



TO MAKE THE CASE

Presenting Sports as an Agent for Social Change

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Dear Reader,

All of us who are involved with sports at its grass-roots level are getting set to run a race against time to save youth sports.

The last academic year saw over \$2 billion eliminated from after-school sports programs in public schools around this country, and this was based only on the published cuts prior to September 2009. Subsequent months have seen even more drastic cuts. For example, February and March of 2010 saw another identifiable \$2.4 million cut from school budgets in L.A. and Chicago alone. And none of these figures reflect cuts to privately funded youth sports programs due to the unavailability of data.

At a time when school districts and social entrepreneurs have to make hard choices, sports are often the first budget item to be reduced or eliminated. The public, having become used to our nation's budget woes, is often quick to accept these cuts without a complete understanding of their implications for future generations of Americans.

Sports are more than just recreation, but many people do not see them that way and therein lies the problem.

When utilized intentionally, sports are a critical tool for the positive development of the next generation of Americans. "Sports-based youth development programs" provide an action-oriented and successful path to discipline, leadership, crime-prevention, lower drop-out rates and healthy lifestyles.

Youth who do not have sports-based youth development activities to fill hours during the day in which they otherwise may be unsupervised are at greater risk for a host of negative behaviors and outcomes. The costs of maintaining these programs today is far less than costs to society associated with dealing with these negative outcomes in the future.

On behalf of our next generation of youth, we must act now.

Up2Us was established in 2009 by youth sports practitioners and leaders in the field of sports-based youth development. Joined by Nike and other collaborators, we are developing a national agenda focused on the following goals: to increase the number of youth served by sports programming; to raise the quality of these programs; to develop a qualified and trained coach force; and to educate the public that our most passionate form of entertainment, sports, may also be one of our most effective tools to fight this nation's most pressing challenges.

We encourage you to join this race before it is too late. We are in the starting blocks getting set for action. By providing this report to help you make your case for funding and sharing our strategy for next steps, we are ready to build stronger communities with you.

Sincerely,
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Orson C. Porter
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Collaborators





Contents

06

I. Executive Summary

08 - 013

II. Proven Benefits of Sports As Social Change Agent

014 - 023

III. Consequences of Budget Cuts And Pay-to-Play

024 - 027

IV. Decreased Participation Leads To Increased Inequity

028 - 033

V. Cost To Society

034 - 035

VI. Call To Action

I. Executive Summary

Most people accept anecdotally that sports can have a positive impact on young children. But, those same people likely know little about research that demonstrates the broad benefits of youth sports participation. The perceived lack of substantive proof often keeps them from actively prioritizing sports in budgets – be it at the school, community, local government, federal government or private corporate level – and subsequently leads to sports being an easy target for economic cuts. Up2Us seeks to provide decision makers the corroboration needed to prevent these cuts and to spark increased investment in sports.

The goals of this survey of the current state of affairs for youth sports are to: aggregate existing evidence that shows the correlation between sports programs and positive behavior in kids; document the very real decline in youth sports opportunities; establish a road map that points not only to the economic benefits of offering sports to kids but also the risks inherent in the disintegration of such programs; and provide suggested paths to follow in order to help move a nationwide youth sports agenda to the forefront.

Research shows:

Youth sports enhance academic learning, character development and students' long-term health.

1. Membership on teams leads to more prosocial behavior.
2. Correlations exist between participating in youth sports and lower juvenile crime rates and other antisocial behaviors.
3. Kids involved with sports show increased academic achievement.
4. Sports decrease the risk of obesity and its association to long-term health problems.

Opportunities for American youth to participate in sports are in serious decline.

1. School sports budget cuts pose a dangerous risk to increased participation.
2. Opportunities to play are decreasing and becoming more costly, particularly with the rapidly escalating prevalence of participation fees, often called “pay-to-play”.

Serious social and financial costs associated with the decline in youth sports need attention now.

1. If cities and towns continue to cut funding from youth sports at the current rate, there will be significant long-term costs to our society including, but not limited to, the associated costs of health care for obesity-related illnesses, costs for crime enforcement and reform, and the residual costs of an increased high-school dropout rate.
2. Low-income communities and minorities, including girls, have less access to sports programs and are even more likely to be set back by such policies.

Up2Us presents this compendium for your consideration as part of our Get:Set campaign. It will show the need for renewed and expanded focus on sports as an agent for social change and as a critical tool for youth development.





II. Proven Benefits Of Sports As Social Change Agent

A. Existing Research Shows Youth Development Through Sports

Countless studies have shown that sports can be good for kids' minds, bodies, and behavior. Emerging research clearly indicates that if youth sports are intentionally taught, organized, and managed in a way that fosters positive physical, social and emotional development in youth and adolescents, the benefits for sport participants are wide-ranging across a number of indicators and hold true across diverse cultural and geographical boundaries. Indeed, data from a study published in the *Journal of School Health* that covered over 50 countries concluded that "... in each of the domains discussed – physical, lifestyle, affective, social, and cognitive – there is evidence that...sport can have a positive and profound effect."¹

There is a common misperception of sports as divorced from education and youth development that demonstrates a lack of awareness of the far-reaching benefits of sports. Studies support the idea that when used intentionally sports serve as a training ground for success for young people on and off the playing field.

