

THE VALUE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS  
AS PERCEIVED BY MIDDLE SCHOOL  
ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY, AND  
NINTH AND TENTH GRADE  
STUDENT-ATHLETES IN  
TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By

STEPHANIE S. SPRING

Bachelor of Science  
Abilene Christian University  
Abilene, Texas, 1989

Master of Education  
Northeastern State University  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma, 1995

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College  
of the Oklahoma State University in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
December 2004

THE VALUE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS  
AS PERCEIVED BY MIDDLE SCHOOL  
ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY, AND  
NINTH AND TENTH GRADE  
STUDENT-ATHLETES IN  
TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Thesis Approved:

Steven Edwards

Thesis Advisor

Betty Edgley

Sarah Price

Kenneth Stern

A. Gordon Emslie

Dean of the Graduate College

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Dr. Steve Edwards, dissertation chair of my committee, a true educator and a true friend. I would also like to thank the other members of my graduate committee, Dr. Betty Edgley, Dr. Ken Stern and Dr. Sarah Price.

There are many who helped me during my journey to obtain this degree. Thanks to Nicole for surviving the many years of my commuting and going to class. To Larry and Sheila who's house served as my personal library every weekend for several years and to my parents who instilled in me the values of hard work and dedication.

Special thanks go to the administrators, faculty and students in Tulsa Public Schools who so willingly participated in this study.

Finally, I would like to thank Tammy Smith, assistant Director of Athletics for the Tulsa Public Schools for her help and support. Much appreciation goes to her for the many hours spent compiling data and assisting me with this project.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation in loving memory of my late secretary, Joanne Conner. She would be proud.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
Purpose of the Study . . . . .	7
Statement of the Problem . . . . .	9
Hypotheses . . . . .	10
Delimitations. . . . .	11
Limitations. . . . .	12
Assumptions. . . . .	13
Definitions . . . . .	14
II. LITERATURE REVIEW . . . . .	17
Benefits of Sports. . . . .	17
Sports and the Middle School Student. . . . .	20
Dangers of Organized Sports . . . . .	21
Summary . . . . .	23
III. METHODOLOGY . . . . .	26
Preliminary Procedures . . . . .	27
Selection of Subjects . . . . .	27
Selection of the Instrument . . . . .	28
Operational Procedures. . . . .	29
Collection of Data . . . . .	29
Research Design . . . . .	31
Statistical Analysis . . . . .	32
IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION . . . . .	33
Analysis of Overall Results. . . . .	42
Summary of Responses by Administrators. . . . .	42
Summary of Responses by Faculty. . . . .	45
Summary of Responses by Students . . . . .	48

Chapter	Analysis of Hypothesis Data . . . . .	51 Page
	Hypothesis One . . . . .	52
	Hypothesis Two . . . . .	58
	Hypothesis Three. . . . .	63
	Discussion of Results . . . . .	65
	V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. . . . .	.73
	Summary of Findings . . . . .	.73
	Conclusions . . . . .	.77
	Recommendations . . . . .	86
	Recommendations for Tulsa Public Schools. . .	.87
	Recommendations for Further Study . . . . .	87
	REFERENCES . . . . .	.89
	APPENDIXES . . . . .	.93
	APPENDIX A- ADMINISTRATOR COVER LETTER . . . . .	.94
	APPENDIX B- ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY . . . . .	96
	APPENDIX C- FACULTY COVER LETTER . . . . .	101
	APPENDIX D- FACULTY SURVEY . . . . .	103
	APPENDIX E- PARENTAL CONSENT FORM . . . . .	108
	APPENDIX F- STUDENT ASSENT FORM . . . . .	110
	APPENDIX G- STUDENT SURVEY . . . . .	112
	APPENDIX H- IRB APPROVAL FORM . . . . .	117

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Mean Values and Standard Deviations by Group. . . . .	36
II. Analysis of Variance and Bonferroni Test School-Sponsored Sports and Behavior. . . . .	53
III. Analysis of Variance and Bonferroni Test Student-Athletes are Less Likely to be Absent from School. . . . .	54
IV. Analysis of Variance and Bonferroni Test Student-Athletes are More Likely to Make Passing Grades . . . . .	56
V. Analysis of Variance and Bonferroni Test School-Sponsored Athletics Created Little or No Change in Faculty Morale. . . . .	57
VI. Analysis of Variance and Bonferroni Test I am Familiar with TJAA. . . . .	59
VII. Analysis of Variance and Bonferroni Test Tulsa Public School's Behavior Standard Versus TJAA's . . . . .	61
VIII. Analysis of Variance and Bonferroni Test Tulsa Public School's Behavior Standard Versus TJAA's. . . . .	62
IX. Analysis of Variance and Bonferroni Test Overall Perceived Value of School-Sponsored Athletics. . . . .	64

## LIST OF FIGURES

\*Figures II – IX represent the breakdown of the responses for all subjects

Figure	Page
I. Breakdown of the Subjects Participating in the Study. . . . .	41
II. School-Sponsored Athletics has No Influence on the Negative Behavior of Student-Athletes. . . . .	53
III. Student-Athletes are Less Likely to be Absent from School. . . . .	55
IV. Student-Athletes are More Likely to Make Passing Grades . . . . .	56
V. School-Sponsored Athletics Created No Change in Faculty Morale. . . . .	58
VI. Familiar with TJAA. . . . .	60
VII. Tulsa Public Schools Behavior Policy versus TJAA's. . . . .	61
VIII. Tulsa Public Schools Attendance Policy versus TJAA's. . . . .	63
IX. Over-all Perceived Value . . . . .	65



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Interscholastic sports have long held a position of prominence in American public education. For years, high school sports have been valued for their contribution to the overall development of the student-athlete. Sports participation can help young people appreciate health, exercise, and fitness; learn about themselves and how to handle adversity; experience teamwork and display sportsmanship (Rasmussen, 2000). Many high school coaches, through the medium of athletic competition, have taught student-athletes the values of self-discipline, work ethic, perseverance, and teamwork. According to Viadero (1999), participating in high school sports is good for students. Studies indicate that participating in high school athletics can have a positive impact on social behavior, academic success, and positive involvement in school (Viadero, 1999). High school sports are associated with social behavior, personal identity, academic success and personal achievement. Sports are a microcosm of our society; what is happening in society, both good and bad, is reflected in youth sports (Rasmussen, 2000).

High school athletics in the Tulsa Oklahoma Public Schools are also associated with these positive characteristics. A number of schools in the district have an extensive heritage of successful students, super-star athletes, and state championships in a variety of sports. Athletics has been a valuable part of the overall curriculum since the inception of the school district in 1899. However, until the year 2001, despite the success of the high school program there was not an organized, school-sponsored athletic program for middle school students in the Tulsa Public Schools.

If participating in athletics has value for high school students, will athletics also benefit the middle school student? Virtually all senior high schools and approximately 80% of middle level schools in the United States offer a competitive, interscholastic sports program (Berryman, 1988). In a study of 1,798 middle schools by McEwin, Dickinson & Jenkins (1996), approximately 25% of schools provided interscholastic sports for sixth graders, 77% for seventh graders and 79% for eighth graders. Percentages of schools providing interscholastic sports were increasing for seventh graders and holding steady for eighth graders. A 1992 national study of 570 middle level schools reported percentages of grades six through eight schools having interscholastic sports programs at the seventh and eighth grade levels as 89% and 92% respectively (Valentine, Clark, Irvin, Keefe, & Melton, 1993). It is apparent from these studies that competitive interscholastic sports for middle school students, most often seventh and eighth grades, is a common practice in

the United States. According to a position statement by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education's Middle and Secondary School Physical Education Council, participation in sports outside of the regular curricular physical education program provides many positive benefits for middle school students. In fact, The National Association for Sport and Physical Education espouses the position that all middle school students should have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of organized sports and other school-sponsored co-curricular programs (Berryman, 1988).

For decades, school-sponsored athletic opportunities were not available to middle school students in Tulsa Public Schools. According to the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association, (OSSAA) in the year 2000, Tulsa Public Schools, the largest district in Oklahoma, was the only K-12 public school district that did not offer some level of school-sponsored middle school athletics. Before 2001, middle school students in Tulsa Public Schools who sought to compete in athletics had to participate in a parent/volunteer athletic organization known as the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association, or commonly known as TJAA. This organization had no affiliation with the public schools, nor did this organization follow any rules and regulations of the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association, the governing body of middle school and high school athletics in the state of Oklahoma. Parents or other volunteers were recruited as coaches for the teams. The Tulsa Junior

Athletic Association had to use Tulsa City Park fields and gymnasiums for competition, and students wanting to participate in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's athletic program had to pay a modest fee to participate. The organization offered boy's and girl's basketball, football, and cheerleading for students in grades six, seven and eight; however there was no affiliation, management or supervision from the school district. In August of 2000, the Tulsa Public Schools' Director of Athletics, also the researcher in this study, developed a proposal to implement a comprehensive, competitive, school-sponsored, interscholastic athletic program for students in grades six, seven and eight in Tulsa Public Schools. The proposed program included football, boy's and girl's basketball, girl's volleyball, and cheerleading for middle school students. In November of 2000, the Board of Education for Tulsa Public Schools voted unanimously to accept the proposal and to implement an organized, district-endorsed middle school athletic program by August of 2001. The Director of Athletics for Tulsa Public Schools was given the responsibility of implementing the athletic program at all 15 Tulsa middle schools for the 2001-02 school year. A one-time budget of \$538,000 was granted to purchase uniforms and equipment, with a recurring budget of \$253,000 per year allocated to conduct the middle school program.

