



REIMAGINING
SCHOOL SPORTS

CHARTER SCHOOLS



Sport for All, Play for Life
A Playbook to Develop Every
Student Through Sports

A Project Play initiative of the Aspen Institute’s Sports & Society Program, “Reimagining School Sports in America” recognizes the essential role that high schools play in preparing young people for life – and the cognitive, educational and health benefits that flow to students whose bodies are in motion. The initiative aims to make quality sport and physical activities accessible to all students by identifying strategies that administrators and other leaders can adopt, aligned with the mission of schools and within the context of a comprehensive education.

In the United States, school decisions are made largely at the local and state levels. Further, the ability to engage students in sports is shaped by a school’s size, mission and resources. So, Project Play launched a national search to find the trailblazers in eight school types. That way, principals, superintendents, athletic directors, coaches, physical education teachers and others can draw inspiration from their best peer fit.

The eight school types:

- Large urban public high schools
- Small urban public high schools
- Large rural public high schools
- Small rural public high schools
- Large suburban public high schools
- Small suburban public high schools
- Private schools
- Charter schools

The Aspen Institute invited all schools to share their innovations and apply for recognition. A \$20,000 award is given to one winner in each category, made possible by our project partners – Adidas/Reebok, The Dick’s Sporting Goods Foundation, and Hospital for Special Surgery. Reports on each school type are being released in 2021, followed by a final report in early 2022 that will make systems-level recommendations that can drive progress across all school types.

About Project Play

Project Play is an initiative of the Aspen Institute’s Sports & Society Program, the mission of which is to convene leaders, facilitate dialogue and inspire solutions that help sport serve the public interest. Since 2013, Project Play has shepherded the national conversation around what good looks like in youth sports. Hundreds of organizations have used Project Play frameworks and ideas to introduce programs, expand grantmaking, shape government policy, advance research, and develop tools to train coaches, empower parents and mobilize leaders.

To learn more about the value of sports and physical activities, please visit as.pn/sportsfacts



Learn more about this project and find all reports at:
as.pn/schoolsports

Challenges and Opportunities: Charter Schools

School-based sports have been a feature of American life since the first decade of the 21st century.¹ They were baked into the overall concept of schools as a means of developing the whole child, long before that term was popularized. A uniquely American concept, interscholastic competition – teams from one school playing teams from another – also was promoted as a tool of nation-building by a coalition of industry titans, child welfare advocates, military recruiters, and medical doctors.

What's a Charter School?

Charter schools are tuition-free public schools operated by independent groups. These groups include non-profit or for-profit companies, who qualify for taxpayer funding through contract (a “charter”) that holds them accountable to agreed-upon performance standards. Under their charter with the district or state, these schools have great flexibility to design their curriculum, culture and missions, which can vary widely, from science education to sports management to general college prep.

Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have charter schools. Most of them are in urban areas, often serving minorities from disadvantaged backgrounds (61% of students are low-income vs. 48% for other public schools). About 5% of the nation's students attend charter schools, though the proportion is much higher in cities such as New Orleans and Detroit.²

The end of the century brought another chance to reconceptualize schools.

They were called charter schools.³ And sports were left out this time, at many.

That's still the case. Less than 4 in 10 (39.8%) charter schools nationwide offer interscholastic sports to their students, according to an Aspen Institute-commissioned analysis of 2017-18 Civil Rights Data Collection by Resonant Education. For traditional schools, it's twice that (81.4%).⁴ Sports just aren't a major feature at many charters, a category born from a desire by parents for greater school choice, including options to traditional public schools with lower graduation rates.

Good riddance, some critics have argued.⁵ They say sports divert dollars from academic pursuits and can reshape the school culture in unhealthy ways, particularly when games become community entertainment. They note that schools in Europe and Asia aren't set up this way; there, local clubs provide sports.

