



REIMAGINING  
SCHOOL SPORTS

# PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS



**boks**



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

A Project Play initiative of the Aspen Institute Sports & Society Program, “Reimagining School Sports” 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 invites any school to share their innovations and apply for recognition. A \$20,000 award will be given to one winner in each category, made possible by our project partners – Adidas/BOKS, 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](https://as.pn/sportsfacts)



Learn more about this project and find all reports at: [as.pn/schoolsports](https://as.pn/schoolsports)

## Challenges and Opportunities: Private High Schools

Many private schools are well-positioned to provide school sports. With smaller student bodies, they can more easily accommodate the demand for roster spots. They also may have considerable access to resources from families and alumni, who can be tapped to underwrite facilities and create teams or programs. Parents are often highly engaged in private school activities, and many, having played sports themselves, value the benefits that sports can provide their children.

Sports are sometimes used as a marketing tool to drive enrollment. Most of the top basketball teams and many of the top football teams in the country are privates – because they can recruit. They can cherry-pick talent without the geographic boundary constraints of public schools, assembling teams with many NCAA prospects.

Still, the chase for the college athletic scholarship isn't even one of the top 10 reasons private school students say they play sports, according to an Aspen Institute survey. In fact, it's less often a factor with private school students (27%) than with public school students (42%). Private school students also are less likely to play sports to make their families proud. They are more likely to participate for exercise, to make new friends, belong to a group, and to support their mental health.<sup>1</sup> Sport activity options are needed, with nearly 6 in 10 saying they have never taken a PE class in high school.<sup>2</sup>

Life sports like tennis and cross country are prioritized. Today, despite a century of Catholic school history in the sport, only 15% of male students play football at private schools, less than half the national average (33%). More than twice as many boys at private schools play soccer (29%) than boys at suburban public schools (12%). While revealing, that finding is perhaps not surprising: Families of affluence have begun turning away from football, which has the highest rates of injury in high school sports, according to the Healthy Sport Index.<sup>3</sup>

### Characteristics of Private Schools

Private schools are run by individuals or a corporation, rather than by a government or public agency. They are funded by their own endowment funds and students' tuition fees. They function outside the jurisdiction of state and federal departments of education and have wide latitude to design their philosophy, curriculum, and activities, and are smaller on average than public schools.

One in nine high school students in the United States attend a private school, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.<sup>4</sup> Parochial and schools with a religious affiliation are most common; other types include boarding schools and those that serve a specific population, such as students with disabilities. The average private school tuition is more than \$13,000 a year, with Catholic schools charging less and non-sectarian schools charging twice as much.<sup>5</sup>

More often than in public schools, students in private schools come from affluent homes, with fewer than 1 in 10 students living in poverty. They more often have two parents at home and those parents often have college degrees. Private schools also are less racially diverse; 70% of students are White, compared to half of public-school students. Private schools are most often found in urban areas.<sup>6</sup>

Athletes at private schools often get involved in other school activities. Private schools have the highest percentage of students reporting participation in band, community service clubs, National Honors Society or other academic clubs, art club, robotics/STEM, speech or debate, student council, and yearbook or newspaper.

Private schools are not without challenges. A sizable chunk of their male students (38%) say they just don't enjoy sports. That's higher than at public schools and suggests that administrators need to work harder to introduce physical activities that will engage a population that has checked out of sports. It's less of a problem with female students, only 28% of whom say they don't enjoy sports (lower than the rate of girls in public schools).

One key will be creating sport cultures that are more accepting of students who may look or think differently than much of the student body. Among private school

students who don't play sports, 25% of Blacks and 40% of Hispanics say they "don't feel welcome" on school teams. That's five times the rate of Black students at public urban schools and almost twice the rate of Hispanic students at public urban schools. Also, 8% of private school students said they stay away from sports because "I don't feel safe because of my gender identification or sexual preference." That's twice the rate of public schools.

Developing solutions to ensure all private school students feel welcome and safe to play sports won't be easy given the larger cultural and political debates on these issues. But many private school administrators are trying, exploring fresh ways to connect students to each other and their interests. In this report, we explore ideas that can help improve the model for private – and other – schools.



