



# National High School Activities Month

**OCTOBER  
2015**

The National Federation of State High School Associations created National High School Activities Week in 1980 to increase the public's awareness of the values and needs of interscholastic activity programs. However, there was a need to celebrate the contributions and benefits young people experience by participation in sports and performing arts for an entire month. Hence, Activities Week has transformed into Activities Month. During this special time, the nation's high schools are encouraged to promote the values inherent in high school athletics and other activities such as speech, music, theatre and band.

National High School Activities Month is an opportunity to remind the public that already in place in every community is a comprehensive program addressing society's most current concerns, by:

- Finding and nurturing the best effort of each young participant;
- Encouraging students to stay in school, perform better academically and become better citizens;
- Demanding respect for fair play and appreciation for the equitable application of procedures, rules and regulations;
- Providing healthy lifestyle instruction;
- Challenging racism, sexism and classism through the active pursuit of teamwork and school spirit.



*"High school sports and activity programs provide one of the best bargains in our community and nation and will continue to do so as long as our nation supports them as an integral part of the education of our young people. Not only do these programs teach the more than 11 million young people who participate in them valuable life skills lessons, such as ethics, integrity and healthy lifestyles, they also provide the best entertainment value in our nation."*

*"We have fundamental, empirical evidence that interscholastic activities provide a successful way in which to create healthy and successful citizens."*

*"Through National High School Activities Month, we have an opportunity to reflect on our participation as well as the participation of our children. Our nation must continue to support these programs and the life skills they provide America's youth."*

— **Robert B. Gardner**, Executive Director, National Federation of State High School Associations



# National High School Activities Month

OCTOBER 2015

National Sportsmanship, Fan Appreciation and Public-Address Announcers Week ..October 1-10

National Performing Arts Activities Week .....October 12-17

National Coaches/Sponsors/Advisors/Officials Week .....October 19-24

National Community Service/Youth Awareness Week .....October 26-31



National Federation of State  
High School Associations

[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)



National Federation of State High School Associations



# National Sportsmanship, Fan Appreciation and Public- Address Announcers Week

OCTOBER 1-10, 2015

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH



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High School Associations

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National Federation of State High School Associations



# National Performing Arts Activities Week

OCTOBER 12-17, 2015

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH



National Federation of State  
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National Federation of State High School Associations



# National Coaches/Sponsors/ Advisors/Officials Week

OCTOBER 19-24, 2015

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH



National Federation of State  
High School Associations

[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)



National Federation of State High School Associations



# National Community Service/Youth Awareness Week

OCTOBER 26-31, 2015

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH



National Federation of State  
High School Associations

[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)

# OCTOBER 1-10, 2015

## NATIONAL SPORTSMANSHIP, FAN APPRECIATION AND PUBLIC-ADDRESS ANNOUNCERS WEEK

**Purpose:** A week to encourage awareness and discussion about the importance of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity to the conduct of interscholastic programs, and a time to thank the spectators who support activity programs throughout the year. In addition, acknowledge the dedication and service that public-address announcers perform every contest.

### What you can do:

- ☑ Make up positive cheers, chants or songs
- ☑ Print bookmarks with sportsmanship ideas; ask the school library to slip them into all books
- ☑ Hand out incentives to faculty, staff and students "caught" being a good sport
- ☑ Use table tents in cafeteria, reading lounges or library for sportsmanship messages
- ☑ Welcome visiting teams with an announcement over public-address system
- ☑ Make posters for contest
- ☑ Cheer good plays by opposing team
- ☑ Incorporate the NFHS Sportsmanship. It's Up to You.™ campaign implementation and resource kit into your school's sportsmanship program
- ☑ Offer tailgate party with hot chocolate and refreshments
- ☑ Offer free program to "selected fans" (based on school colors or some other criteria)
- ☑ Give Booster Club members coupon for free pop and popcorn
- ☑ Introduce parents of players and cheerleaders during pregame ceremony
- ☑ Give school shirt to most avid fans (student and adult)
- ☑ Present chair cushion to a dedicated adult fan
- ☑ Dress up in your school spirit outfit
- ☑ During the course of the season, acknowledge season ticket-holders by name
- ☑ Interview your school's public-address announcer on the local school television or radio station
- ☑ Host Public-Address Announcer contests, where the winner gets to publicly announce a live junior high/middle school contest
- ☑ Invite your school's public-address announcer to explain his/her role and why he/she enjoys being a part of the action

## OCTOBER 12-17, 2015

### NATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS ACTIVITIES WEEK

**Purpose:** A time to focus on the students, coaches and sponsors involved in performing arts programs.

#### **What you can do:**

- ☑ Recognize performing arts participants at pep rally
- ☑ Have reception for students interested in joining performing arts programs; invite current participants
- ☑ Have alumni program with former performing arts students
- ☑ Establish "Awards" program (Oscars, Emmys, Tonys, etc.) to recognize contributors to performing arts programs
- ☑ Create magnetic posters for display on lockers of students involved in performing arts
- ☑ Present program to elementary school or judge "American Idol" program at local nursing home
- ☑ Invite local actors or musicians for performance with students
- ☑ Do feature story in school newspaper
- ☑ Present drama skit during lunch
- ☑ Have a performing arts participant read the morning or afternoon announcements in character
- ☑ Have former band members return to play with current band
- ☑ Have former band members who are parents return to play with current band



# OCTOBER 19-24, 2015

## NATIONAL COACHES, ADVISORS, SPONSORS, OFFICIALS WEEK

**Purpose:** A time to recognize the contributions of high school coaches, advisors, sponsors and contest officials.

### What you can do:

- ☑ Ask non-coaching faculty to serve as "coach of the day" to give them different perspective
- ☑ Honor different coaches and advisors each hour of the day
- ☑ Recognize coaches and sponsors and their families on public-address system during events
- ☑ Invite retired coaches to attend practice or event
- ☑ Play "Name that Coach" clue game
- ☑ Send letters or emails of thanks to a coach, sponsor or advisor
- ☑ Host breakfast for officials who help in sports and fine arts
- ☑ Class competition of "You Make the Call" and feature questions regarding sport rules
- ☑ Have round-table discussion with students, officials and parents
- ☑ Donate sportsmanship book or video to library on behalf of officials
- ☑ Send certificates of recognition and appreciation letters to officials
- ☑ Post signs thanking officials
- ☑ Provide NFHS sportsmanship cards to all officials who work contests at your school
- ☑ Present the NFHS Sportsmanship-Ethics-Integrity Award to deserving officials

# OCTOBER 26-31, 2015

## NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE/YOUTH AWARENESS WEEK

**Purpose:** A time to give back to your community and show your appreciation for their support of your programs. This week also can be used to promote fund-raising efforts that support interscholastic programs. In addition, this is a perfect opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles and prevention efforts.

### What you can do:

- ☑ Recognize business partners in program or announcements at contests or events
- ☑ Offer a beneficial service to business partners, i.e., clean parking lot, cut grass, etc.
- ☑ Offer free admission to event to representatives of program advertisers
- ☑ Hold open house in gymnasium; invite alumni, businesses and media to attend
- ☑ Learn more about high school activities on the Internet at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)
- ☑ Do radio (school) and TV PSAs (community access) with activities participants
- ☑ Offer school souvenirs at auction
- ☑ Put announcement on school marquee
- ☑ Invite local print and electronic media to do a story on the event
- ☑ Videotape and put on YouTube or on the school's website
- ☑ Offer pregame meal with nutritional analysis
- ☑ Hold student workshops on health issues; recognize school nurse, trainer and team doctor
- ☑ Offer students opportunity to "shadow" health professionals
- ☑ Create and display bulletin boards and posters dealing with healthy lifestyle issues
- ☑ Ask students to prepare resource directory of community agencies
- ☑ Read a "health tip of the hour"
- ☑ Hold assembly with guest speakers, such as nutritionists, local county health officials, and local college or university experts

