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THE EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

by

Elizabeth G. Rees

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

REGIS UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

Various studies show that participation in extracurricular activities lead to success both academically and professionally. However, the general public has limited access to this research, and therefore many students are not benefiting from these programs. In this paper, the author reviews the published research of how participation in extracurricular activities affects academic success. She then uses this research to develop a promotional campaign that school administrators may use to educate parents, students, and teachers of the benefits of extracurricular activity participation. The projects are oriented toward presentations at school events and online access to school administrators and parents.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, students participate in extracurricular activities on a daily basis (Holland & Andre, 1987). To most, these activities are natural components of growing up and are seldom seen as detrimental in nature. However, some people feel that participation in extracurricular activities may draw attention away from academic endeavors and promote delinquent behaviors. If this is so, why do these programs and activities remain a consistent component of adolescents' lives? Does participation in extracurricular activities allow a student to develop in a positive or negative manner? This author examined these questions and proposed suggestions on how extracurricular activities can best be incorporated into students' lives.

Statement of the Problem

A debate exists in the educational community about the effects of student participation in extracurricular activities on educational achievement. One position is that participation leads to higher grades and increased likelihood of postsecondary education. Another position is that participation in these types of activities reduces the amount of time a student can devote to schoolwork and results in lower grades and fewer opportunities for college. The research in this area is conflicting. Kirch (2002) focused on one of several different extracurricular activities, which resulted in an incomplete overall assessment. One must sift through many research studies in order to determine

the benefit or detriment of extracurricular activities on educational performance.

Therefore, there is a need identify the benefits and detriments of extracurricular activity participation. This author examines both sides of the argument in this project.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project was to explore the total effects of participation in extracurricular activities at the high school level. The author's position is that participation in extracurricular activities, when kept at an appropriate level, increases the educational success of high school students. She believes that such participation is most beneficial for high risk youth. Through a review of the literature, the author developed a presentation that educates parents and teachers about the benefits of extracurricular activity participation. In addition, the author presented this material to the staff of the Colorado High School Athletics Association, and developed a brochure that hopefully can be used in secondary schools across the state.

Chapter Summary

The confusion about whether student participation in extracurricular activities increases or decreases academic achievement is due to the conflicting research available to the public. It would appear that participation in these types of activities during high school would be beneficial to an adolescent, but a thorough review of the available research needs to be conducted. It is the author's suggestion that extracurricular activity participation increases academic achievement for all students, but is specifically beneficial to high risk students. After review of the literature, the author developed a

presentation and downloadable pamphlet that can be used by secondary school staffs across Colorado in order to promote students' participation in extracurricular activity.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a growing interest in the effects of extracurricular activities on academic performance and social behaviors. The available research spans both sides of the issues; some researchers promote the benefits of participation and others emphasize the drawbacks. Each side claims that the effects of extracurricular participation are the results of the participation, itself, but the exact reasons for these effects are confusing (Holland & Andre, 1987). Also, there are few resources available that address both the positive and negative effects of participation in extracurricular activities in one paper. The author of this project attempts to address both sides of the argument in order to gain a deeper perspective of the effects of extracurricular activity participation among high school students. The purpose of the project was to educate staff members, parents, and students of secondary schools about the effects of participation in extracurricular activities.

History of Extracurricular Activities

Participation in school-based extracurricular activities has long been a fundamental part of adolescence (Larson & Verma, 1999, as cited in Eccles, Barber, & Hunt, 2003). Some of these activities are in the form of athletics, band and orchestra, social clubs, academic clubs, music and theater, and religious organizations. Often, parents encourage participation in such activities so that their children will be more competitive applicants to quality colleges and universities. However, there is

debate among members of the research community as to the academic benefits of extracurricular activity participation. In regard to the effects of participation, Holland and Andre (1987) found that participation facilitates both academic and nonacademic goals in that “participation may lead adolescents to acquire new skills (organizational, planning, time-management, etc.), to develop or strengthen particular attitudes (discipline, motivational), or to receive social rewards that influence personality characteristics” (p. 447). Although some drawbacks of extracurricular involvement have been identified, the social and academic benefits of such participation cannot be overlooked.

Benefits of Extracurricular Activity Participation

Numerous researchers (Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005; Eccles et al., 2003; Herbert & Reis, 1999; Holland & Andre, 1987; Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003; Silliker & Quirk, 1997; Tavani & Losh, 2003) have established the benefits of extracurricular activity participation on academic performance and the decrease of delinquent behaviors during adolescence. Darling et al. stated that “extracurricular activities have been touted by their proponents as enabling youth to socialize with peers and adults, set and achieve goals, compete fairly, recover from defeat, and resolve disputes peaceably” (p. 52). Also, Mahoney (2000, as cited in Eccles et al.) found that participation in voluntary, school-based, extracurricular activities increased students’ participation and achievement in school. According to Mahoney, participation in extracurricular activity facilitated “the acquisition of interpersonal skills and positive social norms, membership in prosocial peer groups, and stronger emotional and social connections to one’s school” (p. 868). Furthermore, Eccles et al. found that constructive,

organized activities are a good use of adolescents' time. These extracurricular activities provide opportunities for adolescents: (a) to acquire and practice social, physical, and intellectual skills; (b) to contribute to one's community and develop a sense of agency; (c) to belong to a recognized social group that is valued within the community; (d) to establish social networks of peers and adults that can help in crisis situations; and (e) to experience and deal with the challenges of normal adolescent life (Eccles et al.; McNeal, 1999).

In addition to the social benefits of extracurricular activity participation, also, researchers (Darling et al., 2005; Eccles et al., 2003; Sillicker & Quirk, 1997) have focused on the educational benefits. Eccles et al. and McNeal (1998) linked extracurricular activity participation to: (a) higher educational achievement, (b) increased job quality later in life, (c) increased participation in politics, (d) ongoing engagement in volunteer activities, and (e) better mental health in adulthood. In addition, participation in extracurricular activities leads to positive student outcomes, such as: (a) increased self-concept, (b) higher grade point average, (c) better school engagement, (d) better school attendance, and (e) higher educational and career aspirations (Elder & Conger, 2000; March & Kleitman; 2002, Youniss, McLellan; & Yates, 1999; all cited in Eccles et al.; Marsh, 1992; McNeal; Otto & Awin, 1977; Picou, 1978; Spady, 1980; Jable, 1986; Laughlin, 1978; all cited in Sillicker & Quirk,). Modi, Konstantopulos, and Hedges (1998, as cited in Holloway, 1999/2000) found that gifted students spent their time away from school participating in constructive activities, such as extracurricular participation. Similarly, Darling et al. stated that "extracurricular activities are seen as a way of offering academically gifted students a way of excelling within the school

environment, a way for academically challenged students to achieve within the school setting, and as a way of creating a sense of shared community within schools” (p. 52).

Sports Participation

Many members of the general public identify athletics as the more recognizable form of extracurricular participation, and this proves to be the most popular among adolescents. In fact, adolescents are more likely to participate in school-based sports than in another types of extracurricular activity (Eccles et al., 2003; Cusick, 1973, Morgan & Alwin, 1980, all cited in McNeal, 1999). Shaw, Kleiber, and Caldwell (1995, as cited in Darling et al., 2005) explained that sports are beneficial to adolescents because participation provides them with a physical and mental challenge as well as a sense of identification with a specific social group. Reinberg (1969, as cited in Eccles et al.) suggested that the positive effects of sports participation require five mediators. First, adolescents must associate with academically oriented peers. Second, adolescents must be exposed to academic values. Third, participation in the sports must enhance the adolescents’ self-esteem. Fourth, sports participation must give a high sense of personal efficacy. Finally, the adult supervisors of the sports must give the adolescent superior career guidance and encouragement. All in all, participation in school-based sports programs seems to develop positive academic behaviors among students. March and Kleitman (2003, as cited in Eccles et al.) explained that analysis of the data set from the National Education Longitudinal Study (2002) provided evidence that athletic participation was related to positive academic indicators, including: (a) higher educational aspirations, (b) increased time spent on homework, and (c) a higher level of post secondary education. Also, Reberg and Schafer (1968, as cited in Holland &

Andres, 1987) found that more male high school athletes had plans to attend college in comparison to nonathletes.

Leisure

Darling et al. (2005) reported that participation in school-based extracurricular activities provides highly structured leisure environments for adolescents. Leisure is defined as a “context in which adolescents are encouraged to manage their own experiences by exerting personal control over their environments and acting autonomously” (p. 51). Mahoney and Cairns (1997, as cited in Holloway, 2002) found that a wider choice of extracurricular activities had the strongest effects, because students were more likely to find something that met their needs and interests. Students form their own identities through leisure environments because they can choose the activities in which they are involved, and what they do within a given setting. Furthermore, extracurricular activities provide a medium for adolescents to experiment with their identities and choices within a controlled environment that is sanctioned by adults (Darling et al.).

Common Features for Assessment

Assessment of the effects of extracurricular activity participation proves simple due to the common features shared among different activities. First, participation in extracurricular activities is not required for graduation (Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003). This enables researchers to compare participants vs. nonparticipants in an unbiased manner. Also, all extracurricular activities are structured. Adults lead these activities, and students must meet with these adults regularly in a context specific to that activity. Due to this, the effects of adult influence, other than teachers and parents, can

be assessed. Finally, students must put forth effort in order to be successful in extracurricular activities. This additional effort can provide a driving force for students to excel in the classroom.

Academic Achievement

Researchers (Herbert & Reis, 1999; Kirch, 2002; Mahoney et al., 2003; McNeal, 1998; Nettles, Mucherah, & Jones, 2000) have suggested that students, who participate in extracurricular activities, are more successful in several academic aspects of their lives. According to Herbert and Reis, “these extracurricular activities and programs appeared to significantly impact these young people, for they were consistently cited as being extremely influential in the development of the students’ ability to excel academically” (p. 448). Gerber (1997, as cited in Holloway, 1999/2000) found that participation in school-based extracurricular activities had a stronger effect on academic achievement than other activities outside of school. The ability to excel at the secondary level paves the way for students to continue to experience success in college, in their professional lives, and within their social circles.

College Attendance

Mahoney et al. (2003) found that college attendance was “unusually common for students who were consistently involved in extracurricular activities” (p. 13). The exact reasons behind this are unknown, but these researchers suggested that the iterative process may have something to do with it. The iterative process involves setting new and challenging goals for the future as current skills increase (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, as cited in Mahoney et al.). Initially, students set more challenging goals within the activity setting. However, these goals may eventually spill over to the academic area as the

students become more successful in their extracurricular activities. As such, many students, who participate in extracurricular activities, set ambitious goals for their future, including plans for postsecondary school education (Mahoney et al.). Often, students who experience success in high school visualize continued success in college. This positive view of themselves helps them to initiate and follow through on the college application process.

Student success in extracurricular activities is not the only driving force for college attendance. Students must demonstrate consistence in their participation in order for the increased success in school to be notable. Mahoney et al. (2003) explained that students, who consistently participate in extracurricular activities during early and middle adolescence, identify more strongly with educational success. This was especially true for students who possessed low competence. Furthermore, the Nettles et al. (2000) findings supported the suggestion that consistency in extracurricular activity participation increased academic performance and postsecondary success. These researchers found that students, who participated in structured and religious activities during their sophomore year of high school: (a) felt more optimistic about their life chances, (b) participated in more extracurricular activities, and (c) were more prepared for class during their senior year. This success was not seen in students who participated in extracurricular activities for only 1 year during their secondary education experience.

Recently, there has been recognition for programs that link the benefits of extracurricular activity participation to high achievement (Nettles et al., 2000). Staff of the American Sport Institute (in press, as cited in Nettles et al.) developed one of these programs titled Promoting Achievement in School through Sport (PASS). This is a year

long program, which is based upon the principles learned through extracurricular activity participation and encourages academic and social achievement. The developers of PASS suggested that the principles that encourage students to excel in sports can support students to excel in school. To achieve this, the PASS faculty combine the coaching techniques of athletic instructions with the curriculum from language arts, philosophy, psychology, physical education, and social studies. According to Kirch (2002), four student goals make up the PASS curriculum: “1) improve academic performance; 2) develop character, confidence, and self-management skills; 3) improve relationships with peers, teachers, and other adults; and 4) develop skills in critical thinking, planning, problem solving, time management, and working in teams” (§ 9).

Kirch (2002) and Nettles et al. (2000) analyzed this program in order to determine its effectiveness on academic performance. The researchers’ findings indicated that PASS students excelled academically compared to their nonPASS counterparts; also, they possessed higher levels of motivation. According to Nettles et al., this difference was attributed to the opportunities to practice social and academic skills learned in school during extracurricular activity participation.

Social Support

Another factor that contributes to academic achievement is the social support that students receive through their participation in extracurricular activities. Eccles et al. (2003) and Herbert and Reis (1999) indicated that students develop positive peer associations through extracurricular activity participation and identify themselves as part of a group. Numerous students in extracurricular activity peer groups possess aspirations for postsecondary education; therefore, they do well academically. This peer association

motivates the desire for academic success among students more than peer association of nonparticipants (Eccles et al.). Herbert and Reis found that a network of achieving peers proved absolutely essential to the achievement of most extracurricular activity participants, and that students were aware of its existence and influence on their success. Mahoney (2000) reported that students, who participate in extracurricular activities with their peer social network, are less likely to participate in antisocial behaviors. Clearly, when their peers validate students' efforts in class and in their activities, it encourages them to continue to excel in both areas.

In addition to peer support, adult support is important for continued academic success. According to Herbert and Reis (1999), "successful students received support and encouragement from each other and from supporting adults including teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, and mentors" (p. 442). Students must have opportunities for interaction with nonparental adults. This type of interaction builds students' sense of optimism, which contributes to confidence in their ability to excel academically. Also, Jordan and Nettles (1999, as cited in Holloway, 2002) found that when students, who participated in structured activities, were supervised by positive adult role models, they made personal investments in their academic success. Student participation in extracurricular activities allows for this type of adult interaction (Nettles et al., 2000). Participation in school-based extracurricular activities is particularly important because it binds students to the adult oriented values of the school. Adults, who sponsor and coach these activities, promote: (a) the importance of high academic performance, (b) academic aspirations, and (c) academic achievement to the participating students (Darling et al., 2005). Furthermore, students acknowledge that this adult interaction and influence is

vital to their academic success (Herbert & Reis). In addition to the academic motivation that these situations promote, also, students who interact with adults in extracurricular activities experience fewer antisocial behaviors and less depression (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; Youniss, Yates, & Su, 1997; Mahoney, Schweder, & Stattin, 2001; all cited in Mahoney et al., 2003). All in all, these findings support the idea that students' extracurricular activity participation that involves supportive student/adult relationships is beneficial (Nettles et al.).

