

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Civilian

Linking Extracurricular Programming to Academic Achievement: Who Benefits and Why?

Broh, B. A. (2002). Linking extracurricular programming to academic achievement: Who benefits and why? *Sociology of Education*, 75(1), 69. doi:10.2307/3090254

SUMMARY: This article analyzed data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) to test the effect of participation in extracurricular activities on high school achievement. It also explored potential connections that linked such participation to academic success. Survey data was analyzed through social capital (i.e. the ability to accrue benefits through membership in social networks) and developmental models and demonstrated that participation in some extracurricular activities improved achievement, while participation in others did not affect achievement.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Participation in interscholastic sports (i.e. competitive level sports) during 10th and 12th grades had a small but consistent benefit for students' grades.
- Participating in interscholastic sports during the 10th and 12th grades improved self-esteem, locus of control, and time on homework.
- Participation in student council, drama club, and journalism club was not associated with academic achievement.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Encourage military-connected youth to participate in interscholastic sports
- Provide military-connected youth and their families resources on available extracurricular activities within their schools and community

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Provide workshops for leaders of school-based extracurricular activities on how to support participating military-connected youth's academic achievement
- Maximize the opportunities available for military-connected youth to participate in extracurricular activities such as music and interscholastic sports

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue support for military-connected youth interscholastic sports and extracurricular activities
- Recommend partnerships among military-based and community-based programs to help military-connected youth feel more comfortable participating in extracurricular activities

This product is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with The University of Minnesota.



Putting Research to Work for Military Families



METHODS

- Data was drawn from the NELS:88, a nationally representative, longitudinal study sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education.
- Participants were asked to complete questions about schoolwork, relationships, family, attitudes, and behaviors. In addition, they were given curriculum-based achievement tests each year of the survey.
- Analysis looked at the relationship between participation interscholastic and intramural sports, cheerleading, music, student council, and vocational clubs, and academic achievement.

PARTICIPANTS

- Students who were included in the study (N = 12,578) had to have participated in the base-year (8th-grade) survey, remained in school through the 12th grade, and had valid measures on each of the four educational outcome measures.
- There were no demographic data for student participants provided in the study.
- Thirty-two percent of participants were involved in an interscholastic sport, 15% in musical groups, 7% vocational clubs, 6% drama clubs, 5% intramural sports and 4% in each of the following: cheerleading, student council, or journalism clubs.

LIMITATIONS

- Limitations in the NELS:88 data prevented distinctions to be made to measures of social capital; therefore, a clear understanding between sports and achievement could not be made.
- Data informing this study were collected almost 30 years ago, since which many of the contexts measured have changed; therefore, findings maybe be different in today's contexts.
- While the study includes different levels of sports participation it does not take into account the different types of sports; which from a social capital lens could result in different outcomes.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Examine the long-term effects among military-connected youth of participation in extracurricular activities
- Explore participation in extracurricular activities using measures that can distinguish different forms of social capital
- Qualitatively investigate why interscholastic sports may support academic achievement

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



For more information about the Assessing Research that Works rating scale visit:
<https://reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu/content/assessing-research-that-works>