

The Case for High School Activities

Introduction

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and its membership believe that interscholastic sports and fine arts activities promote citizenship and sportsmanship. They instill a sense of pride in community, teach lifelong lessons of teamwork and self-discipline and facilitate the physical and emotional development of our nation's youth.

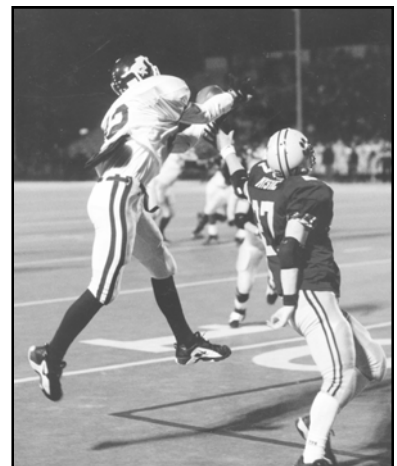


There is no better time than today to assert "The Case for High School Activities." Education and community leaders across the nation must be made aware of the facts contained in this material. From interscholastic sports to music, drama and debate, activities enrich a student's high school experience, and the programs must be kept alive.

At a cost of only one to three percent (or less in many cases) of an overall school's budget, high school activity programs are one of the best bargains around. It is in these vital programs – sports, music, speech, drama, debate – where young people learn lifelong lessons as that compliment the academic lessons taught in the classroom.

The NFHS supports co-curricular endeavors through many avenues, including:

- ❖ Rules Writing Process- The NFHS produces more than eight million copies of publications and support materials annually for 15 rules books covering 17 sports. The NFHS publishes case books, officials' manuals, hand books, and simplified and illustrated books in many sports.



- ❖ The NFHS Coaches Education Program- The NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course provides a unique student-centered curriculum for interscholastic coaches that assists coaches in creating a healthy and age appropriate sport experience. The course can be taken either online or in a face to face blended delivery option.
- ❖ National High School Activities Week – The nation's high schools are encouraged to promote the values inherent in high school athletics, speech, music, drama, debate, and spirit squads during this week-long celebration in the third week in October.
- ❖ Public Service Announcements: Various sportsmanship messages are created and distributed in electronic and radio formats. In addition, healthy lifestyle messages that tackle difficult but current topics such as steroid usage, and hazing education.
- ❖ High School Activities: A Community Investment in America – This presentation is a NFHS educational product. It documents the value of high school athletic and activity programs through an excellent PowerPoint presentation with videos on a CD-ROM. You can order this CD-ROM by calling NFHS customer service at 800-776-3462.

Benefits of Co-curricular Activities

- ❖ **Activities Support the Academic Mission of Schools.** They are not a diversion but rather an extension of a good educational program. Students who participate in activity programs tend to have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems than students generally.
- ❖ **Activities are Inherently Educational.** Activity programs provide valuable lessons for practical situations – teamwork, sportsmanship, winning and losing, and hard work. Through participation in activity programs, students learn self-discipline, build self-confidence and develop skills to handle competitive situations. These are qualities the public expects schools to produce in students so that they become responsible adults and productive citizens.
- ❖ **Activities Foster Success in Later Life.** Participation in high school activities is often a predictor of later success – in college, a career and becoming a contributing member of society.



Following are some of those benefits, with case studies, where applicable, listed to document the benefits (while many of the studies refer to extracurricular activities, the NFHS prefers the use of the term co-curricular activities, believing that activities support the academic mission of schools and are inherently educational).

Participation in high school activities is a valuable part of the overall high school experience.

