HIGHLY EFFECTIVE INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETIC PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENT
ATHLETES WITHIN A HIGH SCHOOL SETTING

by

James Brian Connor

An Executive Leadership Portfolio submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Education Leadership

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ABSTRACT

This Executive Leadership Portfolio (ELP) addresses the need to build a highly effective interscholastic athletic program focused on student achievement. This ELP includes school improvement initiatives that strengthen interscholastic athletic programming. The plan consisted of the following improvement goals: 1) create a strategic plan to manage, guide, and lead the St. Georges’ interscholastic athletic program 2) implement an academic support program for interscholastic athletes at St. Georges 3) create a professional learning community of coaches more engaged in data-driven decision making.

To achieve these goals, a multi-pronged effort addressed issues that in the past have contributed to the mediocre state of St. Georges’ Athletics and will now bring changes to improve the athletic program and academic supports for student athletes. As a result of the improvement effort, the athletics department established a shared program vision and mission, a common language about best practice in the program, better academic support procedures for athletes, and a proposal and plan to enhance the athletic stadium facility. A committed, consistent, and daily effort to communicate to all stakeholders became the norm. Research based strategies were employed to strengthen our understanding of conditions and outcomes in the interscholastic athletics program. The athletics department is now discussing next steps for more informed decision-making about increasing academic support for student athletes with goal of increased student achievement.
This portfolio’s first two artifacts draw on literature and data analysis showing positive relationships between student commitment, achievement measures, and participation in sports. Not only were the results informative and encouraging, this work greatly improved my knowledge of relevant literature and data analysis and has helped as I have undertaken efforts to be evidence-driven more generally in our interscholastic athletic program – a priority also reflected in other artifacts.

Collectively, the artifacts in this portfolio illustrate my leadership journey. I explored and led practices that enhanced the athletic experience of our coaches, players, and parents. Plans will be adjusted and enhanced so we continue to move forward and improve the interscholastic experience for students.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The District

St. Georges High School (SGHS) is part of the New Castle County Vocational Technical School District. SGHS is a public vocational-technical school serving New Castle County, Delaware.

New Castle County Vocational Technical School District serves 4,487 students in four high schools, grades 9-12. New Castle County is the northernmost of the three counties of the U.S. state of Delaware. As of the 2010 census, its population was 538,479, an increase of 7.6% over the previous decade. The center of population of Delaware is located in New Castle County, in the town of Townsend. It is the smallest of three counties, but the largest in population and most affluent.

Each year, about one-fourth of all eighth-grade students attending New Castle County public schools apply for admission to a vocational technical high school. Students who are accepted begin in a ninth grade exploratory program, which exposes them to career options before they elect a specific course of study. They are able to choose to study one of 42 different careers in one of six clusters: Business, Communications, and Computers; Construction Technologies; Health Services; Public and Consumer Services; Science, Energy, and Drafting Technologies; and Transportation.

SGHS has an enrollment of 1,037 students. Of the 1,037 students enrolled, 64% are white, 7% are Hispanic, 26% are African American, 2% are Asian; the rest
(less than 1%) are Multi-Racial, American Indian/Alaska, or Native/Hawaiian. At SGHS, 25% of students are identified as “low income” based on qualification for free or reduced lunch, 13% receive special education services, and 0.5% are classified as English Language Learners (ELL). There are 255 students in the twelfth grade, 268 eleventh graders, 254 tenth graders, and 260 ninth grade students. There are 77 teachers employed in SGHS and 41 hold a master’s degree or higher. This calculates to 52.7% of the faculty.

I was hired at St. Georges in July 2013. A key part of my role as Assistant Principal is with the school’s athletic program. In this capacity, I am charged with developing a stronger vision for the athletic program, overseeing its quality, and supervising the athletic director. I am responsible for approving all funds, hiring and assisting in evaluation of coaches, and managing issues with coaches/parents. The athletic director maintains the sports schedule, athletic budget, monitors student academic eligibility, and coordinates transportation.

Part of the reason I was hired was my extensive background as a high school athletic director in a district in Pennsylvania. An expectation of my job, discussed during the interview process, was that I would work to improve both athletics and academics for student athletes. SGHS has over 400 students participating in sports.

Improvement required changes to “how we do business.” These changes have included, among other things, developing a shared mission/vision, communicating high academic expectations of student athletes, strengthening academic support systems, reviewing data related to student athletes’ academic and athletic participation and outcomes, pursuing more resources for athletics, and improving communication with stakeholders.
This Education Leadership Portfolio (ELP) summarizes the activities that I pursued along with others in the St. Georges’ Athletic Department. The remainder of this report is five chapters, followed by extensive appendices that present the portfolio’s artifacts. The next chapter (Chapter 2) presents the “problem statement.” Chapters 3 and 4 present the improvement strategies that were undertaken and their results. In Chapter 5, I share my reflections on the school improvement process. My reflections about my development as a scholar, problem solver, and partner follow in Chapter 6. My original proposal and the artifacts reflecting my efforts and our department’s improvement initiatives are also included in the appendices.
Chapter 2

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Organizational Role

My current role at St. Georges Vocational Technical High School is to serve as Assistant Principal. I became Assistant Principal in July of 2013. My previous experience in education included 11 years as a Middle School Mathematics Teacher, one year as a Middle School Athletic Director, and four years as an Assistant Principal/Athletic Director in Pennsylvania. I am responsible for athletics (among other supervisory responsibilities) and supervising the teacher who serves as the school’s athletic director. (In Delaware athletic directors are teachers and part of the collective bargaining agreement.) I am responsible for approving all funds, hiring/firing coaches, and issues with coaches/parents.

The bulk of my doctoral work for the past two years has been centered on student-athletes and what a successful, cutting edge athletic program looks like in a high school setting. Reviewing literature in my first year strengthened my belief in the need to create better academic supports for student athletes. Student athletes are exposed to pressures beyond the regular everyday student. Even if their grades are solid, their social and emotional well-being may suffer due to stress from time management, isolation, physical exhaustion, and poor self-image.
Problem Statement

Conversations I have had with coaches, parents, and players have revealed a level of frustration with the lack of athletic vision and a general feeling that we can do more for our student athletes both academically and in terms of athletics. My problem statement below centers on two inter-related areas of academics and athletics, and also on the need for more data to inform planning and decision making for the athletic program.

Athletic Program Issues: The Need for an Interscholastic Athletics Strategic Plan

Under previous district leadership, interscholastic athletics were supported in all four high schools. Building level administrators were empowered to select their students. Students were identified for admissions based on their academic, attendance, discipline, and extra-curricular participation records. For many years, NCCVT high schools have been able to remain competitive in all sports. All four high schools have captured state championships in team sports and have also had individual student athletes become state champions in track and field, wrestling, etc. This successful record is in jeopardy due to changes in district leadership and policies.

NCCVT leadership has shifted power to select students from the buildings to the district level. The relationship that building administrator had with the families in their communities will change, and possibly in less favorable ways. Siblings are not guaranteed a place in their schools. Students graduating from eighth grade who are not comfortable attending high schools such as Glasgow, William Penn, or Dickinson cannot visit with a NCCVT school building administrator and request admission. They
now must send in their paperwork to the NCCVT district office and await a
decision. The list is compiled by the district office staff and mailed to the high schools.

On top of this, athletic budgets have been cut by 50% in the last three years.
This has affected the ability of coaches to attend clinics due to a lack of funding for
registration fees and travel expenses. Coaches need professional development too. The
emphasis now shifts to fundraising; however fundraising is especially difficult for
vocational schools because they are not the home school in their community. For
example, St. Georges is located in Middletown and has to compete with both
Appoquinimink and Middletown High Schools for local funding. Most businesses see
more benefit in supporting their home schools first.

One result of budget cuts and funding shortfalls is that athletic fields are not
regularly maintained. The NCCVT facility director has stated that they do not have
time to water the fields, conduct pre-season and post-season treatment on them, seed
them, etc. This has been an issue over the past few years. The heads groundskeeper
for the Philadelphia Phillies also owns a field surveying and contract business. He
conducted an audit of all district fields and presented his report to the school board in
January. Our fields, including the soil samples, are poor. Most are bordering on
unsafe or dangerous.

Facilities are an important part of a sports program’s success. The stadium at
St. Georges is not equipped with a fence or proper visitor seating. Therefore, the
DIAA will not allow St. Georges to host home playoff games. This is a negative
incentive to attract aspiring student athletes considering enrollment at St.
Georges. Athletes everywhere work hard in the regular season to earn the right to play
at home in playoffs in front of classmates, family, and friends. At St. Georges, this cannot happen because our facility is not appropriately equipped for playoff events.

Another problem is minimal support from Booster organizations. Sadly, our Hawk Boosters club consists of one mother. She runs the concession stand at football and basketball games. That is the extent of the booster funds supporting St. Georges’ athletics. This is disheartening. Where I worked previously as an administrator in the high school athletic program, the booster program had a $25,000 account to support all sports. There were multiple organizational fundraisers, as well field advertising campaigns, donations, and grants. Here, we maintain accounts in the range of $2,000 to $3,000 for the school year.

These problems indicate the absence of an interscholastic athletics strategic plan. There is no defined focus and goal for interscholastic athletics from the school board or district office. If there is no strategic plan, then there is no way to maintain a high level of competition and eventual success.

**Inadequate Academic Support System For Student athletes**

St. Georges does not have a comprehensive academic support system for student-athletes. Schools with successful interscholastic athletic programs have teachers, counselors, parents, and coaches who work together in supporting student athletes inside and outside the classroom (REFS). The collegiate model serves as a strong example where regimented structure and communication are keys among all stakeholders, including but not limited to the coaches, student athletes, professors, academic support personnel, and parents.

At St. Georges, there are no study halls, mentoring programs, or tutoring programs in the school. The time constraints that the vocational credit requirements
and mandatory vocational hours places on the master schedule does not allow for such supports to be built into the school day. At 10th, 11th, and 12th grade, students spend three periods a day in their career areas. Some teachers offer extra help once a week for an hour to hour and a half. The extra help sessions are not consistently offered to students, which makes planning around practice and game schedules very difficult for the interscholastic student athlete. Students who do not participate in sports have more flexibility to attend these sessions. Successful schools support students based on their level of need. Accommodations are made for learning styles, learning disabilities, and gifted students. It should be no different for student athletes.

The level of responsibility rises for student athletes, especially given the time-management challenges they face during the season. Student athletes lose valuable instruction due to early dismissals from class. Multi-sport athletes, those that play more than one sport, lose even more instructional time over the course of a year. Without structured supports in place for these student athletes, academic progress and students’ self-confidence can suffer. It becomes a big challenge for a high school adolescent to balance all of these responsibilities alone.

A few St. Georges’ teachers do communicate with our coaches about the student athlete’s academic progress and/or academic needs; however it is not consistent across all sports. There is not a defined expectation on when to, what to, and how to communicate with coaches about their student athletes. There needs to be a clear and consistent process for these communications across the entire athletic department so that all student-athletes can succeed on and off the field.

Counselors are an integral part of student success. Our counselors are not utilized as effectively as they could be to monitor student athlete academic progress
and within the NCAA recruitment process. Counselors are an active and important part of guiding student athletes and their families in the NCAA eligibility process. If they are not active in the process, many student athletes lose their way.

In sum, the St. Georges’ interscholastic athletic department lacks a defined mentoring/tutoring program, academic safety nets, cooperative partnerships between the instructor and program, as well as a clear and consistent communication process. There needs to be a comprehensive, structured, consistent, and cooperative academic support system for St. Georges’ student athletes.

Need For More and Better Athletic Program Data

To improve the athletic program we need a better understanding of current conditions related to the support of interscholastic athletics at St. Georges. These include finances, facilities, and the extent of instructional time lost due to athletics. In addition, we need data related to how athletic participation impacts academic achievement.

Absent good data, it is hard to know how to support the athletic program more effectively in ways that support the students both academically and in their athletics. Board members and district officials have supported budget cuts to the athletic program. Those who support the program have little factual information to argue on behalf of the program. Therefore, I need empirical data to determine if the athletes are performing well. I plan to do this by comparing academics and discipline data of student athletes to non-athletes. The collection of this empirical data, its analysis, and the results will be information that should be known to group decision makers at the school board level and among stakeholders in the St. Georges’ community.
Improvement Goals

My overarching goal is to seek programs, policies, and practices that increase the academic achievement of the St. Georges’ student athlete, as well as enhance the athletic experience of our coaches, players, and parents. I will work toward this goal by pursuing initiatives responding to the needs described above. More specific actions and projects are described in the table of artifacts below and in the artifact descriptions.

Goal 1
Utilizing a sound research-based approach, I will create a strategic plan to manage, guide, and lead the St. Georges’ interscholastic athletic program.

Goal 2
Utilizing a sound research-based approach, I will implement an academic support program for interscholastic athletes at St. Georges.

Goal 3
Utilizing current and past athletic data, I will create a professional learning community of coaches committed to data-driven decision making.

My hope is to explore practices that can enhance the athletic experience of our coaches, players, and parents. For example, research has shown the positive impacts of participating in athletics and personal well-being. In general, there appears to be a positive relationship between an adolescent’s participation in structured extracurricular activities and well-being in a variety of domains (Busseri et al., 2006; Gilman et al., 2004). The skills and social networks built through extracurricular
participation are thought to enhance school commitment and achievement, educational and occupational attainment, and promote well-being, healthy choices, and prosocial behavior (Eccles et al. 2003; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Further research indicates that students involved across domains, such as involvement in sports, academics, and school clubs, have better psychological adjustment on measures like self-esteem and psychological resiliency, particularly compared to those students who do not participate (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Simpkins et al., 2008).

There are no secret formulas for success in our public school athletic programs. They all operate on similar basic components that maximize their resources while maintaining their educational integrity and systematically tying in with all the community and school support that produce hugely supported winning teams. The result is a community pride that generates more involvement in the schools and a direct relationship between successful athletic programs and high academic achievement (Jones 2007).

This research supports the intention of my improvement goals in seeking measures, policies, and practices, based on sound research, to enhance the interscholastic program at St. Georges as well as increase student athlete achievement inside the classroom.
Chapter 3

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Issues With St. Georges’ Athletic Interscholastic Athletic Programming

This ELP reflects my efforts to address factors that have contributed to the mediocre state of St. Georges’ Athletics and to implement strategies to improve the athletic program and academic supports for student athletes. I believe a successful interscholastic athletic program must include the following: a shared mission and vision across all sports, superior coaching, cutting-edge facilities, committed athletes, off-season development opportunities, supportive teachers and parents, a core philosophy related to academic achievement, effective communication systems between all stakeholders, and a high level of competition. The following chapter identifies each improvement strategy and how it can be implemented to increase student achievement inside and outside the classroom.

A Letter to the St. Georges’ Community

St. Georges, like many high schools, hosts many athletic events, but all too often, the stands do not have large numbers of attendees. People in the community need to be reminded of the importance of attending games and other athletic events. Parental support is vital for student success in high school. While most commonly we think of parental support as parents helping their teenage child with their academic work or making their teenager do homework, a key form of parental support is attendance at games. A high school benefits when members of the community,
especially parents, attend athletic events. This shows support of the school and, for the team and individual student athlete, it shows that people are rooting for their success. That is a very important form of support. I have penned an essay (Appendix A) to the St. Georges’ community, suitable for publication in the Delaware News Journal or the Middletown Transcript. This essay makes the case for the importance of community members' attendance and support at high school athletic events.

**Athletic Competition Breeds Academic Success**

Despite there being a great deal of interest in how athletic participation in high school impacts students' academic work, there is actually very little research on this subject. Having reviewed literature from journals such as *the Journal of School Health*, *Research Quarterly for Exercise & Sport*, *NASSP Bulletin*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Coach, Athletic Director*, and *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, I have found no studies specifically examining the relationship between high school students' athletic participation and measures of academic outcomes.

Therefore, I conducted a comparative study (Appendix B) of the attendance records, grade point averages, and discipline referrals of student athletes versus non-athletes for a sample of students and found student athletes on average have more positive outcomes on these measures. The paper is prepared in the form of a manuscript to be submitted to a publication. The readership for this journal is high school and college athletic personnel and academics that teach and do research on topics related to student athletics.
St. Georges has been subjected to a shrinking athletic budget. Since the athletic budget started to dwindle these past two years, it has become difficult to retain good coaches, maintain facilities, support the travel expenses associated with highly-competitive athletic opportunities, upgrade equipment, and pay event staff to work athletic contests/tournaments. More and more, the fiscal expenses once supported through the district budget are now the individual team’s responsibility. This has sparked an increase in fundraising activities, but the funds raised are not enough for teams and the athletic department to function at a premier level.

In high-functioning athletic departments, there are booster organizations that foster an alternative and substantial funding source to offset the budgetary restrictions on the athletic budget. An organized, dedicated, and effective booster group does not exist at St. Georges.

It is urgent that we develop a booster organization, define what we want to accomplish, and how we will get there. The district and school board will not do this for us and so St. Georges will lead the way. As I highlighted in my problem statement, “there is no defined focus and goal for interscholastic athletics from the school board or district office. If there is no strategic plan, then there is no way to maintain a high level of competition and eventual success.”

Strategic planning documents (Appendix C) were created by the St. Georges’ administration and coaches to serve as a guide toward strengthening the Athletic Department. The plan opens with a new mission statement and a new vision
statement. It expands into a list of specific goals and the timeline associated with meeting those goals.

Phase I focuses on building a shared belief-system, effective communication system, secure site management system, and a cutting-edge athletic training services program. School and community stakeholders are working together to establish the foundational principles to guide us for the next five years. These principles are integral to success in any organization: shared beliefs, effective communication, security, and safety. The building goals and steps Phase I will facilitate progress into and the success of Phase II.

Phase II focuses on improving the interscholastic experience, specifically fan attendance, student athlete academic achievement, coaching evaluation practices/procedures, and facility enhancement. The work to be completed in Phase II is further developed in Appendix D, specifically the Stadium Fencing and Bleacher project.

