

Walden Questions & Comments:

Blue responses from Athletics

Green responses from Facilities

- 1) Will there be secure storage for students' personal items (clothes, backpacks, etc.) during practices/games at Walden? If so, where and how will it be secured? If this is not planned, what can Grady do to provide it ourselves to be sure personal property is secure?
 - a. There will be lockers and locker rooms. The coaches will be given keys to lock and unlock the locker rooms. There will be a storage room also that can be used for storage, if need be.

- 2) What is the capacity (# of bikes held) of planned bicycle racks?
 - a. We will install a bike rack and provide ample space to add more as the need is demonstrated.

- 3) What is APS going to do to address the increased safety risks posed by a combined baseball/softball field? Please consider the following before finalizing this design: Dirt infields are totally inferior for baseball. A movable mound for baseball is ALSO inferior. Baseball is played on a grass infield. That is the standard. There is literature indicating that dirt infields cause injuries - http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1995-08-22/sports/9508210430_1_bryan-wiedmeier-dolphins-dirt-infield and this <http://www.ultimate-baseball-field-renovation-guide.com/baseball-fields-gone-bad-part2.html> and this <http://community.hsbaseballweb.com/topic/dirt-or-grass-infield>. Dirt infields are generally harder to maintain in a rainy season too. So APS is creating a maintenance headache. Artificial mounds cause injuries. Evidence of this can be found here: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/03/080323210203.htm> and http://www.nwgabaseball.org/snitz/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=13300 Also - artificial mounds will require our pitchers to not use spikes. This can have a very negative impact on that player's ability to field and adds an additional expense to all kids who pitch (and potential issues for opponents). Because of all of these compromises we will have a field that is not the same as the other APS schools and will be creating an unfair disparity between the schools.

- a. Douglass High also has a converted field. This was only a suggestion to keep both the softball and male equivalent sport, which is baseball on the same campus for practice and performance. We did not want to construct a facility that would house boys and girls soccer and lacrosse, but would not have the capability of supporting baseball and softball. We also clarified the artificial mound question. We planned on installing a clay mound for baseball season. We also discussed the possibility of converting the infield each season with real turf. We have been advised this is possible for approximately \$40k per annual conversion-and-back.

- 4) Will there be space for sports medicine care/athletic training? Will there be a place for evaluations and/or taping. An athletic training room has been especially helpful to trainers at Grady and Lakewood. Will there at least be space for storage of supplies and first aid treatment of athletes' onsite?
 - a. The building will have the same design and use as North Atlanta and all other designs for the prototype field houses that we are expecting to begin constructing very soon. There was not a training room constructed for this facility. Kids that are in need for evaluations would still receive that service at Grady High. Or there could be portable tables stored at Walden that could be used for typical evaluations and taping.
- 5) What is the priority of use of the fields and how will any conflicts be resolved?
 - a. The school level AD would determine priority use and resolve any conflicts that should take place.
- 6) Does APS plan to increase the usage of the Grady stadium by either outside organizations or other APS schools once Walden is completed? The heavy usage of the Grady stadium by outside organizations and other APS schools imposes a great burden on the campus and student body as a whole in areas of academics and the arts in addition to the more obvious burdens on athletics.
 - a. There are currently no other organizations that use Grady Stadium during the spring, other than Grady Athletics. The plan moving forward is to continue using Grady Stadium for Grady track, soccer, and lacrosse games. The Walden site will only play host to baseball/softball games. Lacrosse and Soccer will only use the site for practices.

