

[http://www.tulsaworld.com/homepagelatest/elimination-of-junior-high-high-school-athletics-part-of-tps/article\\_6eae89bb-7ff2-5788-9eb8-55a5423ae449.html](http://www.tulsaworld.com/homepagelatest/elimination-of-junior-high-high-school-athletics-part-of-tps/article_6eae89bb-7ff2-5788-9eb8-55a5423ae449.html)

## **Elimination of junior high, high school athletics part of TPS budget survey**

**By Mike Brown Tulsa World**

Mar 28, 2017

A survey of funding priorities for Tulsa Public Schools could impact the district's athletic programs in fundamental ways.

Gil Cloud, director of athletics, is urging his coaches, athletes across the district, and their families to participate in the survey. Cloud emailed 63 members of the TPS Athletics Hall of Fame, urging the same thing.

Cost-cutting options include eliminating junior high athletics, eliminating both junior high and high school athletics, combining one school's athletic programs with another's, and eliminating bus transportation for games and competition.

"We're wanting to show what kind of support athletics has when this information is carried forward to the (TPS school board)," Cloud said.

Superintendent Deborah Gist announced last week the district anticipates a \$12 million reduction in state funding for the 2017-18 school year. TPS faces "difficult and heinous" options, **Gist wrote in an op-ed piece** in the Opinion section of Sunday's Tulsa World.

Gist is inviting members of the public to participate in the survey, posted at **www.tulsaschools.org/survey** and open until 6 p.m. Thursday.

In one section of the survey, respondents are asked to order 15 priorities from "most acceptable" to "least acceptable," with 1 being most acceptable.

Four of the five top items relate to athletics and could remain near the top if surveys are filled out incompletely. Cloud is urging pro-athletics respondents to make sure they move those options further down the list and complete the survey.

TPS athletics have undergone severe reductions following a \$6.7 million reduction in state funding for the 2016-17 school year.

Measures included cutting programs for some of the district's nine high schools, restructuring junior high programs and imposing a 75-mile travel limit for all but district- and playoff-mandated contests.

In addition, Cloud trimmed some 100 coaching positions, cutting more than \$200,000 from a \$2.1 million athletic budget.

Varsity swimming was dropped for all but Booker T. Washington and Memorial. All nine high schools (Central, East Central, Hale, Edison, Memorial, McLain, Rogers, Booker T. Washington and Webster) lost one assistant each in the girls and boys sports of cross country, golf and tennis.

In Tulsa's 11 middle schools, the sports of football, volleyball, girls and boys basketball and girls and boys soccer were cut to one squad each per school. Before, each school had separate seventh- and eighth-grade squads in each sport.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/12192284/Stop-banning-children-from-playing-sport-teachers-told-by-Nicky-Morgan.html>

## Stop banning children from playing sport, teachers told by Nicky Morgan

Playing games helps children to develop the character traits they need to succeed in life, the Education Secretary says



Children should not be wrapped in cotton wool, Nicky Morgan says Photo: Alamy



By [Christopher Hope](#), Chief Political Correspondent

9:07PM GMT 12 Mar 2016

The education secretary has called on schools to stop wrapping children in “cotton wool” and allow them to take part in sport, even if there is a risk of injury.

Playing games helps children to develop the character traits they need to succeed in life, Nicky Morgan told The Telegraph.

Her comments come as a leading sports provider in schools warned that some teachers were banning children from running or using skipping ropes because of fears they would hurt themselves.

Dean Horridge, the chief executive of Fit for Sport which provides advice on sports and games for 3,000 schools across the UK, told an anti-obesity conference that over-cautious school playground rules were reinforcing students' sedentary lifestyles.

It also emerged last week that the playground game of tig had been banned at Christ the King School in Leeds, West Yorkshire, after the headteacher claimed that children had become upset at the rough nature of the game.

Mrs Morgan said: "School sport and team games don't just help children stay healthy, they help build character, resilience and grit - the very traits we need young people to develop. That's why I want to see pupils being active in their playgrounds.

"Of course safety is paramount, but if schools wrap children up in cotton wool, they risk the next generation entering adult life wholly unprepared for the challenges it can bring."

Two thirds of primary school children are not meeting the recommended fitness levels of being able to complete "a star jump per second for a sustained minute", Mr Horridge said. Schools are "failing our children on a daily basis" by not encouraging them to do more exercise, he added.

"When children come into school they are asked to sit down and do work," Mr Horridge said. "They go out to playgrounds and are told they can't run. They can't use a ball because it is dangerous.

"Don't use that skipping rope because somebody may get strangled. God forbid have some sprinting races or let people run or you might fall over.

