



Student and Parent Athletics Survey Report

Key Findings

1. The top three reasons students do not participate in athletics are 1) *a lack of interest* 2) *participating would interfere with studies or other school activities* and 3) *their skills aren't good enough to make the team*.
2. 47% of Grade 8 students do not know what the requirements for participating in high school athletics are, yet, two-thirds of them indicated they plan to participate in athletics in high school.
3. Comments related to *Coaches* were the most common coded theme in the open-ended questions pertaining to both what MMSD athletics does well and how it could improve.

Background

As part of the work being conducted by MMSD's Cross-Functional Team on Athletics, students in grades 8 through 12, and high school parents were asked to participate in separate surveys focusing on athletics participation and perceptions of MMSD's athletics program.

Data and Methods

Between January 22 and February 5, 2016, the electronic survey links available in English, Hmong and Spanish were emailed to students in grades 8 through 12, and high school parents. Students were encouraged to participate in the survey by physical education teachers and through announcements. Parents and students received email reminders encouraging participation in the survey. There was a 20% response rate for students and parents. Response distributions were calculated for each closed-ended question for each respondent group. Responses to open-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive coding (summarizing in a word the basic topic of a passage of data) to categorize the topic(s) of each.

Respondents:

Respondent Demographics	Parents	Grade 8 Students	High School Students
African American	5%	13%	8%
Asian	4%	5%	10%
Hispanic/Latino	3%	15%	13%
Multiracial	3%	7%	6%
White	84%	60%	56%
Female	69%	52%	54%
Low Income	9%	35%	26%
ELL	1%	14%	17%
Spec Ed	6%	6%	7%

Respondents to the parent survey who self-reported their demographics were overwhelmingly White (84%) and female (69%).

Similarly, the majority of students who participated were primarily White (60% at Grade 8 and 56% at high school) and female (52% at Grade 8 and 54% at high school).

When compared to the demographics of the district as a whole, there was over-representation among White and not low income students and under-representation among African American, special education and low income students.

Findings

The section below outlines the findings for closed-ended questions on the student survey, followed by the parent survey. For the closed ended questions, we have included response distributions for overall results and narrative description of results by group. For the open ended questions that were common across the student and parent



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Student Survey Questions

The table below shows the questions on student surveys. Questions varied by grade level as indicated by check marks in the columns on the right.

Student Survey Questions	Grade 8	High School
Please enter your student ID	✓	✓
Q1 In middle school, did you participate in organized athletics through private clubs, camps or community recreation programs?	✓	✓
Q2 How many years did you participate in private club, camps or community recreation athletics?	✓	✓
Q3 Have you received information about participating in high school athletics?	✓	
Q4 Do you know what the requirements are for participating in high school athletics?	✓	
Q5 Do you plan to participate in athletics in high school?	✓	
Q6 In high school, have you participated in any interscholastic athletics activities offered by your school- other than required physical education classes?		✓
Q7 In total, how many years have you participated in high school interscholastic athletics activities?		✓
Q8 Which athletics have you participated in? (Check all that apply)	✓	✓
Q9 Please check all the reasons you don't participate in athletics.	✓	✓
Q10 What keeps you playing athletics? (Check all that apply)		✓
Q11 While in high school, have you participated in organized athletics offered by private clubs, camps or community recreation programs?		✓
Q12 Did your club, camp or community recreation experience influence your decision to go out for High School athletics?		✓
Q13 What does the MMSD athletics program do well? (Open ended)		✓
Q14 How could MMSD athletics improve? (Open ended)		✓

The majority of Grade 8 and high school students, 76% and 72%, respectively, reported participation in organized athletics through private clubs, camps or community recreation programs during middle school.

Participation in organized athletics through private clubs, camps or community recreation programs	Grade 8 Students	High School Students
Q1 Percent of students who participated in organized athletics in Middle School through private clubs, camps or community recreation programs	76%	72%
Q11 Percent of students who participated in organized athletics in High School through private clubs, camps or community recreation programs	N/A	53%

Compared to middle school respondents, far fewer high school students (53% v. 76%) participate in athletics through private clubs, camps, or community recreation programs.

Among high school who participated in athletics during middle school, 79% went on to participate in high school athletics. Of the high school students who did not participate in athletics in middle school, nearly half (49%) reported participating in athletics in high school.

Regarding Q12 *Did your club, camp or community recreation experience influence your decision to go out for High School athletics?*, of those high school students who did participate in private clubs, camps, or community recreation programs, 61% said that experience influenced their decision to go out for high school athletics.



Q2 How many years did you participate in private club, camps or community recreation athletics?	Grade 8 Students	High School Students
1 Year	14%	14%
2 Years	11%	21%
3 Years	75%	65%

The majority of students in middle and high school, 75% and 65%, respectively, report participating in private clubs, camps, or community recreation athletics for 3 years.

