



ESPORTS GUIDEBOOK 2.1

HELPING BREAKDOWN BARRIERS & STEREOTYPES

An updated resource for educators who
are looking to start or grow an
esports program





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INTRODUCTION

Picture the scene. Anticipation and excitement are at a fever pitch. Students and parents cheered for, and supported, the team the entire year. The facility is packed, standing room only. Music and cheers are the soundtrack of the day.

In the team room, student athletes are huddled. Jerseys are on. Hearts are racing. The room is thick with anticipation and excitement. The students have studied video of their opponent. They know their tendencies. They are mentally walking through their practices. Walking through their role as part of the team.

A door opens, disrupting the silence. The team looks up to see a focused coach in front of them. This is the moment the coaches and students have been preparing for. They are about to walk out and challenge for a championship title.

A tear rolls down the face of the head coach. The coach scans the room, takes in the moment, and looks each student in the eye. They are hanging on every move the coach makes. The coach clears their throat and begins to speak. "You have an opportunity to make your mark today. You have worked hard. You have trusted the process. You knew from day one, what this team could do for your fellow students, the school and community. You have earned your place in this championship." A pause as the coach is choked up. "You have already made your mark. Win or lose, you will be remembered. Now, we could end there. But let's take this further. Let's execute our plan. Let's win each minute of the competition. Let's walk out of here state champions."

The students are fired up. For a few seconds they jump up. Fist bumps, high fives, and a few "Let's Go!" chants take over the space. As they calm down, they encourage one another. They are ready to compete for the title. They huddle back up, and together, in unison, holler "Team!"



This is a scene we are familiar with. We've seen it in person, in highlights or glorified in movies for decades. Only this isn't a softball team getting ready to take the field. This isn't a basketball team getting ready to take the court. This isn't a hockey team getting ready to take the ice. This is an esports team getting ready to walk on stage and compete for a state title.

Like traditional sports, hundreds will watch in person, but even more will join streams and watch the championship unfold online. While most of their school teams will occasionally find radio play by play, done by local adults or media personalities, here the students are calling the action and call it is an understatement. Their excitement and energy level can be felt through the stream. Their understanding of the action is unquestioned. They are taking it to another level.

This team's journey was a long one. It didn't happen overnight. A few years earlier, this scene wasn't on the school's radar. Fortunately, these students, and this coaching staff, had other ideas. They saw the potential benefits of developing an esports program. They took time, educated their administration, overcame objections, and prepared to present at a School Board meeting. They hoped to approve esports as a student club.



As the discussion around the agenda item began, a few School Board members expressed their opinions.

"What is esports?"

"Why would we allow kids to play video games?"

"That seems like a waste of resources."

"Do we need to take time in this meeting to talk about this?"

The students and coaches were prepared. They expected these comments. They tackled the why head on. They had evaluated their internal resources and knew it was possible. And as for the School Board, well, they assured the School Board, they did indeed need to hear the request and listen to the impact this activity could make.

What did they say? How did they justify adding a program? Well, that is what this guidebook is all about. It is designed to provide a glimpse into the what, the why, the how and the who, that make up a small portion of the esports community.



2023 LOL World Championship

2023 League of Legends World Championship becomes most watched esports tournament ever. Viewership peaks at more than 6.4 million concurrent viewers. More than 25% increase from 2022 LoL Worlds.

Reference: SportsPro. Retrieved January 2024, from sportspro.com/news/2023-league-of-legends-world-championship-esports-viewership/



Global Revenue

\$1.39 Billion in 2021. Expected to reach \$1.89 Billion in 2025.

Reference: Statista. Retrieved January 2024, from [statista.com/statistics/490522/global-esports-market-revenue/](https://www.statista.com/statistics/490522/global-esports-market-revenue/)



Over 3.1 Million Viewers

3.1 million+ average concurrent viewers on Twitch in both April and May 2021

Reference: Twitch Tracker. Retrieved January 2022, from twitchtracker.com/statistics/viewers



18,000+ Students

More than 18,000 students from over 800 unique institutions competed in NACE Starleague in 2023

References: Stay Plugged In. Retrieved January 2024, from [playfly.com/nace-starleague-spring/](https://staypluggedin.com/nace-starleague-spring/)



A Billion Hours Viewed

200+ million hours viewing League of Legends 2019 World Championships
1 billion+ hours viewing League of Legends 2021 World Championships

Reference: Dot Esports. Retrieved January 2022, from dotesports.com/league-of-legends/news/league-worlds-2021-surpasses-over-1-billion-total-hours-watched-riot-says



Global Hours Streamed on Twitch

Record 6.6 million unique viewers on June 24, 2022
1.8x growth of consistent monthly hours since January 2020

1 billion streaming hours in January 2020
2.3 billion streaming hours in May 2021
1.8 billion streaming hours in October 2023

Reference: TwitchTracker. Retrieved January 2024, from twitchtracker.com/statistics/watch-time



Over 13,000 and Counting!

Over 2,000* schools have esports teams managed by incredible, state-focused organizations
8,600+ schools have an esports team on PlayVS platform
3,400+ schools have an esports team on HSEL platform
14,000+ schools have football teams
Approx 20,000 NFHS sanctioned schools

References: Inc. Retrieved January 2022, from www.inc.com/kevin-j-ryan/playvs-high-school-college-esports-growth-update.html
High School Esports League. Retrieved Jan 2022, from www.highschoolsportsleague.com
*Information gathered from each individual state.



110% Growth in Average Concurrent Viewers

from December 2019 to December 2023

Reference: Twitch Tracker. Retrieved January 2024, from twitchtracker.com/statistics



US Monthly Esports Viewers

26.6 million esports viewers each month in 2021 with projected growth to 31.6 million esports viewers each month in 2023
18.8% growth in monthly esports viewers from 2021 to 2023.

Reference: Insider Intelligence. Retrieved January 2022, from www.insiderintelligence.com/insights/esports-ecosystem-market-report/

Scholarship Opportunities

270+ Colleges offering scholarships

References: Stay Plugged In. Retrieved January 2024, from staypluggedin.gg/colleges