- ❖ Students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are 49% more likely to use drugs and 37% more likely to become teen parents than those who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities (United States Department of Education. *No Child Left Behind: The facts about 21st Century Learning*. Washington, DC: 2002.)
- ❖ In their 2006 report, *Effects of Title IX and Sports Participation on Girls' Physical Activity and Weight*, Professors Kaestner and Xu of the University of Illinois at Chicago, found that the dramatic increase in sports participation among girls in the aftermath of the passage of Title IX was associated with an increase in physical activity and an improvement in weight and body mass among adolescent girls. They conclude that their results strongly suggest that Title IX and the increase in athletic opportunities among adolescent females it engendered had a beneficial effect on the health of adolescent girls.
- ❖ A *Harvard Educational Review* article in 2002 found that participation in extracurricular activities in high school appears to be one of the few interventions that benefit low-status, disadvantaged students – those less well served by traditional educational programs – as much or more than their more advantaged peers.
- ❖ In telephone interviews of a national sample of teens in 2001, more than half (54%) said they wouldn't watch so much TV or play video games if they had other things to do after school. The same survey found that more than half of teens wish there were more community or neighborhood-based programs available after school, and two-thirds of those surveyed said they would participate in such programs if they were available.
- ❖ Bonnie Barber and her colleagues, contributors to the 2005 book, *Organized Activities as Developmental Contexts for Children and Adolescents*, concluded that making diverse clubs and activities available to a wide range of students is important. The opportunity to embed one's identity in multiple extracurricular contexts and to experience multiple competencies facilitates attachment to school and adjustment. Activity participation is also linked to affiliation with peers who are academically focused. Adolescents can benefit from this synergistic system when they have opportunities to participate in diverse activities.

Students who compete in high school activity programs make higher grades and have better attendance.

- ❖ According to the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, students who participate in the arts nine hours or more each week for at least a year are four times more likely to: be recognized for academic achievement, win a school

attendance award, participate in a science and math fair and win an award for writing. They are also three times more likely to be elected to class office.

- ❖ A Minnesota State High School League survey of 300 Minnesota high schools showed that the average GPA of a student-athlete was 2.84, compared with 2.68 for the average student, and that student-athletes missed an average of only 7.4 days of school each year, compared with 8.8 for the average student. (Trevor Born. High Standard for GPA, in *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, May 14, 2007.)
- ❖ A study published in the August 2007 issue of *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that students who took part in more vigorous sports like soccer or football or skateboarding, did approximately 10% better in math, science, English and social studies classes.
- ❖ According to the College Entrance Examination Board, music students scored about 11 percent higher than non-music students on the 2001 SAT. Students with coursework/experience in music performance and music appreciation scored higher on the SAT than students with no arts participation. Students in music performance scored 57 points higher in the verbal area and 41 points higher in math, and students in music appreciation scored 63 points higher on verbal and 44 points higher on math.

Participation in activity programs yields positive results after high school as well.

- ❖ Participation in extra-curricular activities provides all students – including students from disadvantaged backgrounds, minorities and those with otherwise less than distinguished academic achievements in high school – a measurable and meaningful gain in their college admissions test scores according to researchers Howard T. Everson and Roger E. Millsap, writing for the College Entrance Examination Board in 2005.
- ❖ In a 2006 research project published by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE), it was found that 18-25 years old who participate in sports activities while in high school were more likely than non-participants to be engaged in volunteering, regular volunteering, registering to vote, voting in the 2000 election, feeling comfortable speaking in a public setting, and watching news (especially sport news) more closely than non-participants.
- ❖ An extensive study commissioned by the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association found, in that Canadian province in 2006, an average of 78.3% of Alberta's top corporate CEOs and Members of the Legislative Assembly had participated in interschool sports. Nearly 80% indicated that being involved in school sports significantly, extensively or moderately complemented their career development and/or academic

pursuits. This same study pointed out that normal participation rate of students in high school sports is around 30 to 35%.

- ❖ The corporate and political leaders surveyed in Alberta (see above) cited the following benefits associated with their involvement in high school athletics: teamwork, discipline, goal setting, leadership, independence, self confidence, stress relief, character development and personal growth, fair play, and acceptance of others.

From a cost standpoint, activity programs are an exceptional bargain when matched against the overall school district's education budget.

