

SPORT FOR GOOD

School Impact Report



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new orleans



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Welcome

A Letter from the New Orleans Program Officer

In 2019, a small but mighty group of Sport for Good New Orleans community partners gathered in a house on Broadway Street, just steps from Tulane's campus. That house, the home of Tulane Center for Sport, was filled with voices and experiences from every corner of our city: school leaders, coaches, teachers, sport-based youth development leaders, and community champions. Together, we asked a simple but urgent question:

How can we deeply support our young people through the power of sport and education?

With few resources and an abundance of determination, we began to imagine a new pathway, one where schools and nonprofit partners would stand side by side, fully supported, in service of youth. Out of those conversations, the idea of Sport for Good Schools was born.

As we gained momentum, we quickly hit a setback when the pandemic slowed our efforts, but it did not silence the vision. If anything, it made our mission more urgent. We knew that without intentional investment, our young people would face deepening mental health challenges, disconnection, and behavioral struggles. The stakes were too high to let the idea fade.

That urgency drew us closer in partnership, and eventually to a powerful match with the Pincus Family Foundation. With the belief and seed funding from the Pincus Family Foundation, we were able to take our first collective steps from vision into reality nearly 6 years later.

The challenges we faced were clear: limited funding streams and scarce capacity. Yet, what outweighed the barriers was our shared purpose, to deepen our impact and support of young people through partnership. We designed a process rooted in community hosting townhalls, thought partnerships, one-on-one conversations, and gathered feedback from coaches, educators, sport-based youth development leaders, community champions, and most importantly, the young people.

This impact report is the living guide. It's not just a document. It's the reflection of New Orleans' heartbeat, of what it means when a community comes together to care for its young people. It's the essence of patience required through collective impact and collaborative work. Inside these pages are the voices, the wisdom, and the collective imagination of people who dared to dream that through sport and education we could build stronger partnerships, and stronger futures.

Above all, this is a letter to young people. To remind them, and us as supporting players, that they're at the center of this work, that their dreams and needs guide our steps, and that together we can build ecosystems that uplift them.



With gratitude,

Tiffany Aidoo

New Orleans
Program Officer,
Laureus USA

Acknowledgments & Contributions

The Sport for Good School pilot was made possible through the collective efforts of young people, educators, coaches, community organizations, evaluators, trainers, funders, and community leaders who contributed their time, expertise, and commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for youth through sport.

We extend our gratitude to every student, family, coach, teacher, school leader, and sport-based youth development organization who helped bring this work to life. Your insights, collaboration, and belief in the power of sport as a tool for youth development shaped the pilot and the learnings captured within this impact report.

Sport for Good School Pilot Partners:

This impact report reflects the collective action and shared contributions of many partners and supporters who believe in the power of sport to create meaningful opportunities for young people. We're grateful to everyone who invested their time, expertise, and partnership in making this work possible.

School Partner



Training & Professional Development



Funding & Investment



Program Partners



Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Partner:



Project Management & Research Support Partners:

- Shawn Gaines, Harrison Gaines Consulting
- Zoya Zia, Research & Community Engagement Specialist

Leadership Council & Strategic Advisement

- Ismail El Shaakir, Educator & Youth Sports Advocate
- Kate Mehok, Crescent City Schools

Laureus USA & Sport for Good Cities



Laureus USA

Laureus USA is a national nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of youth and uniting communities through the power of sport. Founded in 2002 as part of the global Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, Laureus USA carries forward Nelson Mandela's vision that "sport has the power to change the world."

As both a grantmaker and a field-builder, Laureus strengthens the youth sport ecosystem by funding high-quality programs, providing training, producing research, and playing a backbone role for community-based collective action and advocacy efforts.

Since 2012, Laureus USA has invested more than \$33 million in sport-based youth development (SBYD) organizations, reaching over one million young people nationwide.

