

Is Texas HS Football Too Big?

 247sports.com/high-school/texas/Article/Is-Texas-HS-Football-Too-Big-126192244/

By [Nick Walters](#) Dec 10, 2018



McKinney ISD Stadium seats 12,000 people and cost \$70 million to construct in 2018.
(Photo: McKinney ISD)

They say everything is bigger in Texas. After all, the state takes up more space than most countries.

If you don't get how big Texas is...

Miami to Atlanta - 606 miles

San Fran to Seattle - 680 miles

Chicago to Manhattan - 723 miles

East-West Across Texas - 762 miles

Diagonally Across Texas - 801 miles pic.twitter.com/8kJ0Pr1yl

— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [July 14, 2018](#)

Its high school football is no exception.

For all Americans deprived of it...

This is Texas High School Football. pic.twitter.com/4mSEz7SOIM

— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [September 3, 2018](#)

Multi-million-dollar stadiums sprout like weeds, grown men beat their chests in crowded

bleachers, and “Friday Night Lights” is re-watched religiously. But even in a land where football reigns as king, some Texans are beginning to ask the uncomfortable question: Has it gone too far?

North of Dallas, McKinney Independent School District’s stadium, which was erected just this year, seats 12,000 people and cost \$70 million.

Sorry HS Football in other 49 states.
TEXAS PUTS Y’ALL TO SHAME. pic.twitter.com/yCLyyYA0sV
— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [August 30, 2018](#)

This new college stadium is NICE.
Oh wait... That’s a Texas HS stadium. pic.twitter.com/XpKdeavs4w
— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [August 9, 2018](#)

Just ten minutes down the road towers Allen ISD’s Eagle Stadium, built in 2012 with a capacity of 18,000 and a price tag of \$60 million.

High School Football in Texas.
Bigger and better than your state’s. pic.twitter.com/drtZsLqDXU
— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [November 3, 2018](#)

#1 Texas HS Football Team
VS
#1 California HS Football Team pic.twitter.com/hVZpJADHZX
— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [July 29, 2018](#)

Some community residents argue that the amount of taxpayer money being spent on high school football is exorbitant and reflects misplaced priorities in the state’s school system. This debate has resulted in conflict brewing across a number of districts, one of which being Grapevine-Colleyville ISD.

Texas HS Football is no joke, people.
Colleyville Heritage’s new place pic.twitter.com/yGJDTOEPzP
— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [July 10, 2018](#)

Since GCISD announced plans to begin construction on stadium renovations worth \$18 million and a pair of indoor facilities costing a total of \$32.8 million, frustrated taxpayers and students have taken their pitchforks to the web. A battle fought with words, the crossfire in this Dallas-Fort Worth suburb is a microcosm for a civil war in the Texas HS Football community.

In an informal, anonymous survey distributed in February 2018, GCISD students complained about their district’s special treatment towards athletics and disregard to

more basic needs.

One survey comment summed up the general tone of most responses: “NOBODY NEEDS A NEW FOOTBALL STADIUM!! WE WANT URINALS THAT FLUSH AND STALLS WITH DOORS.”

Another student wrote: “We could have spent maybe 1 out of the 18 mil we spent on our stadium to fix some of the major problems going on inside campus. It’s ridiculous and frankly an obvious picture of the system’s priorities.”

A survey responder who identified themselves as a district parent wrote: “Arts are more productive than athletics and deserve at least equal if not more funding.”

My old high school.

Who is currently postponing productions because the theatre dept. is so in need of upkeep that every time it rains outside, the stage inside gets wet. The catwalk is unsafe due to water damage. Black Box tech cues are saved on floppy disks.

Support the arts. <https://t.co/SG0mYNyYpa>

— Austin (Sky) Parker (@austinskyarker) September 11, 2018

Grapevine High School assistant principal Ted Willmann understands the concerns about excessive spending but says athletic success instills a sense of community within a student body, making it worthwhile to invest in a football program.

“Any championship-caliber football program needs at least \$100,000 a year to contend,” Willmann, a long-time coach, said. “We only get \$20,000, not much more than other departments.”

According to Willmann, the zeros in front of the dollar signs are distracting taxpayers from the reasons behind the numbers. A five-year bond package approved in May 2016 supplied Grapevine-Colleyville ISD with nearly a quarter billion dollars devoted solely to expenditures on construction of and improvements to public-use facilities.



https://youtu.be/wHtsHYWwk_Q

“What some people don’t understand is that every dollar spent on stadium renovations and indoor facilities are from the 2016 Bond Program,” Willmann said. “Most complaints suggest using bond money in areas it could not have been spent towards in the first place.”