The inherent benefits of youth sports are even more magnified and expanded when youth development practices are directly incorporated into the traditional model of sports as activity. Youth development professionals say that these practices can launch youth on "a healthy trajectory toward adulthood."² Such programs often combine sports with other activities, such as academics or community service. According to research, these combinations can increase sports' overall benefits,³ such as higher college acceptance rates.⁴

Most sports-based youth development programs have a "participation-for-all" ethic, doing away with tryouts and rankings,⁵ thus increasing participation by those often barred from play such as low-income, racial minority, female, rural and urban children. Through the ethic of inclusion, programs seek to build emotional safety so that personal development can occur. Importantly, youth development sports programs do not necessarily eliminate competition. Instead, because competition is encountered in all aspects of life, these programs teach it in a developmentally appropriate way so that young people learn strategies for winning and losing with grace.⁶

B. Specific Research Shows Individual Benefits of Youth Sports

Prosocial Behavior

- ❁ Sports can help kids improve their self-esteem⁷ and develop important social and leadership skills.⁸
- ❁ Young people who participate in recreational programs are more likely to make friends, including cross-race peers.⁹
- ❁ When comparing the benefits of sports to other extracurricular activities, researchers have found that sports are better suited to help young people acquire emotional control, teamwork skills, and initiative.¹⁰

- ☛ A 2-year study by the University of Virginia of The First Tee, a national youth golf program, found that participants scored higher than a comparison group in a wide range of social skills: managing emotions, meeting and greeting, resolving conflicts, appreciating diversity, setting goals, perceived academic competence, moral conduct, and self-efficacy to resist peer pressure.¹¹
- ☛ Girls in the Game found that after one year of participation in their program, participants had a healthier body image and better social skills than their peers who did not participate.¹²

Avoidance of Antisocial and Other Risk Behaviors

- ☛ 10-16 year olds who have a relationship with a mentor, like a coach, are 46% less likely to start using drugs and 27% less likely to start drinking alcohol.¹³
- ☛ Youth who do not participate in extracurricular activities are 49% more likely to use drugs than those who spend 4 hours a week in activities.¹⁴
- ☛ Multiple studies show athletes are less likely to smoke cigarettes or marijuana.¹⁵ Athletic participation was associated with less drug and alcohol use in adolescents.¹⁶
- ☛ Police calls reporting juvenile crime drop by as much as 55% during the summer when Phoenix basketball courts and other recreation facilities are kept open until 2 a.m.¹⁷
- ☛ Norfolk, Virginia saw a 29% drop in crime in targeted neighborhoods and a city-wide reduction in violent crime after police, human service agencies, and local citizens partnered to start new youth athletic leagues.¹⁸
- ☛ Crime rates plummeted 24% after a late night recreation program was started in Cincinnati, Ohio.¹⁹
- ☛ Students involved in sports had significantly higher odds for milk consumption and healthy self-image, and significantly lower odds for emotional distress, suicidal behavior, family substance abuse, and physical and sexual abuse victimization.²⁰
- ☛ Sedentary adolescents are more likely to get pregnant.²¹ Additionally, the Women's Sports Foundation found that the rate of teenage pregnancy in non-athletes was 11%, over twice the pregnancy rate as for adolescent female athletes, 5%.²²
- ☛ Active adolescents are more likely than their sedentary peers to use contraception during sexual intercourse, delay the initiation of first intercourse, lower the frequency of sexual intercourse, and decrease the number of lifetime sexual partners.²³

Academic Achievement

Too often, conversations involving academics and sports get painted with the broad brushstrokes of unacceptably low graduation rates for athletes from the elite NCAA football and basketball programs. Indeed, while the University of Central Florida's Diversity and Ethics in Sport's regular release of these statistics is often attention grabbing, the negative findings for this subgroup are the exception to the rule and not the rule itself.²⁴ For example, by the NCAA's own figures, less than 4% of high school basketball players will play on any NCAA team.²⁵ So, what about the other 96% of high school hoopsters and the rest of the young athletes who play their respective sports in school and non-school settings? It is beyond question that involvement with sports leads them to higher academic achievement. Youth who participate in sports achieve more in primary and secondary school and are more likely to go to college, thereby benefitting from more career and lifestyle choices later in life.

- ☛ At age 9, 30% of children do not meet a proficient reading level, and by age 13 this figure is almost 40%.²⁶ Sports participation is linked to improved standardized test scores in math and English and increased time spent on homework.²⁷

- ☛ Longitudinal studies have shown student athletes do better in school than non-athletes. In a 3-year study of North Carolina high schools, from 1993 to 1996, athletes had higher grades, better attendance, and lower discipline referrals.²⁸
- ☛ High school students who play sports are less likely to drop out²⁹ and more likely to attend college.³⁰
- ☛ Data from the national "Monitoring the Future" survey indicates a majority of student athletes—65% in 8th grade, 65.7% in 10th grade, and 56.8% in 12th grade—have plans to complete four-year college degrees. Non-athletes with college goals are a minority: 44%, 39%, and 44% respectively.³¹
- ☛ Research shows sports could help close the achievement gap between black students and white students. African-American male athletes in 8th grade were more likely to have plans to complete high school and attend college than non-athletes.³²
- ☛ There is a statistically significant relationship between physical activity and academic achievement with physical activity showing a positive influence on concentration, memory and classroom behavior.³³
- ☛ A study by Harvard researcher John Ratey found that students in Naperville, Illinois who received early morning physical activity made 1.34 years worth of growth on standardized literacy tests, compared to a control group of students who only made .7 year's growth. Additionally, a math tutoring plus physical activity intervention increased standardized algebra scores by 20.4%, compared to the control group's 3.8% score increase.³⁴
- ☛ Another recent study also showed that not only does exercise have positive cognitive benefits, but that the benefits actually increase as the amount of exercise increases. In this study, students in Augusta, Georgia, who had the greatest improved scores in academic tests and executive function were the children who exercised the most.³⁵
- ☛ 92% of athletes in Harlem RBI, a program that combines baseball and literacy for low income minority youth, go to college.³⁶ In contrast, 58% of youth in East Harlem drop out of High School. Only 13% of East Harlem residents hold a college degree.³⁷

Physical Fitness

One does not have to look far to note that the United States is ailing. Obesity and heart disease are on the rise, and the cost of health care rises along with them.³⁸ Look no further than the resources being put behind First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative to see that physical fitness, or the lack of it in our children, is something that demands attention.

