School Sport for All: An Inclusive Developmental Framework to Improve Participation

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Abstract

Recognizing the contributions that school sport can make to the wellbeing of students, this paper proposes a "re-imagined" school sport framework. School Sport for All (SS4A) places students at the center of building a program where development and wellbeing are prioritized. The SS4A framework fully integrates and promotes key aspects from comprehensive school health, whole-child education, and long-term athlete development throughout all its features. As a whole, SS4A aims to ensure the benefits of sport can be experienced by all, within a school system where teaching and learning are prioritized in the classroom and in the school community.

Introduction

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2011), schools serve as crucial catalysts for change by equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for personal growth and societal advancement. Through providing a comprehensive education that develops 21st-century competencies, schools prepare students for success in both their personal and professional lives (Joynes et al., 2019). Learners have to deal with unforeseen and ever-changing situations in their future, so it is essential for them to be equipped with a variety of competencies, such as cognitive and metacognitive abilities (e.g., analytical thinking, imaginative thinking, and self-control), social and emotional competencies (e.g., sympathy, self-confidence, and teamwork), and practical and physical experiences (e.g., establishing healthy habits, persistence, applying new information) (UNESCO, 2011). These skills should be deeply rooted in school activities and educational experiences (OECD, 2018). Furthermore, all individuals, regardless of their gender, socioeconomic status, or location, should have access to quality education (UNESCO, 2008, 2021). Education has a significant impact on promoting social cohesion and addressing issues of inequality and injustice, making education a critical tool for advancing a more just and equitable world (UNESCO, 2021).

Within the broader education picture, school sport (SS) can play an important role in a student's experience and holistic development (Holt et al., 2008; Neely & Holt, 2014; Sulz et al., 2022; Thompson et al., 2022; Yanik, 2018). We recognize that SS can look quite different across the globe. For the purposes of this paper, we will be using the Canadian context as a reference point and believe that others can extrapolate the content and conclusions to their own unique context. In Canada, the term "SS" refers to school-sponsored sport, practiced outside regular class hours, in which students participate in organized interscholastic games and competitions (Camiré & Kendellen, 2016). School Sport Canada's

mission statement is to "promote and advocate positive sportsmanship, citizenship, and the total development of student athletes through interscholastic sport" (2018). SS has been perceived as possessing a distinctive capacity to augment educational opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting and to foster development that cannot be achieved in more conventional environments (Eccles et al., 2003; Hellison, 2003). Participation in SS is associated with educational benefits, such as higher educational attainment, higher likelihood of attending post-secondary institutions, better academic engagement, and lower participation in risky behaviors (Sulz et al., 2022; Wretman, 2017). Further, research has shown that participation in SS can provide young people with various advantages that promote their overall wellbeing. These benefits may include greater engagement with school, a sense of belonging to a group, improved emotional regulation, increased physical activity, and the development of important life skills like communication, goal-setting, and teamwork (Sulz et al., 2022; Holt et al., 2008; Neely & Holt, 2014; Yanik, 2018). Overall, SS has the potential to provide a platform for students to develop important competencies for their success—now and in the future.

Obstacles to Quality School Sport

Amidst the opportunities and benefits available, schools face a number of obstacles to offering quality and inclusive sport opportunities for students. Canadian SS researchers (Gleddie et al., 2019; Neely & Holt, 2014; Sulz et al., 2020) have identified issues with traditional SS programs: (a) a lack of essential purpose/philosophy (e.g., focus on winning over development), (b) inequities for participation (e.g., only "elite" teams), (c) sustaining quality and investment (e.g., lack of support for teacher-coaches), and (d) conflict/overlap with club sport teams (e.g., the same students getting all the opportunities to play). Thompson et al. (2022) reported that participation in sport at school has not led to marked differences in the number of student-athletes performing at an elite level. As such, the authors state that SS are not suitable for facilitating the combination of elite sport and education. Rather, these programs should consider the bigger picture and focus on the holistic benefits instead of solely on performance (Thompson et al., 2022). Work by Camiré et al. (2009) and Sulz et al. (2022) aligns with this rethought purpose. These researchers argue that SS should be advocated for and advanced through an educational perspective. Specifically, Camiré et al. (2009) documented parents' perception that SS should promote an atmosphere which is based on pleasure, participation, and positive development for all participants, not just those with the most athletic talent. Sulz et al. (2022) recommended considering SS as an integral part of a healthy school community, for all students.

