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Student Involvement in Extracurricular Activities  
and Post-Secondary Education Placement

by

Courtney J. Martin

November 2015

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Student Involvement in Extracurricular Activities  
and Post-Secondary Education Placement

by

Courtney Justin Martin

This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
Lindenwood University, School of Education

  
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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

Full Legal Name: Courtney Justin Martin

Signature:  Date: 11/18/15

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### **Abstract**

Extracurricular activities have been an important part of adolescents' lives for generations (Kremer-Sadlik, Izquierdo, & Fatigante, 2010). Extracurricular activities take place outside of the classroom and result in several benefits to students (National Federation of State High School Associations [NFHS], 2010). With the recent recession in the United States, many school districts are having to find ways to cut budgets and are looking at eliminating extracurricular activities to save money (Lamb, 2011). Data from graduating seniors were reviewed in the largest accredited public school district in a Midwestern state. Graduates are required to take a post-follow up survey upon graduating from high school (DESE, 2015). This study involved examination of what those graduates who participated in extracurricular activities while in high school did after graduating. Five high schools were examined within the school district. Each of the five high schools creates an eligibility roster of students who participate in extracurricular activities. The data were collected from the 2011, 2012, and 2013 graduating classes. Graduates who did and did not participate in extracurricular activities were compared, noting whether they went on to college or the military or the workforce. The data revealed more students who participated in extracurricular activities while in high school went on to college than did those students who did not participate.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Extracurricular activities are a significant component of high school life. While academic coursework for students is vital, a student's participation in fine arts or athletics is just as important (Kanaby & Proctor, 2010). Kanaby and Proctor (2010) summarized extracurricular activities and their benefits in three ways: "they support the academic missions of schools, they are inherently educational, and they foster success later in life" (p. 1). Extracurricular activities play a major role in the lives of today's youth (Kort-Butler, 2012). The benefits to students who participate in extracurricular activities last throughout their lives and in many ways shape who they will become (Lunenburg, 2010).

This chapter includes a background of the study and the benefits of extracurricular activities. The theoretical framework, the statement of problem, and the purpose of the study are presented. The research questions that guided the study are posed. The definition of key terms, limitations, and assumptions are detailed in this chapter.

### **Background of the Study**

Extracurricular activities provide a variety of life lessons to prepare students to go out in the world and have a positive influence. According to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) (2010):

Activity programs provide valuable lessons for practical situations—teamwork, sportsmanship, winning and losing, and hard work. Through participation in activity programs, students learn self-discipline, build self-confidence and develop skills to handle competitive situations. These are qualities the public expects schools to produce in students so they become responsible adults and productive citizens. (p. 3)

Peguero (2011) found, “There are connections between school-based extracurricular activity involvement and students’ educational progress and life course” (p. 20).

In a 2010 article entitled, “Participation in Activities Outside of School Hours in Relation to Problem Behavior and Social Skills in Middle Childhood,” Howie, Lukacs, Pastor, Reuben, and Mendola (2010) noted:

Research has shown that participation in outside activities (organized activities occurring after school) is associated with lower dropout rates, reduced problem behaviors, increased school performance, and with building the interpersonal skills and positive assets needed to become active and productive young adults.  
(p. 119)

These skills are crucial for young adults to learn and carry with them through life (Howard, 2011).

Fredricks (2012) suggested, “There is an increasing awareness that participation in organized activity context offers valuable opportunities for growth and positive youth development” (p. 295). Bloomfield and Barber (2011) stated, “A broad range of positive outcomes has been associated with adolescents’ participation in extracurricular activities” (p. 582). Citing Eccles and Gootman and Fredricks and Eccles, Fredricks (2012) stated:

These contexts share several features that are directly linked to positive development, including regular participation schedules, support and guidance by non-familial adult leaders, connections to a prosocial and academically-oriented peer group, and opportunities to build skills and participate in meaningful tasks.  
(p. 295)



Young adults benefit greatly from the growth and positive attributes that extracurricular activities provide.

Covey and Carbonaro (2010) stated, “Compared with other literate postindustrial countries, children in the United States spend a large amount of time in leisure activities, with more than half of children’s waking hours spent in leisure activities” (p. 21). Roulin and Bangerter (2013) agreed students engage in extracurricular activities because they are passionate or interested about extracurricular activities. Roulin and Bangerter (2013) further explained involvement in extracurricular activities builds resumés of the students, and the students perceive this as valuable for their future careers.

The NFHS (2010) asserted, “Students who participate in activity programs tend to have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems than students generally” (p. 3). Fisher (2010) reported, “It is clear that participation and success are strongly associated as evidenced by participants’ better attendance, higher levels of achievement and aspirations to higher levels of education” (p. 24). According to Fisher, (2010) it was “found involvement in extracurricular activities keeps at-risk students in school” (p. 25). Cassel, Chow, Demoulin, and Reiger (2000) contended, “More often than not when high school students begin involvement in the use of alcohol and drugs it is because they are not heavily involved in other acceptable and satisfying pursuits” (p. 249). Furthermore, decreasing early school dropout by both girls and boys has been linked to school extracurricular activity engagement (Fisher, 2010).

Darling, Caldwell, and Smith (2005) emphasized students are also often able to form valuable relationships with other students and with adult role models through

participation in extracurricular activities. Moreover, Darling et al. (2005) determined, “Extracurricular activities allow youth to form new connections with peers and acquire social capital. They are one of the few contexts, outside of the classroom, where adolescents regularly come in contact with adults to whom they are not related” (p. 1).

According to the NFHS (2010), the variety of skills garnered from extracurricular participation and the connections formed among classmates, coaches, and adults have also been linked to success in college and adulthood. In fact, “Participation in high school activities is often a predictor of later success—in college, a career and becoming a contributing member of society” (NFHS, 2010, p. 3). Following a study of the College Entrance Examination Board, Evanson and Millsap (2005) concluded:

Our study provides compelling evidence from the SAT, a national high-stakes test, that participation in extracurricular activities provide all students—including students from disadvantaged backgrounds, minorities and those with otherwise less-than-distinguished academic achievements in high school—a measureable and meaningful gain in their college admissions test scores. (p. 6)

Students who participated in extracurricular activities scored higher on college entrance exams.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A number of scientists have studied human needs and behaviors (Wade & Travis, 2006). Appropriate to this study as a theoretical framework was Maslow’s theory of motivation. Maslow introduced his theory of motivation and created what he called a “hierarchy of needs” (Hall, Lindzey, & Campbell, 1998). Hall et. al (1998) explained that Maslow separated human needs into five categories: physiological, safety,

love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Studies have shown “people are motivated to participate in activities that they perceive as helping them to meet their needs” (Gorman, 2010, p. 29). With this in mind, each category of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs was considered when determining why students participate in extracurricular activities. Supportive of the connection between involvement in activities and higher achievement was Peguero (2011). According to Peguero (2011):

Students’ extracurricular activity involvement, such as honor society, plays, sports, school bands, clubs and other similar activities, increases educational achievements and attainments, reduces problem behavior, improves attitudes towards educational and occupational goals, positively influences psychosocial adjustment, and decreases the likelihood of dropping out. (p. 20)

Involvement in extracurricular activities benefits students both inside and outside of the classroom.

Lawhorn (2008) explained students participate in extracurricular activities to develop a sense of safety as well as to form friendships. People tend to view “the personal feeling of being a part of some larger whole begins with a feeling of belonging” (Cassel et al., 2000, p. 248). Bloomfield and Barber (2011) suggested, “The positive indicators associated with participation in structured extracurricular activities also extend to an adolescent’s sense of identity” (p. 583).

A study by Zullig and White (2010) showed higher life satisfaction from playing sports for both girls and boys. Furthermore, “Pride is a feeling of personal gratification that derives largely from secure feelings of being a member of groups larger than self and flows directly from feelings of belonging” (Cassel et al., 2000, p. 248). Howie et al.

(2012) agreed the social skills and positive assets result from sports participation will increase the likelihood of making better career choices and will promote educational attainment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The economic downturn has placed financial limitations on nearly every aspect of American life. School districts are no different, and many are frequently forced to make budget cuts (Christensen & Horn, 2009). High schools across the country are reporting the economic recession has led to similar financial difficulties for extracurricular programs (Garcia, 2009). With school districts making budget cuts and voters not happy about paying taxes, should schools be funding extracurricular activities (Kronholz, 2012)?

Fisher (2010) argued cuts to extracurricular programs would deny students valuable opportunities and benefits:

Throughout the nation, school districts are experiencing budget shortfalls. Invariably, they must find ways to slash programs and trim expenses or face the unpopular tax increase. As education leaders examine potential cuts, one inclination is to focus on extracurricular activity programs, especially in the areas of academics and the fine arts. Although an easy choice, such a decision only hurts students. (p. 24)

Extracurricular activities at all grade levels have been reduced or eliminated due to cuts in education funding (Lucas, 2012). According to J. Harrison (2013), “Activity programs in general, and athletics in particular, become targets for large-scale spending cuts” (p. 28). During the 2009-2010 school year, more than 7.6 million students

participated in high school sports (Howard, 2011). With such a large number of students participating in extracurricular activities, and activities accounting for a small portion of a school's overall budget, these activities must not be cut from schools (Harrison, 2013).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Extracurricular activities are easy targets when school districts need to save money (Christensen & Horn, 2009). According to Fisher, "Cutting extracurricular activities might be a simple approach to balancing the budget, but it is certainly the wrong one" (p. 25). In order to keep extracurricular activity programs alive, school districts are scrambling to find funds to allow the programs to continue (Kanaby & Proctor, 2010).

Despite the economic challenges facing the nation and schools, maintaining extracurricular programs is vital. If schools' activity programs are going to survive, school leaders must spend time defending and protecting their programs (Lamb, 2011). Lamb (2011) continued, if they do not, "some individuals have suggested that districts eliminate all high schools sports programs" (p. 10).

Should school districts look at cutting extracurricular activities to save money for other needs? Do the benefits of extracurricular activities not matter in the big picture of student success after high school? This current study was conducted to examine the connection between students' participation in extracurricular activities and their academic and career choices after high school. The purpose of the study was to discover if students who participated in extracurricular activities pursued higher education as opposed to entering the workforce or enlisting in the military.

**Research questions.** The following research questions guided this study:

1. How does student participation in high school extracurricular activities influence higher education participation?
2. How does student participation in high school extracurricular activities influence military enlistment?
3. How does student participation in high school extracurricular activities influence students entering the workforce after graduation?

#### **Definition of Key Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined:

**Extracurricular school activities (ESAs).** Extracurricular school activities are school programs that occur during times not part of the school hours offered in a school day (Evanson & Millsap, 2005).

**Grade point average (GPA).** Grade point average is the calculation of the grades students receive while attending school (Wilson, 2009).

**Missouri State High School Activity Association (MSHSAA).** The MSHSAA is the governing body that develops and adopts standards to regulate the diverse interscholastic activities in the state of Missouri (MSHSAA, 2015).

**Scholastic Aptitude Test and Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT).** The SAT is a standardized reasoning test for college admissions in the United States (Evanson & Millsap, 2005).

#### **Limitations**

The following limitations were identified in this study:

1. This study was conducted in one urban school district in a Midwestern state. Other states' post-graduate follow-up data to determine what high school students in those states pursued following graduation were not considered.

2. Students who started at one of the five high schools and then moved or transferred to another high school in the district might not have been on the eligibility roster of the high school from which they graduated. Therefore, if a student participated in an extracurricular activity either freshman, sophomore, or junior year of high school at one school, transferred or moved to another school and did not participate in an extracurricular activity as a senior, and then graduated, he or she was not counted as participating in an extracurricular activity in high school.

3. Schools included in this study did not have the exact same extracurricular activities offered. This meant students had the opportunity to participate in some activities at their school that students at a different high school did not. In this study, the following three activities were not offered at all five high schools: scholar bowl, winter guard, and drum and bugle corps.

4. Not all the options offered on the post-graduate follow up survey fit into the three categories that were tested in this study: attended a two- or four-year university, entered into the military, or went into the workforce. The categories the survey offered but were not used include the following: attending a non-college credit postsecondary school (NOC), not available for placement (NA), not included in specified categories (OTH), unknown follow-up status (UNK), and not completely employed (ENC). These additional categories made it impossible to obtain 100% placement of every graduate from the school district used in the study.

The following assumption was accepted

1. The participants' responses were offered honestly and without bias.

### **Summary**

Extracurricular activities have long been looked at as positive opportunities for young adults (Reeves, 2008). Students who participate in extracurricular activities have better grades, lower discipline infractions, higher graduation rates, and better attendance (Harrison, 2013). School districts are having to make tough decisions about where their money should be spent, and extracurricular activities are one cut many school districts consider to save money (Lucas, 2012).

The background of the study, statement of problem, and the purpose of study were presented in Chapter One. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was described as the conceptual framework for the research. Research questions, definition of key terms, limitations, and assumptions were detailed in this chapter.

In the next chapter, the benefits and consequences of extracurricular activities are explored. Positive effects of extracurricular activities include physical development and a sense of community and belonging, increased academic performance, and college readiness, as well as the roles opportunities for extracurricular activities play in the lives of students. Negative effects that are associated with extracurricular activities, such as financial burdens on school districts, over-scheduling of students, and student health concerns, are explored.



## Chapter Two: Review of Literature

In their article entitled, “The Link Between Cocurricular Activities and Academic Engagement in Engineering Education,” Wilson et al. (2014) not only admitted there has been a clear link between positive academic outcomes and participation in cocurricular activities, but the “role of extracurricular activities have demonstrated a positive connection between cocurricular involvement and the social and emotional lives of students, academic engagement, actual grade point average, standardized test performance and protection from drop-out” (p. 627). Armenta (2011) agreed, stating for many students, athletics, band, cheerleading, and other extracurricular activities play an integral part of the school experience. Bloomfield and Barber (2010) stated adolescents who participate in extracurricular activities reported having significantly higher rates of satisfaction and levels of attachment and engagement to school.

Gardner and Charles (2012) noted compared to students who do not participate in extracurricular activities, students who do participate are more disciplined, have better attendance, higher grades, and greater self-confidence. Those who participate in sports or performing arts have a better chance for a successful career (Gardner & Charles, 2012). Bloomfield and Barber (2010), found during school and two years after completing school, participation in extracurricular activities has been associated with higher occupational and educational aspirations. Metsapelto and Pulkkinen (2012) agreed adolescents who participate in activity programs have been linked with heightened psychosocial competencies, higher educational achievement and attainment, and reduced problem behaviors.

Kremer-Sadlik et al. (2010) argued children's social adjustment and academic achievement have been linked to extracurricular activities. The NFHS (2010) has supported participation in extracurricular activities, because these activities support the academic missions of schools, are inherently educational, and foster success later in life. Lucas (2012) reported research published by the Arts Education Partnership compared highly involved eighth graders in the arts with eighth graders who did not participate in the arts, finding better outcomes consistently for the students who were highly involved. The researchers found students involved in the arts showed less likelihood of dropping out of school and had better grades, but by tenth grade these students had better attitudes towards school (Lucas, 2012).

The NFHS (2010) has maintained extracurricular activities are an extension of quality educational programs and not a diversion from good educational programs. The NFHS (2010) has specifically contended participation in extracurricular activities leads to fewer discipline problems, lower dropout rate, better attendance records, and higher grade-point averages. Simoncini and Caltabiono (2012) concurred extracurricular participation is positively associated with higher educational aspirations, higher test scores and grades, as well as school engagement.

Howard (2011) argued, "The benefits of high school athletics and other activity programs are well-documented: better attendance records, lower dropout rates, higher grade-point averages, improved self-esteem and self-confidence, and preparation for a successful career" (p. 10). Jiang and Peterson (2012) agreed, "Some research has linked youths' participation in structured extracurricular activities to a lower likelihood of risk

behaviors such as internalized behavior problems, depressive symptoms and anti-social behaviors” (p. 363).

In her 2014 paper entitled, *The Effects of Extracurricular Activity on Children and Adolescents: Hosting a Tennis Camp for Children in the Foster Care System*, Armstrong concluded:

Participation in activities such as these [extracurricular] instills in children the qualities essential for life-long success including good work ethic, time management skills, the ability to work in groups, commitment, and focus all while guiding them along the right path as they grow and mature as young adults. (p. 2)

Additionally the NFHS (2010) noted students learn how to develop skills to deal with competitive situations and to build self-confidence and self-discipline, which are expectations society expects schools to produce in young adults so they will become productive citizens and responsible adults.

Reeves (2008) maintained teachers and school leaders should acknowledge the motivation and sense of community extracurricular activities provide and should consider these opportunities essential rather than optional. According to Reeves (2008), in order to create a positive environment inside the classroom, educational leaders need to consider everything that affects students during the course of the day, including extracurricular experiences. Furthermore, Brown (2009) warned, “if a kid doesn’t have somewhere to go, something to do to occupy their time, unfortunately what they do more often than not is they end up in trouble” (para 3).

Additionally, Knifsend and Graham (2012) concluded as adolescents begin to explore their identities and emerging interests, joining multiple extracurricular activities becomes very important. Hoffmann (2006) admitted:

Studies regularly indicate that male and female students, who participate in extracurricular activities, including athletics, derive a host of benefits: better grades, a higher likelihood of college attendance, a lower likelihood of dropout, higher educational aspirations, more satisfaction with schools and teachers, higher life satisfaction, broader conventional peer networks. Less involvement in delinquent behavior, and less drug and alcohol use. (p. 275)

Schools must continue to offer extracurricular activities due to the multiple effects that are beneficial to students.

