## Abstract

Although previous research has noted that extracurricular activities are significantly associated with students’ various outcomes, little research to date has explored their current conditions. This case study examined the status and quality of extracurricular activities in 11 public schools around Central Indiana.

Two sets of data were combined and matched by each school’s identification: the survey of extracurricular activities from schools and the schools’ characteristics from Indiana Department of Education. Of the sample, 67% were elementary schools and 42% were relatively low SES schools with a larger number of students receiving free meals.

## Methods

**Methods:** Mixed-methods research design, using multiple measurement methods (extracurricular survey, PSSB instrument, and IDOE)

**Research Question:** What are the current conditions around extra curricular activities and how do these conditions differ according to specific school characteristics?

**Future Plans**

1. Continue data collection
2. Conduct an evaluation of Indiana schools
3. Expand assessment to more Indiana schools
4. Dissemination of work

## Review of Literature

Schools have long been known as the most important social setting where elementary, middle/junior, and high school students promote their educational, social, emotional, and physical development and prepare themselves to become competent citizens who can foster a better society (Gentle-Genitty, 2008). School-related factors have been found to be one of the most robust predictors for student development in schools (Gentle-Genitty, 2010; Henry, 2007).

In particular, many studies have identified the effects of school-based extracurricular activities on student attendance rates, truancy, dropout, and discipline (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). This is based on the fact that these activities serve as a crucial school setting which enables students to build their own identity, generate social and human capital, and maintain contact with school environments (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005).

In addition, a few, but growing number of studies have sought to identify the essential elements of successful school-based extracurricular activities (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Naftzger et al., 2007; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahstrom, 2010). In the previous studies, some elements have received more attention as significant factors for positive student outcomes, including: (a) activity characteristics, (b) student engagement, (c) staffing, and (d) partnerships. They are particularly emphasized by government funders (i.e., U.S. Department of Education) in assessing the quality and progress of school-based extracurricular activities (Naftzger et al., 2007). However, there is little understanding of current conditions about the core elements of extracurricular activities especially offered by public schools around Central Indiana. We strongly expect that our research can provide useful information for school staff and stakeholders to create an action plan for advancing their school-based extracurricular activities.

## Current Status of Research

Our study showed on average, that schools provided 21 different student extracurricular activities. Of the 21, the top activities were:

- **Top Activities**
  - Academic
  - Performing Arts
  - Sports
  - Pre-social
  - School Involvement

For quality of extracurricular activities, about **12%** of students in each school participated in at least one activity and averagely **spent 2.6 hours** a week on extracurricular activities. The mean number of staff and volunteers was **5**, who administered activities. Approximately, **39%** of activities in each school were delivered by community partnerships.

Our study also found that elementary schools had lower mean scores in most measures of quality of extracurricular activities, such as the frequency of the activities, hours spent per week, and the number of staff and volunteers. Furthermore, low SES schools tended to have lower levels of students’ participation in extracurricular activities, although they provided more frequent and diverse activities than high SES schools.

**Student Activities and Resources**

- **High SES**
- **Low SES**

These results may imply that more significant attention should be paid to elementary schools to improve the quality of activities as well as low SES schools to promote students’ active involvement.

## References