



National Federation of State High School Associations

# National High School Activities Month

**OCTOBER  
2019**

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 12 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."*

– **Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff**

Executive Director

National Federation of State High School Associations





National Federation of State High School Associations

# National High School Activities Month

## OCTOBER 2019

National Sportsmanship, Fan Appreciation and Public-Address Announcers Week	October 1-5
National Performing Arts Activities Week	October 6-12
National Coaches, Advisors, Officials, Sponsors Week	October 13-19
National Community Service/Youth Awareness Week	October 20-26



**National Federation of State High School Associations**  
PO Box 690 | Indianapolis, IN 46206  
Phone: 317-972-6900 | Fax: 317.822.5700 | [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)



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

**OCTOBER 1-5, 2019**

**NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH**



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# National Performing Arts Activities Week

**OCTOBER 6-12, 2019**  
**NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH**



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# **National Coaches, Advisors, Officials, Sponsors Week**

**OCTOBER 13-19, 2019**  
**NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH**



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# National Community Service/Youth Awareness Week

**OCTOBER 20-26, 2019**  
**NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH**



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**OCTOBER 1-5, 2019**

## **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. Use social media as a strategy to promote your activities and garner community and school support.

### **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 6-12, 2019**

## **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 "You Got Talent" style 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
- ✓ Sponsor a "Mystery Dinner" where diners have a role in the mystery-themed play during dinner



**OCTOBER 13-19, 2019**

### **National Coaches, Advisors, Officials, Sponsors 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, coaches, advisors and supporters.



**OCTOBER 20-26, 2019**

### **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

# WAYS TO CELEBRATE 2019 HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES MONTH

## OCTOBER 1-5

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

- Make up positive cheers, chants or songs
- Print bookmarks with sportsmanship ideas; ask library to slip them into all books
- Give incentives to faculty, staff and students "caught" being a sport
- Make posters for contest
- Use table tents in cafeteria, reading lounges or library for sportsmanship messages
- Welcome visiting teams with announcement over PA system
- Provide Booster Club members coupon for free pop and popcorn
- Present free program to fans (based on school colors or other criteria)
- Give school shirt to most avid fans (student and adult)
- Offer tailgate party with refreshments
- Introduce parents of players and cheerleaders during pregame ceremony
- Ask media to feature fan with longest attendance record at high school event

## OCTOBER 6-12

### National Performing Arts Activities Week

- Recognize performing arts participants at pep rally
- Invite middle school band students to perform with high school band at football game
- Give program at elementary school or judge "You Got Talent" program
- Do feature story in campus newspaper
- Invite local actors or musicians for performance with students
- Organize youth talent program for community
- Present drama skit during lunch
- Have former band members return to play with current band
- Sponsor "Mystery Dinner" (a dinner where guests have a role in the mystery-themed play)

## OCTOBER 13-19

### National Coaches, Advisors, Officials, Sponsors Week

- Make up positive cheers, chants or songs
- Host breakfast for all sponsors and coaches
- Honor different coaches and advisors each hour of the day
- Play "Name that Coach" clue game
- Recognize coaches, sponsors and their families during events
- Let "fan of the week" sit on bench with team
- Host breakfast for officials who help in sports and performing arts
- Class competition of "You Make the Call;" feature questions on sports rules
- Have round-table discussion with students, officials and parents
- Post signs thanking officials
- Donate sportsmanship-related book or video to library on behalf of officials
- Send certificates of recognition and appreciation letters to officials, coaches, advisors and supporters

## OCTOBER 20-26

### National Community Service/Youth Awareness Week

- Offer free admission to event to representatives of program advertisers
- Hold open house; invite school board members, alumni, businesses and media to attend
- Do radio or television public-service announcements with activities participants
- Recognize business partners and school board members in programs
- Offer school souvenirs at auction for funding community service project
- Set aside a portion of practice time to discuss healthy lifestyle issues
- Hold workshops on health issues; recognize school nurse, athletic trainer, team doctor
- Create and display bulletin boards and posters dealing with healthy lifestyle issues
- Offer pregame meal with nutritional analysis
- Offer students opportunity to "shadow" health professionals
- Have students prepare directory of community agencies



**OCTOBER 2019**

## **National High School Activities Month**

To Publicize or Celebrate Throughout the Month:

- ✓ Use social media to promote activities at your school
- ✓ 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



National Federation of State High School Associations

# What High School Activities Mean to Me...

*Character Is What You  
Are When No One is Looking*

We would like to thank the members of the NFHS Student Services Committee for securing the following testimonials.