Gardner and Charles (2012) alleged multiple-sport participation benefits adolescents by providing better teamwork and leadership from cross training different activities. Extracurricular participation, the NFHS (2010) suggested, is also a predictor of success later—in higher education, work success, and becoming a positive citizen of society. Fishbowl CEO David Williams (2013) explained six reasons why individuals who played sports make good employees. Williams (2013) noted athletes have the desire to practice a task relentlessly, rigorously, and even after they have failed several times until they are successful. Athletes have strong work ethic and seldom give up (Williams, 2013). Sports psychologist Dr. Mirgain (2012) agreed, “We recognize the years of hard work that prefaced the coronation, the childhood given over completely to mastering a rigorous task and pursuing a difficult goal. Their accomplishments are rare, as is the dedication those accomplishments demanded” (para. 1).

Secondly, Williams (2013) pointed out athletes set goals and find ways to achieve their goals. Athletes will find alternate ways to become successful if their path is blocked; they will learn not to work harder but smarter (Williams, 2013). Harrison (2013) agreed, whether a person is a sports person, a leader, or an artist, if they are successful, they have all set goals which have directed their efforts and made them the best they can be. Next, Williams (2013) explored how athletes have the ability to develop new skills to evolve with change. Williams's (2013) fourth point stressed the ability of athletes to see the big picture, set long term goals, and know that to be successful, a strategy must be put into action.

Striving for balance is the fifth point Williams (2013) made regarding athletes. The ability to balance several different topics or ideas can be a positive side effect of athletics. Dr. Mirgain (2012) explained balance and athletics:

A healthy relationship is one of balance, where athletes are challenged in their sports and continue to develop their physical and mental skills. They should have specific goals that they're working toward and the right kind of support to help them reach those goals. A healthy athlete isn't just a skillful athlete, but someone who is able to develop the different aspects of themselves. (para. 10)

Through extracurricular activities, students learn how to juggle different activities and learn how to multitask (Armstrong, 2014).

Williams's (2013) last point was athletes are used to being part of a team and work well with co-workers and partners. Williams (2013) suggested athletes will know how to get the most out of every member of the team, they will know each team

members' strengths and weaknesses, and they will put the team members in positions to be successful.

### **Physical Development**

Mahoney and Vest (2012) claimed, "Over the past three decades, it has become evident that organized activities, such as extracurricular activities, after-school, and community programs, are important contexts of development for adolescent physical, psychosocial, cognitive, and educational functioning" (p. 409). Kremer-Sadlik et al. (2010) admitted an added emphasis has been placed on youth to join extracurricular activities, especially sports, due to the obesity problem currently affecting the United States. Kremer-Sadlik et al. (2010) stated, furthermore, adolescents' participation in extracurricular activities have shown a positive relationship with psychological and physical good health, and higher levels of self-efficacy. Lunenburg (2010) explained, "Extracurricular activities program allows for a well-rounded, balanced expansion of the curriculum by reinforcing learning, supplementing the required and elective curriculum, integrating knowledge, and carrying out the objectives of democratic life" (p. 5).

Engagement of participating in meaningful extracurricular activities enhances the well-being of the participants (Kremer-Sadlik et al., 2010). Kremer-Sadlik et al. (2010) concluded well-being is linked to a families' organization of rituals and routine practices, such as sports activities, music lessons, forms of work and prayer, and bedtime routines. Bloomfield and Barber (2010) expressed extracurricular activity participation has been found to provide diverse opportunities for growth and development, as well as a structured use of time. As Bloomfield and Barber (2010) determined:

Adolescent participation in structured extracurricular activities has been associated with numerous developmental benefits. For example, participating in activities has been linked to greater school attachment and sense of belonging, better academic achievement, higher academic aspirations, and less risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use, or dropping out of school. (p. 114)

Several studies have pointed to the benefits of participation in extracurricular activities.

Little, Wimer, and Weiss (2008) asserted participation in well-implemented, quality afterschool activities could improve social and developmental outcomes as well as academic achievement in students. More specifically, Davidson (2006) suggested participation in extracurricular activities enhances students' lives in terms of physical development, creativity (not only through fine arts, but also athletics), problem-solving skills, exploration of interests, and development of self-confidence, stress relief, and time management skills. Lawhorn (2008) suggested time management skills learned through extracurricular activities often carry over into studies and lead to strong academic performance.

Burgess (2009) suggested in addition to developing time management skills and increased self-esteem, involvement in extracurricular activities allows students to explore various interests. Massoni (2011) concurred when students correctly perform their roles in extracurricular activities, they gain better self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-respect due to the pride they feel upon completion of the task. Extracurricular programs designed to have positive effects on the students also correlate to better scores on reading and math standardized tests, compared to students simply receiving extra time to complete homework (Massoni, 2011).

Darling et al. (2005) believed it important to “expose youth to experiences that they may not have at home, encourage them to enroll in school-based extracurricular activities such as band, theater, or sports, and enrich their leisure outside of school” and “provide youth with skills that will last a lifetime” (p. 2). Participation in extracurricular activities also provides students a variety of opportunities to explore various interests and personal capabilities that could guide them toward potential careers or areas of study (Cockson, 2010). Harrison (2013) stated:

Athletic and performing arts activities provide a vehicle for schools to go beyond providing academic growth and develop the whole student socially and emotionally. Participation in school activities help to build human qualities regular academic programs cannot address. Students who participate have improved self-confidences and self-esteem. They also have the opportunities to assume leadership roles. Activity programs are valuable tools for schools in teaching these crucial life skills. (p. 29)

Cockson (2010) suggested these activities enable students to reveal hidden talents that can direct them to a passion in their lives, a passion that fosters a love of learning and prevents some students from becoming bored with the academic process. Cockson (2010) further explained many students find a purpose through extracurricular activities, allowing students more creativity in other areas of academics.

Jiang and Peterson (2012) agreed participation in extracurricular activities such as vocational and academic clubs, fine arts, and sports has been recognized as critical for the development of the youth of America. Harrison (2013) argued students involved in extracurricular activities learn teamwork, group dynamics, and cooperation while



learning goal setting. Powell (2012) cited, “According to a *USA Today* survey, 95 percent of Fortune 500 company chief executives have one thing in common: participation in education-based activity programs while in high school” (p. 27). Powell (2012) contended extracurricular activities give students the opportunity to learn valuable lessons that they cannot learn in the classroom.

### **Increased Academic Performance and College Opportunities**

In his article entitled, “Athletics, Fine Arts Hurt by Education Reform,” Lucas (2012) shared:

In data presented by the National Education Longitudinal Study, it was determined that participants in any extracurricular activity in high school had significantly fewer unexcused absences or skipped classes, three times as many participants had a grade-point average higher than 3.0; 50 percent more achieved the highest quartile on math and reading assessments, and 20 percent more were expected to earn a bachelor’s degree or higher. (p. 22)

Ciciora (2009) asserted one University of Illinois professor who examined the sociology of education linked this involvement with increased academic performance, as well as success later in life. According to Ciciora (2009), “High school sophomores who were rated by their teachers as having good social skills and work habits, and who participated in extracurricular activities in high school, made more money and completed high levels of education” (para. 2).

As stated by the NFHS (2010) in *The Case for High School Activities*:

According to the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, students who participated in the arts nine hours or more each week for at least a

year are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, win a school attendance award, participate in a science and math fair and win an award for writing. They are also three times more likely to be elected to class office.

(para. 13)

Students with similar test standardized test scores but less participation in activities earned less money and were more trouble socially (Ciciora, 2009).

While their research may not be definitive, Everson and Millsap (2005) found a strong correlation between increased SAT scores and participation in extracurricular activities. Powell (2012) acknowledged students who participated in music scored 11% higher than students who did not participate in music activities on the SAT. In addition to these higher test scores. Burgess (2009) contended students who are able to list a number of extracurricular activities on applications for higher education are more appealing to college admission officials who want to enroll students on a broader scale as opposed to simply book work.

Dowshen (2010) also maintained extracurricular participation creates responsible and well-rounded students and helps them look good on job and college applications. Roulin and Bangerter (2013) explained applicant skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics are judged on resumes. With jobs becoming harder to get, extracurricular activity involvement could play a factor in hiring one person over another; applicants entering the job market with limited job experiences and similar educational qualifications have to separate themselves by other avenues, such as extracurricular activities (Roulin & Bangerter, 2013). Symonds (2014) explained colleges and universities look at many different areas when deciding on applicants to their school, and

advised each student that “an often underestimated way to differentiate your resume or MBA application from the other candidates in the mile-high pile, is through your extracurricular activities” (para. 2).

Chang (2009) suggested colleges specifically look for students who have not only participated in extracurricular activities, but have also pursued leadership positions in the groups they are a part of and have maintained steady participation over an extended period of time. Students garner the attention of college admissions officials by staying determined in an assorted but linked set of extracurricular activities, targeting leadership roles that expand the accomplishments of the previous leaders (Chang, 2009). Hoffmann (2006) explained involvement in activities allows youth to expand peer networks and foster new peer relations; increase their intellectual, physical, social, and interpersonal skills; learn necessary rules of society; and learn positive communication skills.

### **Sense of Community and Belonging**

Hoffmann (2006) believed important socialization experiences are gained by many youth through extracurricular activity participation. Burgess (2009) pointed to this driving sense of community and agreed extracurricular activities encourage students to make a contribution, to think about others instead of only about themselves, and to build long-lasting relationships. Extracurricular activities also foster a sense of community among students and a pride in their schools (Burgess, 2009). Extracurricular activities allow for heightened positivity and psychosocial competencies as well as academic adjustment (Simoncini & Caltabiono, 2012).

Burgess (2009) specifically noted extracurricular activities provide lessons in upholding long-term obligations. Participants realize they have committed to their peers

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and others by working hard. While becoming part of a community and working for a shared cause, students are able to develop important social skills and often form lasting relationships (Lawhorn, 2008). Lawhorn (2008) summarized using teamwork to achieve “a common goal provides a foundation not only for friendships, but also teaches a skill important to instructors and employers” (p. 17).

### **Participation in School Extracurricular Activities Especially Beneficial**

Fujita (2006) asserted participating in sports, even more than playing a musical instrument or performing community service, contributes to increased motivation and academic performance. All activities offer multiple benefits, but participation in school sports especially increases motivation and academic performance (Fujita, 2006).

Lawhorn (2008) pointed out being part of a team provides students opportunities to grow as leaders: “Teamwork often evolves into leadership in the extracurricular environment, because each club or organization has leadership posts” (p. 17). All these benefits are in addition to the obvious correlation between athletic participation and physical fitness.

Harrison (2013) agreed activity programs teach students group dynamics, cooperation, and goal setting, as well as giving them opportunities to lead individuals while learning crucial life skills. Oftentimes children’s development and behavior, which are vital predictors for future failures or successes of the child, can be related to participation in extracurricular activities (Simoncini & Caltabiono, 2012). Peterson (2012) explained:

School extracurricular activities such as athletics, fine arts, and vocational and academic subject clubs have been identified as a vital developmental context for

American youth, with participation in such activities often viewed as an important strategy to protect youth from engaging in a variety of risk behavior. (p. 362)

Regardless of coming from advantaged or disadvantaged backgrounds, extracurricular activities help all children (Jiang & Peterson, 2012).

Greenwood, as cited in Brown (2009), stated unfortunately when a child does not have an activity to occupy his or her time, and does not have a structured environment, that child will inevitably end up getting in trouble. According to Harrison (2013), schools use performing arts and athletics as vehicles for students to grow academically as well as to develop emotional and social skills. In their report entitled *American's Promise Alliance: 10 Indicators of Academic Achievement and Youth Success*, Gifford, Evans, Berlin, and Bai (2011) summed up the benefits for students participating in extracurricular activities: "Students who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to be optimistic about their futures, to have higher self-esteem, to be civically engaged, and to enroll in postsecondary education and earn a post-secondary degree" (p. 22).

### **Budget Cuts**

In her 2012 article entitled, "Academic Value of Non-Academics: The Case for Keeping Extracurricular," Kronholz (2012) admitted with the expiry of stimulus money from the federal government, districts are having to find ways to tighten up their spending. Lamb (2011) reported due to the budget crisis that school districts are facing across the country, individuals are suggesting sports programs be eliminated. If extracurricular programs are eliminated due to budget cuts, students will be denied valuable opportunities for personal, academic, and athletic growth (Garcia, 2009).

Furthermore, Lucas (2012) explained athletic teams at all levels have felt the crunch of budget cuts as several schools have reduced or eliminated the number of extracurricular activities offered to students. As cited in Bowen and Hitt (2013), Ripley agreed the costs to school districts might outweigh the numerous benefits associated with extracurricular activities. Unfortunately, today's economic situation is forcing school districts to examine effective ways to make budget cuts, and oftentimes extracurricular activities are targeted (Powell, 2012).

Despite these apparent benefits, many school districts are making necessary but painful budget cuts—a number of which are being made to school sports programs—as a result of the recent economic turmoil in the United States (Garcia, 2009). Cuts can be taken from anywhere, and with multimillion-dollar shortfalls, school districts have zeroed in on athletics instead of teachers and core subjects (Baker, 2013). Garcia (2009) admitted school systems across the country are “trimming compensation for coaches, eliminating transportation, adding athletic fees for students, holding fundraising drives, cutting night games to save on electricity costs, and dropping some sports and related events altogether” (para. 7).

If athletic programs are cut from school districts, not only will students lose the opportunity to learn valuable skills that will allow them to succeed later in their careers and further education, they will also miss out on a quintessential experience of high school life (Garcia, 2009). Brown (2009) agreed, “A new reports says that \$2 billion in cuts to school-based and physical education programs are contributing to a range of problems afflicting the nation's youth, including obesity, violence and academic failure” (para. 1). Fredricks (2012) agreed schools need to encourage and assist in gaining student

participation in extracurricular activities due to the short and long-term academic benefits, not eliminate extracurricular activities as a way for the district to save money.

### **Factors of Over-Scheduling Students**

Not all people feel the effects extracurricular activities have on high school students are positive. Reeves (2008) stated:

Parents and teachers might fear students may lose their focus on academics when they become too busy with out-of-school activities. Attending too many rehearsals, practices, and meetings may cut into homework time. When students get overscheduled, they might be spreading themselves too thin, which may lead to spending less time studying and preparing for class. (p. 86)

There are other factors as well. Some have indicated there is a negative association with youth who are overscheduled in activities (Fredricks, 2012).

Kremer-Sadlik et al. (2010) stated today's culture has placed an increasing amount of pressure on children to participate in activities and perform at levels much higher than their age, forcing them to grow up at a much faster pace. Mirgain (2012) stated too much pressure from parents and too much practice time can have a negative effect on students such as burnout or creating a hostile relationship with their parents. Citing Elkind, Rosenfield, and Wise, Mahoney and Vest (2012) acknowledged:

According to some writers, the time commitment and competitive elements, including pressures from adults, which coincide with increasing amounts of organized activity participation, is hypothesized to undermine aspects of family functioning, detracts from schoolwork, and fosters psychological distress resulting in risky coping behaviors such as substance abuse. The concern that too much

organized activity participation leads to poor development outcomes is called the over-scheduling hypothesis. (p. 409)

Fredricks (2012), found excessive participation in extracurricular activities has a negative impact on youths' ability to balance multiple activities time to spend with their families.

### **Non-Benefits for Students' Health**

Jiang and Peterson (2012) admitted while it is widely assumed that participation in extracurricular activities is beneficial, in fact research concludes involvement is sometimes detrimental on the behavior of youth. Mirgain (2012) agreed, "The flip side of that athletic coin, though, suggests not all sports participation is healthy participation, and the training demands of an increasingly regimented, pressure-laden youth sporting world can alienate athletes rather than invigorate them" (para. 4). Metsapelto and Pulkkinen (2012) suggested there may be negative aspects of activity involvement and stated antisocial behavior has been associated with extracurricular activities. Furthermore, Metsapelto and Pulkkinen (2012) concluded while participation in sports has been shown to increase goal setting, develop leadership skills, and apply effort, youth who participate have been found to have higher rates of alcohol use and more stress than non-participants.

Another issue faced by students who are involved in extracurricular activities is being hazed. Merriam-Webster (2015) defined hazing as "the practice of playing unpleasant tricks on someone or forcing someone to do unpleasant things" (para. 1). Green (2010) cited a study conducted by Dr. Allen and Dr. Madden in 2008 titled, "The National Study of Student Hazing," which found several incidents of hazing of students. The researchers found while hazing is known to be part of athletic programs, it extends to



a variety of other school activities; forensics teams, debate, choir, band, dance squads, theatre, and academic clubs have all been associated with hazing incidents (Green, 2010). Green (2010) found hazing is very relevant in high school extracurricular activities:

Hazing is prevalent among American high school students, with 48 percent of students who belong to groups reporting being subjected to hazing, 43 percent reporting being subjected to humiliating activities, and 30 percent reporting being forced to engage in potentially illegal acts. (p. 13)

Green concluded students were found to be physically and emotionally harmed by their hazing incidents (Green, 2010).