In response to the previously discussed issues, there has been growing interest in how to create inclusive SS programs focused on quality, development, and wellbeing—all within the important context of educational growth and development. In Canada, scholars have called for quality SS programs focused on student development but also with a view to support teacher-coaches, who are often overworked and stressed, but care deeply about sport and athlete development (Gleddie et al., 2019; Neely & Holt, 2014; Sulz et al., 2020). Sulz et al. (2020) challenged school athletic directors and teacher-coaches to create spaces for all students interested in playing SS and to do so by "thinking outside the traditional SS box" (p.1569). They suggested a "re-imagined" SS model that places students at the center of building a

program where development and wellbeing are priority. Both Sulz et al. (2020) and Camiré (2014) advocated for properly supporting and therefore sustaining teacher-coaches to achieve these goals. These adult mentors and leaders are critical to the development of students and the overall quality of programs. Specifically, the authors suggest teacher-coaches should be valued, compensated, recognized, and offered professional development opportunities to improve their competencies and ensure they have philosophies and values that are congruous with SS's education mandate (Sulz et al., 2020; Camiré 2014).

These current challenges emphasize a need to revise the culture and structure of SS to focus on student-athlete holistic wellbeing and development, enhance participation rates—of both skilled and developing athletes—and build capacity to attract teachers to coach SS teams and maintain their involvement. School leaders also need to recognize the contributions that SS can make to the education community and the holistic success of students, and then become advocates for valuing, prioritizing, and supporting SS to achieve those goals.

Development of a School Sport Framework

Recognizing the role SS can play in student-athlete wellbeing and overall development, we decided to explore the development of a framework for quality SS that was evidence based, open enough to apply to diverse contexts, and designed to address the challenges and opportunities stated above. Following the design of similar processes to develop a framework for embedding physical literacy in physical education (Gleddie & Morgan, 2021) and the implementation of comprehensive school health in the school community (Storey et al., 2016), our proposed SS framework is based on three foundational approaches.

Comprehensive School Health (CSH)

CSH is an internationally recognized framework for supporting improvements in students' educational and health outcomes (JCSH, 2019). A CSH approach to education and health emerged in response to the recognition and understanding of the importance of multifaceted approaches to health and the association between health and learning (Kolbe, 2019). Researchers suggest moving from practices that rely mainly on a singular approach (e.g., health class, school policy) to a multi-pronged whole-school approach in order to improve the current health of youth, as multifaceted approaches not only affect individual behaviors but also the environment in which students live and learn (Samdal & Rowling, 2011; Storey et al., 2016). The CSH approach integrates multiple school components (i.e., teaching and learning, partnerships and services, healthy school policy, social and physical environment) that can improve both health and education outcomes. Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of comprehensive approaches to health-enhancing behaviors and positive educational outcomes among students (Langford et al., 2017; Michael et al., 2015). Examining the experiences of youth in SS through a CSH lens enables an understanding of the place of sport within a healthy school community and underscores the importance of addressing the multifaceted needs of students to support their holistic wellbeing and development.

Whole-Child Education

Whole-child education recognizes that a narrow focus on academic achievement alone is not sufficient to support students' holistic development and success. Instead, a comprehensive approach that addresses the multiple dimensions of students' lives is necessary to create a supportive and nurturing environment in which all students can thrive academically and personally (Morse & Allensworth, 2015). This approach takes into consideration the emotional, physical, social, and cognitive development of each student. Specifically, whole-child education is based on five tenets: (a) each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle; (b) each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults; (c) each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and border community; (d) each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults; and (e) each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in their future and participation in a global environment (ASCD, 2007). A whole-child approach to education encourages school administrators, decision-makers, teachers, and other members of the school community to think more holistically and comprehensively about offering students both academic and non-academic support and learning opportunities (Slade & Griffith, 2013). SS can play an important role in supporting whole-child education by promoting physical activity, healthy development, and a positive school culture. Whole-child education reflects and aligns with the CSH approach by addressing the health needs of the student to support their physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development and further integrate health and education (Lewallen et al., 2015). When integrated into a comprehensive and well-rounded educational program, SS can have a positive impact on student learning and wellbeing.

Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)

LTAD shares fundamental principles of whole-child education, including comprehensive development, creating supportive environments, personalized learning, and promoting inclusivity and engagement, which contribute to individuals' well-rounded growth and success. Specifically, LTAD offers a comprehensive approach to athlete development that focuses on optimizing the performance and wellbeing of athletes over the course of their athletic careers (Higgs et al., 2019). The main objectives of LTAD are to (a) ensure that athletes have the opportunity to participate in sports in a safe and healthy environment; (b) provide a clear path for athletes to progress through the different stages of development, from beginner to elite; (c) ensure that athletes receive the necessary training and support to reach their full potential; (d) provide athletes with the skills and knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their athletic careers, including decisions about when to retire; and (e) foster a positive and inclusive culture in sport that supports athletes at all levels of development (Higgs et al., 2019). LTAD is based on the principles of physiological, psychological, and motor development, and takes into account the different needs and challenges faced by athletes at different stages. Developing a SS program with LTAD as a foundation, schools can help students develop their athletic abilities in a safe, structured, and age-appropriate way.

Outline of and Evidence for School Sport for All (SS4A)

The goal of SS4A (Figure 1) is to increase opportunities and improve experiences within SS for all community members–students first, but also for parents, teachers, coaches, and administrators. In the following sections, we will provide an overview, explain the structure, and share the evidence behind the SS4A framework.

Fig. 1: The School Sport for All (SS4A) Framework

Where It All Begins

The entry to SS4A is evidence-based (Figure 2). Evidence can certainly include findings from formal research, such as we have shared above. However, evidence can also come from formal and informal discussions with students, parents, and teachers. It can come from a lifetime of teaching and coaching experience, coupled with a working, professional knowledge of children and sport. As such, our goal of improving access for all is built on a foundation of evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence—all relevant to distinct school communities able to meet the needs of diverse students.

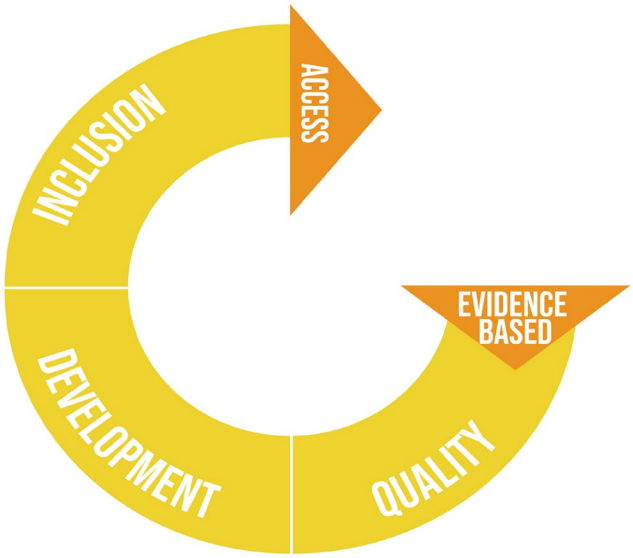

Fig. 2: Essential Elements

Essential Elements

The Essential Elements (Figure 2) are at the heart of every change we wish to make to SS systems; they refer to the fundamental components that are required for the system to operate effectively and to fulfil its intended purpose. These elements are considered essential because without them, the system would not be able to operate at its best. Essential Elements are the core components that are foundational for achieving SS4A, and, as such, they cannot be compromised or omitted without significantly impacting the overall effectiveness of the framework. These elements interact and work together, running through the entire framework, including the Essential Conditions (green circle—Figure 3) and the center of the framework (Figure 4). In other words, SS cannot be for all unless it is based on evidence, grounded in quality practice, developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and meets the needs of the whole child.

