



Chapel Hill High School Booster Club

Department of Athletics

Ronnie Hayes, Director
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& email to npedersen@chccs.112.nc.us
& 1st CLASS U.S. MAIL

Dr. Neil Pedersen, Superintendent
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools
750 Merritt Mill Road
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27516

Re: Maintenance of Chapel Hill High School Facilities

Dear Dr. Petersen:

I write this letter on behalf of the Chapel Hill High School Athletic Booster Club, and the parents of many students involved in the athletics program and other programs at Chapel Hill High School, to express our growing concern regarding the condition of the facilities at Chapel Hill High School. There is a long and growing list of hazardous conditions at the school that we would like to bring to your attention. We hope that you will initiate prompt remedial action. While the Booster Club's concerns primarily stem from the conditions in High School Building B, we are aware of other, similar conditions in the non-athletic areas of the high school.

We realize that Chapel Hill High School is about 40 years old, and is somewhat "tired." We also realize that the school district spent \$10 million replacing windows and portions of the roof at the high school. We are thankful for those capital improvements. However, the issues we are now most concerned with involve what should be routine maintenance, which has been performed poorly, if at all.

The following is a partial list of situations that we, in the Booster Club, believe require immediate attention:

1. Both the upper gymnasium and the lower gymnasium at the high school are overrun with mice and cockroaches. Likewise, the locker rooms have frequent "furry" visitors, at least one of which was inadvertently transported home, unknowingly, in a student's gym bag. Surely, something can be done to correct the infestation of vermin and cockroaches!

2. Bleachers in the upper gymnasium could use a “tune up,” if not replacement. The bleachers do not seem as stable they ought to be, some sections do not function properly, and some boards are missing. The bleachers are unsafe, and are an accident waiting to happen. They could and should be repaired, or replaced.
3. As you may know, the Booster Club has for several years run an after school concession program in Building B. Beginning late last spring and continuing through the summer, the food preparation area in Building B which is used by the Booster Club for fundraising activities was infested with cockroaches. Eventually, an exterminator “sprayed” the area and Booster Club personnel spent many hours rearranging equipment to enable us to open for business. While this may seem trivial, the profits generated by the Booster Club from the after school concession program is used to fund two scholarships for graduating seniors. This year, the Booster Club was not able to open the concession program until a month into the school year due to the condition of the concession area, putting our scholarship program at risk. The cockroaches are an ongoing problem in the concession area. Certainly, something more, and on a regular basis, can be done to eliminate the roaches and clean up the food preparation area.
4. I have also heard numerous concerns expressed about the condition of the air ducts and vents in the locker rooms and cafeteria facilities, among other places. They do not appear to have been cleaned in a great while. Some display mold, mildew and similar evidence of lack of regular maintenance.
5. The air intake vents in the lower gymnasium obviously have not been cleaned in years. Though located high on the wall of the gymnasium, the accumulated dust (or whatever it might be) on the vents is clearly visible from the bleachers in that gym. It looks bad, but even more importantly it must be unhealthy for our students and faculty who use the gymnasium during the school day as well as our student-athletes and guests. The school district surely has people and equipment to keep the vents clean.
6. There is a handrail in the hallway outside the lower gymnasium that is broken – leaving jagged metal edges exposed. As of late last week, it had not been repaired, though I understand that a work request was submitted several weeks ago. This is a dangerous and unacceptable condition that must be repaired immediately, especially as wrestling and basketball seasons get underway and we are inviting guests to attend our facilities.
7. The condition of the girls locker room is atrocious. I am aware that some girls will not shower there because the locker room is filthy.
8. The fence at the recently refurbished tennis courts looks about to fall over because an improper windscreen was installed. This is an unsightly and potentially dangerous condition that has existed for many months. It needs to be fixed.

