

## Attachment IV: St. David High School Waterloo KW Record Article May 14, 2008



MATHEW MCCARTHY, RECORD STAFF

Dave Bennett, senior manager of capital planning for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, stands on a natural turf field at St. David Secondary School in Waterloo, which will soon be replaced with artificial turf, as part of a \$2 million project.

# Catholic board will spend \$2M on new top-of-the-line sports field

By Karen Kawawada, Record staff

**WATERLOO** — St. David Catholic Secondary School is getting a \$2-million upgrade to its athletic facilities.

The Waterloo high school will be the first in the region to have an artificial turf field, and it's also getting a six-lane rubberized track. The Waterloo Catholic District School Board made the announcement yesterday.

Capital planning manager Dave Bennett said the school hasn't had a track since 1992, when the now-43-year-old school got an addition.

The current field is the only one at an area Catholic high school that's not irrigated.

The new field will be made of artificial fibre and rubber, so it will be softer to fall on than a regular field. There will also be less risk of injury because there won't be holes or divots.

"The story goes, the field will be the 13th man; we'll have a competitive edge," said principal Paul Lacalamita.

The price tag includes lighting, upgrades to some features such as the long jump pit, a small field house with washrooms, a 300-seat bleacher and an electronic scoreboard.

"It's a pretty ambitious program," said Vic Degutis, the board's resource development head.

The \$2 million field is decidedly on the pricey side. Public school trustees recently approved \$475,000 to put in a new irrigated field at Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School in Waterloo. If Cambridge's fire-damaged, 148-pupil Alison Park Public School is rebuilt the same size, it would cost \$2 million to \$2.5 million.

The Ministry of Education won't pay for a \$2 million field, but Bennett and Degutis said the board can recoup costs over 10 years by charging fees to the community groups they expect will be eager to use it.

For now, the board will take out a loan, as with any major building project, and will own 100 per cent of the field. There will be no user fees to students beyond

normal athletics fees.

An artificial turf field can host 3,000 hours of play a year, compared with 400 for a grass field, Bennett said. Athletes can use the field from early March to December and unlike grass, the turf doesn't need to be rested to regenerate. The lighting will allow evening use, and the field can be used for a variety of sports. It will also be possible to have more than one group using it at the same time, said Bennett.

Although the board is looking for ways to cut its budget and has warned teacher unions there may be layoffs, money for facilities such as fields comes from "completely different envelopes," Degutis said.

"This has no implications for the operating budget."

Construction starts in early June and last until November.

Ten portables will have to be moved, so for the last two weeks of school, classes will be held in alternate locations, including a nearby church.

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