



FACTS ABOUT YOUTH SPORTS AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Research shows that kids who are active and involved in sports do better in school, are more likely to attend college, and are less likely to be truant or drop out of school than their less active peers. Yet our educational system continues to cut recess and physical education programs to spend more time on academics. After-school programs must play a vital role in getting kids involved in sports and improving their educational outcomes.

Sports Opportunities in School are Limited

- Children's needs for daily physical activity are not being met at school. Only 3.8% of elementary schools, 7.9% of middle schools, and 2.1% of high schools provide daily physical education (PE) classes for the entire school year for students in all grades.¹
- There is no federal law that requires PE to be provided to students in the American education system, nor any incentives for offering PE programs.²
- California is one of 11 states that have requirements for the number of minutes per week spent on PE in elementary school. However, more than half of the elementary school districts in California did not meet these requirements in 2005.³

Sports Participants Have Better Academic Outcomes

- Participating in interscholastic sports throughout high school is related to improved math and English grades.⁴
- Adolescents who engage in moderate physical activity five or more times a week are more likely to achieve an 'A' in math and science than their peers.⁵
- High school athletes are more likely to have a positive relationship to school. A longitudinal study of 22,696 high school students in 1,052 schools found that both male and female athletes had higher grades, higher educational aspirations and fewer school discipline problems than non-athletes.⁶
- Sports participation is associated with lower dropout rates. In a survey of 14,249 high school students, students who participated in athletics were an estimated 1.7 times less likely to drop out than were those who did not participate.⁷

¹ Department of Health and Human Services. (2006). *School Health Policies and Programs Study 2006*.

² National Association for Sport and Physical Education & American Heart Association. (2006). *2006 Shape of the nation report: Status of physical education in the USA*. Reston, VA: National Association for Sport and Physical Education

³ California Center for Public Health Advocacy. (2006). District Compliance Summary in California Elementary School PE Requirements.

⁴ Broh, B. A. (2002). Linking extracurricular programming to academic achievement: Who benefits and why? *Sociology of Education*, 75(1), 69-95.

⁵ Nelson MC, Gordon-Larsen P. (2006) *Physical activity and sedentary behavior patterns are associated with selected adolescent health risk behaviors*. *Pediatrics* ;117:1281-1290.

⁶ Fejgin, N. (1994). "Participation in high school competitive sports: A subversion of school mission or contribution to academic goals?" *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 11:211-230.

⁷ McNeal, Ralph B., Jr. (1995) *Extracurricular activities and high school dropouts*. *Sociology of Education* 68.1: 62(19).



High School Athletes Are More Likely to Attend and Complete College

- High school students who play sports are more likely to be attending college full time at age 21 than non-participants.⁸
- The odds of graduating from college within 6 years of completing high school are 41% higher for females who played interscholastic high school sports than for those who did not.⁹

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⁸ Eccles, J.S., and Barber, B.L. (1999). "Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching band: What kind of extracurricular involvement matters?" *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 14(1):10-43.

⁹ Troutman, Kelly P., and Mikaela J. Dufur. (2007) *From high school jocks to college grads: assessing the long-term effects of high school sport participation on females' educational attainment*. *Youth & Society* 38.4: 443(20).