



REIMAGINING
SCHOOL SPORTS

SMALL URBAN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS



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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 invited 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



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

Challenges and Opportunities: Small Urban Public Schools

Characteristics of Urban Schools

For purposes of this report, the Aspen Institute defines a small urban school as a public school with fewer than 1,000 students and classifies itself as located in a city/urban area. The National Center for Education Statistics defines a small urban school as one located inside an urbanized area with a population of less than 100,000. Thirty percent of U.S. public school students are in a city – fewer than in the suburbs (40%) and more than in rural areas (19%) and towns (11%).¹

Urban school districts tend to be large and about two-thirds of urban students are non-White.² For every student enrolled, the average predominantly non-White urban school district receives \$2,226 less in funding than a White district.³ Urban schools also serve an increasing majority of students from disadvantaged households. Urban students (38%) are more likely than suburban (16%) and rural (28%) students to receive free or reduced-price lunch.⁴ Typically, urban students are “likely to be surrounded by adults with low levels of educational attainment and limited professional prospects – a social context that can have a powerful impact on how students approach school and envision their futures.”⁵ The most successful urban schools have a clearly stated mission; a safe climate for learning; high expectations for students, teachers and administrators; high student time on task; administrators who are instructional leaders; frequent monitoring of student progress; and positive home-school relations.⁶

Nationally, 63% of urban public high schools offer interscholastic sports, below the rates of rural (73%) and suburban (70%) schools, according to an Aspen Institute-commissioned analysis of 2017-18 Civil Rights Data Collection by Resonant Education. The percentage of urban students who play on high school teams is 33%, also lower than that of rural (42%) and suburban (41%) schools.⁷

There are distinct differences between large and small urban schools that impact sports opportunities. In the early 2000s, many education policymakers prioritized what is known as the “small school movement.” The idea is that smaller high schools have better attendance, stronger performance on reading and writing assessment, and higher graduation and college attendance rates, despite serving a more educationally disadvantaged population of students. The movement

took large high schools, primarily located in urban areas, and redesigned them into smaller schools to build relationships so students, teachers and families better know each other and improve school academics and culture.

There are distinct differences between large and small urban schools that impact sports opportunities.

The success of this effort is still being debated. “Small schools have come a long way over the past decade, but the risks of these schools failing or reverting back to comprehensive school practices are very real,” wrote researcher Carroll Bronson. “Small schools need to provide opportunities that are different than the larger comprehensive schools they are replacing.”⁸

More recently, another study concluded that small school reform improved schools of all sizes in New York City, with significant gains in graduation rates, test rates, and cost per student.⁹

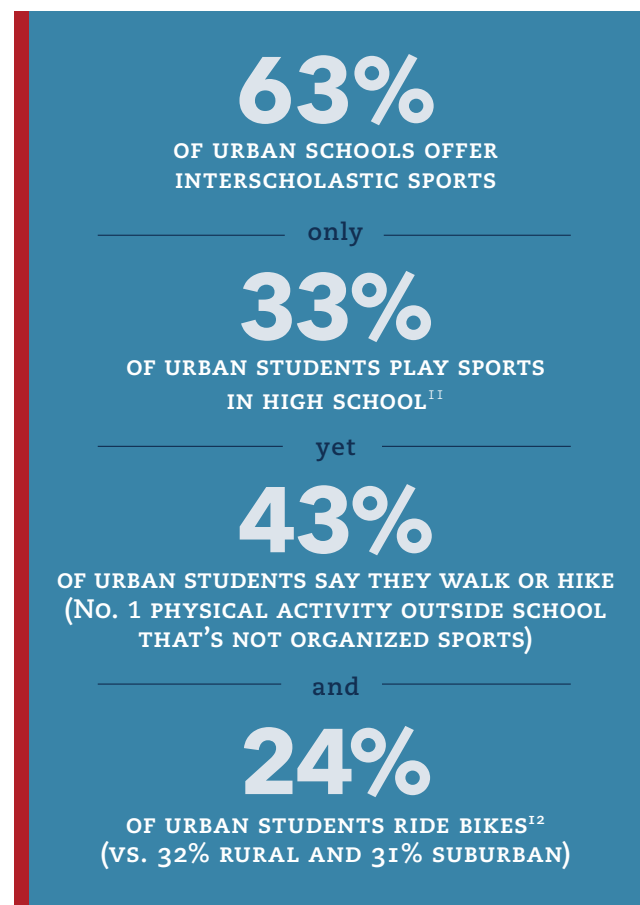
One result of downsizing urban schools is fewer sports options offered. “What once were large, comprehensive, urban high schools with large athletic programs were split up into multiple schools where a smaller design focus – and therefore a limited number of athletic offerings – became prevalent,” wrote Jimmy Lynch, executive director of athletics at the School District of Philadelphia.¹⁰ Schools with smaller student bodies may lack the capacity to consistently field teams that interest students, while also changing the identity and pride of a school because fewer teams and roster spots may mean less interest to try the sport or attend sports events as a spectator. Identifying and securing field and gym space is especially challenging.