Sport for Good Cities & Sport for Good New Orleans

Laureus' flagship Sport for Good Cities initiative builds local coalitions to improve access to high-quality sport experiences for youth, primarily from under-resourced communities and those facing the highest barriers to play. Laureus invests in organizations, coordinates efforts across sectors, and co-creates long-term strategies to advance youth and community development through sport.

Sport for Good Cities operate on a foundational principle: let the community lead. Rather than imposing top-down strategies, Laureus engages local stakeholders to identify needs, define success, and shape sustainable solutions.

Sport for Good New Orleans (SfG New Orleans) launched as the first Sport for Good City in 2014. Over a decade, SfG New Orleans has successfully involved over 30 organizations, awarded 78 grants, invested \$3.3 million, and impacted over 73,000 youth through grantmaking. This coalition model effectively aligns schools, nonprofits, funders, civic leaders, and professional athletes to expand access, enhance program quality, and facilitate data sharing for continuous improvement. Partners consistently affirm the coalition's value, with approximately 90% reporting that SfG New Orleans is building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive coalition and that youth and families are better off because of the initiative.



The New Orleans Youth Sport & Education Systems

The city of New Orleans has one of the most unique educational ecosystems in the country. According to the Louisiana Department of Education, 98% of all schools in New Orleans were charter or private schools in the 2024-2025 academic year (Rossmeier, 2025). Following post-Katrina restructuring, state officials began moving away from a traditional district model to address reductions in staff and the destruction of school buildings. Although New Orleans once relied heavily on centralized public education, it has since become a decentralized charter and private school-dominated system.

While this structure has created opportunities for innovation and school autonomy, it has also produced significant challenges related to coordination and access to extracurricular sports, and arts-related opportunities. Schools often operate independently creating vast differences in the levels of resources and support that each school receives.

Further insights highlight that youth engagement in sports is driven more by intrinsic and developmental factors than by competition alone. Having fun, learning, and improving skills rank as stronger motivators for participation than competing and winning. These findings highlight the importance of designing youth sport experiences that prioritize joy, skill-building, and holistic development (First Tee & Harris Poll, 2025).

Laureus USA has also seen and documented the vital role intentional sports programming can play in positive youth development (PYD). Research published by Laureus USA shows that young people who attend SBYD programs are more likely to exhibit positive social emotional learning (SEL) outcomes than young people who attend non-sports programs. Additionally, young people in SBYD programs are far more likely to experience key PYD practices associated with growth in SEL than those in non-sports programs (Laureus USA & Hello Insight, 2020). As sports programs are often among the first areas impacted by budget cuts, programs that bring SBYD to schools are becoming more essential than ever.

While exploring these gaps and opportunities, SfG New Orleans found that systemic barriers continue to shape school infrastructure and youth sports participation. The need for additional investment in coaches, expanded professional development, and rethinking how resources are allocated to support in-school and afterschool programming became apparent. With more coordinated community-based solutions, strategic and intentional partnerships with schools could significantly expand access to positive youth sport experiences for students, especially those facing barriers to play.

Youth sports participation remains uneven:



**Only
50%**

of children ages 6–17
in Louisiana participate
in team sports or
take lessons.

A number below the already underwhelming
national average of 55%.*

Gender-based disparities:

Louisiana ranks
among the bottom
10 states for girls'
sports participation
compared to their
male peers.

Despite these
challenges, belief in
the value of sport
remains strong—
“9 in 10”
parents say nationally.*

*(Aspen Institute, 2025)



2019: The Strategy Begins to Grow

Research consistently shows that schools remain the number one location for youth to play sports on a regular basis, reinforcing the critical role that academic institutions play in youth development through sport (Aspen Institute, 2025). Locally, many community organizations recognized this and deepened current partnerships or began exploring new relationships with schools. As a collective, more focused efforts to increase access to sport in schools began in Spring 2019, when Laureus USA convened local sport-based youth development (SBYD) nonprofits, educators, and community champions to better understand a central question:

“How can Laureus USA’s SfG New Orleans and other philanthropic partners invest in and sustain impact in New Orleans?”