Quality

Maintaining quality SS programs is imperative to reaching the goals of the framework—increase opportunities and improve experiences within SS. For example, increasing the number of players on a team can inhibit development by reducing the attention, amount of practice, and playing time of student-athletes. It is best to offer multiple teams, each with their own coach, as opposed to one large team. Sport for Life developed a guide to provide quality sport delivery based on long-term development, with the intention to identify how community sport organizations can improve and sustain quality sport (Jurbala, 2019). Sport for Life's Quality Sport model emphasizes three main components: Good Places, Good People, and Good Programs. Good Places refers to creating safe and inclusive environments for individuals to participate in sports, regardless of their age, gender, ability, or socio-economic background. Good People focuses on promoting positive values such as respect, teamwork, and fair play among coaches, athletes, and parents, and developing strong relationships within the sporting community. Good Programs involve creating

developmentally appropriate and engaging training programs that focus on the holistic development of individuals, including their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills (Jurbala, 2019). By prioritizing these three components within SS programs, we can foster a quality sporting experience that supports lifelong participation and personal growth.

Related to the point above, re-imagining SS does not mean we remove competition—competition can be healthy. The point is to allow more students to participate in healthy competition at their particular skill and developmental level. According to Shields and Bredemeier (2009), competition can affect people and society in both favorable and unfavorable ways. On the one side, competition can encourage people to push themselves past their comfort zones and pursue success, which can foster personal development, drive, and greatness. On the other hand, competition can also result in adverse consequences that hurt both individuals and society as a whole, such as anxiety, violence, and a win-at-all-costs mentality. Shields and Bredemeier (2009) suggest that competition should be set up in a way that prioritizes good sportsmanship, justice, and respect for opposition while still encouraging individual development and motivation. By taking a balanced approach, competition's advantages can be maximized while its drawbacks are reduced (Shields & Bredemeier, 2009). That means appropriate competition for highly skilled athletes and those just learning a new sport. Quality sport experiences focus on good people (trained leaders and coaches), leading good programs (to develop athletes) in good places (safe and welcoming).

Development

Shifting school focus to a holistic development approach will foster personal growth to allow youth to learn about themselves, develop sport and life skills, and acquire attributes that will benefit them beyond sport (Camiré et al., 2013; Holt et al., 2008). If the goal of SS is to holistically develop students, it should emphasize personal growth, skill development, fun, peer support, and educational success (Sulz et al., 2020). Holt & Neely (2011) evaluated the concept of positive youth development in relation to youth sport. Positive youth development is a strength-based conception of development that occurs when youth's values, beliefs, and life skills are actively strengthened to enable maturation into well-balanced, optimal-functioning individuals (Gould & Carson, 2008; Lerner et al., 2005). Positive youth development through sport aims to develop psychological, social, emotional, physical, and intellectual skills in athletes that can be used in sport and in life (Bateman et al., 2020; Gould & Carson, 2008). Holt and Neely (2011) reported that youth sport has been associated with positive and negative developmental outcomes, with positive developmental benefits of sport participation being contingent on social contextual factors (e.g., how coaches, parents, and peers contribute to the sport experience). Richard Lerner, a developmental psychologist, introduced the 5Cs of positive youth development (e.g., Lerner et al., 2005): Competence, Confidence, Character, Caring/Compassion, and Connection. The 5Cs are measurable constructs that represent desired youth development outcomes. Zarrett et al. (2008) found that youth who participated in sports for two or more years had significantly higher positive youth development scores than non-participants and youth who participated for only one year. This underscores the importance of providing opportunities for all students to participate on SS teams and of incorporating SS into students' holistic development.

