

I am Mark@Rauterkus.com of the South Side. I coach for the District and used to be on the Athletic Reform Task Force. My sons graduated from PPS and are in college.

I speak around town often, generally as an advocate for system-wide issues. Today, is different. I have a specific request for the superintendent and/or board to benefit dozens, if not hundreds of students in the future.

I'll post the long version, with photos and footnotes, at CLOH.org.

I'm here because the chain-of-command from school athletic director, principal and district athletic office are not inclined to make these changes themselves. The mechanism and desire to reconvene district-wide athletic reform is still absent.

I do receive a river of support from various people within PPS. Sadly, significant, often predictable and inexplicable obstructions appear. We've learned how to navigate around a few of them in the last decade. But in my view, we still have oceans full of challenges regarding after-school, sports, wellness and leading quality programs.

Background, I'm coaching, co-ed, Swim & Water Polo to 100+ city-kids, mostly in middle school grades.

30 at the charter school,  
20 at Arsenal,  
20 at Obama,  
20, so far at the Saturday Swim School held at Oliver Citiwide High School. More are welcome and expected on Saturdays. A hand-out here.  
Plus, about 30 are gearing up for the varsity teams.

We had 50 in Swim & Water Polo at Summer Dreamers in 2016. Sadly we got stuck at Carmalt without a pool. We have successfully coached 200 Dreamers in 2015, and we should be trending to serve more than 500 kids every summer within Summer Dreamers, in my humble opinion.

My coaching is a labor of love that reaches lots of kids for very little money. ~~This year a \$2,500 discrepancy surfaced with the Summer Dreamers contract because PPS staff shortages necessitated my hire of additional coaches.~~

~~This is an issue for another day, sorta.~~  
~~I'm at 3 or 4 different pools, off and on, and I'm only talking about OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME, not in-school Physical Education.~~

PPS has 14 indoor swim pools. These pools, PUBLIC ASSETS, sit idle, especially after school days, evenings, nights, weekends, holidays and in the summers. My calculations claim that the capacity for training swimmers, in these outside the school day opportunities should reach more than 6,000 individuals every year. We might engage about 600 now.

Meanwhile, in the fall of 2016, there was ONE student on the Obama golf team.  
In the fall of 2016 and 2015, NONE of the Obama golfers even went to the city championships.

~~I know about golf at Obama because I coached that team for 2 seasons in 2012 and 2013.~~

I'm asking for the PPS Board and Superintendent to PULL the plug on Varsity GOLF at Obama and redirect the sports budget for golf to Water Polo at Obama. ~~Both golf and water polo are fall sports.~~

Replace the golf team (and its one athlete) with water polo and gain 20 to 60 kids on teams next year. We'll have boys and girls water polo teams at the varsity, JV and middle school levels.

More than 20 middle school students, mostly girls, at Obama, are playing water polo **now**. Well, ... we should have had middle-school water polo games today, but the pool has been closed for as a needed electrical inspection.

~~Last school year, I volunteered and taught more than 15 6<sup>th</sup>-grade boys how to swim and play water polo. We had three times as many kids and as many practices with this optional, spring water polo as the Obama Middle School Swim Team did with its official winter season. These same kids are still excited as 7<sup>th</sup> graders, and it has grown to all grades. I think they deserve a funded and supported high school water polo team to look forward to.~~

We have a swim pool. We don't have a golf course.

We have the demand for water polo. Golf has gone down the drain at Obama.

Water polo will keep our kids engaged, fit and excited about swimming. Water polo will help the swim teams and get many kids to learn to swim and one-day become lifeguards.

A modest budget is necessary to cover costs for uniforms, officials, travel, equipment and a coach. But we're cutting golf expenses.

Plus, we don't really need to eliminate golf opportunities. ~~I hate to pit one sport against another.~~

Kids that want to golf, can enroll in Allderdice.

Additionally, PPS could tinker with the sports co-op agreements among Allderdice, Obama and Sci-Tech with golf so that students from all three schools could compete in varsity golf for Allderdice.

Likewise in Water Polo: Co-op sports agreements should be floated so interested students at Allderdice can join Obama's Water Polo Teams.

Obama's water polo team could be extended to support students from: Dice, Westinghouse, U-Prep, Oliver, CAPA, Sci-Tech, Winchester Thurston, Ellis, Seton LaSalle, and perhaps a few other smaller schools within and next to the city's borders.

~~Then we've got a best of all world's situation, more kids with better opportunities. I think our swimming pools can be further energized and turned into the best learning labs for exploring personal and group excellence. Thanks for the governmental oversight.~~

Thanks for listening and the consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon. My cell: 412-298-3432