The rise of special admission and magnet programs within existing schools further complicates sports opportunities. Lynch found that evolving enrollment sizes for small schools not only impacts the number of sports programs a school can offer in any given year, but also how much a school can sustain programs. “As populations in urban cities fluctuate on an annual basis, the projections on what sports a school may or may not be able to host can change rapidly,” Lynch wrote.

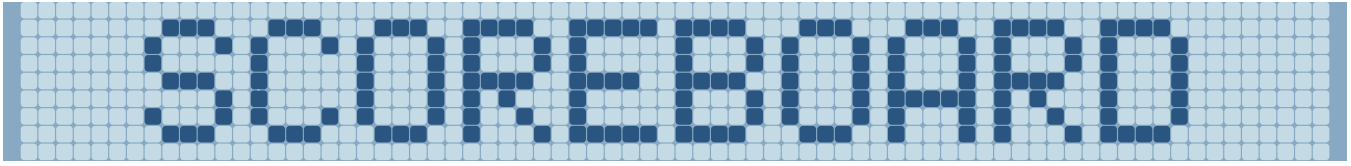
Some urban schools participate in cooperative sports programs, meaning multiple schools combine to field one team in a sport. Co-op programs may be the only way to field a team and provide a student’s only access to a particular sport. Coaches with co-ops say there’s great value in students from different backgrounds getting to know each other. The drawbacks: Communication between two schools is very difficult and leads to logistical problems; co-op athletes may need extra transportation to another school; some students will never make varsity because the co-op team pools from a larger group; and school pride can be lost by not playing solely for your school team.

Worth noting: Our Aspen Institute survey shows urban students rely just as often on community programs as they do school programs. Urban students participate in track and field, soccer and football outside school more than suburban and rural students. Only 17% of urban students said they plan to participate in track and field in high school (vs. 25% suburban and 24% rural), compared to 11% of urban students who planned to do track outside school (vs. 6% each for suburban and rural).

Where small urban schools can truly thrive is by building meaningful relationships with students. Since there are fewer athletes, coaches and athletic directors can enjoy the benefits of knowing every student and their parents. They can build a safe place that may not always be possible in a large school, where students can become lost as another number. Ideas in this report can help refresh the high school sports model for small urban schools to tackle immense challenges.



SMALL URBAN PUBLIC 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 urban students told us.

Top sports urban students plan to play this year

At School

21%	Soccer
20%	Basketball
17%	Track and Field
15%	Volleyball
14%	Tackle Football
12%	Baseball
10%	Tennis
7%	Golf
6%	Cheerleading
6%	Cross Country
6%	Softball
6%	Wrestling

Outside School

21%	Soccer
18%	Basketball
13%	Volleyball
13%	Baseball
11%	Track and Field
11%	Tackle Football
8%	Softball
5%	Tennis
5%	Cheerleading
4%	Golf
3%	Wrestling
2%	Cross Country



Other physical activities urban students participate in outside school

Urban Students

All Students

43%	46%	Walking/hiking
30%	36%	Workout at gym
27%	30%	Jogging
27%	32%	Pickup games/ free play
24%	32%	Riding bike
17%	21%	Swimming