Many charters don't even have the facilities to offer sports. Some have attached gyms but less often there are fields and running tracks. Further, they have smaller student populations, which can make fielding full rosters a challenge. In places, they must form their own interscholastic leagues,⁶ having been denied access to established leagues dominated by traditional schools whose leaders aren't always happy with the siphoning of students and dollars into charters.

Many charters don't have the facilities to offer sports.

Some charters are sports powerhouses. Some even have been set up to explicitly help athletes pursue NCAA scholarships, which in cases has led to academic and recruiting abuses.⁷

But with most charters, given the space and other challenges, you have to *really* believe in the educational value of sports to build them into your school concept. You must work to align coaching practices with your teaching culture. You must control costs, with the higher transportation needs. You can't just adopt the sports model created decades ago. You must innovate.

Gender equity is more of a priority in charters, where interscholastic sports are offered.

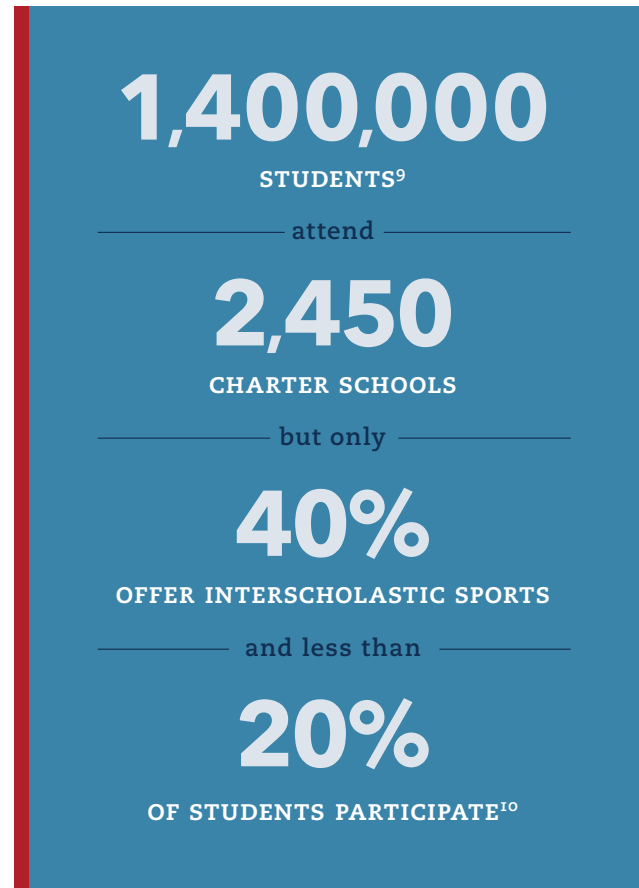
This challenge is why the Aspen Institute is launching its "Reimagining School Sports in America" series of reports with charter schools – to begin pumping big ideas into the bloodstream around how to deliver programs that meet the needs of students and prepare them to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.



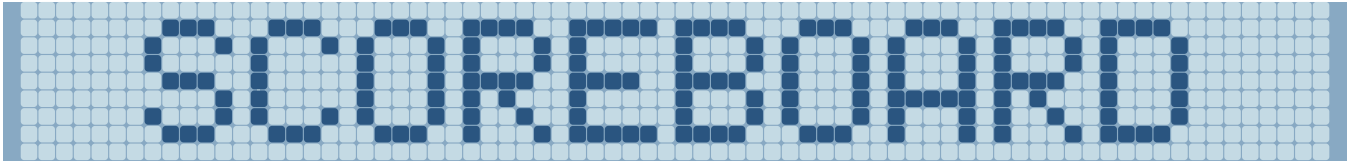
That may mean no tackle football, the most expensive and injury-inducing sport, though some (like our charter schools' winner, ICEF View Park Preparatory School in Los Angeles), do find a way to offer it. That may mean more co-ed play. Or practices in parking lots. Or collaborations with other local charters to pool resources. Or fewer demands on athletes to train year-round in one sport – only 12% of charter school students told us they gave up another sport to focus on their primary one.