Through convenings with community partners, the momentum building across the city became clear. SBYD organizations were actively pursuing deeper partnerships with schools and communities, recognizing that collaboration is key to expanding opportunities for young people. SfG New Orleans also found many youth-serving nonprofits operating within the same communities and serving similar populations, often with overlapping programming creating a strong opportunity for alignment, coordination, and collective impact.

School counselors emphasized that school-based access provides some students with services they otherwise would not have, reinforcing the critical role schools play in addressing structural inequities. Even amidst funding constraints, New Orleans

schools continue to maximize resources and create enriching learning environments- demonstrating innovation and a strong commitment to student success.

School leaders and coaches identified a powerful pathway to expand youth sports engagement by strengthening and better connecting extracurricular infrastructure across schools. Since access to physical spaces can be limited and often concentrated within individual school ecosystems, prioritizing collaboration between youth sports providers and schools is essential.

A local study found that community-based organizations have the capacity to reach about one-third of students within schools, making partnerships essential to bridging access gaps (Greater New Orleans Foundation, 2019). In response to these realities, SfG New Orleans began exploring a school-centered partnership model designed to strengthen coordination, expand access to youth sport opportunities, and better align community resources. **Shaped through countless community conversations and collaborative planning cycles, the Sport for Good School Pilot emerged.**

The purpose of the pilot was to strengthen the school ecosystem while engaging mission-aligned partners to deliver sports programming and professional development. SfG New Orleans, through its ability to convene mission-driven partners, had already started creating new pathways for young people, coaches, and community across the city.





Co-Designing the Model within a Cross-Sector Ecosystem

Schools are a natural anchor for strengthening collaboration between SBYD providers and education partners. The New Orleans Partnership School Study released by the Greater New Orleans Foundation discovered a need to help schools and community-based organizations organize the resources they have including people, time, and money to support this work and make sure schools have enough resources to engage with additional service partners and professional development, among other areas (Greater New Orleans Foundation, 2019). These insights helped inform our strategic direction.

With seed funding from the Pincus Family Foundation, SfG New Orleans formalized the Sport for Good School Model through a year-long, intentional and collaborative engagement process designed to shape the school - community partnership approach. By organizing town halls, partner convenings, focus groups, and individual stakeholder conversations, SfG New Orleans worked with school leaders, SBYD nonprofit providers, and other cross-collaborative partners to explore the following questions:

1. What strategies can lead to effective and consistent collaboration between external sport providers (SBYD and youth sports organizations) and schools in New Orleans?
2. How might we extend the strategy to not only support SBYD and youth sports organizations but also to ensure schools have the proper resources that allow young people greater access to quality positive youth development through sport?
3. What type of SBYD coach training do school-based coaches and staff desire? What are effective ways of providing that training?
4. What type of training is integral for the broader youth sports sector to advance high-quality accessible youth sport opportunities and healthy leaders? What are effective ways of providing that training?

The engagement process included:



Focus Groups (Thought Partnerships):

These conversations (12 in total) brought together school leaders, SBYD organizations, and community stakeholders to explore opportunities for collaboration, identify student needs, and gather insights on how sport could best support youth development within the school environment.



Community Town Hall Meetings:

These larger gatherings (3 in total) created space for broader community participation and dialogue. Participants discussed access to youth sports, barriers to participation, and opportunities to strengthen partnerships between schools and community organizations.



Program Partner Team Huddles:

Smaller, implementation-focused meetings were held with key partners to review feedback, refine program design, and align on logistics related to coaching, scheduling, and program delivery at the school site.



Youth Team Huddles:

Smaller, implementation-focused meetings were held with students at Fannie C. Williams Charter School (FCWCS) to gather direct feedback from youth. These conversations created space for students to share their perspectives on sports participation, their interests, and program design, ensuring the Laureus USA Sport for Good model reflects the needs and experiences of the students it seeks to serve.

