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Athletics vs Performing Arts

1. Introduction

Athletics and performing arts are commonly seen as opposite components of a school's curriculum. Funding must be split between the two in a way that provides the necessary tools and facilities for both programs. How much is given depends not only on the revenue and publicity that it brings, but also the participation levels of the student body. However, I believe that funding should be based around the interests of the students and molding them into respectable adults. In this paper, the effects that each have on students both in school and later in life will be examined. From the evidence found, it is decided that a combination of both athletics and performing arts should be provided in a student's life. In order to do so, institutions must implement new educational program ideas such as STEAM. This addition to the program will provide different programs that foster creativity within students.

2. Body Paragraph #1 - \$\$\$

When it comes to funding, it is no question to most that athletics have the upper hand. In collegiate settings, athletics provide not only large amounts of revenue for the school, but also large amounts of publicity. Schools recognized as Division I focus their attention heavily around athletics, and in doing so, can make drastic budget changes in favor of the continuation of those programs.

Back in 2017, Wright State University proposed a series of budget cuts that would lay off 71 people, leaving 107 jobs vacant. The School of Medicine would suffer the largest cut, reaching as high as \$3 million. Athletics, while cutting its two swimming teams, would still come out of this with a \$1.6 million increase (WSU Budget). Ultimately, the \$284 million budget was reduced by \$30.8 million, 57 members of the faculty were laid off and 119 jobs were left vacant (WSU Budget). This proposal to begin with seemed mind boggling. Large sums of money are just being thrown around like it is nothing. People are being laid off and yet athletics are still experiencing an increase in funding. Considering there was no mention of the arts in this report, it can be inferred that funding going in that direction is nearly non-existent.

One reason for the opposition of budget cuts towards athletics focus around the upkeep and maintenance of athletic facilities. In order to keep an athletic program in good standing, large quantities of money are needed to maintain the facilities that are being used by student athletes (Huntrods, et al. 2017). At times, these facilities are kept in unnecessarily preteen conditions, leaving other programs and facilities malnourished. However, this focus on funding athletics over other programs is nothing new. Huntrods, et al. (2017) states that “In 2008, Division I public schools used nearly \$800 million of student fees to support their athletic program, an 18% increase from 2005.” An interesting note in that quote is the phrase “student fees.” This implies that these fees, which are taken from all members of the student body regardless of participation in athletics, is put into one program. In some institutions, these athletic facilities are off-limits to non-student athletes. On the other hand, some institutions utilize performing arts centers to create a liberal arts academic program.

How performing arts are funded for is a process that can be seen as minimal. Keeney, K.P. (2018) explored the investment in performing arts centers of institutions in order to see

what allowed for the balance of having performing arts programs while providing little funding.

From these findings, it was ultimately decided that institutions invest in the arts for two main reasons: to fulfill their public mission statements; to capitalize on and acquire resources.

Institutions that claim to provide a liberal arts education need to do just that. In order to do so, they must have all types of different learning centers and programs that allow for what is defined as a liberal arts education. Performing Arts Centers are an easy way to fulfill this role. They can contain a plethora of different art programs and allow the student body to participate in them.

Funding for any institution is a complex process that requires thorough insight. What makes the funding of the arts a promising one for institutions is that resources can be allocated from other sources easily. Fulfilling community service by contributing to the public arts field allows for the transfer and sharing of different resources from different sources. The problem that comes from this, is that these sources might not be the best in terms of quality of goods received. By funding for performing arts centers, institutions can fulfill their requirements for proper liberal arts programs with minimal funding.

Unfortunately, funding is usually the deciding factor in the quality of athletic and art programs that schools have to offer. Because revenue and publicity are received in a higher quantity from athletics, funding will be prioritized there before the arts. The system in which most performing arts programs is funded acts almost like a hand-me-down. Resources are constantly relocated between different institutions and are rarely purchased brand new. By doing so, funding a performing arts program becomes a relatively cheap expense and will provide the school with the upholding of that mission. The focus of the paper will now turn towards the social factors that both the arts and athletics play on students as well as the psychosocial development that occurs within students who participate in each.