- ☛ 33% of American kids are overweight or obese by the 3rd grade.³⁹
- ☛ Sport is proven to be one of the most effective means of combating childhood obesity,⁴⁰ which drives community health care costs up significantly.⁴¹
- ☛ Regular exercise through sport regulates weight gain and decreases the risk of heart disease. The National Survey of Children's Health showed non-athletes to be 60% more likely to be overweight than athletes.⁴²
- ☛ Youth who play sports are more than eight times as likely to participate in sports activities as adults than youth who do not.⁴³
- ☛ Currently, only 1 out of 3 high school students meet federally recommended levels of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA).⁴⁴ Youth athletes are far more likely to meet these requirements than non-athletes. A recent evaluation of after-school programs in California showed that young people reached MVPA for an average of 24.4 minutes when they participated in structured activities including sports, and received only 13 minutes through unstructured activities.⁴⁵

- Loyola University’s study of the Chicago community sports program Girls in the Game, showed that over time, participants in the program “ate significantly more fruits and vegetables, exercised significantly more, endorsed a significantly healthier ideal body type, had a lower, healthier Body Mass Index, and knew more about nutrition and healthy lifestyles”.⁴⁶
- Dramatic reductions in PE classes may decrease the likelihood of children to explore sports outside of school, just as early exposure to sports increases their likelihood of adult participation.⁴⁷

C. Societal Benefits: Youth Sports Help the Nation

Communities everywhere have had to grapple with unprecedented levels of youth violence as well as a host of environmental challenges. However, evidence verifies that youth sports are a powerful tool to combat these daunting national problems.

Crime

- Participating in sports can reduce the number of unsupervised and unstructured after-school hours young people experience.⁴⁸ Research studies suggest that this reduction of “hang-out” time can also lead to less crime.
- In a study of Los Angeles county, school communities with more extracurricular sport activities had drastically lower crime rates than school communities with fewer programs (approximately 1:18).⁴⁹
- Urban midnight basketball leagues have been proven to reduce neighborhood crimes.⁵⁰

The Environment

- Outdoor sports allow kids to experience nature. These youth are more likely to champion environmental causes.⁵¹
- Outdoor experiences also help young people develop creativity, problem solving skills, and emotional and intellectual capacities.⁵² Time in “green” spaces, including sports fields, can reduce violent behaviors.⁵³
- Outdoor recreation is in decline, down 11.6% from 2006 to 2007⁵⁴ which potentially magnifies the lack of awareness of youth to environmental issues.

Civic Engagement

- Young people who play sports are more likely to volunteer, vote, and speak in public.⁵⁵ Higher levels of civic engagement by young people are critical for the democratic process.

Notes

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III. Consequences of Budget Cuts and Pay-to-Play

A. Budget Cuts are Severe and Often Target Sports

Funding Cuts In Education

Education budget cuts around the country have made it very difficult for schools to continue offering athletic programs and other after-school programming. With less funding to go around, most schools around the country are concentrating their increasingly limited resources on the core educational subjects mandated in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of 2002.

- ☛ Research by Up2Us estimates that over **\$2 billion dollars** has been cut from after-school sports and activities budgets nationwide during the 2009-2010 school year.⁵⁶
- ☛ In New York City, Chancellor Joel Klein specifically mentioned that enrichment and after-school programs were endangered when he announced a \$405 million cut for the 2009-2010 school year.⁵⁷
- ☛ In Los Angeles administrators at the city's Unified School District's Beyond the Bell office—which coordinates and funds expanded enrichment opportunities—warned of \$1.3 billion budget cuts across the district between 2009 and 2011 that would target extracurricular programs outside of the regular school subjects.⁵⁸
- ☛ Chicago Public Schools cut their budget by \$1 million by eliminating 2010 spring sophomore sports.⁵⁹ This was on the heels of a 2009 report that showed 28% of schools were cutting extracurricular activities, including sports, as a way to compensate for a budget shortfall.⁶⁰
- ☛ The Riverside Unified School District (CA) cut \$300,000 from athletics for the district's five schools.⁶¹
- ☛ These cuts come despite the fact that school sports and extracurricular activities are extremely cost-effective, accounting for only about 1-3% of a school's budget and engaging 60-70% of students.⁶²

Funding Cuts In Private Sector

Youth sports programming that is not directly affiliated with school-based programs – activity associated with community and national nonprofits for example – are also seeing cuts so the education figures above are only the tip of the iceberg. The effects of the recent economic crisis, which has hit non-profits equally as hard as schools, has yet to factor directly into national measurements – in large part because of the lack of a centralized mechanism for reporting such figures.

- ☛ A report by the Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF) found that 81% of grant-makers in the state will focus their 2009 giving on assisting “those adversely affected by the economic downturn,” targeting funding for basic education and job skills training, food and emergency housing assistance.⁶³ MCF reports that the focus on basic needs is a national trend, one that could further negatively affect sports programming in vulnerable communities.
- ☛ In the summer of 2009, in a study of almost 1,500 outside organizations providing after-school programs serving 1.2 million students, The Wall Street Journal found that 60% of the organizations experienced decreased funding which is likely to affect their operating budgets.⁶⁴
- ☛ The current recession is also having a negative impact on sports organizations that rely on sponsorships from local businesses. In north Florida, for example, one youth soccer league sent out more than 100 sponsorship inquiries and got zero replies.⁶⁵

B. Budget Cuts Lead to Decreased Participation In Sports

The overall impact of budget cuts is decreased access to and participation in youth sports. The extent of this decline outside of schools is not fully known because of a lack of data that exists on how the economy is also impacting community- and faith-based athletic programs. Many of these programs have been impacted by reduced funding by foundation and private donors who have reprioritized giving based on the job crises or on the shrinking of their endowments.