9. The gates and fences around the high school football stadium and track are damaged at several locations. There are holes or gaps in the fence, and some top rails of the fence and gate (at least) are damaged and unsafe. This poses a security hazard (as evidenced by the recent break-in and theft of merchandise at our stadium concession stand) and a safety hazard. These conditions could, and should, be easily and quickly fixed.
10. There is a broken gate between the lower practice field and the Smith tennis courts. I am not sure whether the school district is responsible for this, or the Town of Chapel Hill or some other entity, but it needs to be repaired.
11. As you know, there is a drainage swale of some sort that runs parallel to the fence separating the football stadium from the soccer field. There is a pathway with a gate running from the football stadium to the soccer fields, which crosses over this swale. Just two weeks ago, a child walking with his mother into a soccer game (Panther Creek playoff game) fell into the swale from the path. This is an unsafe situation — some barrier needs to be placed along side the path as it crosses the swale.
12. The same swale as mentioned above is part of what appears to be a drainage “system.” The swale and surrounding area are strewn with trash, do not appear to be maintained, and emit a foul odor most of the time. Visitors to our athletic fields have commented about the unpleasant aroma and unsightly condition frequently. Something needs to be done about it.

All the above items can be rectified with routine maintenance. Unfortunately, the experience we have had at Chapel Hill High School is that these types of “routine” maintenance issues are not tended to, and as a result the appearance and usefulness of the facilities deteriorates. The condition of these facilities is an embarrassment to the Booster Club, to our student-athletes, and it should also be an embarrassment to the Administration and School Board. Some of the conditions, I am sure, might concern the Orange County Health Department if they were aware of them.

We ask for your immediate attention with respect to these issues. We would be happy to meet with you, or someone from your staff, to discuss some of the maintenance issues further.

There are a few additional items that, while not necessarily posing security or safety concerns, call for your attention. There is a scoreboard for the women’s softball field sitting on the ground, unused and exposed to the elements. It has been there for more than one year. Surely, the women’s softball team deserves a functioning scoreboard. Also, the ice machine, washer and dryer at the High School Athletic Facility are temperamental, I am told. They are so old that it is not cost effective to repair them. Furthermore, it is becoming more difficult and expensive to obtain replacement parts. These appliances should be replaced with more modern, energy efficient and environmentally friendly equipment.

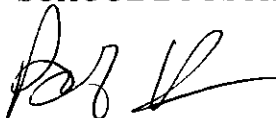
Finally, Chapel Hill High School does not have the equipment it needs to properly maintain the baseball, football and soccer fields. There should be, but is not, an adequate lawn mower available so that the grass is maintained at a proper height. The soccer field, in particular, is in terrible condition. It is pock-marked, resulting in unsafe footing and errant bounces. In fact, just this season at least one women's field hockey team refused to play on our field due to its condition. Furthermore, Coach Benson has advised us that the pile of sand we observe beside the soccer field is what remains of the sand he was spreading on the field to top the surface (level it), only to have the spreader break down part way through the project. Though requests were made to repair the spreader months ago, it is still broken down, so the work to improve the field to tolerable condition is still incomplete. The condition of the fields in general, and the lack of timely response to a request to repair to the spreader in particular, are unacceptable and must be addressed.

We realize that the School Board and Administrator wrestle each year with budget issues, and that you have to respond to many different constituencies. However, as is evident at Chapel Hill High School, maintenance of facilities seems to be a low-priority item. This results in deterioration of facilities, unsafe and un-secure conditions, and disenchantment of faculty, students, and parent organizations. Chapel Hill High School is getting older, and maintenance issues increase with age. We believe that the Central Administration has been neglecting the facilities at the High School, and we do not intend to allow the situation to continue. We would be happy to meet with you, or with the School Board, to discuss the conditions at the High School, and to develop an "action plan" to correct existing conditions and ensure ongoing maintenance to prevent future occurrences.

We appreciate your consideration of these issues, and anticipate your prompt attention and response. If we have not heard from you by November 30, 2007, we will contact you and all Board of Education members directly to discuss these important issues in greater detail.

Very truly yours,

CHAPEL HILL HIGH
SCHOOL BOOSTER CLUB



Robert E. Hornik, Jr., President

REHjr:las

cc: Jacqueline Boyd-Ellis, Principal
Ronnie Hayes, Athletic Director
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Board of Education
Chapel Hill High School Athletic Booster Club Board