Only  
**27%**  
OF PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS  
SAY THEY PLAY SPORTS TO CHASE  
COLLEGE ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS  
(vs. 42% of public school students)

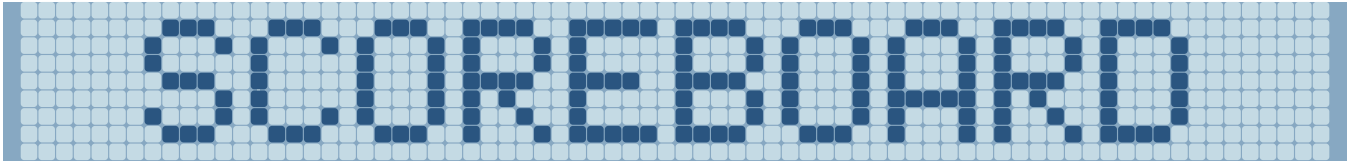
---

**89%**  
SAY THEY PLAY SPORTS  
FOR THE EXERCISE  
(vs. 77% of public school students)

---

Only  
**42%**  
OF STUDENTS HAVE TAKEN  
PE IN HIGH SCHOOL <sup>7</sup>

## PRIVATE 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 private school students told us.

### Top sports private school students play at school

(played at least one full season on team since 9th grade)

#### Female

	28%	Volleyball
	27%	Soccer
	21%	Field Hockey
	19%	Lacrosse
	18%	Cross Country
	16%	Basketball
	15%	Tennis
	12%	Track and Field
	10%	Swimming
	4%	Ice Hockey
	4%	Golf

#### Male

	29%	Soccer
	25%	Basketball
	23%	Tennis
	19%	Lacrosse
	15%	Baseball
	15%	Tackle Football
	14%	Track and Field
	14%	Cross Country
	12%	Ice Hockey
	8%	Golf

#### All

	28%	Soccer
	20%	Basketball
	19%	Lacrosse
	18%	Tennis
	17%	Volleyball
	16%	Cross Country
	13%	Track and Field
	12%	Field Hockey
	8%	Ice Hockey
	7%	Swimming
	7%	Tackle Football

### Top sports that students wish their private school offered

#### Female

	11%	Archery
	9%	Skiing
	7%	Gymnastics
	6%	Cheerleading
	6%	Dance Team
	5%	Badminton
	4%	Bowling
	4%	Softball
	4%	Weightlifting

#### Male









	9%	Skiing
	7%	Archery
	5%	Ultimate Frisbee
	5%	Weightlifting
	4%	Badminton
	4%	Flag Football
	4%	Tackle Football
	4%	Wrestling
	3%	Bowling
	3%	Swimming

#### All









	9%	Archery
	9%	Skiing
	5%	Badminton
	4%	Cheerleading
	4%	Dance Team
	4%	Gymnastics
	4%	Weightlifting

## Other physical activities private school students want to try









### Female

-  **44%** Strength Training
-  **43%** Yoga
-  **33%** General Fitness Classes
-  **28%** Biking
-  **26%** Dance
-  **25%** Skateboarding
-  **24%** Climbing
-  **18%** Outdoor Recreation

### Male

-  **46%** Strength Training
-  **30%** Biking
-  **23%** Climbing
-  **18%** Parkour
-  **18%** Outdoor Recreation
-  **16%** Skateboarding
-  **15%** General Fitness Classes
-  **11%** Adventure Racing

### All

-  **45%** Strength Training
-  **29%** Biking
-  **29%** Yoga
-  **25%** General Fitness Classes
-  **23%** Climbing
-  **21%** Skateboarding
-  **18%** Outdoor Recreation
-  **16%** Dance

## Why private school students play sports

Reason	Female	Male	All
Exercise	92%	85%	89%
Have fun	84%	82%	83%
Playing with and making new friends	75%	71%	73%
Learn and improve skills	67%	64%	66%
Competing	58%	74%	64%
Emotional/mental health	61%	49%	55%
Winning games/championships	50%	61%	54%
Belonging to a group within the school	52%	40%	46%
Improve college applications	49%	36%	43%
Getting away from problems	34%	27%	31%

## What prevents private school students from playing sports

Reason	Female	Male	All
Too much schoolwork	38%	29%	35%
I don't enjoy sports	28%	38%	31%
No offered sports interest me	22%	32%	25%
Didn't try out/not good enough	18%	21%	19%
Family responsibilities	14%	9%	13%
Work schedule	17%	3%	13%
I don't feel welcome	12%	9%	13%*
My friends don't play	11%	6%	10%
Previous injuries	12%	6%	10%
Transportation challenges	14%	0%	9%

\*The "All" percentage exceeds female and male figures because "All" includes students who answered non-binary or preferred not to respond.