- 7) Given the limited onsite parking, can APS make arrangements with a nearby location for overflow parking, especially on game days for baseball/softball? We understand the plan is that athletes will be taking the bus from Grady to Walden as a team but as a practical matter, many older athletes will need to drive their own cars due to travel time constraints or because they will be coming from their dual enrollment classes on other campuses than Grady. In spring, we could have up to six teams at this complex (for example: girl's soccer followed by boys as well as baseball). That is a whole lot of cars from the home and visiting teams, as well as school buses. APS needs to provide guidance on how to solve these parking challenges now rather than leaving it to the teams to solve a problem on an ad hoc basis that can be easily anticipated in the planning stage.
- a. The Walden site has never allotted for mass parking, even as a full functioning middle school for years. Our plan once again is to play soccer and lacrosse games at Grady Stadium, thus we will not have large crowds of that magnitude on the Walden campus. APS will investigate the opportunity to use the King Center parking lot run by the National Park Service.
- 8) Does APS plan to lease the Walden space to outside organizations and how will those plans be communicated with the Grady community?
- a. Our plan is not to lease the Walden site to any other organizations. This will only take place if the Grady administration would like to engage in that practice.
- 9) How can Grady access the usage calendar for all events (Grady/APS/outside third- party) scheduled at both the Grady Stadium and, in the future, Walden?
- a. Grady Stadium is property of APS Athletics, and we will continue to operate it as such. Calendars are shared openly and often with Grady Administration on all events that take place at Grady Stadium. The Walden site will not have outside events. There was a discussion about some type of shared digital calendar. How that would work, from a technology standpoint, and who would maintain it was a topic of unresolved discussion.
- 10) Most, if not all, other APS traditional high schools have separate softball and baseball fields on their campuses or available to them nearby. Even after Walden is built, baseball and softball will be expected to share a field. There has been some discussion in the past about a joint agreement with the city of

Atlanta to develop the Central Park fields (or other locations like the Field of Dreams developed for softball) as a home baseball field for Grady. Is this still a possibility?

- a. Central Park is no longer an option, as the city has plans to renovate and repurpose for the intended use of the city. The Field of Dreams will not work for Softball due to issues with tree removal and not having enough land to build a regulation field. There was also a discussion about installing a softball field at the Inman campus after the portables are removed. It appears that a field will fit there with some tree removal cost impacts, some topographic issues that can be resolved with dollars, and some potential concerns about the neighborhood's perception about their use of the field as it sits currently.

Is there anything the Grady community could do to facilitate such a partnership? (with the City) Not sure how to answer this question except to say that yes anything is possible. But who initiates the contact with the City. Currently, baseball and softball use separate fields at Crim so Walden actually presents a greater challenge with the shared field. Undoubtedly

- 11) While the Grady community is grateful to finally get some additional field space in general, we are concerned about some responses we have received to questions that seem to indicate that APS is treating the provision of Walden and some of the amenities that necessarily will be built there by virtue of the field's location away from the Grady campus, as giving Grady some sort of advantage to other APS schools in the equity evaluation, when this just is not so: (a) Grady students will still have to be bused some distance from campus for practices and games, (b) Grady student athletes will still be required to choose between attending an academic tutorial or extracurricular club meeting OR attending a sports practice, unlike students at other schools who may be able to arrange to attend the tutorial or meeting and then walk across campus to join their teammates mid-practice, (c) Grady will be using a shared baseball/softball field that presents higher risk of injury to baseball players, challenges and disadvantages to baseball performance and competitiveness, and creates even higher usage conflict than currently exists at Crim where the fields are separate. (d) the Grady campus itself will still absorb the strain of use of other organizations at the Grady stadium and how that use negatively impacts parking, access to the school, and increased security risks to students who are on-campus after hours for extracurricular events at the same time that a public unfamiliar to the community also is present.

- a. This statement was partially addressed during the entire conversation. The land at Walden is what it is and the improvements ameliorate the current practice of going to Crim. The Grady HS site just cannot provide the opportunities for athletic fields that some other schools have. It was pointed out that Crim is still available. There is just not a lot of land available to make situations perfect for all.
- 12) Will there be AED defibrillators onsite, and if so, how many and where will they be located and how will they be accessed (i.e., will coaches need a key, etc.)? If not, why not and what can the Grady community do to make sure they are available?
- a. Yes there will be an AED on site.
- 13) What equipment can/will be stored onsite at Walden and how will it be secured?
- a. There will be field storage on site in the proposed building. Whatever is being stored at North Atlanta HS Fieldhouse will be available. Soccer nets, lacrosse nets and baseball pitching equipment.
- 14) Will the concession stand be fully equipped with refrigeration/freezer/ice machine and/or cook tops/grills? Who will be responsible for cleaning/supplying/managing it? Will Grady booster clubs/teams be able to use it as a fundraising opportunity like at other schools or will proceeds belong to APS?
- a. There is a concessions space with a small storage room in the proposed building. The concessions space will be outfitted with a double sink and an ice machine. There will be a space for a refrigerator. There will be counters with electrical power to accommodate small cooking appliances like crock pots, hot dog rollers, popcorn machine, etc. There should be no cooktop cooking or frying in this space. There are no provisions for grease traps or exhaust hoods. Grady High School administration can decide how they would like to operate the concessions. APS Athletics will not assume any of the proceeds.
- 15) Will the facility continue to be called “Walden” or can it be given a name that associates it more directly with Grady High School (perhaps “Grady Athletic Complex at Walden Fields” if it is important to retain “Walden” in the name)? Creating a unified school community and fostering school spirit and identity is particularly challenging at Grady where we have no facilities where our students feel like they can really take any ownership. No matter where we are, it feels like we are only temporarily occupying the space until

