

**KEEPING ACADEMICS FIRST**  
**HELPING STUDENTS PERFORM BETTER**  
**ACADEMICALLY**

Published by

**IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**



**IOWA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC UNION**



**2004**

## FOREWORD

**The purpose of high school athletic and activity programs is the education of the young people involved so they will become more productive citizens in society.** Interscholastic athletic and activity programs must be part of a school's total educational program.

**Research has shown, that as a group, students involved in high school athletics and activities have higher GPA's than those not involved, and those involved in more than one sport, or activity, have still higher GPA's.** However, balancing academics as well as athletics and activities can certainly present challenges for students. We believe students involved in athletics and/or activities need to be equally committed to academic success and success in athletics, and/or, activities. The following are a few of the suggestions provided in the booklet, "Keeping Academics First," to help students perform better academically. Several copies of this booklet have been sent to every high school in Iowa.

### DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE STUDY HABITS

**Studying is a combination of making time to study and maximizing your study time.**

When studying, **be prepared** with the materials you will need, and find a place where you will not be distracted.

**Schedule regular study time every day** and allow adequate time to study each subject. Studying at a similar time every day prepares your mind & body to focus on studying.

**Libraries and study rooms are great places to study** as they minimize distractions. If you have a minimal amount of studying to do, use the extra time to review difficult subjects, read a good book, or evaluate the goals you have set.

**Keep a daily planner** or make notes on when assignments, papers and projects are due, and when exams are scheduled. Don't put off assignments that aren't due immediately. By beginning an assignment soon after it has been assigned, it will seem more manageable & you will probably worry less about it.

**Become actively involved in studying.** Highlight important points, jot down notes, check definitions, and put question marks by things you don't understand or which need clarification.

Don't fall into the trap of only studying for the classes you find the easiest or most interesting. **Alternate between studying for classes you find most interesting and those you find least interesting.**

**It's easier to concentrate when it is quiet.** The easier it is to concentrate the more you will accomplish in a shorter period of time and the more you will retain. Avoid distractions like T.V., radio, telephones, and friends (unless you are studying with them) while studying.

If you have multiple subjects to study, **make a list of specifically what needs to be done.** That way you won't forget something and you can mark each item off your list when it is completed, signifying what you have accomplished.

**Do difficult tasks first while you are still fresh.** If you tend to procrastinate, study the most interesting subject first.

**Set specific goals at the beginning of long study periods.** Make a list of exactly what you need to accomplish in each class.

**Studying during daylight hours is more productive** than studying when it is dark outside.

**Have specific places to study.** This will help condition your body to be prepared to study. Take into consideration proper lighting, a comfortable room temperature, and availability of study materials.

**Avoid procrastination.** Start with a positive attitude. Organize what needs to be done into manageable parts. List what needs to be done, in order of priority. Clear your desk so there are fewer distractions. No matter how trivial the task might be, start doing something rather than just sitting and doing nothing. **AT ALL COSTS, AVOID STUDYING IN FRONT OF THE TELEVISION!**

**Studying information that needs to be memorized works best just before going to bed** because while you sleep, your subconscious will help you retain the information.

**Don't study in bed.** Your body is conditioned to become sleepy in bed, not to study.

**Don't waste valuable study time you may have during school.** If you are given time to study at the end of class, use it. If you complete your homework in one class get permission from the teacher to work on other homework you may have.

**Avoid being extremely tired, hungry, or stressed out** when studying.

### **TIME MANAGEMENT**

**Use a daily, weekly and/or monthly planner** to indicate class schedules, meetings, practices, study time, assignment due dates and scheduled tests.

**Make a “to do” list** and follow it every day.

**Write down your class assignments** and keep all assignments in one place. Keep track of due dates for assignments and projects.

**Keep handouts organized** for all classes.

**Don’t waste valuable study time** you may have during the school day.

**Say “No”** to the things that don’t fit into your schedule or are not a priority.

**Find the right time to do things.** Are you a morning person, or a night person? Determine what tasks you do well at certain times of day and do those tasks when you can do them most efficiently.

**Get a good night sleep** as often as possible.

### **DOING YOUR BEST IN THE CLASSROOM**

**Give the teacher a good first impression** by sitting in the front of the classroom beginning on the first day of class. Don’t sit with friends who are poor students and tend to get in trouble. This severely limits your ability to pay attention. Take notes and stay focused on the class.

**Be actively involved** in every class. It makes the class more fun and more educational.

**Arrive at every class prepared** with texts, pencils, paper, etc.

**Set short-term and long-term goals in every class.** Some may be daily or weekly goals and some may be quarterly or semester goals.

**Become involved** in classroom discussions, even if it means admitting you don’t understand.

**Keep an open mind and try your best** to understand what is being said in class and what you read.

**Be an active listener.** Sit near the front & center of the room, sit up straight, look at the speaker, keep an open mind, stay focused on the discussion, and be prepared to take notes. Being on time for class, and having all materials ready, helps one prepare to be an active listener. Most students who do well academically don't just sit in the back of class and absorb everything that is said. They demonstrate behavior that allows them to do their best.

**Let the teacher know you are paying attention** by taking notes, asking questions and participating in class discussions. When a student has a borderline grade, teachers will often decide the final grade based on attentiveness in class and class participation.

**Help others understand your point of view**, rather than becoming frustrated because they don't understand.

**Try to phrase difficult concepts in a way you understand.** Ask yourself, "What does that mean and how can I relate to it." By truly understanding a difficult concept you will remember it long after the original words are forgotten.

If you are having trouble with a class, **get help as soon as possible.** This will show you have an interest and want to do your best. Waiting until the day before a test is scheduled, or an assignment is due, may not leave enough time for you to be prepared. If you did poorly on a test, or assignment, visit with the teacher as soon as possible about how you can do better next time and about the possibility of extra credit. Once you ask for help, be prepared to follow up on suggestions the teacher may have, especially offers of help before or after school.

## **REFERENCES**

A Guide for College-Bound Student-Athletes & Their Parents. National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, Indianapolis, IN, 2003; Improve Your Studying Skills. The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 2004; Motivation & Goal Setting. The University of Iowa Academic Advising Center, 2004; Time Management. The University of Iowa Academic Advising Center, 2004; The University of Iowa Student-Athlete Handbook. The University of Iowa, 2003-04.