

# SPORTS PROMOTE YOUTH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



Youth sports participation positively impacts many aspects of academic performance and achievement including grade point average (GPA), standardized test scores, graduation and drop out rates, school attendance, behavior in and out of the classroom, and future educational achievement.



Compared to nonathletes, research has shown that:

- Youth athletes have **23%** higher GPAs, and as the number of sports teams an athlete participates on increases, GPA also increases.
- Youth athletes are more likely to get an A in Math and English.
- Middle and high school athletes have higher Math test scores.
- High school athletes have higher graduation and lower drop out rates.
- Middle and high school athletes miss **51%** fewer days of school and are **42%** less likely to have an unexcused absence from school.
- Youth athletes are **28%** less likely to be involved in a physical fight and **27%** less likely to be involved with vandalism.
- High school athletes submit more college applications, have higher levels of college enrollment, and obtain higher levels of education after high school.
- Middle and high school athletes are more likely to plan on attending college.

## HOW DOES YOUTH SPORTS PARTICIPATION INFLUENCE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT?

Youth sports participation is believed to have direct and indirect influence on academic achievement.

### DIRECT INFLUENCES

- Athletes must maintain good grades to stay eligible for sports participation.
- Many high school athletes would like to participate in sports while at college. Colleges and universities commonly require students to meet a minimum entrance exam score in order to be accepted to the school.
- Athletes are not eligible to participate in sports practices or competitions on days when they do not attend school. This rule may result in less absenteeism and more classroom time compared to nonathletes.
- Sports participants are more likely to do homework than nonathletes and have been shown to be **48%** more likely to spend three or more hours on homework per week.

### INDIRECT INFLUENCES

- Athletes are **43%** more likely to report liking school and **65%** more likely to believe that teachers and other adults at school care about them.
- Playing sports is associated with increasing an athlete's number of academically oriented friends. Increased school connectedness, interest, motivation, or investment in school may also have a positive effect on athletes' academic achievement.
- Athletic success requires conditioning and practice, adherence to rules, willingness to work with others, the ability to persist in the face of adversity, and the ability to evaluate success and failure. These skills can also be applied to the academic setting and life in general.
- Athletes may have more interactions with positive adult role models. Increased attention from coaches and teachers can promote academic achievement.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Get Set to Make the Case: Presenting Sports as an Agent for Social Change

<http://www.up2us.org/uploads/reports/Up2UsNikeGetSetOrangePaper.pdf>

**MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS PARTICIPATION IS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG MOST YOUTH. SUPPORTIVE AND STRUCTURED SPORTS ENVIRONMENTS THAT EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL CAN HELP TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.**