

What is your relationship to ACPS? *	Parent/Guardian of an ACPS Student
Full Name *	David Brennan
Public Hearing Date *	Monday, November 14, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.
I will be delivering my remarks... *	In Writing
Specific Topic Related to the FY 2024–2033 CIP Budget: *	Request for study of venues/equipment for ACHS activities
Enter or copy your comments into the box below:	<p>My name is David Brennan, and I'm the current president of the Alexandria City High School Softball Boosters. I am also an ACHS parent of two daughters (classes of '22 and 24) who have participated in cross country, indoor track, softball, band, orchestra, robotics, and countless other clubs. These activities deepened their school experience and helped them grow immensely as students, classmates, and leaders. I am forever grateful for the dedicated teachers, coaches, mentors, and volunteers who made those activities possible.</p> <p>I'd like to ask for your support for a study to do a thorough review of current ACHS venues and equipment to identify needs and opportunities to further enhance the equity and growth of sports and activities across ACHS. The goal of this study would be to help to ensure that resources, facilities, and budgets are realistically aligned with the evolving needs of our teams and clubs. Not only will this significantly strengthen the caliber of the activities ACHS offers, but it will also increase access and participation from a wider number of students. Most importantly, it will identify additional opportunities to support the health, wellness, and safety of all students who choose to participate.</p> <p>We are fortunate at ACHS to have a vibrant and strong community of booster organizations to rally support for our students and their activities. However, I think too often we have come to rely on the efforts, time, and funding of these booster organizations to make up for budget shortfalls for core capital and operational expenses. This reliance on external funding from our booster organizations raises significant issues of equity. While some of our programs have more established booster clubs that have been very successful in engaging and activating resources to support their individual activities and competitions, other teams and clubs with less robust organizations are not able to benefit from these additional external supports.</p>

There are many instances where booster fundraising has been the sole source for equipment and facility upgrades on which our teams and clubs rely. For example, the softball boosters led fundraising for critical and significant improvements to their field at Witter – including dugout enhancements, a storage shed, pitching lanes, and batting cages. Despite these improvements, that location still suffers from inadequate parking, limited bleachers, no concession stand, and no scorers booth. While that situation is particularly challenging (being that Witter Field is a City Parks and Rec location that falls outside the purview of ACPS), it is just one example where we would love to see targeted funding allocated to support our student-athletes and coaches who dedicate so much of their time and energy.

There are additional challenges faced by our teams who practice and compete exclusively off-site (softball, baseball, and others). These require significant logistic coordination among school transportation, players/parents/caregivers, coaches, training staff, and administrators. While there is no easy or immediate solution given the space and facility constraints across ACPS and the City, specific attention should be given during this study to explore possible improvements that could enhance the health and safety of participants on teams who don't compete near campus and foster greater school/community awareness and participation in these programs.

Thank you for your time and attention.

David Brennan
