



**WOMEN'S
SPORTS
FOUNDATION**

THE STATE OF HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS IN AMERICA: AN EVALUATION OF THE NATION'S MOST POPULAR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY

AUGUST 2018

Veliz, P., Snyder, M., & Sabo, D. (2018). *The State of High School Sports in America: An Evaluation of the Nation's Most Popular Extracurricular Activity*. East Meadow, NY: Women's Sports Foundation.

Two Primary Questions

Data used comes from:

- Office of Civil Rights Data Collection
- Common Core of Data
- Monitoring the Future survey

1. Are U.S. public high schools offering fewer opportunities to participate in interscholastic sport?
2. How does involvement in interscholastic sport influence the positive development of adolescents when compared to involvement in other types of extracurricular activities?

High School Sports Participation

The rising trend of U.S. public schools dropping all sport programs has leveled off.

11.3%
1999-2000

22.0%
2009-10

22.7%
2013-14

Percentage of public high schools
indicating they did not offer
interscholastic sports

High School Sports Participation

Public schools with high levels of poverty continue to struggle with offering any sports to students.

13%



33%



High School Sports Participation

When public schools with high levels of poverty offer sports to students, they offer over a third fewer sports and sports teams.

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32.5 Teams
18.7 Sports

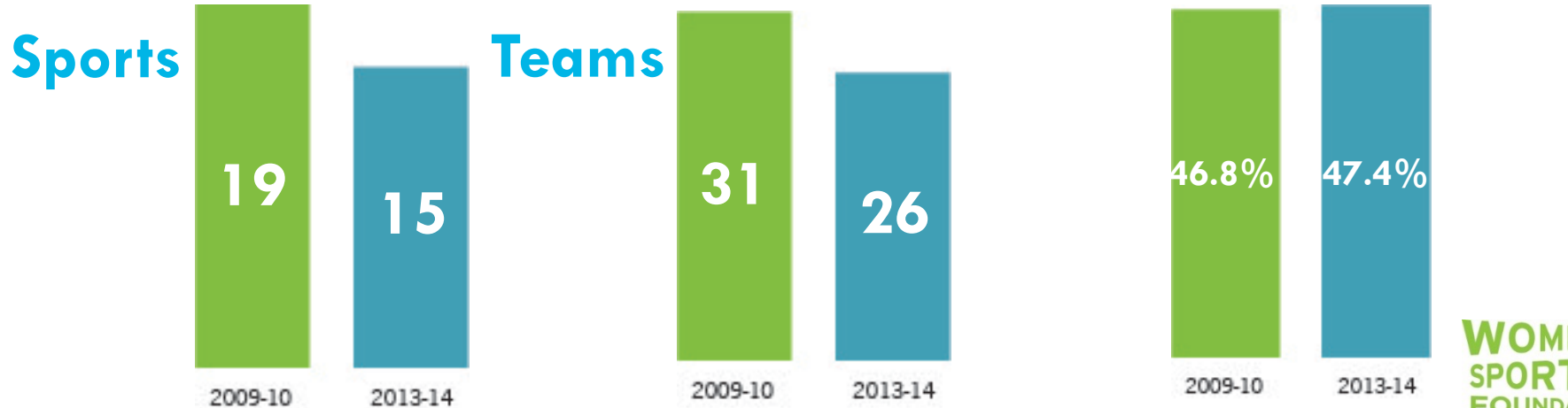


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18.5 Teams
11.9 Sports



High School Sports Participation

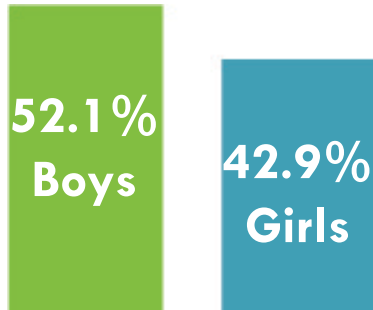
Participation rates in interscholastic sport continue to slowly increase, despite fewer sports and sports teams being provided by schools.



