The Relationship Between Participation in Football and GPA, Discipline, and Attendance of Urban Male High School Athletes Before and After the Introduction of the 2.0 GPA Play Policy in One School Division in Virginia

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Abstract

The educational plight of the urban student athlete is often associated with academic underachievement. This study researched the effects of minimum academic standards on athletes to increase their academic success, attendance rates, reduce discipline infractions and subsequently, increase graduation rates. Vidal- Fernandez (2011) conducted a study on the effect minimum academic requirements to participate in sports had on high school graduation. Students who were involved in a sport had significantly higher grade point averages during their sport season compared to their grade point averages when the students were not in season.

Schools invest large amounts of resources into sports activities under the well-supported assumption that these activities increase levels of student outcomes. If engagement in athletics significantly improves the likelihood of academic success, then school leaders should choose to target resources and efforts at increasing participation, especially for at-risk and failing students (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011).

In this quantitative study to determine what impact athletics have on the student’s academic performance, the researcher collected existing data on the high school football teams for two semesters prior to a system wide 2.0 GPA policy to play and two semesters after the implementation of the 2.0 GPA play policy. Independent variables (attendance, discipline and GPA) and dependent variables (participation in football, academic coach or no academic coach, and athletic coach) were collected, and these variables were then measured and analyzed using relevant statistical procedures.

Many of the student athletes in this study increased their accountability for their academic achievement in order to achieve higher GPAs in order to participate in athletics. Although not statistically significant, the data showed there was an increase in the overall district GPA for football players in the division after the implementation of the 2.0 GPA rule. Another important finding, student mobility (transiency) was notable at each high school during the three-
year span of the study. While the present study only analyzed a district sample of athletes, the results could assist parents, coaches, and school administrators in monitoring the academic success of the school system’s athletes.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

This study researches the effects of minimum academic standards on athletes to increase their academic success, attendance rates, reduce discipline infractions and subsequently, increase graduation rates. Athletic participation, both active and passive, flourishes in almost all schools and at all levels. Thomas Perry (2005) discusses in the “Underbelly of the Beast” that in today’s American society, as a result of the attractive commercial media blitzes, interest in the athletic prowess of athletes starts at a very early age. Yet, the seemingly endless arguments about the appropriateness and/or benefit of athletics in an academic setting are continually bantered about in educational circles (Perry, 2005).

Background

Since almost everybody goes to school in America and because of the close connection between schooling and athletics, athletics has become embedded as part of the American way of life. The Vidal-Fernandez study (2011) found with increased academic standards, academically marginal students who enjoy sports may be motivated to work harder to remain on the school team. However, some students may simply give up because the utility cost of the extra academic effort required exceeds the benefits of playing high school sports. If the second effect dominates the first, graduation rates might actually decline when a state adds an additional required course to the minimum standards (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011).

Vidal-Fernandez (2011) discussed that setting minimum academic requirements to participate in sports can, in theory, have heterogeneous and ambiguous effects on student achievement. While the intention of setting minimum academic requirements is to improve the academic performance of marginal students who have a preference for participating in athletics, a stricter rule could have unintended effects such as missing school and a drop in grades. Much research such as the Vidal-Fernandez study (2011) and this current study investigated athletes who performs marginally and wants to participate in athletics will put forth the work of making an extra academic effort to meet the requirement and stay on the team. If the latter option is more
attractive, the student might decide to drop out if sports were the only reason that kept them in school in the first place (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011).

To change the game, you have to change the frame of the ultimate goal, graduation. There are many underlying theories and scholarly studies related to athletic involvement that framed the context of this research. Much of the research on urban male achievement (Irving & Hudley, 2008) presents negative academic statistics and often troublesome stories about their chances of academic success. Much of the research includes external factors that affect academic achievement such as a single parent household and a lack of male role models. Researchers such as Irving & Hudley (2008) suggest that in most educational settings, the urban male presence is custodial staff or sports instructors as role models and the research shows stereotypical depictions of urban males as incompetent or lazy (Irving & Hudley, 2008). This research study seeks to find the positive correlation of athletic participation and academic success in student athletes.

Several early athlete studies in the 1980’s, such as Snyder’s, “A Theoretical Analysis of Academic and Athletic Roles” (1985), discovered that given the choice of being remembered as a star athlete, brilliant student, most popular, or a leader, high school males have continued to rank athletic stardom as the single most important criterion for achieving status within the adolescent social structure, while the achieving student continued to rank second. The ensuing educational dilemma is incessantly observable: a system of social values that rewards athletics more than academic achievement appears to motivate American cultural values (Snyder, 1985).

Studies such as Vidal-Fernandez (2011) and Hudley & Irving (2008) have been conducted in both K-12 education and postsecondary education to measure the impact of extracurricular involvement. Studies have looked at a wide range of topics, such as athletics, participation in clubs, working a job and drop-outs. If engagement in athletics significantly improves the likelihood of academic success, then school leaders should choose to target resources and efforts at increasing participation to the desired levels, especially for at-risk and failing students (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011; Hudley & Irving, 2008). This study sought out to prove the connection between athletics and academics in order to increase the success of athletes will be researched and investigated in this study.

In the Vidal- Fernandez study (2011) about the effect of minimum academic requirements to participate in sports on high school graduation, students who were involved in a
sport had significantly higher grade point averages during their sport season compared to their
grade point averages when the students were not in season. The fact of improved grades for
student athletes has been proven over and over. Schools invest large amounts of resources into
these activities under the well-supported assumption that sport activities increase levels of
student performance, such as grade point average, attendance, dropout rate, etc. (Vidal-
Fernandez, 2011). This research studies students who participated in athletics and whether they
performed better academically due to their participation and influence.

Extracurricular activities such as athletics have had a long established record of providing
connections to the school for both parents and students alike. Researchers argue that
extracurricular participation is one of the best methods for cultivating connectedness for all
stakeholders. There is substantial theoretical literature such as the Siegel study (1996), Higher
Education and the Plight of the Black Male Athlete and the Shakib and Veliz’s study (2013)
Race, Sport and Social Support: A Comparison Between African American and White Youths’
Perceptions of Social Support for Sport Participation, that argues that African American families,
more than other groups, are inclined to push their children towards sport in an effort to obtain
social mobility (Siegel, 1996). Whether or not African American families are indeed more
supportive of their children’s sports involvement relative to other ethnic groups is unclear. It is
also unclear whether African American youth obtain more social support from their family
members relative to other social influences (Siegel, 1996).

When examining urban male athletes, a multidimensional approach is needed to
understand factors that promote or hinder academic success. This study strives to understand the
effect that athletics and academics have upon the success of urban male athletes. Researchers
investigating athletics have long been interested in the relationships between participation in
sports activities and the social outcomes, academic achievement, and educational attainment of
adolescents.

Athletics serve as a place to act out the developmental tasks of adolescence (Feldman &
Matjasko, 2005). Feldman and Matjasko used a nationally representative US sample of 2,185
third- through twelfth-graders. The study compared African American youths’ perceptions of
encouragement for sports participation relative to other groups. Results of the Feldman and
Matjasko study (2005) indicated that relative to White, Hispanic and Asian youth, African
American youth are more likely to receive encouragement for sports participation from all
sources (total encouragement scores). African Americans are also more likely to obtain encouragement from family members and non-kin than other ethnic groups. The results of this study suggest that both African Americans and the larger community emphasize sport more for African American youth than for other youth (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005).

Feldman & Matjasko (2005) believed that athletics offer a means to express and explore one's identity, generate social and human capital, and offer a challenging setting outside of academics. Adolescents form their identity by developing skills, discovering preferences, and associating themselves with others (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Being a member of a particular group such as teams, structures what individuals do with their time and the kinds of values and norms to which they are exposed (Eckert, 1989). Participating in extracurricular activities such as athletics helps adolescents come to understand themselves by observing and interpreting their own behavior when they are engaged in these activities (Valentine, Cooper, Bettencourt, & DuBois, 2002).

The time adolescents spend in after-school activities stands in contrast to the quick-paced schedule of the school day. A 2003 study by Dworkin, Larson & Hansen found that during extracurricular activities, students are better able to get to know other peers and adults through personal bonding and mutual trust and commitment. Students involved have the opportunity to develop mentoring or coaching relationships, develop personal relationships with peers who share similar interests, and possibly interact with other adults from the school or community who provide support for the activity (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003).

In the late eighties study by Finn (1989), athletics were found to provide a challenging setting for students outside of academics that helps them maintain contact with the school environment (Finn, 1989). For some students, activities offer a place to develop additional skills and recognition that extend beyond academic achievement. However, for others, activities may be the only place to obtain success tied to the school context, in that such success would not be obtained through academics (Finn, 1989). While support for this notion is largely theoretical, one older but relevant study by Coleman (1961), “The Adolescent Society: The Social Life of the Teenager and its Impact on Education”, compared students who were athlete-scholars, athletes only, scholars only, and neither athletes nor scholars. It showed that members of the athletes-only group had more friendship nominations and were more likely to be part of the leading crowd than members of the scholars-only group (Coleman, 1961). Coleman (1961) found that
students who were more successful in sports than in academics were still able to command the recognition and respect of their peers, which was associated with more positive psychosocial outcomes. Coleman (1961) discovered there is a possibility that students who are more likely to be in the leading crowd regardless of participation are those who also choose to participate in sports. School-based activities are generally shown to provide opportunities for positive developmental outcomes. Athletics gives another avenue to students to promote these positive outcomes (Coleman, 1961).

Adolescents without supportive peer and adult relationships, without feelings of belongingness to social groups, without exposure to positive social norms such as engaged communities and friends, and without integration of contexts as family, school, neighborhood, and peers may be most at risk for poor developmental outcomes (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). It is in the absence of any of these factors that school-based athletics may exert their most influential mark on a student athlete’s life. Substantial theoretical literature such as Bandura and Walters (1963) argues that African American families, more than other groups, are inclined to push their children towards sport in an effort to obtain social mobility. Debate still exists over when the family exerts the strongest influence over a child’s sport involvement. The family is considered the most significant factor influencing the other role models after whom children will pattern their subsequent sporting behaviors as they get older (Bandura & Walters, 1963).

An ongoing debate exists over whether participation in high school sports enhances or detracts from the educational achievement of participants. Proponents of extracurricular activities and athletics (Lumpkin & Favor, 2012) believe the opportunities from participating in athletics enhance academic performance, especially when students must meet specific levels of academic achievement to maintain eligibility (Lumpkin & Favor, 2012). In the 2012 study of the Academic performance of athletes and non-athletes by Lumpkin and Favor, the academic performance of students in grades 9-12 who did or did not participate in Kansas high school sports was analyzed. Lumpkin and Favor (2012) found that across all ethnic groups, athletes were much less likely to drop out of school than non-athletes, supporting the argument that participating in high school sports is a contributing factor in retention. Participating in athletics may be particularly beneficial to ethnic minorities. In the Lumpkin and Favor study, 213 African American non-athletes dropped out of school compared to only 13 athletes in the 2012 study. Black non-athletes were found to be 16 times more likely to drop out of school than Black...
athletes. The 2012 study also found huge differences between athletes and non-athletes in GPA, graduation, and dropout rates. Competitiveness in sports may contribute to a harder work effort focused on achieving at least minimal, and possibly higher, academic goals. The Lumpkin and Favor (2012) study suggested that athletes may enjoy the prominent status attached to being an athlete because they receive more encouragement and praise for their efforts than do non-athletes. Thus, maintaining athletic eligibility becomes a priority (Lumpkin & Favor, 2012).

The differential graduation rates of African American student athletes and other student athletes has been a study of great concern over the last 20 years. In the Seigel 1996 study, African American football players graduated at a rate that is 21% lower than that of their White teammates (Siegel, 1996). The trend is moving in a positive direction; however, it still doesn’t equal that of their White male counterparts.

In the Lapchick 2000 study, White male basketball players graduated at a rate of 52%, while their African American counterparts graduated at a rate of 38% (Lapchick, 2000). Since the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) first began tracking the Graduation Success Rate with student-athletes who entered college in 1995, the rate has steadily increased. In the latest released data in 2013, African-American male student-athletes graduated at a rate 9 percentage points higher than African-American males in the student body (49 percent vs. 40 percent), while African-American female student-athletes outpaced their student body counterparts by 13 percentage points, 62 percent vs. 49 percent (Hosick, 2013).

In the 1996 study conducted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the American Institute for Research, African American athletes were found to have higher expectations for a professional sports career than all other student athletes (Lapchick, 1996). These observations, identified by Lapchick, may have direct and indirect consequences on the athlete’s academic performance. If the student athlete values his/her sport as the most viable means to economic success, he/she may tend to give most effort, concentration, and hope to the sport. Unfortunately, this is what many scholars believe has happened (Lapchick, 1996).

According to the NCAA (2013) website, the probability of competing in athletics beyond the high school interscholastic level are about 6.5 percent, or approximately one in 16 of all high school senior boys playing interscholastic football will go on to play football at an NCAA member institution. Less than two in 100, or 1.6 percent, of NCAA senior football players will get drafted by a National Football League (NFL) team. Eight in 10,000, or approximately 0.08
percent of high school senior boys playing interscholastic football will eventually be drafted by an NFL team (NCAA.org, 2013).

The two highest revenue producing collegiate sports at the Division 1 level, basketball and football, are also the sports of choice for the majority of African American males. African American males are overrepresented in the collegiate sports of basketball and football in which they make up over 50% of athletes at the Division 1 level (NCAA.org, 2013).

