



On November 13th, 2019, it was announced that the Des Moines Public School District was going to propose a plan to build a community athletic complex on the grounds of Drake University. As of right now, there are two schools in Des Moines that have no stadium, Roosevelt and East, while the remaining three schools, Hoover, Lincoln, and North, have stadiums that are in immense disrepair.

The budget appointed for this project is \$15 million. The School Board estimates that it would cost \$60 million to fix up or rebuild the stadiums that already exist across Des Moines. While the board believes the community stadium is the most fitting solution from both a financial and beneficial standpoint, there are members of the Des Moines community that disagree.

“It isn’t the best choice to build the stadium. If we build it, it wouldn’t always be available for continuous use. Only two schools could use it at a time, which could mess up the schedules of soccer, football, and any sport that wants to use it. I think it would be in our best interest to split up the budget evenly among every high school so they can fix up the facilities and maintain the partnerships they already have,” senior and student athlete Osman Memic said.

While there are those that either support the stadium or are against it, there are some individuals that are on the fence.

“This stadium project is unlike any other project DMPS has ever taken on. There is no denying it would be a beautiful facility and the home of the only regulation-sized soccer pitch under DMPS’s control. It is important we take the time to carefully weigh the pros and cons, especially the idea of losing a home field at Hoover, North, and Lincoln, as whatever decision is made will affect this

and future generations of DMPS students. There is a lot of emotion involved in this decision and all stakeholders, especially the students, deserve to have their voices heard before a decision is made,” parent and former soccer coach Dan Pardock said.

From the standpoint of an administrator, there is a lot to consider when thinking about the possible construction of the stadium. There’s the logistics - such as how athletes will get to and from games, how the district can make games more affordable for students, and how the stadium could be used for pre-season activities and training. There are also more community-based questions. How will more support be garnered from Des Moines residents? How can the district get more students to attend games? There are many thoughts to consider and ideas to discuss.

“Would I appreciate \$4 million to fix up Hoover’s stadium and build a nice fieldhouse and locker room? Of course. However, from a financial standpoint, I know that’s not possible. There has been \$15 million appointed for stadiums, and it would cost \$12 million alone to get Lincoln’s stadium back in good condition. I know a lot of people have apprehension towards the new stadium as they believe it will cause students to become more disconnected from their school, but I think that when our athletes leave a brand new, nice locker room and step out onto a beautiful turf field, they’ll love the game and their school even more,” athletic director Jake Burke said.

Later this month, there will be a School Board meeting to discuss how the Board is going to vote on whether or not they support the construction of the stadium, with the actual vote as early as February.



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- DAN PARDOCK

