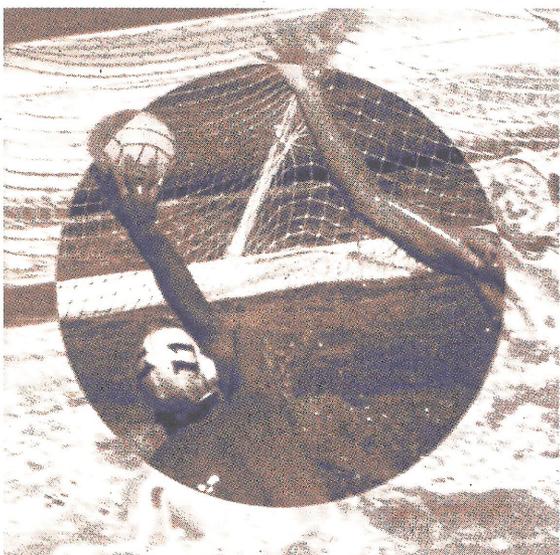




# ***The Funding Crisis in High School Athletics: Causes and Solutions***



*Report From the Conference - April 23 & 24, 1992*



**Organized and Hosted by  
The Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles**

**David L. Wolper, Chairman**  
**Anita L. DeFrantz, President**

**Board of Directors**

<i>Howard P. Allen</i>	<i>Maureen Kindel</i>
<i>John C. Argue</i>	<i>Richard D. Nanula</i>
<i>Yvonne Brathwaite Burke</i>	<i>Peter O'Malley</i>
<i>Jae Min Chang</i>	<i>Rodney W. Rood</i>
<i>Lodwick M. Cook</i>	<i>Dr. Frank Sanchez</i>
<i>Anita L. DeFrantz</i>	<i>Peter V. Ueberroth</i>
<i>James L. Easton</i>	<i>Harry L. Usher</i>
<i>Shirley T. Hosoi</i>	<i>Gilbert R. Vasquez</i>
<i>Earvin "Magic" Johnson</i>	<i>David L. Wolper</i>
<i>Rafer Johnson</i>	<i>Mayor Tom Bradley, Emeritus</i>

**The Amateur Athletic Foundation (AAF) of Los Angeles is the organization created to manage Southern California's share of the surplus from the 1984 Olympic Games. Located in the historic Britt House since 1985, the AAF has committed more than \$46 million to create, support and expand existing youth sports programs, and develop the Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center. The Sports Resource Center is a state-of-the-art learning and cultural center for sport which contains sports books, periodicals, films, videos, photographs and memorabilia. To date, hundreds of thousands of boys and girls, and more than 400 youth sports organizations throughout Southern California, have benefitted from the endowment.**

1985  
1986  
1987  
1988  
1989  
1990  
1991  
1992  
1993  
1994  
1995  
1996  
1997  
1998  
1999  
2000  
2001  
2002  
2003  
2004  
2005  
2006  
2007  
2008  
2009  
2010  
2011  
2012  
2013  
2014  
2015  
2016  
2017  
2018  
2019  
2020  
2021  
2022  
2023  
2024  
2025

Education, especially public education, is threatened by a lack of funds, the hostility of certain policy makers, and insufficient public appreciation. High school interscholastic sports, an integral part of high school education for decades, face reductions and even elimination as school boards struggle to balance budgets.

The Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles hosted *"The Funding Crisis in High School Athletics: Causes and Solutions"* to call attention to the issue and find answers to the problem.

Two points came through loud and clear at the conference. One, high school athletics make a positive contribution to high school education. Anecdotal evidence and formal research both tell us that the quality of high school education in our country would be diminished without interscholastic sports. Second, the funding crisis is here now and it requires solutions now, not later.

I urge you to join me in the continuing search for solutions so that we can preserve a valuable part of American education.

Anita L. DeFrantz  
President,  
Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles

Table of Contents

Foreword .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Keynote Address: The State of High School Athletics .....	3
<i>Panel:</i> Budgeting for High School Sports .....	4
Address: The Role of Athletics in High School Education .....	5
<i>Panel:</i> The Impact of High School Sports on Student-Athletes .....	6
<i>Panel:</i> The Search for Solutions .....	7
Conclusions .....	8
List of Participants .....	Inside back cover

High school sports are in a state of fiscal emergency. With financial resources dwindling, administrators are being forced to redefine the role of sports in the education system and, too often, sports are being eliminated in the attempt to balance budgets.