These facts do not stop an overwhelming majority of athletes from focusing their time, energy and efforts in becoming professionals (Wiggins & Miller, 2003; Zirin, 2008). This is a prime case of labeling theory in which African American males view themselves as athletes primarily and deem all other roles such as academics as secondary (Adler & Adler 1989). Athletics are an integral part of most high school settings. The large number of students that participate in school sponsored athletics and the financial resources that are invested into these activities by schools show the well-supported assumption that there is a direct correlation between athletics and student performance (Wiggins & Miller, 2003). The assumption is evident through such factors as: grade point average, discipline and attendance that will be discussed in this research. There have been relatively few studies that examine the athletic involvement of high school, at-risk students and their academic success. This study strives to create insight and research evidence to the relationship between athletic and academic success.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine athletic participation and academic coaching and their relationship to the school performance data of urban male high school students participating in football, before and after the implementation of the 2.0 GPA play policy. The researcher examined what relationship, if any, participation in athletics and the availability of an academic coach for football teams have on discipline, attendance, and grade point average.

**Research Questions**

The overarching question:

1. What effect does athletic participation have on the achievement outcomes of urban male athletes participating in football in a division where a 2.0 GPA eligibility rule was established?
2. What effect does the 2.0 eligibility rule have on the urban male high school football student athlete’s school performance (with or without an academic coach) related to attendance, GPA, and discipline after one semester of implementation?

3. What are the football players GPA’s two semesters after the 2.0 GPA play policy is implemented?

4. What effect does an academic coach have on the urban male athlete’s academics?

Conceptual Framework

The older but relevant 1995 study about extracurricular participation by O’Brien and Rollefson found that students who participate in sports programs tend to have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems that non-participants. Athletic participation also may help at-risk students and other students who have academic difficulties in high school and college by closing the achievement gap of urban males and strengthening their school connection (O’Brien & Rollefson, 1995).

The O’Brien and Rollefson (1995) research studied students who participate in athletic activities, specifically football and whether they perform better academically due to the participation in athletics. Participation in athletics has had a long established record of providing connections to the school for both parents and students alike. Many researchers such as O’Brien and Rollefson (1995) argue that athletic participation is one of the best methods for cultivating connectedness for all stakeholders. Since students spend a significant amount of time with coaches and sponsors preparing for games, competitions, performances, and other activities, and parents or guardians often attend these events in support of their child, one could argue that stakeholders have increased interactions with the school because the student participated in athletic activities (O’Brien & Rollefson, 1995). Athletics provide the opportunity for the reinforcement and practice of the classroom lessons and skills taught in a real world context both on the field and off the field.
Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study the following definitions of specific terms related to this research are provided for understanding the research study and participants.

**Athlete.** Students who participate in athletic activities, specifically football and whether they perform better academically due to the participation in athletics (O’Brien & Rollefson, 1995).

**Athletics.** Games, competitions, and other activities related to sports.

**Academics.** Academic requirements for student athletes can have a positive net effect on academic performance (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011).

**Advisor.** Academic support for high school students.

**At-Risk Students.** Students or groups of students who are considered to have a higher probability of failing academically or dropping out of school (Glossary of Education Reform, 2013).

**Attendance.** A record of how often a student attends school. A student’s school attendance is seen as a key factor in the effectiveness of the overall academic success of the student.
Student mobility is a contributor to academic failure, behavior issues and dropouts (Durante, Fisher, Matthews, Nakagawa & Stafford, 2002).

**Discipline.** Out-of-school suspensions as a default disciplinary tactic undermines the goal of closing the opportunity and achievement gaps (Schott, 2012).

**Dropout.** A student who withdraws from school before completing graduation requirements.

**Eligibility.** Meeting the academic requirements to compete or participate in athletics.

**GPA.** Grade point average.

**Graduation Rate.** The percentage of students within a cohort who graduate during their expected graduation year (DOE, 2014).

**High School.** A school comprised of grades nine through twelve.

**Play Policy.** Minimum academic achievement in order to participate in athletic programs.

**Urban.** School districts, such as New York City, Detroit, and Miami, where the graduation rate for Black males ranges from 20 to 30 percent (Kafele, 2012).

**Limitations of the Study**

The 2.0 play policy research had several limitations. This study was primarily limited by its small sample size of the five high school football teams. The sample size could have been expanded by including additional male sport teams to analyze all urban male athletes outside of football who participate in sports. A larger sample with more diversity between the sport teams would have improved the results. A second limitation is the inherent issue of transient students in the urban school division. A quarter of the sample moved out of the district by the end of the study. More research could be focused on the tools used to increase academic success and inherently improve the long-term effects of a minimum GPA play policy in high school sports. Future studies could include information on programs related to dropout prevention, urban transiency and grade retention.
Organization of the Study

Chapter one includes an overview of the study which looks at the effect of minimum academic standards on athletes to increase their academic success, and attendance rates, reduce discipline infractions; and subsequently, increase graduation rates of urban males. The purpose is to determine what impact participation in athletics has on the student’s academic performance. The research questions will guide the direction of the study.

The literature review in chapter two provides a critical review of the research and literature related to the impact of required minimum grade point average (GPA) for participation on the athletic participation for the urban male athlete. The literature reviewed in support of the GPA play policy includes research on family expectations and characteristics common with families of urban athletes, high school graduation rates, involvement in extracurricular activities, and teaching techniques for athletes to achieve academic success.

Chapter three provides the methodology, a quantitative study design using the athlete’s pre and post 2.0 GPA (grade point average), school system play policy to participate in athletics. In addition to GPA, attendance and discipline were analyzed for effect between years one and two. Chapter four contains the results of the study, including data tables and figures analyzing the GPA’s, attendance and discipline (out of school suspension data) for each school year athletes were followed. The final chapter five reveals the findings, implications and recommendations for future research on athletes and academics.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter provides a critical review of the research and literature related to the impact on athletic participation for urban male athletes, with a strong emphasis on urban male athletes and the required minimum grade point averages (GPA) for athletic participation. Literature reviewed in support included research on family expectations on urban athletes, high school graduation rates, involvement in extracurricular activities, teaching techniques and tools for athletes achieving academic success. The researcher conducted an extensive search of the literature related to academic and athlete’s success from numerous databases such as ERIC, ProQuest, and various other online databases. Key words used in the research process included: athletes and academics, dropouts, urban athletes, graduation rates, academic success, urban athletes, high risk students, high school and urban males. This review is organized into four sections: academics, African American family expectations, studies of graduation rates, and teaching techniques and tools used to increase the academic success of urban male athletes in this study.

Academic Standards: Lagging Behind

Of all the challenges we face in education today, one of the greatest is the challenge of motivating, educating, and empowering Black males (Schott, 2012). This group of students in crisis is evident on multiple levels, starting with graduation rates. According to the Schott Foundation (2012), the U.S. high school graduation rate for Black males is just 52 percent, compared with 58 percent for Latino males and 78 percent for White males.

The foundation releases its report every four years. In 2008, the Black male graduation rate was 47 percent. The progress among Blacks closed the racial divide on graduation rates by three percentage points over nine years to a 26 percentage-point gap (Schott, 2012).

“Alarming as this figure is, the situation becomes even more shocking in large urban school districts, such as New York City, Detroit, and Miami, where the graduation rate for Black males ranges from 20 to 30 percent. The crisis doesn’t just begin when students drop out of school. In far too many cases, it begins before they even enter school” (Kafele, 2012, p 67).

As students move through the grades, Black male students as a group have lower achievement levels, excessively high suspension and expulsion rates, and a disproportionate
number of special education referrals (Kunjufu, 2005). These school-related gaps the Schott (2012) research found culminate in Black male adults are more chronically unemployed and underemployed, are less healthy and have access to fewer health care resources, die much younger, and are many times more likely to be sent to jail for periods significantly longer than males of other racial/ethnic groups (Schott Foundation, 2008, p 3).

In the Vidal-Fernandez (2011) study found imposing minimum standards for athletes might increase or decrease high school graduation rates. The study found that academically marginal students who enjoy sports may be motivated to work harder to remain on the school team. Conversely the research showed that some students may simply give up because the cost of the extra academic effort required exceeds the benefits of playing high school sports (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011). If the second effect dominates the first, graduation rates might actually decline when a state adds an additional required course to the minimum academic standards, which would be clearly counter to the regulations’ intended result (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011).

The Vidal-Fernandez (2011) study speaks to important issues in educational policy. They suggest that, under certain circumstances, imposing tougher academic requirements on male student athletes can have a positive net effect on academic performance. Admittedly, these findings are dependent on the precise nature of the requirements and the activity in question, and they do not imply that negative incentives have a positive influence on boys in general (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011). In the Heckman and LaFontaine (2007) study showed these findings suggest that minimum academic standards for high school athletes did not contribute to the steady rise in high school dropout rates in the U.S. since the 1970s despite an increase in the internal rate of return for high school graduation (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2007).

The rate of return for high school graduation is currently at an all-time high in American history because high school graduation is, except in very few cases, a prerequisite for college attendance and the earnings premium for college graduation has greatly risen since the 1970s (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011, p 2). The findings of this 2011 study indicate that whatever the factors driving the secular trend in dropout rates may be, the imposition of minimum academic requirements for athletics is probably not among them. Setting minimum academic requirements to participate in sports can have varying effects on student achievement (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011). Self-motivation can play a key role in student success and the improvement of the academic performance of marginal students who have a strong preference for participating in athletics. In
Vidal-Fernandez’s academic requirement study from schools in the 1970’s, certain predictors were considered. The first predictor of the Vidal-Fernandez (2011) study was that rules should be concentrated on students with a strong preference for athletics.

The Vidal-Fernandez study did a separate analysis for athletes and non-athletes. The rules of the study did not include the student athletes whose academic performance was strong. The study researched in the Vidal-Fernandez study was conducted on athletic participation numbers in the 1970’s when Title IX had not been enacted (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011).

The Vidal-Fernandez (2011) study found that the academic rule is positive and significant. Minimum academic requirements for sports participation can have a positive impact on high school graduation rates; however, it depends on the strictness of the rule. A higher requirement implies a lower likelihood of a positive impact (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011).

In comparison to the Vidal-Fernandez (2011) newer research studies, such as the STAR project, the goal of the Student Achievement and Retention (STAR) Project was to learn more about the potential for support services and financial incentives to improve academic performance in college. The STAR project found that boys do not respond to positive incentives (Angrist, Lang, & Oreopoulos, 2009). The effects of the STAR intervention on students’ academic performance were mixed. Male achievement was essentially unchanged by the intervention, which was seen as a disappointment for those who look to incentives to be an easy fix for boys’ academic performance and completion problems. Reasonably clear evidence existed in the STAR project of a sizeable impact on females in the findings. Interest and use of services was much higher for young women than young men (Angrist, Lang, & Oreopoulos, 2009). In comparison to the STAR findings, the results of the Vidal-Fernandez study suggest that negative incentives may be effective in changing male behavior (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011).

Levin (2004) found there is a need to identify students who are at risk because of their failure to attend school, earn passing grades, comply with school discipline, and/or productively engage with educational expectations. From the perspective of schools, such identification might be seen as a means of helping to plan needed interventions for these students (Levin, 2004).

Bhattacharjee (2003) and Henry and Tator (2010), found that the intervention measures, such as mentorship programs, had an impact on the risky practices and circumstances of students, particularly African Canadian (used interchangeably with Black) males. In fact, Black youth are counted among the most at risk students because of their continued disengagement
from school, poor academic performance, and high rates of absenteeism, suspension, expulsion, and dropout, due in part to the school’s progressive discipline policies and practices (Bhattacharjee, 2003; Henry & Tator, 2010).

Why does this situation persist for Black males? It might be because education authorities’ persistent disregard for, or unwillingness to acknowledge, race and racism as factors influencing students’ gendered schooling and educational experiences a perspective informed by the color-blind discourse of Canada’s multiculturalism. Such disregard might explain why schooling produces and maintains rather than reduces risk (James, 2012, p 466).

Lapchick, Jitnurse and Moss (2010) obtained in their study, Black males disproportionately underperform in U.S. public schools, but are overwhelmingly represented in college and professional spectator, revenue-generating sports such as basketball and football. Too often, young urban males envision athletics as the only pathway to success. For example, Black males represent about 6% of the total U.S. population, but comprise over 66% of professional football players and 82% of professional basketball players (Lapchick, Jitnurse, & Moss, 2010). Black males represent only 3% of physicians and surgeons and 2% of attorneys (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Athletics is seen as a way that youth who are at risk can surmount the obstacles and challenges they face in their communities and schools. Athletics can engage students so they do not drop out of school (Lapchick, Jitnurse & Moss, 2010).

Athletes face what is referred to as a double negative label in that they are construed as dumb athletes and unintelligent (Harrison, Sailesb, Rotichc, & Bimper, 2011). If they are good at sports, the stereotypical assumption dictates that they are also poor students. But, as Noguera (2008) in The Trouble with Black Boys: And Other Reflections on Race, Equity, and the Future of Public Education Discovered, Black students do not arrive at school with an anti-intellectual orientation (Noguera, 2008). Rather, Black boys, as Hernandez and Davis (2009) mentioned, “arrive with high regard for their teachers and very optimistic about their learning, but this positive outlook on their education decreases as they go through school” (Hernandez and Davis, 2009, p 19). That Black students are not expected to do well in the classroom, but on the basketball court, is in part a reflection of the messages they receive from their teachers and coaches, and the hidden curriculum pertaining to racial stereotypes (James, 2012, p 477).
Expectations on the Urban Athlete

The expectations placed on athletes and their success is supported by the theoretical literature that argues that African American families, more than other groups, are inclined to push their children towards sport in an effort to obtain social mobility (Shakib & Veliz, 2013). Shakib and Veliz (2013) discuss in their research how the American culture is impacted by a Sport Ideology that associates African American males, in particular, with athletics, even though they are less likely than other groups to participate in the majority of sports besides football and basketball.

While, some theorists contend that African American families’ more deliberate and intense sport socialization serves a positive function, others argue that it is damaging (Shakib & Veliz, 2013). While there is debate over when the family exerts the strongest influence over a child’s sport involvement, the family is considered the most significant factor influencing the other role models after whom children will pattern their subsequent sporting behaviors as they get older (Bandura and Walters, 1966).