## 2015 NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH WAYS TO CELEBRATE

October 1-10 National Sportsmanship, Fan Appreciation and Public-Address Announcers Week	October 12-17 National Performing Arts Activities Week	October 19-24 National Coaches/Sponsors/Advisors/Officials Week	October 26-31 National Community Service/Youth Awareness Week
<p>Make up positive cheers, chants or songs</p> <p>Print bookmarks with sportsmanship ideas; ask library to slip them into all books</p> <p>Give incentives to faculty, staff and students "caught" being a sport</p> <p>Make posters for contest</p> <p>Use table tents in cafeteria, reading lounges or library for sportsmanship messages</p> <p>Welcome visiting teams with announcement over PA system</p> <p>Provide Booster Club members coupon for free pop and popcorn</p> <p>Present free program to fans (based on school colors or other criteria)</p> <p>Give school shirt to most avid fans (student and adult)</p> <p>Offer tailgate party with refreshments</p> <p>Introduce parents of players and cheerleaders during pregame ceremony</p> <p>Ask media to feature fan with longest attendance record at high school event</p>	<p>Recognize performing arts participants at pep rally</p> <p>Invite middle school band students to perform with high school band at football game</p> <p>Give program at elementary school or judge "American Idol" program</p> <p>Do feature story in campus newspaper</p> <p>Invite local actors or musicians for performance with students</p> <p>Organize youth talent program for community</p>	<p>Ask noncoaching faculty to be "coaches of the day"</p> <p>Host breakfast for all sponsors and coaches</p> <p>Honor different coaches and advisors each hour of the day</p> <p>Play "Name that Coach" clue game</p> <p>Recognize coaches, sponsors and their families during events</p> <p>Let "fan of the week" sit on bench with team</p> <p>Host breakfast for officials who help in sports and performing arts</p> <p>Class competition of "You Make the Call;" feature questions on sports rules</p> <p>Have round-table discussion with students, officials and parents</p> <p>Post signs thanking officials</p> <p>Donate sportsmanship-related book or video to library on behalf of officials</p> <p>Send certificates of recognition and appreciation letters to officials</p>	<p>Offer free admission to event to representatives of program advertisers</p> <p>Hold open house; invite school board members, alumni, businesses and media to attend</p> <p>Do radio or television public-service announcements with activities participants</p> <p>Recognize business partners and school board members in programs</p> <p>Offer school souvenirs at auction for funding community service project</p> <p>Set aside a portion of practice time to discuss healthy lifestyle issues</p> <p>Hold workshops on health issues; recognize school nurse, athletic trainer, team doctor</p> <p>Create and display bulletin boards and posters dealing with healthy lifestyle issues</p> <p>Offer pregame meal with nutritional analysis</p> <p>Offer students opportunity to "shadow" health professionals</p> <p>Have students prepare directory of community agencies</p>

# NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH

## OCTOBER 2015

### TO PUBLICIZE OR CELEBRATE THROUGHOUT THE MONTH

- ☑ Invite school board members to read a public-service announcement on the value of activities at school functions or pep rallies
- ☑ Display school board members photos with athletes and/or activity participants around school or in school event programs
- ☑ Public-service announcements to local radio and television stations and newspapers
- ☑ Place on school website, school radio or television station PSA spots
- ☑ Morning or home-room announcements
- ☑ School phone messages
- ☑ Posters or bulletin board displays
- ☑ Assembly or pep rally
- ☑ Poster or essay contest
- ☑ Mayoral proclamation
- ☑ Invite public officials to be guests at contests or planned activities and recognize their attendance
- ☑ Send letters to local church leaders asking them to recognize participating high school students
- ☑ Ask civic organizations to recognize student participants, their parents or fans who are members of their organization
- ☑ Ask local merchants to advertise discounts during week to those with ticket stub or program from school event
- ☑ Create a contest between each class (freshman, sophomore, junior and senior) to devise the best way to celebrate National High School Activities Month



# What High School Activities Mean to Me...

CHARACTER IS WHAT YOU ARE WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost;  
When health is lost, something is lost;  
When character is lost, all is lost.

— Author Unknown

We would like to thank the members of the NFHS Citizenship and Equity Committee for securing the following testimonials.



## TESTIMONIALS



### **Savannah Dickson, Beaverton High School, Beaverton, Oregon**

My time as an athlete has taught me to strive toward success in all aspects of life. I have discovered that the expectations that I hold for myself are often higher than those of anyone around me, requiring a level of dedication and motivation on the field and off in order to continue fulfilling them. As an athlete, people look up to you. They see you fighting the battles of balancing a difficult lifestyle, and notice the effects of every defeat. I have discovered that holding your head up in the face of loss is more valuable than boasting of championships. I have learned that my own expectations are not as important as exemplifying the image of being a student-athlete. Our duties require not only skill, but leadership, dedication, and a desire to create the best version of yourself. The result of the game is significantly less important than coming away with even more drive for the next. Athletics has given me a reason to continue being better every day. I reject the common temptations that high schoolers face, so that I can continue being the role model for others my age to live the best lives they can.



### **Janis Worklan, Official, Wintersville, Ohio**

Among the ads that debuted at the 2015 Super Bowl, my favorite—and the one I think will be remembered for years—was the “Like a Girl” offering. Its message was simple: Tired stereotypes about women as the weaker sex are about as appropriate now as the old six-on-six, halfcourt basketball girls in Iowa and Oklahoma played until the mid-’90s. When they’re asked to show how they throw or run, the young girls in the ad strike a gritty, determined game face and demonstrate a Jordan-like intensity as they run and throw.

Later that week I officiated a girls basketball game before a packed Western Pennsylvania gym. On a last-second shot before halftime, one defender challenged a seemingly uncontested jump shot. The resulting contact sent blood flying from her cut lip. Come third quarter, there she is again, her nose and upper lip packed with gauze. A minute in, she takes an inadvertent elbow, and the blood gushes again. So what happens a few minutes later? She returns and finishes the game with her lip heavily taped up. Stitches could wait until after the game. Like a girl? You betcha.

I’ve officiated football and men’s lacrosse for many years at the collegiate level. Yet I see the real value of athletic participation, character development and citizenship each winter when I work my one girls sport. The young women on the basketball court show grit and a healthy self-esteem. I truly believe the opportunities on the athletic fields and courts these girls have grown up with is why the youngsters in that ad can glare fearlessly into the camera and show what it looks like today to do something “like a girl.”



### **Brecken Denler, Mountain View High School, Mesa, Arizona**

High school was an opportunity to shape myself into the person I wanted to become. While I have been touched by brilliant educators in my day, I feel the true pinnacle of my high school experience has been through activities. Activities are about more than just learning; they are about doing and ultimately becoming. Activities including Speech and Debate and Model United Nations have allowed me to better understand the structure and operations of the world, to understand and respect the different people of the world, but most importantly, it has allowed me to find out what and who I wanted to become. Through these activities I developed morally, I put philosophies I was raised with into practice; intellectually, I applied and embraced my studies; socially, I built friendships and networks of a lifetime; and personally, I found who I was. I learned about scholarship in class; I became a scholar in activities. I would not have the grades or motivation I am now immensely proud of without my activity experience. Going into the future, what I learned in high school will, without a doubt, continue to influence me, but what I learned in activities, can never be overstated.



### **Ken Potter, Jesuit High School, Portland, Oregon**

As coaches, we continually need to reflect on our role in developing athletes with great character and citizenship. My proudest moment in coaching came just last month, during the 2015 NCAA National Championship Football game. Keanon Lowe, one of the captains for the University of Oregon, was profiled on the Jumbotron before the game. Keanon said that his high school football coach was the most instrumental and inspirational person in his life. I was so moved and humbled by this unexpected tribute from a player – and person – I love.

Keanon went on to say that I had helped guide him in the formation of his character and outlook on life. All the state championships, league championships and wins pale in comparison to knowing in my heart that we as a coaching staff are teaching young athletes that their character, work ethic, determination and treatment of others will be their true signature in life.

As coaches, I believe we are first and foremost educators. We have the opportunity to help guide our athletes in the most important matters of life. Often we hear the line, inaccurately attributed to Vince Lombardi, that “winning is the only thing.” Those who spout this nonsense do not care how victory is accomplished, nor what is taught along the way. Of course, I coach to win, and prepare our teams to have the opportunity to win, but as an educator, it is far more imperative that I model what I know will help our student-athletes be successful not only on the field, but in life.

