**Dawson Springs Middle School Baseball and Softball Proposal**

***Section A- Proposal***

Panther Athletics is proposing adding middle school baseball and softball for the 2024-2025 season.

DSMS polled the students in regards to their interest in baseball and softball. Based on the survey results, it was clear that there was a significant interest among middle school students in adding baseball and softball programs to Panther Athletics. Surrounding counties have already established similar programs, indicating that there is a demand for these sports at the feeder development level.

To implement the programs, the open field sessions would begin in late June to allow interested students to start practicing and developing their skills. Tryouts can then be conducted in July to select the players for the teams. The season would during the months of August and September, providing ample playing time for the students.

It is also encouraging to note that neighboring teams are interested in adding Panther Athletics to their schedule. This indicates that there is potential for competitive matches and a well-established structure for the teams to participate in.

Overall, with the strong interest from students and the support from surrounding teams, implementing middle school baseball and softball programs for the 2024-2025 school year seems like a viable and exciting opportunity for Panther Athletics.

The typical season for middle school baseball and softball is 10-12 games.

***Section B-The following are factors, considerations, or concerns regarding the new sport***

1. **Available Facilities.** Facilities are an essential concern in considering the addition of a new sport. For multiple reasons, schools should have appropriate facilities to conduct the activity on-campus. Unfortunately, Dawson will not have practice facilities on campus, but we will have Tradewater park, the Multi-Purpose Room, and the high school band parking lot to utilize. With the middle school season running before High school season (August-September) there will not be any conflicts with the field.
   * **Softball-** Until the city park is rebuilt, the girls will have to practice at riverside and play all of their games away.
2. **Supervision**

* A head coach will need to be hired for both the softball and baseball teams.
  + Surrounding districts are paying middle school coaches between $1,000-$1,500 stipends.
  + We have several people who are interested in coaching middle school baseball and softball.
* Coaches will supervise all practices, transportation, and games.
* Coaches will be responsible for completing KHSAA sports safety and rules clinics.
* Coaches will be required to be AED, First Aid, and CRP certified.

1. **Transportation** – Buses can be taken to the 6 away games (10-12 softball games). Practices will be local so the parents can bring them. Away games will be no further than 45 minutes.
2. **Equity**

* All students will have the opportunity to try out, but they must have a current KHSAA sports physical on file.
* All students must be in good academic standing.
* Athletes are expected to follow the code of Acceptable Behavior and Athletic handbook policies

1. **Title IX-** Gender Equality

* Does the activity accommodate the interests and provide equal opportunities for

both genders?

* + Yes it will benefit male and female athletes

1. **Expenses-**

* School system costs – including coach stipends (proposed $1,000), transportation, uniforms, and equipment. (Uniforms will be bought by parents and fundraising the first season)
  + Athletics will be able to provide support in offsetting some of the equipment cost.
* Both the softball and baseball team will help offset the costs by gaining sponsorships as well as fundraising.

1. Safety.

* Teams will follow the DSHS Cardiac Response Plan and Emergency Management Plans
* Players are expected to follow KHSAA equipment guidelines
* Heat Index will be checked regularly by the coaches

1. **Benefit to Schools and School System.**

* The benefits of having the middle school program is to engage kids in sports, and leadership skills at a young age.
* By developing these programs you will be developing catchers and pitchers earlier to be high school game ready. They will learn situations that they will need at the next level.
* Feeder programs are vital to the success of high school programs