3. Body Paragraph #2 - Social Aspect of Arts

Students who participate in programs centered around the arts are usually looked upon as outsiders. The terms “Band Kids” and “Theater Kids” are used in a derogatory sense in most institutions, usually by other students. Martinez, A. et al. (2016) notes that students who participate in different forms of the arts are shown to experience more isolation as well as bullying. Researchers believe that this is due to the ties to emotional health that music provides. By engaging in art that allows one to be self-expressive, these students are perceived as weaker than their counterparts (Martinez, et al. 2016). However, within these programs’ students can build long lasting connections based on similar aspects that are seen in sports.

When performing as a group, there is a mutual goal shared by everyone participating. Regardless of who you are, or where you came from, everyone wants the performance to move as smoothly as possible and to sound as good as possible. The attention of the performers is centered around whatever piece, number, or scene is currently being done (eHabibi, et al 2014). Schiavo, A. et al (2018) notes that non-verbal communication used by musicians is a powerful tool that connects students to one another. By exploring this topic, it was found that this connection between musicians was able to foster the cognitive processes related to finding meaning and developing a shared sense of a community. The feeling of being together allowed the musicians to organically produce music (Schiavo A, et al. 2018). These kinds of environments, that are centered around collaboration and performance contribute to the development of negotiating techniques as well as the development of trust and social understandings (Schiavo, A. et al. 2019). In doing so, Martinez et al. (2016) notes that students engaged in the arts are found to feel a stronger connectedness to the school.

At younger ages, the developing musician can be met with many different battles and mockery by their fellow classmates. Outside of the performing arts setting they might experience issues, but when present, they are able to share in the wonderful experience that is creating art. Whether it be music, theater, or art, students who join these programs are known to feel connected to other participating students as well to the school where they are studying. These experiences have important long-lasting effects on the development of an individual's mental health.

4. Body Paragraph #3 - Psychosocial Development from the Arts

Participation in the arts, although in the moment can sometimes be difficult for children and adolescents, can have beneficial effects later in life. Research shows that participation in programs associated with that arts can greatly shape and benefit the mental health of a growing individual. In this section, the psychosocial development of students who participate in the arts will be examined.

In a study conducted to understand how different extracurricular programs impact the emotional development of individuals suffering for different forms of maltreatment, it was found that activities related to the arts and performance are associated with higher intrinsic motivation, initiative and engagement, and lower apathy and substance use (Kwak, Y. et al. 2018). These factors play a key role in how individuals manage the trauma that they hold within them. Art and music-based activities are associated with high levels of trauma symptoms regardless of the type of maltreatment experienced. It is believed that these activities allow adolescents to spend more time in reflection on the experiences that they have had aside from engaging with other people and activities (Kwak, Y. et al. 2018). The expression of emotions is one that many individuals struggle in, it is believed that the use of music study has been shown to increase the expression

and communication of emotions. This is beneficial to adolescents who often lack these abilities during this time in their lives. The use of music earlier in life leads to the development of stronger competencies in other areas later in life. Students who participated in music were shown to have higher levels of emotional awareness compared to non-musicians (Ros-Morente, A. et al. 2019). Being able to understand their own emotions better allows individuals to show higher signs of empathy to other students which in turn can lead to better leadership skills.

Students who participate in musical training were noted to show higher levels of empathy towards others than students who did not participate in musical training (eHabibi, A. et al. 2014). Settings such as these promote cooperation within the student body. Ros-Morente et. al (2019) notes that these types of settings nourish the development of a student's capacity to lead. This study found that 55% of musicians tested were found to have a higher capacity of leadership compared to only 26.3% of non-musicians tested. Music allows students to develop in different areas of "effort, optimism, self-confidence, self-management, and self-perception." Skills like these are shown to promote socioemotional development and leadership abilities (Ros-Morente, A. et al. (2019). Although there might be some negative social factors experienced by students participating in the arts, it can have beneficial effects in the long run with regards to the emotional development and awareness of the individual.

5. Body Paragraph #4 - Social Aspects of Athletics

Athletes are typically portrayed as the elite in schools. Found in large groups of other athletes, they are portrayed as more athletes than students, and often are made out to appear as the leaders of the school. While this may seem the case earlier in secondary schools, this notion can quickly change as student-athletes have some of the busiest schedules on college campuses.