Generally speaking, the NFHS has researched various school districts' budget information across the country that activity programs make up only one to three percent of the overall education budget in a school. In the Midwest, South, and West that figure is even less. In the 2007 school year, the city of Chicago's Public School Board of Education's overall budget was \$4.6 billion dollars, and activity programs received only \$36.2 million, a minuscule one-seventh of one percent (.00789). In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area, their Board of Education proposed in their overall 2008 \$1.2 billion dollars. Their activity programs received only \$4.7 million dollars, one-third of one percent (.0038). Finally, in the northwestern part of the country, in the Seattle Public School system, their Board of Education has a 2008 overall budget of \$339.7 million dollars, while setting aside \$3.2 million dollars for activity programs for a scant one-ninth of one percent (.00942).

Activity programs fulfill students' basic needs, help in students' attitudes toward self and school and minimize dropout and discipline problems.

- ❖ Researcher Richard Learner, writing in *Promoting Positive Youth Development through Community After-School Programs*, found that informal educational and developmentally supportive experiences offered to young people in the context of after-school or community-based programs are a potent source of resources increasing the probability of positive development among youth.
- ❖ In 2003, the *Journal of Adolescent Research* reported that extracurricular activity participation is linked to lower rates of dropping out of school, greater civic involvement and higher levels of academic achievement. Moreover, research tracking participation from eighth through twelfth grades and examining outcomes in the postsecondary years concluded that consistent participation has positive effects that last over a moderate length of time.
- ❖ Extracurricular activities stand out from other aspects of adolescents' lives at school because, according to the Winter 2005 issue of the *Journal of Leisure Research*, they

provide opportunities to develop initiative and allow youth to learn emotional competencies and develop new social skills.

- ❖ A study conducted by Boston University, and published in *Adolescence*, Winter 2001, reported on a survey of 1,115 Massachusetts high school students. Survey results indicated that athletes were significantly less likely to use cocaine and psychedelics, and less likely to smoke cigarettes.
- ❖ Researchers writing in 2004 in the *American Journal of Health Behavior* conducted an examination of cross-sectional data from a nationally representative sample of high school students enrolled in public high schools in the U.S. They showed that students participating in organized sports were 25 percent less likely to be current cigarette smokers
- ❖ Stephanie Gerstenblith and her fellow researchers, writing in the 2005 book, *Organized Activities as Developmental Contexts for Children and Adolescents* state, “Just as schools with efficient procedures and structure have been found to have positive outcomes, our findings indicate that participants in after school programs with these qualities experience reductions in rebellious behavior and increases in intentions not to use drugs.”

Co-curricular activities teach lessons that lead to better citizens.



- ❖ Nancy Darling, et al., writing in the 2005 *Journal of Leisure Research* notes that extracurricular activities allow youth to form new connections with peers and acquire social capital. They are one of the few contexts, outside of the classroom, where adolescents regularly come in contact with adults to whom they are not related.
- ❖ Students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are 49% more likely to use drugs and 37% more likely to become teen parents than those who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities (United States Department of Education. *No Child Left Behind: The facts about 21st Century Learning*. Washington, DC: 2002.)
- ❖ On June 23, 2000, then President Bill Clinton issued an Executive Memorandum directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education to work together to identify and report within 90 days on “strategies to promote better health for our nation’s youth through physical activity and fitness.” The resulting report entitled “Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports” was released in November 2000 and stated that “enhancing

efforts to promote participation in physical activity and sports among young people is a critical national priority.”

