

Athletic Program Support **Process**

Below is a suggested process list for churches planning to support athletics for a public school. It's helpful to start initial planning well enough in advance to allow time for volunteer recruiting, procurement and setup. That timeframe varies based on the type of support offered.

1. Work through the Be|Undivided "Prelaunch Planning" page (see *Strategic Planning*).
2. Meet with school contacts, working with them to find out their needs and how your resources and vision line up with theirs.
3. Determine what avenues of support for the athletic program the church seems best suited for. Some options would be offering coaching support, providing trainers, starting a booster program to encourage student athletes, and providing post-practice or post-game meals.
4. Start to fill key volunteer roles, beginning with the Athletic Program Support Director. The volunteer recruiting and training process will be an ongoing one parallel with all other steps.
5. Meet with church decision-makers, the Procurement Team (see *Strategic Planning for Volunteer Organization* document) and volunteers to develop your plan.
6. Determine what resources will be required for the athletic program support identified in your plan.
7. Develop partnerships with third parties for any desired donations, volunteers, connections, etc.
8. Begin resource procurement.
9. Determine and set up or enhance any facility needs.
10. Meet with school contacts again, finalizing details and any communication strategies needed.
11. Initiate support programs!
12. Maintain a clear communication cycle with the school about availability, problems, successes, etc.

Athletic Program Support **Materials List**

The equipment needed to support school sports drastically differs depending on the sport itself, as well as on the type of support being provided. Below are some suggestions to get started.

- Equipment donations/coaching support:
 - Practice equipment
 - Practice facility
 - Uniforms
 - Balls
 - Shoes/cleats
 - Socks
- Athletic trainer support:
 - Athletic tape
 - Ace bandages
 - Icepacks
 - First aid supplies
- Booster support:
 - Spirit-wear for supporters to wear to games (lanyards, sweatshirts, pompoms with school colors, etc., help promote sporting events attended by church members)
 - Poster-making supplies
 - Energy drinks, energy bars, candy and other little "giveaways" for assembling special pre-event "goodie bags" to encourage student athletes
- Post-practice/post-game meals:
 - A kitchen
 - Serving tools
 - Food
 - Forks, spoons and knives
 - Plates, bowls and cups

Athletic Program Support **Volunteer Positions**

Athletic Program Support Director

- Wants to alleviate the burden on schools and students, and to make things run smoothly to build an efficient and effective support program.
- Duties:
 - Makes sure the distribution of lead volunteers is adequate
 - Coordinates and recruits all other volunteers
 - Works with the Site Coordinator to make sure the school stays updated and comfortable with the partnership in the arena of athletic program support
- Skills needed:
 - Organization
 - Leadership
 - Inspiration
 - Positivity
- Hours required:
 - 5-15 hours/week (during sports seasons)

Volunteer Coach

- Wants to use knowledge of a certain sport to encourage and train students to excel in that sport.
- Duties: Depend on the sport. May include:
 - Running practice
 - Coaching games
 - Film study
 - Scheduling
 - Strategy
 - Recruiting
 - Evaluating players
 - Training players
- Skills needed:
 - Knowledge in the sport
 - Teaching skills
 - Good with students
 - Motivator
- Hours required:
 - 15-20 hours/week, seasonally

Athletic Trainer

- Wants to use expertise to help athletes remain in good physical health.
- Duties: Depends on the requirements of the sport. May include:
 - Wrapping/taping
 - Teaching proper injury prevention techniques
 - Being at games and/or practices
 - Taking care of various injuries
- Skills needed:
 - Medical training (MD, DO, RN, EMT, etc.)
 - Basic sports medicine knowledge
 - Good with students
- Hours required:
 - Depends on the sport and if you have to attend games or practices

Meals Volunteer

- Wants to provide nutritious food to sports participants.
- Duties
 - Making or acquiring food
 - Delivering food to participants
 - Organizing supplies needed for cooking and consumption
- Skills needed:
 - General cooking ability
 - Organization
- Hours required:
 - Depends on if you are acquiring food or cooking and what type of food is being provided

Booster Lead Volunteer

- Wants to help coordinate activities to encourage student athletes.
- Duties:
 - Helps coordinate "goodie bag" or poster-making production for games
 - Is onsite at the church during weekend services to answer questions and sign people up for church-site activities
 - Distributes the school's athletic activity calendars to the congregation
- Skills needed:
 - Good with people
 - Welcoming
 - Organized

- Creative
- Hours required:
 - 5 hours/week during sports seasons

Procurement Team

The Procurement Team (see *Strategic Planning for Volunteer Organization* document) should be contacted and available to help obtain donations of equipment and goods as needed.