It is unclear whether or not African American families are indeed more supportive of their children’s sports involvement relative to other ethnic groups. It is also unclear whether African American youth obtain more social support from their family members relative to other social influences (Siegel, 1996). This overrepresentation of African Americans as role models in highly visible sports is said to reinforce cultural myths about sport being a promising avenue for social mobility (Harrison, Sailesb, Rotichc, & Bimper, 2011). In response to these cultural myths, some academics have called upon African American families to stop pushing their children towards sports as career options at the expense of other, more viable ones (Morris & Adeyemo, 2012).

Policy makers, educators, and administrators must think more deeply about how societal perceptions of Black males as “natural” athletes, rather than intelligent students, adversely influences how educators view Black males academically. This athletic/academic paradox plays out every day in classrooms, schools, communities, and U.S. society. This paradox, undermines the academic achievement of Black male students by inflating athletic careers as a viable future (Morris & Adeyemo, 2012, p 29).
Balancing high school academics and participating in athletics can, at times be a difficult task. Lumpkin and Favor (2012) discovered that sports involvement can bring many positives to students’ lives and, if balanced well with academics, can bring many future rewards. Competitive sports demand a high level of concentration. If athletes can focus on the game, this may well help them understand the need to focus on school-related tasks. As academic standards have risen so have the standards for participating in extracurricular activities. Many times the driving force behind student interest in school is participation in other activities. Participation raises grades, attendance rates, and lowers discipline rates (Lumpkin and Favor, 2012).

In a study conducted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the American Institute for Research, African American athletes were found to have higher expectations for a professional sports career than all other student athletes (Lapchick, 1996). These observations, it is argued, may have direct and indirect consequences on the student athlete’s academic performance. If the student athlete values his/her sport as the most viable means to economic success, he/she may tend to give the most effort, concentration, and hope to the sport (Lapchick, 1996).

In the 2000 Harrison study, it was stated that African American males are subjected to early athletic socialization, which encourages them to become athletes. Past studies have shown that African American males are socialized into sports intentionally and intensively. It has been suggested that socialization of African Americans into sports is a separate and distinct phenomena from the socialization of other groups into sports (Harrison, 2000).

In 2009, Richard Williams, the father of tennis stars Venus and Serena Williams, was interviewed by Canadian magazine Maclean’s about the success of his famous daughters. His interview gives real and relative proof to the socialization of African Americans into athletics:

Richard Williams was asked “when you decided all those years ago on tennis (two years before they were born), had you considered any other sports; “I didn’t know at that time of anything in sports that a woman could do and earn that type of income. I didn’t know nothing about tennis. I hadn’t even watched a tennis match. I just saw [tennis commentator] Bud Collins say to [Romanian tennis player] Virginia Ruzici, “$40,000 is not bad for four days’ work.” I thought, that has to be a joke. But the next day, when I read it in the sports pages, I said, “I’m going to have me two kids and put them in tennis.”
To this day, I don’t know anything a child could do to make that kind of money in one week (MacClean’s Online, 2009).

Parents’ general beliefs about the relative academic competence of boys and girls are one factor that may shape perceptions of their own sons and daughters. It is highly likely that boys’ lower levels of academic motivation play a role in the gender gap in African American academics; however, it is important to recognize that boys’ attitudes are shaped by forces in their social environments that are often beyond their control (Wood, Kurtz-Costes, Rowley & Okeke-Adeyanju, 2010. p 521-522). One factor that may contribute to the gender gap in African Americans’ educational attainment is gender differences in parents’ beliefs about their children’s academic abilities and potential. Prior theory and research support the tenet that parental beliefs shape children’s related self-beliefs and academic outcomes (e.g., Bleeker & Jacobs, 2004; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Neuenschwander, Vida, Garrett, & Eccles, 2007).

Beliefs that depict African American boys as less competent academically than African American girls can be characterized as academic gender stereotypes (Wood etc., 2010; p 522). The Wood (2010) study arguably stated that if African American parents hold less favorable achievement-related beliefs about sons as compared with daughters, then it is plausible that parents’ beliefs mediate the association between African American youths’ gender and their motivational and attainment outcomes (Wood, 2010).

The Hall (2001) study revealed the belief that girls generally perform better than boys in academics could be a reflection of African American parents’ real-world observations of their own children, other African Americans within the broader social context, and perhaps even their own lives. This belief would also be consistent with societal stereotypes depicting African American men as possessing characteristics that undermine academic success (Hall, 2001). Parents’ beliefs about children’s academic potential are an established predictor of African American boys’ academic outcomes according to Benner and Mistry in their 2007 study about mother and teacher educational expectations and low-income youths’ academic competence (Benner and Mistry, 2007).

Results of the mothers’ academic gender stereotypes and education-related beliefs study (2010) are consistent with the idea that parents’ gender stereotype endorsement may shape the achievement outcomes of African American youths indirectly via its influence on parents’ beliefs.
about children’s academic potential (Wood etc., 2010). It is highly likely that boys' lower levels of academic motivation play a role in the gender gap in African American attainment. It is important to recognize that boys' attitudes are shaped by forces in their social environments that are often beyond their control (Wood etc., 2010).

As the Wood study (2010) predicted, African American mothers in the study held lower expectations for the future attainment of sons than of daughters, and a sizeable percentage of mothers endorsed the social stereotype that girls are more capable than boys in school. Negative stereotypes about the academic abilities of African American boys may create a negative feedback loop, thereby contributing to the maintenance of the gender gap in African Americans' educational outcomes (Wood, 2010). African Americans over the past 30 years have improved their success across a broad spectrum of achievement; however, males have made less progress than females, particularly with respect to education (Wood etc. 2010). The belief that girls generally perform better than boys in academics could be a reflection of African American parents' real-world observations of their own children, other African Americans within the broader social context, and perhaps even their own lives (Wood etc., 2010).

A majority (67%) of the mothers in the Wood (2010) study endorsed the stereotype that boys are less competent than girls in academic domains. The most important finding in the 2010 study was the strength of stereotype endorsement as related both to mothers' expectations for the eventual educational attainment of their children, as well as their perceptions of their children's academic competence. (Wood, 2010, p 528).

Student Mobility

We have seen in previous research the effect of the family on the student’s academics is far ranging, and student transiency, also known as student mobility, has been known to also have negative consequences on academic achievement and educational growth (Rumberger, 2003). A student’s school attendance is seen as a key factor in the effectiveness of the overall academic success of the student. Student mobility is a contributor to academic failure, behavior issues and dropouts (Durante, Fisher, Matthews, Nakagawa & Stafford, 2002). The Durante study of school personnel’s perceptions (2002) found that when students are frequently mobile, their academic foundation is comprised, and they are beset with adjustment issues. These mobile students miss
out on academic instruction and relationship development with teachers and students (Paik & Phillips, 2002).

Interruptions such as transiency can cause academic failure and social distress in the academic setting. After a single move, it takes four to six months for mobile students to recover academically (Black, 2006). Academic time can never be regained. Often these same students become situated at their new school and move again. Paik & Phillips (2002) discuss that the correlation of academic expectations of these students also determines their academic success. There is great importance with the family and school support in predicting the student’s academic success.

Rumberger (2002) stated that the psychological and social adjustment that a student experiences while changing schools has an overall effect on the academic success of the student. Adjusting to new peers as well as the academic challenges can pose problems such as hostility and isolation. Durante et al, (2002) stated that student mobility is found to be a disturbance in the overall academic success. The consequences of student mobility are unlimited and have detrimental effects for the overall educational success of the mobile student and the schools they attend.

**Graduation Rates**

Since 2004, the Schott Foundation for Public Education’s biennial reports on Black males in public education have documented that of all racial/ethnic and gender groups, Black males have been the least likely to secure a regular diploma four years after beginning high school. Unfortunately, the data in the 2012 publication of Schott’s analysis of the most recent state-reported graduation rate data (2009-10) indicated that, in 38 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Black males have the lowest graduation rates among Black, Latino and White, non-Latino male and female students (Schott, 2012).

Overall, The Urgency of Now (Schott report, 2012) revealed that nationally only 52% of Black males and 58% of Latino males graduate from high school in four years, while 78% of White, non-Latino males Graduate in four years. While states and districts have been able to provide supports to secure a timely high school diploma for over three-quarters of White, non-Latino males, only a little more than half of Black and Latino males were provided with the same supports. Over the past nine years, the Schott report (2012) has shown there has been progress in
the national graduation rate for male students across the board. The national graduation rate for Black males has increased by 10 percentage points, from 42% in 2001-02 to 52% in 2009-10.

In 2009-2010, was the first year that more than half of the nation’s Black males in Grade 9 graduated with regular diplomas four years later. However, the Schott report (2012) shows progress over the past nine years. The Black male and White, non-Latino male graduation gap has only achieved a three percentage point gain, from a 29 percentage point gap to 26 percentage points. At the current pace of progress for both, it would take nearly 50 years for Black males to secure the same high school graduation rates as their White male peers (Schott, 2012). Educationally, this represents the point at which Black males can secure a high school diploma on par with their White male peers (Schott, 2012).

The Schott study (2012) recognizes that across the nation nearly one out of every six African American students (17%), and one in 14 Latino students (7%) in the state sample were suspended at least once in 2009-10, compared to one in 20 White students (5%). In the study’s state by state analysis, Virginia suspended 15-20% of African American students. The disproportionate use of out-of-school suspension for Black and Latino children at all levels is the first step toward pushing them out and lowering their chances to graduate. The Schott (2012) study states that overuse of out-of-school suspensions as a default disciplinary tactic undermines the goal of closing the opportunity and achievement gaps by increasing dropouts and decreasing valuable learning time for students. The (2012) study data indicate the end result in too many cities and states, is that Black and Latino students are the fastest growing population in U.S. schools. The Black and Latino students need to make the most academic progress to close America’s achievement gap and are the most likely to be academically sidelined or pushed out of school (Schott, 2012).

Tools and Techniques for Academic Success

Student athletes represent a unique population in the academic realm. Unlike other students, athletes are often required to adhere to academic rules and requirements mandated by athletic leagues such as VHSL (Virginia High School League) and school districts to participate in a sport. In the Gaston-Gayles (2003) research study, Advising Student Athletes: An examination of Academic Support Programs with High Graduation Rates, the student athletes were required to take at least five classes and maintain a 2.0 GPA overall or semester average to
participate. Student athletes constantly strive to balance the roles of athlete and student. Many athletes cannot accomplish these dual roles successfully without support and assistance (Gaston-Gayles, 2003). Academic support, such as academic advisors, provides student athletes guidance to find the balance and success in their multiple roles of student athlete. The focus on academic support is not just for maintaining athletic eligibility, but it should affect the development of the whole student through life skills (Gaston-Gayles, 2003).

Different models exist for advising. The Holmes study (2000) focused on only one, intrusive advising, which is characterized under the basic assumption that students will not seek advice and guidance from advisors (Holmes, 2000). This model is often used with students who typically have high attrition rates, such as students of color and students with disabilities (Heisserer & Parette, 2002). Holmes (2000) reported this model increased overall academic performance and retention for these populations.

In an earlier dated study by W. Earl in the NACADA Journal (1988), Earl described intrusive advising as deliberate and structured intervention (Earl, 1988, p. 28). There are three basic principles that guide this model. First, academic and social integration are the keys to persistence. Second, students can make adjustments in areas of deficiency by learning specific integration skills. Third, student motivation is not the cause but the result of intrusive advising (Earl, 1988). The overall understanding of the program is that student motivation is enhanced through self-evaluation, practiced study skills and community involvement. Vital to the academic success is the support of athletes, from their coaches. Without support from the athletic coaches, the program may not be as successful (Gaston-Gayles, 55p). The key to the success of academic advising with athletes was the focus on graduation and not just maintaining eligibility (Hartwig, 2007). Athletic teams often serve as a strong support system for student athletes. Support systems help student-athletes obtain encouragement for increased academic achievement and engagement thus increasing their accountability to maintain high GPAs. Hartwig (2007), Making a Difference. Techniques found that student athletes require this counseling and guidance to aid their academic success.

Coaches influence.

The relationship between coach and athlete has been the subject of many researchers. Coaches provide guidance and advice and serve as role models to many student athletes. The significance of a coach’s role can play a big part in the athlete’s life. Researchers Rhind and
Jowet (2010) found that advice and support provided to student athletes from their coaches has a positive impact on the student athlete and coach relationship. The absence of these variables has a negative influence on the relationship (Rhind & Jowett 2010).

Wilson and Stephens (2007) examined athletes and their dedication to their sport. The study researched the influence by whether athletes’ coaches had significant expectations on them and or provided negative suggestions. Student athletes, who perceived that their coaches had great expectations and gave minor criticism, were more inclined to persevere (Wilson & Stephens, 2007). The athletes in this study reported being mindful of the environment the coaches established and felt that the coaches could have an influence over the team and student athletes (Wilson & Stephens, 2007). The Rhind & Jowett (2010) study researched the traits, support and advice, and the positive impact of these qualities. While the absence of these qualities can have a negative influence. Similarly, the 2012 study Rhind, Jowett and Yang (2012) showed that quality over quantity of time between athlete and coach proved to be beneficial in the strength and influence of the relationship. Short conversations before, during or after practice sessions may help to develop and maintain relationships with all players within a team (Rhind, Jowett & Yang, 2012).

In the Arman (2013) dissertation study, the Perceived Importance Coaches Have on Student-Athletes' Academic Performance, Arman (2013) discusses the perceived importance coaches have on student athletes academic performance and reported some important influences stated by athletes. Student athletes reported that the coaches acted as a parental figure throughout their college career (Arman, 2013). The coaches reportedly advocated for athletes, and their academic beliefs were similar to their own parents. The student athletes stated that one of the reasons why they looked up to their coach was because their coach was successful and they wanted to be successful like him/her (Arman, 2013). One of the important findings discovered by Arman (2013) by the student athletes was that interactions with their coaches were pertinent to the student athletes being persistent in their academics.