Together, these engagement opportunities created a collaborative feedback loop that informed the Sport for Good School Model. The process enabled the program to be community-informed, responsive to student needs, and grounded in the strengths of the New Orleans sport and youth development ecosystem.

The Intermediary-Led Sport for Good School Model

Following deep community engagement and collaboration with local stakeholders through the SfG New Orleans coalition, Laureus USA created a model for the intermediary-led Sport for Good School pilot.

Fannie C. Williams Charter School (FCWCS) was identified as a strong anchor site based on alignment between school leadership, student priorities, and the goals of the Sport for Good School model, as well as the opportunity to coordinate multiple SBYD partners at a single site. The school's existing commitment to student wellbeing, enrichment opportunities, and collaboration with community partners created the right environment to pilot the coordinated school-based approach.

According to ecosystem mapping and youth population analysis conducted by the New Orleans Youth Alliance and the Children Youth & Planning Board, the area surrounding FCWCS reflects a high concentration of young people with significant gaps in resources and opportunities. This partnership aimed to contribute to closing the gap in programmatic investment and access.

FCWCS serves about 475 pre-K through 8th grade students each school year. The student body is nearly 50/50 male and female, composed primarily of African-American (85.7%) and Latino (13.7%) students (US News and World Report, 2026). For this pilot study, students in grades 3rd-7th were engaged in SBYD programming.

The SBYD partner selection was informed by student and school leadership interests. SfG New Orleans assessed the sports and enrichment opportunities already available to students through school day programming, extracurricular activities, and school team-based offerings. The initial mapping process

helped identify strengths within the school's current sports offerings and areas where students and coaches had limited exposure to unique sports opportunities. Rather than duplicating existing offerings, SfG New Orleans collaborated with FCWCS to prioritize introducing SBYD opportunities that expanded access to activities students would not otherwise experience within the school setting.

This approach ensured that nonprofit partners complemented the school's existing programming while broadening the range of sport experiences available to students. Based on this alignment, three SBYD partners were identified as anchor pilot partners; Excite All Stars - a multi-sport program that helps youth gain confidence to become champions of change in their communities; LOOP NOLA - an organization that provides positive, life-changing outdoor experiences for New Orleans youth; and New Orleans Rowing Club - a learn-to-row program led by Xavier University Rowing student athletes.



The partners, relevant activities and strategies, and intended outcomes are described in the table below:

Partner	Role, Activities, & Strategies	Goals
Anchor School Fannie C. Williams Charter School	• Host programming during & after the school day • Coordinate scheduling & facility access • Increase staff participation in professional development opportunities • Participate in pilot implementation check-ins • Support youth focus groups • Support monitoring, evaluation, and learning of student & program impact and outcomes	 Build greater access to sport for young people through strong collaboration between school & SBYD nonprofits.
SBYD Partners Excite All-Stars LOOP NOLA New Orleans Rowing Club	• Deliver structured SBYD programming • Align delivery with school-day expectations • Participate in onboarding & implementation meetings • Participate in training opportunities • Contribute implementation insight to strengthen the model • Monitor and evaluate student and program impact & outcomes	 Increase access to professional development & capacity building opportunities for coaches, staff, & supporting players.
Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning Hello Insight Coach Across America Evaluation Consultant	• Support identification of shared outcome indicators • Administer evaluation tools & youth focus groups • Capture program insights via townhalls, interviews, & team huddles • Support interpretation of findings • Contribute to continuous improvement cycles	 Improve school & social outcomes through intentional SBYD programming.
Athlete Ambassador Players Coalition Sport for Impact	• Align athlete-led community engagement efforts with the priorities of the Sport for Good School pilot to ensure that athlete involvement amplifies impact through sport • Strengthen student connections to athlete role models who demonstrate leadership, community, & pathways to opportunity through sport & education • Provide strategic support in highlighting how athletes' voices & power can advance resource-building & equity in young people's access to sport & opportunity	
Intermediary & Backbone Support Laureus USA	• Manage grant distribution & support responsible use of funds • Manage & coordinate relationships between school leadership & SBYD partners • Identify & organize professional development opportunities for coaches & school staff • Support monitoring, evaluation, & youth feedback processes • Convene partners through structured town halls, interviews, & team huddles • Document pilot insights to inform future programming model	