Gender equity is more of a priority, where interscholastic sports are offered. Indeed, in 30% of charters, girls' participation rate is equal to or higher than that of the boys. Among all public schools, it's 19%.⁸

Charters may be the interloper in school sports. But some also bring fresh perspective that can help update and fortify the model, moving forward.



CHARTER HIGH SCHOOLS














The Aspen Institute conducted a national survey of ninth- to 12th-graders between September 2020 and March 2021. The sample represented students from public, charter and private schools across the country. The survey was conducted via an online platform and results were analyzed by Resonant Education. Here is what charter students told us.











Top sports that charter students play at school

(played at least one full season on a team)











Female

	39%	Basketball
	38%	Volleyball
	35%	Soccer
	14%	Cheerleading
	11%	Softball
	10%	Track and Field
	6%	Cross Country
	4%	Swimming
	3%	Flag Football
	2%	Gymnastics
	2%	Dance

Male













	57%	Basketball
	36%	Soccer
	24%	Tackle Football
	15%	Baseball
	13%	Track and Field
	7%	Volleyball
	7%	Cross Country
	4%	Wrestling
	3%	Flag Football
	2%	Ice Hockey

All












	48%	Basketball
	35%	Soccer
	23%	Volleyball
	13%	Tackle Football
	12%	Track and Field
	8%	Baseball
	8%	Cheerleading
	7%	Cross Country
	6%	Softball
	4%	Flag Football

Top sports that charter students wish their school offered











Female

	20%	Gymnastics
	20%	Swimming
	17%	Archery
	14%	Dance
	11%	Tennis
	10%	Bowling
	8%	Cheer
	7%	Softball
	7%	Lacrosse
	6%	Volleyball
	6%	Badminton
	6%	Tackle football

Male






	18%	Tackle football
	14%	Archery
	12%	Baseball
	12%	Swimming
	12%	Bowling
	10%	Wrestling
	9%	Weightlifting
	7%	Flag football
	7%	Tennis
	7%	Ultimate frisbee
	6%	Basketball

All






	17%	Swimming
	16%	Archery
	12%	Gymnastics
	11%	Bowling
	11%	Tackle football
	9%	Tennis
	8%	Baseball
	8%	Dance
	8%	Wrestling
	7%	Weightlifting

Other physical activities charter students want to try







Female

-  **42%** Dance
-  **29%** Yoga
-  **27%** Skateboarding
-  **23%** Strength training
-  **21%** General fitness classes

Male

-  **39%** Strength training
-  **28%** Biking
-  **21%** Parkour
-  **20%** Climbing
-  **19%** Skateboarding

All

-  **31%** Strength training
-  **26%** Dance
-  **24%** Skateboarding
-  **24%** Biking
-  **19%** Yoga
-  **19%** General fitness classes

Why charter school athletes play sports

Reason	All	Female	Male
Have fun	80%	82%	79%
Exercise	75%	79%	72%
Learn and improve skills	69%	75%	63%
Playing with and making new friends	52%	56%	48%
Competing	51%	46%	57%
Winning games/championships	48%	44%	54%
College scholarships	47%	46%	48%
Emotional/mental health	46%	53%	36%
Improve college application	42%	49%	37%

What prevents charter students from playing sports

Reason	All	Female	Male
Too much schoolwork	49%	55%	39%
I don't enjoy sports	33%	38%	27%
No offered sports interest me	33%	31%	32%
Didn't try out/not good enough	24%	28%	18%
Work schedule	23%	24%	21%
Family responsibilities	22%	24%	18%
Transportation challenges	13%	12%	12%
Too expensive	12%	13%	8%



WINNER: CHARTER SCHOOLS



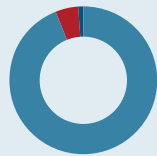
REIMAGINING SCHOOL SPORTS

ICEF View Park Preparatory

Los Angeles, CA

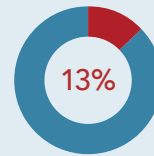


Location

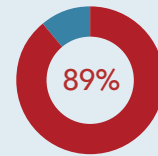


Race/ethnicity

- Black (93%)
- Hispanic (5%)
- American Indian (1%)
- White (0%)



