

# HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR

WESTON WAMP

For Immediate Release

November 28, 2023

Contact: Haley Burton, 423-619-5311

## **Turf Fields to be Installed at Four Public High Schools; Hamilton County Partners With ‘Fund for Excellence’ to Improve Athletic Facilities**

Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp today announced the county’s plans to immediately upgrade athletic facilities across several Hamilton County high schools. In partnership with the Fund for Excellence, a local nonprofit spearheading efforts to enhance public school athletic facilities, the county has committed to outfitting four competition fields with turf.

“Leveling the playing field for student athletes at public schools across our county, from Soddy-Daisy to Howard, is a top priority of our administration,” said Mayor Wamp. “As a result of the county’s investment in turf fields, maintenance costs will go down, coaches will have more time to coach and mentor, and our communities will gain valuable recreation assets that can be used year-round.”

The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners recently approved funding for synthetic turf at The Howard School’s Reggie White Field and upgrades to the softball complex at Brainerd High School. Over the next few years, the county, in partnership with Fund for Excellence and Hamilton County Schools, intends to fund the installation of turf at all public high schools.

“Athletics are a key component of the overall student experience, providing opportunities for student belonging, community connections, and stakeholder engagement,” said HCS Superintendent, Dr. Justin Robertson. “The installation of synthetic turf at three existing stadiums and one new stadium is a win for our school district, our students, and our athletic programs. Turf fields require less maintenance and less downtime, making the facilities available for more student use. Additionally, the partnerships that make these upgrades possible create connections with our community that build support for public education. I look forward to future partnerships that will help us bring state-of-the art playing surfaces to all our stadiums for the benefit of our student athletes.”

Mayor Wamp has spent the past year garnering support for public school athletics and advocating the private sector invest in their local schools. Earlier this year, Chattanooga-based trucking company U.S. Xpress invested \$2 million from the sale of a parcel of land to Parkridge Medical Center to the Fund for Excellence. In July, the Hamilton County Commission approved the donation benefitting public school athletic facilities, allowing artificial turf football fields to be installed at Ooltewah High School and Soddy Daisy High School.

“We are grateful to Hamilton County and all our trusted community partners who are choosing to invest in public education,” said Kris Humber, Executive Director of the Fund for Excellence. “Athletics are an essential

part of student success, and the Fund for Excellence is thrilled to provide equal opportunities to student athletes throughout Hamilton County.”

The synthetic turf will provide communities with an asset not previously available and allow Hamilton County to compete as a host site for numerous regional sporting events throughout the year. The county will use hotel-motel tax revenues to fund a portion of the upgrades to Howard’s Reggie White Field, which is located in the heart of the county’s main tourism district.

The Howard School, Ooltewah High School, Soddy Daisy High School, and Tyner Academy will have artificial turf fields installed through these funding agreements.

###