

# SIDELINED USA PARTNERS WITH CABOT PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE STUDENT-ATHLETES WITH MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT RESOURCES

## ARKANSAS SCHOOL DISTRICT INVESTS IN NON-PROFIT'S PANDEMIC INITIATIVE PROGRAM PRIORITIZING STUDENT-ATHLETE MENTAL WELLNESS

CHICAGO, IL., June 21, 2021 - [Sidelined USA](#), is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization serving and advocating for student-athletes whose athletic careers have been cut short due to a medically-forced exit from sport. This year, Cabot Public Schools located in Lonoke County, Arkansas chose to partner with Sidelined USA and has continued to utilize the non-profit's COVID-response program which provides free specialized mental wellness [support resources](#) to student-athletes whose sports have been disrupted due to the impact of the pandemic.

With the ongoing uncertainty of pandemic disruptions affecting athletic programs across the country, Jason Cates, Director of Athletic Training for Cabot Public Schools advocated for his student-athletes and gathered a team of administrators to proactively supply mental wellness support resources through Sidelined USA. Since partnering with Sidelined USA and its COVID Wellness Initiative, Cabot Public Schools has provided these resources to over 400 student-athletes in the Cabot Athletic Program spanning across six sports teams; Football, Volleyball, Track/Cross Country, Girls Basketball, Boys Basketball, and Soccer.

Cabot Schools' program representative for Sidelined USA's resources distribution, Jason Cates, has worked with Sidelined USA in the past specifically providing support to injured or medically disqualified athletes. He knew that during these unprecedented times, partnering with Sidelined USA was the best way to get mental wellness support resources to athletes in the district. "We have used Sidelined USA on a case by case need with individual student athletes since its inception. Sidelined has been a valuable resource for our athletic training staff when helping our students try and navigate



photo: Cabot High School's Football Program listening to #TEAMSIDELINED Podcast Episode 1

a prolonged period where they could not participate in athletics. I am excited that Cabot Public Schools and Sidelined have partnered together to be able to offer the full program for ALL of our students 7th-12th grade. Especially, trying to navigate COVID this past year with all of the uncertainties and new obstacles it presented, not only in school but also athletics and at home. Sidelined has given our students the ability to learn and to talk about their fears/feelings. It has shown that our district is taking a hands-on approach to mental health issues," Jason Cates, LAT, ATC, Director of Athletic Training, Cabot Public Schools.

Sidelined USA's experience working with medically disqualified athletes makes the non-profit uniquely qualified to support athletes affected by the pandemic. The COVID Wellness Initiative, developed by the organization, provides resources such as the #TEAMSIDELINED podcast episodes, accompanying team discussion guides and activities, a network of former sidelined athlete mentors, mental health expert advice, and coping strategies.

Cabot Public Schools administrators' decision to prioritize their student-athletes' holistic health by partnering with Sidelined USA is a perfect example of an athletic program with a profound sense of what it means to provide meaningful support for its student-athletes. By investing in Sidelined USA's wellness initiative, Cabot is advocating that mental health is just as important as physical health. "Sidelined USA is creating discussion between student-athletes and coaches and normalizing the conversation about depression and anxiety," applauded Michael Byrd, Assistant Superintendent of Cabot Public Schools.

As a participating partner in Sidelined USA's COVID Wellness Program, Cabot Schools receives monthly resources that cover a wide range of mental health support topics including: loss, loneliness, stress, managing negative thoughts, how to ask for help, depression and anxiety, pandemic disruptions, triggers, coping skills, thoughts of suicide, facing adversity, cultivating resilience, identity and more. The main goal of this partnership between Cabot Schools

and Sidelined USA is to provide ample resources to student-athletes equipping them with the necessary mental wellness support tools to conquer obstacles. With Cabot administrators implementing these resources into its athletic programs, a positive sports culture has been developed - one that is open to growth, mental health awareness, and honest dialogue.

Sidelined USA is on a mission to continue to assist athletic programs in navigating the effects of the pandemic through the COVID Wellness Initiative and teaming up with Cabot Public Schools has proven to be beneficial to the district's student-athletes. "It's been a very difficult year for athletes. We are honored to be able to provide specialized guidance and mental health support for student-athletes impacted by this pandemic. When school districts like Cabot take action by providing mental wellness support tools to all of their student-athletes, they are truly destigmatizing mental health and helping to create a culture that affirms that mental wellness is for all of us!"



It's about

**KIDS**  
Cabot Public Schools

photo: Cabot High School student-athletes watching Sidelined USA Executive Director Christine Pinalto discuss mental health support resources with sports psychologist Matt Brown

## About Sidelined USA

*Sidelined USA is a 501c3 nonprofit organization which exists to reunite permanently sidelined student-athletes with their passions and equip them to find a meaningful way forward through resources, connection, and new pursuits. Sidelined USA inspires permanently sidelined athletes to face the obstacles imposed on them, adapt, and overcome. The Sidelined USA team engages in original research, education, and advocacy initiatives to raise awareness for improved after-care of medically disqualified athletes. Visit [www.SidelinedUSA.org](http://www.SidelinedUSA.org) for more information.*

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