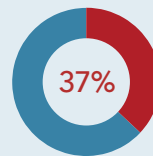
Disability



Free/reduced lunch

Athletic department budget¹ **\$153,714**

Percentage of total school budget **2.2%**



Students who play interscholastic/intramural sports or participate in school clubs involving physical activity (out of 450 students)

Interscholastic

- 🏆 Baseball
- 🏃 Track and Field
- 🏀 Basketball
- 🏐 Volleyball
- 🏈 Tackle Football
- 🏉 Rugby
- 🏳️ Softball

Intramural

- 🏆 Baseball
- 🏳️ Softball
- 🌟 Competitive Cheerleading
- 🚤 Sailing
- 👟 Dance/Drill

Club

- 🏋️ Strength Training
- 🏃 General Fitness Classes
- 🏆 STOKED Action Sports Program

Website
icefps.org

Contact **David Hughes**, Athletic Director,
david.hughes@icefps.org

Stuart Krohn, Director, ICEF Student Leadership Academy,
skrohn@icefps.org



OUR WINNING SCHOOL RECEIVES
\$20,000 AWARD



WINNER'S INNOVATION / ICEF VIEW PARK

New Sports, New Insights

It's Thursday afternoon in the Crenshaw District of south Los Angeles, a year into the pandemic. From the sun-splashed porch behind her single-story home, 16-year-old Kimorri Boozer leads a fitness workout to the Bee Gees' anthem Stayin' Alive. Her audience is on Zoom, a dozen kids from K-8 schools affiliated with the charter high school she attends, ICEF View Park Preparatory School.

She shakes a rugby ball back and forth, exhorting them to move. Some do. She closes with an oral exercise, asking, *What superpower would you want to have?*

A girl laying on her belly says "superspeed" because fast is cool. Another says "superstrength." A boy suggests "read minds." Another says, "fly." Kimorri's rugby coach, Elona Williams, offers a nod to "the power of teleportation."

Here's the thing about View Park: Versions of each of these dreams await if they move on to the high school where Kimorri is now a junior. They might whip down a slope on a snowboard at Big Bear, a mountain retreat to the east of the city. They might power their way through a stiff wind on a sailboat at Marina del Rey. They might even jet to Japan, Brazil, or the South Pacific, with the school rugby teams.

Kimorri traveled to Tanzania as a freshman member of the girls' rugby team. She stayed at the home of a host family. Hiked to a waterfall. Played games and reflected.

“

Rugby helped me see beyond L.A. You realize there's a world around you and so many people who can help you.

Kimorri Boozer, Student

”



“Rugby helped me see beyond L.A.,” she says. “You realize there’s a world around you and so many people who can help you.”

It's an urban school that offers sailing, rugby and, through its action sports program, surfing and snowboarding.

Rugby is the defining program at View Park, underwritten by \$100,000 in annual donations raised from true believers in the power of the sport to foster learning. But the charter's sports portfolio is so broad that already Kimorri has sampled 12 activities, from track to skateboarding, soccer to tennis, surfing to dance.

It's that variety that makes View Park the charter school winner in Project Play's national search for the most innovative school sports programs in the country. Research shows that students who play multiple sports do better academically and behaviorally than those who specialize in just one. “Significant differences” have been found in GPAs and days suspended from school.¹² Among the charter school finalists, View Park stood out for providing so many sport options.

And, against all odds. Consider: View Park has no facilities on site to play games. No gym. No full field. No track. Yet it offers 10 interscholastic teams, five intramurals programs, strength training, general fitness classes, a cutting-edge P.E. program, and an afterschool action sports program that includes surfing.