*Plans and Steps Toward Stadium Facility Enhancement*

St. Georges Technical High School has a multi-sport turf field for field hockey, soccer, lacrosse, and football as well as an 8 lane track with sand pits and a pole vault pit. When the school was built in 2006, the construction project failed to account for DIAA (Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association) regulations regarding visitor seating and fencing height. Consequently, St. Georges is prohibited from hosting home playoff games in football as well as state playoff games. This is discouraging to our fans and student athletes and takes all the incentive and excitement out of securing home field advantage. Old and substandard facilities also cast a negative light on the school.
If the benefits outweigh the costs of upgrading the multi-sport turf facility, the next step is a clear understanding of the stakeholders involved in the project. In any school construction project, many players are involved such as parents, coaches, district leaders, school boards, county officials, environmental agencies, politicians, and more. Since I am dealing with a tax-supported public institution represented by a board of education, it was important to determine the stakeholders involved and analyze their perspectives as well as interests, to enable better planning to cultivate support for funding and approvals for facilities refurbishment. It is equally important to have a tangible vision, in this case, planning documents, so your stakeholders can visualize the future.

The stakeholder analysis (Appendix D) is followed by facility planning documents, created by a student within the St. Georges’ Tech Drafting career area. The analysis is presented through a table describing each stakeholder as well as his or her values and concerns within the project. The planning documents are individual designs and quotes for the stadium enhancement.

*Academic Interventions for Student athletes - “A Model for Supporting Success”*

The high school experience begins with a demanding transition from middle school. The protective and sheltered walls of middle school give way to the wide-open freedoms, individual responsibilities, and more rigorous curriculum of high school. Students have more academic work, more freedom, and less time.

Many students are involved in activities inside and outside of school. These include work, athletics, church, boy/girls scouts, etc. While all freshman students encounter a major transition from middle school/junior high school to high school, the student athlete faces an even greater set of challenges due to the extra time and mental
and physical energy he or she must commit to the athletic program. This creates additional stressors and puts the student athlete at greater risk to struggle academically.

Currently St. Georges high school does not have a formal, well-designed academic support system for student athletes. In order to develop an appropriate model to fit our student athlete needs, I had to delve into the literature surrounding this topic. I reviewed literature to help plan the model. The literature focused on the demands placed on student athletes as well as how secondary and post-secondary institutions planned athletic, academic, and social/emotional supports for students in a rigorous environment. The literature provided models of best practice for implementing academic support services for all students, not just student athletes. Based on the literature review, I developed a three-prong model (Appendix E) to meet the athletic, social/emotional, and academic needs of St. Georges’ student athletes.

**Student and Parent Athletic Brochure**

In order to handle the transition experience for 9th graders and emerging varsity student athletes, parents and their children need a resource detailing time management strategies, academic resources, and tips for success. St. Georges’ athletics lacks a formal resource that students/parents can access to navigate the student athlete experience during their respective interscholastic seasons. A handbook (Appendix F) was created to share local and state resources, eligibility policies, contact information for key stakeholders, best practices for students, and NCAA recruitment procedures/support. The brochure provided families information and advice integral to obtaining that success. The readership includes the school leadership, teachers, coaches, parents, and student athletes.
Loss of Instructional Time as a Result of Athletic Early Dismissals

Student athlete and Instructor Surveys

Depending on the distance to travel for away athletic contests, student athletes could miss 45-60 minutes of instructional time twice a week during their competition seasons. This could amount to 24 hours of instructional time lost in a season, based on a three-month season, and most of the time is missed from the same course because early dismissals cut out the same instructional period every time.

I developed a student and a staff survey (Appendices G&H) to learn more about this issue. How do teachers account for this loss of instructional time? What do student athletes do to make up for this loss of instructional time? If there is significant concern or frustration among students, it is important to know this and to address it. If, on the other hand, students do not have concerns, that is important to know too. In order to answer these questions and many more, I administered a student survey specifically related to the loss of instructional time due to sports as well as balancing athletics and academics.

I collected information about the following: student time allocated to academics, student perception of coach/teacher support with academics, student actions taken to communicate with coaches and teachers about academics, and student access to academic supports. It is important to know the range of teachers' attitudes about how students' athletic participation impacts students' academic progress and the teachers' time allocated to student athletes. If there is significant concern or frustration among teachers, it is important to know this and to address it. If, on the other hand, teachers do not have concerns, that is important to know too. I collected
teacher’s perspective related to how students’ athletic participation impacts students’ academic progress and the time allocated to catching student athletes up due lost instructional time. Both surveys include a synopsis of the current conditions as well as implications, recommendations, and conclusions to address the instructional time lost. We will now better assist student-athletes in balancing athletics and academics.

The student survey data results were positive overall. Student athletes tell us they are balancing academics and athletics, maintaining solid grade point averages, and making up lost instructional time with support from their instructors. The results, while positive, demonstrate a need for consistent safety nets/academic supports in policy and practice, which in turn will raise the academic achievement of our student athletes. Approximately 17% of students report utilizing academic supports such as after-school teacher help, outside tutors, or peer tutors often during their athletic season. The most significant data was that 49% of students report never utilizing academic supports such as after-school teacher help, outside tutors, or peer tutors a few times during their athletic season, with 34% never utilizing the support. This result supports the conclusion that they do not use them because they are not readily available. Approximately 85% of students report that their coaches do not coordinate weekly study halls or they are not aware if they coordinate them, while 15% of students report that their coaches coordinate anywhere between 1-4 weekly study halls. These results indicate a need to implement an academic support plan across the entire athletic department. St. Georges’ Coaches are not offering study sessions for student athletes during their season. This is a major concern that must be addressed by the Athletic Department. Coaches from all sports will have to arrive at common ground in carving out academic support time for their athletes during the season.
The teacher survey results show that most St. Georges’ teachers have a positive and supportive outlook toward athletics. About two-thirds devote at least 30 minutes a week of extra time to student athletes. More than half the teachers provide extra help sessions to student athletes for their school work, including time spent after school. Data shows that St. Georges’ coaches expect student athletes to keep up with their work and are supportive of the teachers. More than half teachers surveyed spend anywhere between 3-60 minutes providing additional instruction to student athletes who miss class time. This extra time adds up over the course of the school year and could lead to the feeling that managing this work is bothersome to teachers. A majority of teachers, 60%, report that they do not find it bothersome managing the extra work when dealing with student-athletes who miss class time, however 40% report that it is bothersome. In order to decrease this percentage and enhance the interscholastic experience for all stakeholders, coaches and student athletes will need to take a proactive role in planning for this missed instructional time. By communicating with teachers before the season begins, student-athletes can work out a plan of action that best suits the teacher time demands and the student missing work demands when instructional time is compromised due to sports.

An Evaluation of Off-Season Participation - “USING TIME WISELY”

During the course of my doctoral work, I changed professional positions from an administrator at Avon Grove High School in West Grove, PA to an administrator at St. Georges High School in Middletown, DE. At both the previous and past position, I supervised interscholastic athletics. This artifact was an evaluation conducted at Avon Grove High School in West Grove, PA.
There has never been an evaluation of the off-season engagement activities within the Avon Grove High School interscholastic athletic programs. I developed and conducted an evaluation (Appendix I) of two off-season sport participation programs to gather information about the effectiveness of how the Athletic Department at Avon Grove engages students to participate in sports, specifically during the off-season. The evaluation considered the following two questions:

1. **Process Question:** How well did coaches engage students to participate in their sports programs during off-season activities?

2. **Outcome Question:** Did the off-season engagement activities increase athletic skill levels during the off-season?

The findings assisted me in determining if the Athletic Department off-season engagement activities created a competitive environment that focused on athletic skill development. This will lead to a skillful in-season roster of student athletes. If the findings showed that off-season engagement activities do not create a competitive environment and do not lead to skillful student athletes, the results will be used to modify the program.

*St. Georges’ High School Athletics Program Website*

Like most high schools, St. Georges has its own website. The portion of St. Georges’ High School’s website addressing high school athletics has not been updated for many years. Some of its links are dead, some of the information is outdated, and some information potentially useful to our stakeholders is not there. The website could do more to better inform students, parents, and other stakeholders about athletics and
the athletic program at St. Georges, so as part of my ELP I decided to update and improve it. I used Google site technology to create a one-stop information resource on the interscholastic athletic experience here at St. Georges (Appendix J). The website provides resources for school educators, parents, coaches, and students; cites literature and highlights key research related to interscholastic athletics; and provides links to additional areas of interest.
Chapter 4

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES RESULTS

Effective Communication Strategies Have Increased School Community Support for Athletics:

Letter /Brochure/Website

As a result of developing the three communication artifacts, the department has improved communications with student, staff, and parents through social media outlets and electronic mail. The school wide phone system has been used to celebrate accomplishments and promote events. These strategies have led to larger crowds at all sporting events, almost 800 Facebook followers, and daily website traffic.

Challenges still remain in forming an active and committed all-sports booster organization. This is a key piece to building a strong interscholastic sports program. Parents are key to fostering a culture of involvement and to generating alternative funding. St. Georges has yet to embrace this booster concept, but the department must continue to push on this and stay the course. It will take hold eventually and when it does, the department will be able to increase our level of support to all sports programs, providing the highest quality athletic opportunities for all students.
Evaluation and Research Strategies Produce

Collection of Interscholastic Athletic Data:

*Program Evaluations/Loss of Time/Student Achievement Measures*

The program evaluation, GPA/Attendance/Discipline Study, and the Loss of Instructional Time Surveys (appendices I, B, G, and H) have strengthened our understanding of conditions and outcomes in the interscholastic athletics program. These forms of information did not exist before I conducted the research. We are now able to discuss next steps and make more informed decisions, specifically increasing academic support with the end goal of increased student achievement.

Study Halls will be implemented three days a week after school and will be available to all athletes. Teachers have agreed to volunteer their time to support the athletes with balancing their academics. Our coaches have a better understanding of what our student athletes need to be successful in and out of the classroom. This was a direct result of the survey data we collected.

The department has now turned its attention to rewriting the academic eligibility policy for athletics. The department believes that the 1.75 minimum GPA is too low for a 10 point grading scale. We want to increase the GPA to a 2.3, while providing more academic safety nets for athletes and strengthening the teacher/coach/home relationship.

Off-season training data generated powerful and relevant conversations about strength and conditioning in and out of season. It spurred an introspective reflection for each sports program and the department as whole. We were dedicated to
implementing off-season experiences that improved skills and fostered a positive, family atmosphere.

**Strategic Planning Strategies:**

*Mission/Vision, Facility Enhancement, and Academic Support Model*

The mission, vision, and strategic planning documents have guided the department to a shared philosophy of “how we do business”. The department has shared the philosophy with all stakeholders, committing to student athlete success in the classroom, engaging the community, and providing all with the optimal athletic experience.

Common language and common practices are evident across all sports. The core beliefs of the department are that all athletes receive a positive experience, an active experience, a knowledgeable experience. All stakeholders have openly embraced the core beliefs.

The Academic Support Model will be implemented by a steering committee of coaches this summer. Resources are being gathered this spring and the timelines and action plans will be established after that is complete. Facility enhancements for the stadium are on hold as funds are limited and the school board has prioritized construction plans at another school.

All in all, progress has been made and will continue to be made. We have a clear vision and a shared mission, an academic support system for athletes, and have a specific plan and design ready to enhance the athletic stadium facility.
Chapter 5

REFLECTION ON RESULTS OF IMPROVEMENT EFFORT

I write this reflection as it pertains to our improvement efforts and cannot believe how far we have come. However, there is more to do. The entire 5-year ELP journey has laid a strong foundation for continuing improvement. We have established new policies and practices to guide and support the St. Georges’ Athletic Department toward sustained success.

Communication Strategies:

Letter / Brochure / Website

It has been challenging to increase the communication efforts from the department to the school community. In retrospect, there have been two main challenges.

We are a unique district. We are four technical vocational high schools, each with different athletic departments. We do not have shared visions and actually have differing opinions on important topics. This has made it challenging to do something for St. Georges that is creative and outside the box. We are always compared to what the other schools are doing, or not doing. Often, we have been restricted in our communication efforts by the district, which ultimately hinders departmental progress.

The next challenge is that, while located in Middletown, Delaware, we are not a community school; we are a county school with no control over admissions. Formerly, 8th grade students were selected at the building level based on the district
admission requirements. This freedom allowed the school to choose local students, maintain sibling preference, and select talented athletes. The admissions process is determined at the district level now. This has made it difficult to build excitement or share department philosophies to the youth and middle school students in New Castle County. Therefore, our communication plan to incoming Freshmen about our athletic opportunities begins when the acceptance letters are released to 8th graders in May. The communications are limited, since the incoming students are finishing their 8th grade year and we are completing our school year.

All in all, we have established a committed, consistent, and daily effort to communicate to all stakeholders once they are part of the school community. We have raised awareness through our celebration of student accomplishments in the classroom and on the athletic fields. These communication efforts, at a minimum, have allowed us to show New Castle County residents that we are a strong and successful interscholastic athletic department. We may not have district elementary and middle schools, where we can create excitement and develop pride for their future high school, but we are seeing more people in New Castle County take notice. We think our efforts are starting to motivate more students from across the county to apply to the district with the hopes of being accepted to St. Georges.

**Evaluation and Research Strategies Produce**

**Collection of Interscholastic Athletic Data:**

*Program Evaluations/Loss of Time/Student Achievement Measures*

I have worked to establish a professional learning community of coaches committed to data-driven decision making. We want coaches who collect and
evaluate relevant data, analyze and discuss the data, and plan/implement best practices moving forward.

Coaches tend to be individualistic—focused on their own sports and their policies, practices, and beliefs. This is expected and supported by the department leadership. I knew, however, we had a wealth of knowledge and experience within the department and that we should develop a forum where coaches could engage in far-ranging athletic discussions. But we needed to come together as a department. Our improvement strategies in the area of collecting and analyzing interscholastic data pushed our coaches out of their comfort zone, but at the same time led to important discussions about the bigger picture.

Coaches now share their program policies and procedures related to supporting academic achievement, off-season workouts, and fostering academic partnerships with teachers. The policies and procedures were discussed and changes made to represent a shared departmental commitment to data-driven decision-making and best practices.

Coaches carve out time to meet one-on-one or in small groups to share, debate, and reflect on what they do well and what needs to change. These changes have been gradual; but we are starting to see common practice, procedures, and language across all sports programs at St. Georges.

It was amazing and rewarding to see that our department improvement strategies, focused around athletic data, dismantled the insular tendencies of coaches and developed a collegial atmosphere. We have seen more coaches attend athletic events outside of their own sport. We have seen common practices; an increase in teachers and coaches communicating about academics; and a professional learning
community emerge from a data-driven mindset and a renewed, shared commitment to athletic excellence.

**Strategic Planning Strategies:**

*Mission/Vision, Facility Enhancement, and Academic Support Model*

The professional learning community developed through the data-driven improvement strategies opened the door for a strategic approach moving forward. It may seem odd that we did not establish a mission and vision first, but the first step was becoming more collegial. What happened was quite organic. The data discussions brought us closer together, opened our eyes and helped us realize we shared a lot of the same concerns and priorities and that we needed to work together to see the results. We decided to make these changes through an interscholastic strategic plan.

Coaches are now committed to redefining who we are and how we do it. The mission and vision planning documents were developed by coaches and for coaches. It became a priority for them because it is a product of their efforts. The strategic planning documents also include a facility enhancement project and an academic support service model.

The facility enhancement project has been a long song and frustrating for us all. The district and school board has struggled to communicate with each other about this project, which in turn has sent mixed messages. We need a commitment and strong level of support moving forward. The St. Georges’ Athletic Department has produced a plan, conducted a cost analysis, and designed architectural documents for this project. Unfortunately, progress has stalled. District leadership has turned its
attention away from this work for the moment. The department is hopeful the district will take time this summer to revisit this project. The experience in planning and promoting facility upgrades was incredible, especially since the department members had never designed or planned a construction project from the ground up.
As I reflect on my five years as a doctoral student at the University of Delaware, I am grateful for the opportunity I was given to further my education and extremely proud of the work that was produced. It was a rough start, as my mother was battling cancer, my wife and I had a newborn baby, and 5 hour classes took a great deal of time away from home and work. I contemplated quitting, but my family, advisor, professors, and colleagues (specifically my cohort) would not let me give up. I am thankful for their support and know that I have grown personally and professionally as a result of this work and the journey as a whole.

My Growth as a Scholar

This is where I experienced the greatest struggle and reaped the greatest reward. During my first class, an educational research course, I struggled to critique the scholarly articles as well as understand the analyses and methods employed in educational research. I felt like it never really clicked for me. The feedback I received from my professor and my peers was intensive, humbling, and frustrating. At certain points, I began to question if I was smart enough to finish this journey. I continued to plug along, ask questions, reread articles, highlight text, refer to the textbook, and reach out for help. Each semester I improved. I began to make connections and understand how to dissect scholarly literature. It became clear that if a “critical lens” is applied to the research at hand, the scholar becomes a critical consumer of that research. Being able to critically evaluate research helped support
better educational decisions about best practice. With a solid understanding of research methods and analysis as well as a newfound “critical eye” for research, I was able to conduct an empirical study as well as literature reviews. I hope in the near future to contribute to the body of scholarly literature in the area of interscholastic athletic programming – a literature which remains limited and emerging.

In order to solve the problems we face in education, we as leaders must be informed consumers of research as well as contributors. The doctoral experience has prepared me for both.

**My Growth as a Problem Solver**

The growth I experienced as a problem solver manifested itself through my growth as a critical research consumer. They go hand in hand. I was lucky enough to identify my “problem statement” early on in the program. Once this was set, my research guided my appendices (improvement strategies).

I was a problem solver before I entered the doctoral program, but during my doctoral studies, my problem solving skills strengthened by learning more about scientific methodology. Our cohort was exposed to real-life case studies throughout our doctoral courses. After reading and analyzing those case studies, we were challenged to solve systematic educational problems involving public relations, scheduling, curriculum, discipline, budgets, etc. The everyday troubleshooting turned into high-stakes problem solving for sustained systematic success. I went from the minor leagues to the major leagues. I learned to learn from others who have encountered and attacked similar school leadership and organizational management problems.
I am thankful for the collegial teamwork, professional discourse, varying perspectives, and commitment of both my professors and cohort along the way. They all have aided in my improved and enhanced problem solving skill set.