"We are creating a sedentary behaviour from a very early age and of course when they come home from school, they get a lift home because of the dangers, we ask them to sit down and do their homework.

"Seven year olds are doing an hour, an hour and a half of home work after a full day of sitting down at school. We then say 'eat your tea and go to bed – good night'. There is very, very little time to create activity."

*"Of course safety is paramount, but if schools wrap children up in cotton wool, they risk the next generation entering adult life wholly unprepared for the challenges it can bring."*

Nicky Morgan

Mr. Horridge said he organized school playgrounds in activity zones so boys football matches did not hog the playground and force other children to watch.

A survey by a teachers' union in 2011 found that hundreds of over-zealous schools were preventing pupils playing games enjoyed by generations of children amid fears they will be sued if something goes wrong. It found that three in 10 schools had banned British bulldog – where children try to stop other pupils running across the playground.

There was also evidence of schools stopping pupils from playing leapfrog, marbles, tag and even skipping.

Teachers told how some schools imposed “safe” versions of traditional sports to prevent pupils being injured, forcing them to play football with a soft ball and banning rugby tackles in favor of a gentle “touch” version of the game.

In November 2014, Noblehill Primary school in Dumfries cracked down on youngsters using skipping ropes or balls at play times because “they can cause upset regarding space to play/someone being hurt by an item”.

David Green, from the thinktank Civitas, added: “Schools that pursue hyper-safety at the expense of other educational goals are harming both the education and health of children.

“Vigorous sport, even at the risk of the kinds of injury that can be sustained in rugby, football and cricket, are essential to the development of courage and resilience - qualities that every child needs as they grow up.”

<https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/preps/story/2012-05-07/Coach-proposes-ending-high-school-sports/54801730/1>

## Column: Ex-college coach proposes ending high school sports

By Dan Hinxman, analysis, Reno Gazette-Journal

Updated 5/7/2012 3:25 PM

It would be easy to dismiss [Len Stevens](#) as having taken one too many basketballs upside the head during his playing and coaching days.

And there have been plenty of them — playing and coaching days, that is, not so much cranial encounters with basketballs: head coach at Washington State (1983-87), Nevada (1987-93) and for a Swiss club team; assistant coach at UC Irvine; a player at Ohio and Wichita State; a high school coach. From the days when cartoons were a high Saturday priority through becoming a grandfather, Stevens has lived a life of sport.

All that experience is what gives his unique perspective some merit.

He wants to put an end to high school sports.

Your first reaction was probably in line with mine. Preposterous. Ludicrous. What of the pageantry, the history, the apple pie? High school sports were probably a big part of your childhood. High school sports probably helped mold who you are today.

Kick it to the curb, Stevens says.

And after you listen to his reasoning you find yourself drifting to his side of the fence — not necessarily jumping over it, but at least willing to give it more thought.

There are several reasons why Stevens, now the executive director of the Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce, feels the way he does, and they all revolve around how our changing culture has effected changes in high school sports. When high school sports were introduced they were to be a completely inclusive part of the educational experiences, and for decades they were. Now that takes a back seat.

As Stevens points out:

- Coaches were supposed to be teachers. Now fewer than half of them are.
- Each passing year, fewer and fewer students attend their schools' games. A recent study showed fewer than 10 percent attend games, Stevens said.
- At almost every school principals will tell you their greatest headache is dealing with parents who have complaints about their child's experience in sports (the child should be playing more, the coach doesn't know what he's doing, the coach is too harsh, etc.).

The solution, Stevens thinks, is to go to the European model. There are virtually no high school sports in Europe, just club sports. (England has a high school sports program but it is highly overshadowed by club sports, and the rest of Europe has very limited, almost intramural-level prep sports.)

Club sports have been growing in the [U.S.](#) for years, and Stevens believes if we go to club sports that would answer a lot of problems and put the high school focus back where it belongs, on education.

In this format, high schools would still have intramural sports and physical education, which would turn the attention to recreation, diet and exercise.

Families that want the experience of high-end competition, perhaps parents who believe the road to a college education is through sports, will get more attention and more control through club sports. There is a higher cost involved, but there would also be a cost reduction to everyone by way of a tax break.

The one point that Stevens made that I'm not yet convinced will work is his notion that families that have financial challenges would still get opportunities in club sports. Stevens thinks club sports will give breaks or waivers to talented children who might not be able to afford it, but that still leaves out the "tweeners," the kids who are good but not great who want to compete at the highest level.

In almost any scenario there would be those who would be left out compared to the opportunities that are made available through high school sports today.

Still, it's an idea that should be considered. It's revolutionary and even offensive to some degree, but it might just work.