Inclusion

Like school, SS should be a place where any student who wants to play a sport has an opportunity. There are certainly challenges associated with this (e.g., gym space, coaches); however, in our experience, many programs have successfully implemented alternative structures to increase participation. SS opportunities can range from intramurals to interscholastic teams, "sport camp" options to drop-in sessions, intraschool teams to jamboree style tournaments. These would allow more opportunities for more students to receive the benefits of SS. However, a low percentage of the student population actually participates in SS, limiting those receiving the benefits (Dwyer et al., 2006; Kann et al., 2014). Dwyer et al. (2006) found that while 97.2% of schools provided SS programs, only 15% of students participated. The low percentage of student participation is often attributed to funding, teacher involvement, and the availability of facilities/gym space (Dwyer et al. 2006; Sulz et al., 2020). Intramural programs, for example, can be an effective way to provide students who are not on SS teams with opportunities for physical activity and sport participation (Edwards et al., 2014). However, due to decreasing resources for school-based physical activity opportunities (e.g., volunteer teachers, teacher compensation, and funding to schools), the availability of intramural programs in schools is limited (Dwyer et al., 2006; Edwards et al., 2014; Sulz et al., 2020). This issue is exacerbated by the fact that students who are not advanced athletes have fewer options at school. Often the students who do participate on SS teams are already quite active outside of school and/or fill roster spots on multiple SS teams (Sulz et al., 2020). Traditional SS sometimes includes pressure to "win," resulting in team selection procedures where only highest skilled athletes fill roster spots, while the developing athletes are cut (Gleddie et al., 2019). If lower skilled players make the team, they often see little playing time, limiting their development. Furthermore, students who are cut from SS teams often discontinue their involvement from the sport they were cut from; therefore, team selection practices may also be a way of enhancing continued participation (Gleddie et al., 2019). Advocating for these students does not mean forgetting about the higher skilled athletes (and all those in between). The extra effort and time taken to provide feedback and direction to youth who were not selected might make a difference in their future sports participation (Gleddie et al., 2019). By implementing de-selection practices that are seen by student-athletes as respectful, fair, and supportive, we can create an experience for youth that encourages future sport engagement, rather than sport discontinuation (Gleddie et al., 2019). Variety and opportunity ensure sport for all, so it's important to consider what activities are preferable for the school population, including adaptive or modified activities for different abilities and skills, and ensuring that the "rules" don't create barriers to participation.

Essential Conditions

The Essential Conditions (Figure 3) are the environmental and population-focused aspects that surround the Essential Elements and ensure success and access. These are what need to be understood so as to develop programs based on who is in the school, what is happening at school, and what tools and supports are needed to make change.

Fig. 3: Essential Conditions

Contextual Autonomy

One size does not fit all. The re-imagined framework needs to be carefully and intentionally applied to fit within each unique school and community context. Rural? Urban? Large high school? The neighborhood elementary school? Each has its own unique characteristics, families, cultures, physical plant, community amenities, and district policies. As a result, the SS4A framework is designed to provide each school community the autonomy to customize the framework to meet their own specific needs. Storey et al. (2016), in their work on essential conditions of CSH implementation, have recognized contextual conditions, such as time, funding, readiness, and prior community connectivity as important considerations to successful CSH implementation. Autonomy is viewed as imperative to implement SS4A into existing school communities. Aligning with Storey et al. (2016), the SS4A framework is flexible to allow for each school to build upon its strengths, assets, and needs.

Diverse Populations

School is a setting that purports to offer convenient and equitable access to sport; however, sometimes specific populations tend to be excluded. Inequities in SS are currently present and refer to disparities and imbalances in access, resources, and opportunities that limit the ability of some students to participate and benefit (Buchanan et al., 2016; Tandon et al., 2021). These inequities can be caused by a variety of factors, including experience/skill level, socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, gender,

