

ADVOCATING FOR: TENNIS IN SCHOOLS

PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL TEAM TENNIS

Advocacy for tennis involves taking our knowledge and passion for tennis and connecting it to the needs of communities, schools, colleges, and local governments. Advocacy is the ability to demonstrate to decision-makers how tennis programs can benefit the community.

One of the areas in which advocating for tennis can have significant results is in schools. From elementary to high school, tennis can be played at any age at all skill levels. Students can ask their teachers how they can start playing in their PE class, and if there are after-school programs they can join.

INTRODUCTION

Advocating for School Tennis requires the Advocate to take that first step in building a relationship with key personnel within a school system.

SOME OF THE KEY SCHOOLS PERSONNEL CAN INCLUDE:

- Health and Physical Education Specialists
- Health Services Personnel
- Parent and Outreach Program Specialists
- Athletic Directors
- Middle School Administrators

KEY POINTS OF EMPHASIS

One of the key points reported by the *Women's Sports Foundation* regarding tennis is its relationship to schools.

- Overall, tennis reported one of the highest rankings with respect to academic achievement (highest or second-highest across five separate measures – percentage of "A's", average grade, 10-or-more hours of homework per week, college attendance aspiration, and college graduation aspiration).
- The USTA Foundation Special Report has found that kids who play tennis are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and volunteer in the community. Additionally, tennis positively influences the lives of U.S. school aged youth across all socio-economic levels.
- Tennis in elementary, middle school, high school and after-school programs is an excellent way to combat childhood obesity and reintegrate physical activity into the childrens' everyday lives.



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CHALLENGES

- Although there are many middle- and high-school tennis teams, tennis is not always offered as a physical education option in all schools.
- Gaining approval from school administrators to allow outside entities to teach tennis during their PE classes or during their after-school programs.
- PE teachers lack tennis exposure or awareness and education that tennis is easy to teach, even in small spaces or with large groups.
- Outside entities wishing to provide tennis after-school programs often must pass a background check and go through special training.
- Many programs are not affordable to economically-disadvantaged youth. This can be mitigated by working closely with local NJTL programs that offer low-cost entry programs and encouraging Community Tennis Associations (CTAs) to help subsidize some of the cost.
- Providing transportation for after-school programs can be a barrier when a school does not have capacity to run one on site.

TACTICS TO ADVOCATE FOR SCHOOLS TENNIS

- Get educated on the Net Generation school curriculum, which was developed in conjunction with SHAPE America, the leading organization who sets the national standard for PE best practices.
- Schedule a site visit to your local elementary, middle or high school: This is one of the most effective and efficient ways to connect with the students and staff.
 - Site visits allow for you to demonstrate tennis to the kids.
 - Certified teaching professionals should take the opportunity to meet with Physical Educators to explain opportunities for tennis.
- Working with local media is an excellent way to publicize school and afterschool programs.
- Advocates should build strong relationships with local health writers who are looking for good, positive stories about your school-after school programs and their related health benefits.
- Educate teachers or administrators on tennis opportunities at school, whether it be PE school program curriculum developed in conjunction with SHAPE America which meets curriculum standards, or an after-school program opportunity.

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