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem contributes to students' success in school, whether or not they continue with postsecondary education (Tavani & Losh, 2003). A student's self-perception of competence can affect his or her self-concept in either a positive or negative manner. This level of self-concept is a concern when comparing how a student performs academically (House, 1997; as cited in Tavani & Losh). According to Coleman (1961, as cited in Holland & Andre, 1997), standards of peer acceptance are established during the adolescent years, and participation in peer value activities can increase peer approval and students' self-esteem. Also, Holland and Andre stated, "through the pattern of extracurricular activities schools allow or disallow, facilitate or inhibit, and tie the pattern of tangible and intangible rewards provided for participation in activities, schools influence personality development and socialization" (p. 437). Participation in activities that increase students' perception of competence will have a positive effect on self-concept and, as a result, students will perform at a higher academic level (Crain et al, 1982; Grabe, 1981; Phillip, 1969; Schendel, 1968; all cited in Holland & Andre). According to Eccles et al. (2003), activities that one associates with a high attainment

value, or “the value of an activity to demonstrate to oneself and to others that one is the kind of person one most hopes to be” (p. 877), are the most beneficial in the increase of self-esteem.

Internal Characteristics

Also, the internal characteristics that a student possesses contribute to how successful he or she will be in school (Tavani & Losh, 2003). The amount of motivation or self-confidence that a student holds influences the academic success that the student will experience during his or her high school career (Tavani & Losh). Increased energy and time invested in a goal results in higher levels of performance. Participation in school activities, both academic and extracurricular, contribute to levels of motivation and self-confidence. How students perceive an activity as support for their goals is an important factor of the effect on self-esteem. Inasmuch, a student will assign an attainment value to each proposed activity and decide how it will affect future goals. Eccles et al. (2003) defined attainment value as “the value of an activity to demonstrate to oneself and to others that one is the kind of person one most hopes to be” (p. 877). Activities that allow students to experience success and increase their levels of self-confidence are the most beneficial in encouraging students to set high goals.

Activities that are associated with a high attainment value contribute to increased levels of perceived self-confidence. Tavani and Losh (2003) found that students, who perceived themselves as having high levels of self-confidence, set more challenging expectations for themselves. Frequently, these higher expectations carry over to performance in the classroom. Many students, who participate in extracurricular activities, develop a sense of identity as they uncover the elements of their individuality.

In turn, this discovery makes school more relevant when students begin to recognize their own valued characteristics as aspects of the curriculum (Waterman, 1950, as cited in Darling et al., 2005). As students identify similarities between success in extracurricular activities and success in the classroom, they continue to excel in both environments. Nettles et al. (2000) suggested that participation in extracurricular activities provides opportunities for students to practice social and academic skills in an environment outside of the classroom. Also, participation in extracurricular activities strengthens students' connection with the community when people outside of the classroom acknowledge their success. Mahoney and Cairns (1997) suggested that, "extracurricular participation could raise an individual's status within the school, extend her or his social affiliations in the school community, or enable both to occur" (p. 241). This success increases a student's self-confidence and, therefore, the cycle continues.

School Engagement

Numerous researchers have linked extracurricular activity participation to school engagement (Herbert & Reis, 1999; Mahoney et al., 2003; Nettles et al., 2000; Tavani & Losh, 2003). This connection hinges on the principle that participation in extracurricular activities increases students' motivation to succeed in every aspect of life, including school (Tavani & Losh). Mahoney (2000) concluded that participation in extracurricular activities may be a moderator of antisocial behavior. Nettles et al. found that students, who participated in extracurricular activities from Grades 10-12, were more optimistic about their lives and were more prepared for class. This increased optimism encourages students to set higher academic goals for themselves and, naturally, leads to increased engagement in school. This engagement continues as students: (a) find a sense of

meaning in school, (b) begin to believe in themselves, and (c) receive positive feedback for their academic efforts (Herbert & Reis; Mahoney et al.; Tavani & Losh;). According to McNeal (1999), when school faculty encourage student participation in extracurricular activities, the school climate becomes more positive. Also, this encouragement establishes feelings of security among the students. This safe environment leads to: (a) increased academic achievement, (b) decreased likelihood of drop out, and (c) increased student involvement (MacKenzie, 1983; Byrk & Thum, 1989; both cited in McNeal).

When students find a sense of meaning in school, they are more involved and successful in the classroom. Mahoney et al. (2003) suggested that participation in extracurricular activities helps to establish this connection. They found that students, who were involved in extracurricular activities, commonly experienced a purpose connected with school engagement and the educational process. This connection resulted in greater adherence to the educational process, in both high school and college. Furthermore, Tavani and Losh (2003) suggested that this sense of meaning increases the levels of motivation in students and strengthens their self-confidence. This amplified motivation and self-confidence results in students' belief in themselves. Also, Marsh (1992, as cited in Holloway 1999/2000) concluded that participation in both academic and nonacademic extracurricular activities leads to increased commitment in school and its values, which is connected to increased academic achievement. Students involved in extracurricular activities tend to develop peer groups with other high achieving students. These peer groups offer encouragement, which increases a student's belief in his or her potential achievements both extracurricularly and academically (Herbert & Reis, 1999).

Also, the positive feedback that students receive about their success encourages school engagement. First, positive feedback from peers encourages a student to excel academically, as well as in their extracurricular activities (Herbert & Reis, 1999). Students want the support from their peers and will work hard to maintain that support. Second, the feedback that students receive from adults, other than their parents, is encouraging as well. Tavani and Losh (2003) explained that “the constant information provided to them about their academic characteristics from outside sources, along with their own beliefs and feelings suggest a multitude of internal and external predictors of success” (p. 143). Students need this acceptance from mentoring adults in order to motivate them to continue the successful behavior; therefore, it is necessary that willing sponsors are readily available to increase student participation in extracurricular activities (McNeal, 1999). Finally, parental encouragement is essential for the promotion of academic success. When parents acknowledge the effort that a student puts forth to succeed in a task, whether it be in extracurricular activities or school, the student is more likely to continue that behavior (Tavani & Losh). It is important that parents connect the success to the effort invested, rather than the natural ability of the student. When effort is associated with success in the extracurricular activity, also, the student will associate effort with success in the classroom. Parental accolades in both areas are likely to encourage ongoing school engagement.

Interpersonal Competence

Self-esteem increases when students have high levels of interpersonal competence. Mahoney et al. (2003) defined interpersonal competence as the ability of students to “maintain good relations with peers and avoid aggressive conflicts” (p. 3).

Students develop interpersonal competence through the supportive relationships that they form during extracurricular activity participation (Herbert & Reis, 1999). These relationships help students to set and support realistic goals for the future and, therefore, increase their belief in themselves. High levels of interpersonal competence lead to challenging goals for the future. Also, challenging personal goals reflect a history of success in high school, and an attraction toward careers that require high levels of interpersonal competence (Mahoney et al.).

Students with low levels of interpersonal competence can change this level through participation in extracurricular activities (Mahoney et al., 2003). Often, the relationships that students form and maintain through extracurricular activity participation involve peers who hold positive academic values. Participation in extracurricular activities allows students opportunities to build interpersonal skills and discusses positive plans for their future. Otto (1982, as cited in Marsh, 1992) suggested that participation in extracurricular activities is related to: (a) improved personal adjustment, (b) improved socializing patterns, (c) improved social integration, (d) less self-estrangement, and (e) less powerlessness. The influence of peers on students with low interpersonal competence is linked to increased social acceptance and popularity within the school community (Eder & Parker, 1997; Eder, Evans, & Parker, 1987; Sandstrom & Coie, 1999; all cited in Mahoney et al.). The social acceptance and success that students experience because of the activity will, in turn, make school a more meaningful and attractive experience for students with low interpersonal competence (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). In addition, the adult relationships that students form through extracurricular activity participation can contribute to increasing levels of

interpersonal competence. According to Herbert and Reis (1999) “the combination of family and peer support, support from significant adults, and experiences in which (students) begin to see themselves as valued individuals enabled their belief in self to become stronger and their resilience to develop” (p. 453). This heightened sense of resilience and self-confidence directly influences a student’s level of interpersonal competence.

High Risk Students

A low household income and/or difficult home culture are two elements that characterize high risk students (Darling et al., 2005; Herbert & Reis, 1999; Mahoney et al., 2003; Silliker & Quirk, 1997; Tavani & Losh, 2003). These challenges, as well as typical school related stress, result in increased obstacles to success for high risk students. According to Mahoney (2000) “the introduction of a new experience into the existing pattern of constraints was linked to a shift in the outcomes associated with the early patterns of social and academic competence” (p. 512). Participation in extracurricular activities is helpful in order to establish a routine of success for students who currently have none and represents an attractive stepping stone that encourages conventional behavior (Mahoney, 2000). This experience of success leads to the desire to perform well academically and engage in positive social behaviors, regardless of the struggles of the home environment.

Low Economic Status

A predicting factor of student academic achievement and post educational status is economic status. Mahoney et al. (2003) found that many students, who fall into the low economic status, possess low competence and seldom achieve high academic status.

Frequently, students who grow up in low income families, and are influenced by negative social factors, experience feelings of powerlessness. This makes it crucial for educators to identify the hidden talents and abilities of these students and enable them to excel academically (Baldwin, 1987; Fraiser, 1989; both cited in Herbert & Reis, 1999). Herbert and Reis found that, often, minority students are discouraged by members of society to live up to their full potential. Through participation in extracurricular activities, these students can find recognizable success. Spady (1970, as cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) found that boys, from low economic families, who were involved in athletics, tended to have higher educational aspirations than nonparticipants. Also, McNeal (1995, as cited in Holloway, 2002) indicated that participation in extracurricular activities allows students from low income families to socialize with students from higher income brackets. This experience exposes at-risk students to peers who have better attitudes toward school. The peer relationships formed and self-confidence gained through participation in extracurricular activities may, in turn, influence the success of low income students in the classroom.

Reduced Drop-Out Rates

Students with low academic ability and from racial ethnic minority groups are more likely to drop out of school (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Frase, 1989; Rumberger, 1987; all cited in McNeal, 1995). However, a number of researchers (Eccles et al., 2003; Holloway, 1999/2000; Mahoney & Cains, 1995; Mahoney, 2000; McNeal, 1995, 1999) found a link between extracurricular activity participation among high risk students and lower dropout rates.. Specifically, when high risk students participated in extracurricular activities during middle or early high school, the rates of early dropout

decreased dramatically (Mahoney & Cains, 1997, as cited in Darling et al., 2005). The influence from this participation was attributed to the peer and adult relationships formed through their extracurricular activity participation. Overall, the research indicated that extended participation in extracurricular activities, of 2 or more years, has the greatest impact on the academic success of high risk students (Darling et al., 2005). Eccles et al. cited Mahoney (2003) and Mahoney and Cains (1997) and stated, “there is a link between extended participation in extracurricular activities during high school and reduced rates of dropout and criminal offending, particularly during the early high school years and for high risk youth” (p. 867). Holloway cited McNeal (1995) and concluded that “students who participate in athletics, fine arts activities, and academic organizations were an estimated 1.7, 1.2, and 1.5 times respectively, less likely to drop out than those who did not participate” (p. 87). Also, athletic participation has been found to reduce school drop out by 40%. Mahoney and Cairns suggested that extracurricular activity participation provides opportunities to create a positive and voluntary connection to the school and its values, which is especially beneficial to students whose prior commitment has been marginal. Clearly, identification of the talents of high risk students and the encouragement of their participation in activities that showcase these talents is an important step to assure the academic achievement in these students.

School vs. Home Cultures

High risk students must be able to separate the in-home and school cultures in order to obtain academic success (Herbert & Reis, 1999). The reasoning behind this is the different influences that each environment has on high risk students. Most successful students acknowledge this fact and explain that outside role models influence their

achievement. The necessity for this separation is partially due to the low education levels of many parents of high risk students. According to Tovani and Losh (2003), parental education levels do not directly influence how a student performs academically, but they do strongly influence how the child is raised. Students, whose parents have high levels of academic achievement, are more likely to graduate from high school and pursue postsecondary schooling. Parents' education levels and their involvement in their children's lives are the primary predictors of how a student will perform in school. An increase in even one of these factors has a positive influence on a student's academic success.

Even when parent education levels are low, students who experience active parental involvement perform at higher levels of academic achievement (Darling et al., 2005; Herbert & Reis, 1999). When parents encourage their students to participate in extracurricular activities, and when parents take an active interest in these activities, student performance in the classroom increases. Extracurricular activity involvement is important to the success of high risk youth because it nurtures their social interests and talents (Herbert & Reis). These findings lead researchers to emphasize the need for the presence of quality extracurricular activity programs in urban school systems. Darling et al. cited Werner and Smith (1982/1989) and stated that "participation in extracurricular activities played an important part in the lives of the resilient youth, especially those activities that were cooperative enterprises" (p. 57). Parental encouragement of these programs, in combination with parental cooperation in these programs, is essential in order to promote the academic success of their children.

Delinquent Behaviors

Students, who participate in extracurricular activities, have lower numbers of delinquent behaviors that lead to academic failure than nonparticipants (Mahoney, 2000). Darling et al. (2005) found that participation in extracurricular activity predicted lower levels of drug and alcohol use and higher levels of positive academic attitudes. Additionally, students, who participate, perform better in school and hold higher academic aspirations than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities. A clear connection exists between drug and alcohol use and academic success. Mahoney found that extracurricular activity participation had the greatest positive influence on high risk adolescents who displayed problem behaviors and economic disadvantages. Participation in extracurricular activities can influence the students to make choices that promote their success in school.

Prosocial Activities vs. Sports

Larson (1994, as cited in Darling et al., 2005) examined the long term effects of extracurricular activity participation on working class adolescents. He found that students, who participated in activities such as student council, youth groups, and band, displayed lower levels of delinquency in comparison to students who participated in athletics. Also, Eccles et al. (2003) found that these prosocial behaviors promoted positive behaviors among students. Mahoney (2000) stated, “the simultaneous participation of their peer social network in school activities was critical to the associated reduction in antisocial patterns across development for high risk youth” (p. 512). Students involved in prosocial activities are less involved in risky behaviors during the

high school years in comparison to their peers who do not participate in extracurricular activities.