**My Growth as a Partner**

Nothing great can be accomplished alone. I have always believed that and have applied that to my personal and professional life, to the best of my ability. The doctoral experience has reinforced this conviction. Being in education for 17 years, I have been witness to the frustration that builds when decisions are made in isolation or dictated from on high. Stakeholders want and deserve a voice and their voices should carry a lot of weight.

Many times, we do not realize that we have in front of us competent teachers and competent administrators, ready and willing to assist in making a larger difference. Often times, we pigeon hole talented individuals, instead of taking risks for the greater good. We have to allow them inside when making decisions. We have to respect them as experts in their craft. The ultimate goal is to empower others to lead as well.

The doctoral cohort that I was lucky enough to be a part of showed me the spirit and strength of collegiality and partnership. We supported each other inside and outside the classroom. As our assignments, projects, papers, and speeches piled up and our personal frustrations mounted, we stepped up to help and support each other.

My growth as a partner has benefited immeasurably from the experiences within the doctoral program over these past 5 years. This has helped me build collaborative teams at St. Georges’, teams equipped to handle areas of need in both
academic and athletic realms. I am a stronger leader because I have become a better listener and a better follower.
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO LOCAL PRESS
“SUPPORT THE TEAMS, SUPPORT THE KIDS”

With St. Georges trailing by 1 point and with only 3 seconds left on the game clock, St. Georges’ player Jasmine Jones stepped to the free throw line. Her body was spent, her arms and legs weak and burning with fatigue. Jasmine knew she had to fight the fatigue and the nerves and focus 100% on her next task: make two free throws. Stress was no stranger to Jasmine, but this time the stakes were high. She knew that the next free throw would put her over 1,000 points in her basketball career and put her in the exclusive company of only 4 other females in the history of basketball at St. Georges.

The game had been neck and neck for four quarters. Now it came down to a pair of free throws, one free throw to reach 1,000 points and the next one to win this game. With icy cool, Jasmine made the first free throw and then the second one…and cemented the victory for her team.

As I watched the teammates and their families celebrate the miraculous win, it was hard not to be disappointed that fewer than 40 fans witnessed the event. Forty people were present to witness and celebrate an accomplishment that may happen once a generation. Sadly for Jasmine as well as for many of our student athletes, this is too often the norm for St. Georges’ High School sporting events. We all benefit, especially the students, from more community members attending St. Georges’ sporting events.
St. Georges competes in the Blue Hen Conference, which consists of fourteen member schools. There are two divisions, the American and National, each containing seven member schools. The divisions are determined by school enrollment. The American Division contains schools with enrollments at or below 1,300 students. The National contains schools with enrollments at or above 1,300 students. St. Georges is in the National, with a school enrollment of 1,780 students. Recent statistics on basketball attendance at the other schools in the National Division show an average of 175 fans in attendance.

I attend many of our students’ sporting events and too often witness low levels of fan attendance. I hear the same lament from many of the coaches: few beyond the students’ parents come to games. At a Girls soccer game this past Fall, only twenty fans watched from the stands. Last spring, Boys Volleyball rarely had more than ten fans in attendance. Whether it is basketball, tennis, swimming, lacrosse, or baseball, low fan attendance is too often the norm.

My request is this: please try and attend more St. Georges’ High School sporting events. Attending games is an easy and enjoyable way to support the school. It benefits the individual student athlete by bolstering his or her self-worth, the school by promoting school spirit, and the community by making caring and participation visible. I believe fan attendance at games helps our students and helps the school improve. If the school improves, the community improves. We are all winners when this happens.

When a student athlete participates in a sport and fans attend in big numbers, the student feels his or her participation is valued – is important. If more community members attended St. Georges’ sporting events, it can help more student athletes feel
this sense of being valued and important. Their pride in participation and commitment to representing their school will rise.

Research shows there are benefits to high school sports participation. Herbert Marsh, a top internationally known educational psychologist, completed a study about athletic participation in public schools. In the recently published study in Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, Marsh (2003, p.16) writes: “Students with more athletic participation in extramural/team sports benefited more in terms of grades, Carnegie units, educational aspirations, internal locus of control, and self-esteem. They also spent more time on homework, applied to more universities, and experienced more positive parental expectations. Two years after high school these students were more likely to be enrolled at a university and for a longer period of time. They also had higher levels of tertiary education and higher educational aspirations.”

In a study published in Developmental Psychology, Professor Jennifer Fredericks and Professor Jacquelynne Eccles (2006, p. 12) found: “Participation in school clubs and sports predicted higher grades and educational expectations. The higher grade and educational attainment of activity participants as compared with nonparticipants may be a result of a greater commitment to school and a greater likelihood of associating with peers who value academics.” The authors advocate that participation in high-quality extracurricular activities, such as sports or clubs, are a productive use of a student’s leisure time and can provide distinct opportunities for growth and development. Students have different opportunities to develop physical, intellectual, social, and emotional competencies when involved in sports, school clubs, and pro-social activities. They can also form supportive relationships with a variety of adults and peers.
Larger audiences at school sporting events could also lead to stronger school and community pride for St. Georges High School. Take the experiences of Mrs. Dulany O. Bennett, head of Oregon Episcopal School from 1998-2006. She came to a boarding school noted for its academic rigor, but she felt it was missing something. Mrs. Bennett shared her story of what athletics did for that school and community. She said: “Oregon Episcopal School has always been a good school. But in a school with a heavy intellectual focus, a tough curriculum, and a challenging academic tradition, it was clear that we needed something else. Lighthearted, community-building, and healthful, athletics provided balance and delight for player and spectator, and provided Oregon Episcopal School with a greater sense of spirit. Excitement around sporting events allows a unique participation. Members of all constituencies can come in unlimited numbers, and they can converse and cheer with each other. Very few other activities provide such opportunities. Arts events are magnificent, but they generally require silence, and folks in attendance do not usually make common cause so easily and with such enthusiasm as they do on the sidelines of a great sports contest” (Bennett, 2007, p. 73). Pride in one’s school would lead to additional benefits, such as better behavior, strong academic performance, and community service.

Attending home sporting events is one way to show school pride and strengthen the community culture. Home field advantage is complex but real. A boost in our fan attendance could create an environment at St. Georges where our student athletes perform better. In an article from the Chronicle of Higher Education, senior writer Eric Hoover shared results of a study on home field advantage from Philip E. Varca, an associate professor in the department of management and marketing at the University of Wyoming. Mr. Varca compared the performances of home and visiting
teams in men's college basketball games. Hoover (2009, p.1) writes: “In his sample, he found little difference when he looked at measures of fine motor skills: The visiting teams had basically the same field-goal and free-throw shooting percentages as the home teams. But there were statistically significant gaps in three categories that involve strength and full-body movements: blocked shots, rebounds, and steals. The home team had more of each; meanwhile, the visitors committed more fouls.” Varca (2009, p.2) concludes that fan attendance at home games “may trigger a kind of territoriality in home teams' athletes.” By attending our home games, our fans can increase the student athletes’ energy.

Previous research in sport psychology has shown a connection between fan support of sport teams and overall team success by focusing on factors that influence the frequency of fan attendance. In a study from the University of Pittsburgh, Professors Beth Deitz and Audrey Murrell (1992, p. 36), found: “Fans that show support for their sport teams through attendance, can more easily see themselves as integral participants in the game and share responsibility for its outcome.” Our community coming together would have a positive effect on the sporting environment for the home team and for the fans. This is very good news. We want our athletes to embrace playing at home and be proud of the environment created by their fans.

Participation in sports may have academic benefits as well. A recent study from the Journal of School Health (2010) shows a strong and positive association between participation in organized, team sports and higher grade point averages. The study consisted of participation and achievement data collected from 4,746 middle school and high school students from 31 schools in the Minneapolis/St Paul metropolitan area of Minnesota. The results indicated that for high school girls, both
physical activity and sports team participation were associated with a higher GPA. For high school boys, sports team participation was associated with a higher GPA. In both cases, the association was significant.

Some students will participate in sports even if there are no fans in attendance. They do it for the camaraderie of teammates, the fun of competition, and the enjoyment of physical activity. However, if there are larger audiences at sporting events, it is likely more students will want to participate. Imagine a 9th grader new to the school contemplating field hockey where fan attendance is never more than a handful of parents. Imagine a 9th grader contemplating field hockey at a school where game after game, 60 or 70 home fans are there to support the team, cheering them on. Isn’t that going to be an extra incentive to want to be on the team?

Students who now do not participate in sports will see that participation is rewarded with cheering and support from the community; therefore they would be more likely to join sports. Imagine a 20% increase in sports participation among student athletes. If participation strengthens self-worth and school pride, then it stands to reason that more participation is better. A 20% increase in sport participation by students could lead to 20% more kids feeling a greater sense of pride, more positive feelings of self-worth, and better grade point averages.

Another important benefit from larger community attendance at sporting events is that it can strengthen the community. Professor Robert D. Putnam, author of the best-selling book Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, draws on evidence including nearly 500,000 interviews over the last quarter century to show that we sign fewer petitions, belong to fewer organizations that meet, know our neighbors less, meet with friends less frequently, and even
socialize with our families less often. He points out that while more Americans are bowling than ever before, they are not bowling in leagues. They are bowling alone. Professor Putnam shows how changes in work, family structure, age, suburban life, television, computers, women’s roles and other factors have contributed to this decline. If the families in our community come to sporting events, our children who participate in sports and those who do not participate in sports will feel empowered to do the same. This cohesive atmosphere could have a lasting effect as these students raise families of their own in their future communities.

Our students need this community to attend St. Georges’ High School athletic events, because when we attend, we make kids feel important. If they feel important, they continue to participate and may ask their friends to join in. Kids involved in sports have higher grade point averages, develop a sense of school pride, and share that pride with the school community. In addition, when we come together as fans to support our students at home games, we become a stronger community. Who knows, the more fans we have may even help us win a few more games.
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Section I – The Issue:

How Does High School Athletic Participation Affect Educational Outcomes?

You often hear that participation in high school sports “builds character.” This phrase is commonly heard because it takes sacrifice and self-discipline to be a high school athlete. Daily sports practices are hard, often grueling. Sports practices may involve running for thousands of yards, or dozens of repeated wind sprints, or intensive weight training, or lengthy ball drills, or swimming laps for hours. The student athlete often does not return home from school until 5 or 6 pm, and is often exhausted. Some sports activities require rising early in the morning for training. In addition, there is the discipline required in following the rules and requirements of coaches and in receiving coaching and striving to be better. Doing all of this brings great challenges to the adolescent high schooler.

And there is also the attitude element of sportsmanship. The student athlete must learn to play fair, know the rules, and maintain integrity both on and off the field. The athlete must learn to win and lose with grace.

For these reasons, interscholastic sports have a valued place in high school. Parents take pride when their adolescent child participates in a sport. Coaches get a
great deal of gratification from their role as mentor. Most teachers also view sports participation positively.

While there are positive views about high school sports participation, there are also concerns. One is about the toll in time and fatigue that high school sports may inflict on the student athlete. The downside of all the time and effort devoted to practices, meetings, and games, is the large loss of time that could otherwise be devoted to schoolwork. It is not just the time committed to sports, but also the mental and physical effort. After two hours of intense practice and mental concentration, some students may have no “gas in the tank” left upon coming home, and then face the task of homework and early rising the next morning to get to school. Also, there is missed time during the school day when, during the sports season, high school athletes have early dismissals to get to busses to transport them to away games.

The other concern is the expense of high school sports. Among those who are not big sports supporters, there is a view that way too much money is spent on high school sports – on facilities, equipment, travel, and other expenses. These concerns, of course, are not directed at the high school student athlete, but these concerns do lie behind the attempts in some districts and municipalities to cut budgets for athletics based on the belief that too much is spent; and that savings generated from budget cuts can and should go to teachers and other academic supports.

To help address the concern about sports participation in high school possibly conflicting with academics it is important to use data to examine this relationship. If there is a detrimental impact, as some believe, then perhaps there should be less emphasis on sports in high school or perhaps the time and money spent on sports
should be curtailed. It is important to examine this topic specifically – about whether there is a detrimental impact of sports on academic performance of students.

There is a small amount of literature on the role of high school athletics participation in students’ academic and character development. Most of it is written in the spirit of support for the important role of extra-curricular involvement in high schools and involvement in sports. Most authors view participation as an important part of young people’s development and of their high school experience (Arnold, 1997; Hampel, 2013; Klesse & D'Onofrio, 2000).

Some studies have been done, but as several authors have noted, this is an important question without a lot of research; more research can be helpful. Bird and Ross (1991, p. 1) write:

… a clear picture does not emerge at the high school level at which both positive (Schumaker, Small, & Wood, 1986; Soltz, 1986) and negative (Landers, Felta, Obermeier, & Brouse, 1978) results have been obtained. On the positive side, athletic participation may serve to promote more efficient use of time and higher motivation to excel at different school endeavors (see Soltz, 1986). On the negative side, high school athletics may (a) divert resources and time from academic activities; (b) draw student attention away from studies through events such as pep rallies and games; and (c) discourage non-participants through the excessive amount of attention given to athletes and cheerleaders. In general, the key factor appears to be how the individual athlete balances the demands of participating in sports with academic responsibilities (see review by Ballantine, 1981).
Similarly, Jordan (1999) notes “The research literature affords little guidance on the specific relationship between participation in high school athletics and school-related outcomes for adolescents.” (p. 1)

Robert Hampel, former Director of the University of Delaware’s School of Education, surveyed seventy-five college students about their extracurricular experiences in High School. Hampel (1997) writes, “Everyone of my 75 students recalled a favorite extracurricular activity…Two thirds of them praised sports; one third mentioned non-athletic pursuits. As I read what they wrote, I was amazed by how much they liked the sports and the clubs. No one did them grudgingly or cunningly to pad their college applications. No one said high school stunk and they wouldn't be caught dead on campus after the last bell. What came through instead was pride and joy…The comments about their teammates, by the way, far outnumbered the occasional praise of a memorable coach or teacher.” (p. 1)

Bridging the Gap, a nationally recognized research program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is dedicated to improving the understanding of how policies and environmental factors influence diet, physical activity and obesity among youth, as well as youth tobacco use. The program identifies and tracks information at the state, community and school levels; measures change over time; and shares findings that will help advance effective solutions for reversing the childhood obesity epidemic and preventing young people from smoking. In a recent research brief on sports participation at the secondary level, the following were two key findings: 1) Fewer than one third of students take part in interscholastic sports, and participation in intramural sports is even lower. The percentage of students participating in interscholastic sports during the school year is relatively consistent across 8th, 10th
and 12th grades at 31 percent, 30 percent and 30 percent, respectively. 2) Higher percentages of boys than girls participate in interscholastic sports and intramural sports. The gender gap is between 2 percent to 5 percent, which is statistically significant and present for all grades.

Herbert Marsh, a top internationally known educational psychologist, completed a study about athletic participation in public schools. In the published study in *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, Marsh (2003) writes: “Students with more athletic participation in extramural/team sports benefited more in terms of grades, Carnegie units, educational aspirations, internal locus of control, and self-esteem. They also spent more time on homework, applied to more universities, and experienced more positive parental expectations. Two years after high school these students were more likely to be enrolled at a university and for a longer period of time. They also had higher levels of tertiary education and higher educational aspirations.” (p. 217)

In a study published in *Developmental Psychology*, Fredericks and Eccles (2006) found: “Participation in school clubs and sports predicted higher grades and educational expectations. The higher grade and educational attainment of activity participants as compared with nonparticipants may be a result of a greater commitment to school and a greater likelihood of associating with peers who value academics.” (p. 12) The authors advocate that participation in high-quality extracurricular activities, such as sports or clubs, are a productive use of a student’s leisure time and can provide distinct opportunities for growth and development.

Students have different opportunities to develop physical, intellectual, social, and emotional competencies when involved in sports, school clubs, and pro-social
activities. They can also form supportive relationships with a variety of adults and peers.

Section II – The District and Community

The North Woods School District is a publicly funded school district in the mid-Atlantic. The district has six schools, including a high school. The community’s population is 28,919 and is about 85% white. The African American and Hispanic population is about 13% and “other” is the remainder. The median family income is about $76,000. The median income of a home owner is holding steady at $75,820.

North Woods High School is a traditional, comprehensive high school serving 1800 students in grades 9 through 12. North Woods High School offers students a variety of extra-curricular avenues, including but not limited to clubs, theatre arts, club sports, and interscholastic sports. Within the interscholastic athletic department, North Woods offers sport participation opportunities during three seasons (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Students participate in sport-related activities (leagues, workouts, or meetings) out of season as well. I help supervise coaches and student athletes and assist in other ways with the athletic program, including overseeing the management of facilities.

One motivation for this analysis is the ongoing pressure on athletics to cut budgets. Many community and board members think there are ways the district can be more efficient; many think the budget is larger than it needs to be. One area of focus is on the budget for athletics. Many perceive it as too large and do not think of athletics

1 All names used are fictitious. The data was collected from a community and school district from the mid-Atlantic region.
as really part of the core mission for schools. So at board meetings and in other community forums there is talk of cutting the athletic budget.

I disagree with this perspective. Indeed, members of the athletic program point out the many ways the program is run efficiently and the many activities and fund-raisers that contribute substantially to supporting the athletic program. They have conducted fund-raisers for a stadium scoreboard, a gymnasium sound system, athletic trainer’s ice machine, and a baseball batting cage. There have been prior budget reductions leading to staffing reductions. Some programs that had assistant coaches lost them. Budget cuts significantly affected the amount of opportunities for participation in freshman sports programs, which resulted in a loss of more coaches and reduced opportunities to play sports for the student body.

It is difficult to address the budget cut mentality and critical comments about the cost of athletics without evidence to support the benefits of athletics at the high school level. The problem I address here is the absence of empirical data on relationships between athletic participation and academics among students who participate in athletics. Lack of data makes it hard to argue in support of the athletic program with factual information. As Scott Plous (1993) lays out in his book The Psychology of Judgment and Decision Making, “group discussion tends to amplify the inclination of group members, known as “group polarization.” (p. 187) Hundreds of studies have explored the topic, including the first such study in 1961 by James Stoner. Stoner (1961) found that after groups discussed a topic they were more likely to make riskier changes, against their conservative norm. This “risky shift” has been researched in many variations with consistent results. Group discussion usually leads to people advocating for riskier courses of action than they otherwise would as
individuals. It is possible that groups in the community talking amongst themselves and complaining about school budgets and taxes could start to lean more and more in the direction of creating drastic budget cuts that could have a seriously adverse effect on student opportunities in athletics and this would be to the detriment of students, staff, and even the community.