Questions 3, 4 and 5, shown in the table below, that pertained to future participation in high school athletics appeared on the Grade 8 survey only. Less than half of the Grade 8 students surveyed (47%) indicated they received information about participating in high school athletics.

Grade 8 Students - Future Participation in Athletics	Yes	No
Q3 Have you received information about participating in high school athletics?	47%	53%
Q4 Do you know what the requirements are for participating in high school athletics?	53%	47%
Q5 Do you plan to participate in athletics in high school?	77%	23%

Of the 47% of Grade 8 students who responded they do not know what the requirements for participating in high school athletics are, interestingly, two-thirds indicated they plan to participate in athletics in high school.

Questions 6 and 7 pertained to interscholastic athletics and appeared on the high school student survey only. Seventy-two percent (72%) of high school students surveyed indicated they have participated in interscholastic athletics activities offered by their schools, other than required physical education classes. Among those who participated in interscholastic athletics, 36% participated for one year; 27% participated for 2 years; and 37% participated for 3 years or more.

Q8 Which athletic activities have you participated in? (Check all that apply)	Grade 8 Students	High School Students
Soccer	43%	25%
Cross Country	17%	20%
Track	14%	20%
Volleyball	24%	19%
Basketball	32%	16%
Swim/Dive	29%	12%
Football	20%	12%
Baseball	17%	16%
Tennis	19%	12%
Hockey	8%	4%
Softball	7%	6%
Cheer/Dance/Pom	11%	7%
Gymnastics	12%	4%
Golf	4%	3%
Wrestling	3%	4%

The most common athletic activity in which students participated was soccer, with 43% of Grade 8 students and 25% of high school students participating.



For Grade 8 students, the second and third most common athletics activities participated in were basketball (32%) and swim/dive (29%).

For high school students, the second and third most common athletics activities participated in were track and cross country (20% each) and volleyball (19%).

Q10 What keeps you playing athletics? (Check all that apply)	High School Students
It's fun	89%
It keeps me physically fit	85%
I get to spend time with friends	74%
I like being part of a team	73%
I like to compete	65%

High school students who participated in athletics were asked Q10 *What keeps you playing athletics?* and allowed to check all the reasons that applied.

The most common reasons, in order, that students cited for continuing to play athletics was fun (89%) and physical fitness (85%). The next most common reasons were to spend time with friends (74%); be part of a team (73%); and to compete (65%).

Students who reported they did not participate in athletics, were asked to indicate all the reasons why they didn't participate.

Q9 Please indicate the reasons you don't participate in athletics. (Check all that apply)	Grade 8 Students	High School Students
I'm not interested in athletics	69%	37%
Participating would interfere with studies or other school activities (clubs, fine arts, etc.)	56%	48%
My skills aren't good enough to make the team	49%	42%
It's not fun	47%	21%
My friends don't participate in athletics	19%	16%
It costs too much	12%	22%
There's too much pressure from adults	19%	17%
Athletics activity isn't offered through the school	13%	5%
I'm concerned about physical injuries	30%	11%
My disability or medical condition limits participation	9%	6%
Participating would interfere with a job	4%	24%
I didn't know I could participate	7%	10%

The most common reason Grade 8 students cited for not participating in athletics was a lack of interest (69%). The second most common reason was concerns that participating would interfere with studies or other school activities (56%) and the third most common reason was concerns that their skills aren't good enough to make the team (49%).

Among high school students, the most common reason for not participating in athletics was participating would interfere with studies or other school activities (48%). High school students' second most common reason was concerns that their skills aren't good enough to make the team (42%), followed by a lack of interest in athletics (37%).



Parent Survey Questions

The table below shows the questions on the high school parent survey.

Parent Survey Questions
Q1 Where did you learn about high school athletics opportunities?
Q2 Do any of your children participate in high school sponsored athletic programs?
Q3 Which high school athletic activities does your child / do your children participate in? (Check all that apply)
Q4 Excluding fees, how much do you spend on the following items for high school-sponsored athletics?
Q5 Excluding fees, how much do you spend on the following items for athletics offered through private clubs, lessons, camps or community recreation programs?
Q6 What is MMSD athletics doing well? (Open ended)
Q7 How could MMSD athletics improve? (Open ended)
Q8 Please indicate the reasons your child(ren) don't participate in athletics. (Check all that apply)

In response to Q1 *Where did you learn about high school athletics opportunities*, 40% of parents surveyed, learned about high school athletics opportunities during enrollment while 39% learned about them from other parents; 17% learned from private club/league/community recreation programs and 4% from coaches.

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of parents surveyed have children who participate in high school-sponsored athletic programs.