That's extraordinary for any school with 450 students. It's especially remarkable for a charter school, less than half of which nationally offer interscholastic sports teams – with only 19.3% of students, at most, participating.¹³ At View Park, 37% of students played a sport, in all forms, in the year before the COVID shutdown.¹⁴

“We go to public parks to do everything,” says Stuart Krohn, director of ICEF's Student Leadership Academy and the founder of its rugby program.

The parks can be dangerous, enough so that some parents won't let their child play sports. Crenshaw is the community that inspired the 1991 John Singleton film *Boyz n the Hood*, and gang violence remains an ever-present threat. Local rapper Nipsey Hussle was shot just outside school grounds in 2019. Three years earlier, Krohn says, the rugby teams had to hit the ground to avoid errant bullets in a drive-by shooting in the park where they practiced.

“We used to park our bus in the parking lot where the gang members hang out,” he says. “Now, we park down the way and walk up.”

View Park officials persevere because sports are essential to the whole-child educational concept of the school, expressed as “Academics, Arts and Athletics.” There's a heavy lean toward what scientists call “open skill” sports, which includes team sports, that require active decision-making and have been shown to better promote cognitive function than other sports.¹⁵ But sports of most types are good. The school's crisp, clear mission statement calls for “each student to develop an appreciation for an active lifestyle, good character, and a positive self-image.”



We used to park our bus in the parking lot where the gang members hang out. Now, we park down the way and walk up.

Stuart Krohn, ICEF's Student Leadership Academy



The secret in the school's sports sauce is partnerships. With UCLA for the sailing program. With USC to develop a sports-sampling P.E. curriculum that Kimorri describes as “fun” instead of “making it like we're doing it for the grade.” View Park officials have been enterprising grant writers, securing \$1.8 million from the federal government in 2013 to launch the P.E. program, which in turn boosted its sport culture.

It's an effective strategy, certainly in charters. The Aspen Institute's national youth survey shows that 10% of charter school students said that trying a sport in P.E. made them want to play that sport at school – twice the national average. View Park also has won grants from ESPN and the Women's Sports Foundation to develop girls' programs, and from the LA84 Foundation's Play Equity Fund to underwrite general operations. The Positive Coaching Alliance and U.S. Tennis Association provide coach training, the latter at View Park's affiliated middle school.

That middle school is a key ingredient in its model. View Park starts introducing sports such as rugby in fifth grade through entry-level versions like flag rugby that open young minds to the possibilities – that Black kids in urban areas can play sports well beyond the usual limited menu of basketball, football, track and other traditional sports. Athletes on the high school teams help coach the rugby players, which in turn facilitates their leadership skills, a focused priority at View Park.



The takeaway: Many kids want to explore. They seek self-discovery.

In the communities where the Aspen Institute has landscaped the state of play, student surveys have often revealed an appetite for non-traditional sports. In East Harlem, a largely Latino area, it was hockey.¹⁶ In Hawaii, it was winter sports (!).¹⁷ In Central Ohio, Black students told us they want to try rock climbing, karate and swimming.¹⁸ The takeaway: Many kids want to explore. They seek self-discovery.

View Park facilitates as much. It created a project-based course on action sports, which is how Kimorri was introduced to skateboarding and surfing. And it organizes those rugby trips that expand worldviews. After returning from Tanzania, Kimorri joined an entrepreneurship program that took her to Montana, where she shared a whitewater raft and housing with area students.

She came home and started her own business, a clothing line. “It’s called Rich Kingdom Mentality,” she wrote in an essay. “It means that before you become rich, you have to have the mentality that your dreams will become reality.”

View Park’s sports program isn’t perfect. It has just one athletic trainer, a part-timer who attends football and rugby games. Krohn said the school wants to find the funding for a full-time athletic trainer. The challenge: That can cost more than the \$29,700 it spends on the rest of the football program. The total athletic department budget is \$153,714, not including funds raised for rugby teams’ international trips.