Section III – Exploring Athletic Participation, GPA, and Attendance

The following analyses are based records from the senior class – 405 students at North Woods High School. The analyses look at correlations between sports participation and grade point average, absences, discipline occurrences, and attendance. The approach was to compare these variables for students who were involved in athletics versus those who weren’t. Students were coded as not involved in sports (coded 0) or involved in at least one sport (coded 1). In addition, for those involved in sports, additional codes indicated which and how many sports they were involved in – many students participate in more than one sport. In all, there are 26 sports that students can be involved in.

Table 1 shows that almost 70% (279 students) of the seniors are not involved in athletics; 90 students are involved in one sport, 25 students in two sports, and 11 students in three sports.
Table B-1  
12th Graders involved in Sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Sports</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
<th>Student Body %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>405</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the 12th grade participation in sports by gender, with 82 males doubling the participation of the 44 senior females.

Table B-2  
Sport Participation in 12th Grade by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Student Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>126</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 compares athletic participators (“student athletes”) to non-participators in terms of GPA, absences, and discipline occurrences. The student athletes’ GPAs were higher and they have fewer absences and discipline incidents. Student athletes had a mean GPA of 3.51 and a mean absence rate of 7.84 days, while non-athletes average GPA was about .20 lower than the student athletes and non-athletes were
absent about two more days on average than student-athletes. A T-test shows that the differences between the two groups were statistically for GPA and absences (P = .01). Discipline occurrences were slightly lower for athletes, but the difference is not statistically significant.

Table B-3 North Woods HS Non-Athlete versus Athlete Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement Measures</th>
<th>Athlete†</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>3.279</td>
<td>0.6495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3.51*</td>
<td>0.4539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>9.81</td>
<td>7.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absences††</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>7.84*</td>
<td>6.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Occurrences‡</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†0=non-athletes, 1=athletes
††Absences are “per year”
‡ Discipline occurrence is defined as any referral that results in a consequence (warning, detention, or suspension) and the variables is “per year.”
*indicates difference achieves statistical significance at P = .01

For another analysis, I looked to see whether there was a relationship between GPA and the number of sports a student was involved in (Table 4). Coding for the analysis is as follows: non-athletes are coded 0 (n=280) and athletes as 1, 2, or 3
depending on whether the athlete was involved in 1, 2, or 3 sports. Table 5 shows that more sports participation is associated with a higher GPA, fewer absences, and fewer discipline occurrences. The average GPA goes up slightly with more sports participation: 3.43 for 1 sport participators, 3.64 for 2 sport participators, and 3.89 for 3 sport participators. Absences and discipline occurrences go down with greater sports participation. Non-athletes (3.28) averaged a GPA almost six tenths lower than student athletes (3.89) involved in three sports, were absent six days more on average than student athletes involved in three sports, and averaged almost two more discipline occurrences than student athletes involved in three sports.

An Analysis of Variance test was conducted showing that the differences by GPA are big enough to achieve statistical significance at the P = .05 level; the differences in absences are almost big enough (P = .065) to achieve statistical significance; while the P value for discipline occurrences was well above the significance level. On each measure, the pattern shows better results for students engaged in athletics and the best results for those in multiple sports.
Table B-4  Means By The Number of Sports The Student Is Involved In

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th># of Sports</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0*</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2**</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3**</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absences</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>9.78</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>6.70</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>4.71</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GPA, F statistic P value = .000 (# of sport= 0 differs from both # of sports = 2 and # sport = 3)
GPA, Absences F statistic P value = .065 Discipline Occurrences F statistic P value = .470

Section IV – Conclusions and Implications

Results above in Table 3 and Table 4 show without question better academics, attendance, and conduct for student athletes. Given these results, there is no way to contend, as some may do, that sports participation is somehow in conflict with or shortchanges students' academic pursuits. Overall, the students in sports are better students; and, more involvement in sports certainly does not hurt; in fact, the more
involved students are, the better the outcomes. At the same time, it is not appropriate to draw the conclusion that somehow sports participation directly causes higher academic achievement or better behavioral conduct.

While we cannot conclude that participation in sports produces better academic achievement, it is reasonable to contend that by participating in sports, students develop habits and character traits that also help them in academics. Sports participation produces a high level of interaction with adults – coaches, volunteers, parents – and this interaction is likely to create more responsibility and other positive attitudes. Habits and traits associated with sport participation, include time management, effective communication, teamwork, and discipline and these are likely to have favorable effects in terms of students’ academic achievement (G.P.A., Attendance, and Discipline). These habits and traits have a positive relationship with success in the classroom, on the playing field, and in life.

Another factor to consider is the academic eligibility requirement for those participating in sports. The eligibility requirements were created by the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association, also known as the DIAA. The High School Athletic Director monitors the student athlete’s academic performance at the district/building level. Student athletes are required to maintain a 2.0 G.P.A. as well as pass all classes defined as graduation requirements. If the student athlete does not meet the eligibility requirements, they will be removed from participating in their sport. Thus, compared with students not involved in sports, student athletes have a strong incentive to maintain adequate grades and to avoid getting into trouble with excessive absences or disciplinary problems – so, undoubtedly, these eligibility requirements play a role in explaining the findings of the athletes’ overall more positive results.
In conclusion, participating in sports appears not to be detrimental to a student’s academics. In fact sports participation may actually support higher academic achievement as demonstrated in the statistical analyses from North Woods High School. Sports participation under the guidance of a good coach and other supportive adults goes hand in hand with healthier lifestyles and overall wellness.
REFERENCES


*Unpublished Master’s Thesis*, MIT School of Industrial Management, Boston, MA.
School administrators and school boards are feeling the pressure associated with measuring up against federal and state academic achievement accountability standards. The accountability movement has forced school districts to cut funding in the areas of extra-curricular activities and interscholastic athletics. When this happens, athletic departments need to redefine their goals and how they will achieve them.

St. Georges has recently fell victim to a shrinking athletic budget. Since the athletic budget started to dwindle these past two years (2014 and 2015), it has become difficult to retain good coaches, maintain facilities, support the travel expenses associated with highly-competitive athletic opportunities, upgrade equipment, and pay event staff to work athletic contests/tournaments.

More and more, the fiscal expenses once supported through the district budget are now the individual team’s responsibility. This has sparked an increase in fundraising activities, but the funds raised are not enough for teams and the athletic department to function at a premier level. In high-functioning athletic departments, there are booster organizations that foster an alternative and substantial funding source to offset the budgetary restrictions on the athletic budget. An organized, dedicated, and effective booster group does not exist at St. Georges. Developing one is an urgent priority.
NCCVT school district has trimmed athletic budgets for St. Georges and the other three high schools in the district. This is evident in the Superintendent and School Board’s just released 5-year district plan (and mission/vision statement); this plan does not include a section dedicated to interscholastic athletic advancement in the four high schools, nor does it, for other school activities such as band, chorus, and the arts, making these areas vulnerable to budget cuts.

There is a need for us at St. Georges to define what we want to accomplish and how we will get there. The district and school board will not do this for us and so St. Georges will lead the way. As I highlighted in my problem statement, “there is no defined focus and goal for interscholastic athletics from the school board or district office. If there is no strategic plan, then there is no way to maintain a high level of competition and eventual success.”

This artifact served to develop the strategic planning documents for St. Georges’ Technical High School Athletic Department. The plan opens with a new mission statement and a new vision statement. It expands into a list of specific goals and the timeline associated with meeting those goals. The plan is divided into two phases.

Phase I focuses on building a shared belief-system, effective communication system, secure site management system, and a cutting-edge athletic training services program. School and community stakeholders are working together to establish the foundational principles to guide us for the next five years. These principles are integral to success in any organization: shared beliefs, effective communication, security, and safety. The goals accomplished in Phase I will facilitate progress into Phase II.
Phase II focuses on improving the interscholastic experience, specifically fan attendance, student athlete academic achievement, coaching evaluation practices/procedures, and facility enhancement. The work to be completed in Phase II is further developed in Appendix D, specifically the Stadium Fencing and Bleacher project.

Below are the planning documents in their entirety. These documents will forge the path toward a flagship athletic program at St. Georges Technical High School.
St. Georges Technical High School
2015-2018
WHITEHILL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS
DEFINING WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE DO IT

Need: St. Georges has multiple opportunities for students. It is a school
district rich in academic, vocational, athletic, and local traditions.
These statements will become living and breathing documents that define how we will function as an athletic department now and into the future.

The high school athletic department functions under the umbrella of the district vision and mission statements. We are district employees who teach first and coach second. We coach student athletes, emphasis on student.

Our athletic department needs a philosophy stating our beliefs. Our high school philosophy must govern St. Georges’ High School athletics. Interscholastic sports, however, serve as an alternative opportunity to traditional classroom learning. The lessons learned on the playing fields are as valuable as those learned in the classroom. What do we believe about high school sports? What is it we want our student-athletes to experience during their time in our athletic program? What is our philosophy regarding St. Georges’ High School Athletics?

These are important questions with no answers. The time is now to define who we are and why we do it.
ST. GEORGES’ HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS PROPOSAL

DEFINING WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE DO IT

**High School Athletic Department Goals**

- Develop a Philosophy of Beliefs for STG High School Athletics through collegial discussions between administration, coaches, and student athletes.

- Create a system to manage student fans attending our Athletic Events.

- Improve methods of communication between Athletic Program stakeholders including District Administration, community members, Athletic Directors, High School coaches, teachers, parents, student athletes, and League schools.

- Improve overall safety of student athletes during sport practice sessions.

- Improve procedures for Supervision of students involved in Interscholastic Activities.

- Ensure that the Interscholastic High School Eligibility Policy is used to improve student athlete academic performance and classroom success.

- Formalize the coach’s evaluation process to include goal setting, reflective practice, and program expectations.

- Improve Facilities in Stadium – Visitor Seating, Fencing, etc.
### 2015-2018 Proposal Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Stakeholders Responsible</th>
<th>Proposed Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Beliefs</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>July 2015-August 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Fans</td>
<td>Athletic Director</td>
<td>September 2015-June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>August 2015-June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision/Evaluation of Coaches and Student-Athletes</td>
<td>Athletic Director</td>
<td>August 2015-June 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaches</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Athletic Director</td>
<td>September 2016-June 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>Athletic Director</td>
<td>June 2015-June 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GEORGES’ HIGH SCHOOL
ATHLETICS PROPOSAL

DEFINING WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE DO IT

Phase 1:

Goal:

Develop a Philosophy of Beliefs for St. Georges’ Athletics through collegial discussions between administration, coaches, and student athletes.

- Philosophy Round Tables
- Personal Inventories
- Coaches Clinics
- Collaborative Efforts
- Open and Honest Communication

Goal:

Create a system to manage student fans attending our Athletic Events.

- Pilot Study
- Faculty Volunteers
- Website and News Flash Communication
- Student Assembly Communication

Goal:

Improve methods of communication between Athletic Program stakeholders including District Administration, community members, High School Athletic Directors, High School coaches, parents, student athletes, and League schools.

- Monthly Round Tables
Goal:
Improve overall safety of student athletes during sport practice sessions.

- Athletic Trainers
- CPR/First Aid Certifications
- Athletic Injury Protocol

Phase 2:

Goal:
Improve procedures for supervision of students involved in interscholastic activities.

- Collegial Discussions
- Round Tables
- Policy and Procedure
- Accountability
Goal:
Ensure that the interscholastic high school eligibility policy is used to improve student athlete academic performance and classroom success.

- Consistency
- Accountability
- Policy and Procedure
- Collegial Partnerships
- Support Program
- Stakeholder Involvement

Goal:
Formalize the coach’s evaluation process to include goal setting, reflective practice, and program expectations.

- Pre-Season Meeting – Goal Setting and Program Expectations
- Mid-Season Review – Goal Progress Tracking and Reflection of Program Expectations/Program Goals
- Post-Season Review – Goal and Expectation Assessment/Personal Reflection

Goal:
Improve stadium facility by enhancing visitor seating and securing the perimeter with fencing.

- Goal Setting and Program Expectations with School Board and Community at Large
- Goal Progress Tracking and Reflection of Program Expectations/Program Goals
- Goal and Expectation Assessment/Personal Reflection
➢ Development of Action Plan

➢ Fencing Upgrad
Appendix D

PLANS AND STEPS TOWARD STADIUM FACILITY ENHANCEMENT

Interscholastic Athletic Associations exist in every state and govern sports according to a strict set of regulations and policies. These regulations and policies apply to areas such as uniforms, academics, sportsmanship, and facilities. Districts do not always recognize that facilities must be constructed in compliance with regulations; if not, the athletic programs may suffer.

St. Georges Technical High School has a multi-sport turf field for field hockey, soccer, lacrosse, and football as well as an 8 lane track with sand pits and a pole vault pit. When the school was built in 2006, the construction project failed to account for DIAA (Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association) regulations regarding visitor seating and fencing height. Consequently, St. Georges is prohibited from hosting home playoff games in football as well as state playoff games. This is discouraging to our fans and student athletes and takes all the incentive and excitement out of securing home field advantage. Old and substandard facilities also cast a negative light on the school.

Stakeholder Analysis

Introduction

This artifact presents a stakeholder analysis – a valuable step when planning a difficult and complicated new initiative. Improving the athletic program will require changes. Change affects people and existing ways of doing things. Since athletic
program needs will require resources and peoples’ time, it is essential to analyze the status quo and the current stakeholders. Stakeholder analysis aids in planning to consider the interests and potential actions – supporting, resisting, adapting, etc. – of stakeholders.

A stakeholder is simply an individual or group with a reason to care about the decisions and with enough impact on the decision makers so that the reason should be taken seriously. Stakeholders are sources of value attributes. An attribute is something that the stakeholders, or some subset of them, care about enough so that failure to consider it in the decision would lead to a poor decision (Edwards & Newman, 2000, p. 21).}

In any school construction project, many stakeholders are involved such as parents, coaches, district leaders, school boards, county officials, environmental agencies, politicians, and more. When dealing with tax-supported public institutions represented by a board of education, it is important to determine the stakeholders involved and analyze their perspectives and interests to enable better planning to cultivate support for funding and approvals for school system improvement and in my case, an athletic facility refurbishment.

**Goal: Stadium Enhancement**

Facilities are an important part of a sports program’s success. As stated above, the stadium at St. Georges is not equipped with a fence or proper visitor seating. The DIAA will not allow St. Georges to host home playoff games. This is a negative incentive to attract aspiring student athletes considering enrollment at St. Georges. Athletes everywhere work hard in the regular season to earn the right to play at home in the playoffs in front of classmates, family, and friends. At St. Georges, this cannot happen because our facility is not appropriately equipped for playoff events.

We must enhance the stadium with the appropriate fencing and visitor bleacher space so current and future student athletes can compete at home in a playoff atmosphere. We must make sure that the St. Georges’ brand is protected and that the pride established in 2006 lives on for all to enjoy. This can be accomplished with the appropriate upgrades to the stadium for home and visitors alike.

Furthermore, the stadium enhancement will allow St. Georges Technical High School to support community athletic programs. Youth sport programs provide a healthy alternative to video games and television. Kids are able to foster intangible life skills such as teamwork, communication, and self-discipline while participating in an
activity that promotes health and wellness. St. Georges will now be able to support community youth programs with a secure and safe venue, bolstered by additional seating for hometown folk and out of town visitors. This enhancement project will serve as another step toward strengthening the relationship between the athletic program, the school community, and the community at large.

