

# Esports for Education

How schools can embrace esports as an extension to existing programs and curriculum





The popularity of esports has inspired many school administrations to reimagine its use as a complement to traditional academic and sporting programs. Schools are seeing the benefits of esports as an engaging and motivating way to teach lessons of all types – from inclusion, collaboration and good sportsmanship to social skills and the basics of a STEM career. And, esports has now shown that it can be useful in helping students of all ages lay the vital groundwork for strategic thinking and problem-solving.

While administrations may be on board, many remain unsure of how to get started in folding esports into its existing IT infrastructure. From hardware to software, the following whitepaper can serve as a guide for navigating the new world of esports in schools.



### The rise of competitive electronic sports

Esports brings the action and competition of a traditional sporting event – held live and on a field – to a virtual setting with two teams, following defined rules and guidelines. Esports is sometimes associated with “gamers” and antisocial youth, yet over the last two decades it has exploded into a global industry with more than 400 million fans and sell-out events.

Just like traditional sports, esports requires practice, tryouts, and team captains. And, just like regular sports at schools, to participate in esports, one must have good academic standing. Fans in esports are just as passionate and loyal as they are for live sporting events, cheering on their favorite players and following elite stars from around the world.



## The benefits of integrating esports into education

Esports are quickly proving to be an important driver in education success. The benefits of a thoughtful program have shown to be instrumental in driving on- and off-campus improvement in social and academic wellness, as well as college interest and preparing for future careers and higher education.



---

# 80%

of esports teams are comprised of students who show no interest in other extracurricular activities

---

### Benefits include:

- **Participation:** Studies show that more than 80% of esports teams are comprised of students who show no interest in other extracurricular activities. In this way, esports has opened a door for the non-traditional athlete to learn teamwork, build confidence, and more.
- **Attendance:** Esports participants are generally excited to go to school, demonstrated by consistent attendance.
- **Academics:** Esports students are motivated to maintain good standing and/or increase their GPAs.
- **Teamwork and community:** Esports participants learn how to cooperate in groups and how to become more effective communicators, in and out of the game. A heightened sense of inclusion allows players from all backgrounds to unite over a common passion.
- **Strategic thinking:** Esports students need to use statistics, critical thinking, data, and applications to win. This sets the foundation for their success in the real world and paves the path for opportunities in a variety of careers, such as social media, video editing, account management, and more.

## Getting started with esports: Laying the technical foundation

To get an esports program in motion in your school, it will require mentors, sponsors, and consistent and clear communication — all of which are critical to the success of any new academic or sports program. However, for esports, setting the groundwork for strong and scalable infrastructure is key to ensuring that student participants can connect securely, engage seamlessly and do it all in the cloud.



### Network speed and agility:

Latency, or the delay between an instruction and its transmission, is a known challenge in the esports industry. Broadcasting tournaments across streaming platforms such as Twitch and Steam, combined with massive groups of active players, means that playback functionality and fast moves need to operate flawlessly.



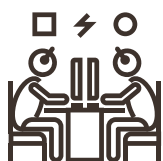
### Security:

Teams must have a well-thought approach for security threats and defense, and not just from the outside — they also must be able to protect against in-game cheating and fraud. Typically, on-premises solutions are desirable to ensure tight control and preventative strategies that can stop game interference in its tracks.



### Gaming hardware:

This refers to the consoles or computers that operate the entire game from end to end. Laptops offer mobility and compact form factors, while desktops tend to deliver more robust capacity for competition performance. Schools can turn to official esports leagues for technology specs, but before investing, it is important to consider how the technology may evolve. Schools will want to consider key features, such as processing power, hard drives, memory and graphics cards.



## Network infrastructure with a competitive edge

A network can make or break an esports program. A smooth network is core to success, allowing esports to avoid latency, jitter, delays and bandwidth challenges. A network should have ample bandwidth with the least possible latency, and the ability to allocate more bandwidth where it is needed.



## On-premises esports solutions

Schools may also consider an on-premises gaming center. This requires solutions customized to the school. Schools will need to consider an area dedicated to gaming, a space that can be flexible and multipurpose. A computer lab may suffice, with the double benefit of also serving the need for advanced computer science classes.

Furniture solutions also take center stage. Modular furniture is beneficial, as it can be continuously reconfigured to expand or allow for social distancing. Modular furniture is also easy to move, customize, and expand. Chairs with ergonomic features can help prevent pain, and allow for custom configuration to aid in monitor display, arm rest, and sit-to-stand modifications.

Schools should also consider solutions for general organization, accessibility, and noise management. Building gaming solutions that can control ambient noise is important to a long-term investment. And, gaming consoles and computers come with countless wires and cables, which can easily lend to tripping hazards and mess if not properly managed.

## Make your esports investments count with Insight Public Sector.

Esports may be an emerging area, but it requires orchestrated support from school administrators and IT professionals to create an exciting and engaging experience. Insight can evaluate and test your existing IT infrastructure for vulnerabilities and opportunities for improvement and expansion. We can guide you to affordable, high-impact solutions from hardware and accessories to network infrastructure and ongoing managed services.



## About Insight Public Sector

Today, every business is a technology business. Insight Public Sector empowers companies of all sizes, government organizations, and healthcare and educational institutions with Insight Intelligent Technology Solutions™ to realize their goals. As a Fortune 500-ranked global provider of hardware, software, cloud and service solutions, our more than 6,000 teammates give clients the guidance and expertise needed to define, architect, implement and manage technology today while transforming for tomorrow.