The two main points I feel are important to being a good role model are character and citizenship. Character is doing your best when no one is watching, supervising or coaching you, and making the right moral decision every time. If you make a mistake, own up to it, and learn from it. Citizenship is treating everyone you meet with respect. We teach citizenship to our student-athletes by allowing them to know that we believe in them and reminding them that they are important.

Keanon Lowe and all the students I have coached remind me of these virtues. It should not take a Jumbotron at AT&T Stadium to remind us how important we as coaches are in the lives of our athletes, and to convince us to keep our eyes on the Big Picture: Character and Citizenship.

### **Gilbert Jones, Central High School, Phoenix, Arizona**

As an educator for over 20 years, I can certainly attest to the value of fine arts education within public schools. I have witnessed countless games, recitals, plays and performances of many differing types. In each case, the pride and confidence boost it provided to students was clearly evident and invaluable. There is so much talent in these children that it is critical that an avenue to express their abilities is available to them. Students grow so much in these programs academically and socially. Fine arts helps them pursue their dreams, goals and passions. I myself am a product of an education with a strong fine arts component. As a member of marching and concert band I learned discipline, accountability and working within the framework of a team to accomplish great things. I see these virtues being passed down through the generations, evidenced by those many events I have witnessed in my career as an educator. Without fine arts I contend there is no civilization. Fine arts prepares our students for a bright future and ensures that what is best in humanity is displayed and perpetuated.



### **LeeAnn Fiser, Bixby High School, Bixby, Oklahoma**

As the mother of four varsity athletes, I've spent many hours over the past 10 years observing the ins and outs of high school athletics. I can honestly say I see high school athletics as a training ground for a number of real world experiences. For so many of us, our high school years are a time where passion runs deep and lifelong memories are made. “Friday Night Lights” – whether spent on a football field, in a basketball gym, on a baseball diamond or on the soccer turf – are the perfect place for coaches and school administrators to reinforce the moral standards that so many parents have established at

home. Most kids have a reasonable sense of right from wrong, but adding an extra layer of caring adults to the list of people in our athlete's lives can only help the athletes in making good choices. Taken a step further, high school athletics afford students an opportunity to expand leadership skills that can be used throughout a lifetime. Done correctly, these leadership and mentoring skills can be applied in other areas of an athlete's high school activities, allowing for a diversified student who will be more prepared for adulthood. In most situations, high school athletics should not replace a parent in the role of determining the morals and values of our children, but it can certainly be an additional positive layer of reinforcement in a society of questionable outside influences.



**Bernard Childress, Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association, Hermitage, Tennessee**

As I travel throughout the state, I listen to the concerns our administrators and coaches have about sportsmanship and the attitude of student-athletes in today's society. It is very obvious that the time has come for each of us to stand up and accept our responsibility.

What is sportsmanship? In an article written by R. Eugene Hill, he defines sportsmanship as "those qualities of behavior which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others." Good sportsmanship is viewed by the NFHS as a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.

Good sportsmanship must be the responsibility of our school administrators, teachers, coaches, students and spectators. Each group must work to develop the ability to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. This is what true sportsmanship is all about.

There have been too many times in our society where we have witnessed blatant examples of coaches, players and spectators exhibiting disregard for rules, regulations and respect for opponents. As educated adults, we must stand up and start setting some examples for our youth.

The promoting of sportsmanship is not an option in our schools. As educators, we set the standards that are and are not acceptable for our young people. Sportsmanship does not just happen. Hopefully, it is first learned from caring parents, but often this is not the case. The responsibility rests heavily on the administrators, teachers and coaches to not only talk about and teach sportsmanship, but to live it daily. I have become convinced that who someone is teaches as much as what someone says.

In our role as educators, we must constantly strive to make sure that athletics is always a positive laboratory where the trials and stress of competition are always tempered by the discipline of sportsmanship. If we fail to demand high standards, we will certainly be guilty of promoting actions and attitudes that have no place in interscholastic athletics. We must all strive to develop an overall understanding that sportsmanship is merely citizenship in the athletic arena.



**Kenny & Jane Wheeler, Pleasant Valley High School, Bettendorf, Iowa**

At the heart of athletic participation is student learning and personal development. We use sport as a vehicle with which to transcend sport and provide valuable, teachable moments that will help the athlete grow into strong, independent individuals with great work ethic and character and a genuine respect and concern for others. Win or lose, these values should be at the heart of the athletic experience.

Coaches are put in a unique position to affect the lives of the young people they teach, instruct, care for and challenge. Our lives and actions, intentionally or unintentionally, become examples of how to live, treat others, and how to respond in

times of defeat, disappointment and triumph. Coaches are truly educators and their responsibilities extend beyond training theory, strategy and winning.

Athletic participation creates opportunities to learn about team, selflessness, sportsmanship and a greater self-awareness of the role you play as it relates to the larger or common good of the group. We believe these values ultimately lead these individuals to be successful outside of the athletic arena and contribute to the greater good of our society. And whether it is through triumph or hardship, good character, integrity and genuine respect for others always leaves a lasting impact.



**Ron Henry, Warsaw Community High School, Warsaw, Indiana**

As a P.A. announcer for almost 60 years, I can say unequivocally that I have had the best seat in the house for the more than 1,500 school activities I've announced!

To me, school athletics and activities are about providing opportunities – opportunities not only for the athletes, but for adults and students who are coaches, trainers, managers, statisticians, game personnel and officials. They also provide opportunities for cheer and dance squads performing their routines with the precision of a military color guard, students donning mascot costumes and spirit apparel and bands faithfully playing their school's fight song, all of which enhance the event experience. Athletics also unite communities by providing them an opportunity – the opportunity to support their students, coaches and supervisors.

Additionally, athletics mean atmosphere; excitement; competition; playing by the rules; demonstrating good sportsmanship; building character; respecting individuals in authority, such as officials, coaches, supervisors and administrators; learning to deal with adversity; and working together, just to mention a few. During my career, I have observed thousands and thousands of participants, and the one thing that athletics has provided them is the opportunity to have fun . . . and isn't that really what it is all about!



**Gayle Workman**

It is impossible to overstate the influence of the fine arts in the education and growth of my children. While studying under one of the finest choral technicians in the state of Utah, they discovered, and learned to love, much of the best music ever written. Thanks to a school that understood the value of employing and funding first-rate instructors, programs and opportunities, my children attended numerous enriching experiences, including: Solo and Ensemble, All-State, advanced music theory courses, collaborative choir concerts, musicals, and trips to influential locations such as Carnegie Hall. Leadership, citizenship and organizational skills thrived while they served on choir councils, attended competitions, and perfected their talents in preparation for performances. All of my children went on to enjoy a collegiate choral experience and many of them made music their chosen profession. High school music education has affected every aspect of their lives, and now the lives of their children. But if you ask my children what they remember best about their high school experience, they would all say it was the music. "My life flows on in endless song; above earth's lamentation . . . thro' all the tumult and the strife I hear the music ringing; it finds an echo in my soul – how can I keep from singing?" (Words and music: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899, P.D.)



**Ainsley Wolfenbarger, Bixby High School, Bixby, Oklahoma**

"I can't – I have soccer" is the statement that nearly dominates my life. The best part? I wouldn't have it any other way. To have the ability and opportunity to play sports is a blessing that keeps on giving back. Athletic involvement is no foreign concept to me as it's been the lead role of my entire life, practically part of my DNA, and something that I have reaped great benefits from both in the here and now and what I know to be long-term. Sports have fed my competitive drive, pushed me outside of my comfort zone, and have allowed me to develop as a confident leader on the field, in my school and within my community. The character-building life lessons in addition to the coaches who have mentored me along the way have bettered me as a person in every aspect, beyond just being an athlete, and for that I am extremely grateful. Athletics have provided me with numerous growing and learning opportunities that have shaped me into a strong, ambitious, goal-oriented, driven young woman prepared to make a difference in this world. To me, soccer is more than just a sport or a game, but a continual learning experience and way of life that has allowed me to achieve greatness and conquer my dreams.

**Michael Vaughan**

I slide into the bleachers with a warm coffee in my hand. I've been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity, weekend after weekend, to observe the power of sport in my children's lives. With one child already grown and the other three following close behind, I know all too well how quickly these years are slipping by. I've come to the conclusion that sport has taught my children many things, the greatest of which is commitment.