The stadium enhancement project stems from Phase II of the Strategic Planning Documents detailed in Appendix C. It would be a few months worth of work to enhance the stadium facility. Beyond the immediate upgrade to stadium security and visitor seating, it will ensure years of stability for interscholastic competition and improve the interscholastic experience for all.
**Stakeholders Involved**

The stakeholder table below describes each stakeholder and selected attributes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group Description (Key Players)</th>
<th>Key Values/Concerns of Stakeholder Group (Brief Overview)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superintendent</strong></td>
<td>Influential key player; politically smart; operates in a political environment; interested in admissions, construction, and student achievement; athletics medium priority; direct; will listen and can be swayed; responsibility to the Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Manager</strong></td>
<td>Influential key player, difficult to deal with; the keeper of the funds; interested in the bottom line; need to be massaged and educated at a slow pace; conservative spender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Board Representatives</strong></td>
<td>9 members; majority of construction money is spent on renovating Howard HS; highly political in nature; influenced by legislatures; internal issues; a few members support interscholastic athletics; two members will take convincing, using evidence; public image is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools Director</strong></td>
<td>Direct responsibility to Union, responding to low-performing schools; relationships with many people in the educational system; he works within; honest/hard-working/student-centered/athletic benefactor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Principal</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge and experience in curriculum/instruction; have +/- powerful relationships with students, parents, and administration; student-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Athletic Director</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge and experience coaching, teacher; student-centered; former Division 1 and Olympic Athlete; kind/gentle/intelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consortium of Local Businesses</strong></td>
<td>Concerned with innovation, career readiness, funding, community stability, networking, and human relationships; NCCVT depends on local businesses to sustain community members; help to create, identify, and support existing/new programs to increase student achievement for low-income and special education students; support athletics through services and money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td>Influential, effective support group that must be involved in improving school system; utilize parental ideas and their power to sway school boards to make decisions in the best interest of children as well as fund new programs and initiatives; support local businesses and can encourage those businesses to give back; majority support athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td>Many varied personalities, academic backgrounds, and aspirations. Listening to the perspectives of the student constituent is essential to stay grounded and have a clear understanding of the obstacles being faced by them individually and collectively inside and outside the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Principal</strong></td>
<td>Experience coaching; former Athletic Director; 11 years teaching experience, 8 years administrative experience as an Assistant Principal and Athletic Supervisor; student-centered; passionate; excellent communicator; team-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table D-1 Stakeholder Analysis Table</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>List of Stakeholders</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interest/Stake in the Change</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What gains or losses (in their own eyes) will the stakeholder experience? (professional prestige? challenges to or affirmation of beliefs? quality of working conditions? monetary compensation? social amenities? other?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Agent of the school board who must protect/maintain their collective interests; decides whether monetary funds can be dispensed for the stadium enhancement; high impact and influence therefore she will use extreme caution; responsible to address concerns from certain school board members who may see this project as a want versus a need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Manager</strong></td>
<td>Superintendent’s fiscal gatekeeper; he must make sure he advises superintendent to make sound, fiscal decisions; he knows that he has a responsibility to the school board and their collective financial interests; he will be concerned with damaging his relationship with the board if he publicly supports this project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Board Representatives</strong></td>
<td>School Board representatives are concerned with public image as well as their public duty and commitment to make fiscally sound decisions for the students throughout the district, not just at STG; some members maintain a purely academic platform while others are more inclusive of extracurricular experiences; some members are extremely political and must protect their at-large interests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schools Director

Former standout athlete in Delaware, so he is very supportive of athletics across the district; understands the DIAA concerns as he was a former board of directors member for DIAA; he is extremely political so he will support the project behind the scenes, mainly through off-the-record conversations with key players; he will not be seen as a vocal, public advocate

He will be extremely supportive of the project; he has experiences with pitching these types of projects and has strong relationships with the School Board; probability of opposition is minimal – the only caveat is he will not stand out publicly to ring the bell; everything will be casual and off-the-record

His support is necessary and important – he accentuates the power of relationships; he will be able to get some stakeholders to listen just based on their long-standing relationship; he is also respected as a former athlete and advocate of athletics; his opposition could damage the project’s support – some people will close their ears because they know he isn’t for the project

My main strategy is to explain the project to him and ask that he plants the seeds of support with the key opposition; this will be easy because we have had several, almost daily conversations about this project and athletics in general; he respects my leadership in the area of interscholastic athletics and we have had many deep conversations surrounding their importance to the high school experience; allies include Principal and Athletic Director

School Principal

School Image is extremely important; he is cautious; he leverages the professional gain of such a project versus the personal damage it could cause the school; he is frustrated with spending $16,000 over the past two years to rent bleachers for playoff games; agrees we need to do something different

He supports the project, but believes the building cannot fund it; he will advocate for it and has personally and publicly expressed his desire to complete this project; his only opposition will come when the district asks STG to foot the bill

His support is crucial; he is respected by the Superintendent and the School Board; he has to place his stamp of approval on this before we can even talk with the Superintendent; he runs the building, therefore he has to show that this project is a need from his vantage point, in order for us to have the Superintendent’s ear; his opposition would stop the project in its tracks

My main strategy is to explain the project to him and ask that he plants the seeds of support with superintendent; this will be easy because we have had several, almost daily conversations about this project and athletics in general; he respects my leadership in the area of interscholastic athletics and we have had many deep conversations surrounding their importance to the high school experience; allies include Schools Director and Athletic Director
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Athletic Director</strong></th>
<th>Former Olympic athlete and Delaware athlete stand-out; coaches several sports and teaches Health/PE; great stake in supporting the project with little risk; she is a professional educator and not an administrator, therefore her scope and influence of power is limited – she will not have to advocate at the highest levels</th>
<th>Full support of the project; probability of opposition is minimal; final decision to move this forward and pitch it to the Superintendent, remains with the building administration</th>
<th>Her support is necessary, however it will be toward the back end until the project is approved to begin; she will be integral in gaining athletic department and community support; her opposition would create questions within the athletic community</th>
<th>Her relationship with the Assistant Principal who authored this project will serve as the key strategy for capturing support; she has been a key advisor to the administration and has assisted in designing the project so it meets DIAA regulations and improves the athletic experiences for student athletes and coaches; she has to be involved to secure her continual support; allies include the Assistant Principal, coaches, and the Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consortium of Local Businesses</strong></td>
<td>Involvement in a project such as this stadium enhancement could provide some businesses with more exposure (professional gains) to the community – e.g. advertisement in exchange for funding; some business owners have students in the district and in St. Georges – this would be a personal gain for them, especially if their children play sports</td>
<td>Support potential from most local businesses is favorable, based on past interactions for individual school program support; opposition would show itself through refusal to assist with funding the project</td>
<td>Community business support is important, however not completely necessary to completing this project; the construction impact on the business community at large is non-existent; after the enhancement project is complete, its impact benefits the business community because STG will be able to host more events, which brings more people, and the potential for more money to be spent in the local business community</td>
<td>Options for gaining local business support will become clearer once the project is approved and the determined funding sources are identified; the level of alternative funding required will determine how we garner local support from community businesses; we will have to provide our businesses some recognition for their support efforts within the project; allies include business owners, community liaisons, building administration, athletic director, and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Majority of parental concerns with school construction are based on tax increases – not a strong concern for Vocational Technical district parents and Delaware does not depend heavily on local funds; parents gain a better interscholastic athletic experience for their children at STG</td>
<td>Parents will support this enhancement project and have expressed this publicly to building administration, the superintendent, and the school board; the school board president has an athlete at STG; opposition is slightly probable</td>
<td>Parental support would be helpful if the school board hesitates to approve the project; it becomes extremely crucial once the project is approved; they will be vital in obtaining funding from local businesses; oppositional consequences are minute, except when we unite to gather local business support</td>
<td>It is a matter of relationships between the Athletic Department, Building Administration, and our school families; the relationships are strong for the most part and through conversations with certain key parents, the support of the project will build; using school events such as meet the coaches night and back to school night, we can explain the vision and mission of STG athletics for the next five years, and in turn gain strong support for this project and many more; allies include athletic department, building administration, and the athletic director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Students | Everything to gain and nothing to lose; student athletes, especially, gain the full scope of home field advantage when they compete in a safe and secure environment; the enhancement project will support an increased fan attendance and lead to a positive and competitive sports environment for all stakeholders | Students will support this project, especially the student athletes; we have met with student liaison and they largely support the project; opposition would only stem from students who may not see a direct benefit from the enhancement; opposition would have minute impact | Student support is important, especially when the mission of most educational institutions, including our district, is to ensure that all students learn and grow; when students feel supported by the institution, their commitment to succeed inside and outside the classroom increases; consequences of student opposition may lead to district stakeholders questioning the need for this project | Students need a forum to have their voices heard; when students feel like they have a voice in making decisions for the school, the more supportive and open they will be to changes; that is the main strategy here – to continue to gather student opinions and ideas on school matters, via the student liaison forum; showing students the benefits of this project will help to reduce opposition; allies include the athletic department, parents, teachers, and the building administration |
| **Assistant Principal** | Author of the enhancement project; extremely high interest and major influence; personal gain includes showing district stakeholders that he can lead a project from creation to completion; professional gain includes enhancing the stadium facility and improving the interscholastic experience for all stakeholders. | In full support of the project; he carries the most impact when selling the project because he knows it so well; his experience with leading athletic programs serves as the most effective mechanism to seeking project approval; opposition is null and void | His support of the project is paramount in importance; he is the creator of the project and knows the impact for all stakeholders; his relationships with these stakeholders will be one of the key, determining factors toward its district approval; the consequences of his opposition are null and void, since he does not oppose it. | He has offered full support toward the project since he created the project and will be slated to lead the project to completion; oppositional concerns are non-existent; allies are the Principal, Schools Director, Athletic Director, School Board President, and parents. |
High school begins a difficult transition for most middle school students. The middle school structure and culture provides more of the support and protections necessary for “tweens” – those not children anymore, but not yet young adults. The greater level of nurturing and guidance of middle school gives way to the more wide-open freedoms, individual responsibilities, and rigorous curriculum of high school. Students have more academic work, more freedom, and less free time.

Many students are involved in activities inside and outside of school. These include work, athletics, church, boy/girls scouts, etc. While all freshman students encounter a major transition from middle school/junior high school to high school, the student athlete faces an even greater set of challenges due to the extra time and mental and physical energy she or he must commit to the athletic program. This creates additional stressors and makes it harder for the student athlete to succeed academically.

Currently, St. Georges high school does not have a formal, well-designed academic support system for student athletes. This artifact will be a planning document proposing and describing an academic support system for student athletes. The document will include tiered intervention strategies and safety nets to assist student athletes during their competition seasons. The document will specify roles and responsibilities for coaches, teachers, parents, and students.
I reviewed literature to help plan this artifact. The literature focused on the demands placed on student athletes as well as how secondary and post-secondary institutions planned athletic, academic, and social/emotional supports for students in a rigorous environment. The literature provided models of best practice for implementing academic support services for all students, not just student athletes.

**Review of the Literature**

The legislative movement for accountability and rigorous standards has forced secondary schools to reassess how they do business. Academic standards are being revamped to focus on increased rigor for college and career readiness. Instructional practices are being tweaked to enhance student learning and promote collaboration and student efficacy.

The Pathways to College Network published a paper titled *Removing Roadblocks to Rigor: Linking Academic and Social Supports to Ensure College Readiness and Success*. The network focuses on the education pipeline from middle school through college graduation in the following four areas: academic readiness for college, college access and information, financial aid and affordability, and college success. The network recommends that educators “align academic instruction with support services, optimize skill sets of school guidance counselors, ensure that school faculty and staff possess appropriate training in adolescent development, create stronger incentives for teachers to help students meet the demands of rigorous academic programs, and increase the frequency of student assessments to keep students on track”. (Campbell, 2010)

These recommendations have been adopted by many states, including Delaware. With the adoption of the Common Core, the commitment to Race to the
Top, and the eventual movement from DCAS to Smarter Balanced, the emphasis on rigor/relevance, accountability, and assessment is becoming the new norm.

In high school, unlike middle school, many students are involved in extra-curricular activities inside and outside of school. These include work, athletics, student clubs, drama, school newspaper work, church, boy/girls scouts, and more. We encourage students to get involved and to participate fully and responsibly, but at the same time we expect all students to succeed academically – and this includes student athletes. Of all the extra-curriculars, nothing takes as much time as athletic participation.

We realize that an athlete must be ultimately responsible for their academic success. Therefore coaches, teachers, and parents must commit to a basic system that can support an athlete's learning and enhance academic performance. During my research, service models consistently suggested these athletic interventions implemented by coaches are most effective:

1) Setting goals with players and parents
2) Requiring planners to be used for planning and documenting academic work
3) Sharing good academic news daily during practice
4) Passing out grade check forms to players' instructors every few weeks; requiring input on class attendance, performance, and behavior
5) Creating an Honorary Coach Program - inviting players' favorite teacher to serve as an honorary coach
Supporting student athlete’s academic progress from the coach/parent end is only a third of the solution. The other two parts include a system of academic interventions: 1) teacher and guidance counselor support for those students who struggle 2) monitoring and supporting student socio-emotional needs.

Schonewise and Weichel (2007) highlight the work being done in a small, southwestern high school that sets the mold. The ultimate goal of the Titan Pyramid is to maximize student achievement for all Papillion-La Vista South students, all the time. The Titan Pyramid has three vertexes, an academic vertex focused on providing assistance and monitoring struggling students, an incentive vertex focused on providing benefits to students who excel, and a character vertex focused on providing students with other skills to help them on their chosen paths.

Schonewise and Weichel (2007) explain that the ultimate goal of the Titan Pyramid is to maximize student achievement for all Papilion-La Vista South students, all the time. The pyramid begins with a strong leadership team that creates a system of expectations and interventions that are systematic, timely, and directive. The loose and tight components give teachers some flexibility in how they meet the expectations of the system. The pyramid requires the cooperation of everyone-- administrators, parents, counselors, teachers, secretaries, and even student runners and tutors. Students are held accountable, teachers provide high expectations, and ultimately the system works to maximize student achievement.

My focus in this artifact highlights the academic vertex within the Titan Pyramid. The incentive vertex and the character vertex are valuable and necessary components within the Pyramid. Students who demonstrate academic growth receive incentives to achieve more. All students are exposed to character development
experiences including community service, personal/professional goal setting, and reflective exercises centered on ethical/moral value.

Below is a snapshot of the academic vertex from the Titan Pyramid (Schonewise and Weichel, 2007), which includes two levels of intervention:

**Level 1 Intervention**

The core idea within the first level is that students don't choose what homework gets completed and turned in. Because students should always be responsible for their homework, the staff determined what assignments are appropriate and relevant for students, depending on their course level, grade, and education needs. Students must complete daily homework to practice and review skills. If a student has not turned in homework, teachers try their own interventions first, then refer the student to an administrator before incomplete work becomes "unaccepted."

The focus areas for Level 1 are detailed below:

**Homework Accountability:** Teachers are required, through a"loose-tight" management structure, to determine how late grades are scored. The tight component requires each teacher to accept late work and give credit and points to those who complete the work. The loose component is how each department works within established guidelines developed for late work. Individual departments determined their best practice plans for accepting late work and the plans are clearly stated on each course syllabus.

**Academic Study Time:** After a teacher works with a student, and the work is still incomplete, the student reports to 30 minutes of quiet study time within 24 hours of handing in the assignment.
**Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday School:** If the student does not attend Academic Study Time, then they are assigned to Tuesday or Thursday School from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at night or on Saturday from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

**Level 2 Intervention**

The second level provides support to students who are failing. The School uses a district report that shows which students are failing which classes. The report automatically generates a credit check each week. On the first day of the week, each teacher informs students if they are on the credit-check list. If they appear on the list just once, students receive fewer freedoms throughout the building. Students who appear on the credit-check list for multiple weeks or who are failing multiple classes receive special counselor attention as long as they remain on the weekly credit-check list. The counselors follow a four-step process to provide support to students:

- **Four Step Process for Guidance Counselors:** 1) Develop plan for improvement 2) Gather information and recommendations from teachers/parents along with administration to implement intervention 3) Meet with student, parent, and administrator 4) Create follow-up plans to monitor student progress on a weekly basis

**After School/Homework Opportunity Club** - academic study hall where students have an hour to complete missing work, get extra academic support, and take assessments

**Success Study Hall** - National Honor Society or the High Ability Learners are available to help students during study hall

As a result of implementing these intervention strategies, failure rates were down and grade point averages and the numbers of students on the honor roll were up.
The Special Education Department noted that the failure rates of special education students dropped from 9% to 1.5% in only one year. The survey results also indicated that students and parents alike were in favor of the higher expectations and additional support the school provided.

The success of the Titan Pyramid supports the need for an academic safety net for all students. The research below focuses even deeper and supports the need for athletic and socio-emotional supports as well.

Blinde and Greendorfer (1992) identified four types of difficulties associated with being a student athlete: role conflict (meeting expectations of roles as both student and athlete), role strain (distress associated with meeting the expectations of others such as parents, coaches, teachers), value alienation (struggling to integrate sports-related and personal values), and exploitation (giving priority to athletic responsibilities so inadequate time and effort are given to student or personal responsibilities).

Higher education personnel have shifted their thinking toward student athletes. They now believe that intercollegiate athletics must assist this population to become whole students and complete athletes - not one or the other. Athletes face challenges and barriers that include adjustment to competing demands, negative stereotypes, the need for unique support services, and coping with learning disabilities. The barriers make them more vulnerable to developmental crises and psychological distress problems and can have debilitating effects from stereotyping. The challenges allow for the implementation of more holistic support services that can meet the needs of all learners.
Most common and receiving the most support in the literature is a three-prong model of intervention for student athletes – athletic, academic, and socio-emotional. Following the literature and tailored to context, I propose the following model for St. Georges and other New Castle County Vocational Technical School District high schools.

**St. Georges’/NCCVT’s Academic Support Model Overview**

Support service models currently exist for students with learning disabilities and transitioning freshmen, but not for student athletes. Each high school provides a full range of extra-curricular activities including athletics, student government, honor society, school newspaper, drama, yearbook, and other national student organizations. Through their participation, students develop communication, leadership, and social skills. The technical schools also offer a model special education program designed to help students achieve academic success and acquire necessary skills for employment. Students are provided a rigorous academic experience in conjunction with a targeted technical focus and engage in extracurricular athletics and activities as well. What is needed are more specific support and guidelines for helping student athletes, particularly during the freshmen year.

While all freshman students encounter a major transition from middle school or junior high school to high school, student athletes endure from the time demands and additional responsibility demands of balance academic expectations and athletic requirements and expectations.
NCCVT Three-Prong Model

Research indicates a three-prong approach is most effective to meet the athletic, social/emotional, and academic needs of student athletes.

Athletic Intervention Prong: Laying the Foundation

Prong One requires coaches and parents to set the stage for the four-year journey through high school.

Coaches begin by communicating academic and behavioral expectations to both players and parents on day one of the pre-season. Players are held accountable for their academic performance and behavior, as well as for communicating this information to their parents, coaches, and teachers. The coaches, players, and parents sign off these expectations in order to be a part of the team.

Players are expected to...

1) Set goals for their academic performance and post-secondary aspirations
2) Be on time to school, class, and practice
3) Maintain an eligible GPA
4) Maintain and possess their agenda books on a daily basis
5) Print out weekly grade reports and have them signed off on by coaches and parents
6) Communicate with teachers on a weekly basis about their work/needs
7) Manage their time each day
8) Complete all work to the best of their ability
9) Conduct themselves appropriately and represent themselves in high regard…they are a reflection of the school and athletic program no matter where they may be

Parents are expected to...

1) Assist in setting goals for their child’s academic performance and post-secondary aspirations
2) Support their children in reaching those goals
3) Hold their children accountable for maintaining and possessing their agenda books on a daily basis
4) Sign off on weekly grade reports
5) Communicate with coaches and teachers about their children’s work/needs
6) Model time management for their children
7) Conduct themselves appropriately and represent themselves in high regard…they are a reflection of the school and athletic program no matter where they may be

Coaches are expected to...

1) Assist in setting goals for their player’s academic performance and post-secondary aspirations
2) Support their players in reaching those goals
3) Hold their players accountable for maintaining and possessing their agenda books on a daily basis
4) Sign off on weekly grade reports
5) Communicate with parents and teachers about their player’s work/needs
6) Model time management for their players
7) Conduct themselves appropriately and represent themselves in high regard…they are a reflection of the school and athletic program no matter where they may be.