Other charters may find the View Park model challenging to adopt. A former rugby player in Hong Kong whose passion for the sport runs deep, Krohn is a force of nature. So is Lisa Finnegan, a high-energy innovator from Ireland who drives the P.E. program. These are dynamic leaders who have the support of their principal. They also have benefit of working in the world’s movie capital, where filmmakers have shared the View Park story in different forms with audiences over the years.

However, Krohn insists, “We have the template. It can be replicated.”

The rugby piece certainly has inspired imitators. In Tennessee, several young teachers learned about View Park nine years ago. “We said maybe this could be us one day,” says Shane Young, executive director of Memphis Inner City Rugby, a community organization that now works with 11 high schools to field teams.

“

I’ve come to believe that the most important thing in high school sports is getting as many kids playing as you can and having fun.

Elona Williams, Rugby Coach

”



Like at other urban schools that have adopted rugby, players at View Park have gone on to compete in college. Some return to coach, like Kimorri's coach Elona. Nurturing that pipeline, which View Park does across sports, helps give students adults who they can relate to (nine of 10 coaches at the school are Black).

Krohn and the coaches also talk about keeping sports in proper perspective. "I was a super competitive, insane guy when I played," he says. "Then as a coach I was like that. What really changed me was seeing myself on film. I didn't like it. I've come to believe that the most important thing in high school sports is getting as many kids playing as you can and having fun."

From fun, personal development grows.¹⁹ That can be a challenging idea in school sports programs where the goals of winning and excellence are mission central. Not at View Prep, where the lessons learned by a first-time surfer are paramount.

Kimorri recalls her first ride. She had been to the beach before, weekend days at the Santa Monica Pier with her mother, a special education teacher at View Park. But she didn't like to get her hair wet, didn't swim all that well, and never went in very far. View Park created the conditions to take that next step.

Along with teammates who were given a water safety course, she was bused an hour north to Malibu. She grabbed her board, and with the guidance of instructors, paddled out to try and catch a wave. She failed, again and again. But she knew from rugby that "when you fall, you just gotta keep getting back up."

Then, suddenly, Kimorri was up. Standing, thinking, feeling, believing.

"I was like, I'm flying! I'm gliding!" she says.

A superhero to herself, wanting more.

HONOR ROLL IDEAS

Strategies that ICEF View Park Preparatory School use that stood out as exemplary to the Aspen Institute and Project Play’s Reimagining School Sports Advisory Committee:

Help them sample sports

Young people want to explore. Introduce them to sports that they may be curious about but have lacked the opportunity to play. And don’t wait until high school. Offer to place entry-level or casual play programs at local middle school(s), with high school athletes helping to supervise.

“Partner with everyone”

That’s the advice of View Park leaders, who couldn’t host any sports programming if not for a robust set of community partnerships. Get to know your local parks and rec director who controls access to fields and gyms. Collaborate with local universities on programs and curriculum.

Don’t accept no

View Park leaders are avid fundraisers. They look for grant opportunities from private and government sources, both locally and nationally. They go to events and network. They make asks, and keep asking. They are persistent and tell their story. They are edu-preneurs (our term).



Tool for School Leaders

Among the top 10 sports played by boys and girls in high schools nationally, cross country delivers the most physical activity. That’s one of many findings in the Healthy Sport Index, a data-driven project of the Aspen Institute and Hospital for Special Surgery that analyzed the relative benefits and risks of playing each sport.