and disability. Students who are excluded from SS often include lower skilled athletes, youth from low-income families, girls and young women, persons with disabilities, and new Canadians (Holt et al., 2011; Somerset & Hoare, 2018; Sulz et al., 2022; Tandon et al., 2021). According to the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (2014), children of recent immigrants are less likely to participate in sports (32%) than children of Canadian-born parents (55%). Reasons for lower participation may include: parents' lack of understanding of the benefits of sport, students' lack of the basic skill level that Canadian kids have already developed to play certain sports, teachers' lack of cultural understanding, and/or SS being too structured and offered after school when students have other responsibilities (e.g., looking after siblings, academic commitments) (Spaaij, 2012; Tirone et al., 2010). Girls and young women are also disproportionately missing out on the academic, educational, and health benefits of SS participation (Canadian Women & Sport, 2020). This gap has been attributed to cultural messages (e.g., "sports are for boys"), variety/interest (e.g., non-traditional sports; individual sports), lack of representation (e.g., female coaches), and physical self-concept (e.g., low physical competence) (Sabiston et al., 2019). Furthermore, pay-to-play SS models inhibit participation among students from low-income households (Holt et al., 2011; Somerset & Hoare, 2018) due to a lack of financial resources available within a family to support participation in extracurricular activities (Snellman et al., 2015). There is a cost associated with SS in Canada, for example, to cover out-of-town travel, competition team fees, team meals, and apparel (Clark, 2008; Holt et al., 2011). Sulz et al. (2022) studied the effects of SS participation among youth from low-income backgrounds. The authors concluded that involvement in SS can result in the formation of meaningful connections with coach-teachers and teammates, increased emotional backing, an improved feeling of belonging and purpose, and a sense of "family." Concerning students with disabilities, access to sports and school sports is notably restricted (Nixon, 2011; Lakowski, 2011; Robinson et al., 2023). Various barriers impede their participation, including a lack of awareness among others on how to inclusively involve those with disabilities, limited training and competition programs, and challenges in accessing suitable resources (Jaarsma et al., 2014; Shields & Synnot, 2016). Robinson et al. (2023) conducted participatory action research to improve sports opportunities for students with disabilities in school environments. Their findings suggest that while it is feasible to provide such opportunities within schools, concerted efforts involving students, teachers, and possibly university researchers, are needed to identify and address the specific needs for sport participation in these settings.

Schools are diverse institutions that enroll students from varied backgrounds, circumstances, interests, and skills. To develop SS programs that meet the diverse needs of students, it is necessary to create a space and place where understanding and appreciation for diversity can develop and flourish. Within the SS4A framework, we recommend that schools strive to keep costs low and/or support students through organizations that provide financial assistance for sport fees; consider the accessibility of the spaces and programs, as well as what the participants can do to support involvement of students with a variety of abilities; reflect on, and plan for, the ethnic backgrounds of students that might influence student sport experience; consider religious practices such as apparel requirements and holidays; and offer modifications and progressions for different activities to support students to participate at their skill level.

Supportive Systems

Similar to the essential conditions identified by Storey et al. (2016) for the implementation of CSH, schools developing and sustaining a supportive system in the school community is essential to the implementation of the SS4A framework. Most SS coaches are teachers who volunteer their time. However, teachers are becoming more resistant to coaching due to workload, lack of support, and family obligations (Camiré, 2015; Sulz et al., 2020). As a result, the sustainability of SS programs is challenged (Sulz et al., 2020). One key concern revolves around how much time coaching occupies in one's life. There is a significant time requirement involved in coaching SS teams, and this creates stress on the role of the teacher's daily job requirements and personal life. However, even with "community coaches" taking the reins in some cases, without teacher volunteers, SS programs suffer. Students are often faced with the choice of whether to attend their club sports event or their SS event; oftentimes they are pressured to play for their more "competitive elite" or expensive club team, leaving their SS event unattended (Sulz et al., 2020). The school, administrators, and staff must foster an environment in which teacher-coaches feel valued and supported, and thus want to coach. Administrators of school systems must acknowledge the contributions that a SS4A framework can make to the education community and then find ways to support and sustain those professionals who are critical to holistic student success (Sulz et al., 2020).

Where We End Up

The end point of the SS4A framework (Figure 1) is access to SS—in all its glorious forms—for all students who desire to play. In this way, we can ensure that the benefits of sport can be experienced by all, within a school system where teaching and learning are prioritized in the classroom and on the court.