Social/Emotional Intervention Prong: Character Education, Grit, and Self-Efficacy

1) Guidance Counselors and Career and Transition teachers meet with students and their families to map out a plan for social and emotional well being
2) The plan is shared with the student athlete’s teachers and coaches
3) Student athletes meet with a guidance counselor or career and transition teacher on a bi-weekly basis
4) Regular Education Teachers monitor well being, communicate concerns, and mentor character education with student athletes
5) A mentor list is compiled of upperclassmen/peers, teachers, coaches, etc. and shared with families when the social/emotional school meeting takes place
6) Mentoring sessions will take place at school and be supervised through administration/athletic director.
7) Through Vision 2015, teachers will focus on character education and the student development of self-efficacy
8) Teachers will also be in-serviced on Angela Lee Duckworth’s notion of grit versus IQ, something we find at higher levels in student athletes.

**Academic Intervention Prong: Classroom and University Partnerships**

1) Weekly eligibility reports are generated by the Athletic Director and sent to all coaches, guidance counselors, and career/transition teachers.

2) Teachers commit to contact parents as soon as a student athlete obtains a C average in their class.

3) Coaches establish a 45 minute study hall bi-weekly – teachers/AP or honors students volunteer time.

4) University partnerships are established for tutoring sessions; undergraduate students in need of experience working with students.

5) Mentors are asked to assist in establishing an academic routine, game plan, and provide support/resources where needed.

**Stakeholders and Resources**

The stakeholders necessary for a successful program include school/district administration, athletic directors, coaches, student athletes, faculty, and parents. The stakeholders need to work together and within their defined roles to implement the services effectively. The stakeholder roles and responsibilities were defined within the model earlier in this project.

From a resource standpoint, I am hard pressed to avoid spending money on the program. I know the district will not be inclined to spend money unless there is inherent value. This is why a small dose implementation should assist me in selling
the program. To save money, I feel we can use the H.A.W.K. Academy resources, which currently exist at St. Georges, as the foundational hub for this service model. Between the career area teachers, coaches, and guidance counselors, freshman student athletes can be monitored from day one. This will help to institutionalize the program.

The more support students have the better they will perform. This model can serve more than student athletes. If implemented effectively, all students can benefit. The end goal of this support system is to assist all students, not just our athletes. It is essential that the support is strongest when needed most, during transitions.

I feel this three-prong intervention system can be adapted to fit within the pre-existing Freshman H.A.W.K. academy, described below:

**Career Programs: Career & Transition**

Careers and Transition is a unique HAWK Academy program for all 9th grade students. The objectives of the program are three-fold:

1) To help each student transition successfully from middle school to high school
2) To help each student make an informed career area selection
3) To ensure each student forms a solid foundation of knowledge and skills needed for high school success, career success, and life-long success.

The Careers and Transition curriculum is divided into an extensive sequence of mini-courses. Teachers use classroom instruction, problem-based learning, engaging projects and activities that are designed to give students the knowledge and skills needed for the 21st century workplace. To emphasize the relationship between...
academic and career success, courses are routinely integrated with the academic subjects in the HAWK Academy.

_Careers and Transition Mini-Courses:_

- Career Planning
- Career Exploratory
- Career Communications
- Career Literacy
- Workplace Safety
- Financial Literacy
- Character Education
- Etiquette and Ethics
- Team Building and Problem Solving
- Technology
- Interview Training

Gathering resources from various stakeholders and implementing an intervention system that addresses the academic, extracurricular, and social/emotional needs of all students will improve district performance.

Educators must remember that the high school years include multiple transitions, many of which can occur in a few months. Everything is a big deal to a high school student. Districts can manage those transitions by supporting communication among all parties and letting the students know where they can access the resources.
Ultimately, by trial and error, we should be able to refine this model to be implemented district-wide and to serve all students within the district. Student achievement will rise if the supports are in place for all students.
REFERENCES


Appendix F

STUDENT AND PARENT ATHLETIC INFORMATION BROCHURE

Contact Information
Supervisor of Athletics:
Jim Connor - 449-3605
james.connor@ncct.k12.de.us

Athletic Director:
Bonnie Mills - 449-3606
bonnie.mills@ncct.k12.de.us

Athletic Trainers:
Vic Kozar - 449-3698
victor.kozar@ncct.k12.de.us
Mark Robinson - 449-3674
mark.robinson@ncct.k12.de.us

Resource Links:
www.hawksports.com
www.doe.k12.de.us/daa
www.stgeorgesde.com

Hawk Fall Sports Head Coaches
Cheerleading - Jennifer Fagin
Jennifer.fagin@ncct.k12.de.us
Cross Country - Pat Atkinson
Pat.atkinson@ncct.k12.de.us
Field Hockey - Jess Bach
jess.bach@ncct.k12.de.us
Football - L.D. M姑
L.D.mash@ncct.k12.de.us
Soccer (Boys) - Justin Null
justin.null@ncct.k12.de.us
Volleyball - Lindsay Miller
lindsay.miller@ncct.k12.de.us

Hawk Winter Sports Head Coaches
Basketball (Boys) - Rod Griffin
rodrick.griffin@ncct.k12.de.us
Basketball (Girls) - Jenelle Gaska
jenelle.gaska@ncct.k12.de.us
Cheerleading - Whitney Singh
whitney.singh@ncct.k12.de.us
Indoor Track & Field - Kari Maul
kari.maul@ncct.k12.de.us
Wrestling - Pat Robinson
Hawk Spring Sports Head Coaches
Baseball - Jeff Rogers
Jeff.rogers@ncct.k12.de.us
Golf - Mark Robinson
mark.robinson@ncct.k12.de.us
Lacrosse (Boys) - Steve Skike
steve.skeike@ncct.k12.de.us
Softball - Roger Seidler
roger.seidler@ncct.k12.de.us
Track & Field - Kari Maul

St. Georges Technical High School
Interscholastic Athletic Program
Guide to Success
2014-2015
- Athletic Eligibility

- Completed DAA Sports Physical – valid from April 1st of preceding school year
- Freshmen must have a 1.5 GPA for the 1st marking period
- 10th, 11th, 12th graders must have a 1.75 GPA for the 1st marking period
- All students must pass their career programs or career exploratory courses
- All students must have a passing grade for a minimum of three courses (one of which must be in math, science, social studies or ELA) from the previous marking period
- Seniors are required to be passing all courses needed for graduation
- Students may not participate in athletics if he/she becomes 19 before June 15 immediately preceding the school year

Fall Sports Begin
August 15th

Winter Sports Begin
November 13th

Spring Sports Begin
March 1st

*See student/parent handbook for comprehensive eligibility information

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Being a Student Athlete at St. Georges

As a student-athlete, you need to make sure your good study skills and planning habits are in place. This will allow you to manage your time between practice, games and homework.

Tips:

- Use a planner or organizer to write down your schedule, including homework time and due dates. Make sure to bring home all needed materials for schoolwork, home, and all needed things for practice/games to school.
- Make sure there is a to-do list on every page so you can organize your notebook.
- Have a dedicated place to do your homework and study. It should be well lit, have all needed supplies and be free from distractions.
- Even if you don’t have written homework, take a few minutes each day to re-examine your notes from each class.
- Know your due dates and complete all assignments.
- Use more than one way to review the material; this is called active studying.
- Know when you need help and ask for it.
- Schoolwork is just like sports—practice, practice, practice!

Looking Ahead to Collegiate Athletics

If you feel you can play at the Division I, Division II, or Division III collegiate levels, make sure:

- Achieve academically
- Behave appropriately
- Communicate with your coach so they can help you with the process
- Set up an appointment with your guidance counselor so they can help you with the process
- Register with the NCAA Clearance Center website

https://www.ncaaconline.org/CLEARANCE/

- Use the “Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete” to get started


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Appendix G

LOSS OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AS A RESULT OF ATHLETIC EARLY DISMISSALS STUDENT ATHLETE SURVEY

Purpose

It is important to know the range of students' attitudes about how athletic participation impacts their academic progress. This includes collecting information about the following: student time allocated to academics, student perception of coach/teacher support with academics, student actions taken to communicate with coaches and teachers about academics, and student access to academic supports. If there are concerns or frustrations among students, it is important to know this and to address it. If, on the other hand, students do not have concerns, that is important to know too. I presented a cross-section of my student athletes (120) with a 16 question survey to get their perspective related to how athletic participation impacts academic progress and the time they allocate to make-up academic work due to lost instructional time. The survey was sent to the following teams: Soccer, Football, Cheerleading, Indoor Track, Baseball, Basketball, Wrestling, Lacrosse, Golf, and Softball. It was completed by 63 (53%) of the students.

Overall, the results of the survey were very positive. In this artifact, I will explain the methods of the survey, highlight specific results for each survey question, and conclude with my takeaways and their implications for moving the Athletic Department forward.
Methods

The survey had several sections. Questions 1-4 were demographic questions, specifically grade, gender, sport, and grade point average (GPA). Questions 5-8 addressed students’ perceptions of coach/teacher support and balancing time and commitment to both sports and school. Students were asked about the level of coach support, teacher support, level of commitment to academics and sports, and their level of struggle with balancing both academics and sports. Questions 9-13 gauged time related to academics, homework, practicing/playing sports, communicating with teachers, study halls, and loss of instruction. Questions 14-16 assessed student perceptions about teacher and coach support as well as student utilization of available academic supports.

Results
The largest amount of survey participants were in the 9th grade. 12th grade had the smallest amount of survey participants. Tenth graders and 11th graders combined for 31 participants, constituting 49% of total survey participants.
Fifty-four female students took the survey; 9 male students took the survey.

Overall, 63 students took the survey.
The majority of students who took the survey, 54%, were Soccer players. Volleyball players constituted 14% of the survey participants, followed by Golfers at 10%. The remaining players combined for 22% of the survey participants.
All students had GPA’s of 2.0 or above. 64% of students report a GPA between 3.5-4.0. 14% of the students report a GPA between 3.1-3.4, while 10% of the students report GPA’s above 4.0.
Approximately 73% of students report that they do not find it difficult to commit 100% to sports and academics. Approximately 27% of the students find it difficult to commit 100% to sports and academics.
Approximately 90% of the students surveyed feel that their coaches are supportive when it comes to student academic needs. Interpreting the meaning of the 10% who respond “not sure” is ambiguous because it is possible that these 6 students do not feel they need coach support because they are high achievers academically. (In retrospect, the question could have been worded better.)
Approximately 95% of the students surveyed feel that their teachers are supportive when it comes to a student’s athletic responsibilities. Approximately 5% of the students surveyed feel that their teachers are not supportive when it comes to a student’s athletic responsibilities.
Approximately 78% of students report that they do not struggle with their academics during the sports season while 23% indicate some level of struggling with their academics during the sports season. The percentage of students that report a struggle with their academics may be first time student athletes. First-time student athletes experience a transition that involves learning how to find a productive balance between sports and their school work.
Approximately 73% of students report that they always communicate with their teachers before missing class for athletic responsibilities and another 24% indicate “sometimes.” Just 3% of students do not communicate before missing class for sports. Overall this data supports the research that student athletes possess strong communication skills.
Approximately 40% of students report that they miss 30 minutes of class per week. Approximately 10% of students report that they miss 90 minutes of class per week. Most of the students, 50%, report missing 45-60 minutes of class per week.
76% of students report spending 0-60 minutes per night on homework during the sports season. Approximately 24% of students report spending more than 60 minutes but less than 90 minutes per night on homework during the sports season.
Approximately 85% of students report that their coaches do not coordinate weekly study halls or they are not aware if they coordinate them, while 15% of students report that their coaches coordinate anywhere between 1-4 weekly study halls. This data indicates a need to implement an academic support plan across the entire athletic department – which I present in this ELP in a different artifact.
Fifty-five % of students report that they spend between 11 hours or more a week practicing/playing their sport; 45% of students report that they spend less than 11 hours a week practicing/playing their sport.
Approximately 93% of the students surveyed feel that their teachers are understanding and helpful in making up work after they miss class due to sports. Approximately 7% of the students surveyed feel that their teachers are not understanding and helpful in making up work after they miss class due to sports.
Approximately 95% of the students surveyed feel that their coaches are responsive to their academic needs after they miss class time due to sports. Approximately 5% of the students surveyed feel that their coaches are not responsive to their academic needs after they miss class time due to sports.
Approximately 17% of students report utilizing academic supports such as after-school teacher help, outside tutors, or peer tutors often during their athletic season. Approximately 49% of students report never utilizing academic supports such as after-school teacher help, outside tutors, or peer tutors a few times during their athletic season, with 34% never utilizing the support.
Conclusions and Implications

The results from the student survey are overall very positive. The results show that a majority of St. Georges’ students understand how to balance school and sports, feel supported by coaches and teachers, and know how to receive academic support when in need.

More than 90% of the students feel their teachers support athletics and assist them in catching up on their work. Most students feel coaches are supportive as well and allow them time to catch up on work after school. Student athlete perceptions were optimistic toward managing their workload (studying/homework) against their time commitment to sport practices/games.

Survey results show a majority of St. Georges’ student athletes maintain solid GPA’s. The demographic data was heavy with female student athletes, equal to 86% of the survey respondents. More males are involved in interscholastic athletics, however the survey was based on choice. Obviously from the total sample, more females chose to complete the survey. Over the three years I have supervised athletics, there has been an equivalent amount of male students and female students losing eligibility due to poor grades. In addition, this number is extremely low, with 1-2 students on average losing eligibility over the course of the school year. While the rationale for this survey did not include reporting student GPA’s by gender, one might contend that female student-athletes are better students than males. This contention would be based on the theory that females are more organized than males and manage time more efficiently than males. The gender data does not support these contentions and would require further and different data analysis to identify which gender had higher GPA’s.
Soccer, golf, and volleyball athletes made up the majority of the survey sample. Out of the total sample, approximately 90% of the student athletes maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher. This data is positive for the athletic department and supports that student athletes at St. Georges balance their time between academic obligations and athletic obligations.

Student athletes feel supported by teachers and coaches during their competition seasons. The survey data supports the notion that teachers and coaches are flexible and helpful with catching up on work, missing practice time to do so. Athletes do not find it difficult to balance the time commitments to both sports and school.

The data shows that most of the St. Georges’ coaches are not offering study sessions for student athletes during their season. This is a major concern that must be addressed by the athletic department. Coaches from all sports will have to arrive at common ground in carving out academic support time for their athletes during the season.

The survey results have three main implications for the St. Georges’ athletic department; these will serve as areas of focus next year:

1) All St. Georges’ coaches will establish an academic partnership with athletes, teachers, and parents at the beginning of the season. The partnership will include weekly communications, an after school support/intervention plan, bi-weekly study halls, and required weekly grade reports. The partnership will be common across all programs, establishing consistency and promoting a strong home and school relationship.
2) The St. Georges’ athletic department will implement a common, academic support plan for coaches and athletes. The department will work this summer to acquire teachers willing to tutor student athletes, bi-weekly, during their seasons. The department will also create a shared academic philosophy, across all programs, so no student athletes slip through the cracks.

3) The department will accrue resources for teachers, coaches, parents, and athletes. These resources will be uploaded to an online technology platform, Schoology, and all stakeholders will have access to them. The resources will include tips for saving time, balancing time, planning ahead, graphic organizers, daily planners/calendars, communication tips, and many other resources for surviving an athletic season.

St. Georges’ athletic department must establish a shared and consistent academic philosophy for the benefit of our student athletes, teachers, coaches, and parents. This shared philosophy will include a commitment to a higher standard of academic achievement. Our coaches have to take a more hands-on approach with student athletes and their academics during the season. Coaches must initiate a partnership with teachers and parents, so student athletes receive the additional support they need, when they need it.

The survey data supports the claims that with approximately 60 minutes of lost instructional time per week, St. Georges’ student athletes…

1) Maintain the balance in time allocated to academics and sports

2) Perceive coaches and teachers support them
3) Effectively communicate with coaches and teachers

4) Understand how to access academic supports

The data is promising, but the truth is we can always do more. While this survey supports that we are doing an effective job, we must raise the bar even higher. As the educational landscape changes, so must the St. Georges’ athletic department as it pertains to academic achievement and student support.
Appendix H

LOSS OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME AS A RESULT OF ATHLETIC EARLY DISMISSALS TEACHER SURVEY

Purpose

Students who participate in athletics do require some extra individual time and attention from their teachers. This is because they miss portions of class time due to early dismissals and they have to arrange ways to make up work. We have never explored the amount of class time student athletes miss nor the amount of time teachers allocate to their individual work with student athletes. It is important to know the range of teachers' attitudes about how students' athletic participation impacts students' academic progress and the teachers' time allocated to student athletes. If there is significant concern or frustration among teachers, it is important to know this and to address it. If, on the other hand, teachers do not have concerns, that is important to know too.

I presented my staff with a 10 question survey to get their perspective related to how students' athletic participation impacts students' academic progress and the time teachers allocate to student athletes due lost instructional time. The survey was sent to our entire professional staff (100 teachers) and was completed by 54 staff members which represents 54% of who the survey was sent to. Overall, the results of the survey were positive. In this artifact, I will explain the methods of the survey, highlight specific results for each survey question, and conclude with my takeaways and their implications for moving the athletic department forward.
Methods

The survey was broken into three different sections, in terms of the types of questions that were asked. The first group of questions, numbers 1-3, were demographic questions, specifically total years experience, gender, and subject taught. The next set of questions, numbers 4-6, addressed time lost and time spent. Teachers were asked about the class time lost due to athletics, time spent afterwards catching students up in class, and the time allocated for extra-help sessions for athletes. The last set of questions, numbers 7-10, gauged instructor feelings toward athletics, specifically support from coaches and support from the athletic department.

Results
A majority of teachers have taught between 6-15 years. 1/4 of the teachers have taught 16 years or more. Overall, most of the teachers in this survey have 6 years of experience or more.
30 female teachers took the survey. 21 male teachers took the survey.
Overall, 51 teachers took the survey.
The majority of teachers who took the survey, 78.8%, teach “Math, Science, or Other.” The remaining teachers, 19.2%, teach “ELA, Social Studies, or Foreign Language”.