There were many challenges in implementing a comprehensive middle school athletic program in a span of eight months. First and

foremost, the district had to “take away” the control of a program from the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association; an organization that had been operating middle school athletics for some 60 years and who vehemently opposed Tulsa Public Schools involvement in the middle school program. Many believed if the athletic program became a school-sponsored program, the number of opportunities for middle school students to participate would be limited and the district would in fact be taking away participation opportunities for students. There were also 154 coaching positions that had to be filled, preferably by certified middle school faculty members. Middle school principals, now facing a much greater workload, had to be convinced to endorse the program and to proactively locate and hire competent coaches for their buildings. In addition, almost \$300,000 in uniforms and equipment had to be specified, bid, sorted, sized and delivered to the 15 middle school sites by August 2001. Facilities had to be coordinated. Middle school students would no longer compete on Tulsa City Park fields or gymnasiums, as all events had to be scheduled in Tulsa Public Schools’ facilities. In a span of eight months the district had to go from “Ground Zero” to operating a full, comprehensive, effective, and proficient middle school athletic program. The implementation of this program was so significant, that not only middle school administrators, but also faculty members, Tulsa Public Schools human resources, security guards, grounds staff, custodians,

high school personnel, parents, and students would feel the impact of this change.

Tulsa Public Schools is now in its third year of operating a comprehensive middle school athletic program. The challenges of implementation were met and the program appears to be flourishing. Middle students now have the opportunity to participate in competitive athletics without having to pay a fee, as well as compete in high school facilities. Students may also now associate their athletic team with school spirit and school pride. Coaches are certified teachers rather than volunteers and the program follows the rules and regulations as set forth by the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association. In the fall of 2002, after the completion of one full year of the program, the Director of Athletics for the Tulsa Public Schools, the individual responsible for the development and the implementation of the middle school athletic program, sought to assess the perceptions of middle school administrators regarding the successes and the failures of the program. An instrument that specifically targeted the perceived value of a middle school athletic program could not be found; therefore the Director of Athletics developed an instrument and conducted a preliminary study. A 33-item Likert scale instrument was developed and was given to 42 Tulsa Public Schools middle school administrators, including principals, assistant principals, and deans. All questions and responses were specifically targeted at the Tulsa Public Schools middle school athletic

program. Administrators were asked to give their opinions regarding issues surrounding the program such as: student attendance, student behavior, student academic achievement, social development of students, school pride, school environment, faculty morale, parental involvement, athletic opportunities and the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. Twenty-nine surveys were completed and returned. The responses were favorable and consistent. In most situations, the administrators agreed that the Tulsa Public Schools athletic program was beneficial to the middle school student and to the middle school environment.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Tulsa Public Schools, the largest school district in Oklahoma, did not offer school-sponsored middle school athletics until the fall of 2001. If a middle school student desired to participate in organized athletics, the only option was to participate through a community organization known as the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association, an organization that had controlled middle school sports for over 60 years. Students who participated in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association were required to pay a fee to participate, were coached by parents or volunteers, and were not held to the academic and attendance standards of the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association, the governing body of athletics in Oklahoma. The Tulsa Junior Athletic Association was an independent

organization, operating under its own set of rules, not under any district control, and not affiliated with any of the public schools.

Current research indicates that the majority of middle schools in the United States offer some level of organized, school-sponsored middle school athletics. Although there is some disagreement, there are numerous authors and organizations that have cited the potential benefits of participation in sport and physical activity programs for middle school students. There is not an abundance of research that speaks to the value of organized sports in relationship to academic success, student behavior and student attendance for middle school students. This study examined the perceived value of the Tulsa Public Schools middle school athletic program by middle school administrators, middle school faculty members, and student-athletes currently enrolled in the ninth and tenth grades. Current ninth graders would have participated in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's middle school athletic program as sixth graders. These same students would have participated in the middle school athletic program sponsored by Tulsa Public Schools as seventh and eighth graders. Current tenth graders would have participated in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's middle school athletic program as sixth and seventh graders. These same students would have participated in the middle school athletic program sponsored by Tulsa Public Schools as eighth graders. Because these particular students attended middle school during between the years of



1999 and 2002, they had the distinct opportunity to participate in both school-sponsored and non-school-sponsored sports.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is no formal, researched based information in Tulsa Public Schools regarding how administrators, faculty members and student-athletes perceive the introduction of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program into Tulsa Public Schools. A systematic study of the perceptions of middle school administrators, faculty members and student-athletes was needed since these perceptions may influence forthcoming decisions regarding the future of the middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools.

The problem in this study was to examine the value of the school-sponsored middle school athletic program related to student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement, and faculty morale as perceived by administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes in the Tulsa Public Schools. A sub-problem under investigation was to survey administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes regarding the perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics in Tulsa Public Schools as compared to the middle school athletic program directed by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. Another sub-problem under investigation was to determine

the overall value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program as perceived by administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes in the Tulsa Public Schools.

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were examined:

Ho 1

There will be no significant difference in the perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program as compared to a non-school-sponsored athletic program, related to student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement, and faculty morale among administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes.

Ho 2

There will be no significant difference in the perceived value of the school-sponsored middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools compared to the middle school athletic program sponsored by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association among administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes.

Ho 3

There will be no significant difference in the overall perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program among administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes.

### Delimitations

The study had the following delimitations:

1. All subjects were employees or students of the Tulsa Public Schools.
2. Administrative subjects were current middle school administrators in the Tulsa Public Schools.
3. Faculty subjects were currently employed as middle school faculty members in the Tulsa Public Middle Schools.
4. Student subjects were ninth and tenth grade, male and female student-athletes participating in high school athletics in a Tulsa High School.
5. Student subjects had participated in athletics during all or part of their middle school tenure.
6. The perceived value of middle school athletics was measured using a 33-item Likert scale instrument. The survey instrument was given to each subject category, i.e., administrator, faculty member, or student-athlete.

## Limitations

This study had the following limitations:

1. Subjects were asked to report their true perceptions regarding the value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools.
2. Not all administrators, faculty members, and student-athletes experienced both the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's and the Tulsa Public School's Middle School Athletic Program.
3. The scope of this study was limited to the school-sponsored athletic program at the 15 middle schools in the Tulsa Public Schools.
4. Except for randomization, there was no attempt made to account for variability due to the mobility of subjects. Subjects may have worked in or attended more than one Tulsa Public middle school before, during and after the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program.
5. Instructions were given verbally for the high school athletic coaches who assisted with the distribution and collection of the student-athlete surveys, rather than in writing.

## Assumptions

The following assumptions were made:

1. The instrument used in the study measured the perceptions of administrators, faculty members, and student-athletes regarding the apparent value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program in the Tulsa Public Schools.
2. Subjects honestly answered all of the questions in the survey instrument.
3. Subjects voluntarily consented to participate in this study.

## DEFINITIONS

Licensed/Certified Middle School Faculty Members- individuals who hold a valid Oklahoma teaching certificate and teach in a Tulsa middle school.

Director of Athletics- the district-level official responsible for the administration of the district athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools. This individual oversees school-sponsored athletics at the fifteen middle schools and the nine high schools in the district. Also the individual who conducted this research study.

Interscholastic Sports Program- athletic program for students in grades six through twelve, which is under the rules and regulations of the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association. The public school district and not an outside organization and/or volunteers administer the program.

Middle School Administrators- non-teaching professionals who hold a valid Oklahoma teaching/administrative certificate and serve as a principal, assistant principal, or guidance dean in a Tulsa Middle School.

Middle Level Schools/Middle School- refers to any school that has sixth, seventh, or eighth grade students as a part of their enrollment.

Middle School Students- any student that is in the sixth, seventh, or the eighth grade.

OSSAA- an acronym used in the survey that represents the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association.

Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association- the policy making body that governs all extracurricular activities in Oklahoma, including athletics.

School-Sponsored Athletics- an athletic program that is administered by a public school district rather than an outside organization and/or volunteers. This type of program operates under the rules of the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association. Participants are typically in grades six through twelve.

Student-athlete- a student in grades six through twelve, enrolled in a public middle school or public high school, which in addition to attending school, participates in the interscholastic athletic program on one or more teams.

TJAA- an acronym used in the survey questionnaires that represents for the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association.

Tulsa City Parks- an organization funded by the City of Tulsa, which oversees a variety of athletic facilities and functions in the city proper.

Tulsa Junior Athletic Association- an organization that has no affiliation with the Tulsa Public Schools, or any public school system, that operated and administered an athletic program for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students in Tulsa Oklahoma, prior to August of 2001, for a span of over 60 years.