The Center and Point of It ALL

Fig. 4: Whole Child

The center of the model, and the point of where we end up (access), is the whole child, the student-athlete. What that means is that the intended outcomes of the framework delivered in any school system are ultimately intended to support healthy, holistic child development. A whole-child approach moves the conversation about education from an often-narrow focus on academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of children (Morse & Allensworth, 2015). By focusing our attention on the developmental and personal needs of students, in addition to their academic

achievements, we can better prepare students for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in school and as members of society (citizenship).

Through the SS4A framework, our aim is to ensure all students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged while at school. If we intentionally focus on holistic development of student-athletes, we should create spaces for all interested students to play, allowing for more students to reap the benefits of quality sports programs. SS offers the potential to complement curriculum and contribute positively to student development by offering opportunities for students to learn about and engage in healthy lifestyles, connect to the school (peers and teacher-coaches) and the broader school community, and be challenged physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

Conclusion

As educators, coaches, athletes, and researchers, we believe strongly in the efficacy and value of SS. In our view, the UNESCO assertation for access to quality education (2008, 2021) should include access to quality SS opportunities—for all. As stated earlier in this paper, the benefits for students are important and diverse. Academically, benefits include increased educational attainment and post-secondary attendance as well as lower incidence of risky behaviors (Sulz et al., 2022; Wretman, 2017). From a wellbeing perspective, SS can provide support for the development of life skills, emotional regulation, physical activity, a sense of belonging, and more (Holt et al., 2008; Neely & Holt, 2014; Yanik, 2018). We are also very aware of the obstacles that stand in the way of quality SS—especially the inequities related to participation (Camiré, 2015; Sulz et al., 2020). We foresee challenges to the implementation of our SS4A framework, including the necessity of building sustainable capacity for the framework, including teachers willing to volunteer as coaches, and the limited funding allocation to SS (Sulz et al., 2020). Supportive systems within the SS4A framework are crucial in this regard. We urge school system leaders to acknowledge the positive impact a reimagined SS framework can have on the education community. They should then explore avenues to support and maintain the professionals crucial for holistic student success.

Perhaps the most significant obstacle to the implementation of the SS4A framework is the need for the culture of school sport to prioritize student-athlete development and participation over winning (Sulz et al., 2020). However, effecting such a culture shift will pose challenges, as it necessitates changes in the mindset, norms, and attitudes of all school stakeholders involved (e.g., students, teacher-coaches, athletic directors, school administration, parents). Nevertheless, amidst these challenges lies an opportunity to reimage SS as a unique and sustainable platform for students' personal growth and development, placing emphasis on their holistic wellbeing ahead of athletic achievement. High-quality SS programs that prioritize student-centered approaches, developmental appropriateness, and evidence-informed practices do not materialize without effort. Rather, they require intentional planning, contextual relevance, and commitment to evidence-based strategies. SS4A was designed to center students in quality sport experiences using an evidence-based framework to ensure contextual quality and access for as many students as possible. Based on the well-established foundations of comprehensive school health (Storey, et al., 2016), whole-child education (Slade & Griffith, 2013), and long-term athlete development

(Higgs, et al., 2019), the purpose of SS4A is to provide structure and guidance for those seeking to enhance and improve SS programs in their unique contexts. We hope that teacher coaches and athletic directors work with the framework in their schools. Likewise, we'd invite researchers to add to the body of evidence by applying the framework in a variety of contexts.

Currently, we are in the midst of studying the implementation of SS4A in a local school community. As our findings and those of others take shape, revisions to the framework may be necessary to improve uptake and efficacy. We will share SS4A and the forthcoming research developments through academic papers such as this one, but also through workshops, podcasts, and professional blogs to provide access to the education community. Increasing opportunities and improving experiences for SS provides a myriad of benefits for students, staff, coaches, parents and administrators. School is intended to be available and accessible for everyone. If that is truly the case, then why not have SS for all?

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