- ❖ In a recent report entitled “Sports Participation and Health-Related Behaviors Among US Youth” published in the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* from September 2000, it was reported that “nationwide, 62.4% of high school students reported participating on 1 or more school and/or nonschool sports teams in the previous year. The major conclusion drawn from the analyses performed in this study is that, in the most populous demographic subgroups of US high school students, sports participation is associated with multiple positive health behaviors...sports programs may promote positive health behaviors and deter negative health behaviors by placing a premium on personal health and fitness as prerequisites to optimal sports performance.”
- ❖ In a study done by researchers at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 2001, “middle-school kids in inner-city neighborhoods who play organized team sports have a higher sense of self-worth and better social skills than their less athletic peers.” The Clark researchers noted that “kids living in poor urban neighborhoods have, on average, 40 hours of unstructured, unmonitored time each week. Organized team sports could be a positive alternative to drug use and other delinquent activities.” -- “Batters More Likely ‘Up’”, Amanda Gardner, *HealthScoutNews*.
- ❖ Another study (2001) done by Gary Overton, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at East Carolina University, in collaboration with the North Carolina High School Athletic Association¹ of the academic performance of high school student-athletes in North Carolina revealed significant differences between athletes and non-athletes. Some of the major findings in the study include:
 - Grade-Point Average: The mean GPA for athletes in the study was a 2.98, while the mean GPA for non-athletes was only 2.17.
 - Attendance: The average number of absences was significantly lower for athletes than non-athletes. The mean average number of days missed by athletes was 6.3 days per 180-day school year, as compared to 11.9 days for non-athletes.
 - Discipline referrals: The percentage of discipline referrals by the reporting schools was lower for the athlete group than the non-athlete group; referrals for athletes ran at a 33.3 percentage while the referral percentage for non-athletes was 41.8 percent.
 - Dropout rate: There was a dramatic difference in the dropout rate; the mean dropout percentage for athletes was miniscule 0.6 percent, while the corresponding percentage for non-athletes was 10.32 percent.
 - Graduation rate: The percentage of graduates was significantly higher for the athlete group than the non-athlete group; the mean graduation percentage for athletes was 99.4 percent as compared to 93.51 percent for non-athletes.

¹ North Carolina High School Athletic Association Bulletin, Vol. 54, No. 1, Fall 2001

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Supplemental Supporting Evidence for the Case for High School Activities

Participation in high school activities is a valuable part of the overall high school experience.

- ❖ Of the 60 students listed in the May 14, 1998, USA Today's All-USA High School Academic First, Second and Third Teams and the 51 who earned honorable mention, 75 percent were involved in sports, speech, music or debate.
- ❖ The 29th annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools of September 1997 reflects an increase in perceptions about the value of cocurricular activities. In 1978, 45 percent of the public judged extracurricular activities to be very important. That figure fell to 31 percent in 1984. In 1985, the figure was 39 percent and jumped to 63 percent in the 1997 poll. The 1997 poll also asked about the emphasis placed on such sports as football and basketball. Fifty-three percent of the respondents believed the current emphasis was about right.
- ❖ The Role of Sports in Youth Development, Carnegie Corporation, New York, in a report of a meeting in March 1996, found that evidence showed that the involvement of young people in sports produces multiple benefits for them. At their best, sports programs promote responsible social behaviors and greater academic success, confidence in one's physical abilities, an appreciation of personal health and fitness, and strong social bonds with individuals and institutions. Teachers attribute these results to the discipline and work ethic that sports require.
- ❖ In a survey of 4,800 high school students in March 1995, the Minnesota State High School League found that 91 percent of them said students who participate in school activities tend to be school leaders and role models; 92 percent said that participation in school activities provides an opportunity not found in a regular classroom setting to develop self-discipline.
- ❖ Adolescent Time Use, Risky Behavior, and Outcomes: An Analysis of National Data, issued in September 1995, by the Department of Health and Human Services found that students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are 57 percent more likely to have dropped out of school by the time they would have been seniors; 49 percent more likely to have used drugs; 37 percent more likely to have become teen parents; 35 percent more likely to have smoked cigarettes; and 27 percent more likely to have been arrested than those who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities.