Tulsa Public Schools- the largest public school district in the state of Oklahoma, with an enrollment of approximately 43,000 students, pre-kindergarten through the twelfth grade.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Benefits of Sports

The study of the impact of sport involvement on youth was promulgated by Smoll and Smith (1978). Smoll, a psychologist, and Smith, a physical education specialist, these men investigated the impact of participation in competitive sport on adolescents. Since then, efforts across many disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, education, medicine) have focused on the impact of athletic participation on adolescent development. Athletic participation is an important variable in child development. American youth devote more time to sport than to anything but family, school, and television. An estimated 20 million of the 45 million children ages six to eighteen participate in sport activities in the United States each year and the estimated annual cost of youth sport participation is 17 billion dollars (Martens, 1984). Considering these figures were generated 20 years ago, and given the popularity of youth sports, a crucial focus of current research is the thorough investigation of the consequences of athletic participation. Van Raalte

and Brewer (1996) assert the concept that athletic participation enhances the physical, cognitive, social, and psychological development of children and adolescents. In general, Van Raalte and Brewer (1996) argue that demonstrative life-skills are learned through or reinforced by sport and then used more adeptly in other areas. For example, through sports, children and adolescents come into contact with societal values such as responsibility for one's actions, conformity, subordination of the self for the greater good, and the formation of desirable achievement behaviors (Van Raalte & Brewer, 1996). McEwin and Dickinson (1996) assert there are many benefits of sports participation for children and young adolescents. Learning to meet life's problems, character development, having fun, overall fitness, strength, coordination, and a sense of personal competence can all be gained through sport activity. McEwin and Dickinson (1998) emphasize that interscholastic sports frequently are credited with promoting socialization skills, building character, enhancing personality development and preparing participants for adult life. Competitive sports are an integral part of the lives of youth and have the potential to offer many benefits, such as regular exercise and fun (Goldberg, 1989). Many contend that sports are the only arena that provides opportunities to practice every condition necessary for a successful transition from childhood to adulthood. Van Raalte and Brewer (1996) maintain that many of the skills learned in sports are the most critical skills to be learned during adolescence and

that successful learning of these skills is what facilitates successful transition from childhood to adulthood. The critical skills learned through athletic participation include: the ability to perform under pressure, problem solving, meeting deadlines and challenges, setting goals, communicating, handling both success and failure, working with a team and within a system, and receiving and benefiting from feedback.

Moreover, adolescents participating in athletics learn that they possess both physical and cognitive skills (Van Raalte & Brewer, 1996). Empirical research supports this notion that participation in athletics can lead to the development of general competence and important life-skills. Indeed, there is more to athletics than being able to compete in one's chosen sport. To be successful, athletes must plan, set goals, make decisions, use strategy, seek instruction, and manage their arousal levels. Van Raalte and Brewer's work (1996) reinforces that these skills are readily transferable to other life domains.

Data also supports the notion that athletic participation provides a proactive method of preventing, or if need be, a reactive method of addressing social and personal problems (Agnew and Peterson, 2002). Researchers explain this effect simply; if adolescents are offered healthy alternatives, they will not adopt, or will cease to continue negative and unhealthy behavior problems. As a healthy alternative, participation in athletics is believed to provide the best outlet for the frustrations and emotional upsets often experienced by adolescents.

## Sports and the Middle School Student

Numerous authors and organizations have also cited the potential benefits of participation in sport and physical activity programs specifically for middle school students (e.g., American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; Darst & Pangrazi, 2002; Seefeldt & Vogel, 1986; Siedentop, 2001). According to the World Health Organization (1998) sport activities can benefit middle school students in the following ways: improvement of motor skills, enhancement of social growth and maturation, improvement of socialization, self-esteem, self-perception and psychological well-being, and the development of normal physical growth. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002) advocate physical activity for middle school students to help build healthy bodies and healthy minds. Duda (1985) states that athletics benefits the young because sports are fun and the participants tend to enjoy being involved. Benefits from athletics lend themselves to the development of feelings of inclusion, belonging, competence, and self-esteem among the participants. Many coaches and parents of middle school students believe sports competition should be available to all middle school students. These advocates passionately support a comprehensive, highly competitive interscholastic sports program for young adolescents (McEwin & Dickinson, 1998).

## Dangers of Organized Sports

Despite such an impressive array of potential benefits for adolescent sports, some authorities warn of detrimental effects associated with participation in organized sports. Some of the more common concerns are: distortion of educational priorities (Steinberg, 1996), loss of identity (Wuest & Lombardo, 1994), psychological stress (National Middle School Association, 1997), and distorted concepts of fairness (Covrig, 1996). Those who argue against beneficial factors of athletic competition stipulate the dangers of competitive stress in athletics and argue that a philosophy of winning at all costs pervades the youth sport scene (Chandler, 1996). What appears to create such diverse views about the values of athletic participation is that the individuals responsible for conducting such programs often lose sight of the programs' educational purposes and the fact that such programs may not be designed and implemented with the best interests of the participants in mind (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; National Middle School Association, 1997; Siedentop, Mand, & Taggart, 1985; Wuest & Lombardo, 1994). Quality supervision of middle-level sports programs is essential if safe and developmentally responsive programs and practices are to exist. This means that middle-level sports should receive the same level of supervision as high school programs (McEwin & Dickinson, 1998). In addition, middle schools unable to secure qualified

and competent coaches should not be allowed to field a team. Coaches must also be held accountable for the effectiveness and developmental appropriateness of the program (McEwin & Dickinson, 1998). The level of success attained in interscholastic athletics relies heavily on the actions of the coaches who have the daily responsibility for the sports program. Coaches make the majority of the decisions that determine the quality of middle-level programs. As a result, coaches of middle-level sport programs should have some specialized preparation in physical education or athletic coaching (Kelley & Brightwell, 1984). Sports participation is usually a positive experience when coaches are knowledgeable about the developmental realities of young adolescents (Micheli, 1984). Young adolescents' psychological well-being should be a priority in developing middle level sports programs (Vaughn, 1984).

Another concern regarding middle school sports revolves around the academic achievement of students involved in competitive athletics. Although there are individuals who agree that academic and athletic success are congruent, there are others that disagree. According to Goldberg and Chandler (1992), the sports madness that has swept the nation has become a source of growing concern, in that society's emphasis on athletics is often seen as being in conflict with some manifest functions of the school, such as promoting academic excellence, transmitting knowledge, and fostering the psychosocial development of the adolescent. Some fear that a system of peer and community values

built around the primacy of athletics may act as a deterrent to academic achievement (Lipsyte, 1982; Nelson, 1983; Snyder, 1985). If an individual conforms fully or adequately in one direction, such as athletics, fulfillment will be difficult in another, such as academics (Goldberg & Chandler, 1992). Although Curry and Weaner (1987) believe the conflict between the roles of student and athlete to be a major problem at the collegiate level, the potential friction between these roles became the focus of increased attention at the middle school and high school level (Curry & Weaner, 1987; Goldberg, 1991; Lapchick, 1987-88). According to McEwin and Dickinson (1998), if interscholastic sports at the middle school level are to be successful, the relationship between athletics and academics must be kept in a balance. All persons involved in an interscholastic middle school athletic program must recognize the top priority in a middle school is the academic program. Practices that disrupt the instructional program should be eliminated from the middle school (McEwin and Dickinson, 1998).

### Summary

There seems to be little doubt that participation in sports can be a great educational and personal vehicle to help develop the full potential of young people. Ideally, there can be much learned from athletics. Athletics can teach self-discipline, teamwork and cooperation, hard work,

competitive spirit, self-esteem, self-confidence and pride in accomplishment (Lapchick, 1989). Brice Durbin, former executive director of the National Federation of State High School Associations and leading advocate of participation said “The philosophy behind this recommendation is based on the firm conviction that activities participation is a valuable educational experience every bit as important to the student’s development as classroom experience” (Lapchick, 1989). Sports programs are inherently neither good nor evil, but rather what adults make of them. We know that children and young adolescents flourish when they feel safe and comfortable. It is up to adults to provide this sense of security, including when it comes to sport activities (Fortanasce, 1995). Well-balanced interscholastic sports programs are important toward making American middle schools a safe and effective place for all young adolescents (McEwin & Dickinson, 1996).

Middle school students should be viewed as a distinct age group who represent a unique stage of development with definite physical, social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics. Due to the many changes occurring both within themselves and around them, coupled with increased decision-making opportunities, middle school students are extremely susceptible to behaviors that place them vulnerable physically, socially, emotionally, and academically (Mohnsen, 1977).

Middle schools were founded for the purpose of addressing the needs of students ten to fourteen years old. Effective middle schools offer a



balanced, comprehensive, and success-oriented curriculum that is sensitive, caring, and supportive of student learning. Among the most important characteristic of middle schools is the emphasis on innovative and flexible curricula, enrichment activities, fostering the health and fitness of young adolescents in order to improve academic performance and the linking of school activities to families and communities (Carnegie Task Force, 1989; Kohut, 1988). Competitive interscholastic athletics may be a part of this learning environment. If it is possible to provide for interscholastic competition in a middle school, it should be planned and implemented in appropriate ways with the needs and interests of middle school students as the primary focus (Burns, 1993).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program related to student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement, and faculty morale as perceived by administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes in the Tulsa Public Schools. A sub-problem under investigation was the perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools as compared to the middle school athletic program directed by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association among administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes. Another sub-problem under investigation was the overall value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program as perceived by administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes in the Tulsa Public Schools.

The procedures in this chapter are categorized into two sections: 1) preliminary procedures and 2) operational procedures. The preliminary procedures include: a) selection of subjects, and b) selection of the

instrument. The operational procedures include: a) the collection of data, b) research design and c) statistical analysis.

Before this study was conducted, approval was sought and obtained from Oklahoma State University's Institutional Review Board. All of the following procedures were performed in accordance with the guidelines for ethical treatment of human subjects.

## Preliminary Procedures

### Selection of Subjects

The investigator surveyed a total of 706 subjects in Tulsa Public Schools for this study. Twenty-nine middle school administrators, including principals, assistant principals, and deans participated in the study. In addition, the investigator surveyed 472 faculty members at the 15 Tulsa Public Middle Schools. Finally, the investigator surveyed 205 ninth and tenth grade, male and female student-athletes enrolled in a Tulsa Public High School. To qualify for the study, student-athletes were required to be enrolled in boy's football, boy's or girl's basketball, girl's volleyball or cheerleading. The surveys were given during the spring semester of 2004. Participation in the study by all subjects was voluntary.

