

Tri-City Herald



BOB BRAWDY Tri-City Herald

Work has started on the \$6 million renovation project of the athletic fields at Hanford High School in Richland. The project, which is expected to wrap up in October, includes putting down artificial turf on the football field, a new surface for the running track and installing new bleachers that can seat 2,000 people.

\$16 million worth of reasons for Richland sports fans to cheer

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RICHLAND, WA

The aging bleachers are gone, the grass is coming up and construction equipment has rolled at Hanford High School's athletic field.

The Richland School District has kicked off its latest round of construction with two new projects — a \$6 million renovation of the athletic field at Hanford High and the reconstruction of Badger Mountain Elementary school.

Then it will be Richland High's turn for a \$10 million upgrade to the 9,000-seat Fran Rish Stadium.

The multi-million-dollar upgrade at Hanford High off George Washington Way is underway and overdue.

"It hasn't been worked on in decades," said Ty Beaver, the district's com-

munication director. "It just needed an overhaul."

The renovation of the athletic fields includes putting down artificial turf on the football field, a new surface on the running track and installing new bleachers that can seat 2,000.

While varsity Hanford Falcon football games are played at the shared Fran Rish Stadium across town near Richland High, other teams use the fields, including junior varsity football, soccer teams and the marching band.

The track surface was in rough shape, and the natural sod on the football field was regularly torn up. And the bleachers will seat more spectators.

In addition, they will be adding a concession stand and replacing the portable toilets with permanent restrooms.

The project is expected to wrap up in October and needs to finish before the

district can start working on improvements at Fran Rish.

The district plans a \$10 million update to the home team side of the "Bomber Bowl," which seats 6,000 to 9,000 depending on the event.

Bleachers and facilities on the visitor's side were upgraded in 2014 as part of a previous bond issue.

During construction, the district plans to use the Hanford fields for events that would normally be held in the stadium.

The projects are part of a \$99 million bond passed by voters in 2017.

The bond also included money to replace their oldest elementary schools, Badger Mountain and Tapteal, as well as build at least one new elementary school, which has yet to be named.

It also paid for the new administration building and renovating the Richland High Auditorium.

2 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

About 500 students from Badger Mountain Elementary and a similar number from Tapteal Elementary students will be finishing their 2020-21 school year in new buildings.

Tapteal students and teachers will be moving into the recently rebuilt West Richland school, while Badger students and teachers will be moving to Elementary 11 after spring break until their school is rebuilt.

The mid-year shuffle was initially planned for the beginning of the school year, but the COVID pandemic delayed finishing work on the \$19 million Tapteal Elementary.

And the Richland School Board awarded a \$19 million bid from Chervenell Construction to start building Badger Mountain on the same site as the old school.

The 28-classroom building will use a similar design to Tapteal Elementary and also have three special education classrooms, a library, gym, playground and multipurpose space.

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