**Educational Tools and Techniques**

Tools and educational techniques increase the success of our students exist in many forms. Single-sex education is one of the programs used as a tool for success of girls and boys. The National Educational Longitudinal Study (NEL) examines the benefits of single-sex
education on social capital outcomes using data from the NEL Study of 1988 to look at the effect of single-sex education on a student’s decision to participate in extracurricular activities.

In educational realms single-sex education is seen as a vehicle for improving the educational experiences of low-income and minority students. The two year Hubbard and Datnow ethnographic study (2005) of low-income and minority students who attended experimental single-sex academies in California indicates that improving achievement involves more than separating students by gender. Using student’s and educator’s voices, the Hubbard and Datnow anthropological study shows that these schools successes were due more to the interrelated contributions of the schools’ organizational characteristics, positive student-teacher relationships and ample resources (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005). The students in this 2005 study generally were academically underachieving, and in some cases were two grade levels below the national average.

Students in the study had come from schools where they had been tracked into general education or remedial classes, and their teachers held low expectations for their success. As a result of these and other factors, Hubbard and Datnow (2005) discovered some students had been chronically absent or had previously dropped out of school. Students typically had low expectations for their own success (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005). The California experiment was shortened and long term meaningful data were not available. However, a major benefit seen from the Hubbard and Datnow single-sex experiment were the ability of the academies to create positive academic environments and eliminate distractions from the opposite sex. The students also benefited from extra funding to the schools as a development grant to use for academic improvements (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005).

Much of the research conducted by Hubbard and Datnow (2005) was through interviews with teachers and students in the study. Many of the students in the 2005 study felt smarter and better supported in a single-sex environment. The underlying effect that resonates throughout this study is the influence of the caring teachers. The researchers noted that some of the teachers in the study shared race, socioeconomic backgrounds and of course gender with their students. These similarities created an open environment between student and teacher (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005).

The relationship between teacher and students enhanced the effect of social and moral lessons beyond the academic. In the conclusions of the Datnow (2005) study, it was indicated
that the needs of the students had been inadequately met in their previous coeducation schools. The single-sex setting gave them positive experiences academically and personally. Without a system of supports similar to that provided by these single-sex settings, and without the financial support provided by the grant, students may continue to falter (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005).

Abundant research and discussion has been found about the topic of single-sex education as a tool for academic success of boys in the last several years. In Mead’s research (2006), no debate or doubt in his studies exist that specific groups of boys, such as Hispanic and African-American boys from low-income homes are in academic trouble. Mead’s research makes a point that the underlying issue is race and class, not gender. Boys are routinely labeled as falling behind because women are surpassing men in many fields of study. The debate benefits neither boys nor girls. According to Mead (2006), it stands as a distraction to more serious educational issues, such as racial and economic achievement gaps and finding practical ways to assist both boys and girls so they can succeed in school (Mead, 2006).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as The Nation’s Report Card, is a widely respected test conducted by the U.S. Department of Education using a large, representative national sample of American students (Department of Education, 2005). NAEP is the only way to measure national trends in boys’ and girls’ academic achievements over long periods of time. However, even relative to girls, the NAEP data used in Mead’s research for boys painted a complex picture. Mead (2006) states that boys make up two-thirds of students in special education and are two and a half times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Beyond these details and statistics discussed, very little known about why these differences in how boys and girls perform in school exist. However, Mead (2006) goes to great length to say that the information is intriguing and must be interpreted with caution. Some differences may be the result of culture and socialization and their development through different opportunities (Mead 2006).

**Benefits of Athletic participation**

Dumb jock is a phrase that has been, and continues to be heard frequently and maybe even used a few times as discussed in the 2006 study by Mead, The Truth about Boys and Girls. Even if said in jest, the not-so-hidden assumption behind the phrase is that intelligence and athletic ability are mutually exclusive. Now more than ever, since the academic rigor in our
nation’s high school classrooms is an increasing focus, this assumption couldn’t be further from the truth (Mead, 2006). Mead in his 2006 study found that athletics allow students to practice leadership, goal-setting, the art of communication and organizational skills. Participating in athletics enhances and provides a perspective to assess the relationship between sports participation and academic engagement and future attainment of educational and occupational goals (Mead, 2006).

The National Federation of State High School Associations (2004) has stated that extracurricular activities such as athletics should, first and foremost, support academic achievement and be an integral part of the athlete’s educational experience. The emphasis should not be on winning and losing athletic competitions. The NFSHSA defines co-curricular activities as not a diversion, but rather an extension of a good educational program that teaches lifelong lessons in the classroom and on the playing field (NFSHSA, 2004 p. 243).

The Academic engagement study (2008) by Dawkins, Braddock & Celaya addressed how participation in sports can increase academic engagement and success. For example, the authors argued that the participation in sports operates through the mediating factors of social, cultural, school engagement and personal resilience to influence students’ academic success. The debate over whether sports participation impedes or enhances mobility may not be a debate at all, since the connection between sports participation and academic engagement of students may result in either or both outcomes, along with other possibilities (Dawkins, 2008).

The connection between sports participation and academic engagement is being closely examined by researchers such as Dawkins to understand whether sports generally impede or enhance success. Dawkins (2008) studied this issue and the importance in addressing aspirations of African American student-athletes and their parents who have their sights on big-time athletics with the ultimate challenge of reaching the ranks of professional sports. The Dawkins study (2008) maintains that academics are central to realizing the athletic aspirations of the student-athlete as the need to maintain eligibility to play, graduate from high school and meet college entrance requirements for furthering their athletic career. A major drawback seen in this research and other studies is that the academic engagement is many times forced and the aspirations for success in education are limited to achieving the goal of maintaining eligibility to participate in sports (Dawkins, 2008).
Participation in sports can serve as an incentive to pursue academics seriously, and doing well can teach our athletes, that strong academically ensures that aspirations to achieve goals that extend beyond sports can be realized. The process of connecting success in experiences where both athletic and academic success are encouraged and rewarded by parents, teachers and others. Thus, academic engagement is elevated to the same level as sports participation, with success in the latter serving as an incentive to doing well in the former and vice versa (Dawkins, 2008; p 55).

Student athletes are motivated in two ways according to Curtis (2006) task orientation and ego orientation. Individuals who are motivated by task orientation define success as the improvement of a certain skill or ability or the acquisition of a new talent. Individuals who are motivated by ego view success as achieving superiority over others (Curtis, 2006). Historically, athletes have been trained from a very young age that winning over other people equals success (Steinburg, Singer, and Murphy, 2000). If student athletes are driven by ego orientation, why do so many lack the same motivation inside the classroom (Curtis, 2006). Curtis (2006) states it is thus the responsibility of academic advisors to help student athletes modify their goal orientation from ego to the more appropriate task orientation. Black youth who exhibit extraordinary athletic talents at an early age may be at-risk of academic disengagement unless there is a strong commitment by parents, teachers and coaches to connect the two (Curtis, 2006).

Emdin in his 2002 study of Black males states that to address the low achievement of urban males, educators must be willing to accept that there are ways of looking at the world, modes of communication, and approaches to teaching and learning that are unique to urban males. At the same time, educators must also acknowledge that these unique ways of being are just as complex as the needs of other students. The tie that binds all students is the desire to be academically successful (Emdin, 2012, p. 13).

Emdin (2012) discussed the five tools he developed for teaching urban males that have had some success in his research as: co-generative dialogues, co-teaching, cosmopolitanism, context, and content. The research and its developed tools were based on the fact that when urban males are in social spaces that align with their core identities, their desires to think critically, make keen observations, support these observations with facts, and engage in dialogue are activated. Most importantly, Emdin’s tools give teachers an opportunity to get feedback from urban males about their teaching (Endin, 2012).
For example, using the Cosmopolitan teaching tool that Emdin (2012) researched, teachers find artifacts from the contexts where youth are embedded and urban males spend the most time. The tool illustrates there must be a willingness to visit their neighborhoods, watch the television programs that they watch, and listen to music that they like. This approach connects the teacher to the learner in complex ways that only become revealed when students start making connections to these artifacts on their own. Furthermore, it allows the teacher to display the effort involved in making the subject taught relevant to urban males (Emdin, 2012).

Emdin’s research concluded with a poignant view of teaching urban males. Emdin (2012) stated that given the persistence of achievement gaps, educators must be willing to move beyond political correctness, stop rehashing approaches that have not worked for decades, and stop paying lip service to meeting the needs of urban males without changing practices. Acknowledging the differences between urban males and their counterparts and enacting reality pedagogy is a first step (Emdin, 2012).

**Synthesis**

This literature review suggests that for many urban students, athletics can provide motivation for improved academic performance. Not all athletes are natural students. The grade requirements to stay eligible and play their sport drives athletes to overcome obstacles in the classroom and improve performance. Establishing a work ethic can serve student athletes well in any life setting. The literature on this topic substantiates the positive and negative impact that athletic participation can have on the academic and overall success of urban males. Schools with well-run athletic programs benefit from leadership that fosters winning inside and outside the classroom.

The literature does support the belief that African Americans see athletics as a means of success and achievement. Simiyu (2009) states in the Triple Tragedy of the Black Student Athlete that greater athletic expectations are placed on Black athletes than their White counterparts by their families, coaches and teachers (Simiyu, 2009). When examining urban male athletes, there must be a multidimensional approach to understand factors that promote or hinder academic success, such as family environmental factors of transiency, support and consistency (Simiyu, 2009). This study investigated previous literature and research on athletics
and academics in its effort to prove there is a positive effect that athletics and academics have upon the success of urban males.
Chapter 3
Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine athletic participation, academic coaching and their relationship to the school performance data of urban male high school students participating in football, before and after the implementation of the 2.0 GPA play policy. The research examined what relationship, if any, participation in athletics and the availability of an academic coach have on discipline, attendance, and grade point average.

Research Design

The researcher chose a quantitative study design using the athlete’s pre and post 2.0 GPA (grade point average) school system policy to participate in athletics. Additionally, the researcher considered attendance and discipline data from the same five inner city high school football teams. This research study is based on the identification of factors that potentially influence possible outcomes (Creswell, Shope, Plano, Green, & Green, 2009).

In this research study, the researcher desired to generalize the findings, and therefore, a quantitative approach was best suited. The research study has the potential to have a healthy sample size, managing all the data holds merit for the use of a quantitative approach over a qualitative approach, where lower sample sizes exist in most cases. While qualitative methods are a valuable means of collecting certain kinds of data, a quantitative method is well suited to present this study that analyzes student data and academic achievement indicators (Arcidiacono, Procentese, & di Napoli, 2009). Additionally, the use of quantitative research in this study allowed the researcher to test hypotheses by examining the relationships among multiple variables (Creswell et al., 2009).

In order to determine whether participating in athletics has an impact on the student’s academic performance. The researcher collected existing data for a five semester period over a three year span with three semesters prior to a system wide 2.0 GPA policy and for two semesters post the implementation of the 2.0 GPA policy to play. In addition to GPA data, the researcher analyzed whether or not a school had an academic coach and a football coach during the process and for how long. The data were compared year to year to see whether there is a difference between the GPA received before policy implementation and after 2.0 GPA play policy implementation.
Creswell describes quantitative research as one that establishes significant conclusions about a population by studying a representative sample of the population (Creswell, 2003). This study compared the GPA’s of urban male football players before and after the 2.0 GPA play policy, along with attendance and out of school discipline data. The researcher tested a theory by specifying narrow hypotheses and the collection of data to support or refute the hypotheses. The population consisted of the entire group being studied, as in this case, ninth and tenth grade inner city high school football players. It does not matter if the population is broad or narrow, only that it includes every individual that fits the description of the group being studied (Creswell, 2003). Creswell states that certain types of social research problems call for specific approaches. For example, if the problem is identifying factors that influence an outcome, the utility of an intervention, such as an academic coach or understanding the best predictors in outcomes, then a quantitative approach is best (Creswell, 2003).

The study was quantitative and quasi-experimental in nature as there were no manipulation of the variables and the hope is to identify relationships between and amongst the variables (McMillan, 2004). The purpose was to study academic performance as measured by semester and cumulative GPA, absence and discipline of urban male high school football players. Independent variables (attendance, discipline and GPA) and dependent variables (race, participation in football) were collected, and these variables were then measured and analyzed using relevant statistical procedures. The variables analyzed are GPA (pre and post play policy), discipline (out of school suspension), and attendance.

As indicated in Chapter One, this study was guided by the achievement outcomes of urban male high school football players. The sub-questions were as follows: The overarching question was,

1. What effect does athletic participation have on the achievement outcomes of urban male athletes participating in football?
2. What effect does the 2.0 eligibility rule have on the urban male high school football student athlete’s school performance (with or without an academic coach) related to attendance, GPA, and discipline?
3. What are the GPA’s two semesters after the 2.0 play policy is implemented?
4. What effect does an academic coach have on the urban male athlete’s academics?
The research design and methodology used to address these research questions included the following information: research design, data collection, data analysis, reporting the findings, setting, context and ethical considerations.

**Site Selection**

Participants for the study consisted of ninth and tenth grade (2012-2013 school year) urban male student-athletes enrolled in one of five inner city high schools (9-12) and active participants in interscholastic athletics, specifically football. The data for the total of 118 student-athletes with an age range for 14 to 19 years old were utilized. Age was not a specific, predictor variable because many student-athletes could be re-classified students who were held back a grade level. Each male student-athlete was an active participant in one or more interscholastic athletic events as defined by the Virginia High School League (VHSL). VHSL is the athletic governing body of Virginia public high school sports. An external variable that was considered is the status and consistency of each high schools head football coach. As discussed in the Amran study (2013) student athletes reported that the coaches acted as a parental figure throughout the athlete’s career and the coaches reportedly advocated for athletes and their academic beliefs similar to their own parents. Convenience sampling was selected as a viable method because the population is located in the same geographic location as the researcher.