### Selection of the Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the 33-item four-point Likert scale questionnaire used in the 2002 preliminary study of Tulsa Public Schools Middle School Athletics. The questionnaire included the following ratings: 1 = agree, 2 = tend to agree, 3 = tend to disagree, 4 = disagree. The survey questionnaire was originally developed to solicit responses and examine perceptions of principals, assistant principals, and deans regarding the value of the school-sponsored, competitive, middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools. It was determined the instrument used in the preliminary study had a reliability value of .92. In addition, the researcher had a panel of experts review and critique the instrument. This panel of experts included the Director of Testing and Assessment, the Director of Library Services and the Coordinator of Reading for the Tulsa Public Schools. The panel substantiated the readability of the questionnaire. Due to the reliability of the survey, the readability of the survey and the lack of another instrument, the preliminary survey was used in this particular study.

The surveys given to each of the three subject groups were not changed with the exception of two items regarding the biographical information of the subjects being surveyed. Items numbered one and two on each of the three sets of surveys were items concerning the biographical information of the subject. These two items were changed

to reflect the subject group being surveyed; however, all other items on the survey instrument remained unchanged from the original instrument used in the 2002 preliminary study.

## Operational Procedures

### Collection of Data

Using the Tulsa Public Schools inter-school mail system, the surveys were mailed to the middle school administrators (principal, assistant principal, and dean) at each of the 15 Tulsa Public Middle Schools. With each survey was a document explaining the purpose of the study and instructions on how to complete the survey. Each administrator was asked to voluntarily complete the survey and return the survey through inter-school mail to the Tulsa Public School's Director of Athletics. Administrators were asked to return the surveys within 10 working days.

To distribute and collect the survey from middle school faculty members in Tulsa Public Schools, the investigator sent the surveys through the inter-school mail to the principal at each of the 15 middle schools. The principal was asked to distribute and collect the surveys at the final faculty meeting of the 2003-04 school year. With each survey was a document explaining the purpose of the study and instructions on

how to complete the survey. Faculty were given adequate time to complete the survey and were asked to return the survey to the principal before leaving the meeting. The principal then returned the completed faculty surveys to the Tulsa Public School's Director of Athletics through the inter-school mail. Through this process, the investigator surveyed middle school faculty in Tulsa Public Schools. This process took place in the month of June during the final days of the spring semester of 2004. Principals were asked to collect and return the surveys within seven calendar days.

To survey the ninth and tenth grade student-athletes in Tulsa Public Schools, the investigator visited each of the nine high schools, where the investigator met with the head coaches of the following sports and activities: football, boy's basketball, girl's basketball, volleyball and cheerleading. When meeting with these coaches, the investigator verbally explained their participation in the study and asked the coaches to assist in the distribution and in the collection of the student surveys. This process took place during the spring semester of 2004.

Accompanying each survey was a student assent form as well as a parental consent document explaining the purpose of the study. The survey, along with the assent form and parental consent form were sent home with the students. Coaches asked the students to return the documents after giving their parent(s) the opportunity to review the material. The investigator asked the coaches to collect the surveys and

the consent forms from the student-athletes and return them separately through inter-school mail to the Tulsa Public School's Director of Athletics. Coaches were asked to collect and return the surveys within 10 school days.

To ensure confidentiality of all subjects, the researcher requested the subjects to not write their name on the survey. There were no surveys returned to the researcher where a subject had written his or her name on the document. Also, there was no identifying information on any survey that might indicate who completed the survey. In addition, because the surveys were returned through the Tulsa Public Schools' interschool mail system, they did not require a return address. The researcher did not know who completed any survey once it was returned. Once returned, surveys were sorted using the biographical information in items number one and two, and stored according to subject group, i.e., administrator, faculty member, or student-athlete. Surveys were stored in a locked file cabinet at Oklahoma State University, Willard Hall, room 432 and were available only to the researcher.

### Research Design

A survey design was used to gather information and assess the perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program. The independent variables in this study were the three groups identified,

administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes in Tulsa Public Schools. The dependent variables were the scores from the survey document.

### Statistical Analysis

The researcher used SPSS 11.0 version for Windows to complete all statistical analysis. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. The between factor (Group) was at three levels, that is, administrators, teachers, and student-athletes. The dependent variables were the individual responses to the questions on the survey. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 significance level. The mean comparison test used was the Bonferroni.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results from the surveys and to provide a discussion of the results. In this study, the researcher examined the value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program as perceived by administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes in Tulsa Public Schools. In August of 2001, Tulsa Public Schools instituted a school-sponsored middle school athletic program. This program would be funded by and supported by the school district. Corporate sponsorships or outside funds were not utilized to implement or support the program. Prior to 2001, middle school students in Tulsa Public Schools who wished to participate in an athletic program had to participate through an organization referred to as the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. This organization had no affiliation with the school district and was an organization led by parents and volunteers. The scheduling of practices and games, the selection of coaches and the implementation of rules and policies were all independent of the school district.

There is limited research on the value of school-sponsored middle school sports in Oklahoma and no research existed on the value of school-sponsored middle school athletics versus non-school-sponsored middle school athletics in public schools. In view of this lack of research, this study evaluated the perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools. Such an evaluation provides data to the school board members, the superintendent, the administrators and to others in Tulsa Public Schools to determine whether the implementation of such a large and expensive program was a worthwhile endeavor.

Information gathered from the survey was used to respond to the following question:

1. What is the value of school-sponsored middle school athletics as perceived by administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade students in Tulsa Public Schools? The following areas were specifically targeted throughout the survey:
  - a. Student behavior
  - b. Student attendance
  - c. Student academic achievement
  - d. Faculty morale
  - e. The Tulsa Junior Athletic Association
  - f. The overall program

Chapter IV is divided into three sections as follows: 1) Analysis of the overall results, 2) analysis of hypothesis data and 3) discussion of the results. The analysis of the overall results will be further divided into the summary of responses to survey items by a) administrators, b) faculty members, and c) ninth and tenth grade student-athletes. Table I provides a summary of all survey questions with the mean values and standard deviations for the three groups identified. Figure I represents the groups who participated in the study.

**TABLE I**  
**SURVEY RESULTS**  
**MEAN VALUES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS BY GROUP**

Item #		Administrators N = 29	Faculty N = 472	Students N = 205
3. Athletic programs are important to the social development of a middle school child (Ho 1)	Mean	1.43	1.55	1.48
	SD	.742	.756	.660
4. Athletic programs contribute to a more positive school environment (Ho 3)	Mean	1.57	1.62	1.50
	SD	.742	.799	.677
5. Athletic programs play an active role to develop positive behavior patterns in students (Ho 1)	Mean	1.61	1.74	1.55
	SD	.737	.826	.742
6. The implementation of middle school athletics played a key role in creating an improved learning environment (Ho 3)	Mean	1.86	2.09	1.89
	SD	.891	.947	.847
7. The implementation of middle school athletics created little or no change in the morale of the faculty (Ho 1)	Mean	2.78	2.27	1.96
	SD	.801	.932	.835
8. Since the implementation of middle school athletics negative behavior of student athletes has decreased significantly (Ho 1)	Mean	2.11	2.50	2.08
	SD	.577	.929	.869

Item #		Administrators N = 29	Faculty N = 472	Students N = 205
9.	The implementation of middle school athletics has little or no influence on the negative behavior of student-athletes (Ho 1)			
	Mean	2.79	2.46	2.00
	SD	.833	.907	.915
10.	Students who participate in athletics are less likely to be absent from school (Ho 1)			
	Mean	1.75	2.14	1.90
	SD	.585	.885	.939
11.	Students who participate in athletics are more likely to make passing grades due to their desire to participate (Ho 1)			
	Mean	1.89	2.14	1.75
	SD	.737	.872	.884
12.	Since the implementation of middle school athletics the concept of school pride has taken on a more positive meaning (Ho 1)			
	Mean	1.93	2.21	1.71
	SD	.716	.912	.835
13.	I am familiar with TJAA, the organization who previously ran the middle school athletic program (Ho 2)			
	Mean	1.37	2.27	1.99
	SD	.688	1.190	1.105
14.	The implementation of middle school athletics by Tulsa Public Schools was well organized and well planned (Ho 2)			
	Mean	1.93	2.24	2.06
	SD	.813	.882	.939
15.	During the implementation of middle school athletics building administrators were given opportunities for input and suggestions (Ho 2)			
	Mean	2.00	2.07	2.11
	SD	.834	.797	.912

Item #	Administrators N = 29	Faculty N = 472	Students N = 205
16. Based on your knowledge of TJAA the Tulsa Public Schools athletic program is more consistent and organized than the previous program (Ho 2)			
	Mean	1.78	2.15
	SD	.801	.924
			2.19
			.996
17. Students participating in Tulsa Public Schools athletics are held to a higher academic standard than they were in the TJAA program(Ho 2)			
	Mean	1.79	2.20
	SD	.957	.966
			2.09
			.961
18. Students participating in Tulsa Public Schools athletics are held to a higher behavior standard than they were in the TJAA program(Ho 2)			
	Mean	1.82	2.26
	SD	.905	.954
			1.98
			.935
19. Students participating in Tulsa Public schools athletics are held to a more strict attendance policy than they were in the TJAA program(Ho 2)			
	Mean	1.96	2.28
	SD	1.105	.967
			2.00
			.926
20. Tulsa Public Schools should add sports at the middle school level to provide more athletic opportunities (Ho 3)			
	Mean	2.65	2.10
	SD	1.164	1.014
			1.48
			.711
21. If more students were involved in athletics at my school it would positively impact the morale in the school (Ho 1)			
	Mean	2.21	2.12
	SD	.833	.893
			1.64
			.740