When they've been tired or not feeling well, my children have gone to the gym anyway, because their coach and their team were depending on them. In life, we need to be someone that people can rely on to put the needs of others ahead of our own.

When my kids have played as hard as they thought they could and their bodies were exhausted, and their coach asked them to play longer, they have, because they knew they could find hidden reserves of endurance within themselves. In life, we are often called on to try harder and stay the course longer than we ever thought was possible.

When my kids have played on teams that have lost more games than they have won, they've continued to play anyway because they were committed to a plan of action that was going to pay off sometime in the future. In life, we will need to know the benefit of resisting small and immediate rewards in favor of the more enduring rewards to come later on in our progress.

Long after I've left my seat on the bleachers with an empty coffee cup in my hand, I know the rewards of sport will endure in the lives of my children.



**Monika Whitsett, Bixby High School, Bixby, Oklahoma**

As adults we realize that the vast majority of people will be involved in teams for the rest of their lives; likely lots of them at the same time (family, work groups, etc.). Human beings learned early on that cohesive groups are more successful than individuals, and so we evolved into societies which are nothing more than groups of teams.

More simply stated, sports teams are a microcosm of the real world – people are grouped together with a common passion and they are expected to perform for the good of a common goal. Some learn and develop their ability to lead, others to follow. Some learn when humility is needed or, at other times, pride. In order to be successful, athletes must learn to balance and manage priorities such as family, school, athletics and work. They must learn how to accept criticism and feed-



back. They must learn how to be introspective. They must learn how to face consequences. They must learn how to be gracious in both defeat and success. These are the skills that will make them productive members of our society and are the reason that sports in school play such a vital role in a young person's upbringing.



**Josh Wallin, Pleasant Valley High School, Bettendorf, Iowa**

It all began my freshman year. As I walked out onto the chlorine-inundated pool deck, I looked to my teammates. Sure, I didn't know them yet, but what I could recognize right away was the sense of camaraderie among them. They weren't just a team, but instead a family; I was the newly adopted member.

Athletics have never defined me, but, after years of participation from a young age, I couldn't imagine myself without the relationships and values that I have developed as an athlete. These values don't just end on the pool deck or at the finish line of the 100-meter dash, but extend into my daily life.

The notion of teamwork is often lost in the often-individualized hustle and bustle of school. Through athletics, I have learned to no longer focus on the "I"s and "Me"s, but instead on the "We"s and "Us"s. As a member of various student groups such as student council, marching band and National Honor Society, it is absolutely critical that a student is able to look beyond his or her individual goals to aid the team as a whole.

My experiences in athletics have broadened my horizons and helped me become the person I am today. I am not the freshman walking out onto the pool deck, wondering what the future will hold; I am the senior, welcoming my new teammates with open arms as we work together to create a better future.



**Jennifer Stephens, Rio Linda High School, Rio Linda, California**

Educational athletics has helped my daughter achieve success in the classroom and in life experiences that I have always knew she was capable of if she just applied herself.

After a rough start academically this year, I had to make the painful decision to withhold her from competing in basketball until her grades improved. She had always done well in school before this year and this was the first time I was ever faced with taking sports away. After seeing the results of her improving academically, I am relieved I made that decision.

Her grades, in just weeks, not only surpassed my expectations, but she has received A's on tests and assignments ever since. She was also presented with two awards – High Achiever and Most Improved Student. In fact she called me at work as soon as she did the math calculation and knew her grades were at the level that we agreed upon to play sports. She wanted to start practicing right away, after school, despite the fact she didn't have a gym bag or her basketball shoes with her that day.

Now came the challenge of making up for lost time. Despite her talent and hustle, the coaches were resistant to the idea of starting her due to the missed time. She knew she was on thin ice so she was a lot more attentive to not only the coach's instructions but every lesson he gave about being a good citizen on campus. It was extremely tough watching her on the bench after all her hard work she had put into her school work and practice. Seeing her work pay off when she finally was able to start and clinch a spot in the playoffs, was an invaluable experience that I will never forget! Sports has positively impacted her academic performance and I believe will help her achieve not only in the classroom but in her future.



**Britnee Iverson, Riverton High School, Riverton, Utah**

Prior to being a part of the fine arts program I would have never imagined that it would affect my life in the ways that it has. When I nail a line in a song and know that I am there supporting the choir, the feeling of self-worth is so overwhelming. Being a part of a team where one could so easily feel forgotten is sometimes unappealing, but sometimes that is what makes a choir beautiful. When everyone is singing and we are all so blended that it comes across as one astounding powerful voice is the most amazing moment. And by being one of the voices that help accomplish that is so awesome, that is the reason I love choral music.

Learning in a classroom versus learning in the choir room are two very different experiences. Although the classroom offers a variety of positive ways to help students learn, I think that learning through fine arts is so much better. From applying the music to feelings it is so easy for me to learn the material, and because of that I have been able to take that into other subjects to help expand my learning capabilities in all of my classes. The fine arts give you an opportunity to not only hear about what other people are doing and feeling, it provides a way for you to feel it and for a moment experience that for yourself. Through the arts I have been able to see different points of view, appreciate others talents and communicate and understand the meaning behind things in a way that I otherwise would not have been able to.

One other amazing thing that the Jordan School District's fine arts program has allowed for me and many others to do that has really changed me is the opportunity to travel. There is something about traveling with a large number of students who all have one passion in common to a place where you are exposed to different musical groups from all around the country that really humbles yourself. Being involved in the arts truly gives you time to learn more about yourself, your peers and all of those who have come before you with an open and appreciative mindset. And that creates a bunch of goal oriented, respectful, and a really great group of youth to be around. I applaud Jordan School District for its wonderful fine arts program and I am beyond grateful to be a part of it.



**Angelia McDaniel, Bixby High School, Bixby, Oklahoma**

I am the parent of a sophomore at Bixby High School. Although my daughter does not participate in any athletic program at Bixby, I love attending every BHS sporting event I can.

I go to the sporting events because I love sports. But I also go because I love to see our high school students at their best. Not only do they exhibit feats of athleticism, they also show great feats of heart.

In the past few years, I have seen students from all grades purchase and wear t-shirts to financially and emotionally support a fellow student who was fighting cancer. I have seen students purchase special t-shirts and participate in running through colored powder to advance awareness of all different forms of cancer. I have seen football and basketball teams embrace and support a student who has special needs by including that student on the teams and encouraging his participation at every event.

Not only do our Bixby High School athletes show skill and talent and dedication on the athletic fields and courts they compete on, our athletes show their heart and character and compassion for others every day in every venue.



# The Case for High School Activities



## INTRODUCTION

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and its member state associations champion interscholastic athletics and performing arts activities because they promote citizenship and sportsmanship in the 11 million students who participate nationwide. Activity programs instill a sense of pride in school and community, teach lifelong lessons and skills of teamwork and self-discipline, and facilitate the physical and emotional development of the nation's youth.

There is no better time than now to assert "The Case for High School Activities." Education and community leaders across America need the facts contained in this material documenting the benefits of participation in interscholastic sports, music, theatre, debate and other activities, to provide support needed for these programs. These activities provide important developmental experiences that enrich a student's high school experience and entire life, and these programs must be protected and sustained.



## Cost Benefit

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 today's best bargains. It is in these vital programs — sports, music, speech, theatre, debate — where young people learn lifelong lessons that complement the academic lessons taught in the classroom. From a cost standpoint, activity programs are an exceptional bargain when matched against the overall school district's education budget.

Examinations of various school districts' budget information across the country reveal that activity programs make up very small percentages of school budgets. In the 2014-15 school year, the city of Chicago's Public School Board of Education's budget was \$4.93 billion; the activity program's portion was \$17.6 million. In the Los Angeles Unified School District, activity programs received \$6.33 million of the overall \$7.27 billion budget for 2014-15. Finally, in the Miami – Dade, Florida School District, its Board of Education had a 2014-15 overall budget of \$3.7 billion, while setting aside \$17.2 million for activity programs. In all of these examples, the budget for school activity programs is less than one percent of the overall district's budget. Considering the benefits, which are outlined below, at such small proportions of overall school district budgets, school activity programs are one of the most effective investments being made in secondary school education programs today.