Learn more at: healthysportindex.com



Healthy Sport Index

Powered By



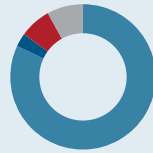
MORE HONOR ROLL IDEAS

Strategies that our other three finalists use that stood out to us as exemplary:

Eno River Academy | Hillsborough, NC

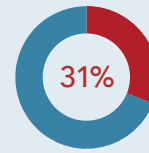


Location



Race/ethnicity

- White (82%)
- Hispanic (7%)
- Black (3%)
- No answer (8%)



Students who play interscholastic/intramural sports or participate in school clubs involving physical activity

Interscholastic

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Soccer
- Swimming and Diving
- Track and Field
- Volleyball

Intramural

- Volleyball

Club

- Ultimate Frisbee

Website

enoriveracademy.org

Contact

Jenny Hartingh, athletic director,
jennyhartingh@enoriveracademy.org

Bring frisbee into your school

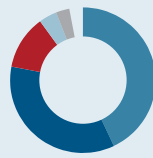
For schools on tight budgets (which aren't?), Ultimate frisbee can be a great option to get students moving at scale for close to no cost. Players burn a lot of calories.²⁰ They also organize practices and games, so there are no coaches or refs. Ultimate can be played in any open field that's 70 yards by 40 yards. Equipment is negligible, and Eno River Academy even limits those costs via sharing bins for used cleats.

Then, there's the sport's culture, as unique as charter schools themselves. Said Hartingh: "There are no college scholarships on the line. No major competitive stuff like you see at other high schools. High schools don't have a sense of pride or identity with Ultimate. It's very much grassroots. The fact that it's self-officiated really changes the way kids play. It becomes a game of respect and love of team. Teams do a spirit circle after every game. Players give themselves funny gifts and awards. It cuts away the elements of youth sports that are tarnished by adults."

High Tech High Chula Vista | Chula Vista, CA

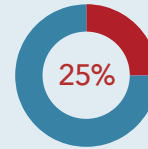


Location



Race/ethnicity

- Hispanic (43%)
- White (35%)
- Asian (12%)
- Black (4%)
- American Indian (3%)



Students who play interscholastic/intramural sports or participate in school clubs involving physical activity

Interscholastic

- 🏹 Archery
- ⚾ Baseball
- 🏀 Basketball
- 🏃 Cross Country
- 🏈 Flag Football
- 🤸 Gymnastics
- ⚾ Softball
- ⚽ Soccer
- 🏊 Swimming and Diving
- 🎾 Tennis
- 🏊 Track and Field
- 🏐 Volleyball
- 🤼 Wrestling

Intramural None

Club

- 🏋️ Strength Training
- 🏊 General Fitness Classes
- 🏞 Outdoor Recreation

Give student sports to the students

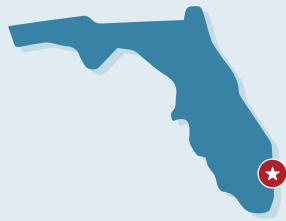
The core concept guiding this 600-student charter is project-based learning, a student-centered pedagogy that gives students the opportunity to develop projects of their choosing in the community to gain a deeper understanding of real-world applications of their learning. At High Tech High, the commitment to that type of learning shows up in athletics.

For instance, students tell administrators which sports they want to play. Then they interview and help select their coach, which in turn helps develop relationships that foster understanding. Said Thompson: “I think it’s a mutual respect given from the beginning. The kids aren’t just getting something sprung on them, like ‘here’s the coach, get used to it.’” One upshot: High Tech High’s approach of listening to students results in no roster cuts.

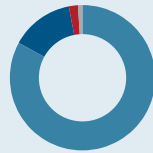
Website
hightechhigh.org/hthcv

Contact
 Shameka Thompson, athletic director,
shthompson@hightechhigh.org

SLAM Miami | Miami, FL

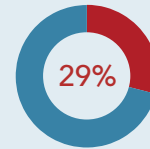


Location



Race/ethnicity

- Hispanic (83%)
- Black (14%)
- White (2%)
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Students who play interscholastic/intramural sports or participate in school clubs involving physical activity

Interscholastic

- ⚾ Baseball
- 🏀 Basketball
- 👯 Competitive Cheerleading
- 🏃 Cross Country
- 💃 Dance/Drill
- 💡 Golf
- ⚾ Softball
- ⚽ Soccer
- 🏊 Swimming and Diving
- 🎾 Tennis
- 🏊 Track and Field
- 🏐 Volleyball
- 🥋 Wrestling