Students have shown negative consequences hazing such as having difficulty eating and sleeping; feeling angry, confused, guilty or embarrassed; doing poorly in school; and being injured after being hazed (Green, 2010). Dr. Stankovich (2012) agreed, “In worst-case scenarios, victims of bullying and hazing have endured tremendous physical and emotional pain, sometimes leading to mental health problems, reckless means for coping with stress and, in rare occasions, even suicide” (p. 10). Stankovich (2012) further explained how these practices have been in place for years, and some student athletes view it as a rite of passage:

Bullying and hazing are other important concerns relating to interpersonal relationships developed in sports, even if some would argue that it’s simply “part of the game” for veteran student-athletes to pick on, belittle or abuse newer students in the program. (p. 10)

Schools must use every resource available to make sure that coaches and sponsors understand there is no place in extracurricular activities for bullying students.

**Summary**

The dilemma school districts face in keeping extracurricular activities will continue to be a concern. Through the review of literature, points were made by both sides if extracurricular activities should be kept or cut from school districts. By advancing expertise in effective communication and the ability to collaborate with others, extracurricular activities help create well-rounded scholars (Fisher, 2010). As school funding continues to shrink, school districts need to determine how they are going to spend the money they receive. In a time when fiscal constraints and accountability are focused on curriculum, many school extracurricular activities are being cut (Fredricks, 2012).

In Chapter Three, the methodology of the study is presented. Research questions, problem, and purpose are provided. Chapter Three also includes research design and a description of the population and sample. Data collection and data analysis procedures, along with instrumentation, are included.

### Chapter Three: Methodology

Shulruf (2010) explained it has been well documented that “extracurricular activities are an integral component of school life” (p. 594). Multiple studies have detailed the many ways high school students benefit from participation in extracurricular activities and athletics, and a number of these point to the correlation between this participation and students’ success beyond high school (NFHS, 2010). Shaevitz (2013) explained when looking for applicants, colleges look first at academic rigor and grades:

They are interested in a student's extracurricular activities—in other words, how you spend your time outside of classes. Colleges care about the character of people they admit; therefore, what you do after school, during weekends and over summers tells them a lot about the kind of person you are. When you think about it, you *are* what you do every day, every month, every year. (para. 1)

Colleges and Universities are looking for well-rounded individuals who can bring several skills with them to college (Symonds, 2014).

This study focused on one urban, Midwestern school district in the United States. This district has five high schools, and all were included in the study. The sample included approximately 4,860 high school graduates over a three-year period. The purpose of the study was to determine the connection between participation in extracurricular activities, specifically athletic programs, and students’ career choices once they graduate from high school. A quantitative design guided the procedures for collection and analysis of the data.

**Problem and Purpose Overview**

While extracurricular activities play a major role in the lives of high school students, these activities also have the ability to help determine what graduating seniors do once they are out of high school (Kort-Butler, 2012). Shaevitz (2013) shared the benefits extracurricular activities provide graduates who are looking to get accepted into college. Shaevitz (2013) explained, “Extracurricular activities are the major way students can demonstrate how unique they are, possibly more interesting, even better than other student applicants” (para. 4).

School districts all over the country have to make tough calls when it comes to saving money. Therefore, this study involved examination of data to see if students’ involvement in extracurricular activities is connected to attending college, the military, or the workforce. The findings from this study may assist administrators in deciding how the funding for extracurricular activities can be justified.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How does student participation in high school extracurricular activities influence higher education participation?
2. How does student participation in high school extracurricular activities influence military enlistment?
3. How did student participation in high school extracurricular activities influence students entering the workforce after graduation?

**Research Design**

This study involved collecting and analyzing quantitative data. Graduating high school students in the district studied are required to complete a postgraduate, follow-up survey. Students fill out the survey before they graduate indicating what their post-secondary plans are after high school. Surveys from 2011, 2012, and 2013 were examined to find out what career choices the graduates planned to pursue once they completed high school. Then, the number of students who participated in extracurricular activities in each school's graduating class and the percentage of those students who went on to attend higher education, military, or workforce were calculated. The independent variable was the students' participation or non-participation in extracurricular activities. The dependent variables were the data compiled via the postgraduate, follow-up survey.

**Population and Sample**

The population for this study included graduating seniors from five high schools in one urban school district (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). The sample included male and female graduating seniors from 2011, 2012, and 2013. A stratified sample was determined as appropriate to answer the research questions posed for this study.

The data from 2011, 2012, and 2013 were disaggregated into 10 data sets:

- Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities.
- Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities.
- Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year university.
- Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year university.

- Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year university.
- Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year university.
- Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the military.
- Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the military.
- Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.
- Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

Table 1

*2011 Graduating Seniors*

2011	Graduating Seniors	Graduates who participated in ECAs	Graduates who did not participate in ECAs
School A	394	209	185
School B	329	193	136
School C	331	202	129
School D	327	171	156
School E	242	110	132
Total	1623	885	738

Table 2

*2012 Graduating Seniors*

2012	Graduating Seniors	Graduates who participated in ECAs	Graduates who did not participate in ECAs
School A	386	216	170
School B	331	191	140
School C	316	155	161
School D	273	144	129
School E	255	106	149
Total	1561	812	749

Table 3

*2013 Graduating Seniors*

2013	Graduating Seniors	Graduates who participated in ECAs	Graduates who did not participate in ECAs
School A	432	223	209
School B	343	215	128
School C	321	178	143
School D	318	169	149
School E	267	127	140
Total	1681	912	769

**Instrumentation**

Once permission from the participating district was received, secondary data were requested. The secondary data included the 2011, 2012, 2013 postgraduate, follow-up survey responses and the Missouri State High School Activity Association (MSHSAA) eligibility lists from the 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and

2012-2013 sports seasons from the five high schools. The data were valid and reliable due to the graduating seniors completing the surveys themselves.

### **Data Collection**

Instrumental secondary data were obtained with permission of the participating district from the district's list of graduating students as well as the MSHSAA eligibility rosters from the five schools for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 school year. Once the data were collected, the postgraduate follow-up surveys were matched to the names of students on the athletic eligibility lists to determine how many students who participated in athletics indicated they pursued higher education, went into the military, or went into the workforce after graduation.

### **Analytic Procedure**

The study was centered on nominal data collected from the MSHSAA eligibility lists from the 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and the 2012-2013 sports seasons and from the postgraduate follow-up survey. Once the data were collected, the percentage of graduates who did and did not participate and what they did after graduation were recorded.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The data were collected after getting permission from the cooperating school district. The researcher was the only person to look at the data. While not being examined, data were locked away where no other person other than the researcher could access it. The students had already graduated and taken the post-graduate follow-up surveys. Their names were not published during the study, and once the researcher had collected the data from each graduate, the records were destroyed.



**Summary**

This study involved examination of how participation in extracurricular activities affects not only student performance, but also career choices after high school. The benefits of extracurricular activities have been well-documented (Harrison, 2013). Opponents have voiced their reasons as to why extracurricular activities are not needed (Fredricks, 2012). Therefore, this study was undertaken to determine the connection between participation in extracurricular activities and career choices.

In this chapter, the research questions and design were discussed. The population and sample along with an overview of the problem and purpose were examined. How the data were collected, analytically processed, and instrumentation were identified as well in the chapter.

Chapter Four contains an analysis of the data. Each research question and accompanying data are addressed. A summary of the chapter is also included.

#### **Chapter Four: Analysis of Data**

Many youth view participation in extracurricular, school-based activities such as academic clubs, sports, and the arts as a normal part of their school experience (Fredricks, 2012). Fredricks (2012) determined, “There is an increasing awareness that participation in organized context offers valuable opportunities for growth and positive youth development” (p. 295). Simoncini and Caltabiono (2012) identified higher social skills stemmed from a moderate amount of participation in extracurricular activity.

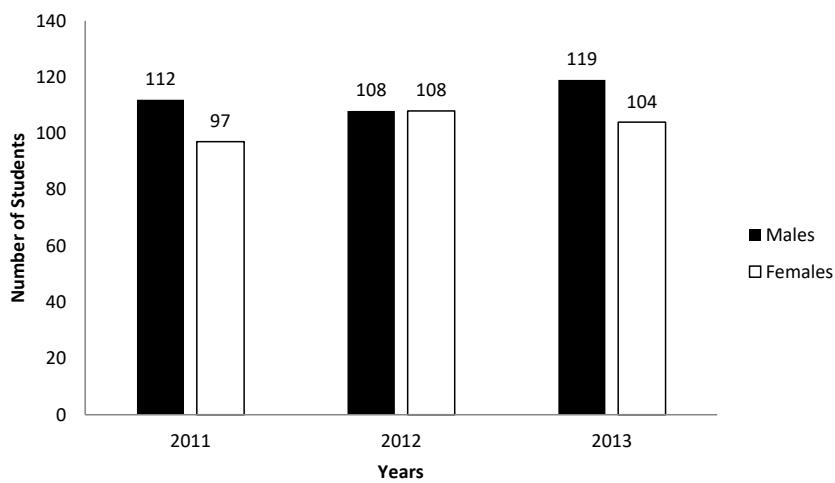
In this chapter, the secondary data that were analyzed are discussed. The data from the postgraduate follow-up surveys and MSHSAA eligibility lists were organized into 10 data sets. The first set of data included the 2011 graduates from each of the five high schools in the participating school district and whether or not the students participated in an extracurricular activity while in high school. These data led to the identification of the path the graduates chose upon successful completion of high school. The data from 2012 and 2013 were organized in the same manner (see Figures 2, 3, and 4).

#### **Data Analysis**

The following secondary data were collected from post-graduate follow-up surveys as well as from the eligibility rosters from the MSHSAA. Each of the five high schools place students who participate in extracurricular on eligibility rosters. There were 25 different activities including the following: boys baseball, boys basketball, girls basketball, cheerleading, boys cross country, girls cross country, dance team, 11-man football, boys golf, girls golf, choir, band, orchestra, boys soccer, girls soccer, girls softball, speech and debate, boys swimming and diving, girls swimming and diving, boys tennis, girls tennis, boys track and field, girls track and field, girls volleyball, and

wrestling. The different categories available from the post-graduate follow-up survey were as follows: attended a four-year university, attended a two-year college, enlisted in the military, or went into the workforce.

As shown in Figure 1, data reflect the number of students from School A who participated in extracurricular activities while in high school.



*Figure 1.* School A: Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities.

Over half of the graduates from School A participated in an extracurricular activity while they were in high school. In 2011, 53.04% of the 394 graduates participated in extracurricular activities. In 2012, 55.95% of the 386 graduates, and 51.62% of the 432 graduates in 2013 participated in extracurricular activities.

As shown in Figure 2, data reflect the number of students from School A who did not participate in extracurricular activities while in high school.

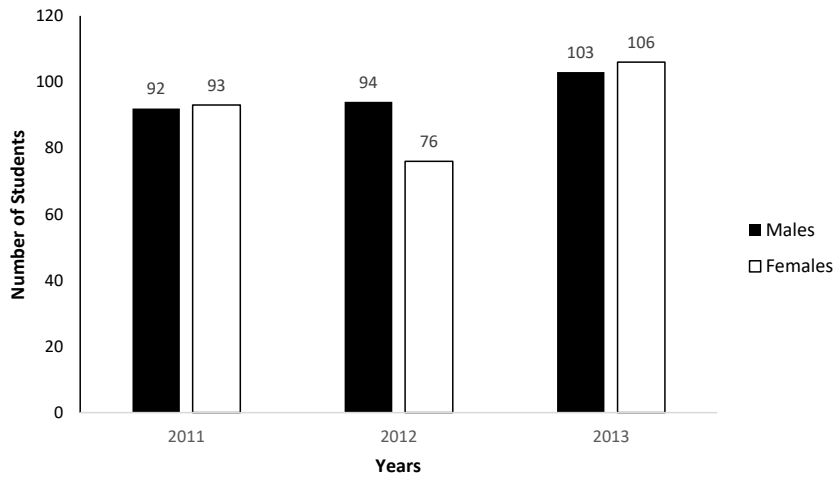


Figure 2. School A: Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities.

A little under half of the graduates from School A did not participate in any extracurricular activities while they were in high school. In 2011, 46.95% of the 394 graduates did not participate in extracurricular activities. In 2012, 44.04% of the 386 graduates, and 48.37% of the 432 graduates in 2013 did not participate in extracurricular activities.

As shown in Figure 3, data reflect the number of students from School B who participated in extracurricular activities while in high school.

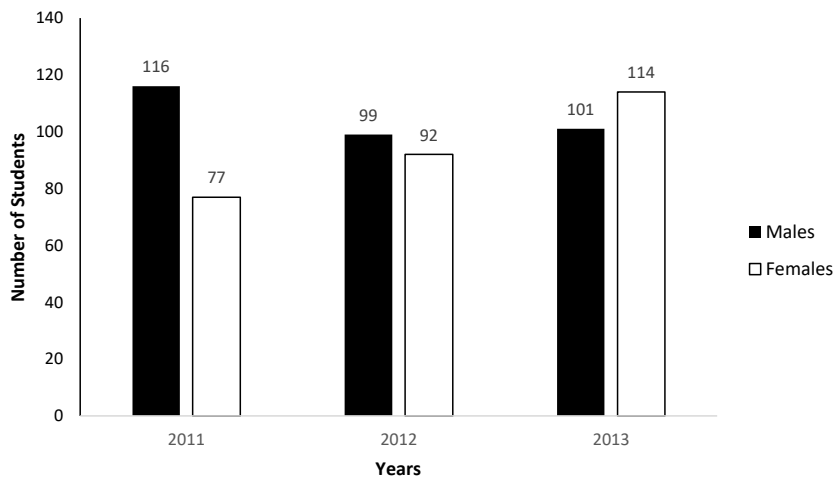


Figure 3. School B: Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities.

Over half of the graduates from School B participated in an extracurricular activity while they were in high school. In 2011, of the 329 students who graduated, 58.66% participated in extracurricular activities. Of the 331 graduating seniors in 2012, 57.70% participated in extracurricular activities, and 62.68% of the 343 graduating seniors in 2013 participated in extracurricular activities.

As shown in Figure 4, data reflect the number of students from School B who did not participate in extracurricular activities while in high school.

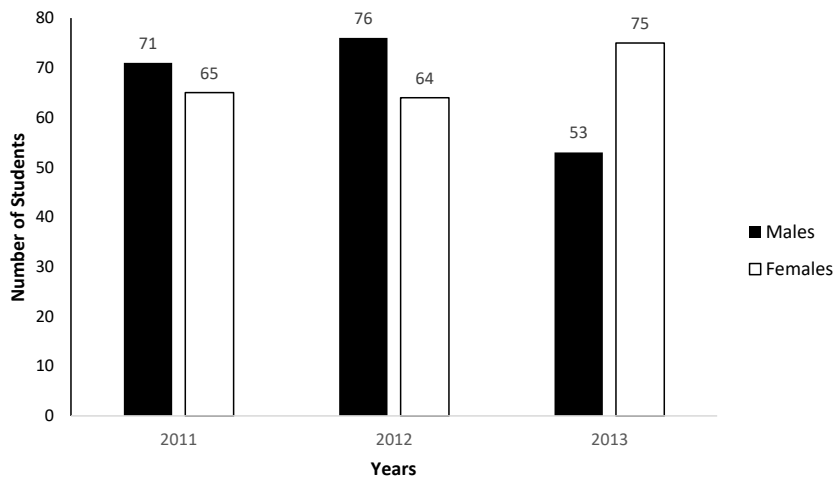
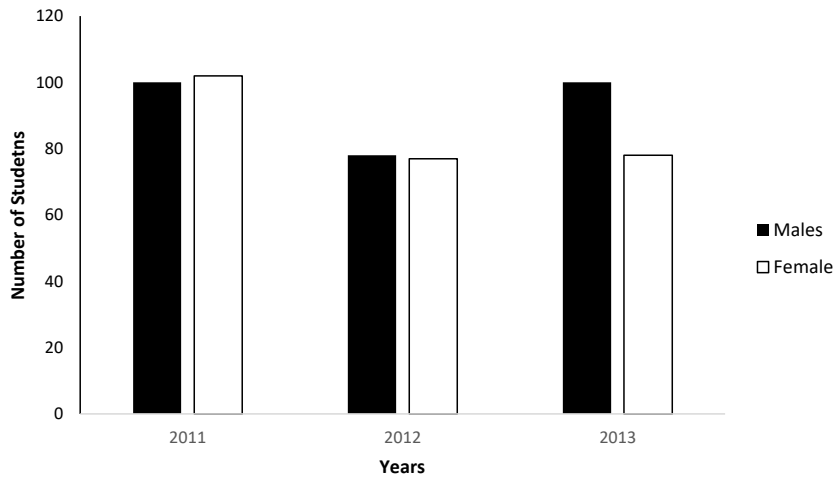


Figure 4. School B: Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities.

A little less than half of the graduates from School B did not participate in any extracurricular activity while they were in high school. In 2011, 41.33% of the 329 graduates did not participate in extracurricular activities. In 2012, 42.29% of the 331 graduates, and 37.31% of the 343 graduates in 2013 did not participate in extracurricular activities.

As shown in Figure 5, data reflect the number of students from School C who participated in extracurricular activities while in high school.



*Figure 5.* School C: Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities.

Over half of the graduates from School C participated in an extracurricular activity while they were in high school. In 2011, 61.02% of the 331 graduates participated in extracurricular activities. In 2012, 49.05% of the 316 graduates, and 55.45% of the 321 graduates in 2013 participated in extracurricular activities.

