

STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO THEIR PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES

**Submitted by Don Logan, Athletic Director, Mid-Prairie High School,
Wellman, IA**

Several years ago, I read with interest the findings of a survey by Scott Kibby from Cedar Rapids, Jefferson High School of the correlation between the grade point and activities. The findings by Scott were intriguing enough that I wanted to do find out what the results for our school were over a period of time.

I wanted to find a correlation between the activities of students and their performance in the classroom. I had a good idea of the correlation, but wanted to provide some proof of my theory that students involved in activities have a better performance in the classroom. The activities included athletic activities, fine art activities of band, chorus and drama, FFA and Speech. I took the cumulative grade points through the 3rd quarter of this year for the all students. I determined the student's participation in no activities, one activity, two activities and three or more activities. I then averaged the grade point average of each student with the number of activities that they participated in during this year. My findings are listed below with the top line (05-06), the second line (06-07) and the third line (07-08)

Average GPA'S	9 th grade	10 th grade	11 th grade	12 th grade	Total
GPA for students who are in NO activities	(05-06) 2.14 (06-07) 2.06 (07-08) 2.02	2.22 2.12 2.00	2.10 2.18 2.14	2.33 2.04 1.90	2.14 2.10 2.02
GPA for students who are in ONE activity	(05-06) 3.10 (06-07) 3.15 (07-08) 3.00	3.12 3.21 3.22	3.23 3.14 3.30	3.13 3.33 3.20	3.18 3.23 3.17
GPA for students who are in TWO activities	(05-06) 3.30 (06-07) 3.33 (07-08) 3.40	3.33 3.34 3.44	3.40 3.40 3.50	3.23 3.45 3.60	3.33 3.41 3.52
GPA for students who are in THREE or more activities	(05-06) 3.42 (06-07) 3.52 (07-08) 3.60	3.40 3.45 3.59	3.67 3.50 3.50	3.33 3.75 3.86	3.45 3.55 3.62

The data speaks for itself. **Students who are involved in activities do better in school than those who are not involved. I would also say that those who are the most involved do the best in school.**

Several reasons why students involved in activities do better academically:

- **Students are better “connected” to school when involved in activities.** These students have pride in their school and their performance in the classroom as well as on the athletic field or stage.
- **Students are put in other situations where they are with and taught by caring, supporting educators.** These coaches and sponsors make good “connections” with the students. They monitor attendance, behavior and grades for each participant in their activity. They are mentors that help students with personal skills as well as academic issues.
- **Activities teach a strong work ethic and many personal skills like responsibility to the team. Activities teach students to set goals and the process by which they can be obtained.** I can’t emphasize enough the fact of making a “connection” to the school and being in many situations where students are around caring and hardworking coaches are vital to the academic success.

There is much discussion on the state and national level on increasing educational standards and improving student performance. There seems to be all sorts of programs and ideas on what we can do to increase the performance of our students in the classroom. **Why not require students to be in a minimum of one co-curricular activity each year? This may be somewhat of a radical thought, but I have so much faith in the power of activities that I think we would see increased performance in our students.**

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AT MID-PRAIRIE HIGH SCHOOL

- **80% of all students are involved in at least one activity** during the year.
- **58% of all students participate in more than one activity** during the year.
- **For the third year in a row, it was determined that the students involved in activities had higher grade point averages than the students who did not participate** in any activities.
- There seems to be a **positive correlation between the number of activities and the grade point averages of students** – the more activities, the higher the grade point.
- **Students who were involved in activities had a much better attendance record than students who did not participate** – average days missed for students in activities was 2.7 days and the average days for students missed not in activities was 10.5 days.
- **Of the 86 students taking Advanced Placement tests, 72 (84%) were involved in at least one activity.**
- **Mid-Prairie ranked 7th in the state in class 2A based on post season play for 2006-07.** Regina, Solon and Tipton were also rated. 2007-08 ratings will be determined after the summer sports are completed.

- **Mid-Prairie had very high marks in state competition in the fine arts** – band, chorus, speech.
- **Mid-Prairie hosted 22 state sponsored events** – more than twice as many events as any other school in the conference.
- **Three things that help to produce success in the activities at Mid-Prairie High School:**
 - Coaches & sponsors
 - Support from parents, boosters, administration and school board
 - Dedication from the students participating in activities