Promoting Multisport & Multi-activity Participation in Rural Schools Today

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Why We Do This
Quick poll:

Who is in the room today?
My Background

- 9 years in the classroom in Iowa and Missouri
  - Social Studies
  - Head Coaching

- 5th year as Activities Director & Middle School Assistant Principal
  - Lawson R-XIV School District in Northwest Missouri

- Ed.D. candidate for the University of Missouri
  - Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
Session Objectives

• Discuss state of activity specialization in U.S.
• Explain literature review on activities and academic achievement
• Why should school districts be concerned?
• Describe policy and practice suggestions
Trends in Participation

According to NFHS (2017), U.S. has experienced 28 straight years of increase in student participation in extracurricular activities; but what we don’t know is:

- A. Are more activities available in and out of school than ever before? Likely, yes.
- B. Are more students involved, but in less diverse ways (i.e. playing 1 sport instead of 2,3 etc.)?
Trends in Participation

▪ The only sport to see decrease participation numbers in 2017---FOOTBALL
  ▪ More than a concussion issue
    ▪ 1) youth sports burnout before physically developed
    ▪ 2) other options are becoming more popular such as cross country
    ▪ 3) Financial burdens
The Discussion Around Sport Specialization

- The fallacy of athletic participation and scholarships (7% and 1%)
- Injury overuse concerns
- Impact of the "club" sport culture spilling into education-based athletics
  - Year round training preventing other opportunities
  - Parent input expectations; options
Why Should School Districts Be Concerned?

• The last 30 years of research has identified that participation in extracurricular activities accounts for some of the variance in academic achievement, attendance, behavior, retention, and even post-high school success (Broh, 2002; Cooper et. al., 1999; Holland & Andre, 1987; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Melnick, Sabo, & Vanfossen, 1992, etc.).

• Era of accountability and budget cuts

• The challenge of unwrapping academic achievement
# Themes of Outcomes Associated with Extracurricular Participation

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<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Developmental</th>
<th>Academic</th>
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| • Associate with diverse groups of students and adults  
  • Acquire social capital from differing peer groups  
  • Improve communication skills | • Time management  
  • Organization  
  • Leadership/supporting status  
  • Prioritization  
  • Multi-tasking  
  • Selflessness  
  • Grit/determination | • Authentic problem solving  
  • Contextual understanding  
  • Network of support |
Literature Review Highlights

**Zero-Sum Theorists**
- Coleman (1961)- not enough time to excel in academic and activities
- Over-scheduling hypothesis (Mahoney & Vest, 2012)

**Developmental Theorists**
- Marsh & Kleitman, 2002 and social/cultural capital
- Social Bond Theory (Hirschi, 1969)
What does Research Say About Academic Achievement and Activities?

• what is considered an “extracurricular activity” - some includes outside of school groups?
• In school activities is more strongly related to achievement gains than out of school activities (Gerber, 1996).
• Students in activities have higher grades (GPA) and career aspirations (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fredericks & Eccles, 2006)
• Students in activities have higher standardized test scores (Everson & Milsap, 2007).
• Students in activities are less likely to drop out (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; McNeal, 1995).
Continued…

• Students from low SES backgrounds exhibit even greater benefits from activities participation (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

• Activity involvement has 2 times the effect size as compared to “study habits” on A.A. (Camp, 1990).

• Females who play sports tend to achieve higher on math and science assessments (Hanson & Krauss, 1999).

• School attendance. Sports is a difference maker. (Laughlin, 1978; Whitley, 1999; & Silliker & Quirk, 1997).
What Does Research Say About Behavior and Activities?

- Participation in activities leads to lower levels of delinquency; except alcohol usage in sports (Landers & Landers, 1978)
- The more time spent in structured activities leads to less time for risky behaviors (Osgood et. al, 1996; Stevensen, 2010).
- SES: affluent students are more likely to participate (McNeal, 1998)
- Students in activities are less likely to have referrals for discipline (Fejgin, 1994; Whitley, 1999)
- Students in activities benefit from social capital across extrafamilial networks (Broh, 2002).
Application of The Social Bond Theory to Extracurricular Participation & Academic Achievement
Implications for Policy and Practice

Policy

- More restrictive than MSHSAA by-laws? For all activities?
- Do district policies hinder/help participation?

Practice

- Promote and incentivize your offerings
- Collaboration for coaches and directors
- Human Resource utilization
- Budgetary Considerations
Local Policy Talking Points

• “Excused” status?
  ◦ Who approves?
  ◦ How much of the day?
  ◦ What is required?

• Transportational needs

• Grade checks

• Financial considerations for students/families (implicit & explicit)
Suggestions for Practice

• How do you promote the offerings you have? Open house for all activities? When?

• Do you work with community stakeholders to support? Ex.: robotics

• Web presence and who maintains it-implicit issues here

• Create or promote involvement in multiple activities through incentive programs
  ◦ Examples: Tri-sport athlete patch, school plaques, lifetime activity passes
Practice Suggestion #2: Collaboration

Many schools have adopted the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model with teaching staff; yet their activities personnel does not mirror this structure.

**Recommendation:** Carve out professional development time for these stakeholders to do so.

If possible, assign shadowing of another coach/director/sponsor in their “off-season”—”I had no idea phenomenon”

“If you don’t have a seat at the table, you’re on the menu.”-Dr. Timothy Wall, Dean School of Education, Northwest Missouri State University
Practice Suggestion #3

Is the district best utilizing current and prospective resources?
Human Resources Cannot Miss

- Utilize and encourage your on-staff employees to coach/supervise as much as possible
- What is your district’s expectation for event supervision?-what message does it send?
- Hiring-- Recruit, recruit, recruit, and network. Every student deserves the best. What could they bring to the table—ask! Who should learn more?
- Embrace change. “We have always done it this way.”—only goes so far.
Budgetary Considerations

▪ If you trust and believe the research—why would not INCREASE spending on extracurricular activities as compared to curricular or human resources?

▪ Adding an activity or sport –Math --Jr. High Cross Country example

▪ *new coach, $2,500 per year, uniforms $500, transportation-varies

▪ 10 more students participate in a fall activity vs. prior years, what social, academic, and development benefits does that investment have? (approx.$4,000)

▪ What else can $4,000 buy you in K-12 or K-8 schools today with that proclivity for a return?
New Revenue Streams For All Schools

▪ Internet streaming of games/activities that include sponsorships
▪ In game entertainment that includes paid advertisement
▪ Sharing in hosting costs for cross country meets, jamborees, etc.
▪ Liquidating surplus equipment through Govdeals.com or other avenues
Next Steps…

• Meet with your A.D. and/or administrative team to discuss the role the district envisions for activities

• Conduct a program evaluation
  
  • Adults model participation in multiple activities-SUCCESS MODELED
    • How?-attendance and participation
Conducting a quantitative analysis for a 3 year cohort of Missouri rural/bedroom community high school students involved in MSHSAA registered sports on the following:

• Is there a relationship between intensity (time) of sports participation and \textbf{ACT achievement} when holding constant for gender, race/ethnicity, prior GPA, and SES?
CONTACT INFORMATION

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References