Although involvement in athletic extracurricular activities promotes academic achievement, there is some debate in regard to its influence on delinquent behaviors. Darling et al. (2005) found that participation in athletics did not affect the likelihood of students' engagement in alcohol consumption in comparison to their nonparticipating peers. In comparison to students involved in prosocial activities, students who participated in athletics were equally as likely to consume alcoholic beverages as were students who did not participate in any extracurricular activities. However, drug use among students, who were involved in athletics, was lower than nonparticipating students. Landers and Landers (1978, as cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported that extracurricular activity participation, either athletic or service oriented, decreased the likelihood of deviant acts. Overall, the findings indicated that there was no association between athletic participation and alcohol consumption, but the likelihood of drug abuse was lower among participants of extracurricular activities.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, the benefits of extracurricular activity participation among students in the middle and high school grades appear to be worthwhile. Clearly, the most undisputable advantage to these after-school programs is the increased academic achievement experienced by the participants. This success is attributed to the positive peer and adult relationships developed among the participants. These relationships encourage academic performance and post secondary education and often discourage the engagement in risky behaviors. High-risk students especially benefit from these types of

relationships. Although athletic participation is linked with alcohol consumption, clearly the benefits of extracurricular participation on academic achievement are present. Based upon the available research, it appears that students should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities in order to give them the support necessary to excel in school and in their post secondary lives. However, there are no programs available to high school students that emphasize the benefits of participation in extracurricular activities.

Based upon the research, this author has developed a presentation that can be used during Freshman Orientation in order to encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities. Also, developed was an electronic pamphlet that can be posted online so that it is accessible to the general population. Presented in Chapter 3 is an explanation of the target population for the project, how it was developed, and how the project was used.

Chapter 3

METHOD

This applied project consists of two parts: (a) a PowerPoint presentation and (b) an electronic brochure. Both pieces were developed for the use of educators at the secondary school level. The author worked with administrators at local schools and the members of the Colorado High School Activities Association in order to distribute these pieces and enable them to be used in an effective manner. The author hopes that these materials will add a missing piece to the education of teachers, parents, and students about the benefits of extracurricular activity participation.

Target Population

The project was targeted toward teachers, parents, and students at the secondary school level. Based upon the research, it is important that this population is aware of the benefits of extracurricular activity participation, as it is the high school aged students who are most benefited through this participation. Teachers must be informed in order to encourage them to become sponsors and coaches of these activities. According to the research (Darling, Cadlwell, & Smith, 2005; Herbert & Reis, 1999; Nettles, Mucherach, & Jones, 2000), students are positively affected by nonparental adult relationships outside of the classroom. Parents need to be informed of the benefits because, often, they are the ones who decide whether or not their child will participate in extracurricular activities. Finally, students need to be informed so that they will actively look for activities that appeal to them.

Procedures

There are two pieces to the project, and thus there are different procedures for each piece. First, the presentation was prepared with the use of PowerPoint. The author used the data from the research in order to develop a PowerPoint presentation to detail the benefits of extracurricular activity participation. This presentation was developed for use during Freshman Orientation and Teacher Orientation at the beginning of a school year. There are two slightly different versions of the presentation in order to ensure that each audience is appropriately targeted. Second, the electronic brochure was developed with the use of Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat. Use of these programs ensured that a hard copy version of the brochure can be created if desired. The author worked with the staff of the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) with the hopes that the brochure can be made available to the public via their web site. If this is possible, it will make this information on the benefits of extracurricular activity participation available to people across the state, as well as to anyone who accesses the CHSAA web site.

Goal of Applied Project

The goal of this applied project was to make the information on the benefits of extracurricular activity participation readily available to the public. By providing the information in both presentation and electronic brochure format, the author was able to reach the general public, as well as high school students and staff members. If the presentations are used as designed, they will reach the most important groups, the teachers and the students. The interest in extracurricular activity participation needs to be increased the most in these two groups. It is anticipated that the information provided in

the presentation and the brochure will increase the number of secondary students who participate in extracurricular activities, and, also, will increase the number of educators who volunteer to coach or sponsor these activities.

Peer Assessment

The author conducted a peer assessment in order to determine the effectiveness of the applied project. She asked three experienced teachers, from different school districts, to review and comment on both the PowerPoint presentation and the electronic pamphlet. The assessment was used to revise the project according to the suggestions from the educators. The author looked for feedback on the relevance of the information provided, and the likelihood that the project can be used in secondary school orientation programs.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, the applied project consists of two parts, a PowerPoint presentation and an electronic brochure. The PowerPoint presentation is intended to be used at the beginning of the school year during the orientation process. It is anticipated that both students and teachers will be inspired to become involved in extracurricular activities because of the information provided in the presentation. The electronic brochure is targeted to the general public, specifically, parents of secondary school students. It is intended to provide details of the benefits of extracurricular activities on academic achievement and social behaviors. In both cases, it is hoped that more students, teachers, and parents will become actively involved in extracurricular activities that are available in their communities.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The applied project is intended to service as a public relations piece for the recruitment of students into extracurricular activities. It consists of two parts, a PowerPoint presentation and an electronic brochure. The PowerPoint presentation was developed to be used in two different situations. First, it can serve as a supporting device for a speaker presentation. For example, it can be used as part of a freshman orientation program. Second, it can be downloaded electronically for individual use and information on a personal computer. The electronic brochure is a condensed version of the presentation. This brochure can be downloaded, printed and copied to use for recruitment and informative purposes. Schools may choose to use it during the registration process as a way to inform parents and teachers about the benefits of extracurricular activity participation. Both projects meet the same goal, to enable school to inform parents and students about the benefits of extracurricular activity participation.

Projects

PowerPoint Presentation

Teacher Orientation Presentation

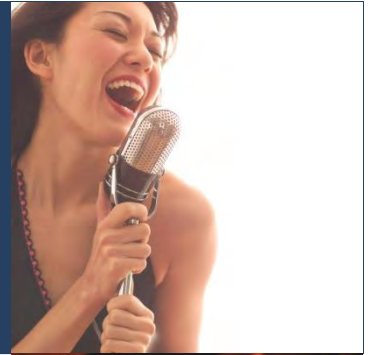
Extracurricular Activities and Academic Performance

A Gateway to Academic and Career Achievement



The Debate

- What effect does participation in extracurricular activities have on academic progress?
 - Side 1: Higher grades & increased likelihood of postsecondary education.
 - Side 2: Reduces the amount of time a student can devote to schoolwork & results in lower grades and fewer opportunities for college.



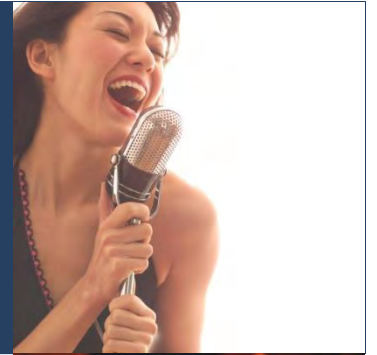
Types of Extracurricular Activities (ECAs)

- Athletics
- Band & Orchestra
- Social Clubs
- Academic Clubs
- Music & Theater
- Religious Organizations
- Other



Benefits of Participation

- Acquisition of new skills
 - Organization
 - Planning
 - Time-management
- Develop/Strengthen attitudes
 - Discipline
 - Motivation
- Receive social rewards



Social Benefits

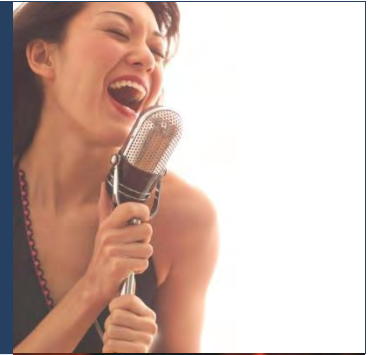
- Socialization with peers
- Socialization with adults
- Set & achieve goals
- Compete fairly
- Recover from defeat
- Resolve disputes peaceably
- Acquisition of interpersonal skills
- Stronger emotional & social connections to school



Social Benefits

- ECA participation provides opportunities for adolescents:
 - To acquire & practice social, physical & intellectual skills
 - To contribute to one's community
 - To acquire a sense of agency
 - To belong to a recognized social group
 - To establish social networks
 - To experience challenges of adolescence

(Eccles et al, 2003; McNeal, 1999)



Educational Benefits

- Higher educational achievement
- Increased job quality in life
- Increase participation in politics
- Engagement in volunteer activities
- Better mental health as an adult

(Eccles et al, 2003; McNeal, 1998)



Educational Benefits

- Increased self-concept
- Higher grade point average
- Better school engagement
- Better school attendance
- Higher educational aspirations
- Higher career aspirations



Sports Participation

- Most popular form of ECA among adolescents
- Provide both physical and mental challenges
- Provide sense of identification with a specific social group
- Develop positive academic behaviors
- Develop ability to work as a team



Leisure Environments

- Leisure Environments are ECA with:
 - Optional participation
 - Comfortable environment
 - Controlled setting



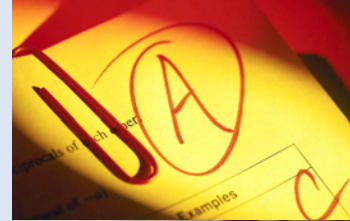
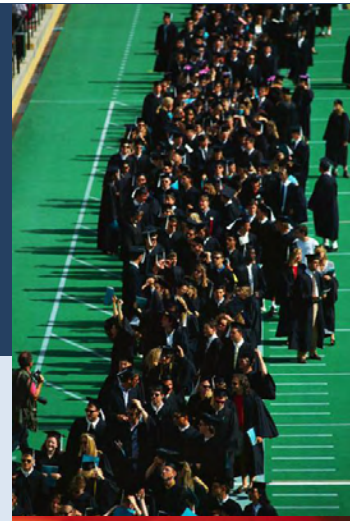
Leisure Environments

- Adolescents manage own experiences
 - Exerting personal control
 - Acting autonomously
- Find something to meet needs & interests
- Form own identities by:
 - Choosing activities
 - Choosing their actions



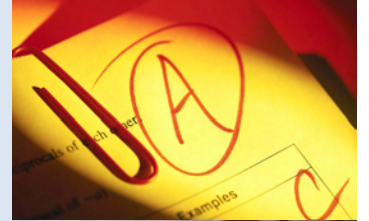
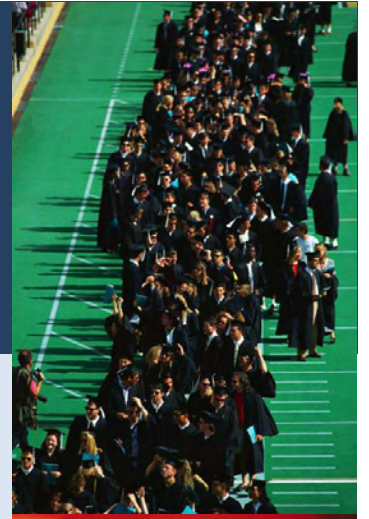
Academic Achievement

- Students who participate in ECAs are more successful in several academic aspects of their lives.
 - Stronger effect than activities outside of school
 - Success in high school paves way for success in college and professional life



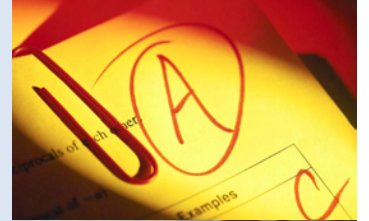
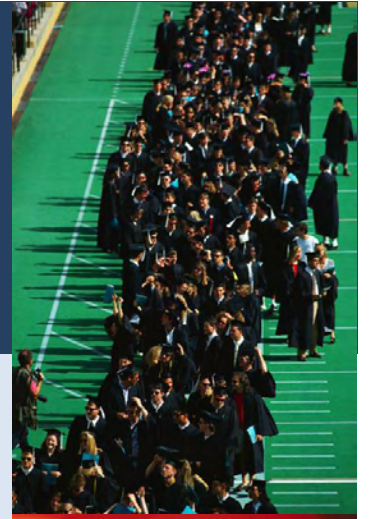
Academic Achievement

- Students who participate in structured and religious activities during their freshman and sophomore years:
 - More optimistic about their life chances
 - Participated in more ECAs
 - More prepared for class senior year



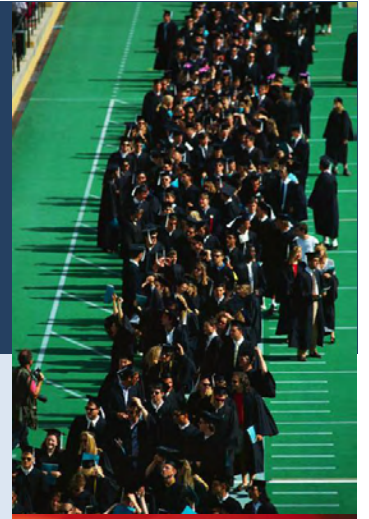
Academic Achievement

- College Attendance
 - Unusually common for students consistently involved in ECAs
 - Attributed to students' ability to set challenging goals
 - Increased self-esteem = increased success



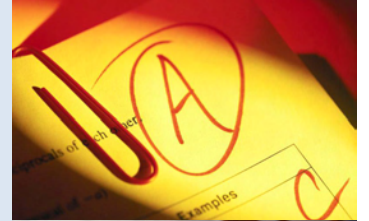
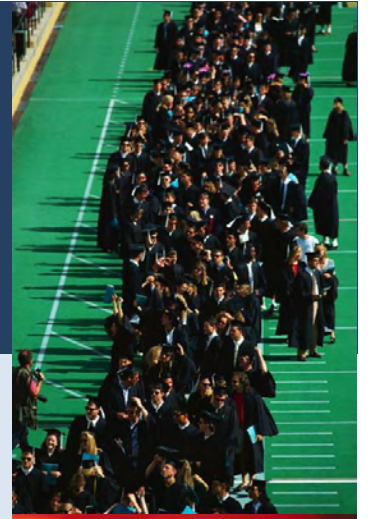
Academic Achievement

- Peer Social Support
 - Develop positive peer associations
 - Positive peer association motivator for academic success
 - Peers validate efforts in class & activities