The model and pilot development was supported by a Leadership Council composed of respected leaders within the New Orleans education sector, including a charter management organization CEO and former principal with district-level experience. One Leadership Council member previously led a pandemic-era case study in partnership with four of Laureus USA's SfG New Orleans organizations

leveraging yoga, meditation, running, basketball, and golf to increase access to sport and play while improving performance and attendance. Findings from that case study helped identify school-based ecosystem alignment as a priority for New Orleans and informed early framing of the pilot (Harris, Liu, Oliver, Balfe, Slaughter, & Mattei, 2020).

Financial Investment & Forecasting

Laureus USA also allocated over \$150,000 in funding to support direct programming, SBYD trainings, coordination infrastructure, and monitoring and evaluation efforts. These investments were strategically deployed to stabilize implementation, enhance partner capacity, and integrate data collection across participating organizations.

Funding Category	Pilot Allocation	Recommended Allocation for Future Programs	Notes
Anchor School	\$10,000	\$65,000	Part of the school payment needs to include a dedicated part-time staff member to run the project internally.
SBYD Partners	\$20,000	\$25,000	Slightly increasing the grant per organization could support data collection capacities.
Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning Training & Professional Development	\$50,000	\$25,000	Ongoing MEL provides critical insight into young people's experiences helping to ensure high quality programming. Investment in this area also supports the development of coaches and educators.
Intermediary & Backbone Support	In-kind	\$30,000 - \$50,000	The support of an active and consistent backbone/intermediary organization is essential to the success of this work. Accounting for overhead and staff time would alleviate some of the capacity challenges that came up in the pilot.

Together, this backbone support and strategic structure reduced fragmentation, aligned expectations across partners, and created the infrastructure necessary for coordinated delivery across multiple organizations within a single school site.

From Community Engagement to Program Impact

Strong foundational guidance through backbone support proved to be crucial for the success of the pilot programs, the development of coaches, and the growth and experience of youth. Regular team huddles fostered trust and teamwork. Consistent professional development provided coaches and program leaders with training to build their skills and broaden their understanding of these efforts. These deliberate engagements directly impacted students' growth and experience through sport, and the following data points to the wider program outcomes.

Increasing Access to SBYD Programming

Over a 17-week pilot program, Excite All Stars, LOOP NOLA, and New Orleans Rowing Club (NORC) collaboratively delivered 106 hours of SBYD programming. This initiative reached 350 students at Fannie C. Williams, offering them opportunities to explore rowing, soccer, tennis, and outdoor adventures through the three partner programs.

This pilot significantly expanded the impact of sport. Previously, Excite All Stars was the sole program, providing 62 hours of programming to approximately 140 students at FCWCS throughout the school year. The pilot reached an additional 210 students, who participated in at least two new sports and increased their physical and youth development activities by 44 hours during the school year.

”

I want to acknowledge and honor the extensive work that was already happening on the ground before we embarked on this pilot. The significant changes you see now, and the foundational efforts established by Excite prior to our collaboration, are what allow for its current success, and that's a crucial part of the narrative.

Will

Executive Director, New Orleans Rowing Club

The pilot also created opportunities for the SBYD organizations to collaborate in new ways. Though all three organizations engage in similar work across the city of New Orleans, uniting to deliver programs on FCWCS's campus unlocked new and exciting possibilities. Notably, NORC and Excite All Stars submitted a joint application for rowing machines. The organizations successfully secured ten new Concept2 Ergs - a \$10,000 in-kind donation from Concept2. The rowing machines will ensure that Excite participants have access to rowing for years to come.