Students who participate in sports are shown to have a higher social status in the context of a school compared to those who are involved in other extracurricular activities. This enables student athletes to feel emotionally safer in the environment of the school, because they are less likely to experience ridicule that might come from other activities. Sports provide the development of comfortable groups that students can find security in (Martinez, et al. 2016). Athletes in team sports relate with one another in their mutual goals of winning a competition. By fixating their attention on these goals, athletes can sync up with other team members and develop team chemistry. In rowing, the similar repetitive movement can foster a feeling of being connected. They can adjust their movements specifically in order to create a mutual benefit (Schiavo, A. et al. 2019). This connection develops throughout an athlete's experience on a team and having the freedom of a teenager's social life allows them to grow as a team and develop friendships with others outside of their sport. However, once college rolls around, student-athletes are met with some difficult changes.

Student athletes are at times restricted to their social lives. Practicing their respective sports take up most of their time, and as a result they are largely surrounded by their teammates focusing on the sport at hand. Their social lives revolve heavily around different training and practices that can be tiresome for the student (Huntrods, C.S. et al. (2017) Different rules and regulations put into place by major sports organizations (i.e., NCAA) restrict students to having a "normal" college experience. Students must abstain from any forms of corruption, gambling, recruiting violations, recreational and/or performance enhancing drug use, and other off court/field problems that can be problematic for the institution. Because of this, they cannot relate to the non-athletic student body as much (Huntrods, C.S. et al. (2017). Depending on the

integrity and goals of the individual, this can either be beneficial or detrimental to the student athlete.

The social life of a student athlete can start off strong and quickly drift away as the intentions of the athlete turn towards professional and collegiate levels. During youth, it serves as a great opportunity to learn new skills, stay physically active, and make friends outside of the classroom. In the next section, the development of athletes from a psychosocial perspective will be examined.

6. Body Paragraph #5 - Psychosocial Development from Athletics

Probably the most significant component of athletics that has a lasting effect on athletes is competition. Competition can be found in the arts; however, it is more prevalent in athletics. Sports are essentially battles between teams that can have rivalries and hold grudges generations long. Competition ignites a flame in the student body that even non-athletes feel and feed from. Star athletes thrive off their competitive sides, but in the long run this can be problematic.

Participation in organized sports shows several different findings, both positive and negative, with regards to developmental factors. From one perspective, student athletes can grow in their ability to take initiative and understand the importance of teamwork. Student-athletes can grow in areas of responsibility, honesty, maturity, character, self-respect, and respect towards others (Huntrods, C.S. et al. (2017). Another perspective might suggest that athletics might promote negative competitiveness, aggression, and risky behaviors in athletes. One study found that participation in organized sports have led to findings of improved socioemotional development and higher instances of delinquency, both violent and non-violent (Kwak, Y. et al. 2019). The ability to lead is one that is commonly associated with athletes. Evidence suggests that athletics might not bring as much leadership to an individual as at once expected.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) boasts on how different athletes can advance as leaders. One account explains how a gymnast from Alabama used her injuries to develop as a leader (Huntrods, C.S. et al. 2017). While it is true that examples like these exist, leadership is not a trait that is specific to athletes. One study found that the development of leadership abilities when compared between athletes and non-athletes is not significantly different. From this finding, the authors suggest that college administration and the NCAA should reconsider their use and projection of student athletes, as it could have negative effects on the psychosocial development of student athletes (Huntrods, C.S. et al. 2017). By pushing for all student-athletes to represent this ideal image, others who might not match it are met with different struggles. In large team sports like football, not all players will feel that same sense of leadership. And in individualized sports like track or wrestling, individualistic goals will be the focus of the athlete.

In the long run, athletics provide healthy encounters that will help build an individual's social life as well as help them develop appropriate emotional development. While there can be some negative outcomes such as competitiveness or risky behaviors, the benefits of having these connections in youth can help someone later in life. In order to fully understand how the development of an individual is affected by athletics and the arts, the following section will focus on some of the main similarities and differences that are seen from a social and psychosocial perspective.