On April 23-24, 1992, the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles convened a cross-section of national experts in high school athletics for a conference to examine the crisis affecting the funding of high school sports and to search for solutions. The conference included individual presentations, panels, small group discussions, and plenary sessions.

During the first day of the conference, participants discussed the process by which budgets are created. They also looked at the role of athletics in high school education and the impact of sports on student-athletes. The second day was dedicated to the search for funding solutions. Conference attendees were asked to be active participants in the deliberations and to share their knowledge and experience.

Virtually everyone who attended the conference believed in the value of high school sports. Thus, the discussions which ensued focused on how to save high school sports rather than whether high school sports are worth saving. It also should be noted that most, although not all, participants seemed primarily interested in the crisis facing interscholastic sport, although the value of club and intramural sports was acknowledged.

The conference allowed for the exchange of ideas and suggestions as to how best to solve the funding crisis for high school sports. This report documents some of those discussions and ideas. Conference participants are encouraged to continue this exchange among themselves and with others who also care about high school sports.



## Keynote Address: The State of High School Athletics

*Brice Durbin, Executive Director,  
National Federation of State  
High School Associations*

A 1990-91 sports participation survey of National Federation of State High School Associations found that a total of 3,406,355 boys and 1,892,316 girls were involved in interscholastic sports. Texas and California led the way with a total number of participants of 515,415 and 424,577 respectively. These figures reflect the high level of interest in high school sports.

Brice Durbin acknowledged that tax-based general funding for high school sports across the country is decreasing at a precipitous rate. A prerequisite for seeking outside support, according to him, is to ensure that the public fully understands the important role athletics play in society. Durbin believes that one of scholastic sports' biggest problems is that it is taken for granted.

High school sports, said Durbin, have gone through a five stage life cycle. Initially, there was total resistance, followed by tolerance, recognition of values, refinement, and now maintenance. Educators today are struggling to maintain the status quo because "high school sports are not the only game in town anymore," said Durbin, who cited television and apathy as the two greatest enemies.

He cited the 1977 defeat of a school bond issue in Rockford, Illinois, as an example of what happens when the public abandons support for sports. All programs except academics were halted there. As a result, school and community spirit eroded. Some industries refused to locate in Rockford because of its lack of balanced programs for students. And, students reported that they spent more of their free time partying.

While perhaps an extreme example, the Rockford case illustrates the mood of voters who feel overtaxed. When tax revenues decrease, so do services, and extra-curricular programs often feel the brunt of the cuts. Meanwhile, costs for equipment, staff, training, security and liability insurance continue to rise.

Durbin stressed that in marketing sports to the public, it is important to understand their main selling points. He noted that sports participants are less likely to engage in drug use, delinquency and gangs; they are more likely to succeed in school and in the business world; they have a better appreciation of principles like teamwork and determination.

Durbin is a proponent of seeking outside funding — "It's not dirty money" — and he strongly opposes charging students user fees — "pay-to-play" — which limit the availability of worthwhile programs to those financially fortunate.

Marketing, said Durbin, is an important tool in the job of saving sports. He urged educators to be creative, innovative and aggressive. Create a vision, establish a structure, be accountable to the public and establish methods and goals. Provide what students need, not what's expedient. And, don't take things for granted.

**Purpose:** *To more fully understand the budgeting process for high school sports from the board of education level to the high school coach.*

In a provocative presentation, panelist Mark Slavkin, a member of the Los Angeles Board of Education, discussed the \$400 million deficit facing the school district in 1992. Since part of Slavkin's job is to decide which programs will be funded and to what extent, he quickly got the audience's attention when he said it would be a mistake for high school sports to continue to receive general fund support, especially considering, what he termed, the small percentage of students who directly participate in sports.

Slavkin warned that dramatic cuts were likely despite emotional protests, and urged educators to find alternative funding, pointing to the corporate involvement in the 1984 Olympic Games as an example. He called sports a "valuable program," but said they ought to be kept alive "within the context of a lesser priority than basic instructional functions. Sports comes second." He acknowledged that outside funding is an emotional issue. Slavkin added that he was not opposed to sports, but was forced to take a realistic approach to the magnitude of the budget problem.

Edward Robbs, principal of Locke High School, Los Angeles, explained that at the individual school level, funding for athletics comes from the student body fund, which is separate from the instructional materials fund. The student body fund is used for sports and other activities. As a principal, Robbs decides how much of the fund is allocated to sports and how much to other activities. In determining spending, the necessity of ensuring student safety takes priority over all other considerations. The costs of transportation, security, and officials must also be met before equipment purchases can be considered. Only some of those costs are offset by the booster club and other forms of fundraising. Robbs noted that some sports such as wrestling and gymnastics have been dropped at Locke.

