

Below is a summary of research that effectively demonstrates the positive impact of athletics (both school-based and community-based) on youth development and academics.

For the over 8,500 youth involved in public school athletic programs, their extracurricular activity is integral to their personal development and learning. Tens of thousands more young people in San Francisco engage in extracurricular athletics through community-based programs. These programs provide structure and context that yield positive outcomes for youth. As a City dedicated to producing successful young adults, we recognize the value of affording our young people access to extracurricular athletic programs.

Youth Athletics and Personal Development

Participation in youth athletics – whether through a school or a community-based program – has generally been considered positive for youth. However, key bodies of research have demonstrated how youth who participate in formal programs perform relative to their peers. Below are summaries this research.

Involvement of young people in sports programs promotes responsible social behaviors and greater academic success, confidence in one's physical abilities, an appreciation of personal health and fitness, and strong social bonds with individuals and institutions.

Carnegie Corporation report (March 1996)

Students who spend NO TIME in extracurricular activities are 57 percent more likely to have dropped out of school by the time they would have been seniors; 49 percent more likely to have used drugs; 37 percent more likely to have become teen parents; 35 percent more likely to have smoked cigarettes; and 27 percent more likely to have been arrested than those who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities.

Department of Health and Human Services report (September 1995)

According to the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, school-age children and teens who are unsupervised during the hours after school are far more likely to use alcohol, drugs and tobacco, engage in criminal and other high-risk behaviors, receive poor grades, and drop out of school than those children who have the opportunity to benefit from constructive activities supervised by responsible adults.

National Education Commission on Time and Learning report (1994)

Participation in high school sports yields the following results:

- By a 2-to-1 ratio, boys who participate in sports do better in school, do not drop out and have a better chance to get through college.
- The ratio for girls who participate in sports and do well in school is three to one.
- About 92 percent of sports participants do not use drugs.

- Sports participants take average and above-average classes.
- Sports participants receive above-average grades and do above average on skills tests. 6) Students involved in athletics appear to change focus from cars and money to life accomplishments during the process.

Hardiness Research (1991)

Female athletes do better in the classroom, are more involved in school activity programs and stay involved in the community after graduation.

Women’s Sport Foundation report (1989)

Youth Athletics and Academic Achievement

Participation in athletics and academics are closely correlated for the simple reason that school-based programs require students to maintain a 2.0 GPA to be eligible for participation. This is a key driver for marginal students to “make the grade” and to be engaged academically. Parents, coaches and students alike will attest to this “carrot and stick” approach to eligibility as the catalyst for converting dropouts to graduates, “C” students to “B” students, and wayward youth to college-bound young adults.

Community-based and school-based programs both contribute to a young person’s sense of character. This discipline and rigor, provided through a structured program, often carries through to the young person’s academic life.

While we can acknowledge the fundamental drivers of this correlation, various studies have quantitatively proven that participation in an extracurricular athletic program results in an increased GPA and better attendance. Four independently-conducted statewide studies showed the demonstrable quantitative impact.

Study	Average GPA for Athletes	Average GPA for Non-Athletes	Average Annual Absences for Athletes	Average Annual Absences for Non-Athletes
North Carolina (1995)	2.86	1.96	6.52 days	12.57 days
Colorado (1992)	2.96	2.35	3.59 days	5.93 days
New Mexico (1992)	2.80	2.00	n/a	n/a
Indiana (1985)	3.05	2.54	n/a	n/a