Empowering and Equipping Coaches

Supplementing youth programming with professional development for both program and school-based coaches was essential to the success of the Sport for Good School pilot. Without trained and supported coaches, even the strongest programs struggle to make an impact. Coaches can make or break a young person's sporting experience, so it is vital that coaches are provided with opportunities to learn and grow, just like the athletes they go on to nurture.

The Sport for Good School coach training sessions brought over 20 teachers, coaches, and school and program leaders together to learn, connect, and grow their coaching and youth development skills. Coach Across America delivered these sessions, exploring topics including "Introduction to Sports Based Youth Development" and the "Power of Competence." The training sessions were delivered in two 1-hour and 30-minute blocks built into the school's professional development days which complemented coaches' busy schedules and after-school commitments. This ability to adapt to coaches' schedules led to increased participation and satisfaction with the sessions. These results further highlight the importance of prioritizing

coaches and being mindful of the wide range of responsibilities they often have, especially in academic settings when most have teaching or school admin roles as well.

100%

of surveyed attendees at both trainings found the sessions engaging, interesting, & organized.

Participants also reported that the trainings felt relevant to their individual roles, & that they enjoyed learning in the group setting amongst their peers.

”

Through the huddles, we are not just reaching our kids here at Fannie C Williams. T. Batiste is also a coach at a high school. What she's learning here, she's now bringing to the high school. Coach Stewart is not just doing his boys and girls flag football here; he's in a park, impacting other kids.

Karen

Librarian, Fannie C. Williams Charter School



Growing Students' Confidence and Developing Their Voices

Positive youth outcomes are not always guaranteed in sporting environments, but they are the priority for Laureus USA partners in New Orleans - Excite All Stars, LOOP NOLA, and NORC. In the 2025/2026 pilot program at Fannie C. Williams Charter School, Laureus USA and the Sport for Good School partners sought to create opportunities for young people to build the social, emotional, and leadership skills that support success both in and out of the classroom.

While data collection challenges limited the number of matched Pre/Post surveys available for analysis, the pilot provided valuable insights into both participant needs and program impact. Through Hello Insight, a field-standard youth development measurement platform used by more than 550,000 young people across 8,000 programs nationwide, LOOP NOLA and Excite All Stars gathered direct student feedback.

The voices of 74 young people painted a clear picture of both need and opportunity. **At the start of programming, 81% of participants scored below the national average in at least one social and emotional learning capacity, highlighting the critical role these programs play in supporting youth development.** Self-management emerged as a key area for growth, with nearly 60% of participants scoring below the national average.



Each session creates space for students to build confidence, support one another, and realize that their ideas and experiences matter. Watching them open up, step into leadership roles, and encourage each other has been one of the most inspiring parts.

Sophia

Tulane University Intern, Girls Leadership Program



One of the most powerful things about our tennis program at Fannie C. Williams is watching 4th graders grow in confidence week after week. Tennis teaches more than forehands and footwork—it teaches discipline, focus, resilience, and how to believe in yourself. For many of our students, this is their first experience with the sport, and by the end of the program they are communicating better, encouraging their teammates, and carrying themselves like leaders both on and off the court.

Coach Olu

Director, Excite Tennis Academy

Despite the limited matched survey sample, the available data points to encouraging outcomes.

Among LOOP NOLA participants who completed both a Pre and Post survey, 93% demonstrated meaningful growth in at least one social and emotional learning capacity, while 60% showed growth in three or more developmental capacities.

These findings were echoed by program leaders, who observed increased confidence, curiosity, resilience, leadership, and engagement among participating youth.

