



Gregory-Portland Independent School District

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**G-PISD School Board votes to build Fieldhouse
using Supplemental Funds provided by local Industry**

G-P Wildcats involved in athletics, band, and other activities will soon benefit from the construction of a new fieldhouse thanks to supplemental payments received as a result of existing Chapter 313 agreements paid to Gregory-Portland ISD from local industry. The \$29 Million facility will include locker rooms, weight rooms, office spaces, storage for band and athletic program equipment, training classrooms, and multi-purpose spaces to support academic and extracurricular competitions. The fieldhouse will be constructed between Ray Akins Wildcat Stadium and the site of the new All-Purpose Practice Facility, which was funded as part of Bond 2020. That \$107.7 Million bond passed with no increase to the total tax rate last year.

Superintendent Dr. Michelle Cavazos said it's important for the community to know that the district is using a funding source to cover the cost of the fieldhouse that is not allocated from bond funds, and not from residential taxpayer dollars. "Because our school board has approved several Chapter 313 agreements through the years, we are receiving supplemental payments from industry in addition to tax dollars allocated by the state funding formula," she said. "These payments add up over time, and can be used for one-time expenses not already covered by school bonds or tax revenue."

Dr. Ismael Gonzalez III, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance, said that as of the date of the meeting on November 15th, G-PISD's Chapter 313 supplemental payments estimated balance totaled \$74 Million since 2016. The fieldhouse will be constructed with a portion of these dollars, and the remaining \$45 Million in supplemental payments will be included as part of G-PISD's fund balance — the source the district will soon begin using to make recapture payments to the State of Texas as required by the Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 49 wealth equalization, or "Robin Hood," law. With remaining supplemental payment dollars, G-PISD's fund balance totals an estimated \$59 Million in the current year and is projected to increase to nearly \$70 Million by September 1, 2022.

Board Secretary Tim Flinn said he expects the state to review school districts with healthy fund balances, and consider changes at the state level to access those funds. "This is the right time to do this for a lot of reasons, and we also need to keep local dollars local while we can," he said. Trustee Nicole Nolen stated that academics and extracurricular programs are connected and tied to overall student performance. "If we give (students) better resources to obtain their goals, everyone wins. This is an all-purpose facility that will provide for (everyone)," Nolen said. "The money is there, so it makes sense."

Other Trustees echoed support for the facility, with Board Vice President Carrie Gregory agreeing on many points while also sharing concern for budget and project funding. "This is going to be a beautiful facility, and I'm glad to see there is some space for academic programs. I am confident many of our students, from athletics and band to academics, will greatly benefit from it." In the end, the board approved with a vote of 6-1. Gregory was the only member opposed.

Dr. Cavazos stated after the meeting that the need for new space is substantial, given that the existing weight rooms, locker rooms, office and storage spaces cannot support large numbers of students and staff simultaneously. "Creative scheduling has become necessary to allow our students to use the rooms inside the George R. Harris All Sports Complex," she said. "In collaboration with those overseeing various programs, these needs have become evident to us. As we develop our program offerings, and continue to observe the rising costs of construction, there are moments when the right time is now to do what we need to do for our students. This will be a facility that can be used by multiple programs, not just athletics, and we're glad to make it happen."

G-PISD Athletic Director Brent Davis attended the meeting, and after the vote stated his gratitude for the support. "I am so excited about the future of G-P and the vision that the district leadership has for all of our programs in the school district — athletics, band, the robotics teams that could use the multi-purpose spaces for their competitions, and other clubs and organizations. What they're doing now will make a real difference for students and the community. This facility will be state of the art, and it will help in making G-P a destination district."

Davis said the George Harris All-Sports Complex will continue to be used after the new fieldhouse is constructed. The Shirley Rowe Gymnasium, the Brown Gym, and the F Wing of the former G-P Middle School campus will be demolished to make way for the practice facility and fieldhouse. The school board voted to rename the current competition gym at G-P High School in honor of Shirley Rowe, with new signage set for installation in that gymnasium later this school year.

G-PISD is also preparing for long-term needs through a master facility planning process, which includes a comprehensive assessment of existing facilities as well as the determination of district and community priorities. "The fieldhouse addition is a project we were able to fund at this time. However, we know there are many other needs in the district and we are planning for them through a strategic process that includes community feedback and involvement," said Dr. Cavazos. "Together, we will look to the future and give our students the best we can while serving our community and keeping our promises."

**G-PISD's annual financial audit process is currently underway. Information for this school year, and projections for next year, contain unaudited figures until the official audit process is completed. For more information about master planning, please visit g-pisd.org/MasterPlan. #*