



eSports FAQ

What you need to know about building a successful eSports program

eSports have been around for awhile, however, the industry is on the rise and creating opportunities for players to up their game to a more advanced level of play and competition. This evolution is opening new opportunities for educational institutions to initiate eSports programs, with the necessary labs and training facilities, to take eSports into the mainstream curriculum.

Following are a few 'top of mind' Q&A's for consideration as you start to build out your eSports program.

Why should I introduce an eSports program?

eSports programs offer real, tangible benefits for schools and universities. One of the most significant is **inclusiveness**. Socio-economic background, athleticism, and gender are irrelevant in the world of eSports. eSports also helps develop **leadership and teamwork** skills, as well as provide exposure to **STEM career pathways** such as software programming, game development, analytics, web development, and statistics.

What opportunities are there for eSports players/students?

Today, there are **175 colleges and universities** across the U.S. that run varsity eSports programs **offering full or partial athletic scholarships** with more than **\$16 million** available in scholarships. This represents a tremendous opportunity for students who may not have had access to college funding. In addition to **STEM**, eSports also provides access to adjacent educational opportunities such as **marketing, journalism, and communications**.

According to The High School eSports League, they now have 2,100 partner schools in the U.S and Canada, and the North America Scholastic eSports Federation has grown to over 1000 clubs.

What elements do I need to plan for?

You will need to **assess student interest**. A survey, either formal or informal, can help gauge student. If the program is a go, you need to **decide on a facility** for training and play. Any available room with the appropriate network devices and infrastructure, lighting, and PCs could become the eSports room. **Furniture and room layout** are also important. You will also need to select on a **coach or a mentor** to oversee the program.

What do I need to know about the tech side of things?

When it comes to tech you will need to think about everything from **computers**, to speeds and feeds, reliability, security, and management. eSports computers require the fastest, most reliable connectivity possible – a wired Ethernet switch port. On the **network** side, you will need to understand your school's current network infrastructure. To ensure there are no bottlenecks, you need to know how big the internet pipe is at the school or school district, and understand each player's bandwidth requirements. From a **security** perspective your eSports network should be isolated from the school's network. A network that provides **intelligent management** can also ease use and support requirements.

What will the eSports lab network solution look like?

Reliability, latency, and speed are key to your eSports network. You will need a network architecture that supports redundancy at every level of the network. You will require a very low latency network, two hops at the most, to get from one switch port to another. You will need to ensure **fast speed and available bandwidth** for your high-bandwidth players. To **secure the network**, all devices need to be identified and authorized. This can be accomplished with device identification where the management platform automatically identifies the device by communicating with a database that has millions of entries. **IoT containment** can further ensure that only authorized devices get access to authorized areas of the network based on their profile.

Successful **network management** will require the right tools, at the right time, with the right information, and with the right interface. It allows you to instantly see the status of your wired and wireless network, as well it provides a single place to push security profiles to your network, ensuring a secure, consistent, and reliable network.

How will I fund the lab?

Funding and supporting an eSports team can come from a wide variety of sources, with local sources being the most obvious. Athletic booster organizations often support nascent teams and would be a good place to start. Next, a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or even a Education Foundation may have grants to help support the team. In his [ebook](#), Martin Fritzen provides insights into building and supporting eSports teams and offers the following tips:

- Connect with local business owners about supporting your esports organization
- Discover local companies that sponsor existing sports or athletic clubs. Connect with them to understand their motivation and see if your organization can help with their goals.
- Check with the municipality or local government regarding funds or grants that support local activities for an eSports team
- Reach out to local organizations that support education and would be interested in participating in your initiative

How can I measure the success of my eSports program?

Of course, the obvious answer is - the win/loss record, but in reality, the best way to measure a successful eSports program for your school or university is to look at the aspects that promote character, leadership, adaptability and teamwork, including:

- **Engagement:** Polls indicate that up to 95% of children K-20 age play video games. As we know, video gaming is a solitary experience, however, joining a team can engage a student in the social aspects of school and improve attendance, class participation and academic success.
- **Social skills improvement:** Team sports are rightly recognized as incubators for creating character and confidence. A successful eSports program can enable students to engage and learn valuable social skills such as:
 - Managing success and failure
 - Strategic thinking
 - Time management
 - Team work; working with others; relying on others
 - Positive values including respect, good sportsmanship, persistence, honesty, and fairness
- **STEM:** Surveys show that an overwhelming majority of eSports athletes go on to major in STEM disciplines in university. The US Bureau of Labor and Statistics notes that 90% of STEM related jobs earn more than the national average. Coaches can encourage STEM activities by having students use spreadsheets and graphs to determine the best tools or features to use when participating.

A few interesting facts about eSports today:

- Global eSports revenues predicted to reach \$1.8 billion by 2022¹
- Overall gaming market will to grow to approximately \$174 billion in 2021²
- 2019 consumer spending on video games was a reported \$120 billion³
- In 2020 there were 435.9 million eSports viewers, by 2024 viewership is expected to be 577.2 million⁴

1 Newzoo 2020 Esports Market Report

2 www.viralnation.com/blog/15-mobile-gaming-statistics-for-marketing-managers/

3 www.marketplace.org/2020/01/03/gaming-sales-top-a-record-120-billion-in-2019/

4 www.statista.com/statistics/1109956/global-esports-audience/