

# How to establish esports in K12 and higher education schools.



In 2018, the National Federation of State High School Associations recognized esports as an official sport. In 2020, U.S. colleges and universities awarded nearly \$16 million in esports scholarships, prompting K12 schools to start their own esports teams.



Today, there are over

# 8,600

high school esports teams  
in the U.S.



### Esports have taken U.S. schools and universities by storm, and for good reason.

Participation breaks down barriers and brings students together over a common interest. It fosters comradery and teamwork. And, with millions of dollars in available scholarships, it motivates students to perform academically and opens career doors in a billion-dollar industry.

Here are a few of the many benefits esports bring to schools and students:

- Drives enrollment in K12 and higher education
- Generates revenue for schools
- Can increase academic performance and student success rates, which can lead to better school funding
- Supports diversity and fosters inclusion
- Creates a community and outlet for students who might not engage in traditional extracurricular activities
- Expands critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity in players
- Promotes student well-being and character development
- Offers [scholarship](#) opportunities for students
- Provides career paths

## Statistics



Nearly  
**90% of teens**  
play video games



**175 member universities**  
in National Association of  
Collegiate Esports



Nearly  
**\$16 million**  
in esports scholarships awarded  
by U.S. colleges in 2020



**\$10.8 billion**  
global market value in 2022



**234 million**  
regular viewers in 2021



**240 million**  
occasional viewers in 2021  
\*Sources: Inven Global, NEA,  
Exploding Topic



## Career Paths

- Software developers
- Game and design developers
- Web development
- Engineering
- Graphic designers
- IT professionals
- Sports marketing
- Professional players

## 6 Steps to Consider When Building Your Team

Before you throw together an esports team, you must be aware of the end goal and school objectives an esports league wants to meet. Then develop a strategy to build a team while fulfilling those goals.

### Here's how to start a team:

#### 1. Reach out to students and staff.

Find out how many students are interested in participating and what games and tournaments they're interested in—this will determine the equipment you'll need. Learn which staff are interested in supporting your team. Depending on the size of your team, some roles may overlap. At the very least, you need a coach/facilitator and tech expert to get your team up and running.

#### 2. Consider where you'll house your esports lab.

Do you have room in your computer lab, will you need to remodel existing space, build a new space? Plan your space to accommodate team growth.

#### 3. Research funding opportunities.

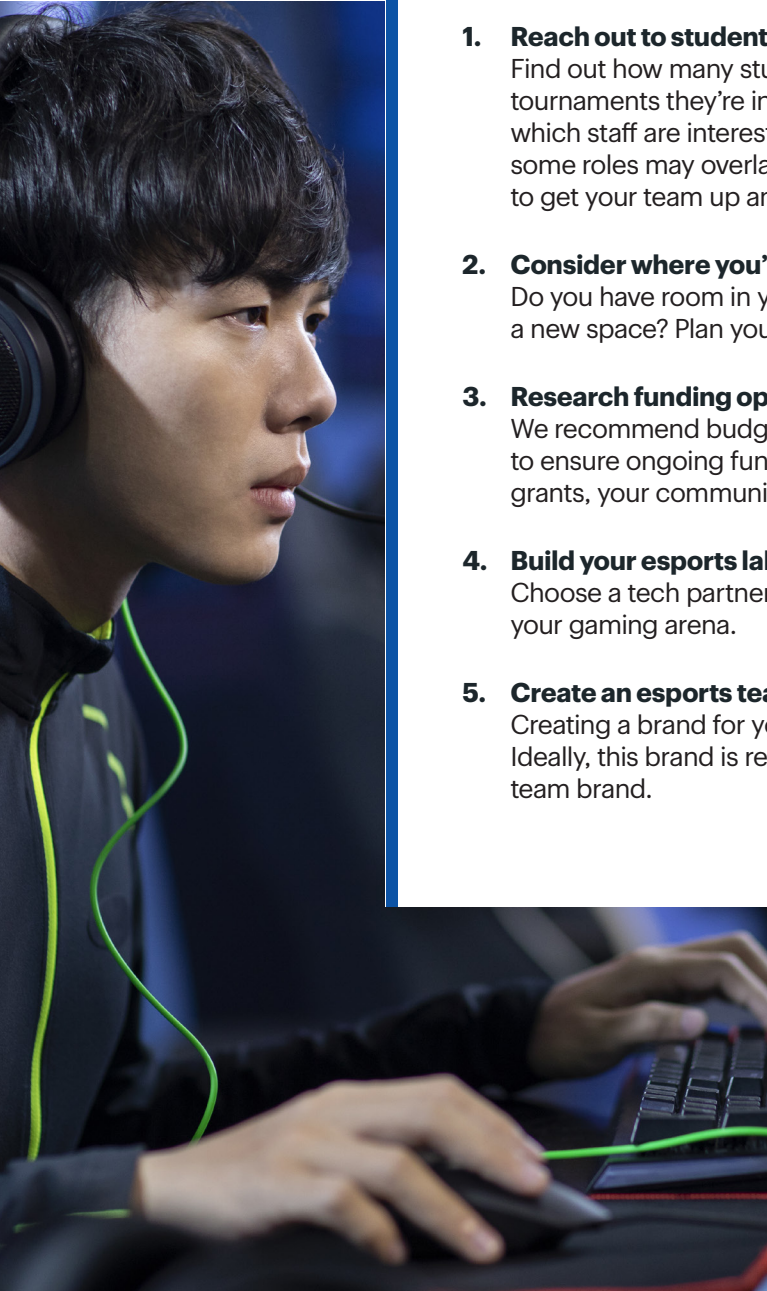
We recommend budgeting and managing your team under your athletics department to ensure ongoing funding and program success. You can fund your team through grants, your community and your fanbase.