## **TESTIMONIALS**

**Lisa Kurns**

**Student, Silverton (Oregon) High School**

Athletic and arts participation is not for everyone, but my experience with it has been very beneficial for me and the people around me. I am on my high school's dance team as well as the top choir ensemble Concert Choir and I have had the opportunity to be a leader: with and without a title. I have learned how to prioritize, be committed, and developed my confidence through the sport. I am one of our team captains this year and it has forced me to be thoughtful and considerate of all members. I help communicate with the coaches and directors and I am a trustworthy source of information for the younger, more inexperienced people. I have gained a strong work ethic and discipline from the tight schedule that comes with the sport. Also, as a part of being on a team I have to communicate and cooperate with my peers. When I have an issue or was in a bad mood, I have learned to speak up and share my concerns rather than holding it back and creating tension. Whenever there is a conflict, I have used the opportunities I have within athletics and the arts to practice my problem-solving skills. This ability to communicate and work with others has allowed me to be more patient and overall more considerate of others.



**Cole Haole-Valenzuela**  
**Teacher, Silverton (Oregon) High School**

I have had the privilege of being the choir director at Silverton High School for 2½ years. Throughout my entire life I have had a passion for the arts. While the arts have been a way to express myself and explore my creativity, the arts have also taught me how to persevere, empathize, and learn to work with others. Within my classroom I tell my students that while I love music, music is not all that we do. We learn work ethic, respect, and professionalism through music. We develop life skills through the arts in order for us to learn how to co-exist with others as we grow in our education and careers. Through the arts, students and lifelong learners have the opportunity to explore different cultures and their own creativity while building life skills. We learn what it means to be human as well as help us understand where we fit within a community and society.



**Jeremy Schlitz**  
**Athletic Director, Madison (Wisconsin) Memorial High School**

The value of athletic participation is not as easily quantifiable as the final score at the end of the contest. It has far reaching implications well beyond sport. Athletics play an integral role in community building and identity of schools and support the development of commitment, reliability, honesty, integrity, accountability, and perseverance in student athletes. Through participation in education-based athletics programs, students strive to become better students, athletes, leaders, and citizens.

As members of a school team, student-athletes are given the experiences and tools to learn to advocate for themselves, own their own experience, respond to success and failure through sport. These skills are the foundation for cultivating future leaders in the communities they participated in and beyond. We often see high school athletes referred to as role models as they have younger students looking up to them, learning sport skills from them, modeling behaviors for them. This is mutually beneficial as the older athletes learn the responsibility of being a role model and the value of giving back to the foundation, recognition, and opportunity that they were provided through sport.



**Kevin Giddens**  
**Associate Director, Georgia High School Association**

Coming from a rural community in Georgia, I grew up on a farm where hard work was the norm. My father guided me into football and baseball. Because of my body type, I was more suited for football and gravitated in that direction for the rest of my life. I have played (high school and college), coached, or administrated football my entire career and even now, I oversee aspects of the sport from a state association level. It is and has been literally my life. Between the hard work of farm life and football life, I have forged several lifetime mentalities that guide me today throughout my personal and professional lives.

First and foremost, I am guided by my faith in Jesus Christ. He, along with my dad, set the example I strive to live by daily. As with everyone else, I fall short every day of the perfect example, but with guidance from the bible, love and support from my family, and using the lessons I have learned from participating in the team sport of football, I feel like I have a very blessed life. Life, just like football,



even if you love it with all your heart, is tough sometimes. As in the old adage, football was good for me, not that I was good for football.

Everything we experience in life's daily encounters has already been addressed by my football experiences. Pick one!! Through football we learn how to play with pain, be humble, grind it out, problem-solving, work within a team, respect, compassion, love, how to be a leader, compete, get up when you've been knocked down, and I could go on. We also learned that life is not fair. (Even though I learned that years ago when I was told: "life is not fair, a fair is where you go to ride rides and eat cotton candy, it has nothing to do with life." Both of my adult children have been able to quote that since they were babies.) But seriously, every aspect of my adult life has been preceded by my experiences from going through all aspects of being a football player. Not to mention the mentors (coaches) who have influenced my life over the years.

I am not one to toot my own horn, so if I am remotely considered a successful professional person, it is because I have learned from the some of the best people God let walk this earth. My parents, my wife, my coaches, my administrative leaders, and my coworkers have all shaped me into the person I am today. I am thankful for the ones that took me under their wing to positively influence me. As with everybody, I have my shortcomings that will always get in the way, just like my lack of athletic ability got in the way of me being a great football player. Football taught me that despite my shortcomings, I can continue to work hard and overcome anything.