WINNER: PRIVATE SCHOOLS

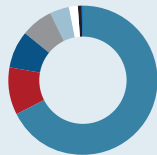


# Trinity School of Durham and Chapel Hill

Durham, N.C.



Location

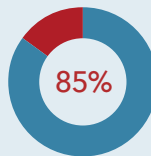


Race/ethnicity

- White (67%)
- Other/Not Listed (10%)
- 2 or More Races (8%)
- Black (7%)
- Hispanic (4%)
- Asian (2%)
- International (0.9%)
- Native American (0.1%)

Sports program costs:

**\$91,070<sup>8</sup>**



Students who play interscholastic/intramural sports or participate in school clubs involving physical activity (out of 183 students)

### Interscholastic

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Golf
- Soccer

- Swimming
- Tennis
- Track and Field
- Volleyball

### Intramural

- Boys Soccer
- Girls Volleyball
- Boys/Girls Basketball

### Club

- Winter Running
- Disc Golf
- Cheerleading

Website  
[trinityschoolnc.org](http://trinityschoolnc.org)

Contact **Sophie Smith**, Athletic Director  
[ssmith@tsdch.org](mailto:ssmith@tsdch.org)



OUR WINNING SCHOOL RECEIVES  
**\$20,000 AWARD**

COURTESY OF



## WINNER'S INNOVATION/ TRINITY SCHOOL OF DURHAM AND CHAPEL HILL

## Make an Athletic Plan for Each Student

When a student enters ninth grade at the Trinity School of Durham and Chapel Hill, they sit with a counselor and chart an academic path forward. They explore educational interests and goals, review test scores and classes taken, and develop a plan that starts with freshman courses but keeps the end in mind – that moment four years from now when they walk at graduation, prepared for the world ahead.

This exercise is common in high schools across the country. Last year, Trinity added a new layer: A four-year athletic plan.

Students were asked what sports, if any, they had played. What sport and general fitness options might interest them at the school. How those offerings might integrate with any non-school club sport activities they are involved with, or that robotics club that is of interest. And how the adults at Trinity can help them achieve their personal vision, whether it be a college athletic scholarship or just making friends through sports.

Some schools ask these questions informally. At Trinity, it's put down on paper.

"We want athletes, coaches, and staff to think that way – to set goals," says Lori Winters, Trinity's assistant director of enrollment management. "Maybe the first year they play JV but their goal in a year and a half is to be ready to try out for varsity. We're not just offering sports and asking kids to show up and play."

Trinity is no athletic powerhouse, certainly nowhere on the level of some of the private schools with national reputations for sports achievement – like Mater Dei in California or IMG Academy in Florida. It's a small, K-12 school with 183 students in the upper four grades that sends an athlete here and there to NCAA programs, and historically has been known more for its academic chops.

But at the Aspen Institute, we're honoring Trinity as the winner of our national search in the private schools category for our Reimagining School Sports initiative. That's because a simple innovation like a personalized four-year athletic plan can, if scaled, help modernize the model for school sports across the country and assist in developing the human potential of every student through sports.

“

**Maybe the first year they play JV but their goal in a year and a half is to be ready to try out for varsity. We're not just offering sports and asking kids to show up and play.**

Lori Winters, Assistant Director of Enrollment Management

”

"It reinforces our belief that every kid should have an opportunity to play a sport," says Jez McIntosh, associate head of school. "We'll give you all the offerings and walk you through them. It increases opportunities to get them involved. It opens the door to say, yeah, you can be part of this program."







The plans can be valuable in identifying sport options for the less athletically confident or inclined student. Trinity offers interscholastic teams in nine sports, with one each season that is no-cut. As a result of the COVID-19 disruption, intramurals in three sports were added, a format that Athletic Director Sophie Smith plans to continue to support as a means of introducing students to sports in a less pressurized way. There also are two club sport activities at the school, disc golf and a winter running club. Eighty-five percent of students participate in something connected to sports or physical activity.

Top athletes also derive benefits, from smart cross-training to college planning.

Zachary Powery is a rising 10th grader. Baseball was his sport up through middle school, but now it's basketball, a game he says he wants to "take as far as I can go with it, college, pro, who knows." When Powery dropped baseball, Smith encouraged him to add track and field, which he had never tried.

"The first time I threw a discus, it went out of bounds," he says. "It was very embarrassing. All these kids at other schools, they looked like professionals."

He worked through the awkwardness and hit the weight room with a plan designed to build the type

of strength that would serve him well in both of his sports. By the end of his freshman year, he had more than doubled his throw, to 69 feet. He did even better in shotput, qualifying for the state championship.