The information that is available based on school-based programming may paint only part of the larger picture of the scope of the decline in youth sports in this nation overall.

- ✿ The number of high school sports declined –1.7% for boys and –1.2% for girls from 2002 to 2008.⁶⁶
- ✿ In 2007, the National Sporting Goods Association found that more sports had overall decreasing rates of participation than increasing. 13 sports gained participants; 26 sports lost participants.⁶⁷
- ✿ The 2006 “Shape of the Nation” report, authored by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and the American Heart Association, noted that while the number of overweight children in America had tripled since 1980, “the percentage of students who attended a daily physical education class has dropped from 42 percent in 1991 to 28 percent in 2003.”⁶⁸
- ✿ As a result of budget woes in the fall of 2009, the South-Western school district in Ohio, the state’s sixth largest district, took the unprecedented step of canceling all extra-curricular activities, including sports.⁶⁹

C. Rapid Escalation of Pay-to-Play

Schools and administrators are employing different strategies to salvage sports programs, from instituting pay-to-play to charging equipment or transportation fees. Pay-to-play has become an increasingly accepted practice. The National Federation of State High School Associations found that in 2009, 33 states reported they have schools with pay-to-play programs.⁷⁰ This number grows substantially when states are included that do not use the term pay-to-play but still charge fees often calling them “transportation” or “equipment” fees rather than participation fees. A scan of the remaining 17 states and Washington DC, found that 10 of the states that did not report having pay-to-play were, in fact, charging students to participate in sports programs in some way.⁷¹

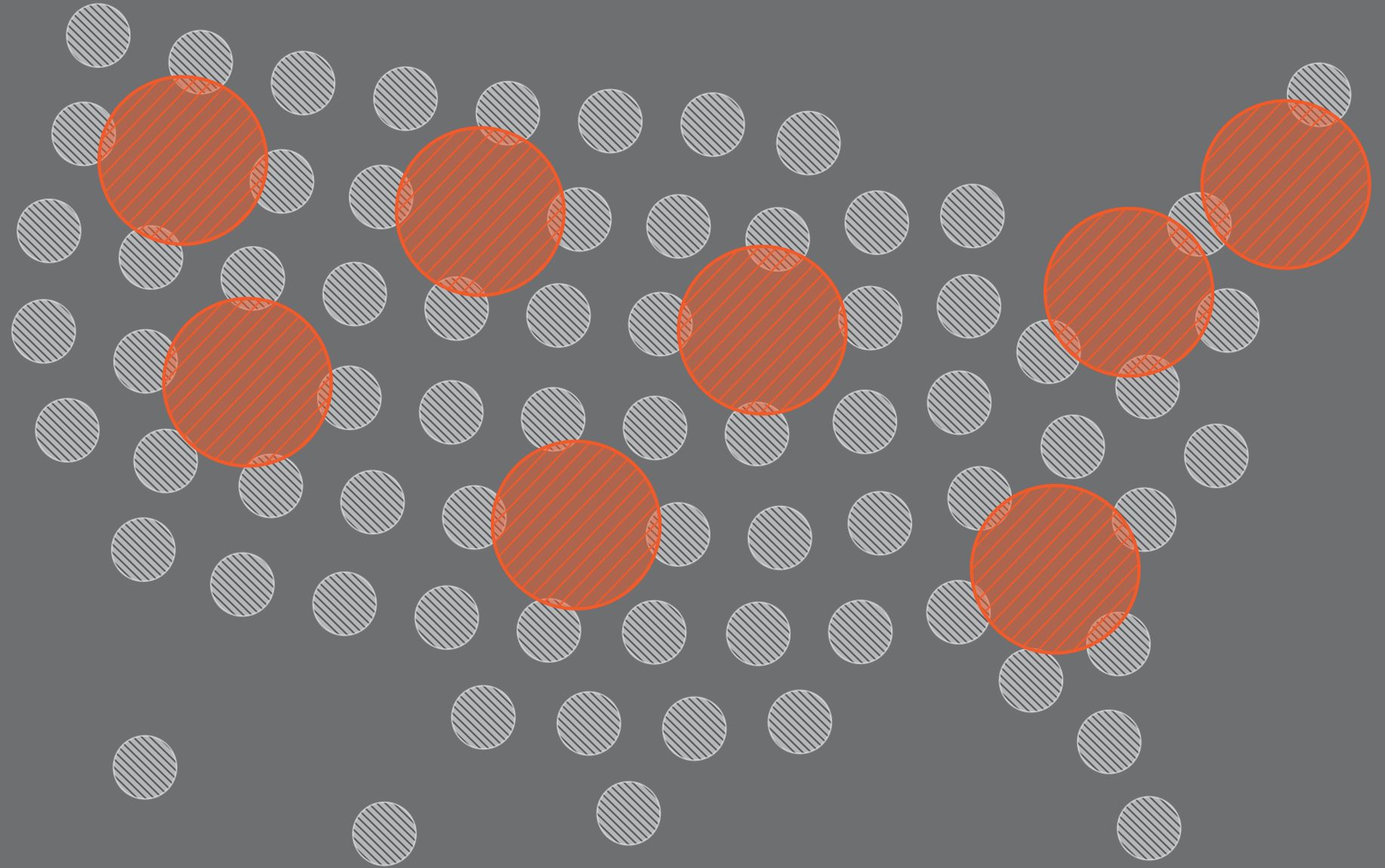
- ✿ A number of schools in California do not have pay-to-play but do require students to pay transportation fees.⁷² Students in San Diego are required to pay a \$90 transportation fee for the first sport and then \$30 per sport after that.⁷³ In Napa Valley High School in northern California, students are charged a \$125 transportation fee for the first sport that they choose to play, and \$100 more for each additional sport.⁷⁴
- ✿ Faced with a massive gap in the 2009-2010 budget, the Los Angeles United School District cut \$350,000 dollars earmarked for sports transportation, forcing schools to cut games teams and share buses where possible.⁷⁵
- ✿ While some schools have, for the time being, avoided charging fees for participation, others have had to cut the numbers of games their teams play, eliminate play-offs, or adopt bus sharing policies with other teams and even other schools.⁷⁶
- ✿ In Montgomery, AL, students currently pay \$45 per athlete to offset the cost of the insurance carriers for its sports programs.⁷⁷

