

District 13 Program Statement for the Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation Facilities

An Outdoor Facilities Plan

BACKGROUND

The District 13 athletic and recreation facilities, consisting of a 440-yard track (later modified to 400m), three playing fields and tennis courts, were initially constructed in 1970. The sports that were a part of the program at that time included track and field, cross country, boys' soccer, baseball, and field hockey. Eventually, softball fields for varsity and JV teams were added to the sports facilities complex. Although field hockey was eventually discontinued, the need for facilities for girls' sports continued to increase.

Much of the expansion of facilities on the 60-acre campus site since the initial construction has been funded by special interest groups. The current varsity softball field is one example of a facility provided by dedicated community members.

In 2002, twelve additional acres (Stannard Property) adjacent to the current track area were purchased by the Board of Education, increasing the available space for expansion of the school district's physical plant.

The current athletic and recreation facilities are heavily used. Despite a small school population (currently 587 students), Coginchaug High School has a rich athletic history. The boys' and girls' track teams, despite decaying facilities, have won numerous state championships. Cross country teams are among the top teams in the state, and girls' softball is regarded as a traditional Connecticut high school powerhouse. The achievements of these teams and the large number of participants in all of the District's 13 interscholastic outdoor sports deserve state-of-the-art, safe and functional facilities.

The athletic physical plant also provides space for physical education classes and recreation activities. The high school, Strong School and Korn School (1,161 students) utilize the surrounding fields for physical education and after school sport activities.

Not a year goes by without new activities being added to the already over-scheduled field spaces. Within the last decade there has been a tremendous proliferation of youth sports in Middlefield and Durham. The well-organized Coginchaug Soccer Club (580 participants), Little League Baseball and Little League Softball (630 participants), and Durham-Middlefield Youth Football (150 participants) has put tremendous strain on existing field spaces. Add to the aforementioned programs Babe Ruth Baseball, summer track and field clinics, fun runs, fall softball and baseball, women's softball league, Middlefield and Durham tennis camp, and many special events such as the annual Memorial Day road race. The myriad of scholastic and recreational activities for both adults and students demonstrate how well-used and important the athletic complex is to the life of our communities, positively impacting the well-being of our youth and adults and serving as a focal point for families.

The deterioration of the athletic facilities is creating a severe impact on both interscholastic and recreational activities. The 400-meter track is in such bad condition that home contests are not allowed, and the facility may soon become unsafe for practices. The high school track teams that regularly compete for conference and state titles are without a home and are suffering the consequences. Twenty years ago Durham could point with pride to our beautiful, lighted tennis courts. Now the boys' and girls' teams, physical education classes and recreation tennis players must contend with the cracks and bumps on the courts. After years of service to the community, the courts are in such disrepair that it is difficult to

conduct a quality game on them. Recreation soccer fields no longer are smooth, creating inaccurate dribbling and passing. Youth football must play on fields with little grass. A multiuse synthetic turf field is severely needed to accommodate the magnitude of the overall field sport programs, and the playing fields badly need to be rotated out of use so that repairs can be made to the grass turf.

Recent construction of leaching fields on the lower portion of the campus has eliminated one playing field often used by Strong School, and the area to the east of the middle school was disturbed during recent construction at Strong School. Also, public schools in the state are restricted from using pesticides as a way to control infestations, making field maintenance more difficult.

The Future: In 1999 the Board of Education approved the inclusion of co-op football as an interscholastic offering. The growth in interest in football among high school boys and the tremendous success of the Durham-Middlefield Youth Football League will eventually require the high school to independently sponsor a varsity and JV team. Appropriate game and adequate practice field space for this sport does not exist. Football team growth and the deterioration of the track, the tennis courts and the current varsity fields for boys' and girls' soccer teams require the District to develop and implement a master plan for expansion and restoration of athletic, recreation and personal fitness facilities.