"Track gave me more confidence as an athlete," Powery says. "It made me not afraid to try new things, not just in athletics but in life."

Smith says that part of developing an athletic plan is gently helping students get realistic about their prospects of playing in college. When she pulls out the NCAA statistics showing the long odds of playing Division I sports, "jaws literally drop."

These meetings consist of her and the student alone, so they develop a plan that truly reflects the desires and adjusted pathway that makes sense to the student – not their parents. But sometimes Smith follows up with mom or dad, who aren't always so easily convinced their child has less than unlimited athletic potential.

That's what she did with the parents of Abby Love, a lacrosse athlete. Since Trinity doesn't offer lacrosse, Love played for a club team, and on that traveling circuit – as so often happens in youth sports today – the carrot of a Division I scholarship was made to seem there for the taking. Still, Love wasn't getting the desired looks.

“We had to say the best fit for Abby was not putting all of her eggs in the DI basket, but rather DIII,” says Smith, who played college lacrosse.

Love is now headed to Swarthmore College, a top Division III school in Pennsylvania, as a recruited athlete on a partial academic scholarship. She says she’s excited.

“We got more real about what needed to be done to play in college,” Love says.

Having tools to manage parent expectations is no small thing. That is especially true at private schools, where parents pay tuition (it’s \$23,000 a year at Trinity), are often highly involved in school activities, and seek a return on investment.

“I don’t think this school can put in place anything that controls parents’ dreams about sports and their kids,” McIntosh says. “But, showing them the big picture and how we will support their student over time is a valuable piece to the puzzle. We can say we sat down with your student and they said this is their goal. It’s another tool in communicating with parents about our (school) philosophy.”

For Smith, the plans are a work in progress. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted her ability to fully develop and implement them with each student. The plans live on paper and she wants to digitize them, for easy updating and distribution. Could injury and health information, including that collected by the school’s athletic trainer, be integrated, to help guide decision-making on sport options? Could links to related resources be added? Lots could be built on top of the platform.

Developing a digital template that could be shared with other schools would be key to scaling. Old habits die hard and athletic directors have tight budgets, so they’ll need to see the value of adding such a feature to their program format. At larger schools, there’s also the issue of capacity: Do they have time to meet with and review the interests of each student, as academic counselors do?

Smith insists these are challenges that can be met.

“It absolutely can be adopted at public schools,” she says. “If it becomes part of the DNA (of onboarding a student at a school), the kid can fill out the form.”



Says Winters: “It starts with the philosophy that athletics is more cocurricular than extracurricular. Often, athletics is treated like an afterthought and (the four-year plans) send the message of, no, it’s part of the overall student experience.”

It’s also part of building a cohesive school culture, Trinity officials say. High sport participation rates mean that most students are striving together in competitive, team-based situations that build bonds and allow them to see talents and character traits that aren’t so easily revealed in classroom settings alone. That, in turn, can help create the conditions to have conversations about tough topics.

Race, for instance. Students say they have seen that play out in the wake of last year’s social unrest after the killing of George Floyd. Like most private schools, Trinity’s students are predominantly White, and Smith says that some Black students have struggled to feel accepted at times. Powery has attended Trinity since second grade and said that talking with classmates about racial issues has gotten easier over the years, aided by an increasingly diversified student body.

“Overall, they’re just trying to create a more welcoming environment,” he says. “Sports is important for that.”

Like fellow rising sophomore Powery, Kaitlyn McLeod is Black. She plays volleyball, basketball and track, and was the state 100-meter champion this year.

“I personally have not experienced anything at Trinity other than welcomeness,” she says. “We really talk about the issues in the world. It wasn’t that way before I came here. We were taught to keep those conversations out of school.”

It’s one more reason Smith feels so strongly about personalized athletic plans designed to ensure that students have pathways to keep them playing sports.

“The gym seems to be a safe space for students,” she says. “Sports, if we do it right, is a great leveler because we are literally on a level playing field. For the White



kids, they see how excellent a lot of Black athletes are and how hard they work. It’s a great crucible of ideas and learning and reality, and of ‘let’s put things aside.’ There’s no better place than a team to do that well.”