Urban Males

All Males


















41%	43%	Pickup games/ free play
38%	44%	Workout at gym
32%	36%	Walking/hiking
28%	30%	Jogging
24%	32%	Riding bike
15%	19%	Swimming

Urban Females

All Females

53%	54%	Walking/hiking
26%	30%	Jogging
25%	30%	Workout at gym
24%	32%	Riding bike
18%	23%	Swimming
17%	23%	Pickup games/ free play

Non-sport activities urban students participate in at school

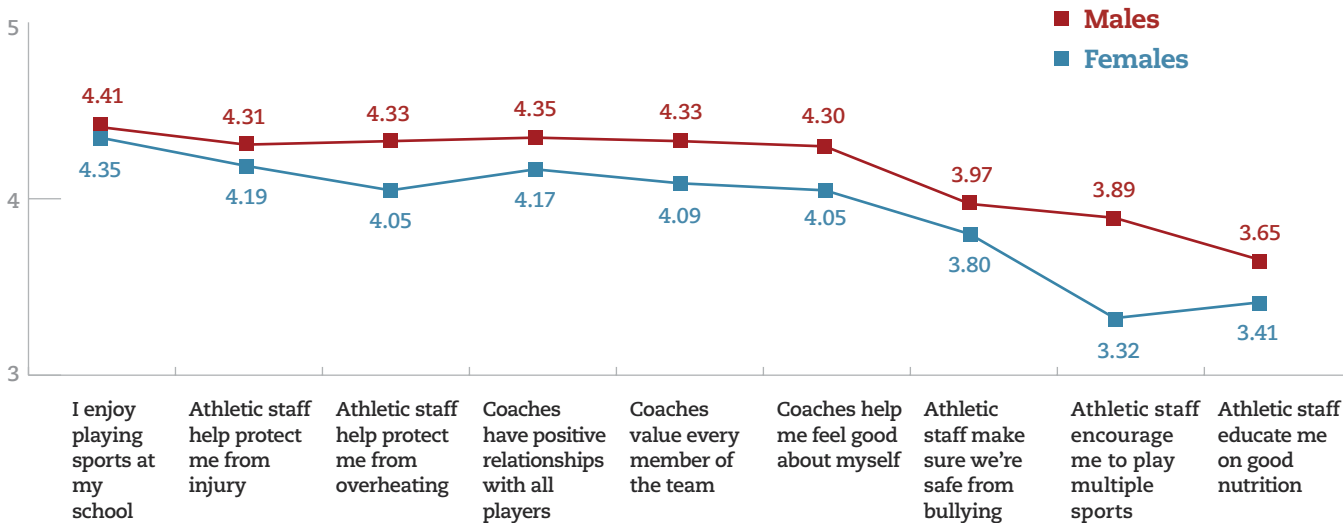
Urban Students	All Students	Urban Males	All Males	Urban Females	All Females
 13%	12% Academic club	 8%	8% Academic club	 17%	16% Academic club
 7%	11% Band	 8%	12% Band	 7%	9% Community service club
 5%	10% Choir	 5%	5% Robotics/STEM	 6%	10% Band
 5%	6% Community service club	 3%	5% Choir	 5%	13% Choir
 4%	6% Student council	 3%	3% Student council	 4%	9% Student council
 4%	4% Robotics/STEM			 4%	8% Yearbook/newspaper

What urban students say about high school PE

Students	Urban	All
Enjoyed PE	63%	62%
Did not enjoy PE	16%	12%
Have not taken high school PE	17%	22%
PE increased interest to play high school sports	5%	5%



