

Resolution No. 6755

Resolution to Replace the Grant Bowl and the Buckman Field Track for the use of Grant and Benson High School Students

RECITALS

- A. The Portland Interscholastic League (PIL) has a more than 150-year history, with student athletes competing as a school district League and providing co-curricular and competitive sport opportunities for student athletes. Over 13,000 student athletes participated in a PIL sport in the 2022-2023 school year.
- B. Following Title IX, the number of student-athletes in the PIL greatly expanded when the inequitable barriers to girls sports participation were removed.
- C. PIL athletics were further expanded in 2014 when opportunities for middle school and middle grade students to participate in afterschool youth sports were added to the PIL. Today more than 4,500 middle grade students participate in PIL Youth Sports.
- D. In the early 2000s, a community initiative was launched that was known as Places for Sport and subsequently as the 10 Great Fields Project. The goal of the initiative was to ensure that every PPS high school had a high-quality turf field and track.
- E. The 10 Great Fields Project took 10 years to complete and the majority of the \$16-17 million in fundraising came from parents, alumni, local businesses, local youth sport clubs and groups, and PPS. Nike made a substantial contribution and retained a community fundraising consultant for more than three years to support community fundraising for the project. The City of Portland provided some financial assistance to the two fields – Buckman (Benson) and Grant Bowl – which are home fields for two of the PIL high schools and are on city land.
- F. The Grant Bowl and Buckman Track, on City of Portland land, have been the home field and track for practice and games for about one hundred years, and they are used during the school year for PE classes.
- G. The Buckman (Benson) field was renovated as part of the 10 Great Fields Project with PPS, community partners, Nike and City of Portland funding improvements. The City of Portland currently has a long-term agreement with a third-party entity who subsequently renovated the field and uses the existing field, while the track remains closed.
- H. In 2012, the Grant Bowl field and track was renovated after a 10-year community fundraising effort and as part of the broader community fundraising 10 Great Fields Project.
- I. When not in use by PPS, the City of Portland rents the field to other users and collects fees for the usage. For example, the City of Portland has collected more than \$300,000 since the new turf field was installed.
- J. Last year, 775 Grant student athletes on 11 teams used the track and field for PIL competitions and practices, and another 900 students used it for PE and weight training classes.
- K. In August 2023, the City of Portland closed the Grant Bowl field to organized sports due to safety concerns, blocking the use of the field weeks before the start of the high school sports season.

The Track at Buckman remains closed with no plans to revive it for the opening of the modernized Benson High School in the Fall of 2024. The City acknowledges that it has a current maintenance backlog of over \$600 million, which has resulted in several neighborhood facilities closing. Similarly for the Grant Bowl, it did not budget for the field's replacement, even though it was expected to have a 10-year lifespan, and the City has not identified or prioritized replacement funding.

RESOLVED

The Board of Education hereby:

1. Recognizes the urgent need to ensure the Grant Bowl and Buckman Tracks are safe and usable for our students, with as little delay and disruption to students and families as possible.
2. Directs the Superintendent to identify financial and other resources to replace the field and tracks and to work with Parks to engage in an emergency procurement process to secure a contractor to repair and/or replace the field in fall 2023.
3. Calls on the City of Portland to provide PPS with a long-term lease of the Grant Bowl and the Buckman Track to avoid future disruptions and quickly replace them. The cost to replace the Grant Bowl and Buckman Track should be, at minimum, proportional to each entity's use, and include the use of the fields for both athletics and physical education classes. The long-term lease will also allow Benson, Grant and PPS to implement further improvements to the Grant Bowl and the Buckman Track.
4. Calls on the City of Portland to expedite all permitting so that the field and tracks can be replaced immediately.