

Great Valley School District

FACTS about the artificial turf fields

How long has the School Board/District been considering artificial turf fields?

The Board first discussed the installation of artificial turf at a Facilities Committee meeting in March of 2004. In January of 2006, that committee reviewed long term capital projects and again identified artificial turf as one of those projects. In May of 2007, the Facilities Committee capped the cost of the fields at \$2 million and in June of 2007, the whole Board approved the bid development for the work.

What research has the District done about artificial turf?

The Board looked at research around cost and use, and health and safety. In addition, the Board looked at data from surrounding districts (i.e. who currently has artificial turf). For more information, please see the Great Valley School District web site.

What are the benefits of artificial turf?

The Board identified a number of benefits. Those include:

- **Lower Maintenance Costs:** Artificial turf requires no mowing, watering, fertilizing, or re-seeding. The cost of man-hours is greatly reduced.
- **Environmental Aspects:** Aside from the environmental advantages that come from lower water use, the removal of significant amounts of fertilizer and pesticides means less chance of contaminating groundwater, and safer field conditions for children, pets, and wildlife. In addition, synthetic turf is commonly made of recycled materials.
- **Availability:** Synthetic turf is available to use 24 hours a day, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Artificial surfaces don't become muddy in wet weather. They don't need to lie fallow to allow recovery time from overuse.
- **Safety Issues:** Some recent studies indicate that these new artificial surfaces are showing low injury rates that are a fraction of the injury rates from studies of earlier types of artificial surfaces. In fact, these new rates are actually lower than the injury rates experienced on natural grass surfaces.

Where are the turf fields located?

One field is a multipurpose field and is located in front of Great Valley Middle School. The other is the field in Valley Stadium (at the HS).

I remember reading some articles about lead in artificial turf fields. Is there any risk to our GVSD students?

There is not lead in the product GVSD installed on its fields. In addition, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) staff released its evaluation of various synthetic athletic

fields on July 30, 2008. The evaluation concludes that young children are not at risk from exposure to lead in these fields. Please see www.gvsd.org for a copy of the report.

How much does artificial turf cost?

The School Board approved a total amount of \$2,230,852 for the installation of the turf fields and the completion of other maintenance items on or around those fields (i.e. HS track resurfacing, irrigation of natural fields). The Great Valley Youth Lacrosse Association donated \$200,000 to the District to offset the costs of the turf project. A final project total will be available once the project is complete.

How is this project funded?

Funds for this project come from the District's Capital Reserve Fund. For more information about that fund, please see the District's web site at www.gvsd.org.

Why does the District talk about cost cutting in areas like transportation and energy use, but it still is able to fund turf installation?

Money for the turf installation comes from the District's Capital Reserve Fund. Operating costs for services like transportation and energy use come from the District's General Budget.

Is the artificial turf under a warranty of any kind?

Yes. The turf fields are under contractor's warranty. That warranty covers defects in workmanship that may cause problems with the fields. The warranty does not cover environmental factors that may affect the turf.

I heard that there are sinkholes under both turf fields. Is that true?

The District is working to correct some soil erosion on the Middle School multipurpose field. That erosion is the result of heavy rain on the site and will be filled in immediately. It is not a sink hole. The field is open for use.

There are two areas on the Stadium's field that are currently being examined. Settlement issues are a common problem on the MS/HS site (due to the amount of limestone under the surface). The areas that show depression have been temporarily filled in to make the field playable. Engineers are currently looking more closely at soil conditions. We anticipate that once the areas are stabilized we will not likely have major issues. This field is also open for use.

I heard that students were not permitted to play on the middle school field because of sink holes. Is that true?

There are not sink holes identified on the middle school field. Teams have been practicing and playing games on that field since mid August. However, middle school teachers were asked to not use the field for physical education classes until construction was complete. The field was cleared for all use on September 18th.

What kind of maintenance is required on artificial turf fields vs. natural fields?

<u>Annual Maintenance Costs</u>	<u>Natural Turf</u>	<u>Artificial Turf</u>
Mowing	\$3,596	\$0
Grooming	\$0	\$1,000
Equipment Deprec. & Fuel	\$1,000	\$1,500
Painting Game Lines	\$4,538	\$480
Treatments & Repair	\$10,005	\$500
Irrigation	\$3,678	\$0
Total Annual Cost	\$22,817	\$3,480
Annual Number of Events	64	291

How long does turf generally last?

The “carpet” (the turf itself) lasts approximately 8 -12 years.

Where can I get more information?

Information is posted on the school district’s web site. Community members may also attend a School Board meeting or work session, or may contact their School Board members directly.