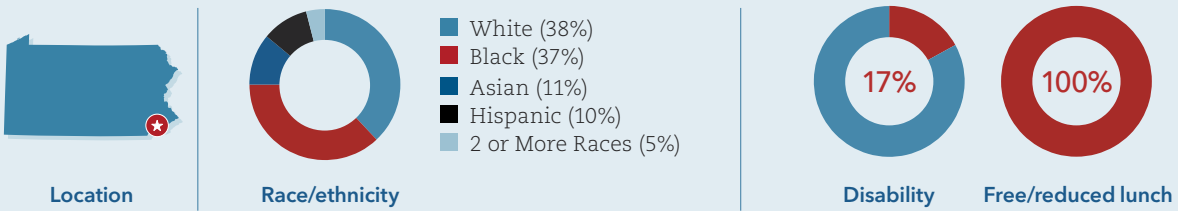
What urban students say of high school athletic staff (1-5 scale with 5 being most favorable)



WINNER: SMALL URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Science Leadership Academy

Philadelphia, PA



Sports program costs: **\$86,000¹³**
 Percentage of total school budget: **0.02%**



Interscholastic

- 🏸 Badminton
- ⚾ Baseball
- 🏀 Basketball
- 👯 Cheerleading
- 🏊 Cross Country
- ⚪ Golf
- 🏑 Lacrosse
- ⚽ Soccer
- ⚾ Softball
- 🏊 Swimming
- 🏈 Tackle Football
- 🎾 Tennis
- 🏃 Track and Field
- 🥋 Ultimate Frisbee
- 🏐 Volleyball
- 🤼 Wrestling

Intramural

None

Club

- 🚲 Bicycling
- 💃 Dance/Step
- 🧗 Rock Climbing
- 🏃 Running
- 🛹 Skateboarding
- 🧘 Yoga

Website
sla.philasd.org

Contact
 Zoe Siswick, athletic director, zsiswick@scienceleadership.org



OUR WINNING SCHOOL RECEIVES
\$20,000 AWARD

COURTESY OF



WINNER'S INNOVATION / SCIENCE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Practice in Mornings to Grow Access

Miranda Sosa can say it now that her high school basketball career at Science Leadership Academy (SLA) in Philadelphia recently ended after graduating. “Freshman year, I was like, morning practice? What’s with getting me up super early in the morning?” she says.

Practices at 6:30 a.m. meant Sosa woke up by 5:30. Depending on if she stayed with her mom in Philadelphia or dad in New Jersey, she had a 20- to 40-minute commute on public transportation to whatever practice location that SLA, minus its own gym, could find before class. Fortunately, the costs for public transportation are covered by the School District of Philadelphia. Otherwise, the \$5.20 roundtrip costs for a train and bus might have prevented Sosa from playing.

There’s science to support morning exercise makes students’ brains better ready to learn.

As the years went on, morning practices grew on Sosa. She found they freed up her afternoons to work on school projects with classmates or earn money with jobs at a restaurant, grocery store and ice-skating rink.

She also felt energized. “I honestly think it’s more beneficial to have morning practices because, for me, working out in the morning prepares me more for the day,” Sosa says.

In fact, there’s science to support morning exercise makes students’ brains better ready to learn. One study found that starting with early-morning physical education class helped a high school dramatically increase its standardized reading and math test scores.¹⁴ Other research, however, revealed that high school students’ sleep cycles benefited by



starting classes later in order to sleep better and feel less sleepy during the day.¹⁵

To be clear, SLA’s basketball, softball and Ultimate frisbee teams hold practices in the mornings out of necessity. Good luck finding available fields and gyms in Philadelphia after school. Every SLA game is an away game on a school bus. So, some coaches elect to carve out practices in the morning, creating some challenges but also aligning with the public magnet school’s mission to grow access to extracurricular activities.

Only one-third of urban high school students nationally participate in school sports.¹⁶ Though it’s not an exact comparison to that national figure, 40% of SLA students play sports or participate in clubs with physical activity. For its ability to adapt practice times and intentionally expose urban students to new sports, SLA is recognized as the Aspen Institute’s Project Play winner in the Small Urban Schools category of our Reimagining School Sports initiative.

SLA differs from many urban schools in that it's a project-based school with a college-preparatory curriculum that focuses on science, technology, mathematics, and entrepreneurship. But SLA faces many of the same challenges, such as diminished budgets and lack of playing spaces, to provide quality sports access to students. Creative thinking guides SLA, which has thought outside the box since it opened in 2006 and faced resistance to play sports at all.