“GCISD had a good plan,” Colleyville Heritage head football coach Joe Willis said. “They had money that had to be allocated and used for certain reasons. That stadium fit that description.”

Football is blamed for being the flame that lit the debate over the district's expenditures. However, while athletic fields are at the center of the bond program’s more expensive projects, football may be only half of the equation – or even less.

“It’s definitely more than just athletics and definitely more than just football,” Willis said. “If you look at the entire year, you’re going to find that football uses it probably less than anybody else does because we’re an outdoor sport.”

Colleyville Heritage indoor facility split up into quadrants for multipurpose use.
For all sports + band. (via [@_dcrouch](#)) pic.twitter.com/OkQOUanI7y

— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [July 10, 2018](#)

Willis describes the “multi-purpose facility” that is the renovated Mustang-Panther Stadium as a “centerpiece that shows that the community and the schools take great pride in their programs,” making it a “huge advertisement that our district is taking care of their kids.”

New in 2018 at Colleyville Heritage:

\$18 million stadium renovation.

Texas-sized bell rung for turnovers. pic.twitter.com/zR1pYWdgoh

— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [August 18, 2018](#)

Grapevine head football coach Mike Alexander said renovations to the district's stadium and construction of their indoor facility, or "The MAC" (Multi-Activity Court), was sometimes counterproductive to the team's progress.

"You look around at all the construction, the MAC isn't quite finished yet, we've been locked out of this stadium for the good amount of the semester," Alexander said. "Every day here has kind of been a challenge just knowing where we are going to practice and how we're going to get things done."

While burdensome restrictions put his team in a bind, including having to play home games at a neutral site, Alexander believes that the ensuing adversity positively impacted his players. So much so that it influenced the Mustangs' team slogan.

"We felt the motto of 'Fight On' has been appropriate this year," Alexander said. "In life you're going to have some uncertainty. The goal is just to fight on."

While questions linger in Grapevine, [@CoachA_GHS's](#) Mustangs "Fight On."

 : <https://t.co/P0KwzZirIJ> pic.twitter.com/ltPYwF32PQ

— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [August 19, 2018](#)

Despite the inherent upsides of having an indoor option on campus for programs in-and-out of the athletic department, a supporter of academics or fine arts may disagree with the allocation of GCISD's bond package. However, money talks. And in a business decision delegating millions to an area of choice, football may give the district the most bang for its buck.

"It actually does bring money back into the district," Willis said. "In fact, it's one of the few programs that generates revenue. It's over \$100,000 depending on what year it is."

PSA from Texas to other 49 states:

This is how to fill a HS football game pic.twitter.com/WnZkihoh3P

— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [October 13, 2018](#)

Since overcoming issues with accommodations, each football program has used their indoor facility in ways the district envisioned since proposing the additions. This year's high school football season was uncharacteristically wet in Texas, as an all-time record 28 inches of rain fell on DFW through the months of September and October.

Water blanketing Pennington Field at [@LDBellFootball](#) v [@CoppellFootball](#). Stadium even lost power for a bit.

Realistic start time is 8 at earliest. pic.twitter.com/7py9ovi7Oo

— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [September 7, 2018](#)

“We went for about four years without having to go inside because of lightning. This year there’s already been five times we’ve had to come in,” Willis said. “It’s paid dividends as far as programs being able to get out of the weather and into a controlled environment.”

Two years after the passage of the bond responsible for their constructions, the MACs are finished products and Mustang-Panther Stadium is set to house both Grapevine and Colleyville Heritage sporting events beginning in Fall 2019. The social outcry heard by GCISD may be a sign of things to come in Texas as districts continue to pay top-dollar for success in football.

Later this month, the eyes of Texas will be glued on Arlington as tens of thousands file into AT&T Stadium to witness football state championships.

Official Attendance...[#UILState](#) Weekend: 213,192
2018 Super Bowl: 103,219

Texas HS Football is a RELIGION. pic.twitter.com/dVBIobPNo1

— Nick Walters (@NickWaltersTV) [May 9, 2018](#)

While most will be absorbed in the spectacle's awe-inspiring aura, some will pause and ponder: "Is Texas High School Football too big?"

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