Q3 Which athletic activities do your children participate in? (Check all that apply)	Parents
Soccer	25%
Cross Country	22%
Track	19%
Volleyball	19%
Basketball	16%
Swim/Dive	15%
Football	14%
Baseball	12%
Tennis	11%
Hockey	6%
Softball	6%
Cheer/Dance/Pom	5%
Gymnastics	4%
Golf	3%
Wrestling	3%

In question 3, parents were asked to indicate the athletic activities in which their children participate.

Similar to the high school students' own survey responses, parents reported the most common sports their children participate in as soccer (25%), cross country (22%), and track or volleyball (19% each).

Questions 4 and 5, shown in the tables on the next page, asked parents about athletics-related spending for school-sponsored programs and athletics offered through private clubs, lessons, camps or community recreation programs.

For high school-sponsored athletics, the majority of parents reported spending between 0-\$299 on services/training (85%); apparel (84%); and equipment (77%).

For athletics offered through private clubs, lessons, camps or community recreation programs, parents' spending patterns differed somewhat.

Parents reported spending between 0-\$299 on apparel (81%); equipment (74%) and services/training (46%). The amounts spent on services/training varied greatly with 27% of parents spending \$900 or more on private clubs, lessons, camps or community recreation compared to just 3% spending that same amount on services/training related to high school athletics.



Q4 Excluding fees, how much do you spend on the following items for high school-sponsored athletics?	0-\$299	\$300-\$599	\$600-\$899	\$900 or more
Services/Training	84%	10%	2%	3%
Equipment	77%	16%	4%	3%
Apparel	84%	13%	2%	1%
Q5 Excluding fees, how much do you spend on the following items for athletics offered through private clubs, lessons, camps or community recreation programs?	0-\$299	\$300-\$599	\$600-\$899	\$900 or more
Services/Training	46%	17%	10%	27%
Equipment	74%	18%	3%	5%
Apparel	81%	14%	2%	3%

For parents who reported their children did not participate in athletics, they were asked to indicate all the reasons why their children didn't participate.

Similar to high school students' reporting, the top three reasons parents cited for their children not participating in athletics was lack of interest (52%), followed by interference with studies or other school activities (34%) and skills that aren't good enough to make the team (31%).

Q8 Please indicate the reasons your children don't participate in athletics. (Check all that apply)	Parents
Not interested in athletics	52%
Participating would interfere with studies or other school activities (clubs, fine arts, etc.)	34%
Skills aren't good enough to make the team	31%
It's not fun	17%
Friends don't participate in athletics	15%
It costs too much	12%
There's too much pressure from adults	11%
Athletics activity isn't offered through the school	10%
Concerned about physical injuries	10%
Disability or medical condition limits participation	8%
Participating would interfere with a job	5%
I didn't know my children/I could participate	4%

Open-Ended Responses - Common Across High School Student and Parent Surveys

Just under one-third of high school student respondents and nearly half of parents responded to the open-ended questions.

What does the MMSD athletics program do well?

The most common coded themes among responses to this question were in order, *Participation* and *Coaches*.



- Student comments regarding *Participation* included: “Allowing anyone and everyone to try out and participate in their sport of interest.” And “It allows anyone to participate, even if they aren't able to afford all that you can do with the sport outside the season at school. MMSD gives them a chance to try.” Parent comments related to *Participation* frequently referenced no-cut sports. “The culture of athletics is fantastic. The "walk-on" teams (no cuts) are great” and “Encouraging all kids to try out. Give less talented kids an opportunity to get playing time so they can improve.”
- Students’ comments related to *Coaches* focused on students’ positive experiences and skill of coaches. The words good and great were used frequently. “The coaches are very supportive and help all athletes to achieve their goals.” And “MMSD athletics does a great job hiring awesome coaches.” Parents’ comments pertaining to *Coaches* included: “Excellent coaches and mentors! MMSD sports give kids sense of community,” and “I am often impressed by the skill and devotion of the coaches.”

How could MMSD athletics improve?

The top two coded themes among student responses to the question were *Coaches* and *Facilities/Resources*.

- Students’ comments related to *Coaches* pertained to better coaching, and training. Suggestions included: “Hire coaches that actually played/ have the credentials to coach that sport” and “hire coaches that are teachers first then athletes, to know how to differentiate instructions so the kids can understand.” Parent comments related to *Coaches* often referenced specific sports or schools and tended to focus on “favoritism” “better coaching” or “training.” One parent suggested “closer supervision of coaching staff to ascertain that the positive behavioral approaches are used in coaching.”
- Students’ comments related to *Facilities/Resources* often did not elaborate beyond those words. For respondents who did offer specific suggestions, they included the need for practice space, extending weight room hours and improvements to the pool (*specific to West High School only*). Parent comments related to *Facilities/Resources* were wide-ranging and well-represented by “Many of the facilities are substandard and inadequate for children to compete within the conference at a high level. Lack of middle school athletics puts MMSD students at a disadvantage compared to the other schools in the conference. The coaching pay is too low and makes it a hardship on the coaches to devote time to the programs.”