You give up the one-time state tax break so that it appears the district's bond and levy won't increase your taxes, at least for 2019. After that you will feel the full brunt of the \$6.20 per \$1,000 valuation increase in your property taxes that would include this bond and levy. Some of us might not be able to keep up with property taxes if this bond and levy are approved. This property tax increase will run for the entire life of the bond and levy.

Folks, there is no "free lunch" being offered by SK School District. You may not pay now, but you will pay later. The district is being flat-out deceptive on this matter. For this reason, and many others I cannot approve of a bond or levy in November.

*Dave Kimble, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/09/04/letters-south-kitsap-bond-and-levy-cost-you-more/1192717002/>

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## District's request isn't all for the kids

**Letters** Published 3:57 p.m. PT Oct. 19, 2018

My chief complaint regarding the information shared by South Kitsap School District officials and supporters is their continuing "sin of omission." It's a sin being propagated over and over.

The sin is the continued claim that passage of a bond and levy for SKSD won't raise our local taxes. Not correct. Consider there is a "full suite," so to speak, of local property tax obligations. SKSD is just one such obligation. Fire, county, road, noxious weeds, recycle, city, regional library, parks & recreation, ports, sewer, water. Every tax on my statement has risen every year. Don't let them snooker you into approving a 25-year bond obligation for a second high school we do not need.

SKSD has plenty of levy money to keep up with maintenance and repairs of all of SKSD facilities. Fact is SKSD has chosen to spend most of our approved levy funds to raise teacher salaries, and hire new teachers. Some of those teachers don't have a classroom to teach in. They wait with hands in pockets for the promised second high school. Last, do some research. Investigate how many business and groups and some of the individual supporters are hoping this thing passes. We are not permitted the number of words necessary to list all the names. Sadly, we must consider that many of the supporters of this bond and levy have a vested financial interest in seeing them pass.

Believe me, it's not all "For the Kids."

*Dave Kimble, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/19/letters-districts-request-isnt-all-kids/1689464002/>

# South Kitsap's bond will change your property taxes

Letters Published 10:28 a.m. PT Oct. 8, 2018

We see differing numbers regarding the cost of the proposed SKSD bond issue. The Kitsap County Assessor's Office told me the cost will be closer to a rate of \$3.38 per \$1,000, not the \$3.24 estimate that has been cited by SKSD. This small difference means a \$165 increase to my annual taxes.

The Assessor could not currently provide me exact numbers since the final interest rate will affect how the bonds are structured and will dictate what must be collected in order to meet the re-payment obligations. In Kitsap County, your assessed property values determine what taxes you pay. The initial rate just determines the starting point. If property values rise, more taxes are collected. If your property values drop, your taxes should go down but due to the bond repayment obligations, the County will need to collect more from you to meet the bond re-payment needs (less tax revenue but bond payment remains the same).

This year, 2018, is a good example of higher taxes and 2019 rates are already posted and even higher. Mine are much higher, how about yours? We all will have a 25-year obligation to pay back the SKSD bond. And don't forget about all the other agencies who will soon request tax increases.

Rather than argue with me, call the Assessor's office and see what your taxes will be.

*Jeff Daily, Port Orchard*

Read or Share this story: <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/08/letters-south-kitsaps-bond-doesnt-mean-taxes-stay-same/1567244002/>

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

# What's in it for the kids?

Monday, October 22, 2018 10:27am | [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)[SOUTH KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT](#)

Before you vote, please read what the McCreary legislation (Senate Bill 6362) says. It cost you a lot of money.

Two items should interest you. First, it specifies the minimum salary for beginning teachers, classified and administrators. South Kitsap School District already pays folks well in excess of what the legislation requires. So those huge pay raises (average 23 percent) just added to the excess the district pays.

Second, it tells districts to secure a funding source to maintain the excess funding if it chooses to pay higher. I guess that's more levies to follow. So, how is this affecting your child since, in South Kitsap, it's "for the kids"?

Is your child's teacher now 23 percent better, more attentive, more innovative and more responsive to your child's needs? Is your school principal 23 percent better at helping your child succeed? Or is it still the same stuff?

Did you get what you paid for? If not, start asking why. Education is one of the few jobs where we reward longevity instead of performance. Maybe it's time for South Kitsap to lead the nation in paying only for the performance of the school district. The statistics the SKSD touts mean little to us. What we should be caring about is that our children are succeeding in their education.

Start voting with your pocketbook and saying no to things that don't help your child. After all, it's supposed to be "for the kids," isn't it?

*Jeff Daily*

*Port Orchard*

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