“

**We really talk about the issues in the world. It wasn’t that way before I came here. We were taught to keep those conversations out of school.**

Kaitlyn McLeod, Sophomore Athlete

”

## HONOR ROLL IDEAS

Strategies that Trinity School of Durham and Chapel Hill uses that stood out as exemplary to the Aspen Institute and our project advisory board:

### Hire a sports parent trainer

Youth and school sports programs everywhere struggle with parent expectations. To address this challenge, Trinity uses Dr. Greg Dale, director of sport psychology and leadership program for the Duke University athletics department. Trinity bought his online program as a guide for parents to help their child. He has conducted seminars for parents and coaches to help children succeed in sports. He works on how to enjoy sports, avoid early sport specialization, and coach all players – not just the team’s best athletes.

### Develop student ideas

Trinity has a senior capstone project in which about five seniors dive deeply into an area of athletics: coaching teams, sports information/journalism, setting up a club, etc. It’s a graduation requirement. This year, one senior has coached the middle school tennis team and another senior is helping the AD launch the student-athlete leadership team. Students write reflections throughout the year, and do a final presentation in front of friends, faculty and the mentor of that program. Trinity athletics sometimes adjusts what it does based on student papers.

### Carve out room for free play

Trinity opens its gym and fields after school and on the weekend. Anyone who wants to participate can come out. It’s also an opportunity for new students to get to know coaches and other athletes. Still, most of the students who come out to open gym are either already on the team in that sport or plan to try out. At lunchtime, there’s open weight room and open gym for any student as long as there’s supervision. Pre-COVID, it was a popular spot for students to hang out on campus and students would eat lunch in the gym lobby.



## Tool for School Leaders

Did you know: There’s a robust tool that athletic directors, coaches, players and parents can use to find sports that are complementary to the primary sport played by a high school student. Check out the Healthy Sport Index, a data-driven project of the Aspen Institute and Hospital for Special Surgery that also analyzes the relative benefits and risks of playing each sport.

Learn more at:  
[healthysportindex.com](https://healthysportindex.com)



Powered By  HOSPITAL FOR SPECIAL SURGERY

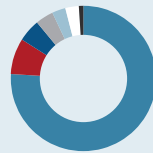
## MORE HONOR ROLL IDEAS

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

### Gaston Day School | Gastonia, N.C.

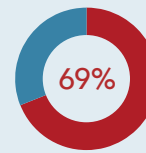


Location

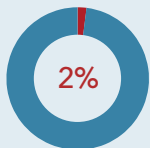


Race/ethnicity

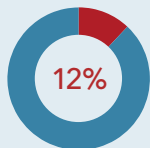
- White (76%)
- Black (8%)
- Asian (5%)
- Two or more races (4%)
- Hispanic (3%)
- Other (3%)
- Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander (0.2%)



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



Free and reduced lunch



Disability (IDEA or Section 504)

#### Interscholastic

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| ⚾ Baseball      | 🏊 Swimming        |
| 🏀 Basketball    | 🎾 Tennis          |
| 🏃 Cross Country | 🏊 Track and Field |
| 💡 Golf          | 🏐 Volleyball      |
| ⚽ Soccer        |                   |

Intramural None | Club None

#### Commit to multisport athletes

The psychology of young people hasn't changed over the past generation, or even millennia. Children are born to explore and test themselves in varied settings. But the industry of youth sports today promotes early sport specialization, discouraging multisport participation into the high school years. Only 35% of athletes at Gaston Day play two sports and 15% play three sports. To grow those numbers, the school plans to host a summer camp in partnership with 2-4-1 Sports (as in "Life's Too Short for Just One Sport"), a national leader in sports sampling curriculum.

Gaston Day will staff the camp, which will focus on kids ages 7 to 13 having fun playing many sports, not skills and drills in any specific one. "If we get this off the ground, now we don't even have to talk about what the culture is here," says Gaston Day Athletic Director Casey Field. "We'll show people Gaston Day values multisport athletes."

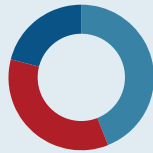
Website  
[gastonday.org](http://gastonday.org)

Contact  
Casey Field, Athletic Director, [cfield@gastonday.org](mailto:cfield@gastonday.org)

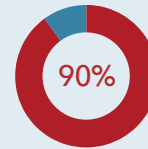
## O'Connell College Preparatory School | Galveston, TX



Location



Race/ethnicity



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

### Interscholastic

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Cross Country
- Dance
- Football
- Golf
- Soccer
- Softball
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Track and Field
- Volleyball

**Intramural**      None

**Club**      None

### Website

[oconnellprep.com](http://oconnellprep.com)

### Contact

**Derek Martin**, Athletics Director,  
[derek.martin@oconnellprep.com](mailto:derek.martin@oconnellprep.com)

### Sponsor sports with flexible rosters

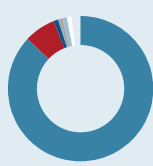
Despite its small student body (67 students), O'Connell offers 13 sports. The school is able to keep so many because sports like track, tennis and golf have flexible roster sizes. "My philosophy is I always want to make sure I have something for everybody," says O'Connell Athletic Director Derek Martin. "If a student doesn't participate, we don't want it to be because we don't have a program to offer. Even if we only have two or three kids in golf, we're going to compete in golf at least as individuals. Same with tennis."