"We were told by the school district, 'Oh, you'll be a science high school and those kids won't want to play sports,'" says Chris Lehmann, SLA's founding principal and CEO. "A since-retired administrator said, 'Oh, come on, these kids don't play sports.' For lack of a better phrase, the sentiment was, 'Nerds don't play sports.' I was horribly offended by that."

“

“A lot of my fears eventually went away. As soon as I joined the team, my coach and teammates were really, really welcoming. That was the biggest game changer.”

Samiyah Snowden, SLA junior

”

Lehmann pushed forward, first with a basketball team and then Ultimate frisbee even though SLA was built without a gym or fields. (The school will have a shared gym in 2021-22 for the first time while sharing a renovated building with Benjamin Franklin High School. The building was closed in 2019 after its initial opening due to asbestos problems that caught the school district off guard following a \$37 million renovation.¹⁷) Today, SLA has 16 sports teams and six clubs involving physical activity at this 500-student school of so-called “nerds.”

Samiyah Snowden, a junior at SLA, was always interested in playing sports but never joined an

organized team because of the time commitment in relation to academics. Snowden, who is mixed race, also felt she did not see herself represented in certain sports while growing up.

“I feel there's a lot of stereotypes when it comes to sports and race, like Black or White people only play this sport,” she says. “Just saying a sport is diverse is one thing, but actually making an effort is a completely other thing.”

While stuck at home during COVID-19 school shutdowns before her sophomore year, Snowden began to see herself trying soccer and joined SLA's team. Nationally, far more White youth play soccer at a higher rate than Black kids, but SLA's team is very diverse with Black, White and Asian students. Snowden worried her skills were not good enough because some SLA players have participated in soccer since they were young. She practiced all summer and watched YouTube videos.

“Then I realized some people actually didn't play since they were little and my skill range was just a little above or lower,” says Snowden, who became a starter her first season. “A lot of my fears eventually went away. As soon as I joined the team, my coach and teammates were really, really welcoming. That was the biggest game changer.”

SLA embraces different sports and activities not regularly available in urban communities. A rock-climbing club with about 20 students was started by a student during COVID as a socially distanced activity. Girls lacrosse, which historically is played predominantly by White youth from wealthy homes, began in 2018 as a cooperative program with another magnet school. About half of the 28 students on the team are Asian, Black or Latina.

Roughly 25 SLA students participate annually in [Students Run Philly Style](#), a city-wide program to inspire youth to run a full or half marathon. Most of these SLA students are typically not on sports teams.

According to Students Run Philly Style, 80% of its student participants throughout the city increase or maintain self-confidence, 50% decrease their violent behavior, and 41% increase their grade-point average.¹⁸

“

We have diverse captains to send a message to suburban teams we play, who don't have that kind of representation, that Black and Latino students can be leaders in this sport. That's really important to me and SLA.

Chris Lehmann, SLA's founding principal and CEO

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Before COVID, SLA's Ultimate program had 50 students on girls varsity, boys varsity and coed JV teams, meaning 10% of this diverse school played Ultimate, a predominantly White sport. About 75% of SLA's Ultimate players only participate in this sport, Lehmann says. Last year's captain became so much more physically fit from years of Ultimate that he made the basketball team as a senior.

Lehmann says he believes SLA fields the only majority Black and Latino Ultimate team on the East Coast and one of the few in the country. “I've had long conversations with some of our Black players who have to fight the stigma in their own community from people who say Ultimate is a White sport and it isn't a real sport,” he says. “We have diverse captains to send a message to suburban teams we play, who don't have that kind of representation, that Black and Latino students can be leaders in this sport. That's really important to me and SLA.”

The culture of Ultimate appeals to some SLA students. Players call their own fouls, so integrity, sportsmanship and fair play are crucial components of the sport. At the end of every game, teams meet in a spirit circle

to congratulate each other and award silly prizes. Lehmann is helping launch a middle school Ultimate league in Philadelphia to help grow the city's four high school teams.

Like the basketball and softball teams at SLA, Ultimate practices in the mornings. It's a necessity at SLA, where the lack of facility space is so bad that the girls soccer team uses railroad tracks in public parks as goals.

“I had a freshman goalie this year come up to me after a few practices and say, ‘When we have real games, will we have real goals?’” says Zoe Siswick, SLA's girls soccer coach and athletic director. They do have real goals in games, but that doesn't make the lack of goals at practices any less sad.

Morning practices are “our secret weapon,” Lehmann says. “You're literally out there with the fog coming off the field, and it's you and the kids. The day isn't good or bad yet. They haven't had a (bad) class. They haven't gotten in a fight with their friend. It's this sacred time that this is what we do. The hard part is there are kids you don't get to play because they don't want to get up so early to practice. They're not entirely wrong. It's hard getting up.”

The Ultimate team practices on empty park fields four mornings per week, usually from 6:30-8 am. The fields are close enough to SLA that students can hop on a city bus after practice and get to school on time for the start of classes.



Siswick runs morning practices for softball but sticks with the afternoon for soccer, always checking with players for their thoughts on what time they prefer. She notices morning practices weed out students who are not truly interested or committed.

“I’ve had players on my team who are persistently late to school and once morning softball starts, they’re never late for the entire season,” Siswick says. “Now, I probably wouldn’t be surprised if some students are falling asleep in class. But it avoids feeling like you’re not getting home until 6 pm or later every day, which can be tough for coaches with a family and students.”

For years, the girls basketball team practiced in a tiny elementary school gym before they were able to rent a local fitness facility for morning practices.



I’ve had players on my team who are persistently late to school and once morning softball starts, they’re never late for the entire season.

Zoe Siswick, SLA’s girls soccer and softball coach



“There are a ton of kids who have jobs in the afternoons – and working way more hours during COVID – who wouldn’t be able to play if we had afternoon practice,” says Erin Giorgio, the girls basketball coach in recent years. “We make it more accessible for a larger number of kids by practicing in the morning. The morning creates complications because they travel by themselves, but a lot of parents would rather have them travel in the morning than night.”

Matthew Kay, SLA’s boys basketball coach, says he lost count on the number of rec centers he has rented across Philadelphia for practices and games. “It’s kind of like, what haven’t I used?” he says.

Kay used to schedule 6:30 am practices and preferred the early time. He’s switching to afternoons in 2021-22 because he has a child to drop off at school each morning but hopes to return to mornings in the future.



“It’s sweet to be done at 3 pm,” Kay says. “Morning practices might work better at neighborhood schools than ours. One of our biggest challenges is Philly is a big city and kids are coming from all over. I can see why a lot of folks don’t do it like us.”

Many SLA students use buses, trains and subways from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) to and from school. The commute can be as long as one hour each way. The School District of Philadelphia provides free SEPTA passes for students who live at least 1.5 miles from school.

Late-pass stickers let athletes ride SEPTA after 6 p.m. when they have games. Siswick, the athletic director, says the free passes allow her to schedule practices at fields that are a subway or bus ride away. “I can really have practice wherever because I know kids will be able to get there with passes,” she says.

If the school district did not provide passes, “I probably wouldn’t be able to play because it’s expensive to take SEPTA every day,” says Snowden, the soccer player at SLA. “I wouldn’t have made it to every practice.”

Lehmann says morning practices can be adopted by other urban schools and former players now tell him how much they miss 6:30 a.m. practices. But he cautions the first year will be “really, really hard.”

“You just have to get the ball rolling,” he says. “Then it gets easier. It becomes culture. I’d never be able to get six hours of practice a week if I tried to find fields after school. If you can get buy-in from the kids, morning practice opens up your schedule in so many ways.”

HONOR ROLL IDEAS

Strategies that Science Leadership Academy (SLA) uses that stood out as exemplary to the Aspen Institute and our project advisory board:

Be creative to secure sports access

Sometimes SLA thinks it can't afford a potential practice facility. That's not the end of the conversation. SLA secured a basketball court at a private facility by agreeing to help create a promotional video. The softball team has discussed holding joint practices with a nearby school at its field. A couple SLA students play football thanks to a cooperative agreement with Benjamin Franklin High School.

Hire women coaches and be flexible

At SLA, 75% of the coaches are women, including female head coaches for girls soccer, girls volleyball, girls basketball, girls lacrosse, softball, coed cross country, coed swimming, and coed track and field. Supportive partners who take on household responsibilities help allow this. So do supportive administrators. When two female coaches return in 2022-23 from having babies, they will decide what practice time works best for their family and the students.

Use sports settings to hold real conversations on race

Matthew Kay, who teaches English and coaches boys basketball at SLA, wrote a book about [how to lead meaningful race conversations in the classrooms](#). He says that talking about racial stereotypes and identity works better in sports – a setting where students want to be – than classrooms. “A lot of times we talk about conversations as if it's all dependent on people's personality,” Kay says. “Teachers aren't often encouraged to work their techniques in leading conversations. Coaches are good at breaking things down to distinct skills that kids can practice that are replicable. Conversations are the same way.”

Tool for School Leaders

Did you know: Youth in contact sports show the riskiest off-field behavior. Among high school sports, the highest rates of binge drinking appear in boys lacrosse (52%), wrestling (35%), football (32%) and girls lacrosse (32%). Learn more in the Healthy Sport Index, a data-driven project of the Aspen Institute and Hospital for Special Surgery that analyzes the relative benefits and risks of playing each sport.

Visit: healthysportindex.com



Healthy Sport Index

Powered By



Let Her Play

To help take the burden away from income-restricted families and help young female athletes get back to the sport they love, the DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation gave out 15,000 gifts to girls programs during an eight-city summer tour. Also, DICK'S is providing 100,000 girls sports bras over one year to encourage more participation.

Learn more at:

www.sportsmatter.org

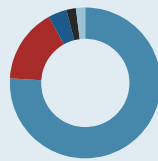
MORE HONOR ROLL IDEAS

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

Coliseum College Prep Academy | Oakland, CA

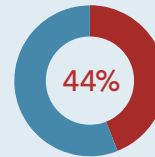


Location



Race/ethnicity

- Hispanic (76%)
- Black (16%)
- Asian (4%)
- White (2%)
- 2 or More Races (1%)



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

Interscholastic

- 🏸 Badminton
- ⚽ Soccer
- 🏀 Basketball
- 🏊 Track and Field
- 🎳 Bowling
- 🏐 Volleyball
- 🏊 Cross Country

Intramural

- 🏈 Flag Football

Club

- 🩰 Ballet Folklorico
- 🏋️ Strength Training
- 🚲 Biking
- 🧘 Yoga
- 🏃 General Fitness/Conditioning

Website

www.ousd.org/CCPA

Contact

Amy Boyle, assistant principal/athletic director, amy.boyle@ousd.org

Aggressively pursue partnerships to pilot programs

If 80% of a potential roster for Coliseum College Prep Academy (CCPA) demonstrates interest in a sport, the school seeks a nonprofit partner to help generate interest for afterschool programming or physical education. Interest is demonstrated through an annual survey of students. The goal is to build a full participation roster for the following year. To avoid sports teams becoming segregated, CCPA targets sports that are accessible and of interest to diverse students, not necessarily sports with the most overall interest.

“Our reputation as a district is if you have an initiative to pilot, come to us and we’ll figure out how to do it on the ground,” CCPA Athletic Director Amy Boyle says. This approach creates interest around dance, yoga, biking, soccer, baseball, softball, rowing, and lacrosse. Because many CCPA girls won’t play sports due to feelings of insecurity about their body, the school partners with Title Nine, a women’s clothing company, to annually receive 50 sports bras for female students to use. “There’s a knowledge gap, more than a financial gap, of parents not understanding bras are a thing that female athletes need,” Boyle says. “The students take them home and try them on, so they find the right size and fit.”