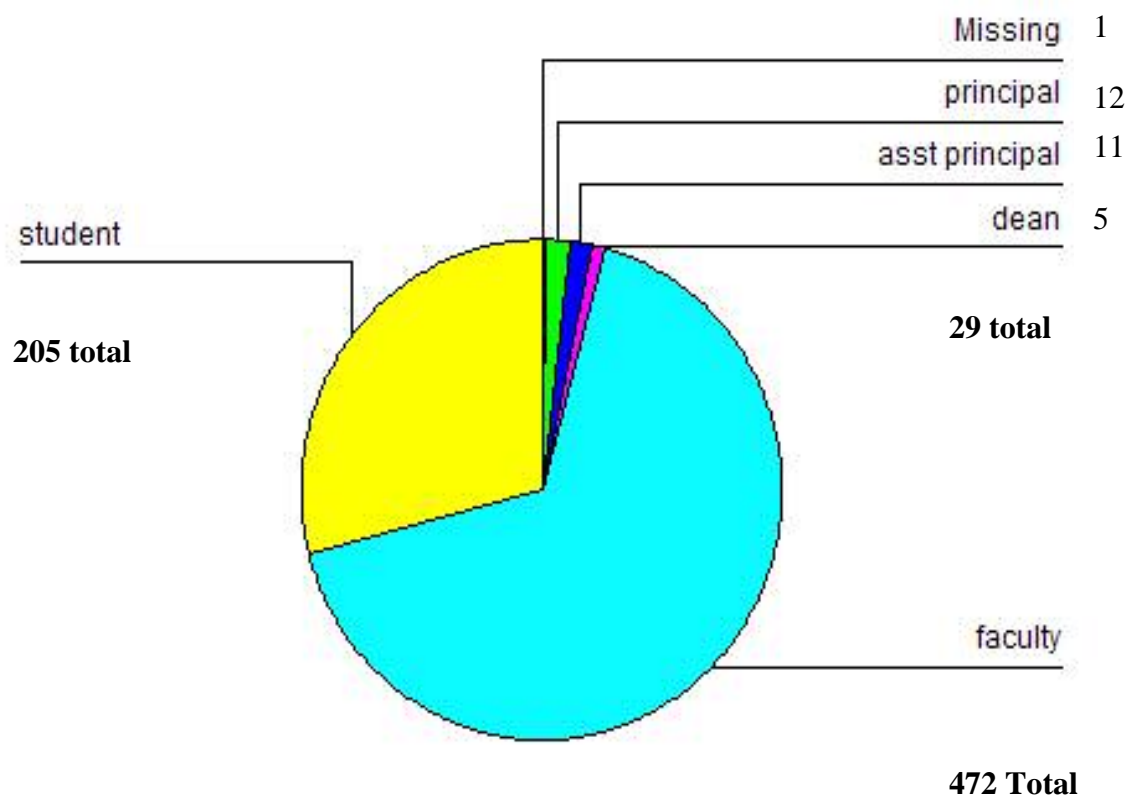
Item #		Administrators N = 29	Faculty N = 472	Students N = 205	
22.	An adequate number of athletic opportunities are currently available to middle school students (Ho 3)	Mean SD	2.19 .834	2.35 .898	2.11 .889
23.	The addition of middle school athletics has made the job of the middle school administrator more difficult (Ho 3)	Mean SD	1.96 1.138	2.86 .931	2.17 .942
24.	Since the implementation of middle school athletics the positive involvement of parents has improved (Ho 3)	Mean SD	2.21 .787	2.55 .880	2.05 .948
25.	Since the implementation of middle school athletics students display more respect amongst their peers (Ho 3)	Mean SD	2.44 .801	2.62 .903	1.96 .906
26.	School sponsored middle school athletics has had a strong influence on the sportsmanship qualities displayed by students (Ho 3)	Mean SD	2.14 .705	2.37 .912	1.82 .853
27.	Having teachers in my building that serve as coaches provides for positive behavior reinforcement for students (Ho 1)	Mean SD	1.46 .637	1.88 .831	1.84 .916
28.	Since the implementation of middle school athletics there is more positive cooperation between student-athletes (Ho 1)	Mean SD	2.11 .737	2.18 .863	1.85 .827

Item #	Administrators N = 29	Faculty N = 472	Students N = 205	
29. The faculty endorses the concept of school sponsored middle school athletics (Ho 3)	Mean	2.11	2.06	1.88
	SD	.934	.799	.873
30. The faculty would say that the overall behavior of student-athletes has improved since the implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics (Ho 1)	Mean	2.15	2.31	1.74
	SD	.879	.904	.880
31. The faculty would say that the concept of school pride has improved since the implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics (Ho 3)	Mean	2.15	2.31	1.74
	SD	.907	.867	.817
32. The faculty would agree the higher academic standards as set forth by the OSSAA has improved academic achievement of middle school athletes (Ho 1)	Mean	2.07	2.21	1.89
	SD	.829	.891	.816
33. Overall, middle school athletics has been a positive addition for the middle school student (Ho 3)	Mean	1.75	1.90	1.58
	SD	.928	.900	.827



**FIGURE I**

Subjects Participating in the Study.



## Analysis of Overall Results

### Summary of Responses by Administrators

A total of 29 middle school administrators from 15 different middle schools completed and returned the questionnaire. These administrators included twelve principals, eleven assistant principals and five deans in the Tulsa Public Schools. One survey was returned with the position missing.

### Student Behavior

Findings regarding student behavior revealed that the administrators agreed that athletics plays an active role in developing positive behavior patterns in student-athletes. In addition, administrators tended to disagree that the implementation of school-sponsored middle school athletics has had little or no influence on the negative behavior of student-athletes. The administrators also indicated that having teachers in their building serve as athletic coaches (rather than parent volunteers) has provided for positive behavior reinforcement for student-athletes. The mean for this variable was 1.46, with a standard deviation of .637.

### Student Attendance

Administrators were asked if having school-sponsored sports influenced the attendance of student-athletes. The administrators agreed that students who participated in school-sponsored sports were less likely to be absent from school. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.75, with a standard deviation of .585.

### Academic Achievement

When asked about the academic achievement of student-athletes, administrators tended to agree that school-sponsored sports influenced academic achievement. The administrators agreed that students who participate in school-sponsored sports are more likely to make passing grades due to their desire to participate. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.89, with a standard deviation of .737.

### Faculty Morale

In the area of faculty morale, administrators tended to disagree that the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program had created little or no change in the morale of the faculty. The administrators indicated that since the implementation of school-

sponsored sports, the morale of the faculty had improved. The calculated mean for this variable was 2.78, with a standard deviation of .801.

#### Tulsa Junior Athletic Association

Administrators overwhelmingly agreed they were familiar with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association, the organization that had previously run the middle school athletic program. Of the 29 responses, only one administrator indicated they were not familiar with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. Administrators agreed that students participating in school-sponsored athletics were being held to a higher behavior standard than they were when they participated under the auspices of the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. The mean for this variable was 1.82, with a standard deviation of .905. In addition, administrators agreed that the attendance policy that students are held to in school-sponsored sports is a stricter policy than the attendance policy in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.96, with a standard deviation of 1.105.

## Overall Program

When asked about the implementation of school-sponsored middle school athletics, administrators agreed that overall, the school-sponsored middle school athletic program has been a positive addition for middle school students in Tulsa Public Schools. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.75, with a standard deviation of .928.

## Summary of Responses by Faculty

Four hundred and seventy-two faculty members at the 15 Tulsa Public middle schools chose to participate in the study and returned a completed questionnaire.

## Student Behavior

When asked if athletic programs play an active role to develop positive behavior patterns in student-athletes, the faculty tended to agree, with a calculated mean of 1.74 and a standard deviation of .826 for this variable. The faculty also tended to agree that having teachers serve as athletic coaches provides for positive behavior reinforcement for student-athletes. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.88, with a standard deviation of .831. The faculty tended to disagree that since the

implementation of school-sponsored athletics, the negative behavior of student athletes has decreased significantly. The calculated mean for this variable was 2.50, with a standard deviation of .929. In addition, the faculty tended to disagree that the overall behavior of student-athletes has improved since the implementation of school-sponsored athletics. The calculated mean for this variable was 2.34, with a standard deviation of .904.

#### Student Attendance

Faculty tended to disagree that students who participate in school-sponsored athletics were less likely to be absent from school. The calculated mean for this variable was 2.14, with a standard deviation of .885.

#### Student Academic Achievement

When asked about the academic achievement of student-athletes, faculty tended to disagree that students who participate in school-sponsored athletics are more likely to make passing grades due to their desire to participate. The calculated mean for this variable was 2.14, with a standard deviation of .872.

## Faculty Morale

When responding to the question regarding faculty morale, faculty tended to disagree that the implementation of school-sponsored middle school athletics has created little or no change in the morale of the faculty. The mean for this variable was 2.27, with a standard deviation of .932.