Transportation Team

The Transportation Team (see *Strategic Planning for Volunteer Organization* document) should be contacted and available to help transport equipment and goods as needed.

Athletic Program Support

Additional Requirements

- **Financial:** Athletic program support financial needs will be determined by which sports you choose and what type of support given. How do we meet these financial needs without being a drain on the church?
 - Procurement from businesses
 - Procurement from service organizations
 - Procurement from church attendees
 - Grants
 - See "Partnerships" section below

- **Facilities:** Most schools have adequate facilities for athletic programs, so there would likely not be additional facilities needs. For those rare situations where schools do not have adequate facilities, the following could be helpful:
 - Gym: If your church is close to the school and has a gym, offering your facilities could reduce gym scheduling conflicts or provide a gym for a school that doesn't have a usable one. Schools may even be able to offer a sport that they didn't have the facility for before.
 - Field: The same is true for sports that need fields. Some schools don't have properly maintained fields. This makes sports more difficult, and dangerous, for students. If you have access to a proper field to rent or use, the school could benefit from that access.
 - General-purpose space: Some teams need either film room space or space to practice skills (like cheerleading). These activities don't require a full gym and could take place in a simple room.

- **Transportation:** Most teams have to travel. Schools have to fund buses and bus drivers, which can be costly. Here are some suggestions for supporting them in this area:
 - Bus driver: Church members with the right driving credentials can volunteer to transport students. Most bus companies will rent out buses, and the school could potentially save money on having to hire a driver. Churches can even consider having someone get licensed just for this purpose.
 - Bus: If you have church buses or vans, you can alleviate some financial stress on the school by donating the use of your buses. (Please check insurance limitations.)

- **Partnerships:** Many organizations have a heart to clothe students and their families. Partnerships multiply your ability to serve. Who can you partner with?
 - Local businesses for donations

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- Local clothing stores for uniforms
- Clubs (Rotary, Elks, etc.)
- Other churches
- PTA
- YMCA
- Community centers
- Local parks and recreation departments

Athletic Program Support **General Information & Resources**

General Considerations

- **Choosing which programs to support** (coaching, training, meals/snacks, attendance at games or events, facility access, transportation, booster, etc.):
 - **Student needs:** What do students actually need? Fit together what the church has to offer with what the greatest student needs are. It can be powerful to offer something as simple as attendance support for games and events.
 - **School needs:** While student needs are at the heart of a church–school partnership, school needs drive connection and ability to serve, and schools have the best long-term perspective on where the holes are in their athletic programs.
 - **Volunteer availability:** This is simply realizing the realities of your people. The after-school hours when sports training happens are often difficult ones for volunteers to be available.
 - **Resource availability:** Being realistic about the resources available, and committing to something appropriate, is important. Starting small and being consistent is key.
 - **Obstacles:** Will there be special training required for volunteers to be able to serve? Are there other obstacles to service? Finding out ahead of time will help with decision-making.
- **Important relationships to build:**
 - Athletic director
 - Coach
 - Vice principal
 - Principal
 - Custodian
 - Office staff

Mistakes to Avoid

- **Overcommitting:** *Every sports program at the school may soon want to tap in to the resources that you are making available, but recognize that those resources will soon be diluted and ineffective if you try to do too much.*
- **Overstepping bounds:** *If a sports program already exists, it's probably because a head coach is already running it. We recommend deferring to coaching staff in decision-making and leadership, unless they request otherwise.*
- **Only providing support where volunteers have knowledge:** *There are many general ways that a person without any knowledge of a specific sport can provide support for coaches and student athletes.*