FACILITY PLAN

Varsity Track and Field

A state-of-the-art, eight-lane, 400-meter, all-weather, synthetic track to accommodate varsity, physical education, and recreational programs and personal fitness activities is urgently needed. The track should be designed to allow for a synthetic surface, multi-purpose field space to be constructed in the interior. The track and field site should include:

- Safe and appropriately located and designed field event spaces
- Long Jump runway and landing area with equipment
- Triple jump runway and landing area with equipment
- High jump take-off area and landing pad with equipment
- Pole vault take-off area and landing pad with equipment
- Shot and discus throwing area
- Javelin throwing area on the lower fields

Activities by season that will use the track:

- Fall - PE classes, cross country practice, community running and walking
- Winter - Community running and walking
- Spring - Varsity boys' and girls' track and field
- Summer - Recreation track and community running and walking

Synthetic Turf Field

A lighted, synthetic surface field space for football games and practices, boys' and girls' soccer games, physical education classes and recreation youth sports activities is needed. The field will have sufficient lines to accommodate the football and soccer games and supporting equipment; goal posts, and soccer goals and scoreboard are also needed. In order to be a quality soccer field the facility must be at least 225 feet wide.

Activities by season that will use the synthetic field:

- Fall - football practice and games, varsity boys' and girls' soccer games during inclement weather and night games, youth soccer and football practice and games, physical education classes and community recreation
- Winter - Club soccer games, physical education classes
- Spring - Football practice, club and youth soccer, softball practice during inclement weather
- Summer - Summer football workouts, youth soccer and summer varsity workouts, recreation activities

Equipment and amenities that are needed:

- Bleacher seating for 1000 spectators
- A press box for 12 to 15 personnel with public address system, scoreboard controls and electronic communication equipment
- Chain link, four-foot high fencing material surrounding outside track and six-foot high chain link fencing enclosing the outside of the track and field site
- Team benches
- Water fountains
- Support building with space for visiting and home locker rooms, refreshment stand, ticket booth and rest rooms (a portion of this building may come in later phases).
- Field and track lighting to accommodate practice and play. The sixty-foot towers with down-facing lighting fixtures that can provide 40-foot candle of illumination.

Reconstructed Varsity and Recreational Tennis Courts

A tennis facility consisting of five state-of-the-art courts is needed for games and practices. The fencing needs to be replaced with 10-foot-high chain link fencing material. Lighting with 40 foot towers is to be included in this project so that local citizens can use the facility in the evenings and on a year-round basis. A support building for tennis equipment storage is also an important component of this project.

Activities scheduled on the courts by season:

- Fall: Recreation and physical educations classes
- Winter: Recreation play by community
- Spring: Varsity boys' and girls' tennis practice and games and recreational play
- Summer: Community use, Park and Recreation Tennis Camps

Reconstructed Strong School Game and Practice Field

The field behind Strong School requires significant reconstruction to make it game ready. Strong School currently has 360 students using this field in the fall and spring. The field will be used for soccer, softball games and practice as well as by community groups. New fencing will also be added adjacent to Pickett Lane.

Summary of Programs and Participants Utilizing Athletic Complex

Program	Participants
Babe Ruth Baseball	75
Coginchaug Soccer Club- Fall & Travel Teams	580
CRHS Varsity and JV Boys' Soccer	43
CRHS Varsity and JV Girls' Soccer	39
CRHS Varsity and JV Boys' Tennis	16
CRHS Varsity and JV Girls' Tennis	21
CRHS Varsity and JV Football	40
CRHS Varsity and JV Boys' Baseball	33
CRHS Varsity and JV Girls' Softball	23
CRHS Boys' Cross Country	34
CRHS Girls' Cross Country	29
CRHS Boys' Track & Field	60
CRHS Girls' Track & Field	58
Durham Middlefield Youth Football	150
Little League Baseball & Softball	630
Memorial Day Road Race	250
Physical Education Classes – Coginchaug	587
Physical Education Classes – Strong	360
Physical Education Classes – Korn	214
Strong School Boys' & Girls' Soccer	63
Strong School Boys' & Girls' Baseball & Softball	36
Strong School Boys' & Girls' Cross Country	45
Summer Children's Softball Clinic	15
Summer Co-ed Adult Volleyball	20
Summer Track & Field Clinic	65
Summer Tennis Camps	40
Summer Weekly Fun Runs	100
Walking Club for Seniors	20
Women's Recreational Softball League	70
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	3716