

EAD 801 Leadership and Organizational Development

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Extracurricular Activities are becoming more commonplace throughout schools in today's society. In reading of previous articles, authors have stressed the importance of how students are to feel like valuable members not only to their school/organization, but to society as well. The feeling of value originates in the student's commitment to various extracurricular activities which allow students to learn a wide variety of skills necessary for not only the success of their academic classes, but also for the success of their overall self. Extracurricular activities promote a positive atmosphere where the student is valued in his/her commitment to that activity, which also leads to an increased value or importance in school.

In the article by Gerber, a researcher named Coleman argued that youth culture places an emphasis on "athletics, material possessions, music, popularity, and dating" (Gerber, 1). The factors listed echo that there are numerous types of social influences that students face. These influences can be both positive and negative. The types of activities encompass students from all backgrounds regardless of race, culture, religion, or socioeconomic status. If students have an interest in extracurricular activities then there remains a strong correlation that the students have a strong interest in school and academics. Extracurricular activities promote self-confidence, self-esteem, and a feeling of responsibility for the student. These qualities seem to bridge the gap for students between school and the extracurricular and ultimately can motivate the student to finish or stay in school and prepare themselves for a life outside of school when they graduate or move to a higher education.

The research concerning extracurricular activities in school or outside school establishes a positive and committed student both in the classroom and after school. Some research strongly suggests that when students participate in an extracurricular activity they are more likely to attend and participate in school. Research also suggests that extracurricular activities are offered

to all schools regardless of school size or location (urban/local/private). The student's socioeconomic status is the only anomaly that seems to threaten the positives of extracurricular activities. For example, if a student cannot afford equipment for an athletic sport/club, then that student may not be able to play the sport like those of his peers. Yet another factor that can drastically affect participation of the student in extracurricular activities is the availability of transportation to and from the school related events. Overall, extracurricular activities seem to influence mostly all students in a profound manner that makes those students take pride in their school and find a purpose for themselves in life and in school.

Physical Education and a student's physical activity level may be one of the most influential factors when it comes down to improving academics. The video from Naperville High School demonstrates that a student's fitness levels are directly linked to improving reading skills by a half of a year and improving math scores. The video also suggests that exercise, and in particular physical education classes, also improve neural connections of the student when that student exercises for at least 20 minutes in their target heart rate zone. Improved academics is a great result because of physical activity, but it is also the healthy change that the student makes when they decide to fully engage in physical exercise that helps the student battle real-life and current battles such as preventing cancer, lowering obesity rates, and diabetes.