Participant feedback also highlighted the quality of the experiences and relationships fostered through the programs. Based on Hello Insight's national dataset of more than half a million young people, the measured experiences are predictive of outcomes — the more young people have high-quality, research-based experiences, the more likely they are to develop socially and emotionally. **84% of LOOP NOLA participants reported that staff consistently encouraged them to challenge themselves and do their best, while 80% shared that staff took time to get to know them and listen to their perspectives.**

Together, these findings suggest that the Sport for Good School pilot created supportive,

relationship-rich environments where young people felt challenged, valued, and empowered to grow. While opportunities remain to strengthen future data collection efforts, the evidence gathered points to the meaningful role these programs play in helping young people develop the skills and confidence needed to thrive.

Reflecting on their overall experience, 84% said they would recommend the program to a friend.



Evidencing the Power of the Collective

The Sport for Good School pilot demonstrates the value of a systems-based approach to expanding access to sport and positive youth development opportunities for young people. Each input, from the financial investment in SBYD organizations and FCWCS, to quality programming, to the training of coaches and educators, creates an environment that allows schools, students, and professionals in the space to grow and thrive.

Lessons Learned

Implementation of the Sport for Good School pilot provided important insights into how coordinated SBYD organizations can operate within the school environment. These lessons reflect the strengths of this pilot, and considerations to improve future implementations or similar projects.

Implementation Insights

The Sport for Good School pilot demonstrates the value of a systems-based approach to expanding access to sport and positive youth development opportunities for young people. Each input, from the financial investment in SBYD organizations and FCWCS, to quality programming, to the training of coaches and educators, creates an environment that allows schools, students, and professionals in the space to grow and thrive.

★ **The pilot demonstrated that schools provide a strong foundation for coordinating multiple partners within a shared environment.** Since schools serve as the primary connector for young people, staff, & families, operating in this space creates a natural pathway to align programming, professional development, & student support systems. Anchoring implementation reduced fragmentation between providers & strengthened continuity of youth engagement across the school day and afterschool hours.

★ Pilot partners emphasized the **value of cross-organizational professional development & intentional team-building time.** Shared learning experiences promote relationship-building, consistency in practice, & a common understanding of program goals. Investing in collaborative professional development & team-building was widely viewed as a key strategy for increasing long-term alignment, effectiveness, & sustainability across the network.

★ Early collaboration with school leadership to **understand existing sports teams, extracurricular offerings, enrichment schedules, and testing days** is essential to enhancing alignment between partners and ensuring high-quality delivery of programming. In addition to implementation alignment, establishing shared values, clear communication norms, & structured opportunities for joint problem-solving would help align efforts, reduce fragmentation, & support a more cohesive program experience for youth.

★ **Youth team huddles created meaningful pathways for students to share feedback & shape program experiences** across in-school & afterschool programming. Incorporating youth voice and choice was a vital element to elevate programming & student experience.



I liked the rowing experience. It makes you feel welcomed. It makes you feel like family. Makes you feel like you've been knowing them for a while. The coaches make you feel that way because they push you to be better. It makes you feel good when you leave like you've been welcomed to the family.

6th grade participant

Fannie C. Williams Charter School

Across delivery partners, students' eagerness and participation remained strong throughout the pilot. Partners reported that students demonstrated familiarity with coaches, consistent excitement for weekly programming, and high levels of curiosity during learning opportunities, particularly during outdoor, field-based, and new sports programming.

Laureus USA's SfG New Orleans played an essential role in coordinating communication between partners, supporting schedule alignment, and maintaining shared expectations across pilot partners. This intermediary structure cultivated collaboration and supported implementation across a single school site.