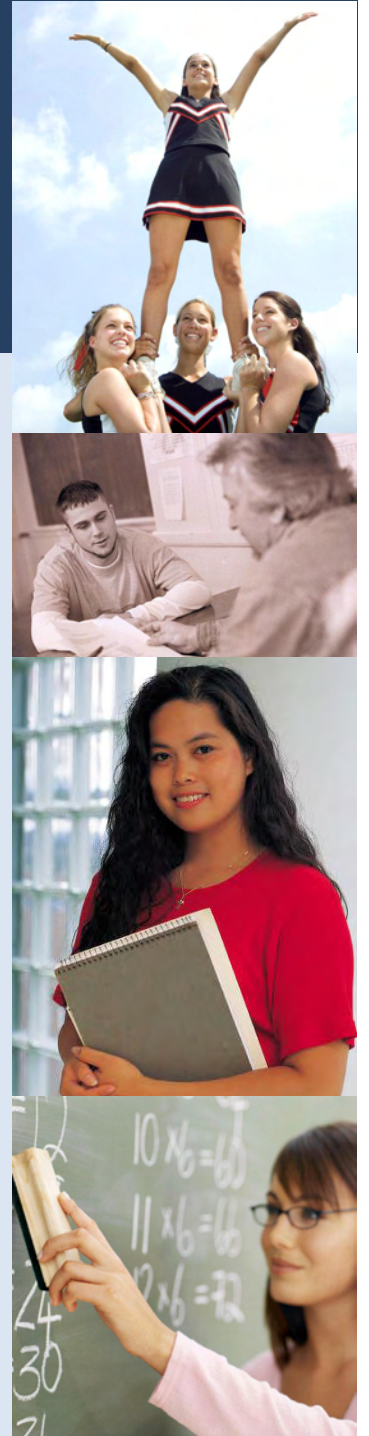
Academic Achievement

- Adult Social Support
 - Opportunities for interaction with nonparental adults
 - Builds sense of optimism & confidence
 - Supervised by positive role models
 - Adult sponsors promote:
 - Importance of high academic performance
 - Academic aspirations
 - Academic achievement



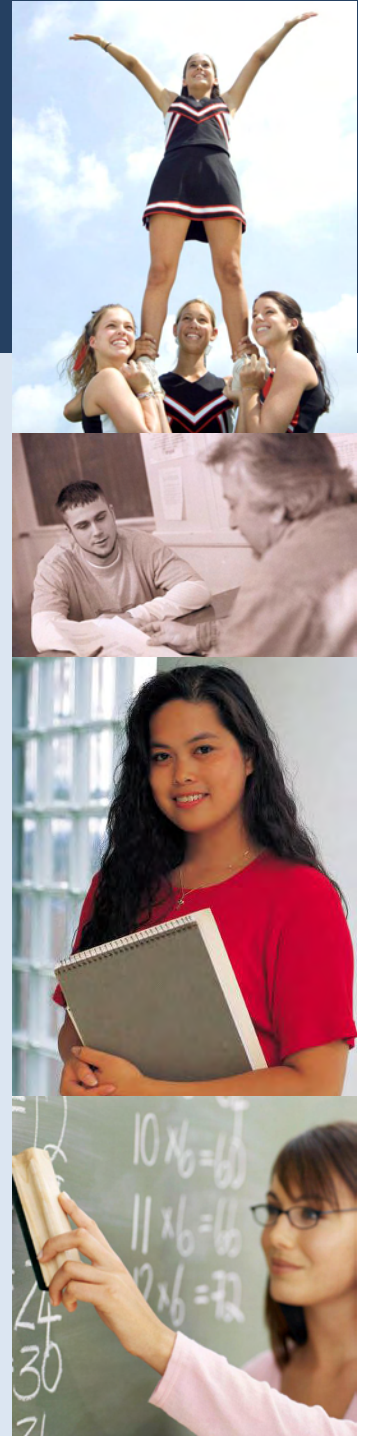
Self-Esteem

- Adolescents level of self-esteem effects how they perform academically
- Activities that increase students' perception of competence:
 - Increase self-esteem
 - Increase academic performance
- Activities that allow students to demonstrate their abilities are best.



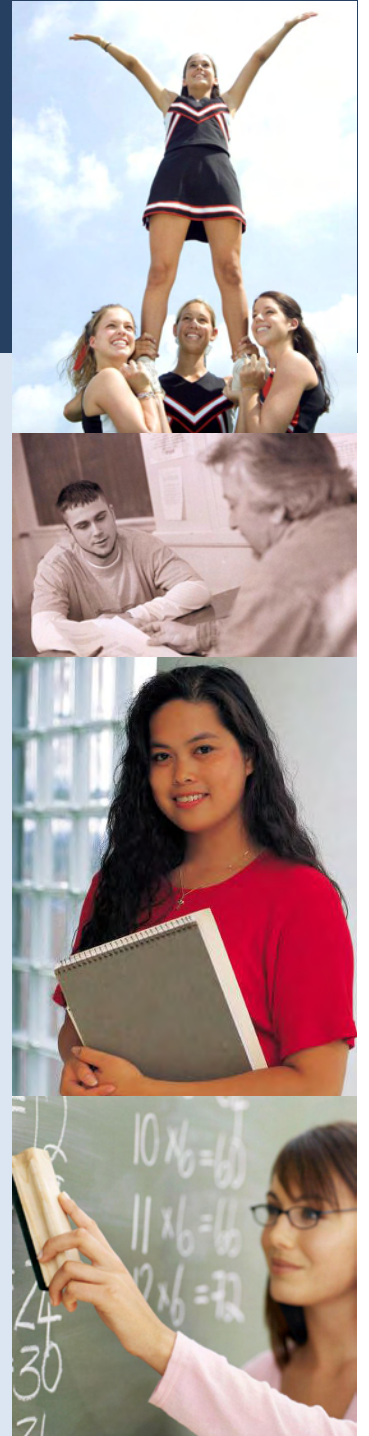
Self-Esteem

- *School Engagement*
 - ECA participation encourages students to perform well in every aspect of life
 - ECA's serve as a moderator of antisocial behavior
 - Faculty members who encourage ECA participation help create a positive school environment



Self-Esteem

- *School Engagement*
 - When students find sense of meaning in school, they are more involved & successful
 - Sense of meaning:
 - Increases levels of motivation
 - Strengthens self-confidence
 - ECA's allow student to socialize with other high achieving students



Self-Esteem

- *Interpersonal Competence*
 - “The ability of student to maintain good relations with peers and avoid aggressive conflicts” (Mahoney et al., 2003, p. 3)
 - Develop through supportive relationships that are formed during ECA participation
 - Social acceptance & success in ECA participation increases school engagement.



High Risk Students

- Challenges:
 - Low household income
 - Difficult home culture
- Increased obstacles to success
- ECA participation establishes a routine of success
- Success in ECA's leads to desired success in school



High Risk Students

- *Low Economic Status*
 - Students :
 - Possess low competence
 - Seldom achieve high academic status
 - Influenced by negative social factors
 - Experience feelings of powerlessness
- Educators need to identify hidden talents & abilities
 - Enables them to excel academically

(Mahoney et al., 2003, p. 3)



High Risk Students

- *Low Economic Status*
 - Students not encouraged to live up to full potential (Herbert & Reis, 1999)
 - ECA's allows for socialization with students in multiple income brackets
 - Exposed to better attitudes toward school
 - Acquired peer relationships & self-confidence influence academic success



High Risk Students

- *Reduced Drop-Out Rates*
 - A link exists between ECA participation & reduced dropout rates
 - Participation in middle & early high school lead to decreased dropout of 40%
 - 2 or more years of participation has greatest impact on academic success



High Risk Students

- *School vs. Home Cultures*
 - Students need to separate home & school cultures in order to achieve academically
 - Outside role models influence academic achievement



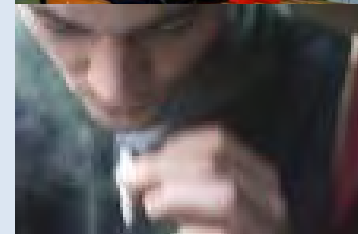
High Risk Students

- *School vs. Home Cultures*
 - Parental encouragement in ECA participation key to increased classroom performance
 - ECA's nurture students' social interests & talents
 - School performance depends on:
 - Parents' education levels
 - Parents' involvement in children's lives



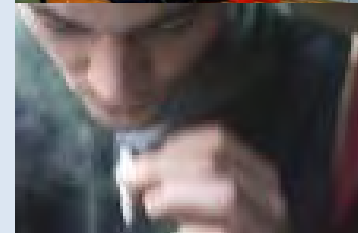
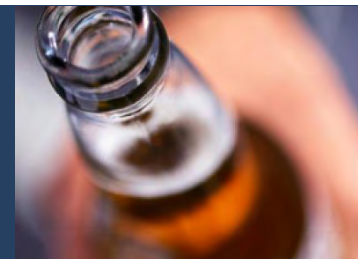
Delinquent Behaviors

- ECA participation leads to lower numbers of delinquent behaviors
 - Drug use
 - Alcohol use
- ECA participation influences students to make good choices that promote success



Delinquent Behaviors

- *Prosocial Activities:*
 - Student council
 - Youth groups
 - Band
- Lowest levels of delinquency via ECA membership
- All ECA participation leads to lower levels of drug use



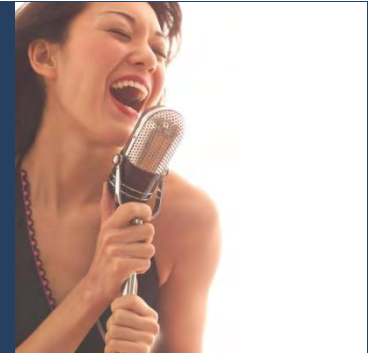
Summary

- ECA participation leads to increased academic achievement
- Success stems from positive peer & adult relationships that are developed
- High-risk students benefit immensely because they discourage risky behaviors
- Parents & teachers need to encourage & support ECA participation



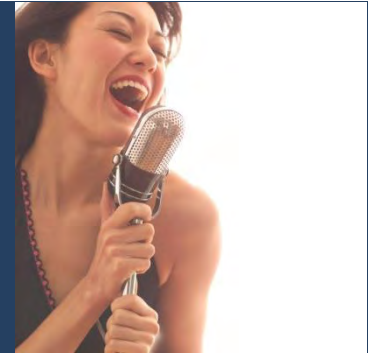
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Extracurricular Activities and Academic Performance

*A Gateway to Academic and
Career Achievement*



The Debate

- What effect does participation in extracurricular activities have on academic progress?
 - Side 1: Higher grades & increased likelihood of postsecondary education.
 - Side 2: Reduces the amount of time a student can devote to schoolwork & results in lower grades and fewer opportunities for college.



Teacher Orientation

A debate exists in the educational community about the effects of student participation in extracurricular activities on educational achievement. One position is that participation leads to higher grades and increased likelihood of postsecondary education. Another position is that participation in these types of activities reduces the amount of time a student can devote to schoolwork and results in lower grades and fewer opportunities for college. The research in this area is conflicting; however, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that participation in extracurricular activities, when kept at an appropriate level, will increase the educational success of high school students.

Types of Extracurricular Activities (ECAs)

- Athletics
- Band & Orchestra
- Social Clubs
- Academic Clubs
- Music & Theater
- Religious Organizations
- Other



Teacher Orientation

Participation in school based extracurricular activities has long been a fundamental part of adolescence. Some of these activities are in the form of athletics, band and orchestra, social clubs, academic clubs, music and theater, and religious organizations.

Benefits of Participation

- Acquisition of new skills
 - Organization
 - Planning
 - Time-management
- Develop/Strengthen attitudes
 - Discipline
 - Motivation
- Receive social rewards



Teacher Orientation

In regard to the effects of participation, Holland and Andre (1987) found that participation facilitates both academic and nonacademic goals in that “participation may lead adolescents to acquire new skills (organizational, planning, time-management, etc.), to develop or strengthen particular attitudes (discipline, motivational), or to receive social rewards that influence personality characteristics” (p. 447).

Social Benefits

- Socialization with peers
- Socialization with adults
- Set & achieve goals
- Compete fairly
- Recover from defeat
- Resolve disputes peaceably
- Acquisition of interpersonal skills
- Stronger emotional & social connections to school



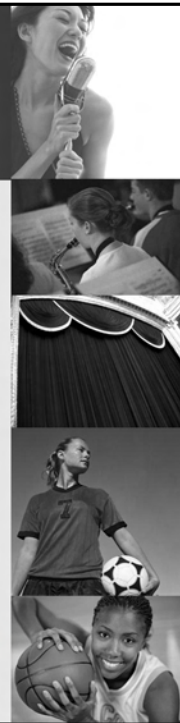
Teacher Orientation

Numerous researchers (Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005; Eccles et al., 2003; Herbert & Reis, 1999; Holland & Andre, 1987; Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003; Silliker & Quirk, 1997; Tavani & Losh, 2003) have established the benefits of extracurricular activity participation on academic performance and the decrease of delinquent behaviors during adolescence. Darling et al. stated that “extracurricular activities have been touted by their proponents as enabling youth to socialize with peers and adults, set and achieve goals, compete fairly, recover from defeat, and resolve disputes peaceably” (p. 52). Mahoney also explained that participation in extracurricular activity facilitated “the acquisition of interpersonal skills and positive social norms, membership in prosocial peer groups, and stronger emotional and social connections to one’s school” (p. 868).

Social Benefits

- ECA participation provides opportunities for adolescents:
 - To acquire & practice social, physical & intellectual skills
 - To contribute to one's community
 - To acquire a sense of agency
 - To belong to a recognized social group
 - To establish social networks
 - To experience challenges of adolescence

(Eccles et al, 2003; McNeal, 1999)



Teacher Orientation

Furthermore, Eccles et al. found that constructive, organized activities are a good use of adolescents' time. These extracurricular activities provide opportunities for adolescents: (a) to acquire and practice social, physical, and intellectual skills; (b) to contribute to one's community and develop a sense of agency; (c) to belong to a recognized social group that is valued within the community; (d) to establish social networks of peers and adults that can help in crisis situations; and (e) to experience and deal with the challenges of normal adolescent life (Eccles et al.; McNeal, 1999).

Educational Benefits

- Higher educational achievement
- Increased job quality in life
- Increase participation in politics
- Engagement in volunteer activities
- Better mental health as an adult

(Eccles et al, 2003; McNeal, 1998)



Teacher Orientation

In addition to the social benefits of extracurricular activity participation, also, researchers (Darling et al., 2005; Eccles et al., 2003; Silliker & Quirk, 1997) have focused on the educational benefits. Eccles et al. and McNeal (1998) linked extracurricular activity participation to: (a) higher educational achievement, (b) increased job quality later in life, (c) increased participation in politics, (d) ongoing engagement in volunteer activities, and (e) better mental health in adulthood.