The study focused on a predominately inner city school system and the five comprehensive high school football teams. Ninth and tenth grade football players who attended specialty schools but participant in VHSL athletics at their zone comprehensive high school were excluded from the study. This variable group was excluded from the research study to insure an equitable GPA data collection process. The researcher focused on this particular topic, athletes and academic achievement in the urban school system, due to the experience and relativity of the study to her current educational position. The school system consists of eight high schools (three specialty), but only five of the eight are comprehensive and offer interscholastic sport participation.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The study focused on the five comprehensive high schools’ football teams. The cumulative and semester GPA, attendance, and discipline record of each football participant was
used in the study to compare achievement outcomes; pre and post GPA play policy. Each school was assigned a corresponding number and described in this section. The five schools chosen for this study share several demographic and geographic characteristics in the same city with a population of 214,000. The urban school system serves over 23,000 students, representing the region’s diverse socioeconomic mix of varying demographics on both sides of this mid-level city. All of the students in the school division are eligible to receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch through a federal grant. The urban school division is comprised of 26 elementary schools, including one charter school, eight comprehensive and one specialty middle school, five comprehensive high schools and three specialties. Demographic information about the five high schools included in this study is listed below in Table 1.

Table 1

*Enrollment in High Schools, 2013*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School 1</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 2</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 3</td>
<td>1246</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 4</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,642</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Urban school system data, for illustration purposes only.*

**Participants**

High school 1 was in its 145th year of existence (different buildings throughout its history) at the time of the study and contained approximately 970 students. Demographics for High School 1 at the time of the study were 84% African-American, 5% Hispanic, 8% Caucasian and 3% other. Male students participating in interscholastic athletics chose from the following sports (football, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cross country, track & field, baseball, tennis, golf and soccer).
High school 2 opened in 1960 and contained approximately 916 students. Demographics at the time of the study for High School 2 were 83% African-American, 10% Hispanic, 5% Caucasian, and 2% other. Male athletes had the same choice of sports as High School 1 athletes (football, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cross country, track & field, baseball, tennis, golf and soccer) except golf, tennis and wrestling.

High school 3 opened in 1959 and during the study opened a new state of the art building and contained approximately 1246 students. Demographics at the time of the study for High School 3 were 65% African-American, 25% Hispanic, 5% Caucasian, and 5% other. Male athletes had the same choice of sports as High school 1 (football, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cross country, track & field, baseball, tennis, golf and soccer).

High school 4 over a 100 years old (2nd location) and contained approximately 835 students. Demographics at the time of the study for High School 4 were 85% African-American, 5% Hispanic, 3% Caucasian, and 2% other. Male athletes had the same choice of sports as High school 1 (football, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cross country, track & field, baseball, tennis, golf and soccer).

High school 5 opened in 1930 and is still in its original building and contained approximately 915 students. Demographics at the time of the study for High School 5 were 65% African-American, 5% Hispanic, 20% Caucasian, and 10% other. Male athletes had the same choice of sports (football, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, cross country, track & field, baseball, tennis, golf and soccer) except golf and wrestling.

Data Analysis

Data collection took place over 5 semesters (2012-2015) to compare the pre and post GPA data pertaining to the 2.0 GPA play policy. Data were retrieved from the school data system and the office of Research and Evaluation and were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, and then uploaded into SPSS software for analysis. Ninth and tenth grade football players who attended specialty schools but participant in VHSL athletics at their zone comprehensive high school were excluded from the study. This variable group was excluded from the research study to insure an equitable GPA data collection process. Participant data were managed by School number and a random assignment of numbers to students being analyzed. The data were
analyzed using descriptive statistics; this includes means, standard deviations, ranges, and frequencies.

A series of t-tests and descriptive statistic data analysis were performed to study effect of categorical independent variables on numerical dependent variables. For direct analysis of the relationships and statistical significance, the present study employed a hierarchical regression analysis so that predictor variables were grouped accordingly and subsequent variables of interest were added to the model (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2009).

A longitudinal data analysis was run using a paired samples t-test to compare student data from time 1 to time 2 and the follow up semesters post 2.0 GPA play policy implementation. In addition, a repeated measures t-test was used to investigate the district’s change in attendance, GPA, and discipline infractions from year to year. Variables for the present study included GPA (cumulative and semester), attendance, discipline, grade level, academic coach or no academic coach.

The following Table 2, describe whether the high school used an academic coach before the 2.0 GPA or after the 2.0 GPA play policy was implemented.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Coach</th>
<th>HS 1</th>
<th>HS 2</th>
<th>HS 3</th>
<th>HS 4</th>
<th>HS 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2, describes whether the high school used an academic coach before the 2.0 GPA or after the 2.0 GPA play policy was implemented. Data retrieved for the study were sorted and stored into an Excel spread sheet prior to analysis. Descriptive statistics included mean scores and standard deviations (Steinberg, 2008). Assumption testing was used to ensure that all variables followed a normal distribution (Sprinthall, 2007). To ensure normality, histograms and normal probability plots were created and accessed (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2009).
**Data analysis techniques.**

Research question number one, what are the achievement, attendance, and discipline data for urban male athletes participating in football before and after the introduction of the 2.0 rule, used a t-test and paired samples analysis. This type of analysis is similar to regression in that it is used to investigate and model the relationship between a response variable and one or more independent variables. In effect, it extends the two-sample t-test for testing the equality of two population means to a more general null hypothesis of comparing the equality of more than two means, versus them not all being equal. Comparison analysis is used to test for differences among more than two variables (Sprinthall, 2007).

Research question number two, what effect an academic coach has on urban male athlete’s academics, used a paired t-test analysis. Research question number three, what effect does the 2.0 eligibility rule have on the urban male high school football student athlete’s school performance (with or without an academic coach) related to attendance, GPA, and discipline, used a paired t-test analysis to examine the effect of the variables post 2.0 GPA play policy. The paired t-test was used to test the differences among Pre and Post 2.0 GPA policy play in GPA, attendance and discipline.

**Time line for gathering, treatment, and management of data.**

Five semesters of grade point average, attendance, discipline and academic coach data were analyzed using urban male football players in the five comprehensive high schools of an inner city school division (2012-2015). The research process began in September 2012 with participating in the university online training for human subject protection (see Appendix A). The school division approval for additional demographic information and approval of district data for the study were approved in October of 2014 (see Appendix B & C). The researcher then submitted the appropriate paperwork to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The study then received IRB approval in November 2014, (see Appendix D).

The researcher requested the necessary information from the school system for student / football players for GPA, attendance, discipline and academic coaching. The researcher also requested that any personally identifiable information be removed from the school division report such as student names and student identification numbers. Data were stored on a separate hard drive for access by the researcher and secured in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s
The data were destroyed following successful defense of the dissertation. In the future the report and findings will be used in the school district to guide further policy requirements and academic initiatives pertaining to the 2.0 GPA play policy.

Summary

The present study was to determine if urban male high school athletes participating in football achieve academic success and retain academic eligibility after the 2.0 GPA play policy with or without the assistance of an academic coach. In many urban communities there is a lack of positive role models, which helps explain why sports are of such importance due to the visibility of prominent urban athletic figures in the sports world. High profile athletes have been historically held in high esteem in the Black community (Wiggins & Miller, 2003).

African Americans are more inclined to participate in sports that they see other African Americans playing. Basketball and football are the preferred sports for African American males (Goldsmith, 2003). School is not always of the utmost importance for some minority students. In a study done by Beamon & Bell (2006), African Americans students were found to put less focus and attention on academics compared to White students. Therefore, parents play a pivotal role in children’s views towards academics and athletics. They can have an instrumental role in regards to the values their children have towards academics and athletics (Beamon & Bell, 2006). While the present study only analyzed a district sample of athletes, the results could assist parents, coaches, and school administrators in monitoring and creating initiatives and future educational policy that will assist the academic success of a school system’s student athletes.
Chapter 4
Results of the Study

Restatement of the Purpose

This study addressed the effects of minimum academic standards on athletes to increase their academic success, attendance rates, reduce discipline infractions and subsequently, increase graduation rates. The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the statistical analyses of school performance data of urban male high school students participating in football, before and after the implementation of a 2.0 GPA play policy. The overarching question was, what effect does athletic participation have on the achievement outcomes of urban male athletes participating in football? The following analyses were implemented in order to address the following research questions.

1) What effect does the 2.0 eligibility rule have on the urban male high school football student athlete’s school performance (with or without an academic coach) related to attendance, GPA, and discipline after one semester of implementation?
2) What are the GPA’s two semesters after the 2.0 play policy is implemented? (Second semester following implementation).
3) What effect does an academic coach have on the urban male athlete’s academics?

The collected data were processed using the SPSS software programs. A longitudinal data analysis was run using a paired samples t-test to compare student data from time 1 to time 2 and the follow up third year, two semesters post GPA play policy implementation. In addition, a repeated measures t-test was analyzed to investigate the district’s change in attendance, GPA, and discipline infractions.

Several independent t-tests were utilized to compare the differences in GPA (grade point average), absenteeism and discipline. Correlation analyses were used to interpret the relationship among the tested categories of GPA, absence and discipline. The analyses were performed to determine whether participating in high school sports, specifically football and the implementation of a minimum GPA play policy, had a significant impact on GPA, attendance and discipline rates for the students that participated. A paired t-test analysis was used to compare school groups. A compared descriptive statistic t-test was performed to analyze the
GPA’s, discipline and attendance of each high school. This chapter is organized into several sections, beginning with the descriptive statistics of each of the high schools.

Beginning in 2012-2013, each high schools ninth and tenth grade football players’ GPA was analyzed, along with school attendance and out of school discipline rates. Ninth and tenth grade football players who attended specialty schools but participant in VHSL athletics at their zone comprehensive high school were excluded from the study. This variable group was excluded from the research study to insure an equitable GPA data collection process.

The school year 2012-2013 served as a trial year with each school tracking the GPA’s of each sports’ athletes. The spring of 2014 served as the first semester where the policy implementation would affect athletic eligibility for fall sports participants in the forthcoming school year 2014-2015. The variables discipline and attendance were only analyzed during the first two years due to the last year of data collection reflected only half of the year (Fall 2014). The data collected and analyzed from each high school were divided by the questions guiding the research, findings and implications.

**Reporting of Data**

The overarching research question of this study is what effect does athletic participation have on the achievement outcomes of urban male athletes participating in football? The following data sets divide the findings by research questions. The five figures compare each student’s average GPA for each high school researched for the school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. The GPA’s are compared for three semesters prior to the policy and the first semester after implementation. Data analyzed were divided by high school comparisons and district level overall comparisons.

What effect does the 2.0 eligibility rule have on the urban male high school football student athlete’s school performance (with or without an academic coach) related to GPA, attendance, and discipline?

The following five figures devised by high school (Figure 2–6) compare each student’s average GPA for each high school researched for the school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, prior to the policy and the first semester after implementation. The areas where a gap is present, indicated by .00, are where a student withdrew or transferred from his initial school of enrollment (school year 2012-2013) or out of the school system. Except for High School 4, each
high school’s overall team GPA average in the comparison of year one and year two shows a small but not statically significant increase in the 2.0 GPA post play policy implementation.

**High school comparison.**

![High School 1 GPA comparison by student 2012-2013 vs 2013-2014](image)

**Figure 2.** Pre and one semester post GPA policy analysis - High school 1.

The GPA for 2012-2013 for High School 1 averaged 2.28 for the 17 students who were part of the study. The GPA after the first semester of implementation, spring of the 2013-2014 school year, average 2.63. The average GPA for High School I was .35, higher after a semester of implementation of the GPA policy.

![High School 2 GPA comparison by student 2012-2013 vs 2013-2014](image)

**Figure 3.** Pre and one semester post GPA policy analysis – High school 2.

The GPA for 2012-2013 for High School 2 averaged 2.04 for the 27 students who were part of the study. The GPA after the first semester of implementation, spring of the 2013-2014 school
year, average 2.09. The average GPA for High School 2 was the same after a semester of implementation of the GPA policy.

**Figure 4.** Pre and post one semester GPA policy analysis - High school 3.

The GPA for 2012-2013 for High School 3 averaged 2.05, for the 27 students who were part of the study. The GPA after the first semester of implementation, spring of the 2013-2014 school year average was 2.13. The average GPA for High School 3 was .08 higher after a semester of implementation of the GPA policy.

**Figure 5.** Pre and post one semester GPA policy analysis - High school 4.

The GPA for 2012-2013 for High School 4 averaged 2.25 for the 30 students who were part of the study. The GPA after the first semester of implementation, spring of the 2013-2014 school year, average 2.09. The average GPA for High School 2 was the same after a semester of implementation of the GPA policy.
year, average was 1.93. The average GPA for High School 4 was .32 lower after a semester of implementation of the GPA policy.

Figure 6. Pre and one semester post GPA policy analysis - High school 5.

The GPA for 2012-2013 for High School 5 averaged 1.90 for the 23 students who were part of the study. The GPA after the first semester of implementation, spring of the 2013-2014 school year, average was 2.38. The average GPA for High School 5 was .48 higher after a semester of implementation of the GPA policy.

The previous figures used a standard GPA calculation and illustrate that four out of the five high schools showed improvement in their GPA between years one and two, High School 4 failed to show improvement (dropping from 2.25 to 1.93). All other schools achieved an increase in their overall team GPA in the first semester of the policy implementation. High School 5 marked the largest increase in GPA (1.90 to 2.38).

Although not statistically significant the increases in GPA for four of the five high schools show positive signs of growth to support the school districts implementation of the 2.0 GPA play policy.

Table 3 illustrates the overall statistical minimum, maximum and mean of the five high schools beginning in 2012-2013. 117 urban male athletes in ninth and tenth grade classification for GPA, absence and OSS (out of school) discipline infractions for school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 when the number dropped to 94 with variations for external variables, such as in
district transfers and withdrawing from the school system. Mid-year of 2014-2015, the number of student athletes dropped to 89 with variations caused by student mobility.

