



August 13, 2019



Dear Richard Montgomery High School Community:

As we are preparing to start the 2019–2020 school year, I would like to provide the Richard Montgomery High School (RMHS) community an update on the stadium field. Since the replacement of this artificial turf field in summer 2018, Department of Facilities Management staff in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has worked with the school administration, the Athletics Unit, and the installation contractor to address field condition concerns raised by our student athletes. This work has resulted in significant improvements, and we are confident that the RMHS stadium field is a high quality, safe playing surface for our students and our community. At the same time, our testing, monitoring, and maintenance protocols will continue to ensure that the field meets our performance expectations.

In January 2019, MCPS partnered with a third-party testing agency, Labosport, to develop comparative baseline data for the various MCPS field surfaces in terms of surface friction and abrasion potential. These tests provided valuable information about the conditions of each field at the time of testing and confirmed that each component of the artificial turf system—field base and structure, shock pad, carpet, and infill material—can have differing performance characteristics depending on the structure and composition of the field system as a whole. The RMHS field surface met testing standards for how slippery the field performed but indicated elevated surface friction that could contribute to greater abrasion potential. Click [HERE](#) for the January 2019 test results.

These test results and analysis were crucial to guiding our maintenance strategies to improve the RMHS stadium field performance. The immediate steps we took to modify the infill layer at RMHS included removal of infill, a deep tine aeration, and multiple field grooming applications. The modification and maintenance work took place over the winter months and the initial feedback from field users was positive. Our ongoing, regular monthly maintenance of the RMHS field has continued as well. This maintenance included grooming the field to aerate and mix the infill materials and continue to enhance the playing experience.

This summer, we conducted a second round of testing and engaged additional expertise in the area of artificial turf by consulting with Dr. Andrew McNitt. Dr. McNitt has conducted extensive research at Pennsylvania State University and also has worked as a technical advisor to the National Football League's Groundskeepers Organization. The follow-up testing used American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards to indicate the relative abrasiveness of synthetic turf playing surfaces. These tests confirm that the RMHS field has significantly improved since the previous testing, and yields results that are more comparable to similar fields. Click [HERE](#) for the July 2019 test results.

**Division of Construction**

The test results again are instructive in the next steps that will further improve the field conditions at RMHS. Dr. McNitt recommends additional maintenance strategies primarily focused on a technique called “power brooming.” This process, which is scheduled for August, will continue to change the profile of the infill mix to increase the proportion of sand in it. We will continue testing and monitoring the field conditions over the coming school year.

We are committed to providing a positive playing experience on all of our MCPS fields, and our work at RMHS will continue to ensure our facilities meet the needs and expectations of our student athletes. We will continue to provide routine updates as work progresses. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at 240-314-1000 or Dr. Jeffrey K. Sullivan, director, Systemwide Athletics, at 240-740-5650.

I hope you have enjoyed your summer break. We look forward to welcoming you and your family back to Richard Montgomery High School for a successful 2019–2020 school year.

Sincerely,



Seth P. Adams  
Director

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