Educational Benefits

- Increased self-concept
- Higher grade point average
- Better school engagement
- Better school attendance
- Higher educational aspirations
- Higher career aspirations



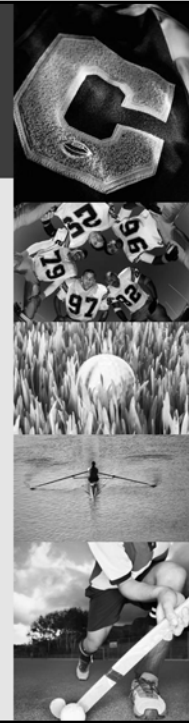
Teacher Orientation

In addition, participation in extracurricular activities leads to positive student outcomes, such as:

(a) increased self-concept, (b) higher grade point average, (c) better school engagement, (d) better school attendance, and (e) higher educational and career aspirations (Elder & Conger, 2000; March & Kleitman; 2002, Youniss, McLellan; & Yates, 1999; all cited in Eccles et al.; Marsh, 1992; McNeal; Otto & Awin, 1977; Picou, 1978; Spady, 1980; Jable, 1986; Laughlin, 1978; all cited in Silliker & Quirk).

Sports Participation

- Most popular form of ECA among adolescents
- Provide both physical and mental challenges
- Provide sense of identification with a specific social group
- Develop positive academic behaviors
- Develop ability to work as a team



Teacher Orientation

Many members of the general public identify athletics as the more recognizable form of extracurricular participation, and this proves to be the most popular among adolescents. In fact, adolescents are more likely to participate in school based sports than in another types of extracurricular activity (Eccles et al., 2003; Cusick, 1973, Morgan & Alwin, 1980, all cited in McNeal, 1999). Shaw, Kleiber, and Caldwell (1995, as cited in Darling et al., 2005) explained that sports are beneficial to adolescents because participation provides them with a physical and mental challenge as well as a sense of identification with a specific social group. All in all, participation in school based sports programs seems to develop positive academic behaviors among students.

Leisure Environments

- Leisure Environments are ECA with:
 - Optional participation
 - Comfortable environment
 - Controlled setting



Teacher Orientation

Darling et al. (2005) reported that participation in school based extracurricular activities provides highly structured leisure environments for adolescents. These environments provide optional participation, a comfortable environment, and a controlled setting.

Leisure Environments

- Adolescents manage own experiences
 - Exerting personal control
 - Acting autonomously
- Find something to meet needs & interests
- Form own identities by:
 - Choosing activities
 - Choosing their actions



Teacher Orientation

Leisure is defined as a “context in which adolescents are encouraged to manage their own experiences by exerting personal control over their environments and acting autonomously” (p. 51). Students form their own identities through leisure environments because they can choose the activities in which they are involved, and what they do within a given setting. Furthermore, extracurricular activities provide a medium for adolescents to experiment with their identities and choices within a controlled environment that is sanctioned by adults (Darling et al.).

Academic Achievement

- Students who participate in ECAs are more successful in several academic aspects of their lives.
 - Stronger effect than activities outside of school
 - Success in high school paves way for success in college and professional life



Teacher Orientation

Researchers (Herbert & Reis, 1999; Kirch, 2002; Mahoney et al., 2003; McNeal, 1998; Nettles, Mucherah, & Jones, 2000) have suggested that students, who participate in extracurricular activities, are more successful in several academic aspects of their lives. Gerber (1997, as cited in Holloway, 1999/2000) found that participation in school based extracurricular activities had a stronger effect on academic achievement than other activities outside of school. The ability to excel at the secondary level paves the way for students to continue to experience success in college, in their professional lives, and within their social circles.

Academic Achievement

- Students who participate in structured and religious activities during their freshman and sophomore years:
 - More optimistic about their life chances
 - Participated in more ECAs
 - More prepared for class senior year



Teacher Orientation

Nettles et al. (2000) found that students, who participated in structured and religious activities during their sophomore year of high school: (a) felt more optimistic about their life chances, (b) participated in more extracurricular activities, and (c) were more prepared for class during their senior year. This success was not seen in students who participated in extracurricular activities for only 1 year during their secondary education experience.

Academic Achievement

- College Attendance
 - Unusually common for students consistently involved in ECAs
 - Attributed to students' ability to set challenging goals
 - Increased self-esteem = increased success



Teacher Orientation

Mahoney et al. (2003) found that college attendance was “unusually common for students who were consistently involved in extracurricular activities” (p. 13). This is attributed to the students’ ability to set new and challenging goals for the future as current skills increase (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, as cited in Mahoney et al.). Initially, students set more challenging goals within the activity setting. However, these goals may eventually spill over to the academic area as the students become more successful in their extracurricular activities. As such, many students, who participate in extracurricular activities, set ambitious goals for their future, including plans for postsecondary school education (Mahoney et al.). Often, students who experience success in high school visualize continued success in college. This positive view of themselves helps them to initiate and follow through on the college application process.

Academic Achievement

- Peer Social Support
 - Develop positive peer associations
 - Positive peer association motivator for academic success
 - Peers validate efforts in class & activities



Teacher Orientation

Another factor that contributes to academic achievement is the social support that students receive through their participation in extracurricular activities. Eccles et al. (2003) and Herbert and Reis (1999) indicated that students develop positive peer associations through extracurricular activity participation and identify themselves as part of a group. Numerous students in extracurricular activity peer groups possess aspirations for postsecondary education; therefore, they do well academically. This peer association motivates the desire for academic success among students more than peer association of nonparticipants (Eccles et al.). Herbert and Reis found that a network of achieving peers proved absolutely essential to the achievement of most extracurricular activity participants, and that students were aware of its existence and influence on their success.

Academic Achievement

- Adult Social Support
 - Opportunities for interaction with nonparental adults
 - Builds sense of optimism & confidence
 - Supervised by positive role models
 - Adult sponsors promote:
 - Importance of high academic performance
 - Academic aspirations
 - Academic achievement



Teacher Orientation

In addition to peer support, adult support is important for continued academic success. According to Herbert and Reis (1999), “successful students received support and encouragement from each other and from supporting adults including teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, and mentors” (p. 442). Students must have opportunities for interaction with nonparental adults. This type of interaction builds students’ sense of optimism, which contributes to confidence in their ability to excel academically. Adults, who sponsor and coach these activities, promote: (a) the importance of high academic performance, (b) academic aspirations, and (c) academic achievement to the participating students (Darling et al., 2005).

Self-Esteem

- Adolescents level of self-esteem effects how they perform academically
- Activities that increase students' perception of competence:
 - Increase self-esteem
 - Increase academic performance
- Activities that allow students to demonstrate their abilities are best.



Teacher Orientation

According to Coleman (1961, as cited in Holland & Andre, 1997), standards of peer acceptance are established during the adolescent years, and participation in peer value activities can increase peer approval and students' self-esteem. Participation in activities that increase students' perception of competence will have a positive effect on self-concept and, as a result, students will perform at a higher academic level (Crain et al, 1982; Grabe, 1981; Phillip, 1969; Schendel, 1968; all cited in Holland & Andre).

Self-Esteem

- *School Engagement*
 - ECA participation encourages students to perform well in every aspect of life
 - ECA's serve as a moderator of antisocial behavior
 - Faculty members who encourage ECA participation help create a positive school environment



Teacher Orientation

The connection between self-esteem and school engagement hinges on the principle that participation in extracurricular activities increases students' motivation to succeed in every aspect of life, including school (Tavani & Losh). Mahoney (2000) concluded that participation in extracurricular activities may be a moderator of antisocial behavior. This engagement continues as students: (a) find a sense of meaning in school, (b) begin to believe in themselves, and (c) receive positive feedback for their academic efforts (Herbert & Reis; Mahoney et al.; Tavani & Losh;). According to McNeal (1999), when school faculty encourage student participation in extracurricular activities, the school climate becomes more positive.

Self-Esteem

- *School Engagement*
 - When students find sense of meaning in school, they are more involved & successful
 - Sense of meaning:
 - Increases levels of motivation
 - Strengthens self-confidence
 - ECA's allow student to socialize with other high achieving students



Teacher Orientation

When students find a sense of meaning in school, they are more involved and successful in the classroom. Mahoney et al. (2003) suggested that participation in extracurricular activities helps to establish this connection. They found that students, who were involved in extracurricular activities, commonly experienced a purpose connected with school engagement and the educational process. This connection resulted in greater adherence to the educational process, in both high school and college. Furthermore, Tavani and Losh (2003) suggested that this sense of meaning increases the levels of motivation in students and strengthens their self-confidence. This amplified motivation and self-confidence results in students' belief in themselves. Also, students involved in extracurricular activities tend to develop peer groups with other high achieving students. These peer groups offer encouragement, which increases a student's belief in his or her potential achievements both extracurricularly and academically (Herbert & Reis, 1999).

Self-Esteem

- *Interpersonal Competence*
 - “The ability of student to maintain good relations with peers and avoid aggressive conflicts” (Mahoney et al., 2003, p. 3)
 - Develop through supportive relationships that are formed during ECA participation
 - Social acceptance & success in ECA participation increases school engagement.

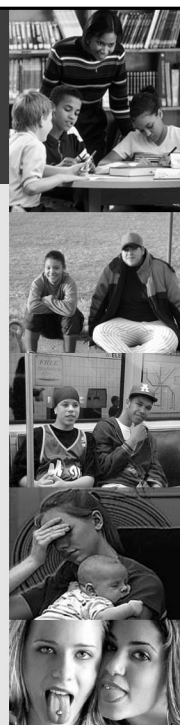


Teacher Orientation

Self-esteem increases when students have high levels of interpersonal competence. Mahoney et al. (2003) defined interpersonal competence as the ability of students to “maintain good relations with peers and avoid aggressive conflicts” (p. 3). Students develop interpersonal competence through the supportive relationships that they form during extracurricular activity participation (Herbert & Reis, 1999). These relationships help students to set and support realistic goals for the future and, therefore, increase their belief in themselves. High levels of interpersonal competence lead to challenging goals for the future. Participation in extracurricular activities allows students opportunities to build interpersonal skills and discusses positive plans for their future. Otto (1982, as cited in Marsh, 1992) suggested that participation in extracurricular activities is related to: (a) improved personal adjustment, (b) improved socializing patterns, (c) improved social integration, (d) less self-estrangement, and (e) less powerlessness. The social acceptance and success that students experience because of the activity will, in turn, make school a more meaningful and attractive experience for students with low interpersonal competence (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997).

High Risk Students

- Challenges:
 - Low household income
 - Difficult home culture
- Increased obstacles to success
- ECA participation establishes a routine of success
- Success in ECA's leads to desired success in school



Teacher Orientation

A low household income and/or difficult home culture are two elements that characterize high risk students (Darling et al., 2005; Herbert & Reis, 1999; Mahoney et al., 2003; Silliker & Quirk, 1997; Tavani & Losh, 2003). These challenges, as well as typical school related stress, result in increased obstacles to success for high risk students. Participation in extracurricular activities is helpful in order to establish a routine of success for students who currently have none and represents an attractive stepping stone that encourages conventional behavior (Mahoney, 2000). This experience of success leads to the desire to perform well academically and engage in positive social behaviors, regardless of the struggles of the home environment.

High Risk Students

- *Low Economic Status*
 - Students :
 - Possess low competence
 - Seldom achieve high academic status
 - Influenced by negative social factors
 - Experience feelings of powerlessness(Mahoney et al., 2003, p. 3)
 - Educators need to identify hidden talents & abilities
 - Enables them to excel academically



Teacher Orientation

A predicting factor of student academic achievement and post educational status is economic status. Mahoney et al. (2003) found that many students, who fall into the low economic status, possess low competence and seldom achieve high academic status. Frequently, students who grow up in low income families, and are influenced by negative social factors, experience feelings of powerlessness. This makes it crucial for educators to identify the hidden talents and abilities of these students and enable them to excel academically (Baldwin, 1987; Fraiser, 1989; both cited in Herbert & Reis, 1999).

High Risk Students

- *Low Economic Status*
 - Students not encouraged to live up to full potential (Herbert & Reis, 1999)
 - ECA's allows for socialization with students in multiple income brackets
 - Exposed to better attitudes toward school
 - Acquired peer relationships & self-confidence influence academic success



Teacher Orientation

Herbert and Reis found that, often, minority students are discouraged by members of society to live up to their full potential. Through participation in extracurricular activities, these students can find recognizable success. McNeal (1995, as cited in Holloway, 2002) indicated that participation in extracurricular activities allows students from low income families to socialize with students from higher income brackets. This experience exposes at-risk students to peers who have better attitudes toward school. The peer relationships formed and self-confidence gained through participation in extracurricular activities may, in turn, influence the success of low income students in the classroom.

High Risk Students

- *Reduced Drop-Out Rates*
 - A link exists between ECA participation & reduced dropout rates
 - Participation in middle & early high school lead to decreased dropout of 40%
 - 2 or more years of participation has greatest impact on academic success



Teacher Orientation

A number of researchers (Eccles et al., 2003; Holloway, 1999/2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1995; Mahoney, 2000; McNeal, 1995, 1999) found a link between extracurricular activity participation among high risk students and lower dropout rates.. Specifically, when high risk students participated in extracurricular activities during middle or early high school, the rates of early dropout decreased dramatically (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997, as cited in Darling et al., 2005). Athletic participation has been found to reduce school drop out by 40%. Mahoney and Cairns suggested that extracurricular activity participation provides opportunities to create a positive and voluntary connection to the school and its values, which is especially beneficial to students whose prior commitment has been marginal. Overall, the research indicated that extended participation in extracurricular activities, of 2 or more years, has the greatest impact on the academic success of high risk students (Darling et al., 2005).

High Risk Students

- *School vs. Home Cultures*
 - Students need to separate home & school cultures in order to achieve academically
 - Outside role models influence academic achievement



Teacher Orientation

High risk students must be able to separate the in-home and school cultures in order to obtain academic success (Herbert & Reis, 1999). The reasoning behind this is the different influences that each environment has on high risk students. Most successful students acknowledge this fact and explain that outside role models influence their achievement.

High Risk Students

- *School vs. Home Cultures*
 - Parental encouragement in ECA participation key to increased classroom performance
 - ECA's nurture students' social interests & talents
 - School performance depends on:
 - Parents' education levels
 - Parents' involvement in children's lives



Teacher Orientation

Even when parent education levels are low, students who experience active parental involvement perform at higher levels of academic achievement (Darling et al., 2005; Herbert & Reis, 1999). When parents encourage their students to participate in extracurricular activities, and when parents take an active interest in these activities, student performance in the classroom increases. Extracurricular activity involvement is important to the success of high risk youth because it nurtures their social interests and talents (Herbert & Reis). Parents' education levels and their involvement in their children's lives are the primary predictors of how a student will perform in school. An increase in even one of these factors has a positive influence on a student's academic success. All in all, parental encouragement of these programs, in combination with parental cooperation in these programs, is essential in order to promote the academic success of their children.