Table 3

_District Level Number of High School Player Participants and Mean Variable for 2012-2013 & 2013-2014_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA 13-14</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA 14-15 Midyear</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent 12-13</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>9.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent 13-14</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12.48</td>
<td>10.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline 12-13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline 13-14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 4, the 2012-2013 mean GPA for each high school is recorded and each high school is coded by a number 1-5. High School 1 had 18 players with a mean GPA of 2.28; High School 2 had 25 players with a mean GPA of 2.09; High School 3 had 27 players with a mean GPA of 2.05; High School 4 had 27 players with a mean GPA of 2.25 and High School 5 had 22 players with a mean GPA of 1.90.

Table 4

_Descriptive - Mean GPA Scores by School for 2012-2013 School Year_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 5, the 2013-2014 mean GPA for each high school is recorded, and each high school is coded, using a number 1-5. High School 1 had 14 players with a mean GPA of 2.58; High School 2 had 23 players with a mean GPA of 2.09; High School 3 had 18 players with a mean GPA of 2.13; High School 4 had 25 players with a mean GPA of 1.93 and High School 5 had 18 players with a mean GPA of 2.38.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>[2.09, 3.24]</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>[1.63, 2.45]</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>[1.65, 2.47]</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>[1.65, 2.40]</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>[1.96, 2.59]</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School level paired T-test analyses for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

The following Table 6 represents school level paired t-test analyses for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. The variables GPA, absence and discipline were analyzed for changes between years one and two for each five high schools urban male athlete. A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare school level GPA, absence and discipline in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. The results represented in this table are described in the next section, followed by the table.

For High School 1 there was a significant difference in the scores for the 2012-2013 GPA, (M = 2.28, SD = .82) and the 2013-2014 GPA, (M = 2.58, SD = .86); t (11) = -2.67, p = .02. For High School 1 there were no significant difference in the average number of absences for 2012-2013 school year, (M = 7.40, SD = 8.55) and the 2013-2014 school year absence, (M = 6.30, SD = 8.55); t (9) = .73, p = .49. For High School 1 there were no OSS (out of school) discipline issues for years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

For High School 2 there were no significant difference in the scores for the 2012-2013 GPA, (M = 2.09, SD = .89) and the 2013-2014 GPA, (M = 2.09, SD = .79); t (20) = -.02, p = .99. For High School 2 there was a significant difference in the average number of absences for the 2012-2013 school year, (M = 10.53, SD = 6.54) and the 2013-2014 school year absence, (M =
18.89, SD = 10.30); \( t (18) = -4.38, p = .00 \). For High School 2 there were no significant difference in the scores for the 2012-2013 discipline, (M = 1.14, SD = .38) and the 2013-2014 discipline, (M = 1.71, SD = .76); \( t (6) = -1.55, p = .17 \).

For High School 3 there were no significant difference in the scores for the 2012-2013 GPA, (M = 2.05, SD = .69) and the 2013-2014 GPA, (M = 2.13, SD = .83); \( t (17) = -.53, p = .60 \). For High School 3 there was a significant difference in the average number of absences for the 2012-2013 school year, (M = 6.39, SD = 4.26) and the 2013-2014 school year absence, (M = 16.17, SD = 13.56); \( t (17) = -3.38, p = .00 \). For High School 3 there were no significant difference in the scores for the 2012-2013 discipline, (M = 1.00, SD = .000) and the 2013-2014 discipline, (M = 3.50, SD = .71); \( t (1) = -5.00, p = .13 \).

For High School 4 there was a significant difference in the scores for the 2012-2013 GPA, (M = 2.25, SD = .90) and the 2013-2014 GPA, (M = 1.93, SD = .94); \( t (24) = 2.77, p = .01 \). For High School 4 there were no significant difference in the average number of absences for the 2012-2013 school year, (M = 10.96, SD = 13.44) and the 2013-2014 school year absence, (M = 11.72, SD = 9.01); \( t (24) = -.38, p = .71 \). For High School 4 there were no significant difference in the scores for the 2012-2013 discipline, (M = 4.00, SD = 4.24) and the 2013-2014 discipline, (M = 1.50, SD = .71); \( t (1) = .71, p = .61 \).

For High School 5 there was a significant difference in the scores for the 2012-2013 GPA, (M = 1.90, SD = .58) and the 2013-2014 GPA, (M = 2.38, SD = .63); \( t (17) = -3.98, p = .00 \). For High School 5 there were no significant difference in the average number of absences for the 2012-2013 school year, (M = 6.06, SD = 5.18) and the 2013-2014 school year absence, (M = 6.18, SD = 4.59); \( t (16) = -.134, p = .90 \). For High School 5 for the school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 there were no discipline issues.

The following Table 6 represents school level paired t-test analyses for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. The variables GPA, absence and discipline were analyzed for changes between years one and two for each five high schools urban male athlete. A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare school level GPA, absence and discipline in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.
Table 6
Paired T-Test of Each High School for School Year 2012-2013 & 2013-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School 1</th>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>GPA 12-13</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School 1</td>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>*2.28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-2.67</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 1</td>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>GPA 13-14</td>
<td>*2.58</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 1</td>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>Absent 12-13</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 2</td>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Absent 13-14</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 3</td>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Discipline 12-13</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 3</td>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Discipline 13-14</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 3</td>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 3</td>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>*10.53</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>-4.38</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 4</td>
<td>Pair 2</td>
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<td>*18.89</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Absent 13-14</td>
<td>*16.17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13.56</td>
<td>3.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Discipline 12-13</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-5.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>Discipline 13-14</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.50</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>*2.25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 4</td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>*1.93</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.19</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 4</td>
<td>Absent 12-13</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.44</td>
<td>2.69</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 4</td>
<td>Absent 13-14</td>
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<td>9.01</td>
<td>1.80</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pair 5</td>
<td>Discipline 12-13</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 5</td>
<td>Discipline 13-14</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 5</td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>*1.90</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-3.98</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 5</td>
<td>GPA 13-14</td>
<td>*2.38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Pair 5</td>
<td>Absent 12-13</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>-13</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pair 5</td>
<td>Absent 13-14</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Pair 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>Pair 5</td>
<td>Discipline 13-14</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05
**District wide analysis.**

Table 7 represents paired t-test results for the district in GPA, absence and discipline in years 2012-2013 to 2013-2014. The t-test was conducted to evaluate whether differences were noted in the variables, GPA, absence and discipline between years one and two. Table 7 results show the GPA comparison between year one (2012-2013) and year two (2013-2014). In year one, the overall district average was (M = 2.12, SD = .79) compared to year two, (M = 2.18, SD = .83).

District wide there was no significant difference in GPA comparison between years one and two. In comparison of absence from year one to year two, a significant difference was noted from year one (M = 8.61, SD = 8.87) to year two (M = 12.48, SD = 10.55), with an increase in year two (1.68). In comparison of discipline between year one and year two, no significant difference was noted in year one (M = 1.75, SD = 1.77), to year two (M = 1.92, SD = 1.00). Comparing the overall GPA district wide in 2012-2013 (2.11GPA) in Table 7, there was a small increase to 2013-2014 (2.18 GPA), following the implementation of the 2.0 GPA play policy. However, there was no significant difference at p = .32. For absenteeism there was a significant difference with, p < .01. Absenteeism was higher after one semester of implementation with the average number of absences per student increasing from 8.61 to 12.48 days. Discipline averaged 1.75 days of suspension before and 1.92 days of suspension, post one semester of the 2.0 GPA play policy, a difference of .17 days of suspension. However, analysis using the t-test showed no significant difference (p = .812).

Table 7

*District Level Paired Samples Test 2012-2013 & 2013-2014*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA 13-14</td>
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<td>2.18</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent 12-13</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>*8.61</td>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>-3.76</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent 13-14</td>
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<td>*12.48</td>
<td>10.55</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline 12-13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>-.244</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline 13-14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05*
Table 7 represents paired t-test results for the district in GPA, absence and discipline in years 2012-2013 to 2013-2014. The t-test was conducted to evaluate whether differences were noted in the variables, GPA, absence and discipline between years one and two. Table 7 results show the GPA comparison between year one (2012-2013) and year two (2013-2014). In year one, the overall district average was (M = 2.12, SD = .79) compared to year two, (M = 2.18, SD = .83).

The following Table 8 is a Pearson correlation that was computed to assess the relationship among GPA, absence and discipline for school year 2012-2013. The variable GPA shows there is a correlation between the variables GPA and absence, $r = .36$, $n = 117$, $p < .01$. The variable discipline shows there is a correlation between discipline and absenteeism, $r = .68$, $n = 24$, $p < .01$. Overall, there was a significant correlation between GPA and absence, as GPA decreased, absenteeism increased. A correlation was also detected between discipline and absenteeism, as discipline increased, absenteeism increased. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). A scatterplot summarizes the results between the three variables (Figure 7).

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>GPA 12-13</th>
<th>Absent 12-13</th>
<th>Discipline 12-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.36</td>
<td>-.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>* .68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>* .00</td>
<td>* .00</td>
<td>* .00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>* .00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 is a Pearson correlation that was computed to assess the relationship among GPA, absence and discipline for school year 2012-2013. The variable GPA shows there is a correlation between the variables GPA and absence, $r = .36$, $n = 117$, $p < .01$. The variable
discipline shows there is a correlation between discipline and absenteeism, \( r = .68, n = 24, p = < .01 \).

![Figure 7. Scatterplot correlation for GPA, absence and discipline for school year 2012-2013.](image)

Overall, in Figure 7 there was a significant correlation between GPA and absence, as GPA decreased, absenteeism increased. A correlation was also detected between discipline and absenteeism, as discipline increased, absenteeism increased.

Table 9 presents a Pearson correlation that was computed to assess the relationship among GPA, absence and discipline for school year 2013-2014. The variable GPA shows there is a correlation between the variables GPA and absence, \( r = -.47, n = 95, p = < .01 \). The variable discipline shows there is a correlation between discipline and absenteeism, \( r = .49, n = 28, p = < .01 \). The variable discipline shows a correlation between discipline and GPA, \( r = -.39, n = 28, p = < .05 \). Overall, there was a correlation between GPA and absence, as GPA decreased, absenteeism increased. A correlation was also detected between discipline and absenteeism, as discipline increased, absenteeism increased and between discipline and GPA. As discipline increased, GPA decreased. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). A scatterplot summarizes the correlation results between the three variables (see Figure 8).
Table 9
2013-2014 GPA, Absence and Discipline Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>GPA 13-14</th>
<th>Absent 13-14</th>
<th>Discipline 13-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.47</td>
<td>-.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>* .00</td>
<td>* .04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent 13-14</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.39</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>* .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

In the Figure 8 scatterplot that follows, a correlation was also detected between discipline and absenteeism, as discipline increased, absenteeism increased and between discipline and GPA. As discipline increased, GPA decreased.

![Figure 8](image_url)

Figure 8. Scatterplot correlation between GPA, absence and discipline 2013-2014.
What are the GPA’s Two Semesters After the 2.0 Play Policy is Implemented? (Post Study Analysis)

In running the data for post analysis the paired t-test only captured students paired from year 2012-2013. Students at school level who transferred more than once could not be calculated on school level data. Those students who transferred are included on district level data. Statistical numbers will vary slightly from the first data set comparison 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 because of the student mobility.

The following Table 10 represents school level paired t-test analyses for 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school years. The variable GPA was analyzed for changes between year one and year three midyear for each five high schools urban males athletes. A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare school level GPA, in the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school years. Absence and discipline were not analyzed with the mid-year GPA analysis. The results represented in this table are described in the next section, followed by the table.

For High School 1 there was no significant difference between year one and three in the GPA scores comparison. For the 2012-2013 GPA school year, (M = 2.33, SD = .79), and for the 2014-2015 mid-year GPA scores, (M = 2.62, SD = .65); $t (10) = -1.50, p = .17$.

For High School 2 there was not a significant difference between year one and three in the GPA scores comparison. For the 2012-2013 school year, (M = 2.04, SD = .93) and the 2014-2015 mid-year GPA scores, (M = 2.34, SD = 1.15); $t (19) = -1.97, p = .06$.

For High School 3 there was no significant difference between year one and three in the GPA scores comparison. For the 2012-2013 school year, (M = 2.06, SD = .67), and for the 2014-2015 mid-year GPA scores, (M = 2.19, SD = 1.24); $t (18) = -.47, p = .64$.

For High School 4 there was no significant difference between year one and year three in the GPA scores comparison. For the 2012-2013 school year, (M = 2.23, SD = .92) and for the 2014-2015 mid-year GPA scores, (M = 1.98, SD = 1.06); $t (23) = 1.75, p = .09$.

For High School 5 there was a significant difference between year one and year three in the GPA scores comparison. For the 2012-2013 school year, (M = 1.93, SD = .48) and the 2014-2015 mid-year GPA scores, (M = 2.41, SD = .76); $t (15) = -2.64, p = .02$. 
Table 10

*High School Level Paired T-Test for 2012-2013 to 2014-2015 Mid-Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Schools</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00 Pair 1</td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-1.50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GPA 14-15 Mid-Year</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>-1.97</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.00 Pair 1</td>
<td>GPA 14-15 Mid-Year</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.26</td>
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<td>GPA 12-13</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>.67</td>
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<td>-.47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
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<td>19</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.28</td>
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<td></td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00 Pair 1</td>
<td>GPA 14-15 Mid-Year</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GPA 12-13</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-2.64</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>*.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00 Pair 1</td>
<td>GPA 14-15 Mid-Year</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

Table 10 represents school level paired t-test analyses for 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school years. The variable GPA was analyzed for changes between year one and year three midyear for each five high schools urban males athletes. A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare school level GPA, in the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school years. Absence and discipline were not analyzed with the mid-year GPA analysis.

**District wide analysis GPA comparison 2012-2013 and 2014-2015.**

The following Table 11 represents paired t-test results for the district in GPA, in years 2012-2013 to 2014-2015. The t-test was conducted to evaluate whether differences were noted in the variable GPA, between years one and three (mid-year). Table 11 results show the GPA comparison between year one (2012-2013) to year two (2013-2014) and year one (2012-2013) and year three (2014-2015). In year one, the overall district average was (M = 2.11, SD = .79) and in comparison to year three (mid-year) it was (M = 2.26, SD = 1.04); \( t (88) = -1.57, p = .12 \). The second comparison was year one (M = 2.11, SD = .79) to year two, (M = 2.18, SD = .84); \( t (93) = -1.05, p = .30 \). District wide, there was no statistical significant difference in GPA.
comparison between years one and two, nor between year one and year three mid-year. A small increase in GPA is noted between each years’ analysis.