Pay-To-Play and Its Effect On Participation


Strategies for implementation of pay-to-play vary dramatically across school districts because individual schools often set their own policies. However, there are countless examples of how athletes, schools and communities have been impacted by the growing trend of pay-to-play.

- ✿ Currently, the national average cost per student for pay-to-play is \$75 for one sport and \$100 for multiple sports.⁷⁸
- ✿ A study conducted by the Michigan High School Athletic Association of 558 Michigan High Schools found that fees up to \$100 cause a 10% decrease in participation while fees up to \$200 dollars affect a 20% decline.⁷⁹

We know that 7.5 million high school students participate in school-sponsored sports teams. We also know that as Pay-to-Play is implemented to make up for budget deficits, students drop out of sports at a rate estimated at 10% for all fees up to \$100 and at a rate of 20% for fees up to \$200. If Pay-to-Play continues to grow beyond the 43 states in which it already exists, and the average pay-to-play fee is somewhere between \$75 and \$100, we will lose about 750,000 athletes from the 7.5 million students currently playing high school sports.



 Represents 110,300 Students
(7.5 million total)

 Represents 93,750 lost Athletes
(750,000 total)

Legal Implications of Pay-to-Play

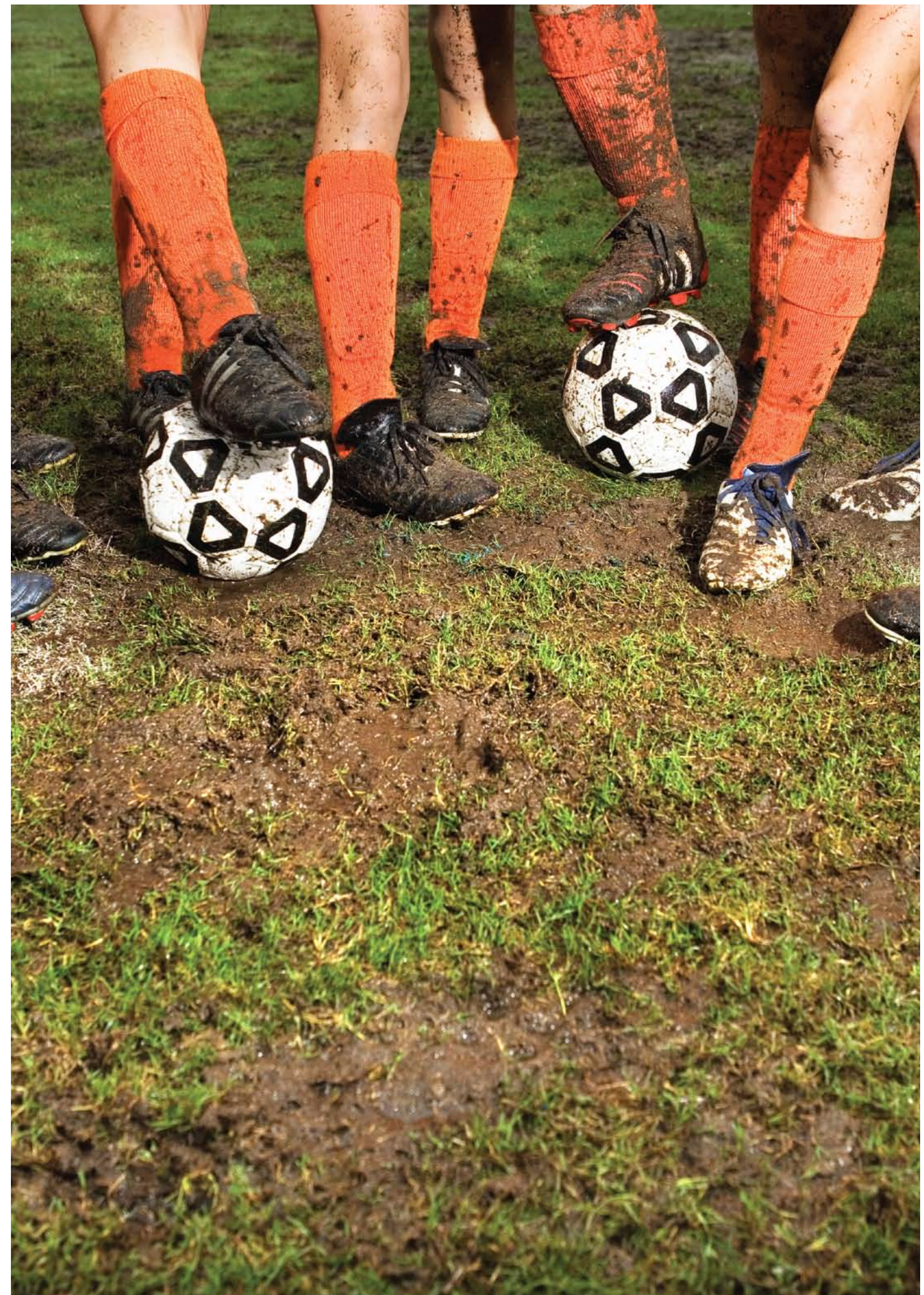
Pay-to-play policies have been criticized on legal grounds. Sports have historically been included as part of the experience of free public education. When a student has to pay for part of that experience then a school could be in violation of that students' right to free education.