Intramural

- ⚾ Baseball
- 🏀 Basketball
- 💃 Dance/Drill
- 🏈 Flag Football
- 💡 Golf
- ⚽ Soccer
- 🥎 Ultimate Frisbee
- 🏐 Volleyball
- 🏋️ Weightlifting

Club

- 💃 Dance
- 🏋️ Strength Training

Use sports to build brains

The array of sports offered at this 1,000-student school in Little Havana, in the center of urban Miami, is noteworthy. Founded in 2013 by the musician Pitbull, SLAM stands for Sports Leadership and Management and leverages youth interest in sports for develop better students. Research has highlighted the ability of coaches to cultivate academic ability – if they approach sports as not just a physical activity but an intellectual exercise.²¹

SLAM teachers also draw on phenomena from the world of sports to enliven classroom topics. They might use degrees of a baseball field to explain a geometry concept, or a chemical reaction with Gatorade to talk about molecules. Said one of our project advisory board members: “I LOVE the incorporation of sports-based courses into the general curriculum. I have long wanted to see more direct efforts made to infuse sport-based learning across a range of subjects.”

Website
slammiami.com

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ENDNOTES

1. [Game On: The All-American Race to Make Champions of Our Children](#), Farrey (ESPN Books, 2008).
2. [National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Data Dashboard](#).
3. [Everything You Need to Know about Charter Schools](#), Vox, 2014.
4. Preliminary analysis of 2017-18 Civil Rights Data Collection conducted by Resonant Education. The participation rate represents the percentage of roster spots compared to the total population of students that year, rather than the percentage of students who were participating in sports. Some students, of course, participated in more than one sport. Another point of context: In the Aspen Institute's survey of students in 2020-21, 30% of ninth- to 12th-graders in charter schools said they had played at least one season of a sport with a school team, at any point during high school.
5. [The Case Against High School Sports](#), *The Atlantic*, 2013.
6. [Bay Area Charter Schools Athletic Conference](#).
7. [Charter Schools: The New NCAA Farm System?](#) *National Education Policy Center*, 2013.
8. [K-12 Education: High School Sports Participation and Access](#), U.S. Government Accountability, 2017.
9. [Key Facts About Charter Schools](#), *InPerspective*, 2018.
10. Preliminary analysis of 2017-18 Civil Rights Data Collection conducted by Resonant Education.
11. Most of the athletic department's \$153,714 budget goes to coach stipends (\$55,700), transportation (\$52,800) and facilities (\$29,700). It does not cover staff costs for physical education or the annual international trip for the rugby teams, which is underwritten by \$100,000 in donor funding.
12. [The Academic and Behavioral Impact of Multiple Sport Participation on High School Athletes](#), Kohl, Lindenwood University, 2017.
13. Preliminary analysis of 2017-18 Civil Rights Data Collection conducted by Resonant Education.
14. ICEF View Park Preparatory School application to Project Play Reimagining School Sports in America project.
15. [Effects of Open Versus Closed Skill Exercise on Cognitive Function: A Systematic Review](#), 2019.
16. [State of Play East Harlem](#), Project Play, 2018.
17. [State of Play Hawai'i](#), Project Play, 2019.
18. [State of Play Central Ohio](#), Project Play, 2020.
19. [The Fun Integration Theory: Towards Sustaining Children and Adolescents Sports Participation](#), A. Visek, et al, 2015.
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21. [The Sports Coach as Educator: Using Sports Learning to Cultivate Academic Ability](#), V. Minjares, 2011.

CREDITS

Tom Farrey, executive director of the Aspen Institute Sports & Society Program, wrote this report with editorial contributions from Jon Solomon, editorial director, and project management from Funmi Animashaun, program assistant. Members of the Reimagining School Sports Advisory Committee, representing perspectives from education, youth sports, health, academia, government, and philanthropy, contributed to the development of this report.

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