As shown in Figure 6, data reflect the number of students from School C who did not participate in extracurricular activities while in high school.

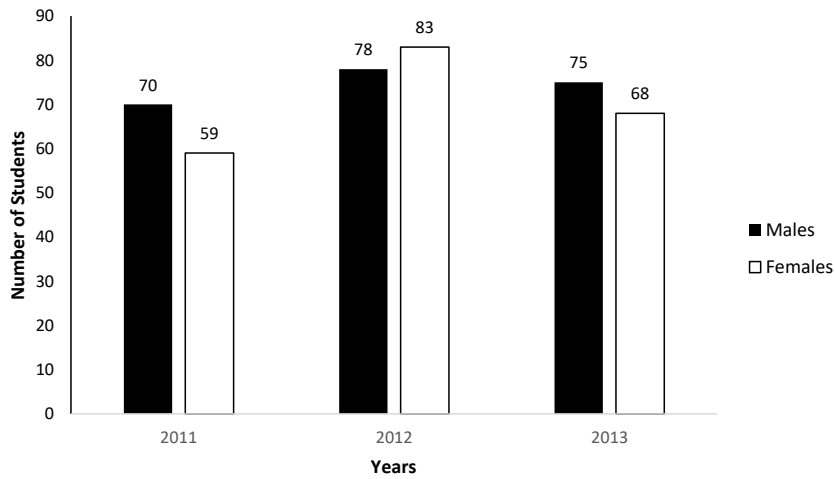


Figure 6. School C: Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities.

A little under half of the graduates from School C did not participate in any extracurricular activity while they were in high school. In 2011, 38.97% of the 331 graduates did not participate in extracurricular activities. In 2012, 50.94% of the 316 graduates, and 44.54% of the 321 graduates in 2013 did not participate in extracurricular activities.



As shown in Figure 7, data reflect the number of students from School D who participated in extracurricular activities while in high school.

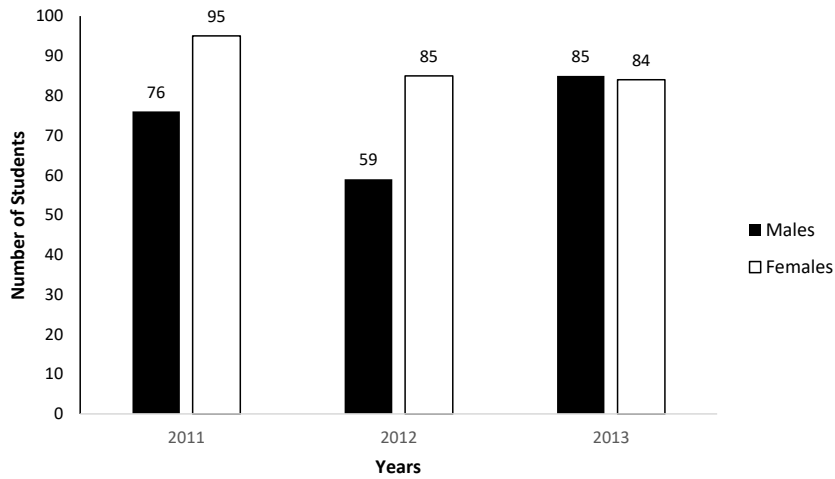


Figure 7. School D: Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities.

A little over half of the graduates from School D participated in an extracurricular activity while they were in high school. In 2011, 52.29% of the 327 graduates participated in extracurricular activities. In 2012, 52.74% of the 273 graduates, and 53.11% of the 318 graduates in 2013 participated in extracurricular activities.

As shown in Figure 8, data reflect the number of students from School D who did not participate in extracurricular activities while in high school.

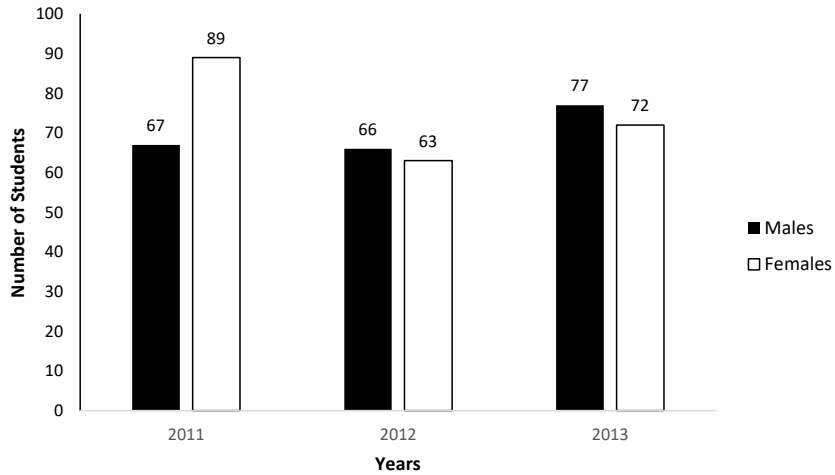


Figure 8. School D: Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities.

Almost half of the graduates from School D did not participate in any extracurricular activity while they were in high school. In 2011, 47.70% of the 327 graduates did not participate in extracurricular activities. In 2012, 47.25% of the 273 graduates, and 46.85% of the 318 graduates in 2013 did not participate in extracurricular activities.

As shown in Figure 9, data reflect the number of students from School E who participated in extracurricular activities while in high school.

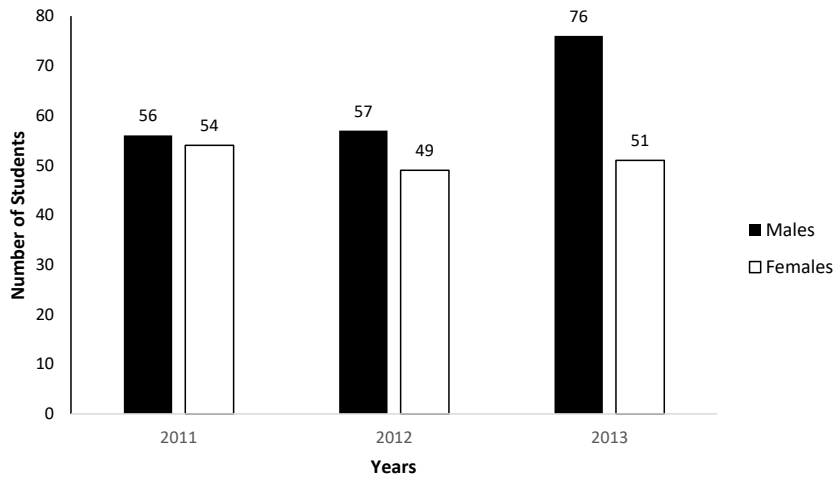


Figure 9. School E: Graduates who participated in extracurricular activities.

Under half of the graduates from School E participated in an extracurricular activity while they were in high school. In 2011, 45.45% of the 242 graduates participated in extracurricular activities. In 2012, 41.56% of the 255 graduates, and 47.66% of the 267 graduates in 2013 participated in extracurricular activities.

As shown in Figure 10, data reflect the number of students from School E who did not participate in extracurricular activities while in high school.

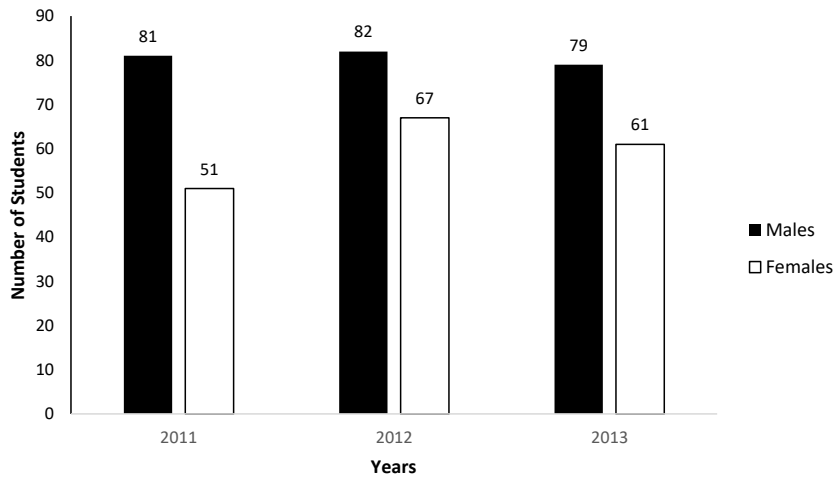
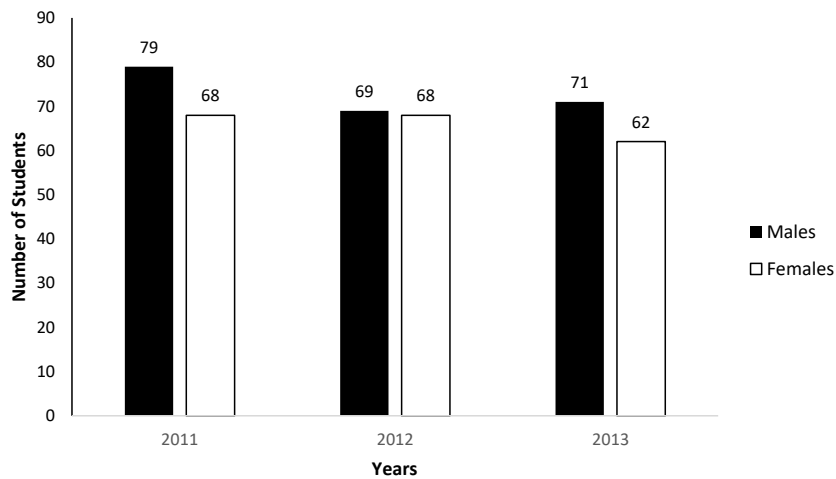


Figure 10. School E: Graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities.

A little over half of the graduates from School E did not participate in an extracurricular activity while they were in high school. In 2011, 54.54% of the 242 graduates did not participate in extracurricular activities. In 2012, 58.43% of the 255 graduates, and 52.43% of the 267 graduates in 2013 did not participate in extracurricular activities.

### Research Question One

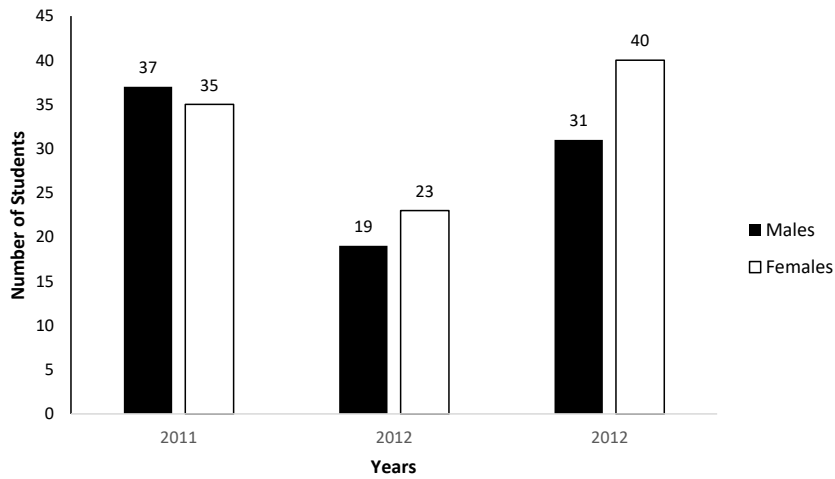
As shown in Figure 11, data reflect the graduates from School A who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.



*Figure 11.* School A: Graduates who participated and went to a four-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School A who participated in extracurricular activities in high school had significantly higher percentage of going to a four-year college than did those who did not participate. In 2011, 70.33% of the 209 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college, while in 2012 64.01% of the 214 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college. In 2013, 59.64% of the 223 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college.

As shown in Figure 12, data reflect the graduates from School A who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.



*Figure 12.* School A: Graduates who did not participate and went to a four-year college or university.

In 2011, 38.91% of the 185 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college. Of the 172 graduates in 2012, 24.41% who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college, and 33.97% of the 209 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college.

As shown in Figure 13, data reflect the graduates from School A who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.

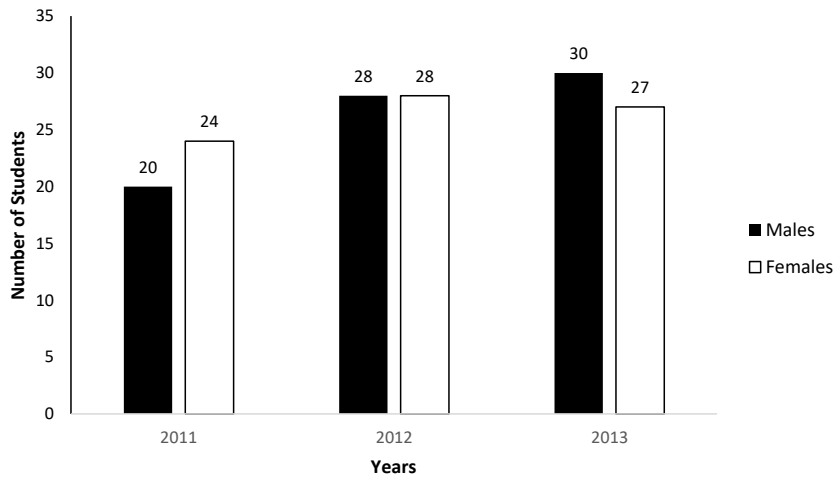


Figure 13. School A: Graduates who participated and went to a two-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School A who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a moderate percentage of the graduates who went on to a two-year college. In 2011, 21.05% of the 209 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college. In 2012, 26.16% of the 214 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to a two-year college, while in 2013, 25.56% of the 223 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college.

As shown in Figure 14, data reflect the graduates from School A who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.

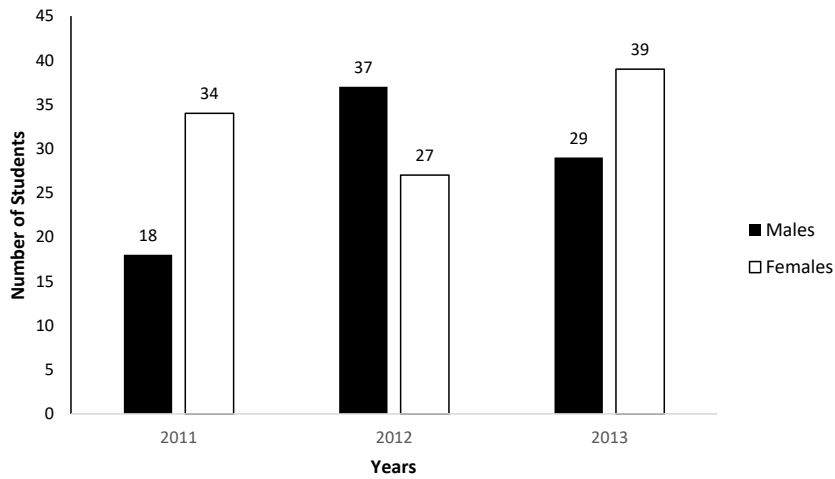


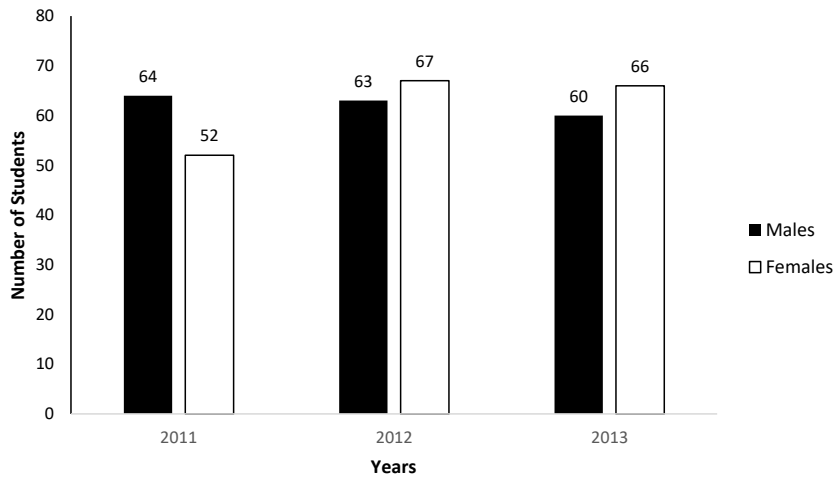
Figure 14. School A: Graduates who did not participate and went to a two-year college or university.

In 2011, of the 185 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities, 28.10% went to a two-year college. In 2012, 37.20% of the 172 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college. In 2013, 32.53% of the 209 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college.

Commented [WU2]: Sentence fragment



As shown in Figure 15, data reflect the graduates from School B who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.



*Figure 15.* School B: Graduates who participated and went on to a four-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School B who participated in extracurricular activities in high school had a significantly higher percentage of going to a four-year college. In 2011, of the 193 graduates who participated in an extracurricular activity, 60.10% of the students went to a four-year college. In 2012, 68.06% of the 191 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a four-year school. In 2013, 215 graduates participated in extracurricular activities, and 58.60% went to a four-year college.

As shown in Figure 16, data reflect the graduates from School B who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.