- ❖ Courts in California, Iowa and Rhode Island have all determined that extracurricular activities, including sports, are included as part of guaranteed free education, and it is therefore illegal to charge participation fees.⁸⁰
- ❖ Despite this legal prohibition, students in both Rhode Island and California are still bearing the burden of cost for playing sports either in outright violation of the law or by the charging of transportation or equipment fees instead of participation fees.⁸¹
- ❖ Twenty-one states in the US have constitutional clauses that guarantee the right to a free education. Given that pay-to-play exists in 43 states, there is an overlap between states that guarantee the right to a free education and those that are charging for part of the experience.

Notes

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IV. Decreased Participation Leads to Increased Inequity

Whereas equal access to physical education within the public school system was once an equalizing force across class lines, it is now quickly vanishing. For many children, physical education class served as an introduction to the world of sports and a stepping stone to the benefits that come with continued participation in sports. Because many low income communities have been forced to cut physical education and gym classes, the critical role they play as this stepping stone is now in jeopardy.

Eric Jensen, author of “Enriching the Brain,” noted how the trend away from school based physical education creates a class-based dichotomy. “The...lower income kids will get less and less physical activity,” Jensen said, than those families who can afford to enroll their children in costly private athletic programs and travel teams.⁸²

The introduction of pay-to-play models only exaggerates the disparity already apparent in underserved communities where families do not have access to disposable income to subsidize their child’s participation in sports. These families tend to live in underserved communities that both need the programs the most and often get the most benefit from school- and community-based sports programs.⁸³ Calvin Davis, Athletic Director for the Chicago Public Schools, said that if pay-to-play were implemented in Chicago, poor athletes in his district would quit sports or even drop out of school.⁸⁴ The superintendent of Mukilteo School District in Washington state commented that a pay-to-play plan would result in fewer students taking part in athletics, as well as inequity and unbalanced competition between those schools that have a high percentage of low-income students and those that do not.⁸⁵

For minorities and girls, the current crisis appears to be increasing an already disproportionate gap in access and participation that existed prior to the recent budget cuts and widespread implementation of pay-to-play.

Racial and Economic Implications

- ☛ Participation in sports among low-income children of color is already drastically lower than middle-class white children. Among low-income children of color, only 40%-60% participate in sports compared to 75% of the white middle class group.⁸⁶
- ☛ Economic inequity can play a significant role in player dropout or non-participation where pay-to-play models have been established in the wake of state budget cuts that directly affect athletics funding.⁸⁷ These pay-to-play models are economically discriminatory to low-income youth whose parents/guardians may not be able to afford the fees.
- ☛ The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that the “transportation problem” is one of the most pressing in youth sports; youth, especially in urban and low-income areas, simply have no way to travel to and from their athletic and recreational activities.⁸⁸
- ☛ In New York City, where 25.8% of families with children live below the poverty line,⁸⁹ only 10% of elementary school students have access to any sports after school and only 4% have the opportunity to join a sports team.
- ☛ A statistically significant sampling of African-American middle school students in Chicago found that they spent only 2.6% of their time in structured after-school activities.⁹⁰

- Responsibilities at home often keep lower-income children out of the game and less likely to be able to take advantage of opportunities provided by sports programs. It is estimated that 1.4 million children under 18 act as significant caregivers for a parent or family member who is ill or disabled.⁹¹ Black and Hispanic youth are more likely than whites to be sharing in child care responsibilities for younger siblings.⁹² Overall, children acting as caregivers tend to live in low-income households, and are more likely to live in single parent families.⁹³

Gender Implications

- Research suggests that girls, particularly those in minority, low-income, and rural communities, face even greater barriers to participation in sports than do boys for several reasons. Low-income girls might be more likely than low-income boys to have home responsibilities. Rural girls are also more likely than suburban or urban girls to be affected by restrictive gender conventions.⁹⁴
- Girls, especially Latina and African-American girls, often lack encouragement from their families and communities to be involved in sports.⁹⁵
- One study shows that by age 16 to 17, 56% of African-American girls reported no leisure-time physical activity, compared to a dramatically lower 31% of white girls.⁹⁶
- In some communities, security is also an issue. Some parents might be wary of allowing their children walk to and from practice after dark, particularly girls.⁹⁷

Notes

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V. Cost to Society

In order to slow the erosion of support for sports-based youth development programs nationwide, the cost/benefit ratio must be brought into the spotlight. Sports benefit community wellness in ways that many people do not realize. More importantly, they also are cost effective.

Evidence suggests that spending money now on sports helps save money later across many aspects of society. For example, the cost-benefit analysis of typical afterschool programs for at-risk children shows that each dollar invested returns between \$8.92 and \$12.90,⁹⁸ a 1000% return on average. This figure may be conservative when one considers how participation in sports is correlated with positive lifelong indicators of health, academic and social success.