Delinquent Behaviors

- ECA participation leads to lower numbers of delinquent behaviors
 - Drug use
 - Alcohol use
- ECA participation influences students to make good choices that promote success



Teacher Orientation

Students, who participate in extracurricular activities, have lower numbers of delinquent behaviors that lead to academic failure than nonparticipants (Mahoney, 2000). Darling et al. (2005) found that participation in extracurricular activity predicted lower levels of drug and alcohol use and higher levels of positive academic attitudes. Additionally, students, who participate, perform better in school and hold higher academic aspirations than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities. Overall, participation in extracurricular activities can influence the students to make choices that promote their success in school.

Delinquent Behaviors

- *Prosocial Activities:*
 - Student council
 - Youth groups
 - Band
- Lowest levels of delinquency via ECA membership
- All ECA participation leads to lower levels of drug use



Teacher Orientation

Students, who participated in activities such as student council, youth groups, and band, displayed the lowest levels of delinquency in comparison to students who participated in athletics. Also, these prosocial behaviors promoted positive behaviors among students. However, all extracurricular activity participation leads to lower level of drug use among adolescents.

Summary

- ECA participation leads to increased academic achievement
- Success stems from positive peer & adult relationships that are developed
- High-risk students benefit immensely because they discourage risky behaviors
- Parents & teachers need to encourage & support ECA participation

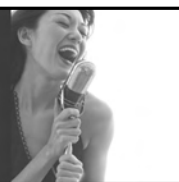


Teacher Orientation

In conclusion, the benefits of extracurricular activity participation among students in the middle and high school grades appear to be worthwhile. Clearly, the most undisputable advantage to these after-school programs is the increased academic achievement experienced by the participants. This success is attributed to the positive peer and adult relationships developed among the participants. These relationships encourage academic performance and post secondary education and often discourage the engagement in risky behaviors. High-risk students especially benefit from these types of relationships. Based upon the available research, it appears that students should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities in order to give them the support necessary to excel in school and in their post secondary lives.

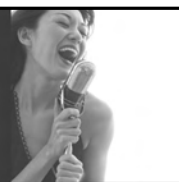
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Freshman Orientation Presentation

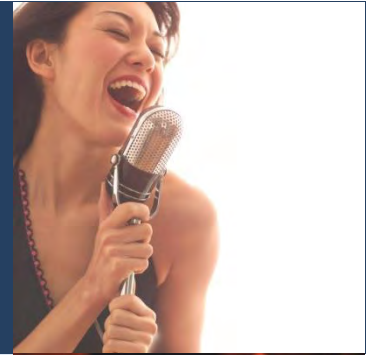
Extracurricular Activities and Academic Performance

A Gateway to Academic and Career Achievement



The Debate

- What effect does participation in extracurricular activities have on academic progress?
 - Side 1: Higher grades & increased likelihood of postsecondary education.
 - Side 2: Reduces the amount of time you can devote to schoolwork & results in lower grades and fewer opportunities for college.



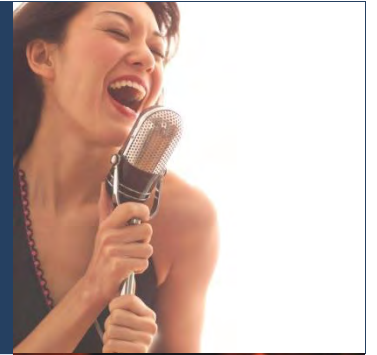
Types of Extracurricular Activities (ECAs)

- Athletics
- Band & Orchestra
- Social Clubs
- Academic Clubs
- Music & Theater
- Religious Organizations
- Other



Benefits of Participation

- Acquisition of new skills
 - Organization
 - Planning
 - Time-management
- Develop/Strengthen attitudes
 - Discipline
 - Motivation
- Receive social rewards



Social Benefits

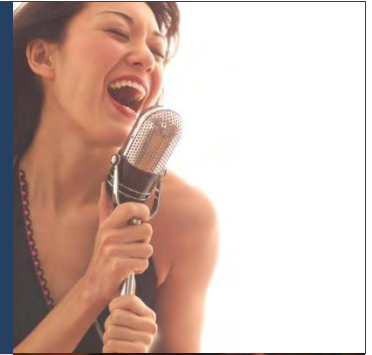
- Socialization with peers
- Socialization with adults
- Set & achieve goals
- Compete fairly
- Recover from defeat
- Resolve disputes peaceably
- Acquisition of interpersonal skills
- Stronger emotional & social connections to school



Social Benefits

- ECA participation provides opportunities for adolescents:
 - To acquire & practice social, physical & intellectual skills
 - To contribute to one's community
 - To acquire a sense of agency
 - To belong to a recognized social group
 - To establish social networks
 - To experience challenges of adolescence

(Eccles et al, 2003; McNeal, 1999)



Educational Benefits

- Higher educational achievement
- Increased job quality in life
- Increase participation in politics
- Engagement in volunteer activities
- Better mental health as an adult

(Eccles et al, 2003; McNeal, 1998)



Educational Benefits

- Increased self-concept
- Higher grade point average
- Better school engagement
- Better school attendance
- Higher educational aspirations
- Higher career aspirations



Sports Participation

- Most popular form of ECA among adolescents
- Provide both physical and mental challenges
- Provide sense of identification with a specific social group
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Leisure Environments

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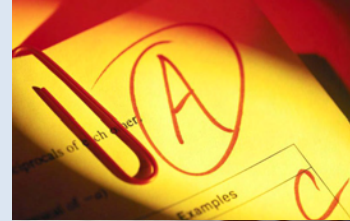
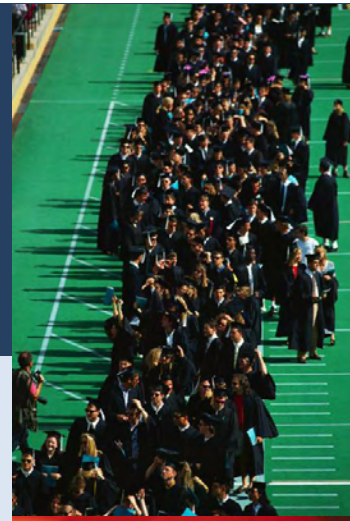
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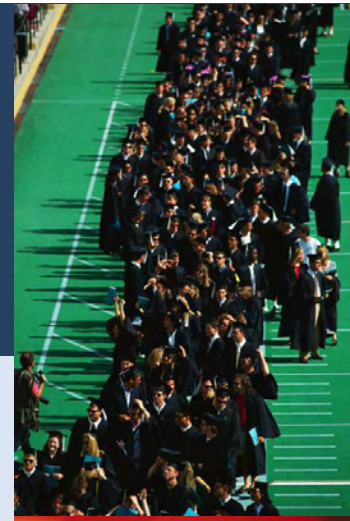
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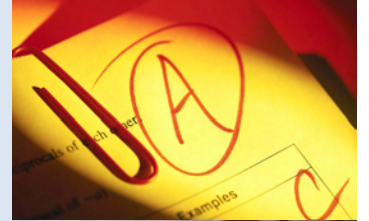
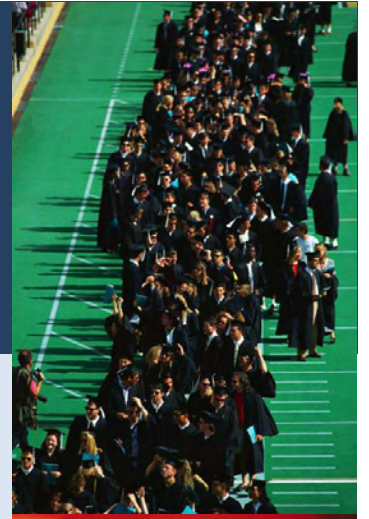
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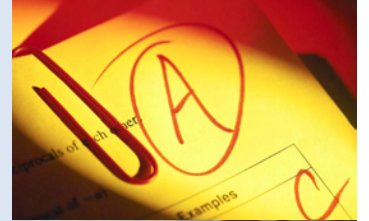
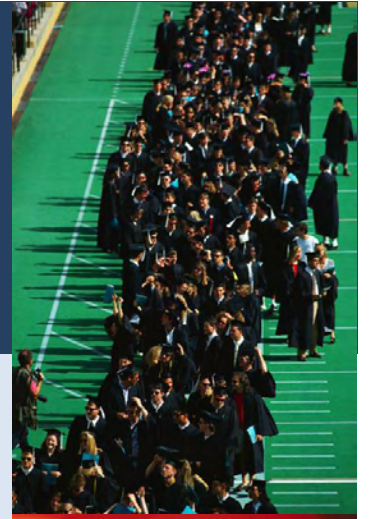
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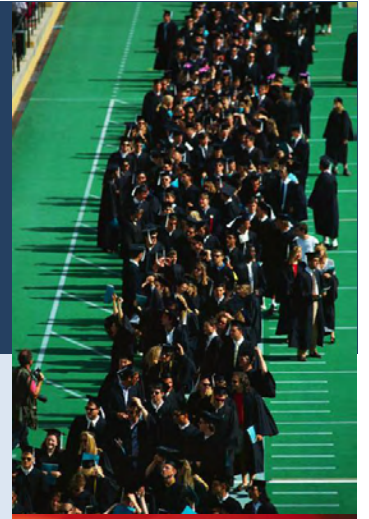
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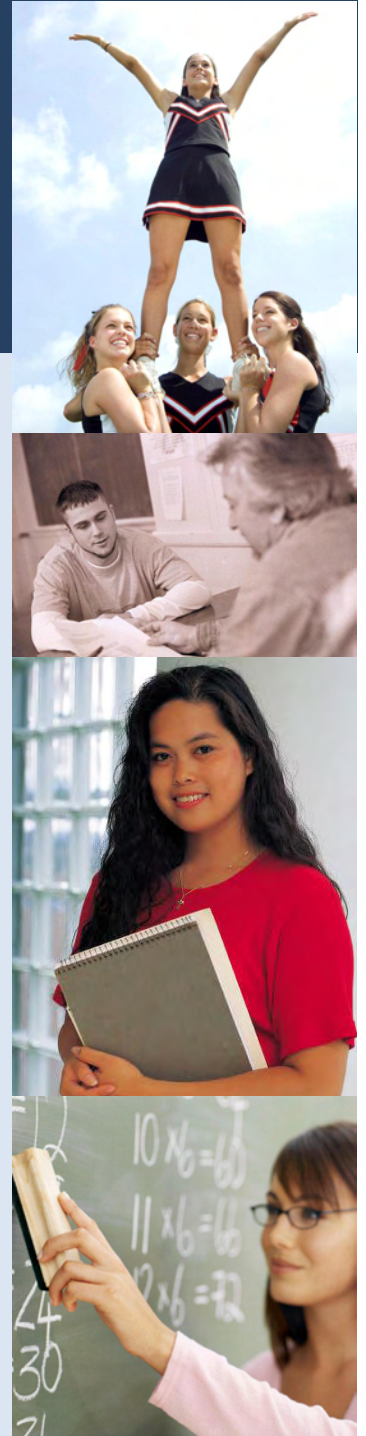
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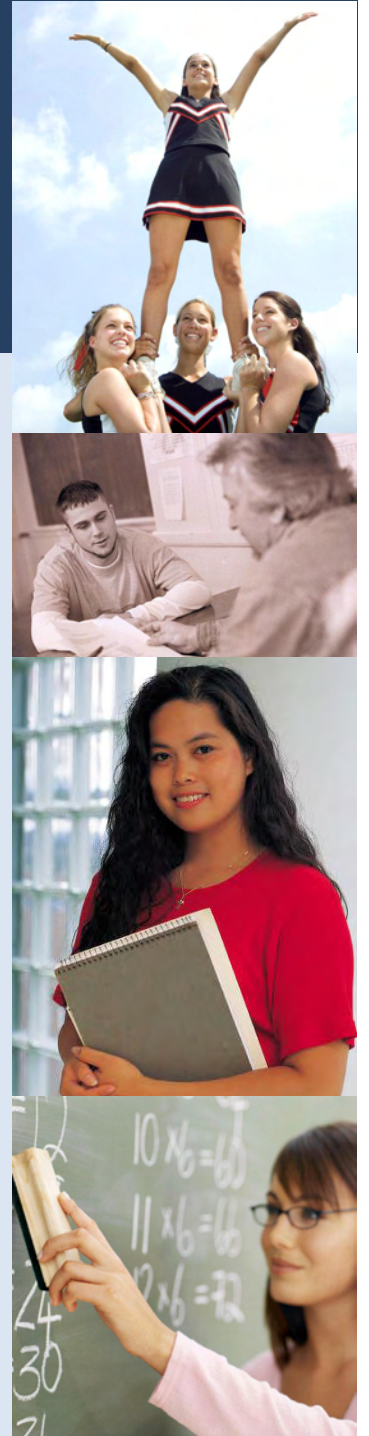
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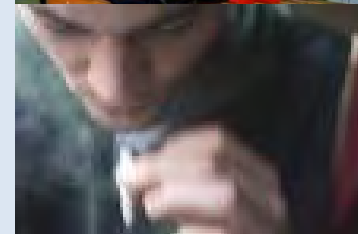
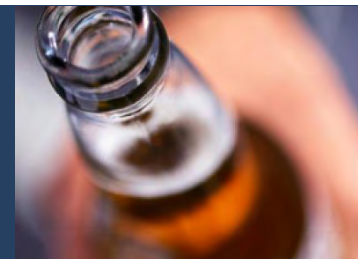
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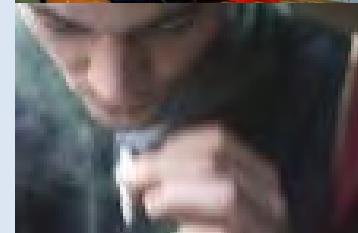
Delinquent Behaviors

- ECA participation leads to lower numbers of delinquent behaviors
 - Drug use
 - Alcohol use
- ECA participation influences students to make good choices that promote success



Delinquent Behaviors

- *Prosocial Activities:*
 - Student council
 - Youth groups
 - Band
- Lowest levels of delinquency via ECA membership
- All ECA participation leads to lower levels of drug use



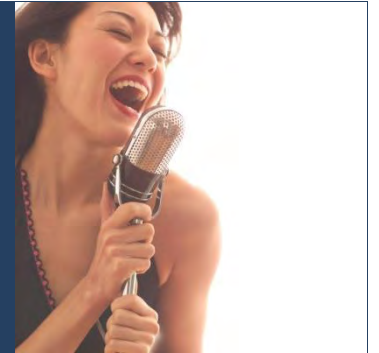
Summary

- ECA participation leads to increased academic achievement
- Success stems from positive peer & adult relationships that are developed
- High-risk students benefit immensely because they discourage risky behaviors
- Parents & teachers need to encourage & support ECA participation



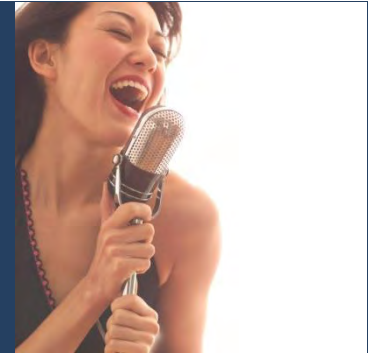
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Extracurricular Activities and Academic Performance

*A Gateway to Academic and
Career Achievement*



The Debate

- What effect does participation in extracurricular activities have on academic progress?
 - Side 1: Higher grades & increased likelihood of postsecondary education.
 - Side 2: Reduces the amount of time you can devote to schoolwork & results in lower grades and fewer opportunities for college.