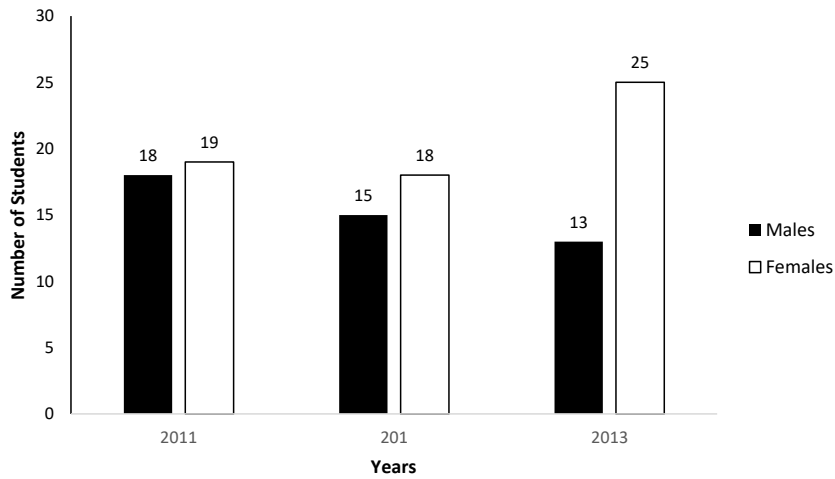


Figure 16. School B: Graduates who did not participate and went to a four-year college or university.

In 2011, 136 graduates did not participate in extracurricular activities. Of those graduates, 27.20% of the students went to a four-year college. In 2012, 23.57% of the 140 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college, while 29.68% of the 128 graduates from 2013 went to a four-year college.

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As shown in Figure 17, data reflect the graduates from School B who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.

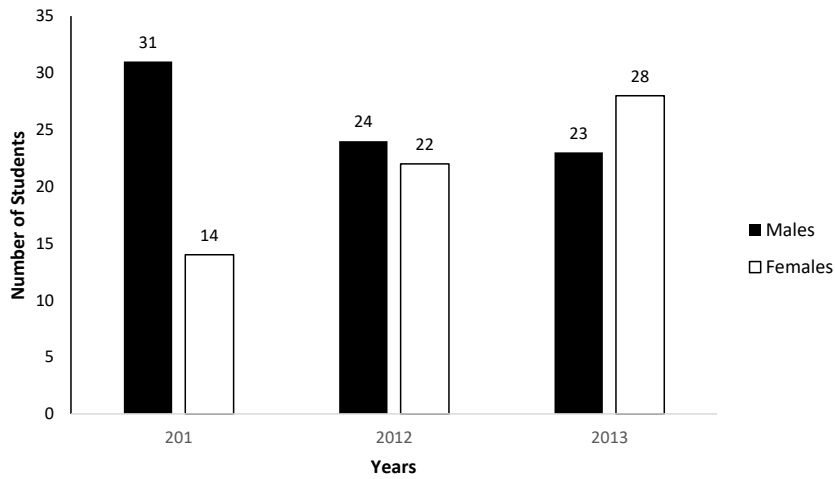


Figure 17. School B: Graduates who participated and went to a two-year college or university.

In 2011, of the 193 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities, 23.31% went to a two-year college. Of the 191 graduates in 2012, 24.08% of the graduates went to a two-year college, while in 2013, 23.72% of the 215 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college.

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As shown in Figure 18, data reflect the graduates from School B who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.

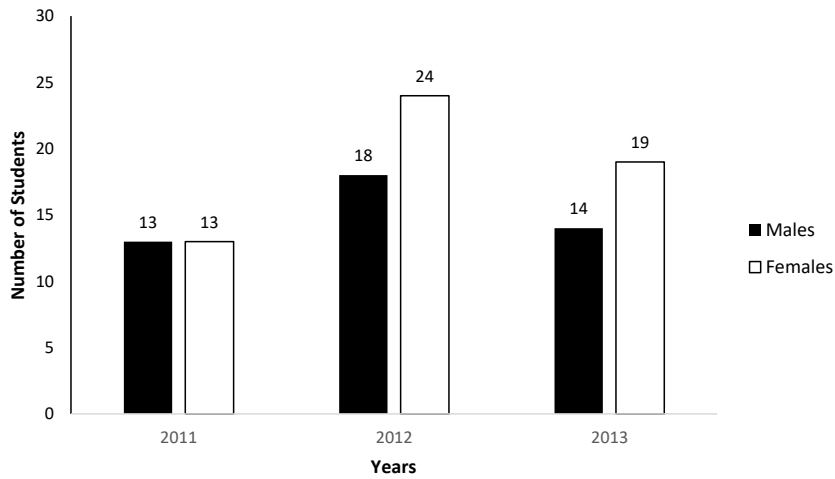
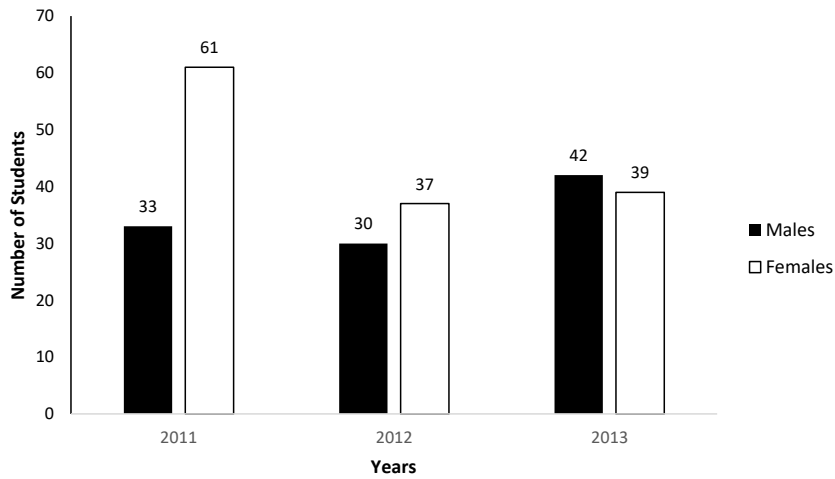


Figure 18. School B: Graduates who did not participate and went to a two-year college or university.

In 2011, of the 136 graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity, 19.11% of the students went to a two-year college. Of the 140 graduates from 2012 who did not participate in an extracurricular activity, 30% went to a two-year college. In 2013, 25.78% of the 128 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college.

Commented [WU5]: Sentence fragment

As shown in Figure 19, data reflect the graduates from School C who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.



*Figure 19.* School C: Graduates who participated and went to a four-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School C who participated in extracurricular activities in high school had a significantly higher percentage of going to a four-year college than did those who did not participate. In 2011, 46.53% of the 202 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college, while in 2012, 43.22% of the 155 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to a four-year college. In 2013, about 45.50% of the 178 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college.

As shown in Figure 20, data reflect the graduates from School C who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.

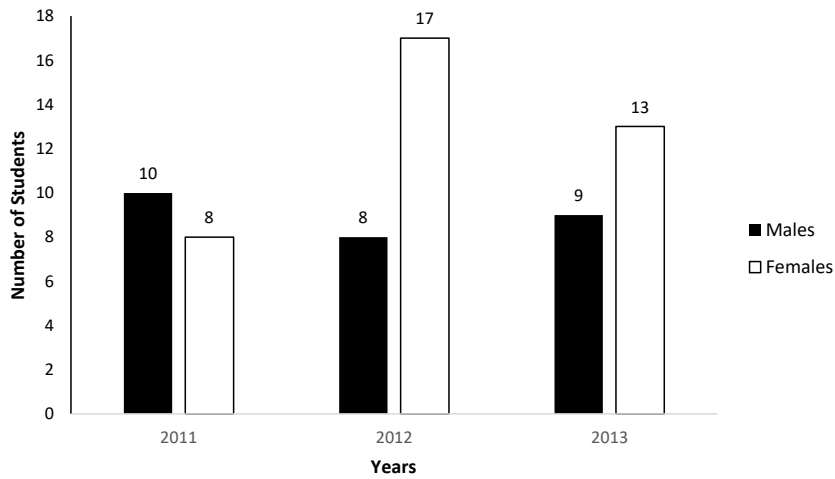


Figure 20. School C: Graduates who did not participate and went to a four-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School C who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school and went to a four-year college were very constant over the three-year study. In 2011, only 13.95% of the 129 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college. In 2012, 15.52% of the 161 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities also went to a four-year college. In 2013, 15.38% of the 143 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went on to a four-year college.

As shown in Figure 21, data reflect the graduates from School C who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.

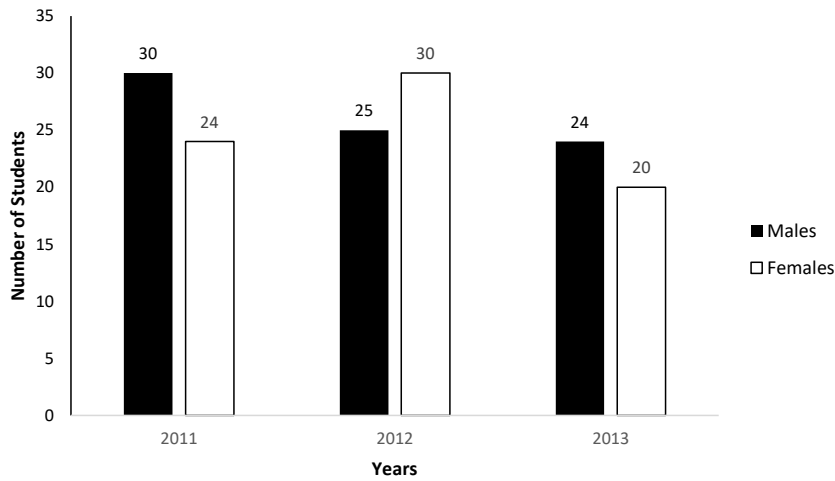
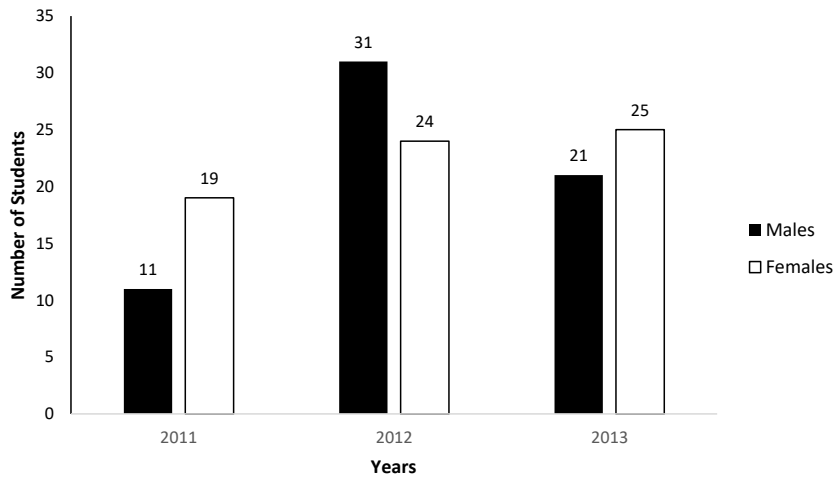


Figure 21. School C: Graduates who participated and went to a two-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School C who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a moderate percentage of the graduates who went on to a two-year college. In 2011, 26.73% of the 202 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college. In 2012, 35.48% of the 155 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college. In 2013, about 24.71% of the 178 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college.

As shown in Figure 22, data reflect the graduates from School C who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.

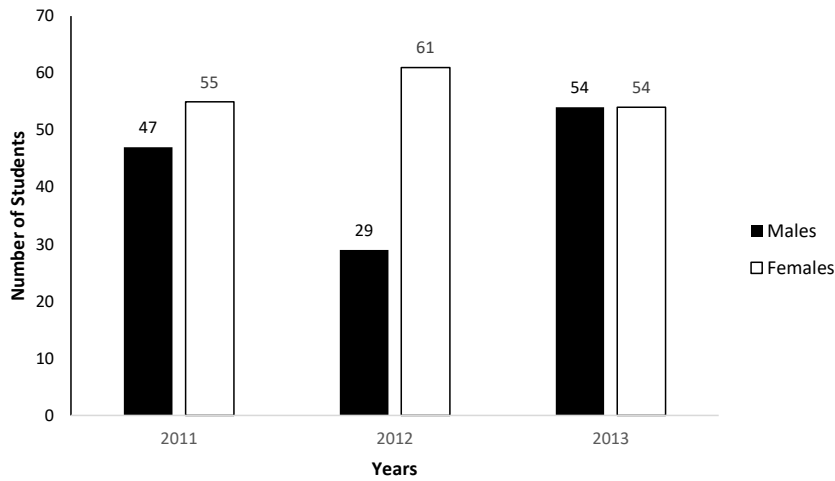


*Figure 22.* School C: Graduates who did not participate and went to a two-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School C who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went on to a two-year college. In 2011, of the 129 graduates, 23.25% of the students who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college. Of the 161 graduates in 2012, 34.16% did not participate in extracurricular activities and went to a two-year college. In 2013, 32.16% of the 143 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college.



As shown in Figure 23, data reflect the graduates from School D who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.



*Figure 23.* School D: Graduates who participated and went to a four-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School D who participated in extracurricular activities in high school had a significantly higher percentage of attending a four-year college. In 2011, 59.64% of the 171 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college, while in 2012, 62.50% of the 144 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college. In 2013, 63.90% of the 169 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college.

As shown in Figure 24, data reflect the graduates from School D who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.

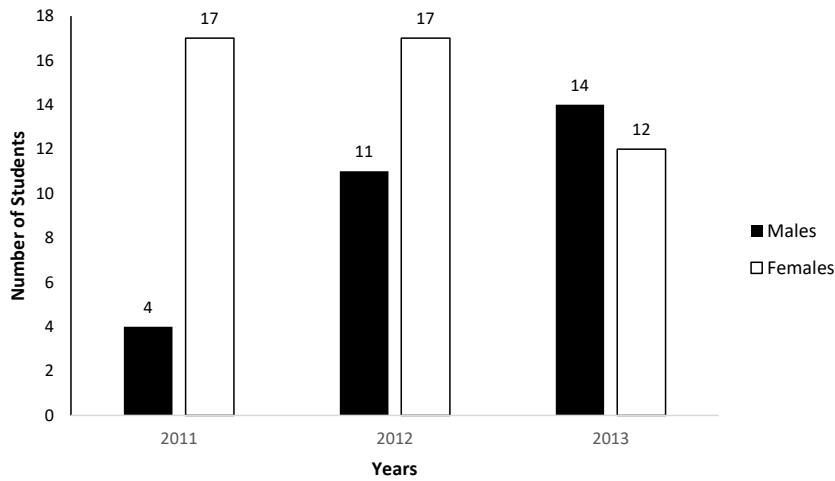
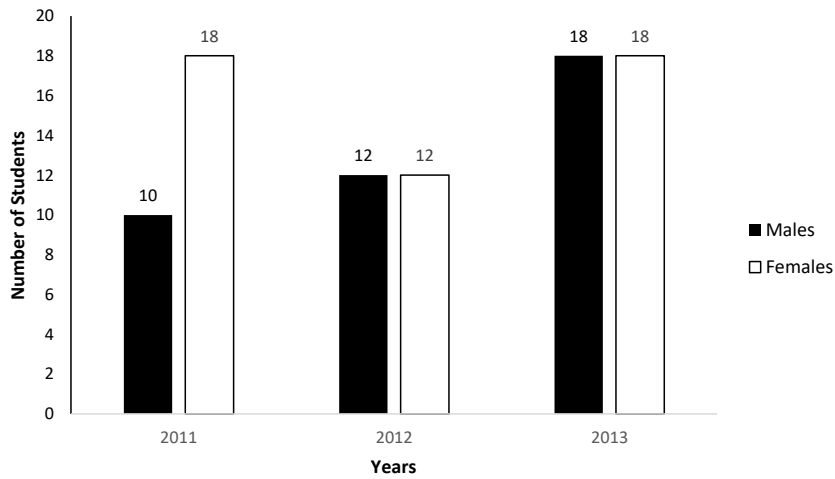


Figure 24. School D: Graduates who did not participate and went to a four-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School D who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went on to a four-year college. In 2011, only 13.46% of the 156 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college, while in 2012, 21.70% of the 129 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college. In 2013, 17.44% of the 149 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college.

As shown in Figure 25, data reflect the graduates from School D who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.



*Figure 25.* School D: Graduates who participated and went to a two-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School D who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went on to a two-year college. In 2011, 16.37% of the 171 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college, while in 2012, 16.66% of the 144 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college. In 2013, 21.30% of the 169 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college.

As shown in Figure 26, data reflect the graduates from School D who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.