Charging pay-to-play fees and/or eliminating sports to resolve budget woes may seem like good solutions now, but down the line these practices may have repercussions that will cost society greatly—from the costs associated with treating more childhood obesity, to fighting more juvenile delinquency and crime, to supporting more adults who dropped out of school and as a result are unable to find work.

Health Costs

- ☛ There are more than 122 million overweight and obese Americans between the ages of 20 and 65, and 1 in 3 young people is either overweight, obese or a risk for becoming overweight or obese.⁹⁹
- ☛ The present epidemic costs \$147 billion annually in extra health care.¹⁰⁰ Engaging young people in youth sports, especially in low-income minority communities where this epidemic is most prevalent, can help to reduce these costs.
- ☛ Obese people spend \$1,429 more on medical costs than normal weight people.¹⁰¹

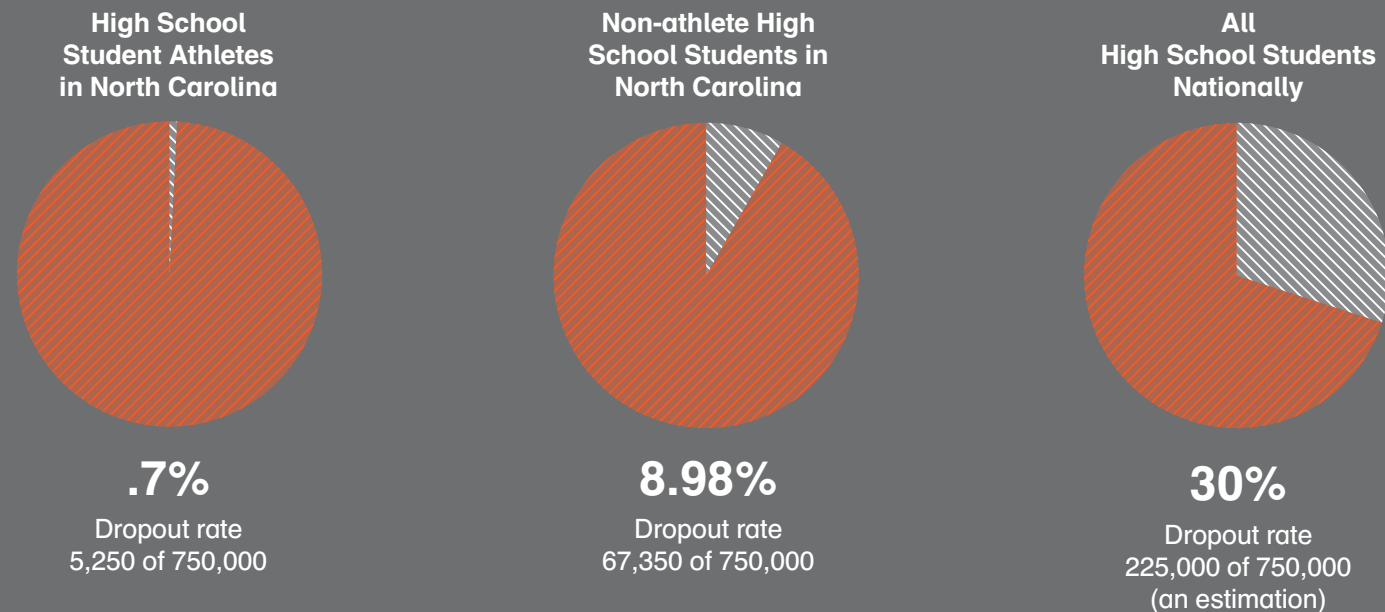
Criminal Activity Costs

- ☛ Sports provide structured activity during the critical hours of 3:00pm to 6:00pm when most juvenile crimes are committed.¹⁰² Without sports, a greater number of students would lack positive adult supervision during these hours. The cost of losing even one child to a life of crime is estimated to be between \$1.4 and \$1.7 million.¹⁰³

Educational Costs

- ☛ The Alliance for Excellent Education has estimated that the approximately 1.2 million students who should have graduated with the class of 2008 will cost the nation nearly \$319 billion in lost income over the course of their lifetimes.¹⁰⁴
- ☛ The California Dropout Research Project at UC Santa Barbara found that in California, high school dropouts, who are more likely to commit crimes than their peers with diplomas, cost the state \$1.1 billion annually in law enforcement and victim costs while still minors. They also found that cutting the dropout rates in half would prevent 30,000 juvenile crimes and save \$550 million every year.¹⁰⁵