Larry Rice, corporate consultant to the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), responded to Slavkin by warning against giving up on general funding for sports.

He disputed the claim that only a small percentage of students participate in sports and suggested that more students are involved in sports than simply the ones seen on the field. With regard to corporate involvement, he warned educators of the difficulty of dealing with businessmen. "They do not necessarily give us the value we think we have," he said. "They are bottom-line driven." Therefore, he said, it is critical to educate them in the value of the sports package. He said "full-service organizations" like the CIF are best equipped to market sports programs to outside supporters.

Panelist Sue Kamiyama, athletic director at Bell High School, Los Angeles, described a funding arrangement similar to that at Locke. She emphasized the need to be creative in fund raising. Bell High School sports teams, for example, provide students as paid audiences for television tapings. Bell, like many other schools, also participates in the Adopt-A-School program, in which local businesses donate goods and services in return for an affiliation with particular schools and the communities which they serve. Kamiyama predicted that corporate sponsorship was the "wave of the future." She suggested that businesspeople who themselves had competed in high school athletics and know their value might be particularly amenable to sponsoring sports programs.

During the question-and-answer session that followed the panelists' presentations, Slavkin was asked for specific alternatives to the general fund, and advised a "more entrepreneurial, aggressive" approach to seeking out corporate involvement. He also dismissed concerns about schoolwide competition for dollars as a knee-jerk reaction. "Do we hold everyone down because someone gets ahead?" he asked. Pressed further on why he advocates general funding cuts in athletics and not other areas, Slavkin said it was not his philosophical position, but rather the reality of the budget crisis.

Brice Durbin, however, rejected the notion that general funding for sports is not feasible. "The L.A. figures are unique," he said. "Sports should be funded as well as any educational program."



## Address: The Role of Athletics in High School Education

*Donald Sabo, D'Youville College, Buffalo, NY*

Donald Sabo, a sociologist from D'Youville College in Buffalo, New York, summarized the state of research on the role of high school athletics in American education. His presentation generally supported the points made by Brice Durbin in his keynote address regarding the interaction between sport and education.

Sabo explained that there was very little empirical research done in the 1960s on the link between interscholastic sports and educational consequences, followed by a growth in research in the 1970s and an acceleration in the 1980s. Until the 1980s, most of the research lacked broad geographical samples. It focused on boys and ignored girls, and failed to adequately scrutinize racial and ethnic variations. Methodology became more sophisticated in the 1980s.

Sabo reported on recent research findings in five areas beginning with the impact of athletic participation on academic performance. Debunking the "dumb jock" stereotype, Sabo found no evidence to support the belief that sports erode academic performance. In fact, there are indications athletic participation leads to higher grade point averages.

As for dropouts, Sabo stated that athletics hold young people in suburban and rural schools. The "holding" ability of sports did not seem present in urban schools. He concluded that sports can be a tool to lower dropout rates if planned and implemented effectively.

With regard to social mobility, data show both boys and girls derive mobility benefits from athletics, but patterns are highly differentiated by gender, race/ethnicity and school location.

Sabo also discussed what he called the "clean-living" hypothesis, that is, the claim that athletes are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs. Sabo reported that the evidence generally supports the hypothesis. In addition, he noted, if the sports environment at a particular school pointedly discourages the use of drugs, athletes are even more likely to avoid their use.

Finally, on the subject of athletic participation and its relationship with teenage pregnancy, Sabo said that a lack of sufficient evidence made conclusions difficult, but offered the argument that since athletes have a higher level of self-esteem, and self-esteem is considered an important factor in determining whether girls take measures to prevent pregnancy, it is possible that sports participation could be valuable. Given the lack of solid research on the relationship between teenage pregnancy and athletic participation and the extent of the problem of teenage pregnancy, Sabo emphasized the need for further research.

In conclusion, Sabo recommended additional research on a wide range of issues involving high school sport and educational consequences. The available evidence strongly suggests that high school athletics have something to offer young people, educators and school districts. Our goal should be to develop high school sports in a way that capitalizes on the educational and social benefits which they can provide.

