



The Quill – Sample Elementary School

Opinion

Elementary school students have some freedom to express themselves. One way some students do this is through their hair color. Hair may be dyed blonde, black, or even purple or pink. However, some schools prohibit students from dyeing their hair unnatural colors like pink. School leaders are concerned this could create a distraction in the classroom, drawing attention to the student and away from classroom lessons.

State your opinion on whether elementary school students should be allowed to dye their hair an unnatural color such as pink. Support your opinion.

Consider paying attention to the following guidelines:

- Choose words that are well-suited to the purpose, audience, and context of your essay.
- Organize your essay so that your ideas progress logically.
- Include relevant details that clearly develop your essay.
- Edit your essay for standard grammar and language usage.



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Informative / Explanatory

While many people think of sports as games played on a live field, the rising idea of “esports” interests many students too. Esports are like competitive tournaments for video games played in teams of students, and many schools are beginning to include them in their programs. Using the excerpt below, write a short essay about esports and its benefits.

Excerpt from <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2022/07/how-esports-helping-students-improve-their-grades-and-build-leadership-skills>

“If you play video games, you are welcome,” says Jacob Dees, instructional technology and esports coach for Apollo Junior High School in Richardson, Texas.

Launched online in the early days of the pandemic, the esports club not only served as a social lifeline for students in lockdown but also became the springboard for an impactful school program.

Their online gameplay was so successful that when participants returned to campus full time, educators at the school doubled down on esports. They convinced Richardson Independent School District leaders to build a state-of-the-art esports room that opened last fall. The school also launched a popular esports class, educating students about careers and technical skills related to the growing esports field.

One of the goals of the program is to attract and engage students who might not participate in other after-school activities, such as music, theater or athletics, says Jessica Rodriguez Furlong, who teaches the esports class. “This has lifted up some students who may otherwise have felt left out,” she says.

In recent years, esports programs have taken over many K–12 schools as educators see competitive gaming engage students and prepare them for a variety of careers in STEM fields or in other esports-related jobs.

Educators say students who participate in esports also develop soft skills, such as teamwork, good sportsmanship, strategic thinking and leadership.

According to “COVID Harmed Kids’ Mental Health—And Schools Are Feeling It,” a November 2021 article published by the Pew Charitable Trusts, schools have seen a rise in student behavioral challenges and reduced engagement. And a March report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that “1.1 million teachers nationwide had at least one student who never showed up for class in the 2020-21 school year.”

Programs like esports can sometimes serve as an unlikely antidote to student detachment. Educators with esports programs report improved social interactions, community building and engagement among students.

This should come as no surprise, as previous reports show that extracurricular activities are important to student well-being. Responding to a 2020 Phi Delta Kappa International survey of secondary students and teachers that asked how schools can address students’ social-emotional needs post-

pandemic, students expressed more interest than teachers in extracurricular activities and socializing with their peers.

Esports Attracts a Diverse Group of Students

To build a successful esports program, schools must build a dedicated esports space with high-end gaming PCs, monitors and peripherals, and comfortable, ergonomic gaming desks and chairs, says Josh Whetherholt, a CDW•G adviser on esports in education.

Apollo Junior High has done just that by turning a classroom into an esports room with 20 gaming stations for students, featuring top-of-the-line MSI computers; curved, 27-inch Samsung LED monitors; Logitech backlit keyboards; mice and headsets; and gaming desks and ergonomic chairs from Spectrum Industries.

Richardson ISD was able to justify the cost to build the room when Apollo created a curriculum-based esports class, says Christopher Yon, executive director of the district's instructional technology operations.

"A big part of our job as educators is to engage kids, and programs like these leverage existing interests that students may have," he says.

Apollo's esports program also provides a welcoming environment for students of all skill levels and has attracted a diverse cross-section of the student body, says Dees, the school's esports coach.

"We've had athletes and nonathletes. We've had musically inclined and those who can't carry a tune. We've had students with and without disabilities," Dees says. "Esports is bringing them all together because it doesn't matter what culture or learning background you come from."

About 20 to 30 students attend club meetings, where they compete against each other in tournaments and livestream to Twitch and YouTube.

Dees and Rodriguez Furlong have seen some students blossom because of esports. One student has stopped cutting class since the esports room opened, and another said the esports opportunities in higher education have reinforced his plans to attend college.

They've also seen some students try harder in their studies and work with tutors to bring their grades up so they can be part of the esports club.

Others are developing leadership and broadcasting skills. Dees and Rodriguez Furlong have taught several students to run in-house tournaments on their own. They keep track of who wins and loses, set up the matches and manage the livestreams — and are teaching other students to take over.

Esports Club Helps Students Grow Leadership Skills

Last November, Edison Township Public Schools in New Jersey opened a new esports arena at Edison High School, providing students an immersive gaming environment that includes 24 gaming stations for play, six stations for competition and a control room where students can broadcast and livestream competitions inside the arena and online.

Each gaming desk features a high-end Acer Predator computer, a 27-inch Acer monitor and headset, and Respawn gaming desks and chairs.

The arena is the brainchild of Superintendent Bernard Bragen, who embraced esports when he learned of the educational and professional benefits of competitive gaming. He then explained the benefits to the board of education and got its buy-in to build the arena.

Long-term, Bragen wants to expand the program by building an arena at the district's second high school and turning esports into a team sport. He also wants to build an esports curriculum. To get there, the district first launched an after-school esports club and arena at Edison High School. Since its opening, the arena has been a huge success, with 500 students joining the after-school club.

"From the start, the goal was to catch a segment of the population that didn't participate in other sports," Bragen says. "They weren't going to be the standout football player or bat .400 for the baseball team, but this gives them the opportunity to be a standout in esports and gives them the same sense of pride."

The district has seen behavioral issues since students returned to campus from the pandemic; however, providing students with engaging activities like esports reduces misbehavior, he says.

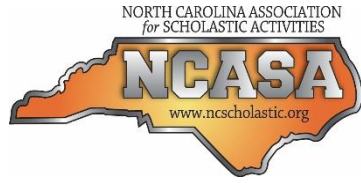
Through team competitions, Edison High School's esports club has helped students practice teamwork, make new friends and build their leadership skills, says Ralph Barca, the district's chief information and technology officer.

From the start, a dedicated group of students has exhibited leadership by getting involved and providing district leaders guidance on the games they want to play and competitions they want to take part in. Barca says these very engaged students even learned to use the technology, including programming the lighting system.

They take pride in the space and help manage the equipment. "To them, it's more than just gaming," he says. "They feel ownership and are taking care of the environment. It has built a culture. This is a gathering place where kids may have nothing else in common, but they have gaming in common, and that is powerful."

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Narrative

Many writers take inspiration from their lives to create beautiful pieces. Construct a narrative essay about how the world you see and the people you interact with inform your writing. Be sure to include detailed descriptions.

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- Edit your work for standard grammar and language usage.