

Friends, classmates, teachers, and administrators of Thompson Middle School:

Imagine this: you're in ELA class and one day, the teachers says that you can only stay in the class if your grades are better than your friends' grades, otherwise you will be cut from the class and won't be able to study English anymore. How would you feel? Does that sound fair? Fortunately, this doesn't happen in our regular classes, but it does happen with our sports teams. Because there are tryouts for our sports teams, not everyone can play. That's just wrong.

While competitive sports at our school are an important tradition and do boost school spirit, they require kids try out and the teams are small. That means only a small number of kids get the advantages of them. I am proposing that our school should sponsor some intramural and club sports. Intramural sports will make the sports in our school inclusive and fun.

One reason our school needs intramural sports is that they allow everyone in the school to participate. There aren't any tryouts for intramural sports. Tryouts lead to cuts, which excludes some students from participating. Let me tell you about my friend, Ryan, who attends another middle school. Ryan lived and breathed basketball. He spent his whole childhood playing it. Every spare moment of his time. Then Ryan had an accident, and hurt his leg. He had to stop playing basketball for a year, and it defeated him. But when he entered 7th grade, his doctor cleared him to play. He was so enthusiastic. He was over the moon. Ryan tried out for the team. But since he hadn't played or practiced in over a year, he was cut from tryouts. This time Ryan was worse than defeated. He was devastated. Ryan was excluded from the basketball team because of bad luck and bad timing. In intramural sports, anyone who wants to play simply creates a team, or joins an existing team.

Another reason intramural sports would be a great addition to our school is because they are fun! According to ESPN, 38% of boys and girls quit competitive sports because they were not having fun. The very origin of the word "sport" means "pleasure" "amuse" and "play." Intramural sports will put the fun back into sports. People could argue that competition can be fun too, and intramural sports can be competitive without being elite, with tryouts to keep the less good players away. But it would be a nice if some of the sports teams at our school could be all about having fun, and could encourage people to just show up and play in ways where having fun is the whole point.

It's true, competitive sports do have their good side. For one thing, they are wildly popular. Just look at how many people go to our football games. My whole family goes to the games and we enjoy yelling our heads off for our team. And last year, when our girls' basketball team went to the state tournament, that brought about a lot of school spirit. Also, competitive sports have been a tradition at our school for decades. I know this from my own experience because my older siblings and even my mom and uncles played when they went here. But don't we want all kids to be able to be a part of the sports tradition at this school instead of just a small number? If all kids attend ELA and other subjects, why shouldn't they all participate in the sports tradition? Offering intramural and club sports teams in addition to the competitive teams will help us to achieve this goal.

I'm proposing that right away, we add some intramural sports teams. My plan is to take a survey of the school and see what type of intramural sports would be most popular among students. Ms. Robbins has agreed to meet with students who have a proposal for an intramural sports team and I'm asking for a few people to work with me on this goal. You can sign up after this speech. Adding some intramural sports to our school will be a great way to get all students feeling great about the sports program at Thompson Middle School!