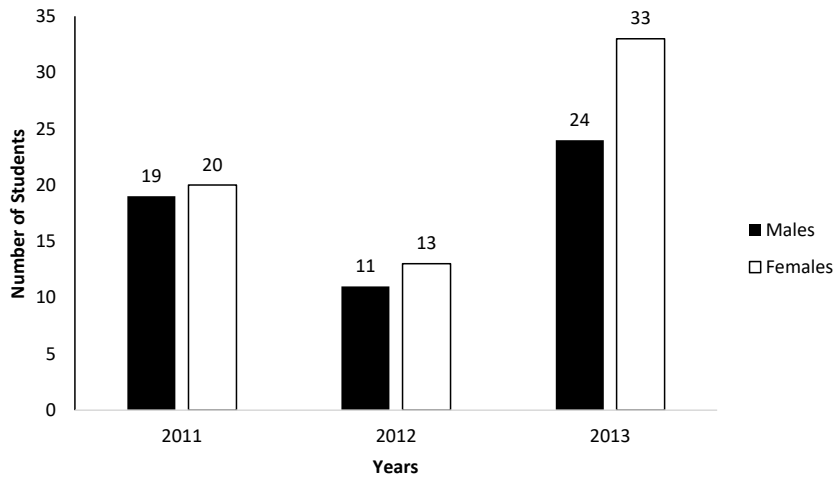
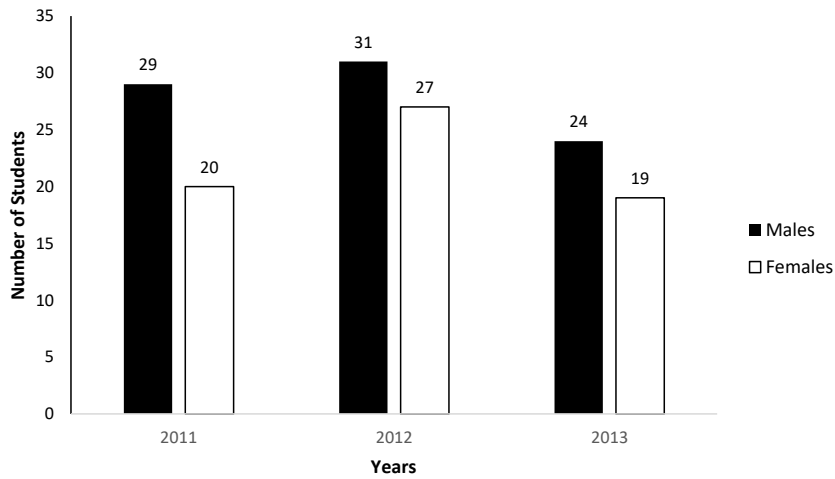


Figure 26. School D: Graduates who did not participate and went to a two-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School D who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went on to a two-year college. In 2011, 25% of the 156 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college, while in 2012, 19.37% of the 129 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college. In 2013, 38.25% of the 149 who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college.

As shown in Figure 27, data reflect the graduates from School E who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.



*Figure 27.* School E: Graduates who participated and went to a four-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School E who participated in extracurricular activities in high school had a lower percentage of going to a four-year college as opposed to the other schools in the district. In 2011, 44.54% of the 110 students who participated in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college. In 2012, 54.71% of the 106 graduates, and 33.85% of the 127 graduates in 2013 went to a four-year college.

As shown in Figure 28, data reflect the graduates from School E who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a four-year college or university.

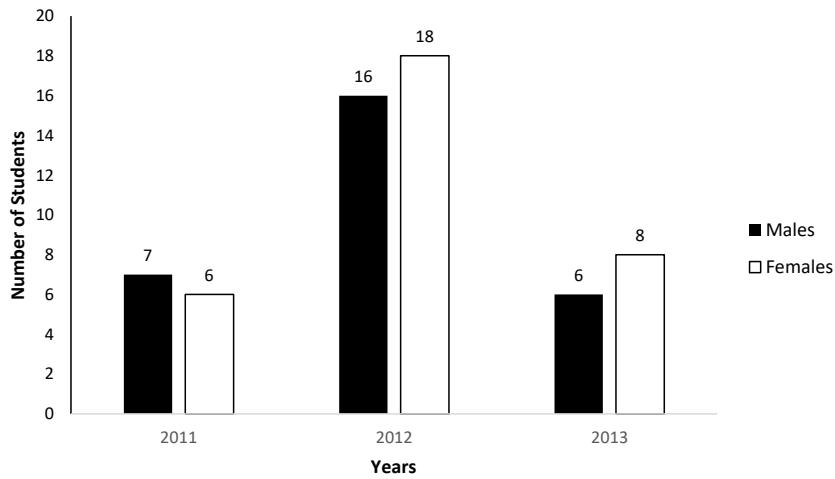
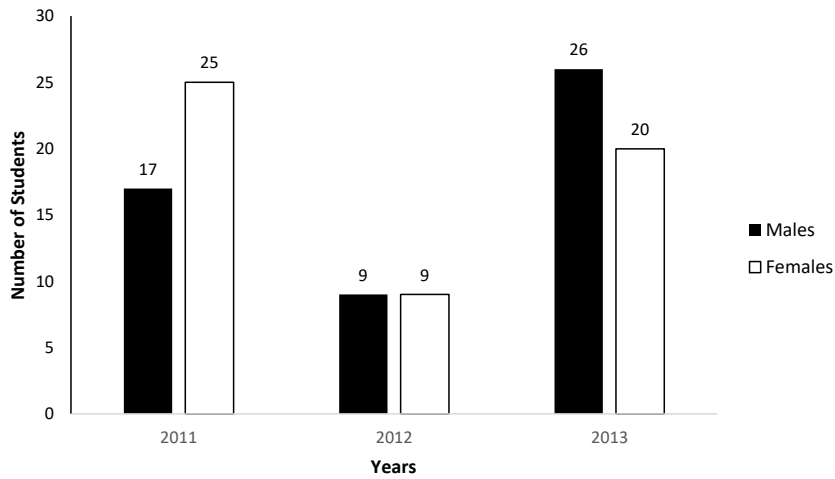


Figure 28. School E: Graduates who did not participate and went to a four-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School E who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went on to a four-year college. In 2011, 9.85% of the 132 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a four-year college. Only 22.81% of the 149 graduates in 2012 went to a four-year college, and 10% of the 140 graduates in 2013 went to a four-year college.

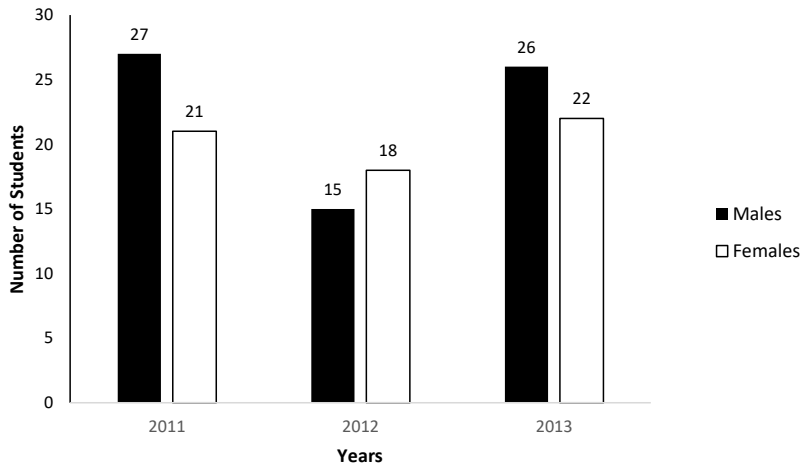
As shown in Figure 29, data reflect the graduates from School E who participated in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.



*Figure 29.* School E: Graduates who participated and went to a two-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School E who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a moderate percentage of the graduates who went on to a two-year college. In 2011, 38.18% of the 110 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college, while in 2012, 16.98% of the 106 graduates went to a two-year college. Of the 127 graduates in 2013, 36.22% participated in extracurricular activities and went to a two-year college.

As shown in Figure 30, data reflect the graduates from School E who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went on to a two-year college.



*Figure 30.* School E: Graduates who did not participate and went to a two-year college or university.

Graduating seniors from School E who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a moderate percentage of the graduates who went on to a two-year college. In 2011, of the 110 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities, 43.63% went to a two-year college. In 2012, of the 149 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities, 20.13% went to a two-year college. In 2013, about 34.28% of the 140 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went to a two-year college.



### Research Question Two

As shown in Figure 31, data reflect the graduates from School A who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

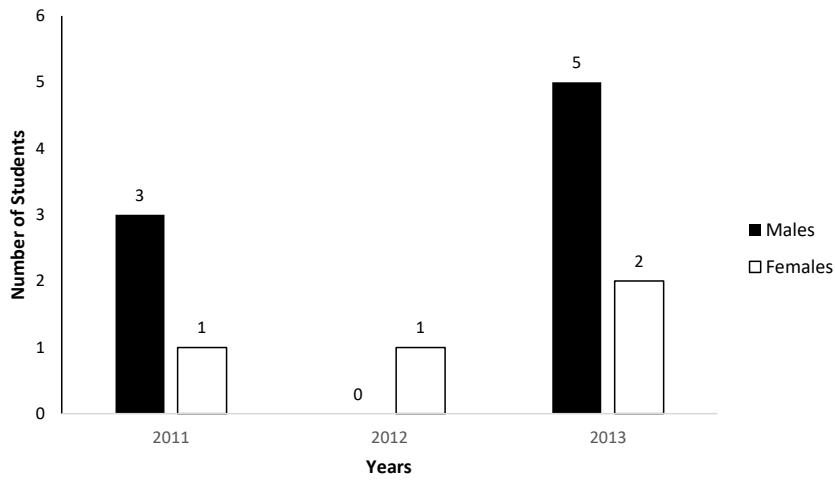


Figure 31. School A: Graduates who participated and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School A who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only four out of 209 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military. Only one of the 214 graduates in 2012 and seven of the 223 graduates in 2013 who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military.

As shown in Figure 32, data reflect the graduates from School A who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

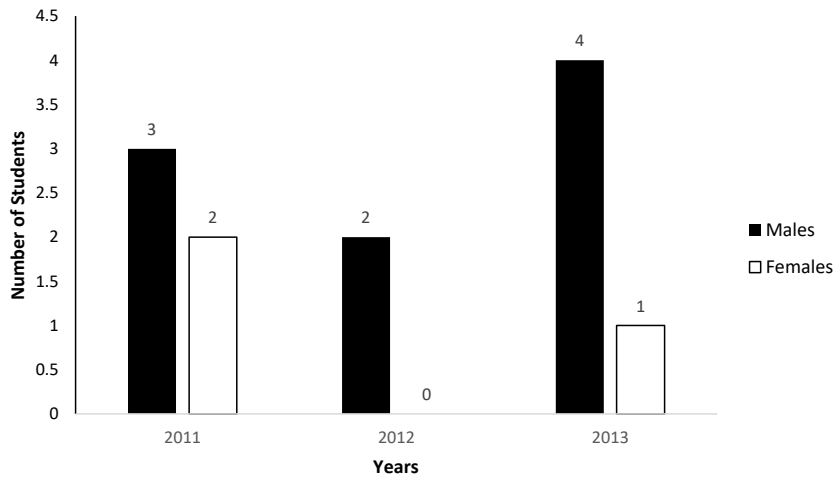


Figure 32. School A: Graduates who did not participate and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School A who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only five of the 185 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. Only two of the 172 graduates in 2012 and five of the 209 graduates in 2013 who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military.

As shown in Figure 33, data reflect the graduates from School B who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

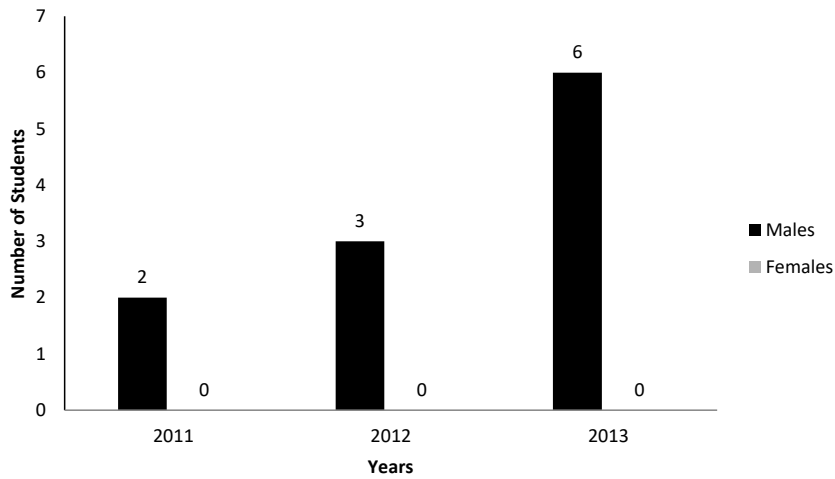


Figure 33. School B: Graduates who participated and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School B who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only two of the 193 students who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military. Only three of the 191 graduates in 2012 and six of the 215 graduates of 2013 went into the military.

As shown in Figure 34, data reflect the graduates from School B who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

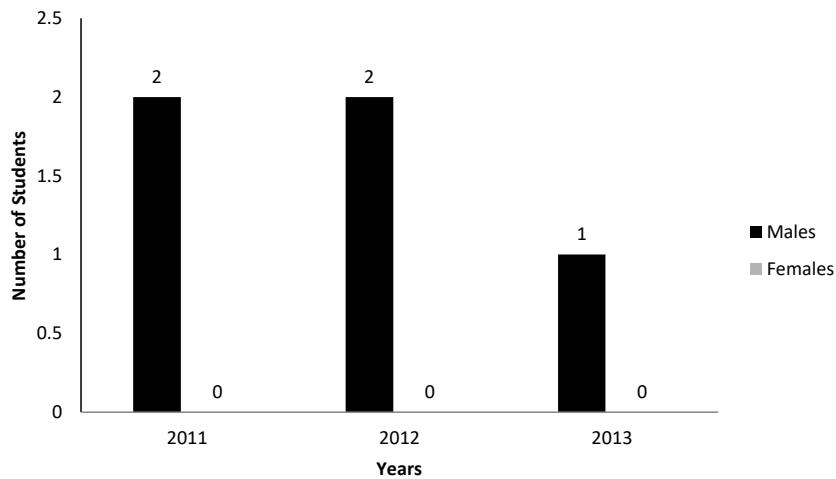


Figure 34. School B: Graduates who did not participate and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School B who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only two out of the 136 graduating students who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2012, only two out of the 140 graduates went to the military, and only one of the 128 graduates in 2013 went into the military.

As shown in Figure 35, data reflect the graduates from School C who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

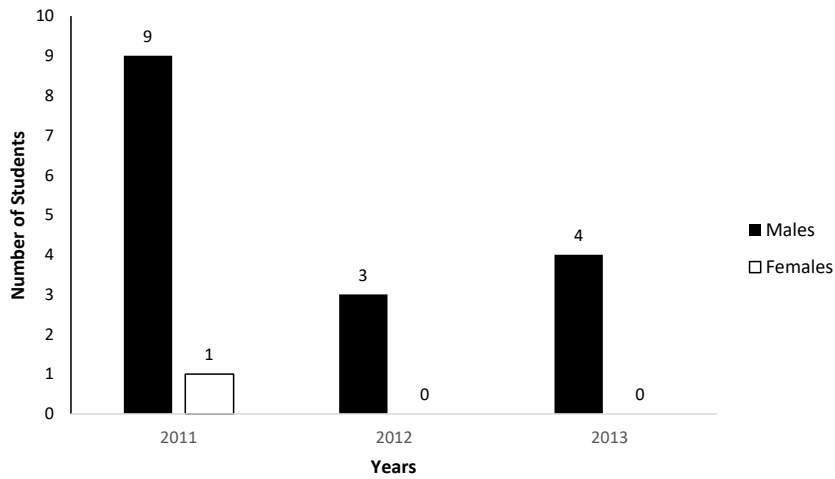


Figure 35. School C: Graduates who participated and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School C who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only 10 of the 202 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in 2012 only three of the 155 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2013, only four of the 178 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military.

As shown in Figure 36, data reflect the graduates from School C who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

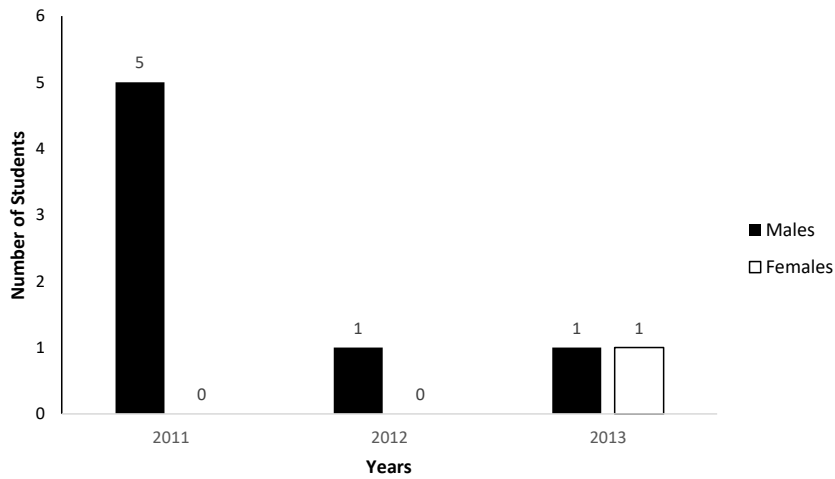


Figure 36. School C: Graduates who did not participate and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School C who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only five students of the 129 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in 2012 only one of the 161 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2013, only two of the 143 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military.