## Tulsa Junior Athletic Association

Faculty members were less familiar with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association than the other two subject groups. Faculty members also tended to disagree that the behavior standards for student-athletes as set forth in the school-sponsored athletic program were more stringent than the behavior standards set forth by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. The calculated mean for this variable was 2.26, with a standard deviation of .954. Faculty also tended to disagree that students participating in the Tulsa Public Schools middle school athletic program are held to a stricter attendance policy than they were in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's athletic program. The calculated mean for this variable was 2.28, with a standard deviation of .967.

## Overall Program

When asked about the overall program, the faculty tended to agree that a school-sponsored middle school athletic program has been a positive addition for middle school students in Tulsa Public Schools. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.90, with a standard deviation of .900.

### Summary of Responses by Students

Two hundred and five ninth and tenth grade student-athletes from nine different high schools in Tulsa Public Schools received parental permission and responded to the questionnaire.

### Student Behavior

Student-athletes agreed that the athletic program played an active role in developing positive behavior patterns for student-athletes. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.55, with a standard deviation of .742. Student-athletes tended to agree that the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program has little or no influence on the negative behavior of student-athletes. In addition, student-athletes agreed that having teachers rather than parents serve



as their coaches provided for positive behavior reinforcement for student-athletes. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.84, with a standard deviation of .916.

### Student Attendance

When asked about school-sponsored sports and attending school, students agreed that individuals who participate in athletics are less likely to be absent from school due to their desire to participate. The calculated mean value for this variable was 1.90, with a standard deviation of .939.

### Student Academic Achievement

Students were asked if having school-sponsored athletics influenced the academic achievement of student-athletes. The ninth and tenth grade athletes tended to agree that students who participate in school-sponsored sports are more likely to make passing grades due to their desire to participate. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.75, with a standard deviation of .884. Students also tended to agree that by having school-sponsored sports that were required to follow the academic guidelines as set forth by the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association, the overall academic achievement of the middle school

athlete had improved. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.89, with a standard deviation of .816.

### Faculty Morale

Student-athletes were asked if school-sponsored sports influenced the morale of the faculty. The students tended to agree that the morale of the faculty had improved since the implementation of school-sponsored athletics. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.96, with a standard deviation of .835. In addition, according to an item on the survey instrument, students agreed that if more middle school students were involved in athletics, the overall morale in the building would improve. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.64, with a standard deviation of .740.

### Tulsa Junior Athletic Association

When asked if they were familiar with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association, student-athletes tended to agree. The calculated mean for this variable was 1.99, with a standard deviation of 1.105. Student-athletes also tended to agree (mean 1.98, standard deviation .935) that the behavior expectations of student-athletes in school-sponsored athletics are higher than those expectations were in the Tulsa Junior

Athletic Association program. In addition, students tended to agree that the attendance policy in school-sponsored sports is a more strict policy than the policy in non-school-sponsored athletics. The calculated mean for this variable was 2.00, with a standard deviation of .926.

### Overall Program

On the variable regarding the overall program, students agreed that the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program was a positive addition for the middle school student in Tulsa Public Schools. The calculated mean was 1.58, with a standard deviation of .827.

### Analysis of Hypothesis Data

Three hypotheses were evaluated in this investigation using the .05 level of significance. Responses to the survey were tabulated using descriptive statistics. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for the analysis of the data. Each of the hypotheses was examined to determine if significant differences occurred among the administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes.

### Hypothesis One

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the perceived value of a school-sponsored athletic program as compared to a non-school-sponsored athletic program, related to student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement, and faculty morale among the three groups identified. As indicated by Table II significant differences occurred among the groups regarding the perceived value of school-sponsored athletics and student behavior. The administrators tended to disagree that the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program has had no influence on the negative behavior of students-athletes. The mean value for administrators was 2.79 (SD .833), while the mean value for ninth and tenth grade student-athletes on this question was 2.00 (SD .915). Figure II represents the responses given by the subjects in the study.

**TABLE II**  
**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE/BONFERRONI TEST**

ITEM # 9

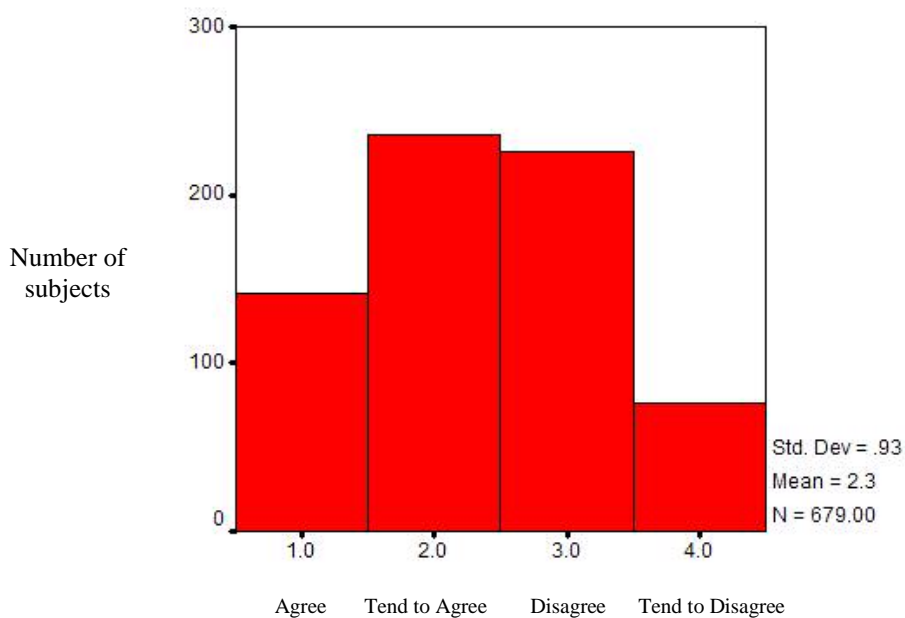
The implementation of middle school athletics has had little or no influence on the negative behavior of student athletes.

<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Degrees of Freedom</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significant F</b>
Between Groups	33.624	2	16.812	20.476	.000
Within Groups	554.228	675	.821		
Total	587.853	677			

**BONFERRONI MEAN COMPARISON TEST**

Administrators	Faculty	Students
<u>2.79</u>	<u>2.46</u>	2.00

**FIGURE II/SURVEY ITEM #9**



As indicated by Table III, significant differences occurred among the groups regarding the perceived value of school-sponsored athletics and student attendance. The mean value for faculty was 2.14 (SD .885) while the mean value for administrators on this question was 1.75 (SD .585). Figure III represents the responses given by the subjects in the study.

**TABLE III**  
**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE/BONFERRONI TEST**

---

ITEM # 10

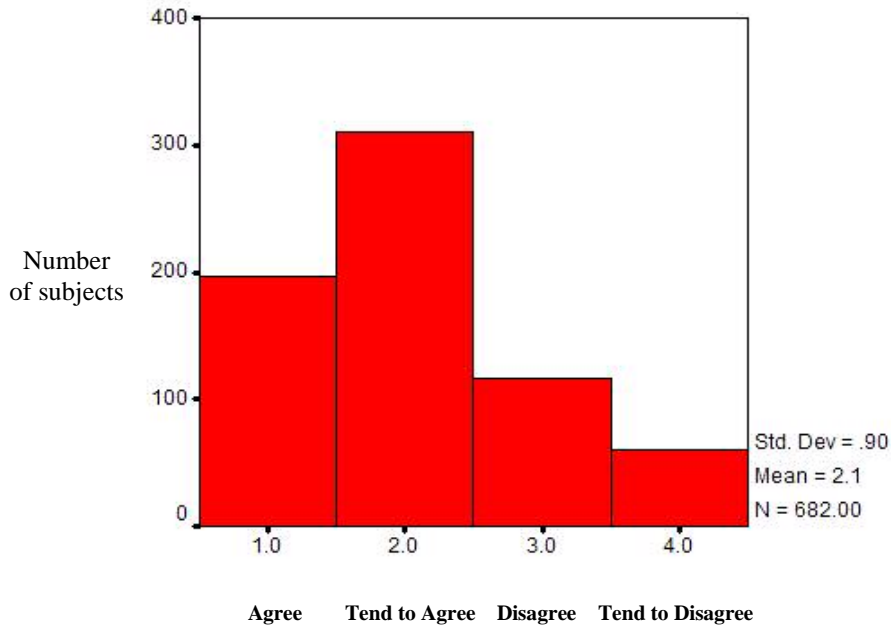
Students who participate in athletics are less likely to be absent from school.

<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Degrees of Freedom</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significant F</b>
Between Groups	10.835	2	5.417	6.831	.001
Within Groups	537.697	678	.793		
Total	548.532	680			

**BONFERRONI MEAN COMPARISON TEST**

Faculty	Administrators	Students
2.14	<u>1.75</u>	1.90

---

**FIGURE III/SURVEY ITEM #10**

As indicated by Table IV, significant differences occurred among the groups regarding the perceived value of school-sponsored athletics and student academic achievement. The mean value for faculty on this question was 2.14 (SD .872), while the mean value for ninth and tenth grade student-athletes was 1.75 (SD .884). Figure IV represents the responses given by the subjects in the study.