#### 4. Build your esports lab.

Choose a tech partner/supplier to help you build your gaming infrastructure and equip your gaming arena.

#### 5. Create an esports team brand.

Creating a brand for your esports team will attract attention and grow your audience. Ideally, this brand is relatable, instantly recognizable and separate from your athletics team brand.



#### Resources

- Middle & High School: [North America Scholastic Esports Federation \(NASEF\)](#)
- Higher ed: [National Association of Collegiate Esports \(NACE\)](#)
- K12, higher ed: [National Esports Association \(NEA\)](#)
- K12: [The Academy of Esports \(TAOEsports\)](#)

## Ready to Level Up?

Once your team has established a regular practice routine and feels ready to compete, it's time to move up to the next level.



- Incorporate **tournament management software** into your tech system
- **Build your fanbase** through community events and fundraisers
- **Promote your team** through a website and social media channels
- Enter and **compete in tournaments**
- Accommodate your fanbase (family, friends, community) with **streaming gear** and **brand merchandise**

### Program Start-up Checklist



#### Support Personnel

- Coach
- Manager
- Administrator/facilitator
- Programmer/IT professional
- Marketer/social media manager



#### Gaming Infrastructure

- Gaming server
- Gaming systems
- Games
- Monitors/TVs
- Game accessories and peripherals
- Gaming furniture
- Broadcast gear
- Tournament management software



#### Funding Opportunities

- Local, state, federal grants
- Tech partnerships that support STEM programs
- Proceeds from brand merchandise
- Twitch and YouTube subscriptions
- Membership platforms
- Ad spots
- Fundraising events
- Community funders, stakeholders and local business owners
- Brand sponsorships (equipment, apparel, nutrition)

## What to Look for in an Esports Equipment Vendor

The vendor you choose to provide your equipment and technology is instrumental to the success and future of your esports team. For this reason, we recommend you choose a proven esports partner that will collaborate with you to create a solution that meets your unique goals, accommodates your budget and supports your program as it grows and evolves.



### The ideal esports equipment and technology partner has:

- Expertise and experience building and outfitting esports teams
- An assortment of end-to-end esports products including PCs, laptops, monitors, headphones, keyboards and mice, AV, lighting, networking, cabling, gaming chairs and desks with good, better and best solutions
- Trusted engineering capabilities, project management and installation services and ongoing technology support
- Relationships with key vendor partners and suppliers

### Why Choose Best Buy® Education?

Best Buy Education leverages years of experience, esports expertise, key vendor partnerships and a large geographic footprint to help K12 and higher education institutions develop unique esports solutions that fit their needs.



### Best Buy Education works with our clients every step of the way, providing:

- Dedicated Account Managers to help you build your esports program
- Complete technology, furniture and more to outfit your esports gaming arena
- Brand-agnostic recommendations that best fit your needs and budget
- Project management, engineering, installation and tech support services

Whether you're just getting started or looking to level up, Best Buy Education offers a complete solution to meet all your esports needs.



## The Client

Jackson Academic STEAM Academy (JASA) in Tennessee



## The Challenge

Funded by an IDEA Innovation grant, the online K12 school sought a tech partner and supplier to breathe life into their esports vision.



## The Solution

Best Buy Education consulted with the JASA to facilitate the school's vision and goals. They managed the project from end to end, **using \$20,000 worth of equipment and technology** for the entire esports arena, including:

- Gaming computers, monitors, keyboards for up to 25 players
- Gaming systems, controllers, tech peripherals for Nintendo Switch, Xbox and PlayStation4
- Complete set of gaming chairs
- LED lighting
- 55+\" LED TV for arena broadcasting
- Sound system



**“Best Buy Education has been unbelievable throughout the process.** I love esports, but I’m also a teacher. My Account Manager took the work off my shoulders and he made our vision come true, piecing everything together, including building out our entire esports arena.”

**David Wicker**, Head of Operations,  
Jackson Academic STEAM Academy.



### Get Started in Esports or Upgrade Today!

Reach out to a dedicated Best Buy Education Account Manager for a **free** esports consultation: **1-800-791-3902** or **Contact Us**