

PRINCE Leadership MONTHLY



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The Benefits of Participation

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As I think back on my time in middle school, I don't remember what I learned about on the Wednesday of the 5th week of the 1st quarter in Science or History class. I know I learned something that day, but I don't remember specifics. What I can remember when I think back to middle school are a number of the football, basketball and baseball games that I played as well as the theater arts play that I was a part of. I can remember some of the close games as well as some of the blow outs.

Growing up I enjoyed school, but what made me excited about it was the ability to participate in my co-curricular activities. I am sure a number of you who have middle schoolers of your own can think back to some of your own memories of participating in sports, band, theater arts, academic teams and so on. I want to share with you some of the information I have been able to find on the many benefits of middle school students participating in co-curricular activities.

My encouragement to all middle school students is to try as many things as you can during your three years in middle school. A big reason I give them this advice is because all of our middle school students are still learning who they are and what talents and gifts God has created them with. The best way for them to learn is to try something new. There is a chance they will not like it or will not be that good at what they are trying, but even through that process, they learn something about themselves and where they should be focusing their attention. Of course, there is a great chance they will really learn to like and appreciate whatever it is they are doing, and they will continue to unpack their many talents and gifts.

Not only does participation offer personal growth opportunities for students, but studies show other incredible benefits as well. Studies show that students who participate in co-curricular activities during middle school do better academically as well as making and keeping healthy friendships. Studies also suggest that an active middle school student will live a healthier lifestyle from creating good habits at a young age. In the study by Michael Gorton, "Exploring the impact of Sports Participation on Academic Achievement in a Middle School," he finds that



middle school students who participate in at least one co-curricular activity, on average, will perform better in the classroom, and their GPAs will be higher than a those of students who do not participate in out of classroom activities. The study also finds that the number of behavior referrals for co-curricular participants was lower than those that who did not participate.

We are almost a quarter of the way though the 2016-1017 school year which means there are still plenty of opportunities for your student to get involved this school year. We have basketball, swimming, baseball, track and field, tennis and soccer seasons still to be played. The middle school will also be putting on a Theater Arts production, and try-outs for that will be happening shortly. I would strongly encourage all middle school students to try something they haven't done before. You never know what will spark a passion in them.

References

Gorton, Michael J., "Exploring the Impact of Sports Participation on Academic Achievement in a Middle School" (2010). Counselor Education Master's Theses. Paper 40