Table 11

*District Level Paired T-Test 2012-2013 and 2014-2015*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>GPA12-13</th>
<th>GPA14-15MidYear</th>
<th>GPA12-13</th>
<th>GPA13-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 represents paired t-test results for the district in GPA, in years 2012-2013 to 2014-2015. The t-test was conducted to evaluate whether differences were noted in the variable GPA, between years one and three (mid-year). Table 11 results show the GPA comparison between year one (2012-2013) to year two (2013-2014) and year one (2012-2013) and year three (2014-2015).

**District player enrollment by high school and year.**

The following Table 12 contains the football player enrollment for each high school by year. In addition, the chart contains the in-district and out of district transfers for each high school. There were 13 total in-district transfers over the three year period with High School 2 and 4, recording the most in-district transfers with 4 each. There were 20 total out of district transfers with High School 3 and High School 5 recording the most with 7 transfers for High School 3 and High School 5 with 5 transfers. In total, 33 student athletes (football players) either moved to another in district high school or another out of district high school during the three year 2.0 play policy GPA study.
Table 12

District Player Enrollment by High School and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School 1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 contains the football player enrollment for each high school by year. In addition, the chart contains the in-district and out of district transfers of athletes for each high school during the duration of the study.

What Effect Does an Academic Coach Have on the Urban Male Athlete’s Academics?

The following Table 13, represents a comparison of the 2.0 GPA play policy for each urban high school from year one (pre 2.0 GPA play policy) to year three (two semesters post 2.0 GPA play policy) indicating how many years there was an academic coach at each school.
Table 13

*Analysis of Academic Coach Effect on GPA at High Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13, represents a comparison of the 2.0 GPA play policy for each urban high school from year one (pre 2.0 GPA play policy) to year three (two semesters post 2.0 GPA play policy) indicating how many years there was an academic coach at each school.

High School 1 (academic coach for three years) averaged 2.11 in 2012-2013, the first year prior to the 2.0 GPA play policy implementation. In year two, the average GPA one semester post implementation was 2.66. The average GPA for High School 1 was .55 higher after one semester of implementation of the GPA policy and after two semesters (2014-2015 mid-year) post policy it was .51 higher after implementation, a difference in -.04 (slightly lower) post 2.0 GPA play policy implementation with a GPA of 2.62.

High School 2 (academic coach for two years) averaged 2.00 in 2012-2013, the first year prior to the 2.0 GPA play policy implementation. In year two, the average GPA one semester post implementation was 2.04. The average GPA for High School 2 was .04 higher after one semester of implementation of the GPA policy and after two semesters (2014-2015 mid-year) post policy it was .34 higher after implementation with a GPA of 2.34.
High School 3 (academic coach for one year) averaged 2.02 in 2012-2013, the year prior to the 2.0 GPA play policy implementation. In year two, the average GPA one semester post implementation was 2.06. The average GPA for High School 3 was .04 higher after one semester of implementation of the GPA policy and after two semesters (2014-2015 mid-year) post policy it was .17 higher after implementation with a GPA of 2.19.

High School 4 (academic coach for one three years) averaged 2.21 in 2012-2013, the year prior to the 2.0 GPA play policy implementation. In year two, the average GPA one semester post implementation was 2.00. The average GPA for High School 4 was .21 lower after one semester of implementation of the GPA policy and after two semesters (2014-2015 mid-year) post policy it was .23 lower after implementation with a GPA of 1.98.

High School 5 (academic coach for two years) averaged 1.90 in the year prior to the 2.0 GPA play policy implementation. In year two, the average GPA one semester post implementation was 2.32. The average GPA for High School 4 was .42 higher after one semester of implementation of the GPA policy and after two semesters (2014-2015 mid-year) post policy it was .51 higher after implementation with a GPA of 2.41.

The two post semesters varied for results at each high school. High School 1 (academic coach 3 years) had the largest increase in the first semester post (2012-2013) at .25 and again increasing to .29, (2014-2015 mid-year). High School 4 (academic coach 3 years) had the only decrease in GPA the first semester post at -.23 and second semester post, -.25. The GPA’s in the first semester post implementation at the two schools with academic coaches for 2 years also varied with High School 2 recording a small increase the first semester post in GPA at .05 and second semester post at .30. High School 5 (academic coach 2 years) showed the overall largest GPA increase at .48, one semester post and .51, two semesters post. High School 3 (academic coach 1 year) increased both semesters at .08 and .14.

**Number of changes in head football coach by high school.**

The following Table 14, illustrates the changes in head football coach at each school and GPA change for each of the five high school football teams during the three year study of the 2.0 GPA play policy.
Table 14

Number of Changes in Head Football Coach by High School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Number of Head Football Coach Changes during Study</th>
<th>Overall Change in GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Data

The previous data were used to examine whether a 2.0 GPA play policy makes a difference in the academic achievement of football players in five inner city high schools. The following questions were used to analyze the data of GPA, discipline and attendance at the high schools.

What effect does athletic participation have on the achievement outcomes of urban male athletes participating in football? The statistical data show a significant difference in the district level results between the pre and post GPA data for High School 5 with a significance level at .02. The GPA for High School 5 in 2012-2013 was 1.90, and in 2014-2015 mid-year it was 2.32 with a gain of .42. High school 1 improved its overall GPA but not at a statistical difference. The data, however, show a small gain district wide between pre (2.11) and post (2.26) 2.0 GPA play policy. Among the high school comparisons, there was significance found with High School 5, GPA comparison between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 mid-year with p = .02.

A GPA comparison was calculated for each high school, and four of the five high schools were able to show a small increase in their GPA between years one and two. One school, High School 4, did post an initial decrease in GPA by .32 (2.25 vs 1.93 avg.) and two semesters post (2014-2015) recorded the lowest GPA with 1.98. In a district wide analysis, a small increase in GPA average was noted between years one and two. In 2012-2013, the district GPA was 2.11, and in 2013-2014 the district GPA was 2.18. In the final year of the study, the first semester of
2014-2015 mid-year which is 2 semesters post 2.0 play policy implementation, all the schools showed improvement with a district overall average of 2.26, except High School 4 which decreased slightly from year two to 1.98 overall team GPA.

What effect does the 2.0 eligibility rule have on the urban male high school football student athlete’s school performance (with or without an academic coach) related to attendance, GPA, and discipline? Statistically, in the 2012-2013 t-test comparisons (see Table 6) there is significance shown when analyzing the preliminary data. High School 1 and 5 show positive increases that continue through the 2014-2015 mid-year data. While, High School 5 showed a decrease in the first and second semester post 2.0 play policy implementation. An effect on absence and GPA is illustrated in the 2012-2013 to 2013-2014 paired t-test for High School 2 and 3 (see Table 6). Absenteeism rose during the second year of the study and correlated with a small effect on absentee rate for the students among the five schools. Student mobility was notable at each high school (see Table 12). The recorded transition of students resulted in 20 school system withdraws and 13 transfers into the other district high schools.

What effect does an academic coach have on the urban male athlete’s academics? In the 2012-2013 school year, two of the five high schools utilized an academic coach. In the 2013-2014 school year, four of the five high schools utilized an academic coach and in 2014-2015, all five high schools utilized an academic coach. All schools showed some growth, except for High School 4, despite having an academic coach for all three years of the study. The years the head football coaches were in their position and the difference in GPA was also tracked. Research has shown that advice and support provided to student athletes from their coaches has a positive impact on the athlete and coach relationship, while the absence of these qualities can have a negative influence (Rhind & Jowett, 2010).
Chapter 5
Restatement of the Purpose

This chapter provides a review of the purpose and methodology of the effects of minimum academic standards on athletes. Findings and implications of findings for practice will be discussed, as well as suggestions for future studies. The chapter concludes with reflection from the researcher on conducting and developing this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine athletic participation and academic coaching and their relationship to the school performance data of urban male high school students participating in football, before and after the implementation of the 2.0 GPA play policy. The researcher examined what relationship, if any, participation in athletics and the availability of an academic coach for football teams have on discipline, attendance, and grade point average.

This study researched the effects of minimum academic standards on athletes to increase their academic success, attendance rates, reduce discipline infractions and subsequently, increase graduation rates. Student athletes constantly strive to achieve balance between their academic and athletic achievements. It was observed through the literature review that unlike other students, athletes are often required to adhere to academic rules and requirements mandated by athletic leagues and school districts to participate in a sport. In this research study, urban student athletes were required to take at least five classes and maintain a 2.0 GPA overall or semester average to participate.

The researcher used SPSS to analyze the data and make calculated assumptions on the impact of the 2.0 GPA play policy on athletes participation. The overarching research question was what effect does athletic participation have on the achievement outcomes of urban male athletes participating in football in a division where a 2.0 GPA eligibility rule was established? The following research sub-questions were addressed in the study:

1. What effect does the 2.0 eligibility rule have on the urban male high school football student athlete’s school performance (with or without an academic coach) related to attendance, GPA, and discipline after one semester of implementation?
2. What are the football players GPA’s two semesters after the 2.0 GPA play policy is implemented?
3. What effect does an academic coach have on the urban male athlete’s academics?
The information that follows yields the findings from the data and analyses in chapter 4. The literature on the topic of academic requirement substantiates the positive and negative impact that athletic participation can have on the academic and overall success of urban males. When examining urban male athletes, there must be a multidimensional approach to understand factors that promote or hinder academic success.

**Findings**

**Finding 1: Although not statistically significant, there was an increase in the overall district GPA for football players in the division after the implementation of the 2.0 GPA rule.** Four of the five schools had an increase in GPA after the implementation of the 2.0 GPA rule, with one of the schools having a statistically significant increase. The data show a small gain district wide between pre (2.11) and post (2.26) 2.0 GPA play policy. Among the high school comparisons there was significance found with High School 5, GPA comparison between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 mid-year with p = .02.

A simple GPA average comparison was calculated for each high school and, four of the five high schools were able to show a small increase in their GPA between years one and two. One school, High School 4 did post an initial decrease in GPA by .23 (2.21 vs 1.98 avg.) and, two semesters post (2014-2015) recorded the lowest GPA with 1.98. In a district wide analysis, a small increase in GPA average was noted between years one and two. In 2012-2013, the district GPA was 2.11 and in 2013-2014 the district GPA was 2.18. In the final year of the study, the first semester of 2014-2015 mid-year which is 2 semesters post 2.0 play policy implementation, all the schools showed improvement with a district overall average of 2.26, except High School 4 which decreased slightly from year two to year three with a 1.98 overall team GPA.

Statistically, the research data results through t-test comparisons illustrate the overall team averages do reflect growth. The growth was minimal overall for each high school district wide post 2.0 GPA play policy implementation, with an increase from year one (2012-2013) at 2.11 to year three mid-year (2014-2015) to 2.26. All high schools showed growth except High School 4, which dropped to 1.93 GPA in the final data.

Setting minimum academic requirements to participate in sports can have varying effects on student achievement (Vidal-Fernandez, 2011). Self-motivation can play a key role in student success and the improvement of the academic performance of marginal students who have a
strong preference for participating in athletics. Competitiveness in sports may contribute to a harder work effort focused on achieving at least minimal, and possibly higher, academic goals. The Lumpkin and Favor (2012) study suggested that athletes may enjoy the prominent status attached to being an athlete because they receive more encouragement and praise for their efforts than do non-athletes. Thus, maintaining athletic eligibility becomes a priority (Lumpkin and Favor, 2012).

**Finding 2: There was a decrease in the overall district attendance for football players in the division after the implementation of the 2.0 GPA rule.**

In the 2012-2013 school year, the variable GPA showed there is a correlation between the variables GPA and absence, \( r = -.47, n = 95, p = < .01 \). The variable discipline shows there is a correlation between discipline and absenteeism, \( r = .49, n = 28, p = < .01 \). Overall, there was a correlation between GPA and absence, as GPA decreased, absenteeism increased. A correlation was also detected between discipline and absenteeism, as discipline increased, absenteeism increased. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). A scatterplot summarized the correlation results between the three variables (see Figure 8).

In the 2013-2014 school year, the variable GPA shows there is a correlation between the variables GPA and absence, \( r = -.47, n = 95, p = < .01 \). Overall, there was a correlation between GPA and absence, as GPA decreased, overall absenteeism increased. A small effect on absence and GPA in school year 2013-2014 is reflected between schools. Absenteeism rose during the second year of the study and showed significance at High Schools 2 and 3. This correlated with a small effect on absentee rate for the students among the five schools (see Figure 9).

In the Vidal- Fernandez study (2011) about the effect of minimum academic requirements to participate in sports on high school graduation, students who were involved in a sport had significantly higher grade point averages during their sport season compared to their grade point averages when the students were not in season. This fact of improved grades has been proven over and over. Schools invest large amounts of resources into these activities under the well-supported assumption that these activities increase levels of student performance (i.e. grade point average, attendance, dropout rate, etc.). This research studied students who participate in athletics and whether they perform better academically due to their participation and influence.
Finding 3: There was a correlation in the district discipline increase, absenteeism increase and GPA decrease for football players in the division after the implementation of the 2.0 GPA rule.

In the 2012-2013 school year, the variable discipline shows there is a correlation between discipline and absenteeism, $r = .68$, n = 24, $p < .01$. A correlation was also detected between discipline and absenteeism, as discipline increased, absenteeism increased. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). In the 2013-2014 school year, the variable discipline shows there is a correlation between discipline and absenteeism, $r = .49$, n = 28, $p < .01$. A correlation was also detected between discipline and absenteeism, as discipline increased, absenteeism increased and between discipline and GPA. As discipline increased, GPA decreased. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Participating in athletics may be particularly beneficial to ethnic minorities. In the Lumpkin and Favor (2012) study, 213 African American non-athletes dropped out of school compared to only 13 athletes in the 2012 study. Black non-athletes were found to be 16 times more likely to drop out of school than Black athletes. The 2012 study found huge differences between athletes and non-athletes in GPA, graduation, and dropout rates (Lumpkin & Favor, 2012).

