

# School Research Summaries Toolkit

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## Co-Curriculars & The Well-Rounded Student

Where do your students go when the last bell rings? At dismissal time, some kids hurry to catch the bus, punch in at a part-time job, or hang out with friends on a street corner. But others suit up for sports practice, paint props for the drama club, or study their next move in the school chess club. These students are involved in "more than just child's play," according to Steve Duncan at Montana State University.

Students who participate in structured extracurricular activities, are likely to have:

- **Higher academic achievement**
- **Higher levels of commitment to school**
- **Higher levels of attachment to school**

### *Additionally...*

- **Schools that encourage students to participate in after-school programs show significant declines in discipline problems & dropout rates.**

School officials who are struggling to balance budgets might consider cutting extracurricular activities. But the savings from such cuts are likely to be meager, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), which encourages cocurricular activities that support the academic mission of schools and teach students "lifelong lessons as important as those taught in the classroom." NFHS estimates that schools typically earmark only 1 to 3 percent of their total budgets for high school extracurricular programs. The funding -- which goes to pay teachers' extra-duty salaries, buy equipment, and provide transportation -- is "one of the best bargains around," NFHS says.

Black, S., (2002). The well-rounded student. *American School Board Journal*, v189, n6, p33.

## **Research Results: *Effective Schools***

### **Frequency With Which Variables Appeared in Effective-Schools Studies Groups**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency of Appearance in the Three Groups</b>
<b>High Expectations</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Safe &amp; Orderly Environment</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Clear &amp; Focused Mission</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Strong Leadership</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Monitoring Student Progress</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Staff Training</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Staff Control Instructional Decisions</b>	<b>1</b>

**Source:**

Rossow, L.F. (1990). *The Principalsip: Dimensions in Instructional Leadership*.  
New York: Prentice Hall. (Table 1.2 - Page 6)

## **Promoting School Connectedness**

Schools have always been an important place for intervention to improve student health. This analysis explored the association between attributes of schools and school connectedness to identify potential ways schools can improve student well being.

- The analysis revealed that school connectedness is lower in schools with difficult classroom management climates.
- The overall level of school connectedness is lower in schools that temporarily expel students for relatively minor infractions such as possessing alcohol, compared to schools with more lenient discipline policies.
- When students are permanently expelled for the first occurrence of an infraction, connectedness is lower still.
- Zero-tolerance policies, which mandate harsh punishment (usually expulsion) for the first occurrence of an infraction, seek to make schools safer. Yet, students in schools with harsh discipline policies report feeling less safe at school than do students in schools with more moderate policies.
- On average, students in smaller schools feel more attached to school than students in larger schools.
- Several researchers suggest that large school size negatively affects school connectedness because, in such settings, teachers cannot maintain warm, positive relations with all students. Class size was not associated with school connectedness.
- Students who participate in extracurricular activities, receive higher grades, skip school less & feel more attached.

1. Clea, A. McNeely, C.A. (2002). Promoting school connectedness. *Journal of School Health*, v72, i4, p138.
2. Joiner, L.L. (2002). Feeling connected to school is key to adolescent health. *American School Board Journal*, v189, n6, p6.

## **Student Achievement is Directly Related to a Teacher's Interpersonal Skills**

A teacher's interpersonal skills are crucial to creating/maintaining a positive working climate.

### **Two Dimensions of Communication**

- Dominance-Submission (Influence)
- Cooperation-Opposition (Proximity)

### **Good teachers are both highly dominant & highly cooperative**

- Strong classroom leaders
- Friendly
- More understanding
- Less critical
- Less uncertain
- Less dissatisfied

Wubbels, T., Levy, J., Brekelmans, M. (1997). Paying Attention to Relationships. Educational Leadership (April).