High School Sports Participation

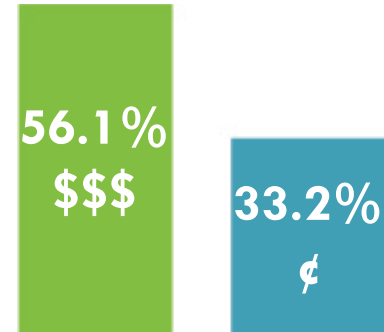
High-poverty schools experience lower student participation in sports than low-poverty schools.

Participation Rates, 2013-14



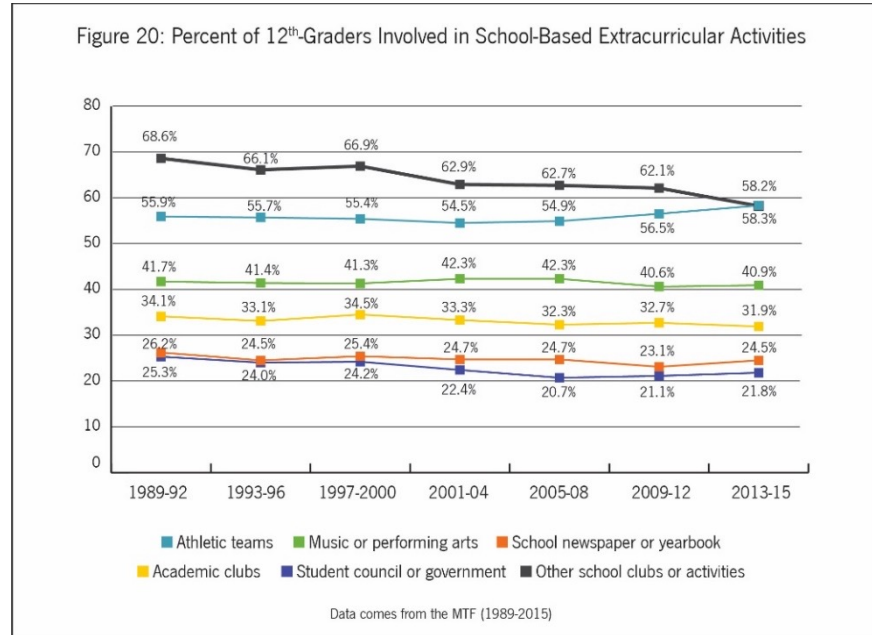
Girls' participation rates still lag behind boys despite having a similar number of sports and sport teams as boys.