If we had a few minutes to talk face to face, you would be able to hear all of the "footballisms" in my general conversation. I have been marred for life in a very good way and would not have wanted my journey through life to have been down any other pathway. Faith, Family, and Football, I am the luckiest guy on earth.



## **MJ Wagenson**

### **Teacher, Rochester (Minnesota) Community and Technical College High School Official – Basketball, Softball, Football**

Sport involvement teaches student-athletes work ethic. Student-athletes learn that any outcome they desire, whether it's trying to hit an ace, a rise ball, a clay pigeon, shoot a free throw or a slap shot, the amount of practice, preparation, evaluation and repetition for accomplishment is grueling to maintain consistency, and only comes with time and commitment.

Sport involvement teaches that success requires repetition, concentration and adjustment to be accurate consistently. These hard skills expose students to the concept that quality work is the only way to earn consistency, while on the flip side, the personal contribution and awareness that all team members must work together toward a common outcome, requires the application of certain soft skills too. As we know, we are only as strong as our weakest link, yet to strengthen the chain, a team member might require compassion, understanding, support and empathy from their teammates. Setting and working toward common goals together helps students recognize other's needs. Students deal with many situations in their personal lives and knowing that someone has their back, is empowering. Sports teach much more than physical skills, they teach confidence, coping, cooperation, empathy, ethics, and problem-solving skills, which prepare our student-athletes to become caring, respectful and productive citizens.



## **Dwayne Weirich**

### **Director of Athletics, Round Rock (Texas) Independent School District**

The importance of athletics and other extracurricular activities cannot be overlooked. As an athlete or public service educator, I have been involved in extracurricular activities for 40 years. My father passed away when I was 15 years old and I can never forget the role that coaches had in mentoring me during that time. Their kind words and encouragement, willingness to help others, and role modeling all lead me to a career in athletics I still enjoy to this day. The best coaches work hard at their craft, are excellent teachers in the classroom and the playing field, teach sportsmanship and class, teach how to be humble winners and gracious in loss, inspire humans to care about each other and work together no matter the color of their skin, their economic status, or anything else society often uses to point out differences. Extra-curricular activities are the place where young people are exposed to and learn characteristics and traits, not found in classroom curriculums, but have proven to be vital to the development of outstanding young adults. I am proud to be associated with the ability to have that impact.



## **Marshall Cho**

### **Boys Basketball Coach, Lake Oswego (Oregon) High School**

"Next Play" is a mindset that we have embraced as a program the past three seasons. When we make a mistake in a game, we don't allow that mistake to linger and affect the task we have ahead of us. This attitude has served us well over the years, but I have recently been challenged to take a step forward from that to ask our coaching staff to ask the players, "What's next?". When we say "Next Play" as coaches, it is often in response to a negative situation. But as our program finds more success on and off the court, I've realized that I can still improve significantly as a leader of young men in celebrating the success our guys have. "What's next" is a response to when a player makes a great play, serves another in the classroom and cafeteria, finds recognition through a volunteer activity away from the court. This approach has renewed my purpose to catch our guys in the act of doing good. Our young people face so many distractions and discouragements in today's world, and as their coach, I am reminded daily of our responsibility to encourage them as we push them to be to the best they are capable of being.



## **Wayne Wheeler**

### **Parent/Coach, Houston, Texas**

As a coach for more than 15 years, I'm often faced with challenges of how to teach, motivate, and lead the team. You learn early on that not all of your kids respond to the same things the same way. My mentor coach would say that "if you treat them all the same, then you're probably doing a disservice to someone." It took a while for me to understand the essence of that statement, but I came to know that you have to teach and coach each individual student-athlete as an individual. You can have team-oriented goals in mind, but the road map to get to that ultimate goal may be different for the individual members. My eldest daughter is a senior in high school. She's been on her school's cheer squad for four years and voted as a captain for the last three. In developing my philosophy for coaching, I always consider my daughter and how I want her to be treated by her coaches. I want them to see her unique-



ness and all that she brings to the team, but I also want them to understand how she learns and what motivates her. I want them to see the individual and how she fits the team. So, when I approach the task of teaching, motivating, and leading my team, I begin with the most important element of the team: the individual. I try to take a sincere interest in each and every student-athlete. I get to know them. In doing so, you figure out what works for each kid. I've learned that to grow my team, I have to grow the individual student-athlete. After all, it's what I want for my daughter.