the next customer comes along. Unlike most other APS traditional high schools who at least have practice fields on their school campuses (that may still be APS property but “feel” like they “belong” to the school community), not only does Grady have limited on-campus facilities available, the stadium that sits on our property is clearly not “ours,” must be shared with other schools and outside organizations and Grady must even sit on the “visitor’s side” of the stadium that sits on our own campus when our football team plays another APS school as the designated visitor.

a. Naming of the facility is governed by Board policy. Board member Grant mentioned that in this case this was up to the school community. There are other opportunities for naming the fields, also.

16) Will there be any naming or other funding opportunities within the complex to help with the financial needs of the project?

a. There was a discussion about board policy for revenue opportunities for school fields. Revenue generated at the District stadiums at Grady and Lakewood go to the Athletic Department. For advertising, see answer to 20. I believe this requires permission from the APS School Board.

17) Greatly concerned about the APS proposal for a convertible single baseball/softball field for Grady at Walden as a solution (or requiring GHS baseball to play on a dirt infield). We will be one of, if not the only, high schools in metro Atlanta that has this configuration. Please share the specific plans APS has to make such a dual use field work safely and effectively without disadvantaging our teams in terms of access to practice and playing fields and negatively impacting the teams’ competitive abilities as compared to other schools.

a. Again, this was just a suggestion to get both teams on the same campus. However the Go team will decide if they would like for this to be a single sport field, and which sport will practice and play offsite.

18) The Grady community is aware of the geographical limitations and challenges to creating field space for a landlocked city campus and appreciate APS’ efforts to fill this desperate need for Grady athletics. However, the impact that the off-site field creates to practice time for Grady kids cannot be underestimated. One example: other schools get field time for Varsity baseball right after school even on days where JV is hosting a 5:30pm game. Meanwhile, Grady loses Varsity practice on our JV game days (and visa versa) as well as when other schools get assigned to the Crim field on our practice days. We don’t travel during iffy weather etc. We get

a fraction of the field for practices as other schools. What solutions can APS provide to these challenges that are unique to Grady's situation as a school that requires off-campus fields (i.e., greater availability to transportation even on iffy weather days, or for the practicing JV/Varsity teams when it is a game day for the other team, among other things).

- a. School activity buses were purchased during the 2016-2017 school year. It has been strongly encouraged that coaches obtain their CDL License all year to be able to transport the athletes to and from practice and games, using those activity buses. This is still an option.

19)The shared baseball/softball field needs to be reconsidered. The cost and time to convert the field every single year would be outrageous and would mean the field is out of commission for periods of time. It really is a bad idea (even if they were just having GHS baseball play on dirt infield and only rebuilding the mound each year).

- a. See above responses

20)Will Grady teams be able to offer banner advertising to our sponsors at Walden? It is our understanding that Grady is not allowed to offer banner advertising on our current fields or the fencing around the fields because we play at an APS facility that is shared with other schools. This currently puts Grady at a fundraising disadvantage to other APS schools where we understand banner advertising to benefit school fundraising goals is permitted at their on-campus fields and facilities. We have never had fields that are primarily used by Grady to offer before and hope to have access to these fundraising opportunities as Walden.

- a. All advertising has to be approved by APS Athletics at all schools. I see no problem with advertising and signage at the Walden site for Grady, however it has to be approved by the Department of Athletics.