Competitiveness in sports may contribute to a harder work effort focused on achieving at least minimal, and possibly higher, academic goals. The Lumpkin and Favor (2012) study suggested that athletes may enjoy the prominent status attached to being an athlete because they receive more encouragement and praise for their efforts than do non-athletes. Thus, maintaining athletic eligibility becomes a priority. Levin (2004) found there is a need to identify students who are at risk because of their failure to attend school, earn passing grades, comply with school discipline, and/or productively engage with educational expectations. From the perspective of schools, such identification might be seen as a means of helping to plan needed interventions for these students (Levin, 2004).

Finding 4: Student mobility was notable at each high school during the three-year study. Of the 117, ninth and tenth grade high school football players from each high school, 33 student athletes either moved to another school in district or moved to another school district. High School 1 recorded 4 out of district and 3 in district transfers. High School 2 recorded 2 out of district and 4 in district transfers. High School 3 recorded 7 out of district and 2 in district
transfers. High School 4 recorded 2 out of district and 4 in district transfers. High School 5 recorded 5 out of district and 0 in district transfers. The district wide transition of students, resulted in 20 school system withdraws and 13 transfers into the other district high schools.

Mobility has been recognized in the educational arena as an impediment to educational growth (Rumberger, 2003). A student’s school attendance has been seen as a key factor in the effectiveness of the overall academic success of the student (Durante, Fisher, Matthews, Nakagawa & Stafford, 2002). Rumberger (2002) discussed and stressed the consequences of student mobility and identifying the cause is equally important. Student mobility varies among students, races, schools and districts but is often found in districts that have a high population of minority students and often experience problems adjusting to their new school environment and missed classroom instruction time because of relocation (Rumberger, 2002). After a single move, it takes four to six months for mobile students to recover academically (Black, 2006).

Stakeholders at all educational levels, national to district, must collaborate and plan in order to successfully remedy the problem. Student mobility is a contributor to academic failure, behavior issues and dropouts (Durante etc. 2002).

Finding 5: Throughout the study each high school except one showed growth in GPA from the beginning of the study in 2012-2013 until the end of the study in 2014-2015 mid-year. The second question, what are the GPA’s two semesters after the 2.0 play policy is implemented? Of the five high schools, High School 5 showed statistical significance from beginning to end with a steady increase and final growth of .51 in GPA percentage. High School 4 was the only high school to decrease each year, ending the study below the 2.0 GPA play policy, at 1.98. District wide the school division did not show significance statistically however; there was growth from year one at 2.11 GPA to year three mid-year at 2.26 GPA.

Too often, young urban males envision athletics as the only pathway to success. Lapchick, Jitnurse & Moss (2010) found in their study that Black males disproportionately underperform in U.S. public schools, but are overwhelmingly represented in college and professional spectator, revenue-generating sports such as basketball and football. For example, Black males represent about 6% of the total U.S. population, but comprise over 66% of professional football players and 82% of professional basketball players (Lapchick, Jitnurse, & Moss, 2010). Black males represent only 3% of physicians and surgeons and 2% of attorneys (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Athletics is seen as a way that youth who are at risk can
surmount the obstacles and challenges they face in their communities and schools. Athletics can engage students so they do not drop out of school.

That Black students are not expected to do well in the classroom, but on the basketball court, is in part a reflection of the messages they receive from their teachers and coaches, and the hidden curriculum pertaining to racial stereotypes (James, 2012, p. 477).

**Finding 6: The number of years that a school employed an academic coach varied from school to school, and did not show a statistical effect on GPA.** The two high schools with an academic coach for three years showed completely different results with High School 1 showing GPA improvement (.29) each year and High School 4 decreasing GPA (-.25) each year. The two high schools with an academic coach for two years both increased their GPA each year. High School 2 increased (.30) and High School 5 increased GPA every year and showed the most improvement (.51) over the three year period of all the urban high schools studied. High School 3 (.14) showed a slight increase despite only having an academic coach in place for one semester (first year of implementation).

Academic support for athletes can be a useful tool for success if supported and maintained in the school. In the 2003 study of Advising Student Athletes by Gaston-Gayles, one of the findings in support of academic advisors is the level of cooperation between advisors, coaches and students. Coaches who understand the importance of earning a degree and the academic mission whether at high school or college help create a positive environment and communicate this effectively to the athletes (Gaston-Gayles, 2003).

**Finding 7: Those schools that experienced more than one football team coach over the three-year period showed increased absenteeism and discipline and lower GPA averages.** The relationship between coach and athlete has been the subject of many researchers. Coaches provide guidance, advice and serve as role models to many student athletes. The two high schools with the most growth in GPA (.29 and .51) and no coaching changes during the three year study period were High School’s 1 and 5. The other three high schools experienced two coaching changes during the three year study period. High schools 2 and 3 showed improvement (.14 and .30) and High School 4 decreased (.25). The significance of a coach’s role can play a big part in the athlete’s life. Researchers Rhind and Jowet (2010), found that advice and support provided to student athletes from their coaches has a positive impact on the
student athlete and coach relationship. The absence of these variables has a negative influence on the relationship (Rhind & Jowett 2010).

In the Arman study (2013) the student athletes stated that one of the reasons why they looked up to their coach was because their coach was successful and they wanted to be successful like them. One of the important findings stated by Arman (2013) by the student athletes was that interactions with their coaches were pertinent to the student athlete being persistent in their academics.

**Implications**

Based on the findings from this study of athletes and academic requirements, there are potential implications for school administrators, academic and athletic coaches and division level leadership.

**School leaders, as the instructional leaders in their buildings, should demonstrate a commitment to the academic success of the athletes by working with the academic and team coaches.** The principal is the leader of the school and influences the actions of those within the school environment. Exhibiting support could increase the success of the academic initiative.

Of all the challenges we face in education today, one of the greatest is the challenge of motivating, educating, and empowering Black males (Schott, 2012). This group of students in crisis is evident on multiple levels, starting with graduation rates.

**School leaders should investigate and establish programs to address the absenteeism of athletes.** Discussions with teachers, coaches, and students could lead to the identification of the cause of increase in absenteeism, setting the stage for changing this academic phenomenon.

Bhattacharjee (2003) and Henry and Tator (2010), found that the intervention measures, such as mentorship programs, had an impact on the risky practices and circumstances of students, particularly African Canadian (used interchangeably with Black) males.

**School leaders in systems that have high mobility within the division should consider working together with other leaders in the system to provide common expectations for the athletes as they move from school to school.** Consistency and shared information throughout the school system can ease the transition of mobile (transient) students.

Interruptions such as transiency can cause academic failure and social distress in the academic setting. After a single move, it takes four to six months for mobile students to recover
academically (Black, 2006). Academic time can never be regained. Often these same students become situated at their new school and move again. Paik & Phillips (2002) discuss that the correlation of academic expectations of these students also determines their academic success. There is great importance with the family and school support in predicting the student’s academic success.

**School leaders should select athletic coaches who support the athlete’s academic performance and attendance, recognizing that the coach can influence those outcomes.** Not only having the same coach, but also having a consistent coach who expects athletes to attend and perform in the classroom can impact the athlete’s performance.

Student athletes reported that the coaches acted as a parental figure throughout their college career (Arman, 2013). The coaches reportedly advocated for athletes, and their academic beliefs were similar to their own parents. The student athletes stated that one of the reasons why they looked up to their coach was because their coach was successful and they wanted to be successful like him/her (Arman, 2013). One of the important findings discovered by Arman (2013) by the student athletes was that interactions with their coaches were pertinent to the student athletes being persistent in their academics.

**Division leaders should not solely rely on a 2.0 GPA Rules for absence, discipline and academic achievement.** Academic interventions and tutorials should be put in place to support the student athletes below the 2.0 threshold to help them gain eligibility and achieve academic success.

Levin (2004) found there is a need to identify students who are at risk because of their failure to attend school, earn passing grades, comply with school discipline, and/or productively engage with educational expectations. From the perspective of schools, such identification might be seen as a means of helping to plan needed interventions for these students (Levin, 2004).

**Division leaders in systems that have academic coaches should provide professional development to the coaches and other staff members so that the coaching effectiveness is consistent and enhanced.** In this study, there were varying levels of effectiveness of the academic coaches, so a consistent professional development program for the division could have impacted their effectiveness.

Academic support, such as academic advisors, provides student athletes guidance to find the balance and success in their multiple roles of student athlete. The focus on academic support
is not just for maintaining athletic eligibility, but it should affect the development of the whole student through life skills (Gaston-Gayles, 2003).

Future Studies

The purpose of this study was to examine athletic participation, academic coaching and their relationship to the school performance data of urban male high school students participating in football, before and after the implementation of a 2.0 GPA play policy. The research examined what relationship, if any, participation in athletics and the availability of an academic coach had on discipline, attendance, and grade point average. The following are recommendation for future studies:

1. Future studies would benefit from a longer time period to collect GPA’s, attendance and discipline post the 2.0 play policy.
2. A qualitative study could be performed to include interviews of student athletes, and non-athletes about the GPA policy and their perspective on the effect that it has on their participation in athletics and on their academic achievement. It would be beneficial to ascertain the value perceived by students of a GPA play policy.
3. Interviews of academic and athletic coaches could yield information about the program from the school level perspective.
4. Interviews of athletic and/or academic coaches in schools where the GPA rule is effective could inform others regarding effective leadership related to student outcomes under the 2.0 GPA rule.
5. A follow up of the current study could include data for students that did not qualify for the 2.0 play policy and the effect not making the grade has on their academic performance. What effect was made if they were ever able to meet the criteria to play post 2.0 policy.
6. An academic analysis of student athletes who haven’t transferred or withdrawn from the school system could be studied.
7. Future studies could compare athlete and non-athlete GPA’s, absence and discipline.
8. Examine the direct and indirect impact of student mobility on a school’s academic success could be investigated.
Reflection

Although the results of this study do not show an overwhelming strong causal relationship between athletics and academics, the two variables do show a correlation among GPA, absence and discipline. Athletic involvement can bring positives to student’s lives and create lasting effects for years to come. Competitive sports demand commitment, hard work, concentration and perseverance. Many times the driving force behind a student’s interest in school is participation in athletics and other activities. The many lessons taught by being on a team can also relate to life with success and failure. The relationship between athletics and academics play an invaluable role in a student’s life and the benefits reach many perimeters.

During the end of this dissertation process a valuable example of the powerful relationship of athletics and academics came to light. One of the district high school teams qualified for the state basketball championships. A young athlete on the team was ineligible the first semester: however, he became eligible for the second semester and was a starting player who assisted the team in their journey to become state champions in their division. The athlete was motivated to reach the minimum GPA to participate and not only improved his personal outcomes, but undoubtably his team’s outcomes as well.

The research and findings on academics and athletics that were discovered through this process will allow myself and other educational leaders to develop programs in school districts to increase the academic success of all urban students. What has been learned could also help leaders in school systems to make informed decisions about student athlete programs, when selecting coaches, both academic and athletic. Subsequently, these research findings may assist educators make informed decisions on academic and scholarly policies concerning athletes.
References


Emdin, C. (2012). Yes, black males are different, but different is not deficient. Phi Delta Kappan, 93(5), 13-16.


Appendix A

Training in Human Subjects Protection Certificate

Certificate of Completion
This certifies that
Stefanie Celine Ramsey
Has completed
Training in Human Subjects Protection
On the following topics:
- Historical Basis for Regulating Human Subjects Research
- The Belmont Report
- Federal and Virginia Tech Regulatory Entities, Policies and Procedures

on

September 9, 2012

David Moore, IRB Chair
Appendix B
IRB Request Demographic Variables

Players and research

Fri, Oct 31, 2014 at 11:36 AM

Dear Ms. Ramsey:

As per your request, I have reviewed the approval letter for your dissertation research request. The letter states that you may use data that are routinely collected as part of your role as the instructional specialist for health and physical education. Therefore, these data would include students’ demographic variables as well as the student performance data that were specified in section #2. I hope this information will be helpful as you secure approval from your institution’s IRB.

Sincerely,

[Quoted text hidden]
Appendix C
District Approval Letter for Data

Ms. Stefanie Ramsey

Dear Ms. Ramsey:

It is with pleasure that I write to inform you that your request to conduct the research for your dissertation in the Schools has been approved. This approval is contingent upon the following conditions being met:

1. A copy of your Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter must be submitted to my office before any study activities can begin.

2. You may use GPA, attendance, and discipline data for high school football student athletes that are routinely collected as part of your role as the instructional specialist for health and physical education. However, all of these data must be stripped of unique personal identifiers prior to analysis.

3. Pseudonyms must be used for the school division and all participants in all reports/presentations about the study or its findings.

4. A copy of the final report of the study must be provided to my office upon completion and prior to publication.

Please confirm by e-mail ( ) that these conditions will be met. Once I receive your confirmation e-mail and a copy of your IRB approval letter, I will provide you with a final approval statement.

Congratulations upon reaching this stage in your doctoral studies. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

, Ph.D.
Coordinator, Research and Evaluation
MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 5, 2014

TO: Carol S Cash, Stefanie Celine Ramsey

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)

PROTOCOL TITLE: The Relationship Between Participation in Football and GPA, Discipline, and Attendance of Black Male High School Athletes Before and After the Introduction of the 2.0 GPA Play Policy in One School Division in Virginia.

IRB NUMBER: 14-090

Effective November 4, 2014, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators listed above are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5
Protocol Approval Date: November 4, 2014
Protocol Expiration Date: November 3, 2015
Continuing Review Due Date*: October 20, 2015

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal/work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply.