The Academic Benefits of High School Athletics

by

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ABSTRACT

With the current trend in educational budget cuts it is imperative that schools are aware of ways to increase student success. A negative stigma has often been associated with being an athlete. The following study was designed to discover whether students participating in athletics tend to possess significantly different grade point averages, and unexcused absence rates, than their non-athlete counterparts. Fifty students, both athletes and non-athletes, were surveyed at two, rural Midwestern high schools. The grade point averages and unexcused absence rates were obtained and compared during the spring semester of 2008-2009 school year. In previous research, participating in athletics has been shown to increase grade point averages and produce lower truancy rates. The research questions of this study focused on students in these rural high schools and asked: Do athletes possess a significantly different grade point average than non-athletes? Do athletes have fewer unexcused absences than non-athletes?

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Chapter I: Introduction

American schools are under increasing pressure to improve students' achievement (Broh, 2002). What many educators are unaware of is that a key component to academic improvement is formed down the hall from the classrooms and past the concession stand in that large area better known as a gymnasium. According to an on-going, long-term study, extracurricular activities are associated with reduced truancy rates, higher academic achievement in high school and college, and stronger attachment to a school (Galley, 2000). Extracurricular activities, particularly athletics, are one of the most prevalent practices in America's educational system (Broh, 2002). However, athletics is a luxury that an increasing number cannot afford. Many schools are dealt limited budgets, thus school officials are making cuts in athletics in an attempt to save money (Ewing, 1995). As an example, in 1991 a decision was passed by the Chicago Board of Education that reduced the athletic budgets of its sixty-four high schools by $6000 per year, which left them with a budget of $750. In addition, a report released by the Arkansas state education department, admitted that of the $2.7 billion spent from state and local funds during 2004, only $61 million, which is about 2%, was provided for athletic programs (Honawar, 2005). Unfortunately, many schools have been forced to diminish athletics entirely. For the substantial amount of high school students who are involved in athletics, this type of action can be detrimental. School districts across the nation are cutting back sports programs, or passing the cost onto students, which make some fear that the scholar athlete is at risk (The New York Times, 2008). For example, in Mount Vernon, where a substantial amount of adolescents participate in after-school athletics, countless educators and parents believe that athletics not only encourage children to attend school, but also keeps students away from detrimental activities such as drugs, crime and gangs. A recent survey by the National Federation of State

High School Associations reported that approximately 53% of high school students participate in athletics, which is more than 7,400,000 American students (Gillis & Howard, 2008). It is chilling to imagine our country having over seven million adolescents with nothing productive to take part in when the school dismissal bell rings. Although there is numerous data proving increases in self-esteem and teamwork, there is limited information on the prospective scholastic benefits of being an athlete. In the past, athletes have been stereotypically portrayed as the "dumb jock," or "ditsy cheerleader," while those not involved in sports were depicted as "science nerds" or "book worms." According to Jones (1996), this association allows individuals to be content engaging in stereotypical conversation where strength is associated with the lack of thinking and being smart is correlated with weakness. Furthermore, research has shown that participating in sports increases motivation to excel in various school activities and also encourages more proficient use of time (Byrd & Ross, 1991). Additionally, the National Education Longitudinal Study reported that high school female athletic participants have a greater chance of completing college than their non-athletic counterparts (Troutman & Dufur, 2007).

Along with many other advantages, athletics has even shown to increase teenagers' psychological wellbeing. An example of the perceived psychological benefits of athletic participation became apparent when a recent study reported that students who were active in athletic programs reported decreased levels of depressed mood compared to adolescents who did not engage in those activities (Mahoney, Schweder, & Stottin, 2002). Improved self-esteem and body-image are also factors contributing to the psychological well-being of high school athletes (Nichols, Sanborn, & Essery, 2007). An additional study showed that frequent, vigorous

activity, such as athletics, reduced the despair and suicide risk of adolescents (Taliaferro, Rienzo, Miller, Pigg, & Dodd, 2008). With teenage depression and suicide rates on the rise, this nation cannot afford to terminate athletic programs that promote the mental health of individuals.

There are many physical benefits of athletic participation including decreased risk for heart disease and diabetes (Nichols et al., 2007). In addition, being physically active and participating in athletics are associated with bone health, which should reduce the risk of fragility fractures later in life. Furthermore, one study's results shown that adults who are physically active tended to have high activity levels as children and adolescents (Dennison, Straus, Mellits, & Charney, 1988). Thus, if teenagers participate in high school athletics they are discouraged from forming a lifelong habit of physical inactivity. This nation's schools have kept a tradition of encouraging exercise that dated back to the 1850's (New York Times, 2008). However, less than 10% of current public schools maintain daily physical education classes. Some believe that the No Child Left Behind Act has cut back the majority of non-math and non-reading classes in order to focus more on achieving higher standardized test scores. What many schools are unaware of is studies have shown that student athletes tend to perform better on standardized tests than non-athletes (New York Times, 2008). The following research has been designed in an attempt to enlighten its readers to the academic advantages to being involved in athletics.

Statement of the Problem

This study is necessary because of the limited research regarding rural school athletes available on the topic. Furthermore, with the current trend of educational budget cuts athletic programs are one of the first to go. If school officials are aware of the potential academic benefits of athletic participation, it may be possible to save these programs. One difficulty the researcher has encountered is determining what constitutes an athlete versus a non-athlete. For

the purpose of this study, it has been decided that an athlete is anyone involved in an extra-curricular activity that utilizes exercise as a main component. The two questions the researcher hopes to answer are whether rural, Western Wisconsin athletes tend to possess significantly different grade point averages than non-athletes, and whether this population of athletes is considerably more or less truant than non-athletes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether athletes in rural Wisconsin schools tend to possess a different grade point average, and attend school with different frequency, than their non-athlete counterparts. Data was collected during the spring semester of 2009 through surveys administered to junior and senior level students at 2 rural high schools in Western Wisconsin.

Hypothesis

The researcher's hypothesis is that student athletes in two rural Wisconsin schools achieve greater academic achievement and lower unexcused absence rates than their non-athlete equivalents.

Definition of Terms

For clarity of understanding the study, the following terms are defined.

Academic Achievement: possessing an above average grade point average along with a low truancy rate.

Athlete: any student participating in an extracurricular activity involving strong, physical movement.

Athletics: "exercises and games requiring physical skill, strength, and endurance" (Merriam-Webster, 2004, p. 44).

Non-athlete: a student not involved in a sport, exercise, or game requiring physical skill, strength, or endurance.

Truant: "a student who stays out of school without permission" (Merriam-Webster, 2004, p. 766)

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The researcher assumes that the completed survey will indicate an honest response from the participant. In addition, it is expected that the survey measures what it was intended to assess.

One difficulty the researcher has encountered is determining what constitutes an athlete versus a non-athlete. Several precautions were taken to clarify this definition; however, limited ambiguity is expected for those completing the survey. Another limitation to this study is that only junior and senior level students were surveyed. Therefore, the results are not able to be generalized to an entire high school population. Furthermore, utilizing two rural Midwestern educational settings does not allow the researcher to survey various geographic locations or provide enough diversity that these results be applied to the general high school population.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter will review the literature regarding the benefits of high school athletic participation. First, evidence will be provided regarding high school athletics improving grades and decreasing truancy. Next, the researcher will provide literature of sports reducing suicide risk in adolescents, along with enhanced social status'. In addition, information will be provided regarding the enhancement of social status that is achieved while being an athlete. Finally, evidence of improved health in adolescents participating in athletics will be provided.

Improved Grades

Over the past two decades, the majority of research indicates that those who excel in the classroom tend to be involved in sports (Stephens & Schaben, 2002). The National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 found that a student's grades often improved if the individual participated in athletics (as cited in Broh, 2002). In addition, Ballantine (1981) cited six studies which reported a positive correlation between athletic participation and academic success. Furthermore, encouraging research compiled by the U.S. Department of Education reported that student athletes are three times more likely to possess a grade point average of 3.0 or higher (Mihoces,1996). Furthermore, a study by Stegman and Stephens (2000) indicated that students who are active in at least one sport possessed a higher grade point average (GPA) and class rank, than their counterparts who did not participate in sports. Similarly, being a member of an athletic team provided student athletes with higher GPA's and increased college attendance (Galley, 2000). An additional study reported that student athletes were more likely to graduate from college than those who did not participate in athletics. This is an important factor to consider, as in addition to a more favorable job market, college graduates enjoy lower unemployment rates and higher incomes than do less educated members of the workforce

(Fleetwood & Shelley, 2000). In terms of possessing higher incomes, in 1998 the median earning of college graduates was $41,000, compared to $23,000 that those with a high school education earned. The vast difference in these earnings, and the fact that the job market is more favorable, provide a clear example of the importance for youth to obtain a college education. Furthermore, you may be wondering why students who participate in athletics are greeted with more academic success. An answer was found in a recent study which concluded that being active in athletics assists students in building discipline and self-confidence, organizing time, and setting goals (Stegman & Stephens, 2000). When student-athletes apply these skills to their academics they are able to showcase success. Furthermore, research supports that students involved in athletic participation possess greater classroom performance than those who are not involved. Therefore, the strong research supporting high school athletes possessing higher GPA's should be cause to encourage the existence of athletic programs.

Decreased Truancy

One of the top ten problems that have a negative effect on youth is truancy (DeKalb, 2000). Shockingly, absentee rates have reached as high as 30% in some cities. For example, in New York City, approximately 150,000 out of 1,000,000 students are absent daily. School truancy is a problem that not only affects the student; it also affects the family and the community. Across the nation, police departments believe that many students absent from school are often committing crimes. These offenses tend to be vandalism, shoplifting and graffiti. In addition, truancy has a negative effect on student graduation, self-esteem, overall achievement, and employment potential. Robins and Ratcliff reported 75% truant students failed to graduate (as cited in DeKalb, 2000). Consequently, reduced earnings and other poor outcomes in the future are associated with failure to graduate. However, after school sports provide students with the opportunity to meet peers, experience a positive environment, and feel

accomplished, which is thought to reduce the likelihood of them being truant. An additional study reported that juvenile court appearances and truancy were decreased by 38% in one year because students were given access to free sports (Kirkham, 2006).

Reduced Suicide Risk

The third leading cause of death in adolescents is suicide (Taliaferro et al., 2008). In addition, the rate of adolescent suicide has increased 18% between 2003 and 2004. These statistics are startling; thus, the National Institute of Mental Health urges researchers study protective factors that may assist in decreasing the adolescent suicide rate (as cited in Taliaferro et al., 2008). A recent study indicated that being physically active promotes positive, psychological well-being such depressed mood, anxiety and stress, and self-esteem. Therefore, physical activity may protect adolescents against suicide. According to researchers, body appearance is a significant factor in determining self-esteem, which is a key player in both depression and suicidal feelings (Taliaferro et al., 2008). Thus, if exercise is associated with a more positive body image, it may reduce suicide risk. Additionally, being physically active on a team may provide additional suicide protection because it provides social support and incorporation. Adolescents in danger for committing suicide frequently feel excluded by peers; however, participating in sports often assists teens in obtaining confidence. A recent study found that adolescents are considerably less likely to arrange suicide if they were physically active regularly. In addition, a large study concluded that student athletes reported decreased feelings of depression compared to adolescents not participating in such activities (Mahoney et al., 2002). A drawback to such a positive finding is that engaging in physical activity or athletics may not be something that depressed or suicidal teens choose to engage in. A possible reason for this is that the symptoms correlated with depression make exercising difficult. These symptoms often

include, but are not limited to, decreased pleasure in daily life, desiring excessive time alone, fatigue or hypersomnia, and psychomotor agitation (WebMD, 2008).

Enhanced Social Status

Many studies have been compiled researching the significance of athletics on students' character. An example of this is the leading-crowd hypothesis, which believes that athletic participation provides athletes with an increased peer status (Broh, 2002). This type of crowd normally consists of the popular, college-oriented, high achieving students. Thus, researchers argue that participating in athletics increases ones social status to a group of academically oriented peers. This, in turn, may encourage higher academic performance. As an example, studies compiled by Coleman, Eitzen, and Thirer and Wright revealed that male athletes hold the highest social status in American high schools (as cited in Broh, 2002). Continuing to support the leading-crowd hypothesis, Lueptow and Kayser found that high school athletes with high social status tend to have higher grade point averages than their counterparts who do not participate in sports (as cited in Broh, 2002). Similarly, the social capital model suggests that one can gain social status from gaining membership in social networks (Broh, 2002). Coleman, along with others, believed that family is a primary site of social gain (as cited in Broh, 2002). If this is true, participation in sports may generate more social assets within the family system by providing opportunities for more social interactions between the parents and child. The social capital model also suggests that sports improves students' grades more than their test scores (Broh, 2002). Similarly, it has been found that involvement in sports presents an increased advancement to educational ambitions and expectations for students from low-income families than those from high-income families. Thus, athletic programs may significantly improve disadvantaged students' achievement. Research has shown that disadvantaged students are less

attached to school, and their parents are less likely to be active in their schooling. However, a fairly recent study suggests that athletic participation may be generating social capital among disadvantaged students and their parents, which may in turn improve their achievement. In addition, a students' decision to become truant often has a lot to do with peer pressure (DeKalb, 2000). One study found that 84% of truant students reported that their friends skipped school as well. Thus, if students can achieve enhanced social status by participating in athletics, it may decrease the likelihood of them becoming truant. Finally, in a study of 182 junior high students 68% of girls and 90% of boys agreed that students find an increase in peer status and popularity from participating in sports (as cited in Stegman & Stephens, 2000).

Crime Prevention

Recent evidence provides encouraging insight into sports and physical activity possessing the potential to reduce crime (Cameron & MacDougall, 2000). Sports and physical activity can reduce crime by providing easily available, proper activities in a positive environment. For many individuals, athletic participation a fantasy or fun activity that provides an opportunity to escape the reality of family problems, living on the streets, or feeling pressured to use drugs or alcohol. Furthermore, being part of a team provides the opportunity for students of diverse backgrounds to feel like equals. This provides a sense of belonging, loyalty, and support, which encourages students to no longer view crime as an option. As an example, one urban city cut youth crimes in half and is attributing the success to sports (Cameron & MacDougall, 2000).

Improved Health

There are many benefits for participating in athletics, especially for better health. Decreased risk of heart disease and diabetes, along with an improved self-esteem and body image are some of the top reported profits (Nichols et al., 2007). Increased bone health is also

associated with athletic activity, which should reduce the chance of fractures in later life. Sadly, nearly half of this nation's teenagers are not vigorously active on a regular basis (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996). With obesity rates of children and adolescents soaring around 17%, now is not the time to be cutting back on athletics. Not only does regular physical activity, such as sports participation, assist in controlling ones weight, it also reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure and colon cancer. In addition, it also reduces ones risk of dying prematurely. Research has shown that childhood fitness greatly influences the likelihood of one being active as an adult as well (Dennison et al., 1988). Unfortunately, more than 60% of adults do not receive the recommended amount of physical activity (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996). Even more shocking, one in four adults is not active at all. Therefore, if students participate in high school athletics their chance of becoming active adults is much higher. Furthermore, being an athlete also aids in protecting students from the major causes of death and disability in the United States. Thus, high school athletics are of significant importance to public health (Dennison et al., 1988).

Along with decreasing truancy, crime, and suicide risk, the literature supports that athletics can have a positive influence on student grades and social status. However, little research has been completed regarding the academic benefits of high school athletics in rural Midwestern schools, which led the researcher to consider whether athletes at these schools have a significantly different GPA and attendance rate.

Chapter III: Methodology

The following segments include subject selection and description, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations of the research.

Subject Selection and Description

The sample for this research consisted of 50 high school juniors and seniors from two rural schools in Western Wisconsin. Of the sample, 25 considered themselves athletes, while the other 25 regarded themselves as non-athletes. Parent/student consent forms were sent home with students one week prior to surveying (see Appendix A). Participants were not allowed to take the survey if the consent form was not signed and returned. In addition, the Institutional Review Board of the University of Wisconsin-Stout approved the project and the principal from both schools consented and encouraged the researcher to continue. The sample featured male and female high school juniors and seniors.

Instrumentation

The researcher created the survey administered to the sample for the sole purpose of determining whether athletes possess higher grade point averages, and lower unexcused absence rates, than their counterparts. It is included as Appendix B.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher arrived in the classroom one week before surveying to explain the research being conducted, assure that student anonymity was a top priority and administer parent/student consent forms. When the researcher returned, the students were provided with a one-question survey (Appendix B) which also featured a slip of paper in the upper, left-hand corner where the students were asked to print their name in. The purpose of having the students identifiable to their principal was to obtain the most accurate data possible. Those who did not

return parent/student permission forms were allowed to work on homework, while those who did return parent/student consent forms filled out the questionnaire.

Once the surveys were completed, the students placed them in an envelope which was then sealed and taken directly to the school office where the principal went through the surveys and recorded each student's grade point average, along with their number of unexcused absences. Once the principal was finished recording a student's information, he removed the piece of paper featuring the student's name, which protected the students from being recognizable. It should be further noted that the procedures for administering the survey were uniform at both schools.

Data Analysis

Mean scores were calculated for both the 25 athletes and 25 non-athletes on the dependent variables, which were GPA's and number of unexcused absences. A *t* test was used to determine whether there were differences in academic success and attendance among athletes and non-athletes.

Limitations

A limitation of the methodology is that there may have been some ambiguity among participants in their definitions of athlete and academic success. The researcher took this into consideration and attempted to eliminate this limitation by providing the definition of an athlete and a non-athlete, for the purpose of this study, while also providing a list of the athletics offered at each school. An additional limitation is possible sample bias within the study. For example, the athletes with a higher GPA may have been more likely to volunteer to participate in this study. In addition, those who have very low GPA's may have been less prone to participate. This goes for attendance records as well. Furthermore, because the researcher created the survey

the reliability and validity is unknown. A final limitation is that the surveyed students may not represent the population as a whole; therefore, the study cannot be generalized to the greater population.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine whether junior and senior level high school students at two rural high schools tend to possess different GPA and unexcused absence rates than their non-athlete counterparts. This chapter will feature the results of the study conducted. Demographic information, item analysis and the research questions will be discussed.

Demographic Information

Seventy-eight junior and senior level high school students, both male and female, were invited to participate and provided with parent/student consent forms. Of those, 50 decided to participate in the study, which represented 64% of the entire potential participants.

Item Analysis

Of the 50 participants, 25 reported that they participated in athletics in the past year, while the other 25 reported that they had not.

The results of the *t* test completed on the dependent variable, GPA, were not significant. Athletes did not possess significantly different GPA's than non-athletes. The mean GPA for those participants who had been active in athletics in the past year was 3.1760. Furthermore, the mean GPA for those who did not participate in athletics during the past year was 2.9997. Finally, the *p* value for GPA was .315 which assures the researcher that no significant difference was found between athlete and non-athlete GPA.

The results of the *t* test completed on the dependent variable, unexcused absences, produced promising results. The mean number of unexcused absences for athletes was .08. However, the mean number of unexcused absences for non-athletes was .48, which is approximately a half-day difference. The *p* value for unexcused absences was .034, which

demonstrates to the researcher that there is a statistically significant difference in the number of unexcused absences between athletes and non-athletes.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to assess whether upper-level high school student athletes tend to possess different GPA's and unexcused absence rates than their non-athlete equivalents. The only research question posed to the students was whether or not they participated in athletics in the past year. Of the 50 students surveyed, 25 answered that they had while 25 answered that they had not. Archival records accessed by both school principals provided information regarding GPA's and attendance records. The question regarding whether athletes possess a different GPA than non-athletes was computed using a *t* test and assessing the means. The results of the means were not statistically significant, which informed the researcher that high school athletes do not possess different GPA's than non-athletes. The second question the researcher wanted answered was whether high school athletes acquired different unexcused absence rates than non-athletes. The statistic results were significant; the researcher could confirm that these rural high school athletes do possess lower unexcused absence rates than non-athletes.

Chapter V: Discussion

This chapter will feature a discussion on several topics. First, a review of the current study will take place. Next, the researcher will compare the results of this study with recent literature. Third, a summarization of the results with implications will be featured. Finally, the researcher will make recommendations for further study and recommendations to the field of counselors.

Discussion

In general, students who participate in at least one sport each year possess a higher class rank, overall GPA, and math GPA than their counterparts who do not participate in sports (Stegman & Stephens, 2000). An additional study reported that athletic participation had a positive impact on academic performance; however the researcher attributes the success to the difference between season and out of season performance (Sitkowski, 2008). The current study reported that students who participate in at least one sport do not possess a higher GPA than those who do not participate in sports. One reason why this could be is because the current research was completed in between seasons, which could account for there being no data proving that athletes possess a higher GPA than non-athletes. In addition, the small sample size of this study did not allow for an adequate assessment of rural high school students. Regardless, the current research of athletes and their GPA does not concur with the literature featured in this study.

As for the literature on athletes and their attendance, after school sports provide students with the opportunity to make new friends, experience a positive environment, and feel accomplished, which is thought to reduce the likelihood of them being truant (as cited in DeKalb, 2000). An additional study reported that juvenile court appearances and truancy were

decreased by 38% in one year because students were given access to free sports (Kirkham, 2006). The investigation is concurrent with these studies because the results indicated that rural high school students participating in athletics possessed a statistically significantly lower number of unexcused absences than their counterparts.

Conclusions

The current study found that athletes did not possess higher grade point averages (GPA) than non-athletes. However, the data yielded results supporting that athletes have less unexcused absences than non-athletes. Therefore, the data from this study imply that being involved in athletics does not result in possessing a higher GPA than non-athletes but the data do suggest that being involved in athletics decreases the number of unexcused absences.

Limitations

It is vital to consider the limitations of this study as the results are being discussed. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher for this particular study; therefore the reliability and validity of the instrument are unknown. In addition, because there could be some ambiguity in the participant's definition of athlete and non-athlete the researcher took precautions such as providing the definition and a list of what sports were available at the school. Even with these steps taken to reduce uncertainty, it is possible that the students did not understand the difference between the researcher's definition of athlete and non-athlete. Furthermore, there is the possibility of sampling biases. For example, athletes with a higher grade point average (GPA) may have been more likely to volunteer to participate in this study. In addition, those who have very low GPA's may have been less prone to participate. This goes for attendance records as well.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research can be made because of the current study findings. The results did not show a statistical significance in GPA between athletes and non-athletes, which could have been caused from including only two rural schools in the research. If the study had been done in an urban area where anonymity is more protected the results may have yielded differently. In addition, the researcher did not examine the two schools' athletic code or grade policies. Both of these factors could have contributed to the results. Therefore, the researcher recommends examining school grade policies and athletic codes in conjunction with conducting research. Similarly, if including two schools, it could be beneficial to find schools with similar policies. The researcher suggests investigating the potential school's attendance policy because it will assist in knowing what constitutes an unexcused absence and how many each student is allowed. Furthermore, this study would benefit from having more student participation.

The researcher's recommendation to the field of school counselors is to be an active advocate for athletic programs by encouraging students to participate, being aware of athletic policies, being a voice during school board meetings, and even attending games. The potential benefits of athletic participation are very valuable to students, staff, and to communities. Now, more than ever, with looming cuts in school funding and budgets it is imperative to be aware of every possibility of increasing student success. Furthermore, although research has found that participating in athletics has many benefits, it may also be stressful for student athletes. Therefore, the researcher recommends school counselors to create a group counseling opportunity for athletes to discuss the pressures of competition and to promote their psychological well-being.

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Appendix A: Parent/Student Consent Form

Consent to Participate in UW-Stout Approved Research

Title: The Academic Benefits of Athletic Participation

Investigator: Danni Larson
715-495-0745

Research Sponsor: Barb Flom, Ph.D
715-232-1343

Description: As a graduate student in the school counseling program at UW-Stout, I am required to complete a thesis research project. The research I will be completing pertains to the academic benefits of athletic participation. In order to determine whether athletes in rural Western Wisconsin schools tend to possess a higher grade point average, and attend school more frequently, than their non-athlete counterparts I am looking for student volunteers to complete a one question survey.

Risks/Benfits: In order to obtain the most accurate grade point average and truancy record possible, I have requested that students be identifiable only to their principal who will record the requested information. In order to ensure that each student is ananomous the principal will remove and destroy any identifying information on the questionnaire once he records the gpa and attendance record. Finally, there will be 2 schools included in this research in order to diminish any chances that students can identified according to grade point average or truancy record.

Special Populations: Parental consent is required to survey volunteer students under the age of 18 years of age.

Time Commitment and Payment: Volunteers should plan to spend about 5 minutes of their time to complete this research.

Confidentiality: Student volunteers will not be identified by the researcher or readers of the results. Participants will only be identified by the principal of the school when he/she records student grade point average and attendance record for the year. Once that information is documented, any identifying information on the questionnaire is removed and destroyed. Also, this consent form will not be kept with any other documents completed during this research.

Right to Withdraw: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There will be no consequences if the student chooses not to participate. In addition, if someone does choose to participate in this research and later wishes to withdraw, they may do so without any consequences.

IRB Approval: This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Wisconsin-Stout's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study please contact the Investigator or Advisor. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator.

Investigator:
Danni Larson
715-495-0745

IRB Administrator:
Sue Foxwell, Director, Research Services
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Advisor:
Barb Flom, Ph.D
715-232-1343
flomb@uwstout.edu

Statement of Consent:

By signing this consent form you agree to participate in the project entitled, ***The Academic Benefits of High School Athletics***

Signature of student participant: _____
Date_____

Signature of parent or guardian: _____
Date_____

Appendix B

This research has been approved by the UW-Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46.

By completing the following survey you agree to participate in the project entitled "The Academic Benefits of Athletic Participation"

Athletics: exercises and games requiring physical skill, strength, and endurance.

Athletics available at your school: Football, Volleyball, Track, Dance, Basketball, Softball, Baseball

Please place an "X" the appropriate box below

Have you participated in athletics during this 2008-2009 school year?

YES_____ NO_____