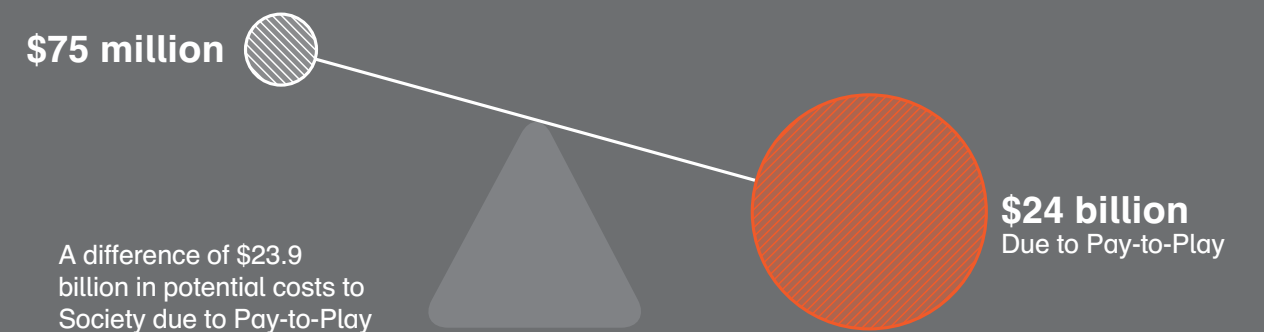
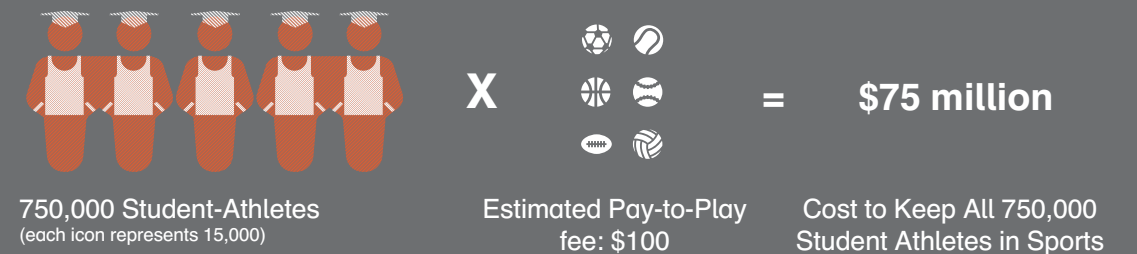
A North Carolina study found that youth who play sports have a dropout rate of .7% versus 8.98% of non-athletes,¹⁰⁶ a fairly conservative figure given that the average dropout rate nationally is closer to 30%.¹⁰⁷



If we assume that 750,000 student-athletes would stop playing sports on a nationwide basis if Pay-to-Play becomes widespread (see pages 20-21) and we use the North Carolina dropout rates to predict the future of those 750,000 athletes, we can conservatively predict that 67,350 of those student-athletes will drop out of school before graduation. Had Pay-to-Play not been implemented, it's likely that only 5,250 of those athletes would drop out of school – a difference of 62,100 youngsters.



Using the estimate of the costs of high school dropouts produced by California that every 120,000 dropouts cost the state \$46.4 billion in services, we can assume that there would be a cost of \$386,666 per high school dropout.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, even with the most conservative figures, society will potentially pay \$24 billion in extra service costs associated with increased student athlete dropouts versus the \$75 million it would cost to keep these youth playing sports and performing in the classroom in the first place.



Military Costs

- ☛ Nine million young adults are too overweight to join the military according to an April 2010 report from retired officers titled "Mission:Readiness." That represents 27 percent of all American's ages 17-24.¹⁰⁹
- ☛ The US Military spends \$60 million annually on recruiting and training replacements for first-term enlistees discharged due to weight problems.¹¹⁰

Notes

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VI. Call to Action

Get:Set to Advocate for Youth Sports

The supporting evidence collected here needs to be shared with as many stakeholders as possible in the worlds of sports, politics, education, corporate and charitable giving. We encourage you to put this compendium of data to good use as you seek to provide – and protect – access to youth sports in your own community.

At Up2Us, we recognize that additional research will also be necessary to provide even further evidence of the fundamental necessity of preserving youth sports programs. To this end, we are developing partnerships with researchers interested in further studying the impact of youth sports. These studies will include a more detailed cost-benefit analysis on the societal and economic impact of declining participation in youth sports as well as research into new and innovative policies that support sports. Up2Us will also continue to advocate for longitudinal studies that more clearly delineate causality and not just correlation between sports engagement and positive youth development.

In addition, Up2Us is exploring new models of funding youth sports programs that can lead to greater sustainability. To do this, we are partnering with outside evaluators to take a closer look at successful revenue structures in and outside of the sports world that can be replicated to sports programs nationwide.

Lastly, Up2Us is working with our member organizations to help develop metrics and evaluation tools that will strengthen our own ability to demonstrate collective impact. This is critical because those things that can be measured, can and will be funded.

It is our hope that all of these initiatives will enable you and the entire sports community to be even stronger advocates for our programs in the years ahead.

If you have information to contribute, questions to ask, metrics to share or data relevant to youth sports, please send it to us at research@Up2Us.org.

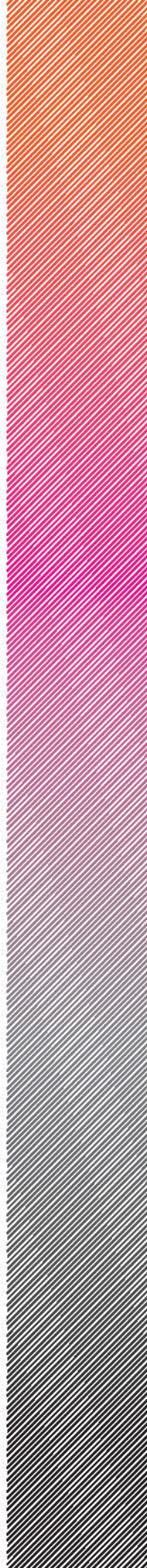
Help power us through to the finish line with sports leading the way as a vital tool of youth development.

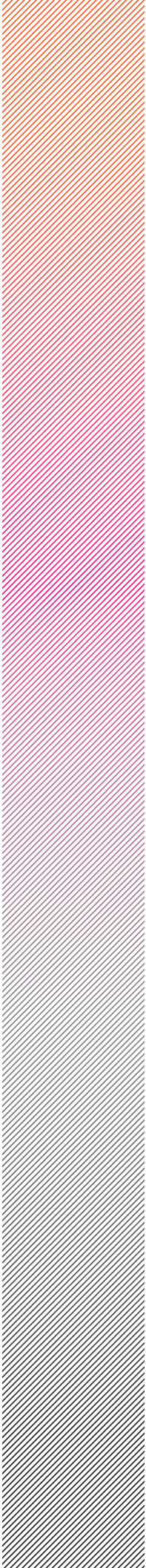
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