- ❖ A study by Search Institute in 1995 indicates that cocurricular activities play a central role in students' healthy development. Yet too many schools are finding it necessary to cut these programs for budgetary reasons. With asset building as a focus, these programs are not peripheral to the school's mission, but important components of a comprehensive strategy.
- ❖ School-age children and teens who are unsupervised during the hours after school are far more likely to use alcohol, drugs and tobacco, engage in criminal and other high-risk behaviors, receive poor grades, and drop out of school than those children who have the opportunity to benefit from constructive activities supervised by responsible adults. In a 1994 Harris poll, more than one-half of teachers singled out "children who are left on their own after school" as the primary explanation for students' difficulties in class. This information comes from the National Education Commission on Time and Learning.
- ❖ Research conducted in 1991 by Skip Dane of Hardiness Research, Casper, Wyoming, revealed the following about participation in high school sports: 1) By a 2-to-1 ratio, boys who participate in sports do better in school, do not drop out and have a better chance to get through college. 2) The ratio for girls who participate in sports and do well in school is three to one. 3) About 92 percent of sports participants do not use drugs. 4) School athletes are more self-assured. 5) Sports participants take average and above-average classes. 6) Sports participants receive above-average grades and do above average on skills tests. 7) Those involved in sports have knowledge of and use financial aid and have a chance to finish college. 8) Student-athletes appear to have more parental involvement than other students. 9) Students involved in athletics appear to change focus from cars and money to life accomplishments during the process.
- ❖ A 1989 nationwide study by the Women's Sport Foundation indicated that athletes do better in the classroom, are more involved in school activity programs and stay involved in the community after graduation. The study also revealed that high school athletic participation has a positive educational and social impact on many minority and female students. The study, based on an analysis of data collected by the U.S. Department of Education's High School and Beyond Study, indicated that: 1) Girls receive as many benefits from sports as boys. 2) The "dumb jock" stereotype is a myth. 3) Sports involvement was significantly related to a lower dropout rate in some school settings. 4) Minority athletes are more socially involved than non-athletes.
- ❖ In 1985, the NFHS sponsored a national survey of high school principals and nearly 7,000 high school students in all 50 states. The survey, funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment in Indianapolis, was conducted by Indiana University in cooperation with the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Following are the results of that survey.

95 percent believed that participation in activities teaches valuable lessons to students that cannot be learned in a regular class routine.

99 percent agreed that participation in activities promotes citizenship

95 percent agreed that activity programs contribute to the development of "school spirit" among the student body.

76 percent said they believe the demand made on students' time by activities is not excessive.

72 percent said there is strong support for school activity programs from parents and the community at large.

Students who compete in high school activity programs make higher grades and have better attendance.

- ❖ A study of nearly 22,000 students conducted by a University of Colorado professor for the Colorado High School Activities Association which was released in the fall of 1999 indicates students who participate in some form of interscholastic activities have "significantly higher" grade-point averages than students who do not. Data obtained from the spring 1997 study by Dr. Kevin J. McCarthy revealed student participants in Jefferson County high schools had an overall grade-point average of 3.093 on a 4.0 scale, while the GPA for non-participants was 2.444. Jefferson County School District, the state's largest school district, has matched the academic success of its students with success on the playing field. The 16 district schools have won a combined 39 state championships in the 1990s in sports, while its music programs consistently bring home "superior" ratings.
- ❖ A study in the September 1998 issue of **NASSP Bulletin** compared academic performance, behavior and commitment of basketball and volleyball athletes and non-athletes in a rural Canadian high school. The article compares mid-term and final grades, visits to an administrator for disciplinary referrals and demerit points for improper behavior and estimates the mean weekly time commitment for athletes in each sport. Findings showed support that athletes match or exceed non-athletes in academic and behavior performance.
- ❖ In the March 1997 issue of **School Counselor**, 123 students involved in interscholastic soccer are analyzed. Results indicate that activity participation does not harm and may enhance academic performance. Male athletes showed in-season improvements in academic performance.

- ❖ In a comprehensive, statewide study of the academic performance of high school student-athletes in North Carolina over a three-year period, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association found significant differences between athletes and non-athletes. Five criteria were used, including grade-point average, attendance rate, discipline referrals, dropout rate and graduation rate, for the 1994-95 academic year.

