

Case Study - **UPDATE**

Florence 1 School District: Esports Program Evolution (2026)

In 2026, esports has moved from the sidelines of the computer lab to the center of the scholastic experience. With over **280 collegiate programs** now offering more than **\$50 million in annual scholarships**, the 'Esports Advantage' is a tangible pathway to college and career readiness. This report provides administrators, IT directors, and facility managers with the technical and academic blueprints needed to build a championship-caliber program from the ground up.

Florence One School District Esports Program

When Florence One School District launched its esports arena in August 2020, the goal was to create a space that delivered an immersive experience for both student athletes and spectators. More than five years later, that original vision has evolved into a high-performing, award-winning esports program—now housed in a newly renovated facility and competing at the national level.



At-a-Glance

\$3.63 Billion: Projected global esports market valuation for 2026.

640 Million: Expected global viewership, driving massive demand for student content creators and broadcasters.

240Hz / 1ms: The new technical gold standard for competitive fair play.

The Foundation:

Academic Integration
Inclusive Engagement
Career Readiness

The Implementation:

Zoned Facility Design
Future-Proof Infrastructure
Elite Tech Standards

The Results:

High Space Utilization
Competitive Excellence
Scholarship Success

Program Evolution & Facility Expansion

Following a major district renovation, Florence One's esports program relocated into the newly named Poynor Healthcare Innovation Center, providing an opportunity not only to refresh the space, but to fully modernize the technology supporting competitive play.

The relocation marked a new phase for the program—one focused on performance, visibility, and long-term sustainability.



Technology Upgrades (2026)

- Intel i11 processors
- NVIDIA GeForce R TX 5070 GPUs
- 64GB RAM
- 2TB storage
- 27" 240Hz monitors

In a move aligned with Florence One's student-first philosophy, the district upcycled its original esports equipment, providing student players with systems for at-home practice and scrimmages—extending access beyond the arena walls.

A Model for What Esports Can Become

Florence One School District's esports journey demonstrates what happens when intentional design, strategic partnerships, and student-centered planning align. What began as a single arena has grown into a nationally competitive program—and a blueprint for how esports can thrive in education.

Competitive Growth & National Recognition

Since its original launch, the Florence One esports program has continued to refine its competitive structure. Today, the program fields varsity-only teams, ensuring a focused, high-commitment environment.

Program Snapshot (2026)

- 25 varsity players
- 4 coaches
- Students from freshman through senior year
- Seasonal competition: September–December and March–May

Florence One now competes through PlayVS Central Division and the South Carolina Scholastic Esports (SCSE) State League, an educator-led initiative created to bring greater structure, regulation, and meaningful competition to scholastic esports in South Carolina.

This shift has paid off.



2025–2026 Competitive Highlights

- 1st Place – Marvel Rivals (State Championship)
- 3rd Place – Rocket League (State Championship)
- 3rd Place – Valorant (State Championship)
- National Championship Qualification (April 20–24, 2026)

One of only eight teams selected nationwide

Space Usage

- Competition Stage: 100% utilization
- Broadcast / Production Area: 90% utilization
- Spectator Seating: 40% utilization
- Team Strategy Room: 25% utilization

Space Utilization & Performance

Originally designed to mirror the energy of a traditional sports arena, the Florence One esports facility continues to perform exactly as intended—supporting competition, broadcasting, and spectator engagement. Broadcasting and media production, once a secondary function, have become increasingly important as the program leverages content to promote matches, wins, and student success in its new facility.

Furniture That Scales with Technology

Five years after installation, Florence One reports that the furniture continues to perform exceptionally well.

- Durable, professional appearance remains intact
- Cirrus gaming stations provide effective cable management during multiple technology refreshes
- Integrated power and data continue to support high-performance gaming

While the furniture has exceeded expectations, the district identified facility-level cable routing—specifically under the broadcast table—as an area for future refinement, reinforcing the importance of holistic infrastructure planning alongside furniture and technology.



Cirrus Esports Cabinet Console

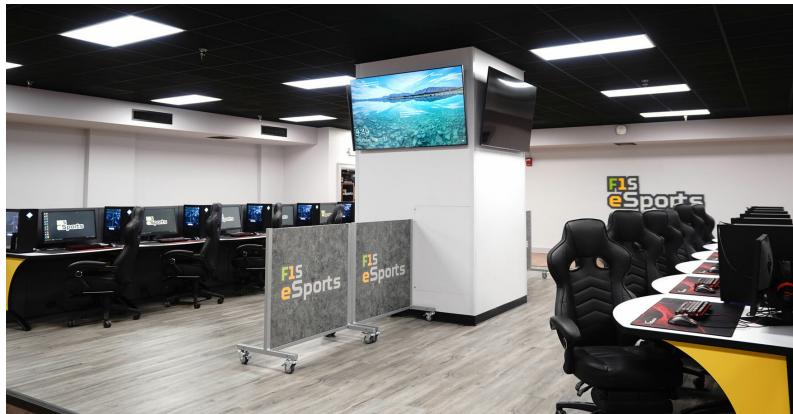


Since 2021, Florence One students have been awarded an estimated \$50,000–\$100,000 in esports-related scholarships.

Student Impact & Outcomes

Beyond competition, the esports program has delivered meaningful student outcomes.

- Two students earned collegiate esports scholarships
- Two alumni returned as paid coaches, bringing continuity and mentorship back into the program
- Students demonstrated measurable social and personal growth, particularly among those who previously struggled with traditional extracurricular participation



See a video produced by the students at Florence On

Lessons Learned: Advice for Other Districts

Florence One's guidance for districts considering esports today is clear:

“Find partners who truly understand design, furniture, technology specifications, and installation coordination. Program success starts with the right foundation.”

Additional recommendations include:

- Secure district-level buy-in early
- Tour established, reputable esports programs
- Identify a coach who is invested in students, not just gameplay
- Build site-level administrative support to promote and sustain participation

Take a virtual tour of our latest esports arena installations and see how schools are transforming classrooms into high-performance competition hubs. <https://www.mediatechnologies.com/gallery/e-sports>



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