

## TITLE IX FAQ FOR JEB STUART PARK

### **What is Title IX?**

Title IX is a federally mandated Civil Rights Equity law that requires that all facilities provided for girls' sports must be proportionally equitable to those provided for the corresponding boys' sports. If the field used by the boys' baseball sports has certain facilities, the field used by the girls' softball sports must have similar facilities of the same quality. This includes the field conditions, dugouts, backstop, fencing, lights, scoreboard, and bleachers.

### **Background on Title IX in Fairfax County:**

In 1997, a complaint was filed with the Office of Civil Rights against Fairfax County Public Schools. To avoid a costly lawsuit, the Board of Supervisors (BOS), Fairfax County Schools, Park Authority, and the Office of Civil Rights formed the Action Plan Review Team (APRT) to determine where the county was deficient in meeting the Title IX equity requirements and developed an action plan.

### **How Fairfax County was deficient:**

Some schools were built prior to girls' softball sports being formed. The field size for girls' softball is smaller than boys' baseball, so they cannot share fields, and these schools had no facilities for the girls' sports. Therefore, these girls' teams use fields at nearby parks. APRT determined that there were inequitable field facilities used by the high school girls' softball teams at nine parks, including JEB Stuart Park. These fields were deficient because they were built to outdated standards, worn out, had no dugouts, no fence, no bleachers, and / or no lights, whereas fields used by high school baseball teams include these features.

### **How this affects county facilities:**

To insure that the county provides equitable, modern facilities for all sports, and is not subject to costly lawsuits, the BOS launched an initiative to meet Title IX requirements. To meet these requirements, the facilities that APRT found to be deficient had to be upgraded to modern and equitable standards. This included the Park Authority fields used by high school sports at Lee High, Ossian Hall, and JEB Stuart Parks. The Park Authority, Schools, and CRS agreed to work together to make this happen.

### **Issue as it applies to JEB Stuart Park:**

Of the fields cited as deficient by APRT, JEB Stuart Park field needed the most work. With the field in disrepair, no dugouts, no lights, or bleacher pads, it was found to have no equity at all and unfit for use. Since the boys' sports have a lighted field with bleacher pads, scoreboard, fence, and dugouts, these facilities must be provided for the girls' sports as well. Since the softball field at JEB Stuart Park is the official field used by the high school girls for practice and competition, Title IX applies to the field at JEB Stuart Park. In APRT's report, School Board objective 3 states "Continue to work with the Park Authority and Board of Supervisors to bring the JEB Stuart High School varsity softball field (at Stuart Park) up to a Level 1 standard (i.e., to light the field)."

### **What is left to be done?**

The girls' softball field upgrades at all other identified parks have been completed, as has the required reconstruction of JEB Stuart Park field in 2008. The last remaining Title IX requirement is lighting JEB Stuart field. This will create equity of facilities because the boys' field at the high school has lights.

### **Who initiated the Master Plan Amendment?**

The Mason District School Board member requested that the Park Authority pursue a Master Plan Amendment to add lights to the field at JEB Stuart Park to satisfy Title IX requirements.

### **Where is the funding for lights at JEB Stuart Park coming from?**

Funds set aside by the county for Title IX compliance that are administered by Community & Recreation Services (CRS).