	<u>Athletes</u>	<u>Non-athletes</u>
Grade-point average	2.86	1.96
Average number of absences per 180-day school year	6.52 days	12.57 days
Discipline referrals	30.51%	40.29%
Dropout rate	0.7%	8.98%
Graduation rate	99.56%	94.66%

- ❖ Findings from the National Center for Education Statistics, *Extracurricular Participation and Student Engagement*, June 1995, revealed that during the first semester of their senior year, participants reported better attendance than their non-participating classmates. Half of them had no unexcused absences from school and half had never skipped a class, compared with one-third and two-fifths of non-participants, respectively. Students who participated were three times as likely to perform in the top quartile on a composite math and reading assessment compared with non-participants. Participants also were more likely than non-participants to aspire to higher education; two-thirds of participants expected to complete at least a bachelor's degree while about half of non-participants expected to do so.
- ❖ A 1992 study by the Colorado High School Activities Association and the Colorado Department of Education revealed that Colorado high school students who participate in some form of interscholastic activity have "significantly higher" grade-point averages and better attendance. Of the students surveyed, the average participant's GPA was 2.96 (on a 4.0 scale), compared to 2.35 for the non-participant. In one school, participants had an average reading test score of 76.30, compared to 58.91 for non-participants. In another school, participants scored 16.17 on the math standardized test, compared to 13.31 for non-participants. A participant missed school an average of 3.59 days a year, while a non-participant missed 5.92 days. The survey showed that the larger the school, the more pronounced the differences in participant and non-participant test scores and attendance results.
- ❖ High school students who compete in activity programs in New Mexico had a 2.80 grade-point average, compared to 2.00 for non-participants, according to a 1992 survey by the New Mexico Activities Association. The survey also indicated that more than 60 percent of the state's principals found that GPAs of at-risk students improved by being active in interscholastic activities.
- ❖ 1990-91 study in the Randolph (North Carolina) County school system showed a strong correlation between participation in athletics and positives such as improved

grades and increased attendance rates. Athletes in grades 9 through 12 in the school system's four high schools recorded an 86 average, compared to 79 for the general population. Athletes averaged four absences, while the general population averaged seven. Eleven percent of the athletes had discipline referrals, compared to 25 percent of the general population. None of the athletes dropped out, while 3.7 percent of the general population were dropouts.

- ❖ In a 1988 survey, John Chevrette and Kenneth Patranella concluded from an investigation in San Antonio, Texas, that educational outcomes related to scholastic performance are enhanced for those secondary students who participate in activity programs. A study of a high school population of 3,536 students found that secondary pupils who participated in more than one activity during a semester tended to experience higher academic performance levels than other participants and non-participants.
- ❖ Students participating in a number of activities not only achieve better academically but also express greater satisfaction with the total high school experience than students who do not participate, according to a 1985 survey conducted for the NFHS by Indiana University. The grade-point average for "high activity" students was 3.05 on a 4.0 scale, compared to a GPA of 2.54 for "low activity" students. Researchers defined high activity as involvement in four or more activities, while low activity students were involved in one activity or none.

Participation in activity programs yields positive results after high school as well.

- ❖ The May 5, 1999, issue of **Education Week** reported on two studies presented at the April annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. The studies both drew on data from a national sample of 25,000 high school students. The Center for Research on Sport in Society at the University of Miami in Florida looked at how often behavior problems cropped up among 12th graders who had taken part in athletics at some point in their high school careers. Even when the researchers controlled the numbers to account for students who already had behavior problems in 8th grade or those who were predisposed to have more prosocial attitudes toward school, sports participation had a positive effect.
- ❖ A separate study done by the Center for the Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University found that sports had a "small but consistent" impact on a variety of other positive school outcomes, too. The more involved that 10th graders were in athletics, for example, the more likely they were to feel confident of their academic abilities or to be engaged in their schools.

- ❖ The Spring 1999 issue of **Assets**, Search Institute, looked at a report from the North Carolina High School Athletic Association. The NCHSAA identified assets that any school-based sports program would inherently develop, along with an additional 26 that purposeful planning could help foster, including:
 - School boundaries** – Schools provide clear rules and consequences. Most athletic programs have codes of conduct or rules for behavior in addition to school policies.
 - Youth programs** – Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in the community. This is a given with most secondary school interscholastic athletic programs. In fact, far more than three hours per week is usually required.
 - Achievement motivation** – Young person is motivated to do well in school. Most athletic programs have minimum standards of achievement that must be met in order to participate in athletics.
 - Planning and decision making** – Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. Because of practice and game schedules, in addition to other responsibilities, secondary school athletes have learned to manage their time.