### **Scott Stemple**

#### **District Director of Athletics, Mason City (Ohio) Schools**

As a father of two daughters who were both student-athletes, as well as being a director of athletics, I strongly believe interscholastic athletic activities are an integral part of a school's educational program. A variety of experiences outside of the normal school curriculum should be provided as opportunity to aid in a student's mental, physical, social, and emotional development. I believe the development of favorable habits, attitude and character development will better prepare the student for adult life in a democratic society. Promoting opportunities and participation in interscholastic athletics at all levels instills pride, reinforces a sound value structure, and enhances the individual's self-image as well as the image of the school district and community. Our school district's goal is to have 100% of our students involved in some form of after school activity. As of today, 75% of our students are active in some form of school sponsored activity beyond the classroom.

We all know that it is unrealistic to think that every student that participates in interscholastic activities is going to walk away with all of the intangibles that I have mentioned; however, I do believe that the majority is impacted. "The glass is always half full," which is why all of us (teachers, coaches, administrators) in connection with our parents and community members should always be continually striving to show the true educational purpose of interscholastic athletics and the important role they play within our schools. With this, I am a proponent of ongoing character/leadership education, with a strong emphasis on service to others, with the promotion of sportsmanship within all of our sport activities. Again, all this in effort to enhance and promote the mind, body and spirit of our students today and tomorrow.



### **Nicole Huston**

#### **Field Hockey Coach, Whitney Point (New York) Central School District**

Teaching our student-athletes what teamwork is and how individual skill plays a role in making our program flourish is always a goal. Each student is an asset to our team. Helping them find their role and be able to develop that role on the team is important. Their individual skills help the team but don't define our team. The student-athletes understand that the talents they bring build a stronger cohesion with our team.

Skills and talents on the field are only part of what we teach. Communication and problem solving are characteristics I look for in my student-athletes. Do they know how to have a conversation with a group? Can they talk about concerns? How can they solve a problem and is there more than one solution? Looking for creativity, out of the box thinking, strategies and comprehension are all part of what



we do together. We work on a specific drill or strategy until we get it right. Then, we take it apart and work on it in a completely different way and see if we can obtain the desired result.

Most careers require teamwork, problem solving, individual work and communication. Teaching student-athletes how to bring all of these characteristics on the field hockey field has played an important part in our success. More importantly, the lessons the student-athletes learn during their high school careers carry on with them into college and the workforce. Hearing from my former student-athletes on how their experience in my program has helped them succeed in their career is a blessing.



### **Sherri Urchyshyn**

#### **Parent, Frank Maddock High School, Drayton Valley, Alberta, Canada**

Having grown up in an athletic family in a small town but having next to no athletic skills of my own, I'm not sure I ever fully grasped how playing on a team could positively affect so many aspects of one's life, that is, until I had my son.

My son plays sports and in general, he plays them very well. I've had the pleasure of watching his confidence grow exponentially thanks to strong coaching and leadership throughout junior and senior high. I have watched him over the years grow from an unsure young boy to a confident and strong young man as he continued to challenge himself to be the best he can be. Watching him shine when his team does well makes my heart warm; but it is when his team is struggling and I have been witness to the humility and sportsmanship that sports have taught him that I am most proud of who my son has become through his experiences.

While playing in an out-of-town volleyball tournament, our team lost in the gold medal game. Both teams played hard and the result was an emotionally charged close finish. I was preparing myself for a disappointed and sad team coming off the court or to watch boastful pride from the other team but, in fact, I saw the opposite! Both teams not only congratulated each other with fist bumps and high fives, but the winning team even asked for a picture with our team. After all was said and done, they walked away with gold medals hanging from their necks and we, with silver, but the smiles were all the same! I maintain that was one of the finest moments I've ever witnessed in sport and the lessons my son learned about how to win and lose with dignity and about how sports can bring people together no matter what the outcome will stay with him - and me - forever.

Playing as part of a team has given him the opportunity to learn commitment and loyalty in a way I never understood. The lessons he has learned through the comradery of his teammates and the dedication they all show to each other on and off the court has helped shape him into a young man that I know will look outside of himself and impact the world in a positive way as he moves beyond high school.