**TABLE IV**  
**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

ITEM #11

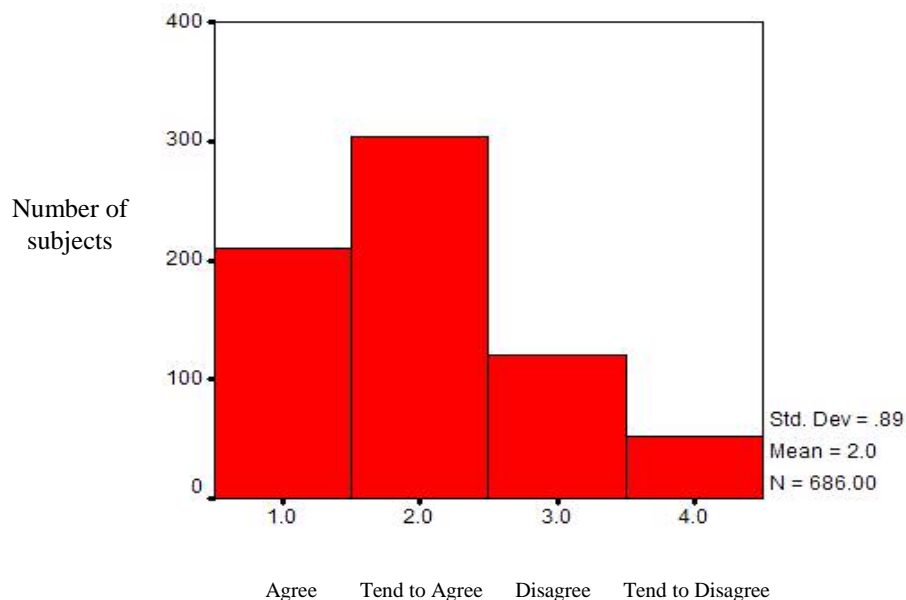
Students who participate in athletics are more likely to make passing grades due to their desire to participate.

<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Degrees of Freedom</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significant F</b>
Between Groups	20.066	2	10.033	13.245	.000
Within Groups	516.606	682	.757		
Total	536.672	684			

**BONFERRONI MEAN COMPARISON TEST**

Faculty	Administrators	Students
<u>2.14</u>	<u>1.89</u>	1.75

**FIGURE IV/SURVEY ITEM #11**





As indicated by Table V, significant differences did occur among the groups regarding the perceived value of school-sponsored athletics and faculty morale. The mean value for administrators was 2.78 (SD .801) while the mean value for ninth and tenth grade student-athletes on this question was 1.96 (SD .835). Figure V represents the responses given by the subjects in the study.

**TABLE V**  
**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

---

ITEM #7

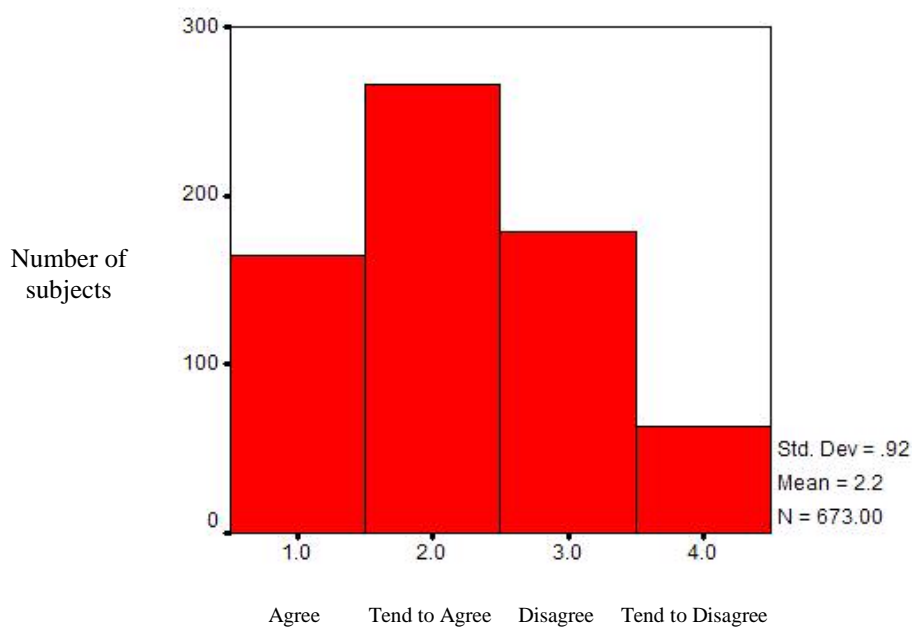
The implementation of middle school athletics created little or no change in the morale of the faculty.

<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Degrees of Freedom</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significant F</b>
Between Groups	22.368	2	11.184	13.757	.000
Within Groups	543.881	669	.813		
Total	566.249	671			

**BONFERRONI MEAN COMPARISON TEST**

Administrators	Faculty	Students
2.78	2.27	1.96

\*all three groups were significant

**FIGURE V/SURVEY ITEM #7**

There were significant differences in the perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program related to student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement, and faculty morale. These were significant beyond the .05 level. The null hypothesis was rejected.

### Hypothesis Two

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant differences in the perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics in Tulsa Public Schools compared to the middle school athletics program

sponsored by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association among the groups identified.

As indicated by Table VI, there were significant differences among the groups regarding their familiarity with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. The mean value for faculty was 2.27 (SD 1.190), while the mean value for administrators was 1.37 (SD .688). Figure VI represents the responses given by the subjects in the study.

**TABLE VI  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

ITEM #13

I am familiar with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association (TJAA) who previously ran middle school athletics in Tulsa Public Schools.

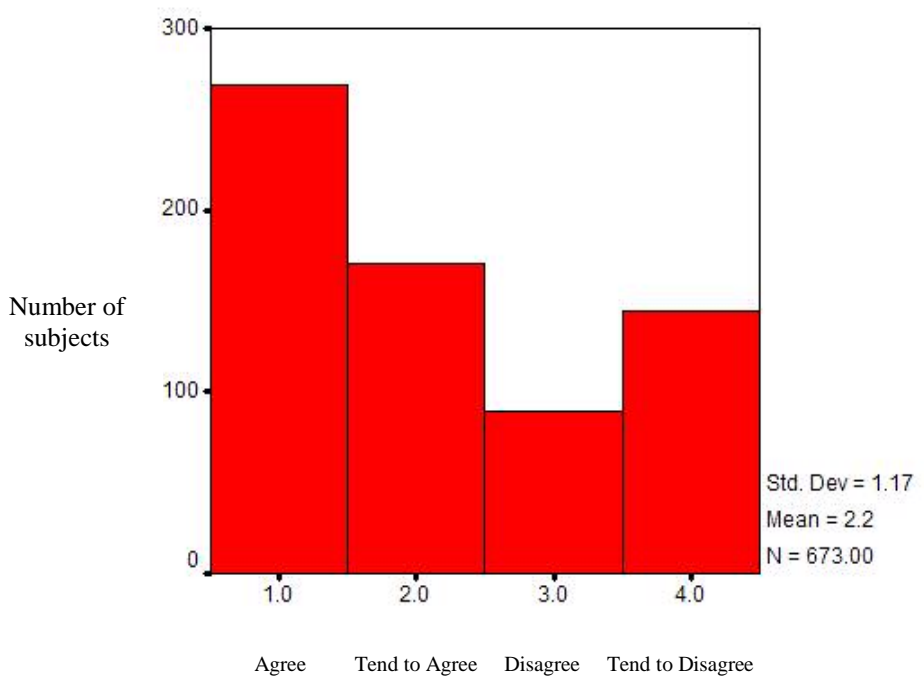
<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Degrees of Freedom</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significant F</b>
Between Groups	27.865	2	13.932	10.503	.000
Within Groups	887.455	669	1.327		
Total	915.320	671			

**BONFERRONI MEAN COMPARISON TEST**

Administrators	Students	Faculty
1.37	1.99	2.27

\*all three groups were significant

**FIGURE VI/SURVEY ITEM #13**



As indicated by Table VII, there were significant differences among the groups regarding their perception of the behavior standards set forth by Tulsa Public School’s middle school athletic program compared to the behavior standards set forth by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. The mean value for the faculty was 2.26 (SD .954), while the mean value for the administrators was 1.82 (SD .905). Figure VII represents the responses given by the subjects in the study.

**TABLE VII  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

ITEM #18

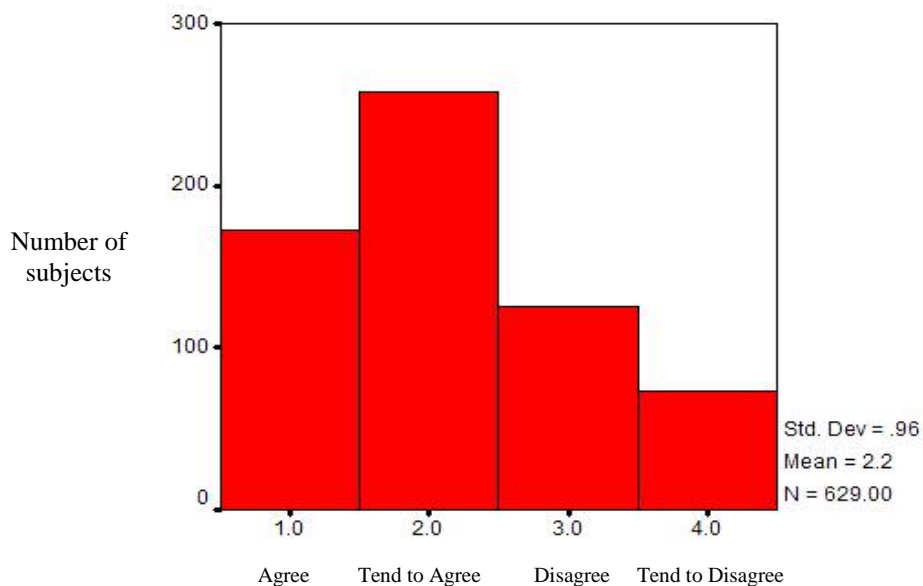
Students participating in Tulsa Public Schools athletics are held to a higher behavior standard than they were in Tulsa Junior Athletic Association (TJAA).