<table>
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All teachers reported that student athletes miss at least 30 minutes of instructional time due to athletics; 20% of the teachers report that students miss about 45 minutes per week, and 52% of the teachers report that students miss 60 – 90 minutes per week.
Approximately 65% of teachers report that they spend 30 minutes or more providing extra instruction to student athletes, most of them devoting 30 – 60 minutes per week, but 8% of them devote as much as 4 – 8 extra hours a week to student athletes. This is a significant amount of time to note, especially when you deal with Fall, Winter, and Spring sport seasons over a 180 day school year. The concern will be addressed in the Conclusion and Implications section of this artifact. Approximately 25% of the teachers spend 30 minutes providing extra instruction. Approximately 30% of the teachers spend 60 minutes providing extra instruction.
Approximately 64% of teachers report that they facilitate at least 1 extra-help session per week for student athletes. Approximately 40% of the teachers report that they facilitate 1 extra-help session per week, while 24% of the teachers report that they provide 2 or more extra-help sessions per week. Approximately 40% of the teachers report that they do not facilitate extra-help sessions for student athletes.
Turning to the question of teachers’ attitudes about the extra time they devote to student athletes, the survey indicates approximately 40% of teachers report that find it bothersome managing the extra work when dealing with student athletes who miss class time. This is a significant concern to note and will be addressed in the Conclusion and Implications section of this artifact. Approximately 60% of the teachers report that they do not find it bothersome managing the extra work when dealing with student athletes who miss class time.
Approximately 83% of teachers report that the student athletes in their classes are responsible in making up class work due to lost class time. Approximately 17% of the teachers report that the student athletes in their classes are not responsible in making up class work due to lost class time. Overall this is a favorable finding in that the extra time teachers are spending is going to student athletes they view as responsible. If they did not have this perception, clearly the extra time would be a much greater source of frustration. However, we need to reduce the percentage of students teachers judge to be not entirely responsible in getting their work done.
Approximately 79% of teachers report that they know how to utilize the academic supports and services available to student athletes who are struggling academically. Approximately 21% of the teachers report that they know how to utilize the academic supports and services available to student athletes who are struggling academically. 

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Total Responses</td>
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</table>
Approximately 73% of teachers report that coaches do a good job making sure student athletes keep up with their academics. Approximately 27% of the teachers report that coaches do not do a good job making sure student athletes keep up with their academics.
Conclusions and Implications

The results from this survey show that a majority of St. Georges’ teachers have a positive and supportive outlook toward athletics. About two-thirds devote at least 30 minutes a week of extra time to student athletes. More than half the teachers provide extra help sessions to student athletes for their school work, including time spent after school. Data shows that St. Georges’ coaches expect student athletes to keep up with their work and are supportive of the teachers. Data also supports the claim that student-athletes are responsible toward making up the missed instructional time as well as any work.

Over half the teachers surveyed state they spend anywhere between 30-60 minutes providing additional instruction to student athletes who miss class time. This extra time adds up over the course of the school year and could lead to the feeling that managing this work is bothersome to teachers. The time spent assisting student athletes can be minimized through careful and up-front planning, effective communications via e-mail, and on-line learning platforms. This concern is addressed through Implication 2 below.

A majority of teachers, 60%, report that they do not find it bothersome managing the extra work when dealing with student athletes who miss class time, however 40% report that it is bothersome. In order to decrease this percentage and enhance the interscholastic experience for all stakeholders, coaches and student athletes will need to take a proactive role in planning for this missed instructional time. By communicating with teachers before the season begins, student athletes can work out a plan of action that best suits the teacher time demands and the student
missing work demands when instructional time is compromised due to sports. This concern will be addressed through Implication 2 below.

The survey data lends itself to future implications for the St. Georges’ athletic department. These implications are listed below and will serve as areas of focus next year:

1) The athletic department will revamp the eligibility policy to include specific expectations surrounding lost instructional time as well as a higher GPA requirement. Schools can create policies that are stricter than the DIAA policies, which fall under the department of education. The school policies cannot fall below the state standard.

2) Coaches will implement a common, academic support/intervention plan for their season. It will include a required communication protocol that involves coaches, teachers, and athletes.

3) Coaches will implement a common, parent communication plan for their season. It will include a weekly communication (e-mail or newsletter) to parents about practices, games, fundraising, and academics. Student athletes will be required to maintain weekly grade sheets and meet with a designated coach to review grades and map out a plan to raise the grade.

The department as a whole must commit to raising the academic expectations and achievement expectations for student athletes. The expectations must be consistent across all sport programs. This will decrease the instructor frustrations with lost time
and favorably increase instructor support toward athletics. While this survey shows a favorable picture of St. Georges’ athletes making up their work and functioning in a responsible, communicative manner, we can do better. We can better prepare these potential collegiate athletes for the 2.3 GPA requirement. Finally, we can solidify the parent/coach relationship and strengthen the coach/teacher relationship.
AN EVALUATION OF OFF-SEASON PARTICIPATION – “USING TIME WISELY”

Executive Summary

A program evaluation was conducted to collect information on the off-season engagement activities within two sports programs at Avon Grove High School (AGHS) in West Grove, Pennsylvania. Avon Grove High School is a traditional high school serving 1,800 students in grades 9 through 12. Avon Grove High School offers students a variety of extra-curricular avenues, including but not limited to clubs, theatre arts, club sports, and interscholastic sports. Within the interscholastic athletic department, Avon Grove offers twenty-five (25) sport offerings during three competitive seasons (Fall, Winter, and Spring). On average, the high school has 1,000 student athletes participate in multiple sports throughout the year. Students participate in sport-related activities (leagues, workouts, or meetings) out of season as well. The programs are girls soccer and football, which both take place during the fall season. Both of these programs have a junior varsity team and varsity team. The girls soccer team consists of all female student athletes and the football team consists of all male student athletes.

The evaluation considered the following two questions:

1. **Process Question**: How well did coaches engage students to participate in their sports programs during off-season activities?
2. **Outcome Question:** Did the off-season engagement activities increase skill levels during the off-season?

The first question was measured by an evaluator-created survey that gathered communications used to share information about their prospective sport, what kind of activities were offered to them, what time the activities were offered, and how often the activities were offered. The results suggested that all respondents in both the girls soccer and football programs believe that off-season engagement activities were communicated effectively to them, as well as their parents, a variety of activities were offered that were physically challenging, coaches were present at all the activities, and athlete attendance during the off-season fluctuated week to week.

The second question was measured by an evaluator-created survey. It was used to evaluate the origin, or reason, students chose to participate in their sport, the degree the skills of strength, conditioning, agility, mental toughness, knowledge of their sport, and overall athletic prowess improved as a result of off-season engagement activities. The results showed that respondents chose to participate in their sport because they possess the skill to do so and enjoy playing the sport as opposed to social reason or family traditions. The results also suggest that overall, student athlete skill levels in both programs, mentally and physically, improved as a result of both off-season programs. 94% of football players and 100% of girls soccer players agreed that the off-season engagement was highly-effective. The implications of the findings are discussed and recommendations for action are offered.
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  Description of Survey 1–Football
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Introduction

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to gather information about the effectiveness of how the athletic department at Avon Grove High School engages students to participate in sports, specifically during the off-season. The findings will be used to determine if the athletic department off-season engagement activities create a competitive environment, focused on skill development, for students. This should lead to a skillful in-season roster of student athletes. If the findings show that off-season engagement activities do not create a competitive environment and do not lead to skillful student athletes, the results will be used to modify the program.

Description of the Program

Avon Grove High School is a traditional high school serving 1,800 students in grades 9 through 12. Avon Grove High School offers students a variety of extracurricular avenues, including but not limited to clubs, theatre arts, club sports, and interscholastic sports. Within the interscholastic athletic department, Avon Grove offers twenty-five (25) sport offerings during three competitive seasons (Fall, Winter, and Spring). On average, the high school has 1,000 student athletes participate in multiple sports throughout the year. Students participate in sport-related activities (leagues, workouts, or meetings) out of season as well.

At Avon Grove, coaches use a variety of off-season engagement activities to increase student participation in school sports. To learn about sport programs, promote when the activities are taking place and how to stay informed, coaches communicate using technology and by conducting meetings. Off-season workout schedules are
posted on-line, meetings are conducted at the middle school and high school to promote their workouts to students and parents, advertisements are handed out at the AGHS open house, and distribution lists containing phone and e-mail contacts are created to communicate important information. Coaches also develop individual player skills and overall team dynamics between players during the off-season engagement activities. High School coaches register students into off-season leagues, compete against other teams, and conduct off-season workouts.

Coaches initiate off-season engagement with varied levels of time and intensity. Different experiences have been reported by students regarding how coaches communicate and engage them during the off-season. How a student is communicated with and to what level they become engaged likely influences their participation in-season.

The four main outcomes that Avon Grove High School coaches hope to accomplish from conducting the off-season activities are:

1) Increase try-out attendance as measured by number of students trying out
2) Increase skill level of students trying out as measured by try-out rubrics
3) Create final rosters that include student athletes with very high skill level and commitment
4) Increase interest in Avon Grove athletics increases as measured by a rise in athletic participation across the high school

I have chosen to evaluate the off-season engagement activities within two fall sport programs. The programs are Girls soccer (n=35) and Football (n=57). Both of
these programs have a junior varsity team and varsity team. The girls soccer team consists of all female student athletes and the Football team consists of all male student athletes.

Evaluation Questions

As part of the evaluation for the program, I developed two questions to be answered.

1. **Process Question**: How well did coaches engage students to participate in their sports programs during off-season activities?

2. **Outcome Question**: Did the off-season engagement activities increase sports athletic skill levels during the off-season?

During the off-season, coaches should be working through various mediums to communicate and advertise their programs, provide time, space, and materials on a consistent basis to as many students as possible, and create a competitive array of opportunities for student athletes to get better at their respective sport. If it does not occur at high levels, then modifications need to be made to the program.

Methodology
<table>
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<th>Evaluation Question</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Variables/ Instruments</th>
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<th>Data Analysis Procedures</th>
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<td>How well did coaches engage students to participate in their sports programs during off-season activities?</td>
<td>Students report not knowing how to get involved in certain sports; students report being frustrated with the lack of information and the communication about off-season workouts and off-season leagues; Much information is disseminated on-line or via school announcements.</td>
<td>Potential sample includes 37 girls soccer student-athletes making up the Junior Varsity and Varsity programs at AGHS and 57 male football players making up the Junior Varsity and Varsity programs at AGHS. Includes approximately 62% males and 38% females in 2 Fall sports. All students will be surveyed.</td>
<td>Grade level and sex of student-athletes; Evaluator-created survey Most survey questions asked on a Likert-type scale.</td>
<td>Create Surveys; distribute surveys at girls soccer and football end of the season meetings; collect surveys at end of the meeting track down students-athletes who were not present at the meeting; have missing students complete surveys</td>
<td>Tally frequency of survey responses and calculate mean responses for each question.</td>
<td>October 26, 2012 to November 4, 2012: Develop surveys November 5 to November 13, 2012: Conduct Surveys with students on soccer and football teams November 14 to November 26, 2012: Analyze data November 27 to December 5, 2012: Write final report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Outcome | Did the off-season engagement activities increase athletic skill levels? | Students report not knowing how to get involved in certain sports; students report being frustrated with the lack of information and the communication about off-season workouts and off-season leagues; Much information is disseminated on-line or via school announcements. | Potential sample includes 37 girls soccer student-athletes making up the Junior Varsity and Varsity programs at AGHS and 57 male football players making up the Junior Varsity and Varsity programs at AGHS. Includes approximately 62% males and 38% females in 2 Fall sports. All students will be surveyed. | Grade level and sex of student-athletes; Evaluator-created survey; Most survey questions asked on a Likert-type scale. | Create Surveys; distribute surveys at girls soccer and football end of the season meetings; collect surveys at end of the meeting; track down student-athletes who were not present at the meeting; have missing students complete surveys. | Tally frequency of survey responses and calculate mean responses for each question. | October 26, 2012 to November 4, 2012: Develop surveys  
November 5 to November 13, 2012: Conduct Surveys with students on soccer and football teams  
November 14 to November 26, 2012: Analyze data  
November 27 to December 5, 2012: Write final report |
Sample

The sample for this evaluation consisted of students who were on the junior varsity and varsity rosters for girls soccer and football. All 92 students will be surveyed about the off-season engagement process and about their in-season participation and skill levels. The sample included a female sports program and a male sports program. When the survey was distributed, there were 33 girls soccer players present and 45 football players present at their respective end of the season meetings. In following up with the two remaining girls soccer players in my sample, one girls soccer player was out of school with a medical situation and the other had left for Thanksgiving vacation. Out of the remaining 8 football players in my original sample, I was able to track down 4, with the others being unreachable up to Thanksgiving break.

| Table 1 |

| Grade Level Sample for Girls Soccer and Football Programs (n=92) |

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<td>62</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>9</td>
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The variables will include the grade level and sex of the student athletes in the sample as well as the sport they participated in during the off-season.

The process question will be measured by evaluator-created surveys (see Appendix A). The questionnaire will begin with three demographic questions identifying the student’s grade, sex and sport. The remaining twelve questions will use a Likert-type scale, regarding students’ self-reporting the type of communications used to share information about a students’ prospective sport, the kind of activities offered to the students, the time the activities were offered, and how often the activities were offered.

The outcome question will be measured by evaluator-created surveys (see Appendix B). The questionnaire will begin with three demographic questions identifying the students’ grade, sex and sport. Thirteen questions will use a Likert-type scale, regarding students’ self-reporting of why the student athlete chose to participate in their respective sport, if they felt their skill level increased since last season, what skills they feel have increased, and the reasons they feel their skill level has increased.
There is one optional written response question where students can share additional reasons they participated in their particular sport.

**Data Collection Procedures**

I developed two surveys between October 26, 2012 and November 5, 2012. They were distributed to student athletes during the weeks of November 5, 2012 and November 21, 2012. The football program and the girls soccer programs conducted end of the season meetings during the survey distribution window. I attended both meetings and distributed the survey to the student athletes present. The surveys were distributed and were answered by respondents anonymously and in silence. A simple explanation was given to respondents on the reason for the survey and the only direction given aloud was the expectation to respond “honestly”.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

I analyzed the results of the both questionnaires by examining the means and standard deviations of the responses. Both surveys were developed on a 4-point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly Agree). For survey 1, I used the criterion of a mean score of 3 or above to determine if communications regarding off-season opportunities were effective, student athlete attendance was regular, off-season engagement activities included strength, conditioning, individual and team skill development, and if off-season activities were offered frequently. Therefore, if the mean response for a question in this survey is 3.00 or above, I will conclude that off-season engagement activities were communicated to
student athletes effectively, coaches provided a variety of engagement activities, and students and coaches attended regularly.

For survey 2, I used the criterion of a mean score of 3.00 or above to determine the origin of student athlete participation, the degree to which individual student athlete skills developed, and the degree to which the coaching staff conducted an effective off-season. Therefore, if the mean response for a question in this survey is 3.00 or above in the Origin section, I will conclude whether a respondent chose to play because of talent, friends, family, coaches, or enjoyment. If the mean response for a question in this survey is 3.00 or above in the Skill Development section, I will conclude a respondent’s conditioning, agility, strength, knowledge, mental toughness, and overall athletic prowess improved. Finally, if the mean response for a question in this survey is 3.00 or above in the Coaching Development section, I will conclude my coaches have a strong knowledge in strength and conditioning and conducted a highly-effective off-season.

**Timeline**

**October 26, 2012 to November 4, 2012** - Develop surveys

**November 5, 2012 to November 21, 2012** - Conduct Surveys with students on soccer and football teams

**November 22, 2012 to November 29, 2012** - Analyze data

**November 27 to December 5, 2012** - Write final report
Description of Survey 1–Girls soccer

Survey 1 was created to answer the Process question: How well did coaches engage students to participate in their sports programs during off-season activities?

The questionnaire contained fifteen items, three of which collected demographic information. The remaining twelve questions measured off-season Communication, Engagement, and Frequency. The Communication items included athlete awareness, parental awareness, communication frequency, and coach’s expectations. The Engagement items included the variety of activities offered, strength and conditioning, physical challenges, competition, and individual/team skill development. The Frequency items included athlete and coaches attendance at off-season activities. The survey results showed individual item means are all equal to or greater than 3.00. There is minimal variation among the standard deviations.
| Table 3 |

*Girls Soccer Survey 1 - Communication, Engagement, and Frequency (n=33)*

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>SA (4)</th>
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<th>D (2)</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
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</table>

*Note. The frequency abbreviations used in items 14 and item 15 are AW - always, 1-2/W - one to times a week, ECW - every couple weeks, 1x/M - once a month, and NVR - never.*
Analysis of Survey 1 - Girls soccer

Mean scores were 3.00 or above on eleven out of the twelve items measuring Communication, Engagement, and Frequency during off-season activities for Girls soccer. The highest scoring items within the Communication strand of the survey included the items measuring parental awareness (3.36) and athlete awareness (3.50). 98% of the athletes and 97% of the parents were aware of off-season activities. Within the engagement strand, the variety, strength/conditioning, and individual/team skill development items scored means of 3.20 and were the highest mean scores within the strand of questions. The Frequency strand showed that 43% of the girls soccer athletes attended off-season activities every couple weeks, with a mean score of 2.40. With regard to the process question: “How well did coaches engage students to participate in their sports programs during off-season activities?” analysis of the survey suggests through the communication items that student athletes and parent were well informed. Within the engagement strand, the analysis suggests there were a variety of activities offered, with a strong emphasis on individual/team skill development and strength/conditioning training. The analysis suggests that while coaches attended every off-season session, student athlete attendance is a concern. In summary, the results clearly show that the coaching staff communicated effectively with both athletes and their parents and the environment was engaging. However, student athletes attended off-season activities less than 50% each week.
Description of Survey 1–Football

Survey 1 was created to answer the Process question: *How well did coaches engage students to participate in their sports programs during off-season activities?*

The questionnaire contained fifteen items, three of which collected demographic information. The remaining twelve questions measured off-season *Communication*, *Engagement*, and *Frequency*. The Communication items included athlete awareness, parental awareness, communication frequency, and coach’s expectations. The Engagement items included the variety of activities offered, strength and conditioning, physical challenges, competition, and individual/team skill development. The Frequency items included athlete and coaches attendance at off-season activities. The survey results showed individual item means are all equal to or greater than 3.00. There is minimal variation among the standard deviations.
### Table 4

*Football Survey 1: Communication, Engagement, and Frequency (n=49)*

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</table>

164
Analysis of Survey 1-Football

Mean scores were 3.00 or above on all twelve items measuring Communication, Engagement, and Frequency during off-season activities for Football. The highest scoring items within the Communication strand of the survey included the items measuring athlete awareness (3.73) and coach expectations (3.71). 98% of the athletes were aware of off-season activities and 98% of the athletes strongly agreed or agreed that their coaches expected them to attend off-season workouts. Within the engagement strand, the variety (3.66), strength/conditioning (3.80), and individual/team skill development (3.61) were the highest mean scores within the strand of questions. The Frequency strand showed that off-season activities were offered weekly (3.70) and 83% of the football athletes attended off-season activities every week, with a mean score of 3.22. With regard to the process question: “How well did coaches engage students to participate in their sports programs during off-season activities?” analysis of the survey suggests through the communication items that student athletes were well informed about the activities and understood that they were expected to be present at the activities. Within the Engagement strand, the analysis suggests there were a variety of activities offered, with a strong emphasis on individual/team skill development and strength/conditioning training. The analysis suggests that activities were offered on a weekly basis, coaches attended every off-season session, and most of the student athletes attended activities one to two times a week. In summary, the results clearly show that the coaching staff communicated effectively with their athletes and the environment was engaging. In addition, student athletes attended off-season activities more than 75% each week.
Description of Survey 2 – Girls soccer

Survey 2 was created to answer the Outcome question: *Did the off-season engagement activities increase sports athletic skill levels during the off-season?* The questionnaire contained seventeen items, three of which collected demographic information. The remaining fourteen questions measured *Origin of Participation, Skill Development, and Coaching Development*. The Origin items included reasons one might choose to participate in a sport, specifically possessing the skills needed, friends, family tradition, enjoyment, or coaches. Question nine was optional and allowed respondents to write additional reasons for participation and was not measured using a likert scale. Most respondents chose to leave it blank and therefore results were not significant enough to report additional information regarding origin.

