Educational Suitability Summary Report

Nelson Field

Date: 08/22/2016

Nelson Field is a stadium that has seating for approximately 12,000 spectators, located in Northeast Austin. The original buildings were constructed in 1965. The stadium hosts multiple Austin ISD high school football, baseball, soccer, and track events. The age of the facility is apparent and needs some improvements to be more appealing and have similar amount of attention that similar facilities are receiving.

Survey Overview

The survey results from staff and administrators were not completed. The educational suitability for most major spaces, including administrative offices, and outdoor spaces was determined by an onsite interview and field assessment.

Interview and Assessment Overview

The stadium has a seating capacity of approximately 12,000. The required support spaces and infrastructure are well dated and showing its age of more than 50 years. There is a noticeable difference between similar centers that are getting more attention with new turf. The facilities under the stadium are showing age and are not meeting the need of the users. The press boxes are sufficient in size but are dated and need some improvements. They have worn countertops and only one small restroom for two press box levels. The press box is not ADA accessible. It is only accessible by bleacher steps. The appearance of the entire facility needs to be updated with cleaning up the concrete, possibly by sandblasting. Also the mix of fencing material of barb wired chain link fence and metal panel is old and unappealing. The desire is to have a more decorative metal fence and repainting other sections of the fence to give the facility a ‘fresh look’. The baseball announcer booth has very old flooring, is very small and is not ADA accessible with only a set of wooden steps to enter into the space. There lacks ventilation for the ticket booths as well as the baseball booth. Fans are used inside as needed and take up space in a confined area limited on space.

Some safety concerns are with the lack of parking during major events. Due to the shared space with the Nelson Bus Terminal that houses buses for the district, parking is not enough. Visiting teams end up parking on the home side and causes issues among opposing spectators. Cameras are carried up a roof access ladder without a cage and placed on the roof of the press box to video the game. The lack of conditioned air in the ticket booths is difficult because sometimes the space gets very hot for the occupants. The lack of handrails in the bleachers is a problem, especially for those with mobility issues. The door to access the press box is not secure. There needs to be an accessible ramp at the men’s restroom at the field house. Currently the accessible path crosses concession stand lines. One desire is to enclose the open area under the press box area to become a hospitality area and this would limit access into the press box area. The facility overall needs more security cameras.
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If the facility were to have major renovations, everything would be fair game. The only item to salvage would be the building plaque. The artificial turf on the football field has been reported to need replacing in two years and is showing signs of wearing. A consideration of and replacing fields with artificial turf would eliminate lawn maintenance. In addition, updating the appearance of the facility could gain some appeal and become a destination for playoff games and generate a source of revenue for the district as well as local businesses.

The main issues of concern for Nelson Field are to update the appearance. The current condition of the facilities shows its age and is unappealing and uninviting. The idea of gaining 'curb appeal' is highly desired with cleaning the concrete, replacing old chain link fencing and painting sections of the fence as well as replacing the playing field surfaces with new artificial turf. The limited amount of railings in the bleachers needs to be addressed as well. The district loses area talent to other districts that focus on their facilities.
Photo 1. Baseball Booth
Photo 2. Baseball Field
Photo 7. Mold Under Bleachers