Challenges

In addition to the model's successes, the pilot highlighted important lessons to bolster future implementation across school-centered partnerships:

- ▶ Coordinating programming across multiple organizations within a single school site **requires additional school capacity such as a dedicated school coordinator** to support scheduling, alignment, communication across partners, and continuity across the school year. The pilot reinforced the importance of assisting school partnership coordination roles that can align expectations across partners and school leadership.
- ▶ Pilot partners also identified opportunities to **strengthen alignment between classroom educators and program delivery partners** during school day activities. Consistent educator presence during partner-led sessions supported behavioral alignment, coaching continuity, and stronger connections between programming and the broader school environment.
- ▶ Changes in student group assignments during the school year affected continuity and created **challenges for maintaining consistent participation, aligning programming and administering evaluation tools**. While shifts in student participation are a common reality in schools and SBYD partners, the experience highlights the importance of establishing conditions for alignment early in the SfG School planning process. Partners identified the intermediary role as vital for coordinating shared values, learning outcomes, team building activities, scheduling and program calendars, which strengthens communication and builds a smoother transition process when natural changes occur in the school. Partners also emphasized how Team Huddles were an invaluable space to reinforce programmatic and partner alignment and accountability for the overall success of the pilot.
- ▶ Young people expressed **challenges in consistently engaging in afterschool programming** due to transportation and competing priorities. These insights reinforced the need for in-school and afterschool programming and continued investment in resources that reduce barriers to participation and accommodate the evolving scheduling realities for schools.

As is common in multi-partner pilot initiatives, implementation surfaced important opportunities to strengthen coordination, programming continuity, and partnership integration.

The insights from the pilot continue to inform refinement of the Sport for Good School Model and shape future opportunities to expand coordinated SBYD efforts and partnerships within school environments in New Orleans.



Forward-Looking:

Supporting SBYD Organizations & Schools to Improve Access to Sport and Enhance Educational Outcomes

This Sport for Good School pilot demonstrated that coordinated partnerships between schools and SBYD organizations can meaningfully expand access to structured sport experiences while strengthening school-community alignment around student wellbeing and engagement.

Deepening this work will depend on continued intermediary leadership, coordination, and

investment across the youth sport and education ecosystem. At the same time, trust-building and cultural understanding are foundational to this breadth of work. Long-term impact depends on consistent and intentional investment in relationships, cross-collaboration, & community-centered partnership. Those elements, alongside funding, are key to sustaining programming.

Recommendations to Strengthen the Youth Sport & Education Ecosystem:

- 1. Dedicated School Coordination and Backbone Infrastructure:** Sustained impact requires a dedicated in-school coordinator to steward partnerships, align resources, and ensure accountability across partners. Without consistent coordination on school grounds, it's difficult to ensure youth sport programming is embedded within the school effectively and that impact is measured consistently. Additionally, a backbone function is essential to maintaining communication with school leadership, aligning schedules, and supporting shared goals across partners. The establishment of a dedicated Youth Sports Coordinator in every school – or a network of coordinators supporting multiple schools – is a critical investment in creating the infrastructure necessary to expand access, strengthen partnerships, and maximize the impact of sport for New Orleans students.
- 2. Investment in Youth Sport and Education Partners:** Continued investment in SBYD organizations and schools is necessary to ensure consistent, high-quality access to sport experiences for young people. Funding supports not only program delivery, but also the infrastructure needed for transportation, equipment, staffing, and planning. Reliable resources expand reach, deepen impact, and create long-term pathways for youth participation and development.
- 3. Training and Professional Development for Coaches and Program Leaders:** High-quality youth sport experiences depend on well-trained, well-supported coaches and program leaders. Ongoing investment in training, particularly in youth development practices, social emotional learning, and trauma-informed approaches through the lens of sport, strengthens program delivery and supports staff well-being. Shared learning spaces across partners also increases trust-building and reinforces the positive impact on young people's experience.

The Sport for Good School pilot demonstrates that when schools, SBYD organizations, and local leaders align around a shared vision, sport can be a powerful driver of youth development and educational engagement. The foundation has been designed and established by the New Orleans community. The next phase requires collective community leadership, sustained investment, and a shared commitment to ensure all young people in New Orleans have access to the long-term benefits of sport and education.



Citations & References

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