

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to share my frustration with the ongoing challenges in securing access to district facilities for community events and programs. As multi-generational Deer Park community members, my wife and I take great pride in our hometown. We are proud Deer Park High School graduates, where we were multi-sport varsity athletes. This deep connection to our community makes it even more disheartening to see how current policies limit access to facilities that should be shared resources for the entire community and used to foster pride in Deer Park.

Our attempts to secure fields for football, softball tournaments, gym time for youth basketball teams and to organize cherished events like the community daddy-daughter dance have repeatedly been denied or met with strong opposition. These are events that build community pride, foster relationships, and provide meaningful experiences for our children. However, it feels as though our district's policies prioritize reserving facilities "just in case" the school needs them, rather than allowing these spaces to be used for the benefit of the broader Deer Park community, especially when they are not in use.

This experience has us seriously questioning whether we should continue to keep our boys in Deer Park leagues or look to surrounding districts, which seem much more welcoming of community involvement. We've seen firsthand how other districts embrace their community's needs, while Deer Park keeps its facilities out of reach, even though they are funded by taxpayer dollars.

This has become a particularly difficult issue for us as strong supporters of the bond and levy, where we've even served on the committee to help advocate for these measures. It's challenging to convince community members to support future bond and levy votes when they feel excluded from the very facilities they are asked to fund. Many in our sports community feel left out in the cold, unable to access fields, gyms, and event spaces, despite their financial contributions.

Please reconsider these policies and strike a balance between school-first use and community access. While school functions are certainly a priority, the district can and should allow these spaces to serve a greater role in fostering community pride and involvement when they are otherwise available. We want to continue supporting Deer Park, but it's becoming harder to justify our commitment when the community is left with so little access.

I appreciate your time in considering these concerns. My hope is that we can work together to find a solution that better serves both the school district and the broader community. By allowing greater access to our district's facilities, we can strengthen the bonds that make Deer Park such a special place to live, learn, and grow.

Sincerely,

Jared Lofstrom  
Proud DP Community Member