Freshman Orientation

Should you or shouldn't you participate in extracurricular activities? That is the question. One position is that participation leads to higher grades and increased likelihood of postsecondary education. Another position is that participation in these types of activities reduces the amount of time you can devote to schoolwork and results in lower grades and fewer opportunities for college. There is no clear answer; however, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that participation in extracurricular activities, when kept at an appropriate level, will increase the educational success of high school students.

Types of Extracurricular Activities (ECAs)

- Athletics
- Band & Orchestra
- Social Clubs
- Academic Clubs
- Music & Theater
- Religious Organizations
- Other



Freshman Orientation

Participation in school based extracurricular activities goes back a long way. Some of these activities are in the form of athletics, band and orchestra, social clubs, academic clubs, music and theater, and religious organizations.

Benefits of Participation

- Acquisition of new skills
 - Organization
 - Planning
 - Time-management
- Develop/Strengthen attitudes
 - Discipline
 - Motivation
- Receive social rewards



Freshman Orientation

Participation helps to achieve both academic and nonacademic goals, because it helps you to acquire new skills (organizational, planning, time-management, etc.), to develop or strengthen particular attitudes (discipline, motivational), or to receive social rewards that influence personality characteristics.

Social Benefits

- Socialization with peers
- Socialization with adults
- Set & achieve goals
- Compete fairly
- Recover from defeat
- Resolve disputes peaceably
- Acquisition of interpersonal skills
- Stronger emotional & social connections to school



Freshman Orientation

Extracurricular activities are known to help adolescents to socialize with peers and adults, set and achieve goals, compete fairly, recover from defeat, and resolve disputes peaceably. Participation in extracurricular activity also helps you to acquire social skills and positive social norms, make friends, and establish stronger emotional and social connections to your school.

Social Benefits

- ECA participation provides opportunities for adolescents:
 - To acquire & practice social, physical & intellectual skills
 - To contribute to one's community
 - To acquire a sense of agency
 - To belong to a recognized social group
 - To establish social networks
 - To experience challenges of adolescence

(Eccles et al, 2003; McNeal, 1999)



Freshman Orientation

These extracurricular activities provide opportunities for adolescents: (a) to acquire and practice social, physical, and intellectual skills; (b) to contribute to your community and develop a sense of agency; (c) to belong to a recognized social group that is valued within the community; (d) to establish social networks of peers and adults who can help in crisis situations; and (e) to experience and deal with the challenges of normal adolescent life (Eccles et al.; McNeal, 1999).

Educational Benefits

- Higher educational achievement
- Increased job quality in life
- Increase participation in politics
- Engagement in volunteer activities
- Better mental health as an adult

(Eccles et al, 2003; McNeal, 1998)



Freshman Orientation

In addition to the social benefits, extracurricular activity participation is linked to: (a) higher educational achievement, (b) increased job quality later in life, (c) increased participation in politics, (d) ongoing engagement in volunteer activities, and (e) better mental health in adulthood.

Educational Benefits

- Increased self-concept
- Higher grade point average
- Better school engagement
- Better school attendance
- Higher educational aspirations
- Higher career aspirations



Freshman Orientation

In addition, participation in extracurricular activities leads to positive student outcomes, such as:

(a) increased self-concept, (b) higher grade point average, (c) better school engagement, (d) better school attendance, and (e) higher educational and career aspirations (Elder & Conger, 2000; March & Kleitman; 2002, Youniss, McLellan; & Yates, 1999; all cited in Eccles et al.; Marsh, 1992; McNeal; Otto & Awin, 1977; Picou, 1978; Spady, 1980; Jable, 1986; Laughlin, 1978; all cited in Silliker & Quirk,).

Sports Participation

- Most popular form of ECA among adolescents
- Provide both physical and mental challenges
- Provide sense of identification with a specific social group
- Develop positive academic behaviors
- Develop ability to work as a team



Freshman Orientation

Athletics is the more recognizable form of extracurricular participation, and is the most popular among adolescents. In fact, you are more likely to participate in school based sports than in another type of extracurricular activity. Sports are beneficial to you because participation provides you with a physical and mental challenge as well as a sense of identification with a specific social group. All in all, participation in school based sports programs seems to develop positive academic behaviors among students.

Leisure Environments

- Leisure Environments are ECA with:
 - Optional participation
 - Comfortable environment
 - Controlled setting



Freshman Orientation

Participation in school based extracurricular activities provides highly structured leisure environments for adolescents. These environments provide optional participation, a comfortable environment, and a controlled setting.

Leisure Environments

- You manage own experiences
 - Exerting personal control
 - Acting autonomously
- Find something to meet needs & interests
- Form own identities by:
 - Choosing activities
 - Choosing your actions



Freshman Orientation

Leisure is defined as a “context in which adolescents are encouraged to manage their own experiences by exerting personal control over their environments and acting autonomously”. You form your own identities through leisure environments because you can choose the activities in which you are involved, and what you do within a given setting. Furthermore, extracurricular activities provide a opportunity for you to experiment with your identities and choices within a controlled environment that is sanctioned by adults.

Academic Achievement

- Students who participate in ECAs are more successful in several academic aspects of your lives.
 - Stronger effect than activities outside of school
 - Success in high school paves way for success in college and professional life



Freshman Orientation

Students, who participate in extracurricular activities, are more successful in several academic aspects of their lives. Participation in school based extracurricular activities have a stronger effect on academic achievement than other activities outside of school. The ability to excel at the secondary level paves the way for you to continue to experience success in college, in your professional lives, and within your social circles.

Academic Achievement

- Students who participate in structured and religious activities during your freshman and sophomore years:
 - More optimistic about your life chances
 - Participated in more ECAs
 - More prepared for class senior year



Freshman Orientation

Students, who participate in structured and religious activities during your sophomore year of high school: (a) feel more optimistic about their your chances, (b) participate in more extracurricular activities, and (c) are more prepared for class during your senior year. This success was not seen in students who participated in extracurricular activities for only 1 year during their secondary education experience.

Academic Achievement

- College Attendance
 - Unusually common for students consistently involved in ECAs
 - Attributed to your ability to set challenging goals
 - Increased self-esteem = increased success



Freshman Orientation

College attendance is unusually common for students who are consistently involved in extracurricular activities. This is attributed to the your ability to set new and challenging goals for the future as current skills increase. Students begin by setting challenging goals in their activity, and then being able to set challenging goals in school. As such, when you participate in extracurricular activities, you set ambitious goals for your future, including plans for college. Often, students who experience success in high school visualize continued success in college. This positive view of yourself helps you to initiate and follow through on the college application process.

Academic Achievement

- Peer Social Support
 - Develop positive peer associations
 - Positive peer association motivator for academic success
 - Peers validate efforts in class & activities



Freshman Orientation

Another factor that contributes to academic achievement is the social support that you receive through your participation in extracurricular activities. You develop positive friendships through extracurricular activity participation and identify yourself as part of a group. Numerous students in extracurricular activity peer groups possess aspirations for college; therefore, they do well academically. A network of achieving peers proved absolutely essential to the achievement of most extracurricular activity participants, and that students were aware of its existence and influence on their success.

Academic Achievement

- Adult Social Support
 - Opportunities for interaction with nonparental adults
 - Builds sense of optimism & confidence
 - Supervised by positive role models
 - Adult sponsors promote:
 - Importance of high academic performance
 - Academic aspirations
 - Academic achievement



Freshman Orientation

In addition to peer support, adult support is important for continued academic success. Successful students receive support and encouragement from each other and from supporting adults including teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, and mentors. You must have opportunities for interaction with adults who are not your parents. This type of interaction builds your sense of optimism, which contributes to confidence in your ability to excel academically. Adults, who sponsor and coach these activities, promote: (a) the importance of high academic performance, (b) academic aspirations, and (c) academic achievement to the participating students.

Self-Esteem

- Adolescents level of self-esteem effects how you perform academically
- Activities that increase your perception of competence:
 - Increase self-esteem
 - Increase academic performance
- Activities that allow you to demonstrate your abilities are best.



Freshman Orientation

Standards of peer acceptance are established during the adolescent years, and participation in peer value activities can increase peer approval and your self-esteem. Participation in activities that increase your perception of competence will have a positive effect on self-concept and, as a result, you will perform at a higher academic level.

Self-Esteem

- *School Engagement*
 - ECA participation encourages you to perform well in every aspect of life
 - ECA's serve as a moderator of antisocial behavior
 - Faculty members who encourage ECA participation help create a positive school environment



Freshman Orientation

The connection between self-esteem and school engagement hinges on the principle that participation in extracurricular activities increases your motivation to succeed in every aspect of life, including school. Participation in extracurricular activities also may be a moderator of antisocial behavior. School engagement continues as you: (a) find a sense of meaning in school, (b) begin to believe in themselves, and (c) receive positive feedback for their academic efforts. Finally, when school faculty encourage student participation in extracurricular activities, the school climate becomes more positive, which in turn, increases student involvement.

Self-Esteem

- *School Engagement*
 - When you find sense of meaning in school, you are more involved & successful
 - Sense of meaning:
 - Increases levels of motivation
 - Strengthens self-confidence
 - ECA's allow you to socialize with other high achieving students



Freshman Orientation

When you find a sense of meaning in school, you are more involved and successful in the classroom. Participation in extracurricular activities helps to establish this connection. Students, who were involved in extracurricular activities, commonly experience a purpose connected with school engagement and the educational process. This connection results in greater adherence to the educational process, in both high school and college. Furthermore, this sense of meaning increases the levels of motivation in you and strengthens your self-confidence. This amplified motivation and self-confidence results in your belief in yourself. Also, students involved in extracurricular activities tend to develop peer groups with other high achieving students. These peer groups offer encouragement, which increases your belief in your potential achievements both extracurricularly and academically.

High Risk Students

- Challenges:
 - Low household income
 - Difficult home culture
- Increased obstacles to success
- ECA participation establishes a routine of success
- Success in ECA's leads to desired success in school



Freshman Orientation

Participation in extracurricular activities is helpful in order to establish a routine of success for students who currently have none and represents an attractive stepping stone that encourages conventional behavior. This experience of success leads to the desire to perform well academically and engage in positive social behaviors, regardless of the struggles of the home environment.

High Risk Students

- *Low Economic Status*
 - Students not encouraged to live up to full potential (Herbert & Reis, 1999)
 - ECA's allows for socialization with students in multiple income brackets
 - Exposed to better attitudes toward school
 - Acquired peer relationships & self-confidence influence academic success

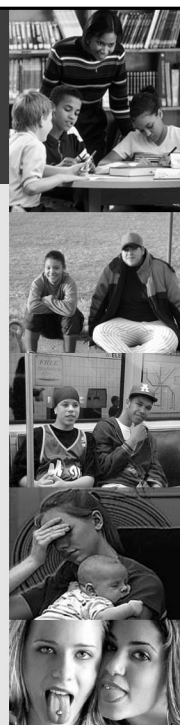


Freshman Orientation

Often, minority students are discouraged by members of society to live up to their full potential. Through participation in extracurricular activities, these students can find recognizable success. Participation in extracurricular activities allows students from low income families to socialize with students from higher income brackets. This experience exposes at-risk students to peers who have better attitudes toward school. The peer relationships formed and self-confidence gained through participation in extracurricular activities may, in turn, influence the success of low income students in the classroom.

High Risk Students

- *Reduced Drop-Out Rates*
 - A link exists between ECA participation & reduced dropout rates
 - Participation in middle & early high school lead to decreased dropout of 40%
 - 2 or more years of participation has greatest impact on academic success



Freshman Orientation

A link exists between extracurricular activity participation among high risk students and lower dropout rates. Specifically, when high risk students participated in extracurricular activities during middle or early high school, the rates of early dropout decreased dramatically. Athletic participation has been found to reduce school dropout by 40%. Extracurricular activity participation provides opportunities to create a positive and voluntary connection to the school and its values, which is especially beneficial to students whose prior commitment has been marginal. Overall, participation in extracurricular activities, of 2 or more years, has the greatest impact on the academic success of high risk students.

High Risk Students

- *School vs. Home Cultures*
 - Students need to separate home & school cultures in order to achieve academically
 - Outside role models influence academic achievement



Freshman Orientation

High risk students must be able to separate the in-home and school cultures in order to obtain academic success. The reasoning behind this is the different influences that each environment has on high risk students. Most successful students acknowledge this fact and explain that outside role models influence their achievement.

High Risk Students

- *School vs. Home Cultures*
 - Parental encouragement in ECA participation key to increased classroom performance
 - ECA's nurture students' social interests & talents
 - School performance depends on:
 - Parents' education levels
 - Parents' involvement in children's lives



Freshman Orientation

Even when parent education levels are low, students who experience active parental involvement perform at higher levels of academic achievement. When parents encourage their students to participate in extracurricular activities, and when parents take an active interest in these activities, student performance in the classroom increases. Extracurricular activity involvement is important to the success of high risk youth because it nurtures their social interests and talents. Parents' education levels and their involvement in their children's lives are the primary predictors of how a student will perform in school. An increase in even one of these factors has a positive influence on a student's academic success. All in all, parental encouragement of these programs, in combination with parental cooperation in these programs, is essential in order to promote your academic success.