**Purpose:** *To better understand the impact of high school athletics on student-athletes, their high schools and the communities they serve.*

Jerelene Wells, principal of Dorsey High School, Los Angeles, is convinced athletics keep many young men in school, especially "borderline gang-bangers." She stated that at Dorsey team bonding sometimes takes the place of the traditional family bonding and that coaches often serve as important role models. She also said sports teach the team concept. This is important, she explained, because "minority young people ... particularly African-American young people" at her school tended not to study in groups and engage in cooperative learning, but that sports participation could change this behavior. Wells also expressed the belief that sports taught the importance of practice - "of doing something over and over" - and setting and achieving goals. However, she cautioned that sometimes sports can dominate emotions, with the image of a school fashioned solely by its success on the field.

Willie West, basketball coach at Crenshaw High School, Los Angeles, said his program has directed many players toward college and that its success has gained national recognition for inner-city youth who would not likely experience such attention otherwise. He said teen pregnancy is a serious problem for his program, often forcing students to drop out and seek employment to support a new family.

The two student-athletes on the panel discussed how they maintain a balance between sports and academics. Each cited parental involvement as a significant factor in their ability to do well in both the academic and athletic arenas.

Greg Walker, a student-athlete at Loyola Marymount University, credited his parents for instilling in him the value of academics over his passion for basketball. He said that once he learned to study, it became a habit. "I wish my Mom and Dad were here to hear me say this," he said. "Thank you for making me do my work." Walker also noted that some of his friends who wish to play college basketball have been rejected by universities because of low grades, but added that increasingly strict college admissions

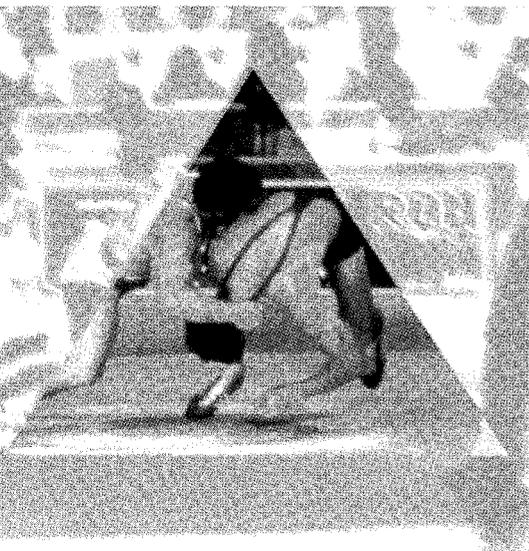
standards seem to provide an incentive for high school athletes to perform in the classroom.

Michelle Kubota, a student-athlete at Venice High School, echoed Walker's comments about parental influence being essential. She said sports motivate her teammates to go to school while encouraging others to avoid drugs so they can continue competing, and she feared the negative impact that budget cuts would have. She also suggested that girls lose interest in sports because there are few professional careers available to women in sports.

Carla Sanger, executive director of LA's Best, a partnership between the city of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District designed to develop afterschool enrichment programs for students in Los Angeles, raised the issue of governance and administration of sports programs as a potentially serious problem. Poorly governed programs ultimately harm student athletes, she warned. Sanger said oversight of administrators is important to assure accountability, and argued that such accountability is necessary if high school athletic programs want to receive corporate support.

Responding to audience questions, the panelists argued strongly that sports are an effective tool in keeping students in school, especially when parents insist on good grades as a prerequisite for continued participation. Several panelists also responded to a question about Prop 48 with criticism of the NCAA rule. Jerelene Wells said students are being "used" by the rule, while Greg Walker said there is a stigma attached to Prop 48 athletes that strikes at their dignity.

When asked to discuss the broader impact of sports on nonathlete students and the community outside of the school, Willie West praised sports' role in bringing pride to the community, even though busing and transfers have blurred boundary lines. Jerelene Wells cautioned against communities identifying their schools' images simply in athletic terms.



**Purpose:** *To discuss new or unusual approaches as alternatives to tax-supported funding of high school sports.*

Don Baird, president of School Properties, has brokered several deals between corporations and high school sports associations. He stressed the need for educators to better understand business and the importance of the profit motive. He cited Reebok's \$7 million commitment in California as an example of the licensing, marketing and television market potential. Such business arrangements work in professional and collegiate sports, and could be effective at the high school level. Baird estimated that there is "more than \$1 billion available to high school associations" which have the knowledge and commitment to pursue corporate funding.