Students are surveyed on what they like about sports there and what could be changed, such as sports to add. That's how Martin came up with adding swimming for next school year – a couple incoming students are swimmers. O'Connell doesn't have a pool on campus, so it might use Texas A&M-Galveston's pool or a public high school 20 minutes away. O'Connell uses Texas A&M-Galveston tennis courts. The oldest Catholic school in Texas just finds a way.

## Seacrest Country Day School | Naples, FL

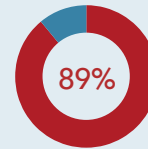


Location



Race/ethnicity

- White (87%)
- Hispanic (7%)
- Asian (1%)
- Black (1%)
- Native American (1%)
- Other (1%)



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

### Interscholastic

- ⚾ Baseball
- 🏀 Basketball
- 🏊 Cross Country
- ⛪ Golf
- ⚽ Soccer
- ⚾ Softball
- 🏊 Swimming
- 🎾 Tennis
- 🏃 Track and Field
- 🏐 Volleyball

### Intramural

- 🏀 Basketball
- 🏊 Cross Country
- 🏈 Flag Football
- ⚽ Soccer
- 🏹 Ultimate Frisbee
- 🏐 Volleyball
- 🏐 Spikeball
- 🎾 Pickleball
- 🎯 Cornhole

### Club

- 🧘 Yoga
- 🏋️ Strength Training
- 🤿 Scuba Diving
- 🏃 Running

### Prioritize life sports

Florida likes its high school football. But it's the most expensive sport and can be hard to host for small schools, with the roster sizes and heightened injury risks. It's also not a life sport, one often played into adulthood. Seacrest invests in those, from volleyball to pickleball, yoga to volleyball, teaching basic skills and the rules.

"We want students to be able to show up on a beach one day and they know how to play beach volleyball, or when they get to college, they know how to play games outside," says Bill Carufe, Seacrest athletic director. "I feel like our kids will have the confidence to know how to play. It's an avenue of acceptance and socialization." It's also particularly responsive to the needs of private school students, who in our Aspen Institute national survey were the most likely to express enthusiasm for free play activities.

Website [seacrest.org](http://seacrest.org)

Contact **Bill Carufe**, athletic director,  
[b.carufe@seacrest.org](mailto:b.carufe@seacrest.org)

## ENDNOTES

1. Results from the Aspen Institute national survey of high school students, September 2020-March 2021. The sample represented students from urban, suburban and rural public high schools, charter schools, and private schools.
2. [Adolescent Physical Activity at Public Schools, Private Schools, and Homeschools, United States](#), 2014, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This study reported 41.5% of students in private schools have not taken PE and these results were also reflected in the Aspen Institute’s national survey of high school students, September 2020-March 2021.
3. [HealthySportIndex.com](#) website.
4. [Public and Private Schools Comparison](#), National Center for Education Statistics.
5. [Council for American Private Education](#), citing NCES data from 2015.
6. [Public and Private Schools Comparison](#), National Center for Education Statistics.
7. Results from the Aspen Institute national survey of high school students, September 2020-March 2021. The sample represented students from urban, suburban and rural public high schools, charter schools, and private schools.
8. Athletic department costs provided by Sophie Smith, athletic director at Trinity School of Durham and Chapel Hill. They are: \$67,400 for coaching stipends and contracts, \$11,045 for transportation, \$4,425 for state athletic association dues, \$3,000 for uniforms (once every four years), \$3,000 for referees and officials, \$1,500 for meals, and \$700 for awards and banquets. Budget does not include athletic trainer, staff support for PE, or maintenance of athletic facilities, all of which falls under the campus-wide budget.



## 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. Photos were provided by Gaston Day School, O’Connell College Preparatory School, and Trinity School of Durham and Chapel Hill.

To learn more, visit [as.pn/schoolsports](https://as.pn/schoolsports)

Our gratitude to the funding partners supporting this project:

