

Oregon School District
Youth Sports & Athletics Task Force Report
Executive Summary (8/21/18)

A long-held belief of Oregon School District Boards of Education is that student participation in co-curricular activities such as youth sports (pre-K - 6th grade) and athletics (7th - 12th grade) are an integral part of the total educational process. Through participation in these opportunities, students can experience activities that will enrich their lives and teach them lessons of personal growth, sportsmanship and teamwork.

Furthermore, sports participation provides a forum for developing and cultivating communication skills, honing the ability to work with others and put others needs ahead of one's own, and having an opportunity to learn from both successes and failures. It helps develops discipline, leadership skills and respect for others, and also encourages healthy choices, leads to increased physical activity to benefit overall health and well-being, assists students in learning how to cope with difficult situations and provides an outlet for enjoyment and fun.

During the 2017-2018 school year, 45 percent of Oregon High School students participated in at least one sport. At Oregon Middle School, that figure was 44 percent. In addition, more than 3,000 Oregon School District students engage in sports activities through local youth sports organizations.

Because the Oregon School District has a proud tradition of deliberate reflection on how we educate our students, opportunities we offer to learners of all ages and partnerships we cultivate with families and community organizations, the Oregon Board of Education established a Youth Sports & Athletics Task Force in early 2017 to examine the following:

- Purposes, shared values and expectations for youth sports organizations and athletic programs in the district;
- Desired future outcomes and best practices, and creation of cooperative opportunities between youth sports organizations and District athletic programs; and
- Need for all organizations and programs to ensure that all students have opportunities consistent with the Oregon School District value of educational equity for all students.

Research was conducted looking at national trends, scientific findings and District participation and survey data. Coming out of this research, the Task Force identified four areas of emphasis relevant to the charge before them.

1. Participation Costs: Youth sports in the United States has become a billion dollar industry that has grown 55 percent since 2010. The proliferation and costs of more selective, competitive opportunities has created a divide between families who can afford this level of coaching, training and travel, and those families who cannot. It has also replaced community-based opportunities which shuts out more kids.
2. Sport Specialization and Cessation: Nearly 3 out of 4 children quit organized sports by the time they enter high school, and the average number of sports played by children ages 6 to 17 has declined for three straight years. Experts attribute this to an “up or out”

mentality and specialization too soon which may lead to burnout, anxiety, depression and attrition.

3. Parent Expectations: Parents are a key component in fostering their child's youth sports experience. Learning how their child can develop properly as an athlete and actively listening to why their child plays sports (#1 reason is likely to have fun) are two important indicators for enjoyable youth sports and athletics participation.
4. Coach Training: Finding individuals who have the necessary coaching competencies and training is a significant issue. Furthermore, 72 percent of youth sports coaches are male, only 28 percent are female.

The Task Force also hosted a two-night Youth Sports Summit whereby more than 90 community members (parents, youth sports leaders, coaches and District staff) met for three hours each evening to discuss youth sports and athletics in the Oregon School District. The Summit also included a panel discussion with current OSD student-athletes about their experiences.

Arising out of the the themes and action steps ideas that came from the Summit as well as the research, the Task Force developed the following framework to guide discussion.

- What recommendations/action steps will have the most impact in ensuring that our youth sports and athletics programs are built upon a foundation of learning?
- What recommendations/action steps will grow the strongest culture in youth sports and athletics for our kids?

The recommendations of the Youth Sports & Athletics Task Force are:

Recommendation #1:

The Oregon School District survey both students and parents (4K to Grade 12) about participation and non-participation in sports in order to better understand access, equity and opportunities or lack thereof, to benchmark participation numbers and to determine goals for the future. We suggest the research be conducted by an outside firm in the Fall of 2018.

Responsible Parties: Oregon School District and Outside Research Firm

Timeline: Fall 2018

Recommendation #2:

The Oregon School District and Oregon Youth Sports Organizations form a consortium to collaborate and develop best practices, shared beliefs and information processes in the areas of coach preparation and training, communication to families and concept of age-appropriate development/seasons. Oregon School District physical education and health educators will also be included as members of the consortium.

Responsible Parties: OSD Athletic Director and Youth Sports Organization Leaders

Timeline: Begin Fall/Winter 2018

Recommendation #3:

Creation of an Advisory Council that is charged with developing tools and mechanisms to help parents become better educated in their role as a "sport parent" with the purpose of fostering

their child's development, ensuring that sports experiences are centered in learning and to help grow a strong and positive sports culture for our kids.

Responsible Party: New Parent Advisory Council

Timeline: Fall of 2018. Launch Winter of 2018.

Youth Sports & Athletics Task Force Members

Oregon School District Staff

Mike Carr, Co-Chair, Director of Athletics

Dawn Goltz, Prairie View Elementary School Principal

Dave Jameson, Community Education & Recreation Program Coordinator

Kelli Pierce, Teacher at Rome Corners Intermediate and Head Cheer Coach

Jake Soule, Teacher at Rome Corners Intermediate and Head Baseball Coach

Sydnee Wyss, Teacher at Oregon Middle School and Head Softball Coach

Community Members

Krista Flanagan, Co-Chair, Oregon School District Board of Education Member

Eric Anderson

John Breidenbach

Tim Erickson

Dawn Koopman

Heather Kugel

Sarah Tarantino