Indiana is one state in which the state association has pursued a partnership with the corporate world. Eugene Cato, executive director of the Indiana State High School Association, explained how his office sold the television rights to the immensely popular state basketball playoff pairings and exclusive sponsorship of the state tournament to an insurance company. The money formed an endowment to support athletics. He strongly urged state associations, rather than individual schools or districts, to handle negotiations.

Despite the success enjoyed in Indiana, a voice from the business community warned that schools should not rely solely on corporate involvement. Angel Martinez, corporate vice president of Reebok International, said such funds will exist to some extent, as long as the company enjoys a return. But, he added, such arrangements will not exist if companies view them as giveaways. He said leaders of high school athletics must develop a comprehensive plan using corporate involvement as well as other sources. Economic conditions will require alternative funding, and a partnership with business is an "absolute necessity."

Holly Metcalf, from the Center for the Study of Sport in Society, told of her involvement in Project Teamwork, a program committed to eliminating discrimination in sports. The project is funded by Reebok, which she said demonstrates how the corporate world and athletics can become partners.

John Youngblood, past president of the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, presented a review of the literature on "pay-to-play" systems which require students and their parents to pay to participate in interscholastic athletics. Youngblood noted that while some school districts in affluent areas report no significant problems with the system, most districts that have implemented user fees have experienced a decline in sports participation. The recommendation of most high school sports administrators is that "pay-to-play" should be used only as a last resort. As an alternative to "pay-to-play," Youngblood suggested a variety of fundraisers, including corporate partnerships.

Because several of the panelists had experience in ongoing corporate/education relationships, questions from the audience focused on the specific mechanics of each deal. Angel Martinez said it is difficult to assess the value of such arrangements in the short-term, but he reminded the audience that high school sports, as a business, is going bankrupt.

Conference attendees were divided into several small groups to discuss solutions and then to present recommendations to the general assembly.

There was widespread agreement among the participants that high school sports in most communities are facing severe financial problems. The overwhelming majority of those present believed that while taxpayer dollars should continue to fund high school athletics, it will be necessary to find other, supplemental sources of funding to save high school sports.

Although most attendees felt that some sort of corporate involvement was desirable, or at least necessary, a small number of individuals strongly argued against any such involvement. Some of those who opposed corporate funding expressed concern that it would create a separate commercial class of students and that the commercialization of high school sports would put excessive pressure on young athletes. In a similar vein, some expressed the fear that a marriage of high school sports and the corporate world eventually would lead to the kinds of corruption which too frequently afflict intercollegiate athletics. Others were concerned that outside funding could create bitter competition as the academic curriculum, athletics and other extracurricular activities all fought for the same corporate dollars.

Most of the discussion, however, centered on ways to more effectively tap corporate sources while simultaneously keeping alive tax-supported funding. In the final session of the conference each group reported its recommendations. Recommendations included the following:

- Undertake a public relations campaign to inform the nation of the importance of athletics in the overall education process and the perilous position interscholastic sports are in now.
- Attempt to build bridges to other parts of the educational community to eliminate the "us-versus-them" mentality.
- Develop a better understanding of the commercial value of the high school sports product and learn how to package it.

- Become fluent in the vocabulary of the business community and have a better understanding of the economic motivations that attract corporate involvement.
- Learn how to become better advocates and lobbyists in the political arena.
- Organize more effectively. Most of the current operational structures overseeing athletics are fractionalized, outdated and incapable of functioning in today's dynamic climate.
- Once organized, formulate a strategic game plan with an eye toward the future as well as the present. Again, this would require a business-like and entrepreneurial attitude that too many high school sport administrators seem to lack at present.
- Once a unified program is developed, be absolutely certain that any funds raised are equitably distributed.
- Recognize that there are other forms of outside funding in addition to corporate sponsorship. For example, a bill currently in the California legislature would assess a tax on all professional sports events, with revenues benefitting scholastic and recreational sports. More traditional fundraisers such as auctions, booster clubs and bake sales also can be used, although most participants believed the amount of money needed to keep sports alive is too great for these methods to have a major impact.

Several procedural questions regarding fund-raising remained unresolved. One of the most important was What entity should be responsible for soliciting and distributing outside funds? Should it be individual schools, school districts or state associations?

Despite being unable to find solutions to every problem associated with fund-raising, most participants concluded that without new sources of revenue, high school sports are in trouble. Alternate funding sources are available. Sport administrators must be innovative enough to take advantage of them. The challenge will be to raise funds and govern athletic programs in a way that maximizes their benefits to young people.