- ❖ The February 1996 **Career World** examines the factors that really matter in gaining acceptance to a college or university. Admissions officers consider grades, test scores and involvement in extracurricular activities in deciding whether to accept or reject an applicant.

- ❖ Admission officers at Harvard, Yale and 70 percent of the nation's other major universities have stated that high school credit and achievement in the arts are significant considerations for admission to their institutions. This finding was from *Can Colleges Help School Fine Arts Programs?* in a 1992 article in Connecticut Music Educators Association News.

- ❖ Results of a 1987 survey of individuals at the executive vice-president level or above in 75 Fortune 500 companies indicated that 95 percent of those corporate executives participated in sports during high school. In addition, 54 percent were involved in student government, 43 percent in the National Honor Society, 37 percent in music, 35 percent in scouts and 18 percent in the school's publication.

- ❖ The American College Testing Service compared the value of four factors in predicting success after high school. "Success" was defined as self-satisfaction and participation in a variety of community activities two years after college. The one yardstick that could be used to predict later success in life was achievement in school activities. Not useful as predictors were high grades in high school, high grades in college or high ACT scores.



- ❖ The College Entrance Examination Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was examined in much the same way. It was found that having a high SAT score did not necessarily indicate success in a chosen career. The best predictor of later success, the study showed, was a person's independent, self-sustained ventures. Teens who were active in school activities, had hobbies or jobs, were found to be most likely to succeed at their chosen profession and make creative contributions to their community.

From a cost standpoint, activity programs are an exceptional bargain when matched against the overall school district's education budget.

Generally speaking, the NFHS has determined through information received across the country that activity programs make up only one to three percent of the overall education budget in a school. In Chicago, that figure is even less. In 1992, the overall budget for the Chicago Board of Education was \$2.6 billion, and activity programs received only \$2.9 million, a minuscule one-tenth of one percent (.001).

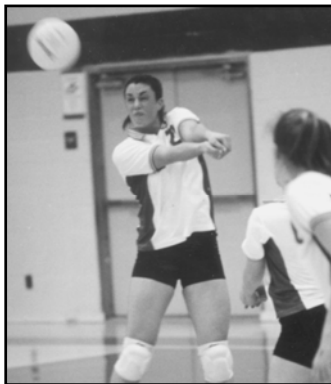


Activity programs fulfill students' basic needs, help in students' attitudes toward self and school and minimize dropout and discipline problems.

- ❖ A report on The Condition of Education, United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics in 1995 found that participation in extracurricular activities may affect academic performance, attachment to school and social development. The report further stated that almost every high school in the United States offers some type of extracurricular activity, such as music, academic clubs and sports. These activities provide opportunities for students to learn the values of teamwork, a channel for reinforcing skills and the opportunity to apply academic skills in other arenas as a part of a well-rounded education.
- ❖ American Youth and Sports Participation, a survey of 10,000 students by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (1990) revealed that the No. 1 reason that girls and boys participate in high school sports is to have fun. Conversely, lack of fun was the leading reason for dropping out of participation. Winning was not seen as a major benefit of sports by young people who participate – it was ranked No. 8 by boys and No. 12 by girls. Skill development was considered a crucial aspect of fun – it was considered more important than winning even among the best athletes. Another finding: The most rewarding challenges of sports are those that lead to self-knowledge. Finally, intrinsic rewards (self-knowledge that grows out of self-

competition) are more important in creating lifelong athletes than extrinsic rewards (victory or attention from others).

Cocurricular activities teach lessons that lead to better citizens.



❖ An opinion survey conducted in July 1998 by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for Shell Oil Company found that respondents felt the top two goals for schools should be teaching values such as respect and honesty and teaching students how to reason and think well.