## The NFHS supports cocurricular 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 16 sports. The NFHS publishes case books, officials' manuals, handbooks, and simplified and illustrated books in many sports.
- **The NFHS Coach 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. With over than one million courses viewed and taken, this tool enhances the education for the adults who have committed to the betterment of their young people. More information can be accessed by going to [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com).
- **National High School Activities Month** – The nation's high schools are encouraged to promote the values inherent in high school athletics, speech, music, theatre, debate and spirit squads during this celebration in the month of October.

- **Public-service Announcements** – Various sportsmanship messages are created and distributed in electronic and radio formats, as well as 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 an NFHS educational product. It documents the value of high school athletic and fine arts activities through an excellent PowerPoint presentation with videos on a CD-ROM. This product is available by calling NFHS Customer Service at 800-776-3462.
- **SPORTSMANSHIP. IT'S UP TO YOU.™ TOOLKIT** – This is the newest initiative for improving sportsmanship in schools and in the community. Sportsmanship is an issue that affects everyone and is everyone's responsibility. The new Sportsmanship, It's Up to You™ campaign is based on respect and involves personal responsibility. It starts with a mindset and ends with behavioral choices. The toolkit contains two DVDs, radio spots, customizable posters, Student Pledge Cards and an implementation guide on how to utilize the components of the toolkit. The toolkit can be ordered by calling NFHS Customer Service at 800-776-3462.

## Benefits of Cocurricular 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 and skills for practical situations – like teamwork, fair play 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 students need if they are to become responsible adults, productive citizens and skilled professionals.
- **Activities Promote Health and Well-being.** Mental and physical health are improved through activities. Self-concept, self-image, physical activity and weight management are a few of these health benefits realized through activity participation.
- **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 healthy member of society.

Following are some of these benefits identified more specifically and documented. This updated version of the Case for High School Activities presents additional and more recent study results and includes additional categories of benefits. Several of the studies have findings that fit into more than one category. In most cases, the study was listed in the category that fit best for most of its findings, and in some cases the other findings for the study (that may have fit better in another category) were also mentioned alongside the major findings. Only a couple of studies were listed in two categories because the study had major findings in both categories. While many of the studies refer to “extracurricular activities,” the NFHS prefers the term “education-based” activities to indicate that activities support the academic mission of schools, are inherently educational and are a significant part of the school or education system.

- BETTER EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES
- ENHANCED SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT AND SENSE OF BELONGING
- POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT/LIFE SKILLS
- HEALTHIER BEHAVIORS



- POST HIGH SCHOOL POSITIVE RESULTS
- DEVELOPING BETTER CITIZENS
- SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

## Better Educational Outcomes

Students who compete in high school activity programs have better educational outcomes, including higher grades, higher achievement test scores and higher educational expectations beyond high school.

- Students in school-sponsored activities had higher math achievement test scores and expectations for attending college according to a report that examined data from two national longitudinal education cohort studies (from the National Center for Education Statistics). The results also showed that the relationship between these outcomes and extracurricular activities held for students in the 1990s (Generation X) and the early 2000s (Millennial Generation). The author comments that these outcomes may be because school activities involvement increases school engagement in the schools' academic culture and also that students in the 2000s were participating more in these "academically beneficial" school-sponsored activities. (Dumais, 2009).

- A study of nearly 140,000 Kansas high school students, examining data from the Kansas State High School Activities Association and the Kansas State Department of Education, revealed that "athletes earned higher grades, graduated at a higher rate, dropped out of school less frequently and scored higher on state assessments than did non-athletes." Student-athletes of color contributed to these overall results having much higher grade point averages, much higher graduation rates, and much lower dropout rates than non-athlete students of color. This led authors to say that although pay-to-play "may seem like a reasonable alternative to eliminating sport programs altogether, it discriminates against students who do not have the financial means to pay for membership on a high school sports team." (Lumpkin & Favor, 2012). Thus, eliminating sports programs, and likely other extracurricular activities, or implementing pay-to-play (or increasing the cost) is likely to have a more negative impact on students who come from families that are poorer, and generally students of color are over-represented among poorer families.

- When looking at the relationship of physical activity and sports team participation with grade-point average (GPA), sports team participation was independently associated with a higher GPA for high school girls and boys. The effect of sports team participation had an independent effect on GPA beyond physical activity. This suggests that other factors involved in sports team participation beyond physical activity play a role in academic outcomes. Possible explanations from



the authors included: sports participation promotes identification with school and school-related values, such as doing well academically, pro-educational social norms among teammates and coaches, and academic requirements for participation. They also note, "For adolescent students, in particular, sports team participation may be the major route by which they are physically active, and multiple studies suggest that participation on sports teams is also associated with better academic outcomes." (Fox et al., 2010).

- An earlier study looking at physical activity and academic performance in younger students found that those who participated in vigorous physical activity did approximately 10 percent better in math, science, English and social studies than students who did no or little vigorous activities. Yet, the study noted that many of the students reporting higher levels of vigorous activities were involved in organized sports like soccer, football or basketball. (Coe et al., 2006).

- Participation in school-sponsored athletics "is associated with a two percent increase in math and science test scores," school-sponsored club participation is associated with a one percent increase in math test scores" and "involvement in either sports or clubs is associated with a five percent increase in bachelor's degree attainment expectations," according to an investigation of National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) data. The author notes that such outcomes, high school test scores and degree attainment expectations, are "strongly related to educational attainment and future wages," and that "society ought to have a better understanding of the benefits these activities [school-sponsored clubs and sports] afford." (Lipscomb, 2007).

- Other research analyzing NELS data shows that high school participation in extracurricular school activities (ESAs) is more strongly related to positive school outcomes than out-of-school extracurricular activities. These school outcomes were higher grades in 12th grade and higher rates of college attendance two years after high school, even when controlling for earlier grades. The study did find "diminishing returns for extremely high levels of ESA." The authors also noted that extracurricular school activities "benefited socioeconomically disadvantaged students as much or more than advantaged students." (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

- 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 non-participating student, and that student-athletes missed an average of only 7.4 days of school each year, compared with 8.8 for the non-participating student. (Born, 2007). This supports previous results from a study done in collaboration with the North Carolina High School Athletic Association that found significant differences between North Carolina high school students who were athletes and those who were not athletes in GPA (2.98 for athletes vs. 2.17 for non-athletes), missed days of school per school year (6.3 for athletes vs. 11.9 for non-athletes), discipline referrals (33.3% of athletes vs. 41.8% of non-athletes), dropout rate (0.6% for athletes vs. 10.32% for non-athletes), and graduation rate (99.4% for athletes vs. 93.5% for non-athletes). (Overton, 2001).

- A report for the College Entrance Examination Board on the study of the relationship of extracurricular activity involvement in high school and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) scores concluded that "participation in extracurricular activities provides all students – including students from disadvantaged backgrounds, minorities and those with less-than-distinguished academic achievements in high school – a measurable and meaningful gain in their college admissions test scores. The important reasoning abilities measured by tests like the SAT, evidently, are indeed developed both in and out of the classroom." This conclusion was reached by analyzing the SAT verbal and mathematics scores of more than 480,000 high school students after controlling for a number of socioeconomic background and academic achievement factors. Also, the impact of extracurricular activity participation was larger than the family socioeconomic factors and academic achievement levels used in this study. (Everson & Millsap, 2005).

- An examination of 2001 SAT scores revealed that music students scored about 11 percent higher than non-music students. Students with coursework/experience in music performance and music appreciation scored higher on the SAT than students with no arts participation, about 60 points higher in verbal area of the SAT and over 40 points higher in math. (CEEb, 2001).

## Enhanced School Engagement and Sense of Belonging

Participation in high school activities is a valuable part of the overall high school experience, enhancing students' school engagement and sense of belonging.