As shown in Figure 37, data reflect the graduates from School D who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

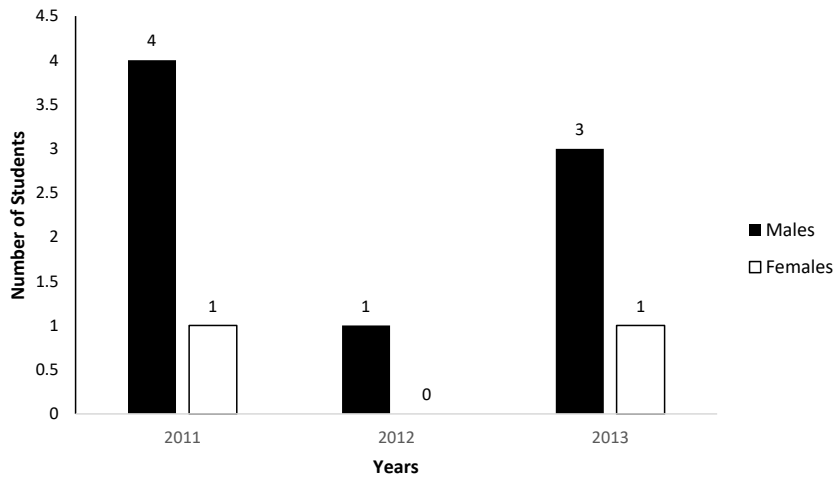


Figure 37. School D: Graduates who participated and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School D who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only five of the 171 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in 2012 only one of the 144 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2013, four of the 169 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military.

As shown in Figure 38, data reflect the graduates from School D who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

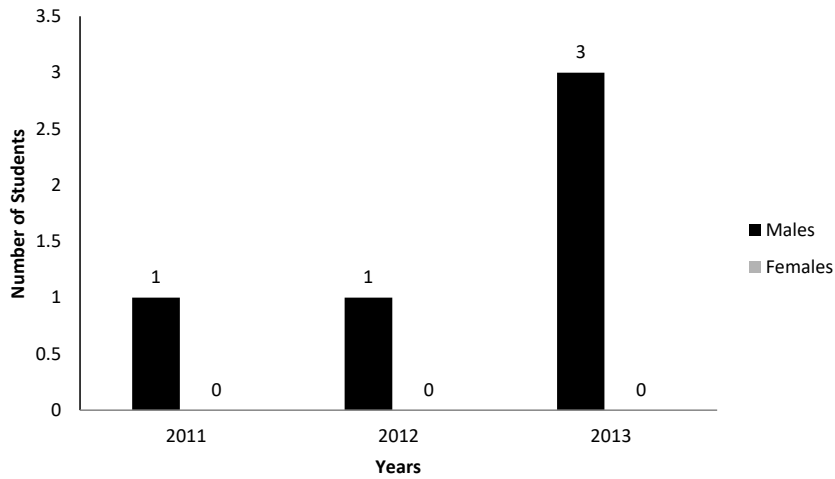


Figure 38. School D: Graduates who did not participate and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School D who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only one out of the 156 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in 2012 only one of the 129 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2013, only three of the 149 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military.



As shown in Figure 39, data reflect the graduates from School E who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

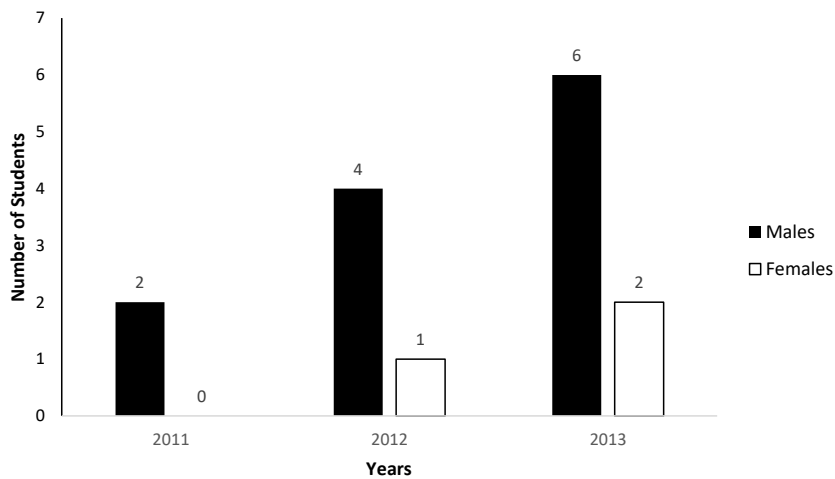


Figure 39. School E: Graduates who participated and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School E who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only two of the 110 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in 2012 only five of the 106 graduates went into the military. In 2013, only eight of the 127 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military.

As shown in Figure 40, data reflect the graduates from School E who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the military.

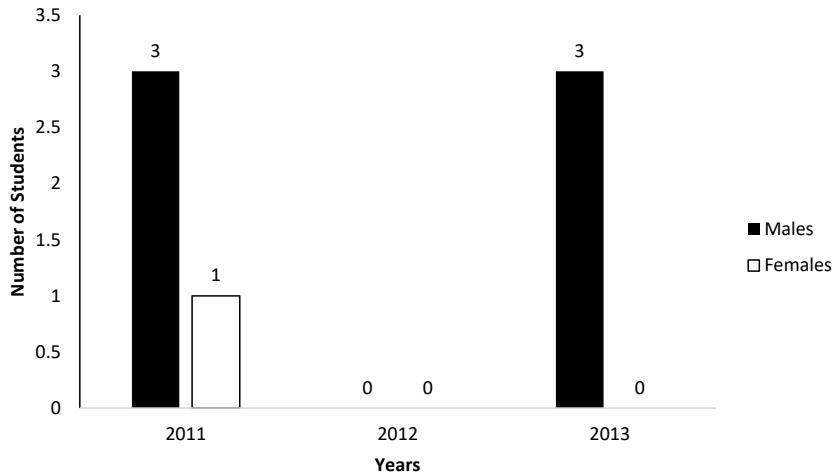


Figure 40. School E: Graduates who did not participate and went into the military.

Graduating seniors from School E who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the military. In 2011, only four of the 132 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in 2012 zero of the 149 graduates and only three of the 140 graduates of 2013 went into the military.

### Research Question Three

As shown in Figure 41, data reflect the graduates from School A who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

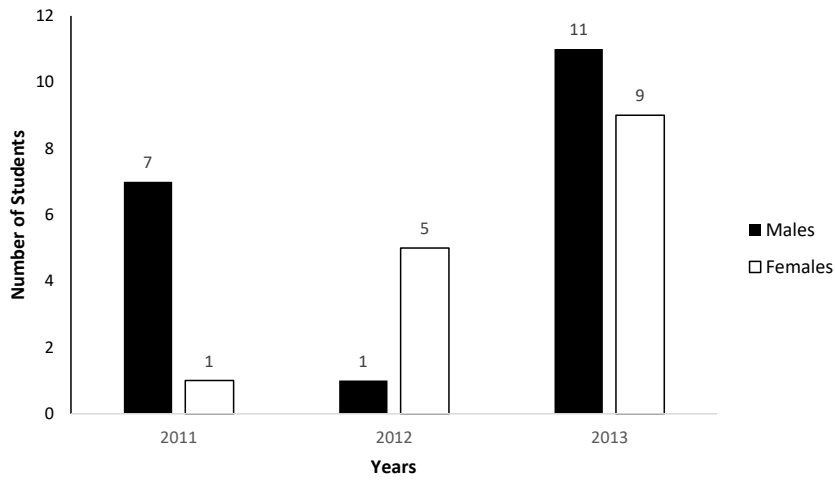


Figure 41. School A: Graduates who participated and went into the workforce.

Graduating seniors from School A who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the workforce. In 2011, only eight of the 209 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while in 2012 only six of the 214 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. However, in 2013, 20 of the 223 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce.

As shown in Figure 42, data reflect the graduates from School A who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

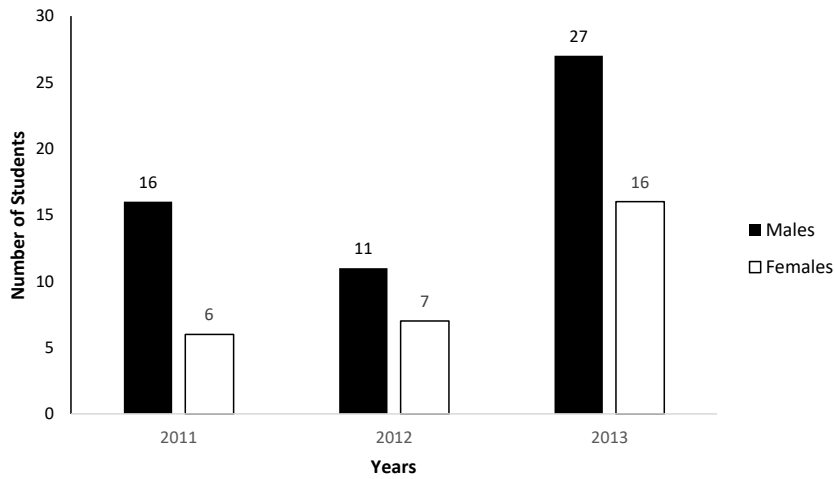


Figure 42. School A: Graduates who did not participate and went into the workforce.

In 2011, 11.89% of the 185 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, 10.46% of the 172 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while in 2013, 20.57% of the 209 graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went into the workforce.

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As shown in Figure 43, data reflect the graduated from School B who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

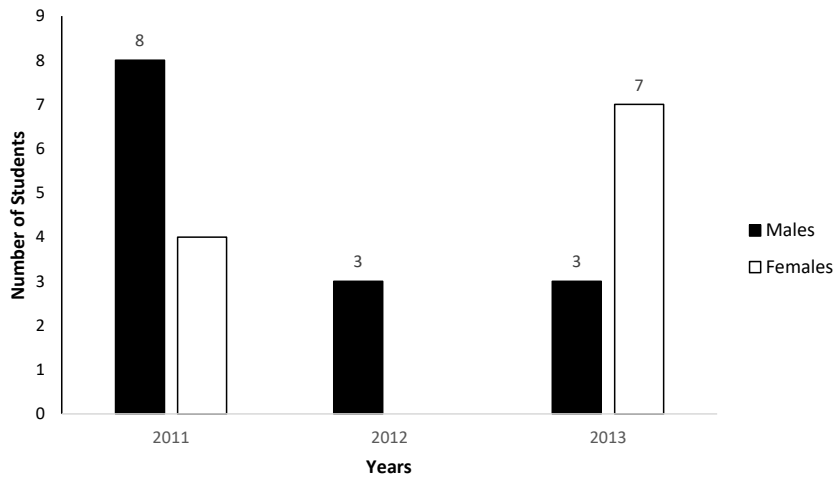


Figure 43. School B: Graduates who participated and went into the workforce.

In 2011, only 12 out of the 193 students who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while in 2012 only three of the 191 graduates, and 10 of the 215 graduates in 2013 went into the workforce.

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As shown in Figure 44, data reflect the graduates from School B who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

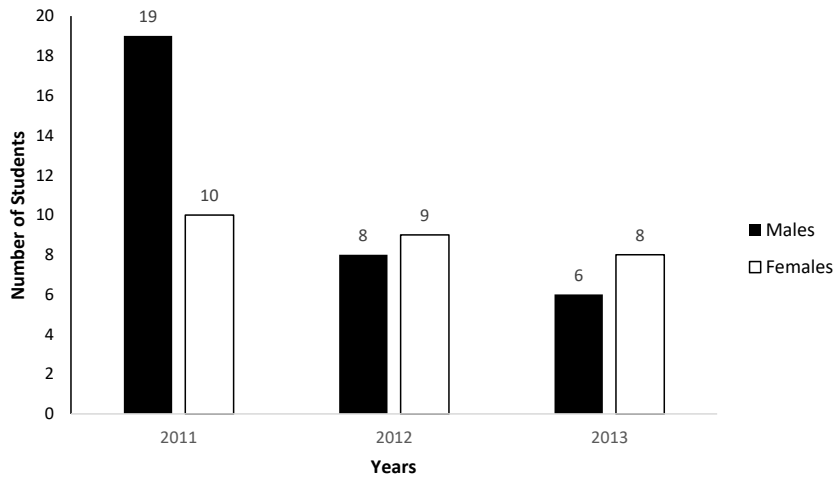


Figure 44. School B: Graduates who did not participate and went into the workforce.

Graduating seniors from School B who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school and went into the workforce steadily declined in numbers over the three-year study. In 2011, of the 136 graduates, 21.32% who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, 12.14% of the 140 graduates went into the workforce, and 10.93% of the 128 graduates in 2013 went into the workforce.

As shown in Figure 45, data reflect the graduates from School C who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

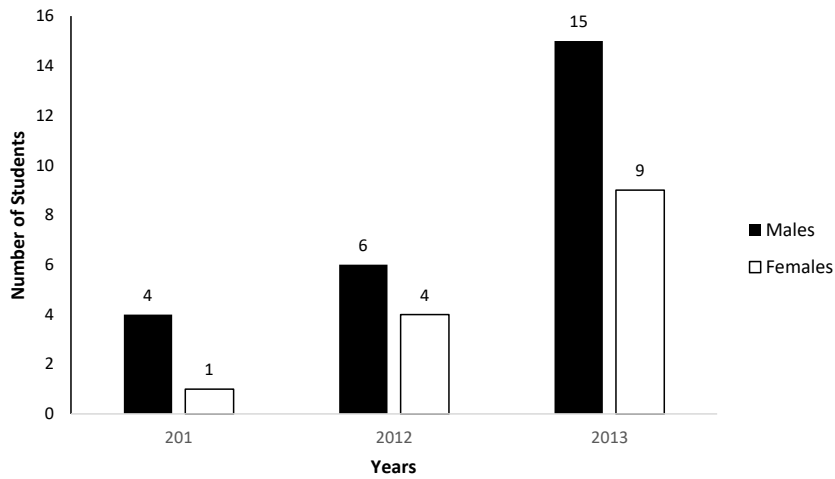


Figure 45. School C: Graduates who participated and went into the workforce.

Graduating seniors from School C who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the workforce. In 2011, only five of the 202 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while in 2012 only 10 of the 155 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. However in 2013, 24 of the 178 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce.

As shown in Figure 46, data reflect the graduates from School C who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

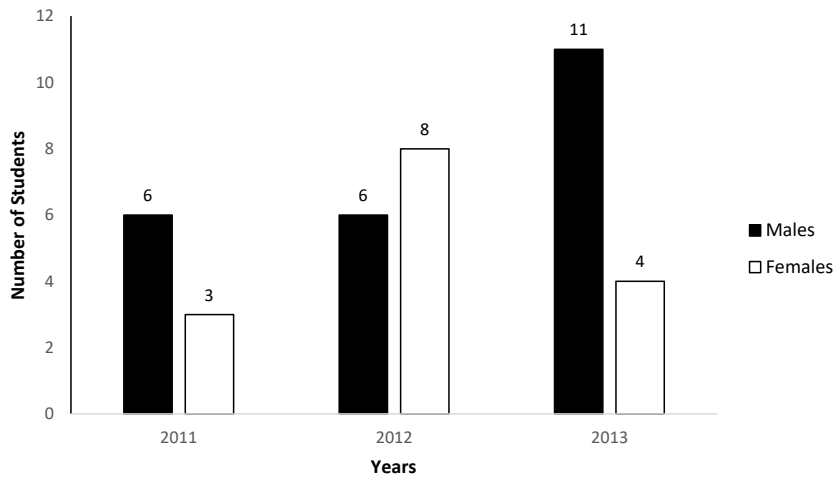


Figure 46. School C: Graduates who did not participate and went into the workforce.

Graduating seniors from School C who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school and went into the workforce increased in numbers over the three-year study. In 2011, only nine of the 129 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, only 14 of the 161 graduates did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce, while 15 of the 143 graduates from 2013 who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce.



As shown in Figure 47, data reflect the graduates from School D who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

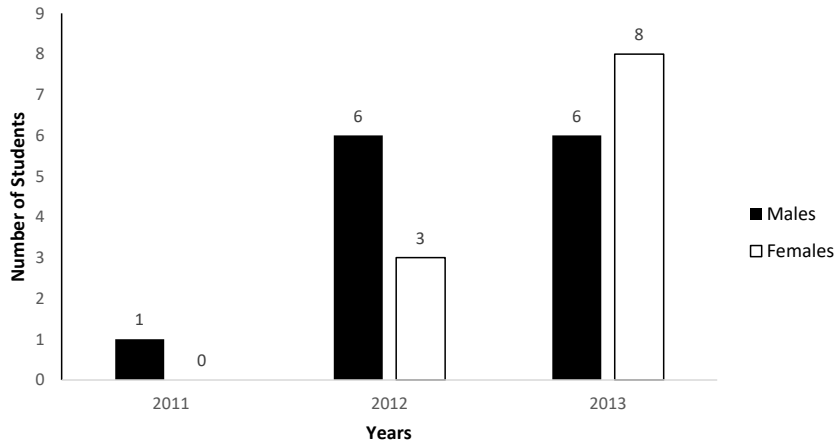


Figure 47. School D: Graduates who participated and went into the workforce.

Graduating seniors from School D who participated in extracurricular activities in high school and went into the workforce steadily improved in numbers over the three-year study. In 2011, only one of the 171 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while in 2012, nine of the 144 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2013, 14 of the 169 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce.