❖ A Wyoming High School Activities Association Statewide Student Activities Survey compiled in the summer of 1998 points out addiction dangers of tobacco use. Yearly, monthly and weekly reported use of tobacco by high school students is low when compared to the high percentage of daily users. Approximately 25 percent of those involved in athletics or activities report daily tobacco use, compared to 40 percent for non-participants. For students involved in both athletics and activities, that percentage drops to 13 percent. A focus of future WHSAA surveys will explore the reasons for this outcome.

In light of these findings, the WHSAA encourages coaches and activity sponsors to continue (or begin) an emphasis on teaching the addictive dangers of tobacco and make solutions known and available to all students.

- ❖ The Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA), in conjunction with the Metro Edmonton High School Athletic Association and the Alberta Centre for Well-Being, completed a survey of 883 students. The survey, completed in November 1997, was undertaken to assess the potential impact that high school athletics has on the lives and attitudes of students in Alberta.

Findings showed student-athletes are less likely to smoke (30 percent versus 44 percent), and if they do smoke, they are less likely to smoke heavily. Overall, 35 percent of students reported they currently smoke cigarettes. The survey findings indicated student-athletes (9 percent) are less likely to report drinking more than once a week in comparison to non-athletic students (20 percent).

"The results of this survey suggest that students who participate in school-based sport programs are good school citizens and may be even better school citizens than their non-sport peers," said John Paton, executive director, ASAA. "School athletes demonstrate positive lifestyle behaviors, such as less smoking and less drug use when compared to non-sport students."

Paton also indicated that if administrators, teachers or parents are concerned that school sport programs compete for students' attention and participation with other cocurricular activities, the study disputes these concerns. Student-athletes tend to participate at a greater rate in other school activities, and they have a more positive perception of their school.

- ❖ A study conducted by Public Agenda released in June 1997 (Kids These Days: What Americans Really Think About the Next Generation) found that more than six in 10 adults, or 61 percent, said youngsters' failure to learn such values as honesty, respect and responsibility is a very serious problem. Only 37 percent believe today's children, once they're grown, will make the United States a better place. Those polled also said greater availability and use of school programs and volunteer groups would be an effective way to help children.

The following two examples don't have dates or other reference material. Assume they are anecdotal stories. Seems like this is best left here, but they could be woven back into main material.

- ❖ Consider the captain at a track championship who had won the long jump and was the leader in the triple jump when he reported to the start of the 100-meter dash. Upon his arrival, he discovered another runner from a rival school had forgotten his spikes. This young man was the only person in the league with a chance to defeat him. Without hesitating, he gave the boy his backup pair of spikes. The young man with the borrowed spikes won in the final while setting a league record in the event. The same scenario played itself out in the finals of the 200-meter dash. The boy who lent the spikes indicated, "It never occurred to me to do anything else."
- ❖ Early in a soccer championship game, a forward and defender both jumped to head the ball. Their heads collided, and one player was injured but did not drop to the ground – the signal to the referee to stop play. The coach on the opposing team recognized the distress of the player and despite his team having the opportunity to clear the ball and take the advantage in play, he directed his team to kick the ball out of bounds. He gave up possession of the ball near his goal to stop play and allow the player to be assisted.

- ❖ The 1996 Surgeon General's report, *Physical Activity and Health*, said that "regular participation in physical activity during childhood and adolescence:
 - Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints
 - Helps control weight, build lean muscle and reduce fat
 - Prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure
 - Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.The report goes on to say that "participation in physical activity increases adolescents' self-esteem.
(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical activity and health: a report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 1996.)

 - ❖ "Other research has shown that students who participate in interscholastic sports are less likely to be regular and heavy smokers or use drugs¹, and are more likely to stay in school and have good conduct and high academic achievement². Sports and Physical activity programs can introduce young people to skills such as teamwork, self-discipline, sportsmanship, leadership and socialization."
 - (1. Escobedo LG, Marcus SE, Holtzman D, Giovino GA. Sports participation, age at smoking initiation and the risk of smoking among US high school students. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1993;269:1391-5.
 - (2. Zill N, Nord CW, Loomis LS. Adolescent time use, risky behavior and outcomes: an analysis of national data. Rockville, MD: Westat, 1995.)
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