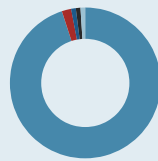
MORE HONOR ROLL IDEAS

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

Dunbar High School | Washington D.C.

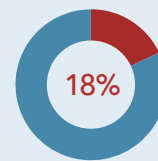


Location



Race/ethnicity

- Black (96%)
- Hispanic (3%)
- Asian (0.4%)
- White (0.3%)
- Other (0.3%)



Students who play interscholastic/intramural sports or participate in school clubs involving physical activity: **18%**

Interscholastic

- ⚾ Baseball
- ⚾ Basketball
- 🎳 Bowling
- 👯 Cheerleading
- 🏊 Cross Country
- 🏈 Flag Football
- ⛳ Golf
- ⚾ Softball
- 🏊 Swimming
- 🏈 Tackle Football
- 🎾 Tennis
- 🏃 Track and Field
- 🏐 Volleyball

Intramural

None

Club

- 🚲 Biking

Promote biking clubs for inner-city students

Homicide rates are increasing in Washington D.C. So, during COVID-19, with students in remote learning, Dunbar High School PE teacher Alex Clark started the Stay Prime biking program for students to stay active and out of trouble. About 60 students are in the program, which features weekly bike rides that vary based on skill level and location to different landmarks around D.C. The program partners with organizations to teach bike safety and how to fix bikes.

The bicycle rides are also used as an intervention. Administrators find biking, which occurs less in urban environments than suburban and rural communities, helps students who have lost a loved to cope with their emotions. Due to the program’s success, D.C. Public Schools is now fielding a competitive cycling team from students across the city. “It’s opened up a ton of opportunities for students to look at themselves differently and realize they’re not just limited to football, basketball, track and volleyball,” Clark says.

Website

www.dunbarhsdc.org/

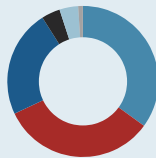
Contact

DeMarcus McMillan, assistant principal, demarcus.mcmillan@k12.dc.gov

Roosevelt High School | Minneapolis, MN

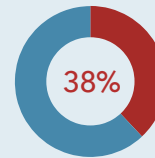


Location



Race/ethnicity

- Black (35%)
- Hispanic (33%)
- White (23%)
- American Indian (4%)
- Asian (4%)
- 2 or More Races (2%)



Students who play interscholastic/intramural sports or participate in school clubs involving physical activity: **38%**

Interscholastic

- Badminton
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Cross Country
- Gymnastics
- Ice Hockey
- Lacrosse
- Skiing
- Soccer
- Softball
- Swimming
- Tackle Football
- Tennis
- Track and Field
- Volleyball
- Wrestling

Intramural

None

Club

- Ultimate Frisbee

Change the narrative about students with disabilities

Between 6% to 25% of students with disabilities nationally participate in school sports, compared to 18% to 73% of students without a disability.¹⁹ Typically, society views youth with disabilities playing sports as an inspirational or charitable act. A truly inclusive model recognizes a legal obligation exists to give every student the right to play sports, whether in a competitive or non-competitive environment.

Roosevelt High School supports this inclusivity by offering many adapted sports for students with physical disabilities – basketball, bowling, soccer, tennis, softball and floor hockey. These are cooperative teams pairing Roosevelt students with others in the school district. Students with intellectual disabilities can play Unified basketball. “Many parents say they never thought their kid would play sports and they can’t believe they have friends,” says Angie Powell, Roosevelt’s adapted sports coach. “So many kids with disabilities don’t see themselves as having a disability. There’s a mindset change that’s needed for more opportunities.”

Website

roosevelt.mpls.k12.mn.us

Contact

Angie Powell, adapted sports coach, angie.powell@mpls.k12.mn.us

ENDNOTES

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CREDITS

Jon Solomon, editorial director of the Aspen Sports & Society Program, was principal investigator of this report. Tom Farrey, executive director, edited the report. Staff including Funmi Animashaun, program assistant, provided project management. 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 Science Leadership Academy and Coliseum College Prep Academy.

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Our gratitude to the funding partners supporting this project:



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