As shown in Figure 48, data reflect the graduates from School D who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

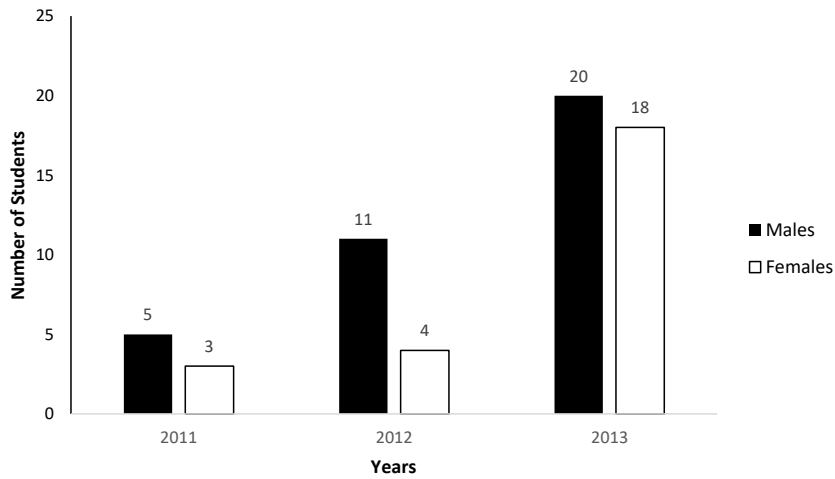


Figure 48. School D: Graduates who did not participate and went into the workforce.

Graduating seniors from School D who did not participate in extracurricular activities in high school and went into the workforce steadily improved in numbers over the three-year study. In 2011, only 5.12% of the 156 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while in 2012, 11.62% of the 129 graduates did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce. In 2013, 25.50% of the 149 graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce.

As shown in Figure 49, data reflect the graduates from School E who participated in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

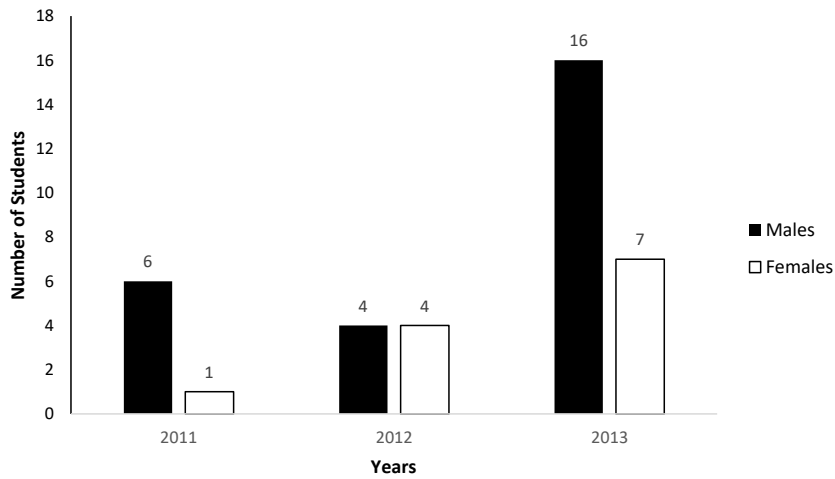


Figure 49. School E: Graduates who participated and went into the workforce.

Graduating seniors from School E who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were a small percentage of the graduates who went into the workforce. In 2011, only seven students out of 110 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while in 2012 only eight of the 106 graduates went into the workforce. However, in 2013, 23 of the 127 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce.

As shown in Figure 50, data reflect the graduates from School E who did not participate in extracurricular activities and went into the workforce.

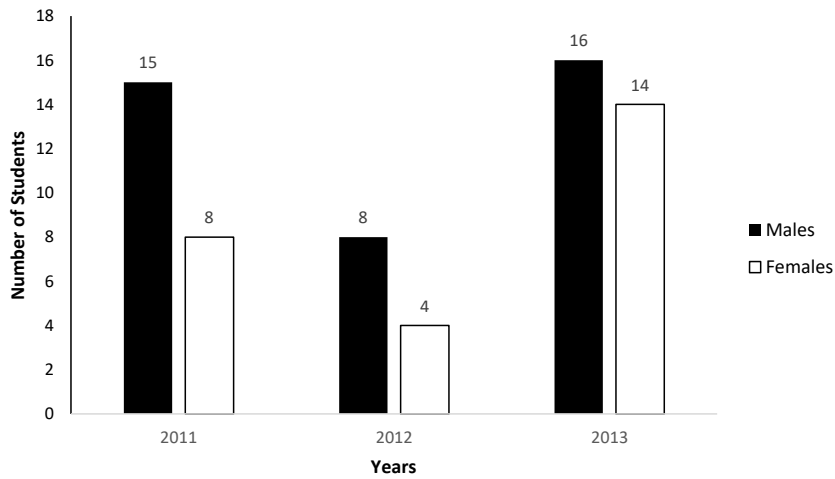


Figure 50. School E: Graduates who did not participate and went into the workforce.

In 2011, of the 132 graduates, 16.67% who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, of the 149 graduates, only 8.05% of the graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 21.42% of the 140 graduates in 2013 went into the workforce.

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**Summary**

Howie et al. (2010) suggested multiple “research has shown that participating in activities outside of school hours is associated with lower dropout rates, enhanced school performance, improved social skills, and reduced problem behaviors” (p. 119). Most studies dealing with extracurricular activities focus solely on effects during the high school years. This study is unique in that it extended beyond this boundary.

The study focused on three years’ worth of data from 2011-2013. For those three years, eligibility rosters were collected for each of the five high schools which included data on student participation in 25 different extracurricular activities. Subsequently, those findings were compared to what students reported doing after high school graduation using the post-graduate follow-up survey issued by the district. The findings were then tallied to show what percentage of students went on to post-secondary education, into the military, or into the workforce.

Included in Chapter Four was a review of the research questions, the purpose of the study, as well as the demographics of the school district. The data from the school district were tallied to find the percentages of what paths students took after graduating high school.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2014) reported 66.2% of 2012 graduates went into college the following fall after graduating. In the district that was used in this study, 67.96% of all graduates in 2012 went on to college. The data also showed 83.86% of the 2012 graduates from the district who participated in extracurricular activities went on to college, which is a significantly higher percentage

than the average. The findings did show graduates who participate in extracurricular activities have a higher percentage of going on to college as opposed to the national average.

In Chapter Five, the findings, limitations of findings, and conclusions are presented. Implications for practice are discussed. Recommendations for future research are posed.

## Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions

Despite the need to cut budgets for districts to stay afloat, numerous studies have suggested extracurricular activities and athletics should not be cut if this goal is to be accomplished. Brown (2009) reported “. . . that \$2 billion in cuts to school-based sports and physical education programs are contributing to a range of problems afflicting the nation’s youth, including obesity, violence and academic failure” (para. 1). Data and “statistics given to the Los Angeles Times by the Unified School District indicates that participation in high school sports is linked with higher GPAs, higher test scores on the CST in English and Math and better attendance” (Fiege, 2012, para. 2).

Kronholz (2012) addressed participation in these activities, especially in athletic programs, positively affects students’ academic performance, investment in their schools, and their college opportunities, all of which contribute to a schools’ increased persistence to graduation. Kronholz (2012) concluded, “There is a link between after-school activities and graduating from high school, going to college, and becoming a responsible citizen” (p. 5). Data from a school district in Maryland showed “kids with the highest test scores are the most active in after-school activities” (Kronholz, 2012, p. 5).

Extracurricular activities have been a part of elementary, middle, and high school students’ lives. The benefits of involvement have been documented in several different studies. Lawhorn (2009) explained:

Studies suggest that participation in extracurricular activities help students in their academic performance. Research found that self-motivation is a factor: Achieving success in an activity that interests them requires students to develop good time-management habits that carry over into school work. In addition, eligibility for

participating often requires students to maintain a minimum grade point average-  
so taking part in extracurriculars means keeping up with academics. (pp. 17-18)

There have not been many studies on how involvement in extracurricular activities has impacted students' career choices after graduating high school. This researcher attempted to gather information on whether students who participate in extracurricular activities have a higher rate of going into post-secondary education than into the military or workforce. Research as to how many students go on to college once they graduate is fairly easy to find; however, there are limited studies regarding graduates who participate in extracurricular activities and then go on to college.

### **Findings**

**Research question 1.** How does student participation in high school extracurricular activities impact higher education participation?

In 2011, 721 out of 885, or 81.46%, of graduates from the school district who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education. In 2012, 681 out of 812, or 83.86%, of graduates from the school district who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education. Finally, in 2013, 701 out of 912, or 76.68%, of graduates from the school district who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education.

**Research question 2.** How does student participation in high school extracurricular activities impact military enlistment?

In 2011, 23 out of 885, or 2.59%, of the graduates from the school district who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2012, 13 out of the 810, or 1.60%, of the graduates from the school district who participated in extracurricular



activities went into the military. In 2013, 29 out of 912, or 3.17%, of the graduates from the school district who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military.

**Research question 3.** How does student participation in high school extracurricular activities impact students entering the workforce after graduation?

In 2011, 33 out of 885, or 3.72%, of the graduates from the school district who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, 36 out of 810, or 4.44%, of the graduates from the school district who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. Finally, in 2013, 91 out of 912, or 9.97%, of the graduates from the school district who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce.

#### **Limitations of Findings**

There were four major limitations in the study. First, the data collected were only from one school district. While there are five different high schools in the school district, all with different socio-economic demographics and diversity, only one school district's data were used.

The second limitation was the data only reflected information from the graduating school. If students participated at another school and then did not participate in extracurricular activities at the school from which they graduated, their data were not included as having been a participant in extracurricular activities. The third limitation was not all five high schools offered the same activities. Some of the high schools offered a scholar team, winter guard or color guard, or a drum and bugle corps. Since not all high schools offered these activities, the students who participated in these activities were not counted as having been a participant in extracurricular activities.

The last limitation of findings was that the graduating students had three more options on the follow-up survey of what to do after graduating high school. Not only did students state they either went to a two-year or four-year university, into the military, or to the workforce, they also had the option of other, unknown, NOC, and EOC. The data did not equal up to 100% due to these individuals not fitting into the defined categories for this study.

### **Conclusions**

The data show beyond a doubt that students who participate in extracurricular activities have a far greater rate of going to college than into the military or workforce. Looking at the data broken down into the five different schools starting with School A, all show a connection between extracurricular activities and going on to college.

In 2011, 91.38% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities from School A went on to higher education. In that same year, 67.02% of the graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education. The following year in 2012, 90.18% of the graduates who participated went on to college, while 61.62% of the graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education. In 2013, 85.20% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went to college, as opposed to 66.50% of the graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity going on to higher education.

When looking at School A's graduates who went into the military, 1.91% of the 2011 graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in the same year, 2.70% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2012, 0.46% of graduates who participated in extracurricular

activities went into the military, while 1.16% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2013, 3.13% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while 2.39% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military.

The findings for School A showed graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities had a higher rate of going into the workforce than graduates who participated in extracurricular activities. In 2011, 3.82% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 11.89% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, 2.80% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 10.46% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2013, School A had its highest number of graduates who did and did not participate in extracurricular activities go into the workforce. That year, 8.96% of graduates who did and 20.57% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce.

School B had a number of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities and college. In 2011, 83.41% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education. The same year, 46.32% of the graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education. In 2012, 92.14% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education, while 53.57% of the graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education. In 2013, 82.32% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education. Also in 2013, 55.46% of

graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education.

When looking at School B graduates going into the military in 2011, 1.03% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in the same year, 1.47% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2012, 1.57% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while 1.42% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2013, 2.79% of students who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while 0.78% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military.

The findings also showed School B graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities had a higher rate of going into the workforce than graduates who participated in extracurricular activities. In 2011, 6.21% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 21.32% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, 1.57% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 12.14% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2013, 4.65% of graduates who did and 10.93% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce.

School C had fairly consistent results dealing with graduates who participated in extracurricular activities going on to college after high school. In 2011, 73.26% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education. The same year, 37.20% of graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity

went on to higher education. In 2012, 78.70% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education, while 49.68% of graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education. In 2013, 70.22% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education, while 47.55% of graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education.

When looking at School C's graduates going into the military in 2011, 4.95% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in the same year, 3.87% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2012, 1.93% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while 0.62% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2013, 2.24% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while 1.39% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military.

In 2011, 2.47% of graduates from School C who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 6.97% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, 6.45% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 8.69% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2013, School C had its highest number of graduates who did and did not participate in extracurricular activities go into the workforce, with 13.48% of graduates who did and 10.48% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities going into the workforce.

School D's data show an upward trend over the three years. In 2011, 76.02% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education. Also in 2011, 38.46% of graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education. In 2012, 79.16% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education, while 40.31% of graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education. In 2013, 85.20% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education, while 55.70% of graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education.

When looking at graduates going into the military in 2011, 2.92% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in the same year, 0.64% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2012, 0.69% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while 0.77% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2013, 2.36% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while 2.01% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military in 2013.

The findings for School D showed graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities had a higher rate of going into the workforce than graduates who participated in extracurricular activities. In 2011, 0.58% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 5.12% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, 6.25% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while

11.62% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2013, School D had its highest number of graduates who did and did not participate in extracurricular activities go into the workforce, with 8.28% of graduates who did and 25.50% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities going into the workforce.

School E's data show a decline of graduates over the three years going to college. In 2011, 82.72% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education, while 46.21% of graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education. In 2012, 71.69% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education. At the same time, 44.96% of graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education. In 2013, 51.18% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher education, while 44.28% of graduates who did not participate in an extracurricular activity went on to higher education.

When looking at School E's graduates going into the military in 2011, 1.81% of the graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while in the same year, 3.03% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2012, 4.71% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the military, while 0% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military. In 2013, School E had the largest number of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities, 6.29%, go into the military, while 2.14% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the military.

The findings for School E showed graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities had a higher rate of going into the workforce than graduates who participated in extracurricular activities. In 2011, 6.36% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 17.42% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2012, 7.54% of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went into the workforce, while 8.05% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities went into the workforce. In 2013, School E had its highest number of graduates who did and did not participate in extracurricular activities go into the workforce, with 18.11% of graduates who did and 21.42% of graduates who did not participate in extracurricular activities going into the workforce.

### **Implications for Practice**

There has been much research done on the topic of the benefits and negative aspects of extracurricular activities. Still more research needs to be completed on what effects extracurricular activities have on post-graduate placement. Students and teachers tend to believe participation in extracurricular activities has a positive impact on students.

The main point from this study is that students who participate in extracurricular activities have a higher rate of going on to college than do students who do not participate. Many times, teachers and parents do not relay this information until it is too late, and the student has already decided not to get involved in extracurricular activities.



Coaches and sponsors must use their students to pass information along to peers about the extracurricular activities that are offered at school. Students will listen to their peers, and this is a great recruiting tool coaches and sponsors can employ to help get students involved in extracurricular activities.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There are two main recommendations for future research. This study needs to be completed every year. School districts' budgets look like they will only be getting smaller and smaller. For extracurricular activities to survive these cuts, districts must continue to demonstrate to their school boards the positive side of funding these extracurricular activities. The goal of any school board is to have graduation rates improve from one year to the next. As shown in this study and other studies, students who participate in extracurricular activities not only have a higher graduation rate, but have a higher rate of going on to college.

The second recommendation would be for more school districts in the state to examine their own data. This study was completed looking at data from one school district with five high schools. There are 591 schools that participate in MSHSAA extracurricular activity.

### **Summary**

Toporek (2014) explained, "If parents want their children to continue their education past high school, pushing them to enroll in extracurricular activities alongside studious peers may be the way to go" (p. 5). Toporek (2014) further concluded:

Participating in any extracurricular activities during high school increases the odds of a student enrolling in college. When paired in those activities with peers

who have higher-than-normal grade-point averages, students are twice as likely to continue on their academic careers after high school. (p. 5)

The benefits that students receive from extracurricular activities will help their odds of gaining admittance to college.

In Chapter One, the historical background of the study and conceptual framework were discussed. The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions and limitations were also discussed. Along with these items, the key terms and variables were introduced in Chapter One. In Chapter Two, a review of both positive and negative aspects of participating in extracurricular activities was provided.

A description of the problem and purpose was reintroduced in Chapter Three. The methodology used in this quantitative study, along with the research setting, demographic, population, and sample were also described in Chapter Three. The data collection and analytic procedures were discussed in Chapter Three.

In Chapter Four, the secondary data were presented from the post-graduate follow-up survey as well as from the eligibility rosters from the MSHSAA. The data were placed in graphs and examined by the percentages of what graduates did once they graduated from high school.

In Chapter Five, research questions were answered with data collected. Findings and conclusions were discussed and evaluated. Research question one data revealed a very high number of graduates who participated in extracurricular activities went on to college. Research question two data showed very few graduates went into the military. In response to research question three, a small percentage of graduates were found to go into the workforce if they participated in extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular activities are opportunities for students to be part of something bigger than themselves and enlighten their high school lives. One positive effect of participating in extracurricular activities has been shown in this study. In this country, there is a tremendous sense of accomplishment and a competitive workforce. Jobs are hard to find. However, the more education a person has, the better opportunity that person will have at acquiring a job where he or she can excel. The research found in this study indicates getting involved in extracurricular activities is one way to help a person get more education after high school.

## Appendix A

# LINDENWOOD

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

DATE: July 14, 2014

TO: Courtney Martin  
FROM: Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: [632191-1] Student Involvement in Extracurricular Activities  
and Post- Secondary Placement.

IRB REFERENCE #:  
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS  
DECISION DATE: July 14, 2014

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # *[enter category]*

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office.

If you have any questions, please send them to [IRB@lindenwood.edu](mailto:IRB@lindenwood.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board's records.

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**Vita**

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