### **Matthew Weltmann**

#### **Student-Athlete, Half Hollow Hills (New York) High School**

School athletics have provided me with an important outlet. As my arms and legs operate in sync to propel me off the starting block and my body glides through the serenity beneath the surface of the natatorium pool, all my worries, frets, and stresses disappear. Studying all disciplines and sometimes working only towards far-off academic and career goals, I have fallen in love with swim's unmistakably clear objective: finish fast.

Strolling through the hall accompanied by men decked out in uniforms of black and red, ready to represent our school and leave our hearts on the soccer field, I am filled with pride and self-worth, the emotions of achievement and fulfillment. Beside our bench and tip-toeing near the sideline, I become more than a single high school student: I become a manifestation of family and community, roaring out instructions and encouragement to elucidate what could be a game-winning result. Guiding my team and serving as captain, athletics have helped me gain proficiency in management and organization by uniting disparate individuals, all with different playing styles and techniques, into one resolute, inviolable squad.

Stepping onto the field or the starting block, waiting for the whistle to blow, I have the responsibility to exert myself to the farthest extent possible. My obligation to my team and community is absolute. Win or lose, my attitude, demeanor, and positive approach represent the legacy I want to leave.



### **Gwen Peterson**

#### **Manager of the Division of Recreation Services, Department of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, Saint Paul, Minnesota**

As a previous high school student-athlete, a mother and grandmother of a high school student-athlete, I have a keen insight into the importance and value of athletics in the life of a high school student. It was because of Title IX that I was afforded the opportunity to discover and develop my athletic ability through competition. Participation in high school athletics not only taught me teamwork, leadership, empathy, competition, communication and negotiation skills, but it served as a platform for me to go on to become an athletic official, coach and creator of a nonprofit focused on girls athletics.

Needless to say, all of those experiences played a role in my ascension to my current position with the City of Saint Paul. I use the skills I learned from athletics, officiating, and coaching daily. Today, I am responsible for providing recreation athletic opportunities to youth and adults across the City of Saint Paul on a daily basis. Serving as a role model to young girls in these capacities never escaped me. I know young females are watching and aspiring. Athletics can shape them into the people they are meant to be. For those who choose to participate, it is so much more than just a game, and the students become so much more than just athletes.



National Federation of State High School Associations

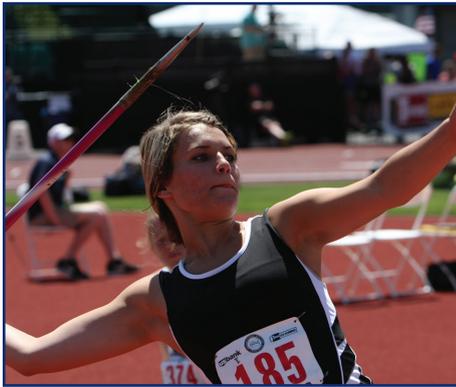
# The Case for High School Activities



## 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 Co-curricular Endeavors Through Many Avenues, Including:

- **Rules-writing Process** – The NFHS produces more than eight million copies of publications and support materials annually for 15 rules books covering 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. TM 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 Opportunities

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 cutbacks 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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**OCTOBER 2019**

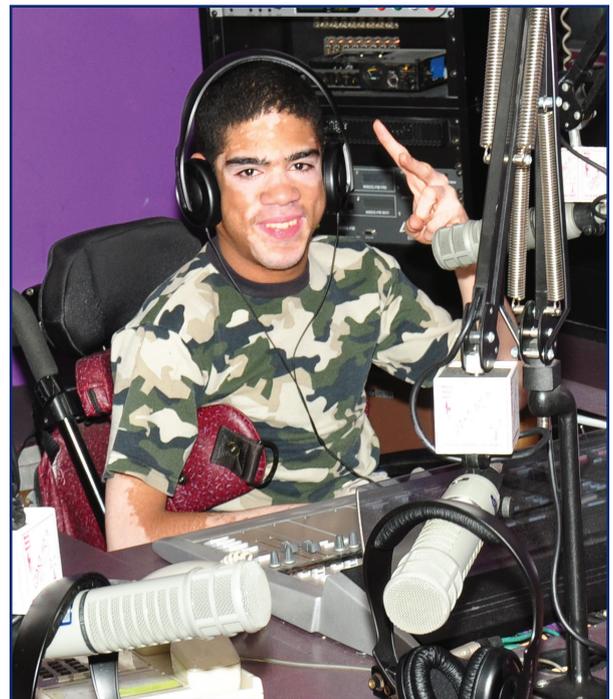
## **General Information About Public-Service Announcements**

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 co-curricular 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.