The Skill Development items included conditioning, agility, strength, knowledge, mental toughness, and overall athletic improvement. The Coaching items included a highly-effective off-season and knowledge of strength/conditioning training. The survey results showed individual item means are equal to or greater than 3.00, except for Family Tradition (2.12) within the Origin strand. There is minimal variation among the standard deviations.
### Table 5

**Girls Soccer Survey 2 - Origin, Skill, and Coaching**  *(n=33)*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<td>6o. Family Tradition</td>
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<td>52</td>
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</table>
Analysis of Survey 2-Girls soccer

Mean scores were 3.00 or above on twelve out of the thirteen items measuring Origin, Skill Development, and Coaching Development during off-season activities for Girls soccer. The highest scoring items within the Origin strand of the survey included the items measuring participation for enjoyment (3.76) and participation due to coaching staff (3.73). Athletes agreed that enjoyment of the sport (97%) and the coaching staff (100%) were the biggest reasons they chose to participate in soccer. Within the Skill Development strand, athletes agreed that their strength (3.21), knowledge of the sport (3.21), and mental toughness (3.24) improved, making them an overall better athlete (3.30). The Coaching Development strand showed that 100% of the girls soccer athletes agreed that their coaching staff implemented a highly-effective off-season and had a strong knowledge of strength and conditioning. With regard to the process question: “Did the off-season engagement activities increase sports athletic skill levels during the off-season?” analysis of the survey suggests through the origin items that student athletes enjoy playing the sport and believe in the coaching staff. Within the Skill Development strand, the analysis suggests respondents increased their agility, knowledge of their sport, mental toughness, strength, conditioning, and overall became a better athlete. The analysis suggests that the girls soccer coaches implemented a highly-effective off-season program and increased the athletic skills of their players.

Description of Survey 2- Football

Survey 2 was created to answer the Outcome question: Did the off-season engagement activities increase sports athletic skill levels during the off-season? The questionnaire contained seventeen items, three of which collected demographic
information. The remaining fourteen questions measured *Origin of Participation, Skill Development, and Coaching Development*. The Origin items included reasons one might choose to participate in a sport, specifically possessing the skills needed, friends, family tradition, enjoyment, or coaches.

Question nine was optional and allowed respondents to write additional reasons for participation and was not measured using a likert scale. Most respondents chose to leave it blank and therefore results were not significant enough to report additional information regarding origin.

The Skill Development items included conditioning, agility, strength, knowledge, mental toughness, and overall athletic improvement. The Coaching items included a highly-effective off-season and knowledge of strength/conditioning training. The survey results showed most individual item means are equal to or greater than 3.00, except for participation reasons due to Family Tradition (2.50), Friends (2.92), and Coaching (2.98) with the Origin strand. There is minimal variation among the standard deviations.
Table 6

*Football Survey 2 - Origin, Skill, and Coaching*  
\(n=49\)

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<td>7o. Enjoy Playing</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
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170
Analysis of Survey 2-Football

Mean scores were 3.00 or above on ten out of the thirteen items measuring Origin, Skill Development, and Coaching Development during off-season activities for Girls soccer. The highest scoring items within the Origin strand of the survey included the items measuring participation for enjoyment (3.63) and participation due to possessing skills (3.35). Athletes agreed that enjoyment of the sport (92%) and possessing the skill (96%) were the biggest reasons they chose to participate in football. Within the Skill Development strand, athletes agreed that their strength (3.49) and conditioning (3.53) increased making them an overall better athlete (3.47). The Coaching Development strand showed that 94% of the football athletes agreed that their coaching staff implemented a highly-effective off-season while 98% agreed their coaches had a strong knowledge of strength and conditioning.

With regard to the process question: “Did the off-season engagement activities increase sports athletic skill levels during the off-season?” analysis of the survey suggests through the origin items that student athletes enjoy playing the sport and possess the skills to compete. Within the Skill Development strand, the analysis suggests respondents increased their agility, knowledge of their sport, mental toughness, strength, conditioning, and overall became a better athlete. The analysis suggests that the football coaches implemented a highly-effective off-season program and increased the athletic skills of their players.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Through analysis of both programs, the overall results suggest that both coaching staffs effectively engaged the student athletes to participate during their off-season activities. While the overall engagement experience was positive within the girls soccer program, athlete attendance at the activities was less than 50%. On the other hand, attendance at football activities was well over 75%. The conclusion that the soccer coaches effectively engaged the girls to participate is not clear due to low attendance, but with football it is clear.

Through analysis of both programs, the overall results suggest that athletic sport skills increased for athletes who participated in their respective off-season activities on a consistent basis. In addition, I conclude athletes in soccer and football believe their coaches implemented an effective off-season and possess a strong knowledge of strength and conditioning.

Recommendations for Action

1. Continue data analysis for the remainder of my athletic programs to measure how effective coaches engage students to participate.
2. Continue data analysis for the remainder of my athletic programs to measure how effective the off-season activities are implemented and if athletic skills increase.
3. Provide direct feedback to the soccer and football coaching staffs on the findings of the evaluation and process the results with them to create strategies moving forward.
4. Conduct Focus Groups in every athletic program to determine effective strategies for increasing off-season commitment from student athletes.

5. Facilitate coaching professional development workshops where coaches analyze what they do in the off-season, why they do it, and then decide across sport programs what is most effective and beneficial for all.
Appendix B - Instruments

Athletic Participation

Off-season Engagement

Survey #1

Thank you for participating in this survey. The intent of the survey is to collect information that will help the Athletic Department understand the quality and quantity of off-season experiences available to student athletes in their prospective sports. To assess how effective your off-season experiences have been, we have decided it would be helpful to understand the level at which coaches communicated off-season opportunities and what those opportunities looked like.

Demographics

1. I am currently in what Grade.
   9  10  11  12

2. I am a…
   Male  Female

3. I participate in which sport.
   Football  Soccer

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. The results will be used to improve the athletic program.

Off-season Communication

4. I was aware of the off-season activities available for my sport.
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

5. My coaching staff communicated with me on a weekly basis about the off-season activities available.
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree
6. My parents were aware of the off-season activities available for my sport.
   - Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

7. My coaching staff expected me to participate in off-season activities.
   - Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Off-Season Engagement

8. A variety of off-season activities were made available.
   - Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

9. Off-season activities were physically challenging.
   - Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

10. Off-season activities included competing against other schools.
    - Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

11. Off-season activities included strength and conditioning training.
    - Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

12. Off-season activities included individual and team skill development.
    - Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Off-Season Engagement Frequency

13. Off-season activities were available on a weekly basis.
    - Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

14. I attended off-season activities…
    - Never  1 time a month ever couple weeks  1-2 times a week  Always

15. My coaches attended off-season activities…
    - Never  1 time a month ever couple weeks  1-2 times a week  Always

Thank you for completing this survey!
Appendix B-Instruments

Athletic Participation

Off-season Engagement

Survey #2

Thank you for participating in this survey. The intent of the survey is to collect information that will help the Athletic Department understand why student athletes chose to participate in their prospective sports, if the off-season experience increased student athlete skills, and what skills increased since last season. We have decided it would be helpful to understand the origin of participation and the potential results gained from students participating in off-season experiences.

Demographics

1. I am currently in what Grade.
   9  10  11  12

2. I am a…
   Male  Female

3. I participate in which sport.
   Football  Soccer

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. The results will be used to improve the athletic program.

Origin of Participation

4. I participated in my sport because I possess the skills required to compete.
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

5. I participated in my sport because my friends were on the team.
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree
6. I participated in my sport because it is a tradition in my family.

   Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

7. I participated in my sport because I enjoy playing the sport itself.

   Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

8. I participated in my sport because of the coaching staff.

   Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

9. I participated in my sport because of other reasons. Please list those reasons below:

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

   Off-Season Skill Development

10. My conditioning improved as a result of my off-season experiences.

   Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

11. My agility improved as a result of my off-season experiences.

   Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

12. My strength improved as a result of my off-season experiences.

   Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

13. My knowledge of the sport improved as a result of my off-season experiences.

   Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

14. My mental toughness improved as a result of my off-season experiences.
15. I am a better athlete as a result of my off-season experiences.

16. My coaches conducted a highly-effective off-season experience.

16. My coaches have a strong knowledge of strength and conditioning for my sport.
Appendix J

GOOGLE WEBSITE FOR COACHES, ATHLETES, AND PARENTS “THE INTERSCHOLASTIC EXPERIENCE”
Solidifying the Brand

Where should we be headed?

Improvement Goals

Our overarching goal is to seek programs, policies, and practices that increase the academic achievement of the St. Georges student-athletes, as well as enhance the athletic experience of our coaches, players, and parents. We will work toward this goal by pursuing initiatives and specific actions/projects as described in the table of artifacts below and in the artifact descriptions.

Goal 1

Utilizing a sound research-based approach, we will create a strategy plan to manage, goals, and lead the St. Georges interscholastic athletic program.

Goal 2

Utilizing a sound research-based approach, we will implement an academic support program for interscholastic athletes at St. Georges.

Goal 3

Utilizing effective educational-based data software, we will establish an interscholastic athletics program database.

Our hope is to explore practices that can enhance the athletic experience of our coaches, player, and parents. For example, research has shown the positive impacts of participating in athletics and personal well-being. In general, there appears to be a positive relationship between an adolescent's participation in extra-curricular activities and well-being in a variety of domains (Buxton et al. 2008; Zhang et al. 2004). The skills and social networks built through extra-curricular participation are thought to enhance school commitment and achievement, educational and occupational attainment, and promote well-being, healthy choices, and social behavior (Edwards et al. 2007, Herren and Kellerman 2002).

Further research indicates that students involved across domains, such as involvement in sports, academic, and school clubs, have better psychological adjustment on measures like self-esteem and psychological well-being, particularly compared to those students who do not participate (Fordbroth and Eccles 2008b; Biddle et al. 2008).

There are no exact formulas for success in our public school athletic programs. They all contain similar basic components that maximize their resources while maintaining their educational integrity and systematically tying in with all the community and school support that produces largely supportive winning teams. The result is a community pride that generates more involvement in the schools and a direct relationship between successful athletic programs and high academic achievement (Jones 2007).

This research supports the intention of our improvement goals in seeking measures, policies, and practices based on sound research to enhance the interscholastic programs at St. Georges as well as increase student-athlete achievement inside the classroom.

To

Add Yes

Comments

Jamie Carr

Add comment
NCCS Support Service Model

Strategic Objective

New Castle County Vocational Technical School District (NCCS) serves the technical high schools. Each school has selected an "integrated curriculum" approach to teaching science. Academics and technical teachers coordinate instruction. Each school also provides a full range of extracurricular activities including athletics, student government, honor society, school newspaper, literary yearbook, and other student organizations. Through their participation in these activities, students develop communication, leadership, and social skills. The technical schools also offer a special career education program designed to help students achieve academic success and acquire necessary skills for employment. Students are provided a rigorous academic experience in every subject with a project-based focus and engage in important career and academic activities as well. Support service models currently exist for students with learning disabilities and transitioning high school students with disabilities.

Strategic Purpose

NCCS recognizes the academic, social/emotional, and athletic demands placed on student athletes transferring from high school. While freshman students encounter a major transition from middle school to high school, high school athletes endure more stressors and are at greater risk to struggle academically and socially. Based on current research and support services at the post-secondary level, New Castle County Vocational Technical School District has created an intervention model to assist student-athletes succeed in and out of the classroom.

Ultimate Goal - Student Achievement

The ultimate goal of the program is to increase the academic achievement of students. The main goal of the program, however, is to achieve student achievement for all students. To achieve the academic goals, the district created athletic programs that are designed to help student-athletes succeed. This project identifies three objectives. The main objective is to create a support service program that increases student achievement for student-athletes.

Three-Prong Model

Based on research, a three-prong approach is the most effective model to meet the academic, social, and athletic needs of student-athletes.

1. Academic Intervention Prong - LCAP, the Pondera Program, and Self-Responsibility

2. Family Contact

Colleges begin by communicating academic and athletic expectations to both student athletes and parents on a day one of the pre-season. Parents are then accountable for their students' performance and behavior, as well as for communicating this information to their parents, coaches, and teachers.

Parents are expected to:

- Set goals for their student athlete's academic and post-secondary populations
- Be on time for school, class, and practice
- Maintain an athlete QR
- Maintain and pass their agenda book on a daily basis
- Print out weekly grade books and have them signed off by coaches and parents
### Hawk Sports

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<th>Sports and Head Coaches</th>
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<td>Cheerleading – Jennifer Frye</td>
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<td>Jennifer <a href="mailto:jfrye@nrc.usc.edu">jfrye@nrc.usc.edu</a></td>
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<td>Cross Country – Rob Nickson</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:rob.nickson@nrc.usc.edu">rob.nickson@nrc.usc.edu</a></td>
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<td>Field Hockey – Jen Bach</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:jen.bach@nrc.usc.edu">jen.bach@nrc.usc.edu</a></td>
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<td>Football – JD Wall</td>
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<td>Soccer (Men) – Josh Hall</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:jhall@nrc.usc.edu">jhall@nrc.usc.edu</a></td>
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<td>Volleyball (Girls) – Emily Kot</td>
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<td>jason <a href="mailto:communion@nrc.usc.edu">communion@nrc.usc.edu</a></td>
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**Comments**

- James Solver

- [View comments](#)
Athletic Training Services

Overview of St. George's After-school Athletic Training Program:

St. George's Technical High School is staffed by two certified athletic trainers:

Mark Robinson, MEd, ATC, CSCS, NASEMSO (502) 449-2674 mark.robinson@newpax.org

Kee Kuykendall, MS, ATC (502) 449-3880 victoria.kuykendall@newpax.org

Certified Athletic Trainers (NATA/BSC certified, AT'S) are health care professionals who provide injury preventative services, emergency care, evaluation, management, treatment, and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions to the student-athletes at St. George's Technical High School.

Injury Prevention/Strength and Conditioning Association (Certified CSCS, National Association of Speed and Explosion Certified NASEMSO). Review, collaborate, and consult with coaches regarding strength and conditioning practices, both in and out of season to monitor performance of student-athletes and minimize their injuries. It is the expectation that prior to coaches planning and designing out of season condition practices, they consult with the athletic training staff.

In-Past Testing (Pre-season) implementation of baseline testing of all student-athletes to establish individual norms in the event of a traumatic brain injury (concussion) - in-season. This comparative data will be available to use in the treatment and recovery process of the student-athlete with the sports medicine team. The expectation is that coaches consult with the athletic training staff to schedule and administer the critical baseline testing procedure in the pre-season, prior to any contact. When a student-athlete is suspected of traumatic brain injury, the student-athlete will be removed from participation and the concussion protocol will be followed. (see link below for protocol and related forms)

http://www.kysports.com/athletics/athletes_medical/athletical.html

Communication: It's will maintain open lines of communication between the student-athletes, parents, coaches, administration, nurses, counselors, physicians, and other members of the sports medicine team that are involved in the injury treatment/recovery process. In the event of an injury, it is expected that the student-athlete, parent, or coach will communicate this as soon as possible to the St. George's athletic training staff. After this process is established, the management of an injury that occur in a school-sponsored/preview, scrimmage or contact will be more efficient.

DAA Pre-participation Physical Examination: It’s the coaches' responsibility to ensure the student-athlete has a physical on file in the school’s nurse's office prior to the first day of practice. Parents must ensure that the student-athlete has had a physical exam on or after April 1st of the previous school year and submit it to the school nurse’s office prior to the first day of practice of their respective sport. It must be completed on a DAA PPE form (form available using link below). Waiting to the ‘last minute’ can delay student participation due to improper documentation.

http://www.kysports.com/athletics/athletes_medical/athletical.html

It's essential that coaches provide an accurate order to the AT's on the first day of practice and update it as the season progresses. This is essential to ensure that the student-athlete's emergency form can be pulled and provided to the coach prior to any participation by the student-athlete.
Sound Off

We want to hear from you. Please post, share, and ask questions. We are all trying to make St. George Athletics the best it can be. Go Eagles!!!

Your draft picks: Andrew, Bob, Andrew, Bob, Andrew, Bob

Next Steps

[Link to next steps] (https://example.com/draft)

What should our focus be for 2023-2026?

Edit post

View Files

Comments

James Connor

Post a comment