- Examination of data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health showed strong evidence that school extracurricular activities were positively associated with adolescents' friendships, both supporting existing friendships and developing new ones. Friendship ties were more likely to exist among activity co-participants while controlling for other friendship processes. The authors noted that extracurricular activities provide settings "within schools that are uniquely poised to promote friendships, as they are typically voluntary, safe settings that allow adolescents space to interact and engage with their friends." (Schaefer et al., 2011).
- A study looking at social adjustment in making the transition from middle school (8th grade) to high school (9th grade) found involvement in sports helped students with friendships during the transition. The authors wrote, "Continuous involvement in sports and initiation of academic activities was associated with having more friendships." (Bohnert et al., 2013).
- School arts participation and engagement are associated with enhanced academic motivation and engagement measures as well as [non-academic] measures of well-being, including a sense of meaning and purpose according to a longitudinal study of students in 15 Australian schools. It also showed that in-school arts participation and engagement measures were more strongly correlated with academic motivation and engagement outcomes and some measures of well-being than non-school related participation measures. (Martin et al., 2013).
- Involvement in a moderate number of activity domains – academic/leadership groups, arts activities, clubs, sports – promotes a greater sense of belonging at school, increased academic engagement and higher academic performance as measured by grade-point average, according to a study of urban, ethnically diverse students (40.7% Latino, 16.8% African-American, 12.7% Asian-American, 11.2% Caucasian and 18.5% other ethnicity of two or more ethnic groups). The study authors suggest that it is necessary for schools to "retain ample extracurricular opportunities in order to foster adolescents' sense of belonging at school and higher academic performance." They conclude that, "it is essential that schools offer a number of extracurricular activities that capture the diverse interests of the entire student body. Schools can maximize the impact of these activities by encouraging disconnected, low-achieving students to join a couple of activities. At a time when school budgets face reductions, this type of research argues for the importance of maintaining a breadth of extracurricular opportunities for students attending urban high schools." (Knifsend & Graham, 2012).
- Contributors to Organized Activities as Contexts of Development: Extracurricular Activities, After-School and Community Programs, noted 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. (Barber et al., 2005).

## Positive Youth Development/Life Skills

Education-based activity programs promote positive youth development and provide opportunities for learning a number of life skills and values not typically taught in classroom education.

- In a study looking at learning life skills through high school sports, a very diverse group of students participating in high school soccer reported learning skills related to initiative, respect and teamwork/leadership, despite the authors noting they “did not find evidence that the student-athletes were directly taught about the life skills that were reported.” (Holt et al., 2008).
- A study of life skills developed through football by award-winning high school coaches found that these coaches saw that the process of participation and striving to win taught life skills such as discipline, work ethic and emotional control. In addition, “these coaches did not view the coaching of life skills as separate from their general coaching strategies for performance enhancement and while highly motivated to win, personal development of their players was a top priority.” (Gould et al., 2007).
- A study of model high school coaches and their athletes found that these coaches taught life skills, their student-athletes learned the skills and were able to transfer them to other areas of their lives. The study found that these coaches “had specific strategies to coach life skills,” which in addition to modeling behavior included “peer evaluations, taking advantage of teachable moments, and volunteer work,” as well as teaching “student-athletes how to transfer life skills.” (Camiré et al., 2012).
- Extracurricular activities stand out from other aspects of adolescents’ lives at school because they provide opportunities to “develop initiative and allow youth to learn emotional competencies and develop new social skills.” These activities



allow “youth to form new connections with peers and acquire social capital.” The authors of this work further stated that activity programs are one of the few contexts, outside of the classroom, where adolescents regularly come in contact with adults to whom they are not related. (Darling et al., 2005).

- In a study commissioned by the Alberta Schools’ Athletic Association, corporate and political leaders surveyed in Alberta cited the following benefits or life skills 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. (Berrett, 2006).
- A survey study of Life Skill Development in Ontario High School Sport concluded that parents, coaches and student-athletes all perceive high school sport as positive and is a context where life skills are developed, that student-athletes score higher on most developmental assets than students who are not in high school sports, and that student-athletes appear to be more engaged and enjoy school more as a result of participating in high school sport. (Williamson et al., 2013).
- A study of students drawn from 26 selected Western Australia high schools found that “in general, participation in any type of extracurricular activity was associated with a higher social and academic self-concept, and general self-worth, compared to no participation.” Also, participating in both sport and non-sport extracurricular activities was associated with higher social self-concept and general self-worth, compared to participating in only sports or in just non-sport extracurricular activities. (Blomfield & Barber, 2009)
- Examination of different adolescent activity patterns (sports-focused, sports plus other activities, primarily school-based activities, primarily religious youth groups, and low activity involvement,) “with five categories of youth development outcomes, including competence (e.g., academic ability), confidence (e.g., self-concept of ability), connections (e.g., talking with friends), character (e.g., externalizing behavior problems) and caring (e.g., pro-social behavior),” showed that participation in only sports or primarily only in other school activities was associated with more positive outcomes than little or no participation in activities, but less positive outcomes than participation in sports plus other activities. (Linver et al., 2009).

## Healthier Behaviors

Students involved in educational activities often have many healthier behaviors leading to better physical and mental health.

- Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS) administered every two years showed that regardless of year, age, gender or race/ethnicity, compared to non-athletes, athletes were more likely to report engaging in vigorous activity and using a condom and less likely to report carrying a weapon. This data showed additional health benefits associated with sports participation that varied by gender and race/ethnicity. These health behaviors included dietary habits, weight loss, sexual activity, interpersonal violence and suicidality, and substance abuse. Of the 25 health behaviors, white female athletes had the most (19) associations with positive healthful behaviors. There were fewer associations between sports participation and positive health behaviors for African-American, Hispanic and the “Other” racial or ethnic category of female athletes, but there were no associations between any racial/ethnic group of female athletes and negative health behaviors. There were some associations for male athletes with negative health behaviors. Minority male athletes showed more associations with healthy behaviors than did minority female athletes. The study's authors state: “school officials and public health planners can use these findings as a tool to evaluate health costs associated with eliminating sport activities, especially as programs face cuts during economic difficulties.” (Taliaferro et al., 2010).



- Earlier findings from YRBS data also showed multiple positive health benefits associated with sports participation. There were some variations between the specific health behaviors associated with sports participation in these two examinations of YRBS data and both studies showed variations by race and ethnicity. However, both studies showed many positive associations with health behaviors for athletes, only a few negative associations, and the significant role sports participation plays in the health of young people. Authors of this earlier study wrote, “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.” (Pate et al., 2000).

- Further documentation of the health benefits of sports and other school activities comes from 50,168 Minnesota ninth-grade public school students voluntarily completing a statewide survey. The data revealed that students involved in sports had significantly higher rates of exercise, milk consumption and a healthy self-image, and had significantly lower odds for emotional distress, suicidal behavior, family substance abuse and physical and sexual victimization than students not involved in sports. Students participating in other activities were significantly more involved in doing homework and significantly less involved with alcohol and marijuana use as well as vandalism. Students involved in both sports and other activities had significantly higher odds ratios than those for “the other groups for all healthy behaviors and measures of connectedness, and significantly lower [odds ratios] for all but one of the unhealthy behaviors.” (Harrison & Narayan, 2003).

- Examination of cross-sectional data from a nationally representative sample of high school students enrolled in public high schools in the United States showed that students participating in organized sports were 25 percent less likely to be current cigarette smokers. (Castrucci et al., 2004)

- A study using the Arizona Youth Survey data showed that Native American students who reported a high level of availability in their school to be involved in extracurricular activities “were less likely to use substances, less likely to be drunk or high at school, to ride/drive when the driver was under the influence and less likely to sell drugs.” Also, the greater their participation in the extracurricular activities at school, the less likely Native American students in this study were to be involved in any of these substance-use and drug-related behaviors. (Moilanen et al., 2014).

- In a specific examination of high school youth and suicide risk using national data from the CDC’s YRBS, sports participation was significantly associated with reduced risk of feeling hopeless and suicide behaviors. This was true for both male and female athletes while controlling for levels of physical activity. “These findings indicate that involvement in sport confers unique psychosocial benefits that protect adolescents against suicidality... and suggest that mechanisms other than physical activity contribute to the protective association between sport and reduced suicidality. Social support and integration may account for some of the differences found in suicidality between athletes and nonathletes.” (Taliaferro et al., 2008).

- Similar health results have been reported in other parts of the world as well. A study of school-based extracurricular activities (SBEAs) of Chinese students found that those who were engaged in school-based extracurricular activities had a healthier self-concept, were healthier psychologically, showed more emotional stability, adapted better socially and had better career development skills than other students. The authors commented: “Based on the results of our study, we suggest that it might be a good strategy to encourage students to participate in SBEAs to promote positive personality characteristics, good psychological health and adjustment, a healthy self-concept and good career development skills. Schools should create an environment that encourages positive SBEA experiences.” They further stated: “School administrators should recognize that most SBEAs have a positive impact on personality, the self-concept and career development skills in adolescents. In particular, SBEAs provide the social support and promote the interpersonal interaction skills that are important to adolescents’ and young adults’ development.” (Shiah et al., 2013).

- In a study asking students how they would like to become more physically active, about 75 percent selected doing more physical activity and sports during and after school, and about 50 percent selected team sports. (Corder et al., 2013). This corresponds with other studies showing that school sports are areas where many students can get more physical activity.
- A research investigation found that the dramatic increase in high school 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.” The study authors wrote 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.” (Kaestner & Xu, 2006).

## Post High School Positive Results

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

- A survey of Alberta’s top corporate CEOs and members of the Legislative Assembly revealed that 78.3 percent had participated in interschool sports. Nearly 80 percent indicated that being involved in school sports significantly, extensively or moderately complemented their career development and/or academic pursuits. This same study, commissioned by the Alberta Schools’ Athletic Association, pointed out that a normal participation rate for students in high school sports is around 30 to 35 percent. (Berrett, 2006).
- Examination of National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) data showed that participation in school athletics was correlated with many positive educational achievements, behaviors and aspirations in the end of Grade 12 as well as two years later. The positive outcomes included “school grades, coursework selection, homework, educational and occupational aspirations, self-esteem, university applications, subsequent college enrollment, and eventual educational attainment.” These results were consistent across different subgroups for students (e.g., socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, ability levels, educational aspirations), and were evident when controlling for these factors along with parallel outcome variables in grades 8 and 10. Participation in interscholastic sport “was significantly more beneficial than participation in intramural sport, particularly for more narrowly defined academic outcomes.” (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003).
- A more recent study of the NELS data showed that participation in organized activities during high school is positively associated with post secondary educational attainment, voting, volunteering and occupational factors two and eight years after high school (while controlling for several demographic, achievement, individual and family factors). More positive associations with outcomes were found for those who participated in organized activities two or more years during high school vs. those who participated only one year. More associations between school-sponsored vs. community-sponsored activities were found eight years after high school, in particular these were the occupational outcomes of full-time employment and income. One possible explanation put forth by the authors was “that school-sponsored activities, relative to community-sponsored activities, offer developmental supports and opportunities that are more relevant for later occupational success.” (Gardner et al., 2008).
- High school leaders, according to self-report responses about being in some typical high school leadership positions used in the NELS, are more likely to attend college and complete a four-year degree according to another examination of NELS data. School extracurricular activities provide many of the leadership opportunities for high school students. The author of this study states, “Since the availability of leadership positions depends upon the existence of school activities that provide such leadership opportunities, the evidence presented in this article indicates that decisions regarding financial cut-backs for extracurricular activities should not be taken lightly.” (Rouse, 2012).

- Educationally vulnerable youth, characterized by significant personal and social risks and an absence of assets for achieving educational success, involved in extracurricular activities during high school, particularly sports, were more likely to attend college three years post high school than the average overall college attendance of educationally vulnerable youth. Other high school club involvement also contributed to higher college attendance. The authors wrote: “Our results suggest that when vulnerable youth are exposed to a broad distribution of extracurricular activity settings that afford them constructive, developmentally appropriate opportunities (e.g., to befriend healthy peers, develop competencies and skills, exercise some autonomy, develop long-term mentoring relationships, and explore their commitment to education more generally) then their chances of being educationally resilient are enhanced.” (Peck et al., 2008).
- When seeking a job, many students believe highlighting their involvement in extracurricular activities (ECAs) “could be a way to inform employers about soft currencies they possess (e.g., soft skills, teamwork) in addition to hard currencies (e.g., education credentials), but also about their self (e.g., their personality or their values), that is, the full package of personal capital.” They can also see involvement in ECAs as a way to distinguish themselves from other applicants. The authors also noted that these students “believe that their degree is not sufficient to ensure them a job after graduation” and see “the need for distinction.” The authors also noted that employers see ECA participation positively “because they believe ECAs are signals of individuals’ competencies or personality.” (Roulin & Bangerter, 2013).
- Participation in high school sports appears to be not only associated with being more physically active now, but well into the future. In examining the physical activity and health of a sample of male World War II veterans over 50 years later “the single strongest predictor of later-life physical activity was whether he played a varsity sport in high school, and this was also related to fewer self-reported visits to the doctor.” The authors of the study further stated, “This is relevant at a time when funding for many sports programs is being eliminated and play time is being replaced by screen time.” (Dohle & Wansink, 2013).
- A survey of Iowans who graduated 10 to 20 years prior revealed that those who participated in sports during high school experienced a number of positive benefits or behaviors, including “engaging in vigorous physical activity during the week; reporting very good or excellent emotional health; having higher self-esteem; not experiencing long- or short- term depression; feeling satisfied with progress made toward goals in the domains of family, career and general life; making active use of discretionary time outside the home; volunteering in the community; voting in state and national elections; knowing the names of U.S. Senators from Iowa; assessing news outlets every day; completing a four year degree; having an annual household income greater than \$50,000; not having trouble paying bills.” Those who participated in non-sport extracurricular activities during high school also experienced a number of these benefits and behaviors, including engaging in vigorous physical activity in early adulthood more days per week, higher self-esteem, more active use of discretionary time, more volunteering and completing a four-year degree. (Lutz et al., 2009).

## Developing Better Citizens

Education-based activities teach lessons that lead to better citizens.

- Examination of data from the National Survey of Civic Engagement found that 18- to 25-year-olds who participate in sports activities while in high school were more likely than nonparticipants to be engaged in volunteering, voting, feeling comfortable speaking in public settings and watching news (especially sport news). (Lopez & Moore, 2006).
- A study looking at data from both the National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health found participation in a number of high school extracurricular activities positively related to

early adulthood voting, even after controlling for many self-selection factors, and those not participating in any high school extracurriculars had a lower voting rate. Performing arts participation in high school had one of the biggest effects. The authors noted that many of the extracurricular activities that had an impact, like music, had seemingly no political content or taught specific voting-relevant skills. Instead, their theory for these associations lies mainly in the creation of the habit of participation and engagement as noted in the following statements. “Those who get in the habit of participating and engaging in their high school community tend to continue those behaviors and kind of associations into adulthood. Those that find themselves on the track of uninvolved and detachment tend to remain detached.” (Thomas & McFarland, 2010).

- Other analyses of NELS data examining the effects of participation in high school extracurricular activities on political engagement among young Black adults showed that participation in individual varsity sports and nonsport extracurricular activities were significantly related to political engagement, as measured by registering to vote and voting in a presidential election. (Braddock et al., 2007).

- Adolescent participation in extracurricular activities was associated with a greater likelihood of college attendance, voting in national and regional elections, and volunteering for community and religious groups according to another examination of NELS data. Consistent extracurricular activity participation in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades showed effects greater than participation in just one of these grades. These results held “after accounting for control and individual, parent, peer and school process variables.” (Zaff et al., 2003).

- A study of behaviors in a sample of World War II veterans found that men who were varsity athletes in high school volunteered time more frequently and donated more to charity than those who were not athletes in high school. In addition, those veterans “who participated in varsity-level high school sports an average of 60 years earlier appeared to demonstrate higher levels of leadership and enjoyed higher-status careers.” (Kniffin et al., 2014).

## School and Community Benefits

Not only do individual students benefit from education-based activities, schools and communities benefit when more students are involved in education-based activities.

- An examination of information on North Carolina school characteristics, the numbers and types of extracurricular activities available, participation rates, and academic outcomes found that schools that offer more extracurricular activities



usually have higher extracurricular participation rates and “opportunities to participate are associated with positive academic outcomes for the school, even when controlling for school resources.” (Stearns & Glennie, 2010).

