

Dear West Potomac Community,

As many of you know, West Potomac High School is reaching out to the community to help fund our turf field initiative. I'm sure you have heard all the advantages of turf fields for athletics. I would like to add another perspective - Practice Site Safety.

On campus, we have a ¾ size rectangular field and a small square practice field. Only the rectangular field has irrigation. Neither field has lights. Our field hockey team splits their time between Bryant's turf and the outfield of the baseball field – to include the dirt infield! In the fall, the Varsity and JV football teams travel once or twice a week to use the turf field at Bryant Alternative School. Freshman football was rarely able to practice on turf.

In the spring, we have to find practice space for eight teams. Last season our boy's lacrosse and girls' soccer teams travelled to Bryant daily. Our boy's JV and Varsity soccer teams practiced at Quander Road School. This is a field we do not maintain and, as an FCPS school field, it is never closed when the weather is bad. The field becomes extremely dug up which translates into it being a less than optimal place for our players to practice. JV boy's lacrosse practiced on the small square field known as the 'Rock Pile'. During the renovation, layers of bluestone were dumped so trailers could be parked there. After renovation a thin layer of dirt was spread over the gravel and that is our 'rock pile'. Grass is rare, weeds are rampant, and bare spots are numerous.

Travelling to any location, even another FCPS school, for practice has inherent risks. The teams do not have access to a school building if the weather turns bad, they have to drive or be driven to practice, we do not have a trainer who can travel with them and there is no security available should an unwanted visitor cause a problem. It would make all of us breathe better if we had our students on campus at all times.

Being the competitive person I am, I must add that I believe our teams are at a serious competitive disadvantage without turf fields on campus. This past year over 80% of our away games were played on turf fields. That number continues to grow. If we want to keep up with our rivals, we need to practice 'game like' situations. That means practicing on turf as often as possible.

I hope you can see your way to donating to our turf field project. It won't be too long before your son or daughter is at West Potomac and we'd like them to have every advantage possible.

Sincerely,

Barbara K. Mahony  
Assistant Director of Student Activities