Delinquent Behaviors

- ECA participation leads to lower numbers of delinquent behaviors
 - Drug use
 - Alcohol use
- ECA participation influences students to make good choices that promote success



Freshman Orientation

Students, who participate in extracurricular activities, have lower numbers of delinquent behaviors that lead to academic failure than nonparticipants. Participation in extracurricular activity predicted lower levels of drug and alcohol use and higher levels of positive academic attitudes. Additionally, students, who participate, perform better in school and hold higher academic aspirations than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities. Overall, participation in extracurricular activities can influence the students to make choices that promote their success in school.

Delinquent Behaviors

- *Prosocial Activities:*
 - Student council
 - Youth groups
 - Band
- Lowest levels of delinquency via ECA membership
- All ECA participation leads to lower levels of drug use



Freshman Orientation

Students, who participated in activities such as student council, youth groups, and band, displayed the lowest levels of delinquency in comparison to students who participated in athletics. Also, these prosocial behaviors promoted positive behaviors among students. However, all extracurricular activity participation leads to lower level of drug use among adolescents.

Summary

- ECA participation leads to increased academic achievement
- Success stems from positive peer & adult relationships that are developed
- High-risk students benefit immensely because they discourage risky behaviors
- Parents & teachers need to encourage & support ECA participation

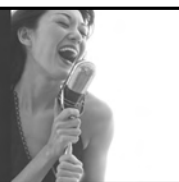


Freshman Orientation

In conclusion, the benefits of extracurricular activity participation among students in the middle and high school grades appear to be worthwhile. Clearly, the most undisputable advantage to these after-school programs is the increased academic achievement experienced by the participants. This success is attributed to the positive peer and adult relationships developed among the participants. These relationships encourage academic performance and post secondary education and often discourage the engagement in risky behaviors. High-risk students especially benefit from these types of relationships. All in all, students should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities in order to give them the support necessary to excel in school and in their post secondary lives.

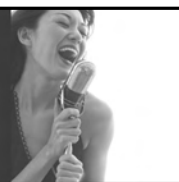
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TYPES OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (ECA)

Public & private schools offer a variety of extracurricular activities for your student to participate in:

1. Athletics
2. Band & Orchestra
3. Social Clubs
4. Academic Clubs
5. Music & Theater
6. Religious Organizations

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ECA PARTICIPATION?

ECA participation allows students to develop a positive self-esteem through socialization with both their peer and positive adult role models. This socialization enables students to experience real-life challenges, and prepares them for life.

This positive socialization also encourages students to set and achieve goals. Successful completion of goals encourages high academic achievement.

SUMMARY

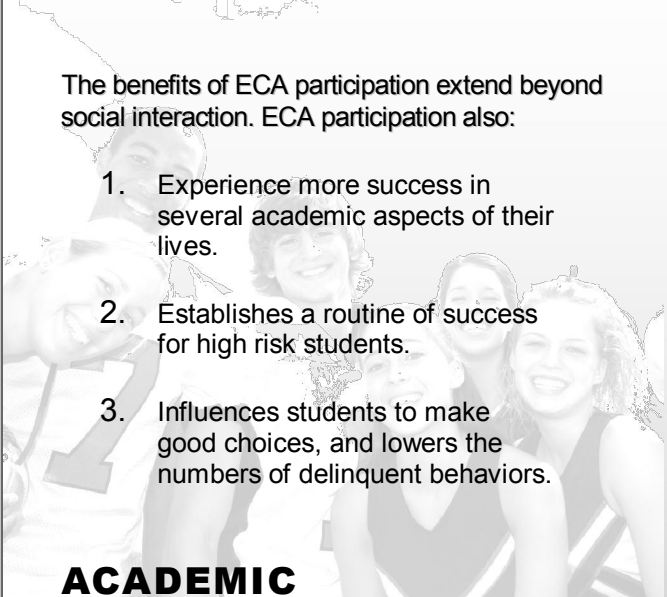
- ECA participation leads to increased academic achievement
- Success stems from positive peer & adult relationships that are developed
- High-risk student benefit immensely because they discourage risky behaviors
- Parents & teachers need to encourage & support ECA participation



Extracurricular Activity & Academic Performance



**A GATEWAY TO ACADEMIC &
CAREER ACHIEVEMENT**



The benefits of ECA participation extend beyond social interaction. ECA participation also:

1. Experience more success in several academic aspects of their lives.
2. Establishes a routine of success for high risk students.
3. Influences students to make good choices, and lowers the numbers of delinquent behaviors.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Students who participate in ECAs are more successful in several academic aspects of their lives. These students usually go on to attend college. This is attributed to the fact that success in ECAs encourages success in the classroom.

Students who participate in ECAs :

- Feel more optimistic about their life chances
- Are more prepared for class during their senior year.
- Have a higher GPA
- Attend school on a regular basis

ECA participation also leads to:

- Higher educational & career aspirations
- Increased job quality in life
- Increased participation in politics
- Ongoing engagement in volunteer activities
- Better mental health in adulthood

HIGH RISK STUDENTS

Participation in ECAs helps to establish a routine of success for high risk students. The success they find through ECAs serves as a stepping stone that encourages conventional behavior.

ECA participation allows high risk students to form positive relationships with other peers and adults. This interaction allows students to gain encouragement and motivation from students from a variety of income brackets. The relationships formed and self-confidence gained through participation in ECAs may influence the success of high risk students in the classroom.

Students who participate in ECAs also are less likely to drop out. Specifically, when high risk students participated in ECAs during middle or early high school, the rates of early dropout decreased by 40%.

The ability for high risk students to separate home and school cultures is crucial in order to obtain academic success. Outside role models, especially adults with high academic achievement, influence students' desire to perform well both in and out of the classroom.

Finally, high risk students often find adult encouragement from their participation in ECAs, which promotes academic success.



DELINQUENT BEHAVIORS

Students who participate in ECAs are less likely to engage in drug and alcohol use. Participation in ECAs can influence students to make choices that promote their success in school.

ECA participation encourages socialization with other students who exhibit positive social behaviors. This interaction reduces the number of risky behaviors that students are involved in, and increases that likelihood of secondary and post-secondary success.



Conclusion

The applied projects are intended for schools to use in order to recruit student participation in extracurricular activities. The PowerPoint presentation is an in-depth explanation of the benefits of extracurricular activity participation. It can be used during a presentation, such as freshman orientation, in order to encourage new students to participate in the available school activities. This presentation can also be posted on a website and downloaded for personal use. The presentation is self-automated, making the presentation easy to navigate for an individual. The electronic brochure is a condensed version of the presentation. It can easily be posted on a website and downloaded for the use of either individuals or school faculty. The tri-fold design also allows the brochure to be printed and copied in order to hand out at school functions. The combination of these two projects allows school faculty members to easily promote the benefits of extracurricular activity participation to new and returning students, and their parents.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The applied project was designed as a public relations piece to be used by schools in order to promote extracurricular activity participation. The peer reviewers provided feedback that suggests that the author attained her goal. Few modifications were suggested, and most of the reviewers found the project to be a beneficial asset to the cause. While there are limitations to the project, it is clear that it could easily be incorporated into an extracurricular activity recruitment campaign for any high school.

Contribution of the Project

Few schools have a structured program that encourages students to participate in extracurricular activities. While some people feel that participation in these activities is distracting to a student's academic progress, the research clearly suggests that the opposite is true. Therefore, it is important to educate students, parents, and teachers of these benefits. Each of the applied projects fulfills this need. The PowerPoint presentation can be used at either a Teacher Orientation program or Freshman Orientation. The presentation designed for teachers is aimed at informing them of the benefits of extracurricular activities, and to also encourage them to become sponsors or coaches of such activities. The presentation designed for students was created with the goal of recruiting incoming freshmen to participate in extracurricular activities. Freshman Orientation was chosen because the research suggests that the benefits of participation are greatest when a student begins participation in early high school. When

the presentations are used as designed, extracurricular participation should increase at a given school and the academic success of the students should also be affected in a positive manner.

The second piece of the applied project was the electronic brochure. This project was specifically designed to inform parents of the benefits of extracurricular participation. The project was designed as an electronic brochure, which allows schools to use it in whichever way is most convenient. It can be posted on a website for parents to download at will, or it can be printed and reproduced to give to parents. The latter would be beneficial for an all-school mailing, or to have available at a school function. Through this tool, parents can easily become educated of the benefits of extracurricular activity participation without the tediousness of reviewing the research on their own. Giving this information to the parents in a simple format allows parents to prepare their children for success in their academic and professional careers.

Resolution of the Original Problem

The original problem that the author encountered was the lack of easily accessible information pertaining to the benefits and detriments of extracurricular activity participation. Through the research, the author determined that the benefits of extracurricular activity participation greatly outnumber the drawbacks. However, this information continues to be a confusing debate among the general public. There needed to be a device that would present the research in a clear and concise manner that anyone could understand. The author has provided two devices that meet this need through the development of the PowerPoint presentation and the electronic brochure. When school

administrators choose to use this information to inform the students, parents, and teachers at their institution of the benefits of extracurricular activity participation, they are providing these groups information to which they otherwise do not have access. Clearly, implementing these materials into the recruiting material for a school will help to clear up the debate of the effects of extracurricular activity participation on academic performance.

Limitations of the Project

The limitations of the project are few, but are important. The first and most important limitation is accessibility. The project can only be beneficial if people are able to access it. School administrators must provide the information either through presentations, mailing, or online access to the documents. Second, school administrators must know about the projects and have them available for their use. The author attempted to address this issue by consulting with the members of the Colorado High School Activities Association. While they were impressed with both projects and saw the value of them, there are no current plans to inform school administrators of their existence. While these limitations are small in number, they greatly affect the goal of this applied project.

Recommendations for Future Research and Study

The research clearly outlines the benefits of extracurricular activity participation; however, further research could be conducted to explore the effects of participation among high-risk students. It would be interesting to conduct a long-term study of how extracurricular activity participation, and lack thereof, affects high-risk youths' success

academically and also in their professional lives. The current research suggests that high-risk students, who participate in extracurricular activities, are more successful in school and in their professional lives, but those studies are few. Also, it would be helpful to separate the study into the different subdivisions of high-risk students, such as low-economic status, delinquent behaviors, teenage parenthood, etc. Breaking down the research into these categories would allow researchers to gain insight as to how extracurricular activity participation affects students in these specific situations. This information, in turn, could help administrators develop extracurricular activity programs that meet the specific needs of their students.

Assessment, Feedback and Changes

The author sent the complete project to six peers, in various positions at two school districts. She also sent a presentation survey, developed in a Likert scale format, in order for each peer to comment on the projects. Three of the peers returned the survey with comments. When asked about the PowerPoint presentation, all three agreed that it was presented in a clear and interesting manner, and was appropriate for the targeted audiences. Also, all three agreed that the presentation was an effective public relations piece and would use it to encourage extracurricular activity participation. The main suggestion of the project was to have the author recheck the wording of some of the slides and script.

The reviewers also responded positively to the electronic brochure. All three reviewers agreed that the brochure was appropriate for, and could easily be understood by, the general public. They also agreed that the brochure could easily be downloaded

and printed for distribution. Of the three reviewers, all agreed that they would refer both parents and educators to this brochure. The main comment regarding the brochure was again targeted towards the wording of the text. Also, the representative from the Colorado High School Activities Association mentioned that the references to religious organization would have to be removed in order for it to be used by their organization.

Overall, the feedback to both projects was positive and suggested that these are tools that school administrators would be interested in using. The author took the reviewers' advice and made changes to the wording. Specifically, she revised the script for the Freshman Orientation presentation to include more informal language to which students would easily relate. As far as the reference to religious organization is concerned, the electronic brochure could also be made available in a Microsoft Word format to allow school administrators to personalize it to fit their needs.

Project Summary

All in all, the author has developed two projects that solve the problem of educating students, parents, and teachers of the benefits of extracurricular activity participation, and these projects are materials that school administrators are interested in using. The PowerPoint presentations provide a means to inform both students and teachers of the benefits of participation. It is the author's hope that the presentations will encourage teachers to sponsor and coach these activities, and will educate students of the variety of activities that schools have available for them. The electronic brochure is an easy way for school administrators to inform parents about the academic success that students participating in extracurricular activities achieve. The information available to

parents is limited, and school administrators can educate the parents by distributing these brochures at institutional events, or having it available to parent via a school website. The author will continue working with the members of the Colorado High School Activities Association, as well as school administrators, to make these projects available and to encourage their use in school extracurricular activity recruitment programs.

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Appendix

Presentation Survey

Please respond to the following questions to help me evaluate the effectiveness of the PowerPoint presentation and the electronic brochure. Keep in mind that the presentation was designed to be used by school to recruit extracurricular activity participation. One presentation script is targeted towards teachers and parents, and the other is targeted towards incoming freshman. The electronic brochure was designed to education parents and students about the benefits of extracurricular presentation, and is intended to be printed and distributed to that demographic. Your honest response will help me make any changes necessary in order for these tools to be used in the most beneficial manner. Thank you for helping me with this project.

PowerPoint Presentation (SD=Strongly Disagree, SA=Strongly Agree)

	SD					SA				
1. The information was presented in a clear and interesting manner.	1	2	3	4	5					
2. The script complemented the information on the slides.	1	2	3	4	5					
3. The information was appropriate for the targeted audiences.	1	2	3	4	5					
4. This presentation is a valuable resource for schools.	1	2	3	4	5					
5. The information is easily understandable for the general public.	1	2	3	4	5					
6. The information encourages student participation in ECA's	1	2	3	4	5					
7. The presentation uses animation to keep the interest of the audience.	1	2	3	4	5					
8. The presentation uses animation to emphasize key points.	1	2	3	4	5					
9. This presentation is an effective PR tool for schools to encourage ECA participation.	1	2	3	4	5					
10. I would use this presentation to encourage ECA participation.	1	2	3	4	5					

Comments: _____

Electronic Brochure (SD=Strongly Disagree, SA=Strongly Agree)

	SD					SA				
11. The information was presented in a clear and interesting manner.	1	2	3	4	5					
12. The information was appropriate for the targeted audiences.	1	2	3	4	5					
13. The information is easily understandable for the general public.	1	2	3	4	5					
14. The information encourages student participation in ECA's.	1	2	3	4	5					
15. The graphic complemented the information.	1	2	3	4	5					
16. The layout was pleasing to the eye.	1	2	3	4	5					
17. This brochure could easily be downloaded and printed for distribution.	1	2	3	4	5					
18. This brochure is an effective PR tool for schools to encourage ECA participation.	1	2	3	4	5					
19. I would use this brochure to encourage ECA participation.	1	2	3	4	5					
20. I would refer educators and parents to this brochure.	1	2	3	4	5					

Comments: _____