## Participants

### **Don Baird**

President/CEO School Properties,  
Yorba Linda, CA

### **Phyllis Blatz**

Executive Director, California Association for Health,  
Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
(CAHPERD)

### **John Bradley**

Culver City (CA) Unified School District

### **June Brandon**

Assistant Athletic Director, Crenshaw High School

### **Marcia Buchalter**

Steel Marketing Partners, San Diego, CA

### **Scott Cathart**

Director of Media Relations, California  
Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Southern Section

### **Gene Cato**

Executive Director, Indiana High School  
Athletic Associations

### **Thomas Crawford**

Director, Coaching Development, United States  
Olympic Committee

### **David Crippens**

Senior Vice President, Educational Enterprises,  
KCET Television, Los Angeles

### **Anita L. DeFrantz**

President, Amateur Athletic Foundation of  
Los Angeles

### **Edward Derse**

Consultant, Santa Monica, CA

### **Charles Didinger**

Assistant Principal, Banning High School

### **Brice Durbin**

Executive Director, National Federation of  
State High School Associations

### **Moses Green**

Assistant Principal, Washington Preparatory  
High School, Los Angeles

### **Ken Gurnick**

Journalist, Augora, CA

### **Dwayne Harms**

Director of Team Sales, Reebok International,  
Los Angeles

### **Doug Hartman**

Graduate Student, University of California,  
San Diego

### **Patricia Harvey**

President, CAHPERD, & Assist. Administrator  
CIF/LA. City Section

### **Karen Hellyer**

California Interscholastic Federation /  
Southern Section

### **Sharon Iriye**

Savanna High School, Anaheim, CA

### **Joe Jares**

Daily News of Los Angeles

### **Rafer Johnson**

Board Member, Amateur Athletic Foundation of  
Los Angeles

### **Bill Kabaker**

President, Herlin Company, Santa Monica, CA

### **Sue Kamiyama**

Athletic Director, Bell High School, Bell,  
CA & member of CIF Executive Committee

### **Michelle Kubota**

Student-Athlete, Venice High School, Venice, CA

### **Frank Kovaleski**

Assistant Director, National Federation of  
State High School Associations

### **Dixie Madsen**

San Diego, CA

### **Kathie Maier**

Athletic Director, Cypress High School, Cypress, CA

### **Angel Martinez**

Corporate Vice President, New Business  
Development, Reebok International, Los Angeles

### **Holly Metcalf**

Center for the Study of Sport in Society, Boston

### **Maury Neville**

Athletic Director, Los Angeles Baptist High School

### **Cecil Peoples**

Athletic Director, Dorsey High School, Los Angeles

### **Steve Quon**

Assistant Principal, Marshall High School,  
Los Angeles

### **Michael Ramos**

Coach, Duarte High School

### **Sally Recusado**

Girls Athletic Director, El Dorado High School,  
Placentia, CA

### **Larry Rice**

State Corporate Consultant, CIF

### **Edward Robbs**

Principal, Locke High School, Los Angeles

### **Don Sabo**

Associate Professor of Social Sciences,  
D'Youville College, Buffalo, NY

### **Carla Sanger**

Executive Director, LA's Best

### **David Shelburne**

Daily News of Los Angeles

### **Eric Shepard**

Los Angeles Times

### **Mark Slavkin**

School Board Member, Los Angeles Unified School  
District

### **Dave Smith**

Assistant Principal, North Hollywood High School,  
N. Hollywood, CA

### **Annie Steele**

President, Steele Marketing Partners, San Diego, CA

### **Carl Sweet**

Boys Athletic Director, El Dorado High School,  
Placentia, CA

### **Mort Tenner**

Los Angeles Unified School District, Retired  
Administrator

### **Bill Thilken**

School Properties, Yorba Linda, CA

### **Elizabeth Thornberry**

President, Citizens for Sports Equity

### **Greg Walker**

Student-Athlete, Loyola Marymount University

### **Kendall Webb**

Commissioner, CIF - San Diego Section

### **Jerelene Wells**

Principal, Dorsey High School, Los Angeles

### **Willie West**

Basketball Coach (Boys), Crenshaw High School  
Los Angeles

### **Joan Wood**

Chicago Community Trust

### **Judy Young**

Executive Director, National Association for Sport  
& Physical Education

### **John Youngblood**

Past President, National Interscholastic Athletic  
Administrators Association

**For Additional copies of this report contact:**

**Wayne Wilson, Director,  
Research & Library Services  
Amateur Athletic Foundation  
2141 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles,  
CA 90018  
213 / 730-9696**