- Schools that have music programs have significantly higher attendance rates (93.3%) and graduation rates (90.2%) compared to schools that do not have music programs (84.9% and 72.9%, respectively) according to a study done in collaboration with a national and an international music association and with Harris Interactive. (MENC & NAMM, 2006).
- A study of Minnesota Department of Education school fiscal and demographic data combined with self-report information from educators found “that increased allocation of a greater proportion of a school’s total annual expenditure (i.e., increased resources) to student activities and athletics programming is associated with a decreased risk of physical assault [PA] for the educators working in” the school. Compared to other resource allocations, such as regular instruction, special education, and district administration, “associations between increased resource allocations to student activities expenditures and decreased risks of PA were the strongest.” The authors suggest that increased funding provides the opportunity for more students to participate in extracurricular activities, which increases exposure to an adult-supervised environment and consistent with other research, are associated “with prosocial behaviors and other positive educational outcomes.” The authors further suggest that “cuts to sports and extracurricular program budgets may have unintended consequences, such as increased violence in the schools.” (Sage et al., 2010.)
- A study using a nationally representative sample of roughly 1,200 public high schools found “that schools with higher proportions of sports participants report significantly fewer serious crimes (i.e., violent crimes) and suspensions occurring on school grounds.” (Veliz & Shakib, 2012).

## Final Thoughts About the Case

As documented here, there are many benefits to participation in education-based activities. Among those studies documenting these benefits, several are from countries other than the United States and Canada, such as Australia, China, Turkey and the United Kingdom. It appears that many of these countries are discovering and studying some of the benefits of education-based activities in addition to considering or actually implementing these activities. Other parts of the world also appear to be recognizing the value of sports, performing arts and other activities in conjunction with academics and within schools. This seems to add further support that schools offering education-based activities can contribute additional benefits to those that can be gained through sports and performing arts activities.

Additionally, although many benefits are cited, several of the studies reviewed for making the Case for High School Activities noted the importance of being intentional about teaching the values, life skills and other characteristics or behaviors it is hoped young people will obtain from participation in education-based activities to assure and strengthen the acquiring of these skills. Although, one or two of the studies above mention student activity participants learning life skills which may not seem to be directly taught, authors of some of the studies caution against assuming too much, particularly around values, life skills and other positive youth development attributes. More will be accomplished for more students if coaches and other activity leaders are intentional and deliberately, directly and diligently teach the values, life skills and positive youth development characteristics they want their student-athletes and activity participants to learn and acquire.

Alcohol and cigarette use serve as notable examples in this regard. Studies are much more consistent in showing that high school students who participate in sports are less likely to smoke cigarettes than those who do not participate in sports. (Castrucci et al., 2004). However, there is less consistency among studies in finding results with alcohol use. In fact, some studies show that students who participate in athletics may be more likely to use alcohol than those who do not participate



in athletics. One study finding a positive relationship between sports participation and alcohol use provided a possible rationale suggesting a sports subculture may exist that not only values academic success, but also “partying,” which included alcohol use. The authors noted that such findings “draw attention to the relative importance that coaches could have in preventing a culture of alcohol use from forming among members of their teams.” (Denault et al., 2009).

Schools are unique settings to provide athletic and performing arts activities, and education-based activities can maximize the benefits that can be gained through sports and performing arts activities. Since students spend much of their time at school, education-based activities may offer easier access to athletic and performing arts activities. This may be particularly true for students who have lesser resources to access, and afford to participate in, such activities. Education-based activities promote more positive attitudes toward school and increase school engagement, which can increase academic motivation and performance. Education-based activities are generally designed to support and work in concert with the academic goals of the schools. Education-based activities staff are trained to not only to teach students athletic or performing arts skills, but skills that help students do well in school and in life. Schools are centers of learning where teaching and learning are intentionally designed and implemented. If communities and societies want to be intentional about what students learn, make the most of athletic and performing arts activity participation as well as help promote academic learning in school, they need education-based activities.





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# NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH OCTOBER 2015

## General Information About Public-service Announcements

A majority of state associations are involved, to some extent, in television and/or radio broadcasts of interscholastic sports. The 1991 Radio and Television Survey indicated sport events were broadcast on radio in at least 46 states and on television in at least 39 states. This measure of high school sports programming also indicates the magnitude of opportunities potentially available for state associations to educate the public about the values and needs of interscholastic programs and encourage sportsmanship.



Several state associations received guaranteed air time for their messages, either instead of or along with, radio and/or television rights fees. Generally, the time is allotted during broadcast of regional and state championship events. A few state associations have negotiated broadcast of their PSAs for other than event-related purposes as a part of their rights fees.

State associations that have been successful in having PSAs broadcast on both radio and television for messages other than upcoming events suggest establishing a relationship with their respective state broadcasters' association. Almost every state broadcasters' association participates in a NCSA (noncommercial sustaining announcement) campaign. However, the degree of involvement in this effort varies among states. For instance, some state broadcasters' associations will help identify specific stations within the state that will help with the actual production of dubbing, as well as distribution of radio PSAs. Also, these broadcasters' associations can provide such information as a directory of all radio stations within each state and appropriate contact persons at the stations.

Finally, many state broadcasters' associations publish a newsletter for distribution to radio and/or television stations. The newsletter can carry notice of upcoming public-service campaigns of nonprofit organizations and encourage participation by radio and television stations. These state broadcasters' associations also can be helpful in documenting the broadcast of PSAs within the state and reporting this information to state associations. In summary, the state broadcasters' association is an important resource for getting our PSAs on the air!

## PUBLIC-SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

What do many of our nation's attorneys, politicians and actors have in common? Besides being articulate and persuasive, they were probably involved in high school forensics. Every society needs leaders. High school forensics certainly does its share to train leaders for tomorrow. High school activities and academics make great curriculum partners. A public-service message from your state high school association.

§ §

Participation in high school cocurricular activities offers a plentiful supply of solid real-life examples of the positive values that we place such an emphasis on later in life. Most of us learned to play by the rules through high school activities. The importance of teamwork often was learned on a football field, or in a band, or during a concert or play. The need to respect authority is a vital part of the interscholastic experience as is the value of commitment. A public-service message from your state high school association.

§ §

Respect for the opponent, spectators, coaches and officials is necessary at all levels of athletics and activity programs. At interscholastic contests, everyone's behavior should be characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Display this respect the next time you attend a high school event. A public-service message from your state high school association.

§ §

Your ticket to an interscholastic athletic event is a privilege, a privilege to watch youngsters learn on the playing field. One of the lessons taught to players is one spectators can follow as well – that of good sportsmanship. Unruly behavior is unacceptable in the classroom, and the athletic field is a classroom. A public-service message from your state high school association.

§ §

An educational environment is critical to the success of high school athletics and activity programs. An important part of that environment is perspective. Without proper perspective, the lessons learned lose their value. The ability to show that a feeling of self-worth is more important than the outcome of any game is a vital lesson. A public-service message from your state high school association.

§ §

Where do high school students learn about competition, free enterprise, morals, values and how to succeed in our society? In uniquely staged high school activity programs. You can be a part of this valuable learning experience by supporting your local high school by your attendance at music, speech and athletic competitions. Join your friends at the main event ... meet them at a high school game! A public-service message from your state high school association.

§ §

Role models are more important than ever in today's society. You can serve as a role model for others the next time you display good sportsmanship at a high school athletic event. Good sports are winners, so the next time you attend a sporting event, remember to be a good sport and act properly. Everyone appreciates the good values portrayed by acts of good sportsmanship. A public-service message from your state high school association.

§ §

Good sportsmanship is learned, practiced and executed. Respect for the opponent, spectators, coaches and officials is necessary at all levels of athletics and activity programs. At interscholastic contests, everyone's behavior should be characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Display good sportsmanship the next time you attend a high school event. A public-service message from your state high school association.

§ §

Ethics, integrity and respect are values important in our daily lives. All of these important values are learned by participation in interscholastic activity programs. Coaches should set a good example for players and fans. Participants should treat opponents with respect. Respect should be extended to officials and judges. Fans should be fans, not fanatics. A public-service message from your state high school association.

§ §