7. Body Paragraph #6 - Using Extracurricular Activities to Create a Healthy School Environment and Coping Mechanisms

In the past four paragraphs, the social life of students and the psychosocial development of them was examined with regards to participation in both athletics and the arts. Extracurricular

activities play a major role in creating the school environment for not only the student body but also for the teachers there. One study broke down school climate into four different realms: safety, relational, teaching and learning, and environmental (Martinez et al. 2016).

Extracurricular activities have been proven to impact these different factors in several different ways. And while they support positive school climates, some activities play a more significant role in doing so than others.

Understanding how to protect the social, emotional, and physical feelings of the student body falls under safety. Extracurricular activities are shown to prevent misbehavior within schools. However, certain activities are favored compared to others. Students engaged in classroom-related activities such as band or student government experience more bullying compared to student athletes (Martinez et al. 2016) Interpersonal relations deals with how interactions between people make them feel. Because extracurricular activities occur outside of the classroom, students are more freely able to develop personal relationships with not only their peers but also their teachers. In doing so, the participants feel more comfortable as a member of the club or organization. Similarly, teaching and learning allow teachers and students to develop close relationships with one another. Teaching and learning that occurs outside of the classroom away from any curricula can be beneficial to students and the school climate (Martinez et al. 2016) The environmental component of the school climate refers to the feeling that the students experience while in school. Whether it be feeling cared for or as a member of the community, this factor is pivotal in forming the school environment. Extracurricular activities allow students to feel a part of the bigger picture. Sports make students feel like a special member of the community (Martinez, A. et al. 2016). Building a comfortable school environment is the first

step in any regard in fostering the social life of all students, including those involved in the arts or athletics.

In both fields, collaboration is built upon the development of understanding and trust in others. In a soccer match, the player with the ball must be trusted by their teammates. In a musical performance, the musician must trust that other members of other sections are playing the piece properly. Environmental information in the exact moment is what drives the coordination of the team or group in order to maintain staying together. At times, the activity of one person is dependent on the reciprocal interaction of those around them (Schiavo, A. et al. 2019). Through extracurricular participation, students can interact with other students and live healthy social lives. The experiences held here then impact the emotional development of the individual later in life.

Major life events, both positive and negative, can be beneficial to both athletes and artists (people who participate in the performing arts). Individuals involved in either extracurricular activity can use these skills and practices to develop healthy coping mechanisms during major life events (John, J.M. et al. 2019). Artists and athletes that use their respective talents as coping mechanisms can focus on their emotions and problems as well as able to imply more reflective activities. This in turn leads to a healthy development of “social relationships with significant others, superior performances, positive physiological and behavioral changes, and a wide range of psychological changes related to adversarial growth.” (John, J.M. et al. 2019). Ultimately, the participation in any extracurricular activity is linked to lower rates of early school dropouts and criminal activity (Kwak, Y et al. 2018). Both forms of extracurricular activities are linked to healthy social lives and the development of appropriate coping strategies.

8. Body Paragraph #8 - STEM vs STEAM Programs

The development of different emotional education programs is one that is beginning to come to light in most education systems. Focusing on emotional development helps promote student life on several different factors. Areas such as self-esteem, adaptation in schools, participation in class, motivation towards learning, and satisfactory relationships between peers and teachers are shown to benefit from focusing on socioemotional skills and competencies (Ros-Morente, A. et al. 2019). Previous studies have suggested an “order” in which students should be taught. This order focuses on beginning with developing an awareness of what students feel, followed by learning how to manage and regulate those what they feel (Ros-Morente, A. et al 2019). By analyzing this new information, researchers have suggested a change from STEM to STEAM programs.

STEM is an education system focused around science education. In recent years the importance of creativity within an individual has led to the integration of the arts in this education system. Thus, the change from STEM to STEAM occurred. Integration of the arts into STEM can provide new creative aspects. Rather than just seeing and repeating, the creative abilities of students will be able to advance new advances in science (Conradty, C. and Bogner, F.X. 2018). By doing so, it is believed that the creativity of students will lead to the progression of science and technology.

9. Conclusion

Rather than focusing on one activity over the other, schools should find a way to combine the two. Research shows how both contribute to the social lives as well as the psychosocial development of students both in and outside of school. One such way to combine both aspects is to implement STEAM based programming. This new educational program could provide exactly

what is needed to make sure that students develop proper emotional awareness, social lives, and leadership capabilities.

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