Participation Rates, 2013-14

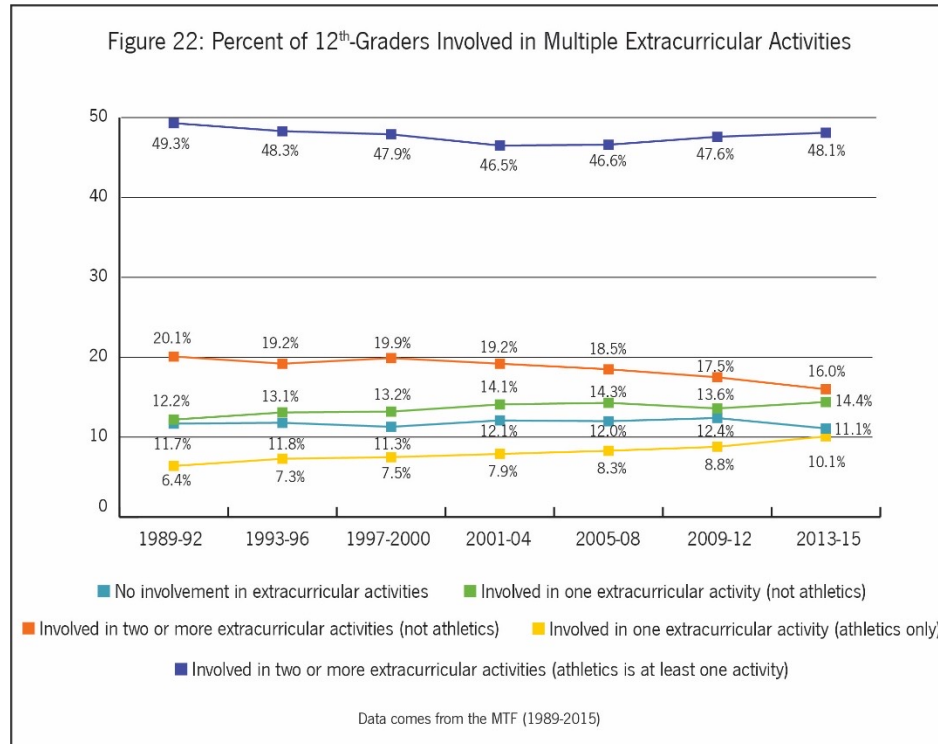


Sports Are More Popular Than Ever

- More boys and girls participated in school sports than any other extracurricular activity.
- Nearly 60% of U.S. 12th-graders were involved in sports, and 40% were involved at a high level.



Athletes Are Highly Engaged in Other School Extracurricular Activities



High Involvement in Sport Yields

Academic Dividends

Highly Involved Athletes

- Higher grades
- Aspire to graduate college
- Less apt to get into trouble at school

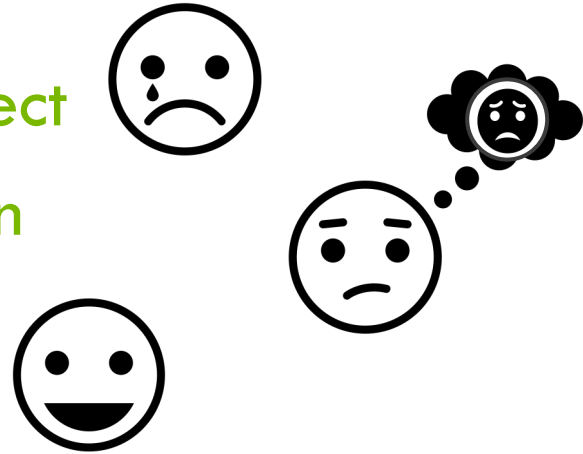
Slightly/Moderately Involved Athletes

- Lower grades
- Lower self-ratings of academic ability
- Higher truancy
- Having to attend summer school

Sports are a Psychological Asset for Many Students

Highly Involved Athletes

- Lower rates of depressive affect
- Lower levels of self-derogation
- Higher levels of self-esteem



A Complicated Picture of Sport and Substance Use

Highly Involved Athletes

- Lower risk of cigarette use
- Lower risk of marijuana use
- Lower risk of nonmedical use of prescription drugs
- Higher risk of binge drinking



A Complicated Picture of Sport and Substance Use

Slightly/Moderately Involved Athletes

- Higher risk of binge drinking
- Higher risk of marijuana use
- Higher risk of driving under the influence



Summary of Outcomes

High levels of school-based athletics involvement

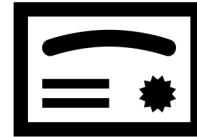
- Lower levels of depression
- Higher levels of self-esteem
- Lower levels of self-derogation
- Higher grades
- Greater aspirations to attend college
- Lower risk of truancy and school misbehavior
- Lower risk of academic problems
- Lower risk of cigarette use
- Lower risk of marijuana use
- Lower risk of nonmedical use of prescription drugs
- **Higher risk of binge drinking**

Summary of Outcomes

Low levels school-based athletics involvement

- Higher risk of truancy
- Lower grades
- Lower self-ratings of academic ability
- Higher risk of binge drinking
- Higher risk of marijuana use
- Higher risk of driving under the influence

D-



Given the positive developmental outcomes of sport —

- ❑ Educators, parents, and policy makers should work harder to maintain their sports programs.
- ❑ More resources should be put toward sports in schools that serve students of lower socioeconomic class.
- ❑ Girls should receive more school sports opportunities.



Given the positive developmental outcomes of sport —

- ❑ Future research should try to untangle whether participation rates in private youth sport organizations have increased in recent years due to cuts to interscholastic sports within public high schools.
- ❑ Since roughly 31% of students who are involved in school-based athletics identify as being minimally involved, school administrators and coaches may want to make a greater effort to get these minimally involved athletes a greater role in some aspect of the sport they are involved with during the school year.