<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Degrees of Freedom</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significant F</b>
Between Groups	12.951	2	6.476	7.221	.001
Within Groups	560.442	625	.897		
Total	573.393	627			

**BONFERRONI MEAN COMPARISON TEST**

Faculty	Administrators	Students
2.26	<u>1.82</u>	<u>1.98</u>

**FIGURE VII/SURVEY ITEM #18**



As indicated by Table VIII, there were significant differences among the groups regarding their perception of the attendance policy established by Tulsa Public School's middle school athletic program compared to the attendance policy set forth by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. The mean value for the faculty was 2.28 (SD .967), while the mean value for the administrators was 1.96 (SD 1.105). Figure VIII represents the responses given by the subjects in the study.

**TABLE VIII  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

ITEM #19

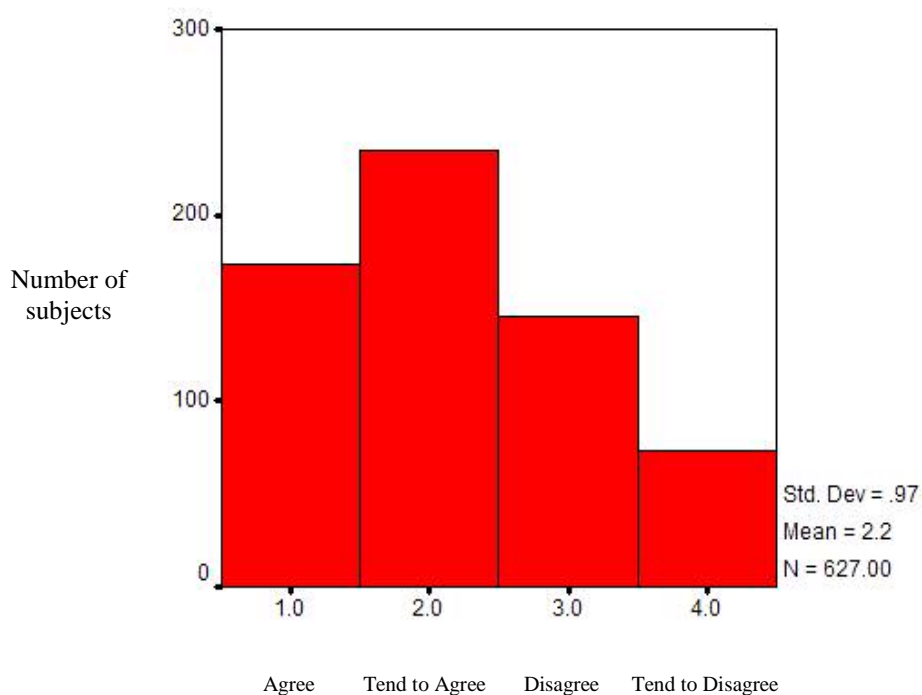
Students participating in Tulsa Public Schools athletics are held to a more strict attendance policy than they were in Tulsa Junior Athletic Association (TJAA).

<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Degrees of Freedom</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significant F</b>
Between Groups	11.350	2	5.675	6.134	.002
Within Groups	576.407	623	.925		
Total	587.757	625			

**BONFERRONI MEAN COMPARISON TEST**

Students	Administrators	Faculty
2.00	<u>1.96</u>	<u>2.28</u>

---

**FIGURE VIII/SURVEY ITEM #19**

There were significant differences in the perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics in Tulsa Public Schools compared to the middle school athletics program sponsored by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association between the groups identified. These were significant beyond the .05 level. The null hypothesis was rejected.

### Hypothesis Three

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the overall perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics between the groups identified. As indicated in Table IX, there were

significant differences between the groups regarding the overall perceived value of school sponsored middle school athletics. The calculated mean value for the faculty was 1.90 (SD .900), while the mean value for ninth and tenth grade student-athletes was 1.58 (SD .827). Figure IX represents the responses given by the subjects in the study.

**TABLE IX  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

ITEM #33

Overall, the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletics program was a positive addition for the middle school student.

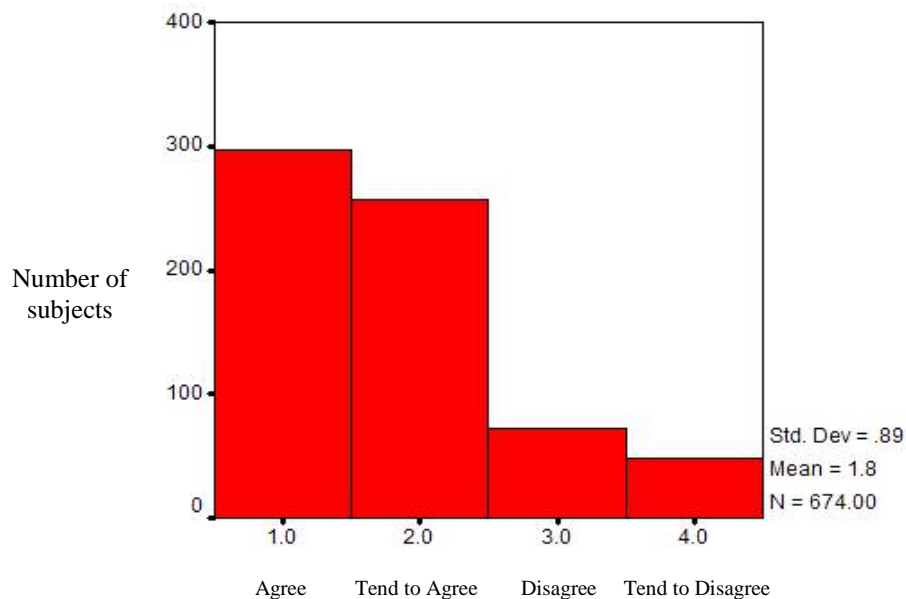
<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Degrees of Freedom</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significant F</b>
Between Groups	13.995	2	6.997	8.987	.000
Within Groups	521.661	670	.779		
Total	535.655	672			

**BONFERRONI MEAN COMPARISON TEST**

Students	Administrators	Faculty
1.58	<u>1.75</u>	<u>1.90</u>

---



**FIGURE IX/SURVEY ITEM #33**

There were significant differences in the overall perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics in Tulsa Public Schools between the groups identified. These were significant beyond the .05 level. The null hypothesis was rejected.

### Discussion of Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the value of school-sponsored middle school athletics as compared to non-school-sponsored middle school athletics as perceived by administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes in Tulsa Public Schools. Tulsa Public Schools, the largest school district in Oklahoma, did not offer school-

sponsored middle school athletics until August of 2001. Prior to that time, any middle school student attending Tulsa Public Schools who wished to play organized sports, had to participate through an organization known as the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. The organization resisted the efforts of the school system to take control of the middle school athletic program. Many believed that school-sponsored sports would jeopardize the number of participation opportunities for middle school students in Tulsa Public Schools. Since the implementation of the program, the school system has found that this is in fact not the case. There has not been a need for additional athletic teams at any middle school for any existing sport. Middle school students who wish to participate have the opportunity to do so. Furthermore, the Director of Athletics for Tulsa Public Schools would like for the Board of Education to consider an expansion of the middle school athletic program to add the sport of boys and girls soccer to serve more students, including the growing Hispanic population in the district. If more sports were added, this would also increase the overall number of participation opportunities available for middle school students in Tulsa.

The school system has also discovered that students are now outfitted with safe equipment and proper uniforms, regardless of the socio-economic situation of the school's community. Prior to school-sponsored athletic programs, there was no equity regarding the safety of the equipment used and the condition of the uniforms worn. Now that the

program is school-sponsored, middle school student-athletes can be sure that the equipment and the uniforms are both safe and proper since both are now provided by the school system.

Based on the review of the literature, it was apparent that there were differing thoughts regarding the importance and the value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program. Some see athletics as beneficial for middle school students. Competitive sports are an integral part of the lives of youth and have the potential to offer many benefits (Goldberg, 1989). Van Raalte and Brewer (1996) assert athletic participation enhances the physical, social and psychological development of children. McEwin and Dickenson (1998) say interscholastic sports are credited with promoting socialization skills, building character and preparing participants for adult life. Conversely, some see middle school athletics as being too competitive and too stressful for middle school students. Some of the more common concerns are: the distortion of educational priorities (Steinberg, 1996), a loss of identity (Wuest & Lombardo, 1994) and a distorted concept of fairness (Covrig, 1996). The National Middle School Association (1997) associates the danger of psychological stress to organized sports. Chandler (1996) argues that a philosophy of winning at all costs has pervaded the youth sport scene. However, in this study, the researcher is not attempting to determine the value of middle school athletics in general, rather to determine the perceived value of the middle school

athletic program specifically in Tulsa Public Schools. The results of this study indicate that the implementation of school-sponsored sports has been beneficial to middle school students in Tulsa Public Schools in a variety of areas.

It was anticipated that there would be differences in the perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics as it relates to student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement and faculty morale. The analysis of the data indicated there are significant differences among the groups in the above-mentioned areas. As for student behavior, the administrators indicated that middle school athletics has helped in the area of negative student-athlete behavior, whereas student-athletes indicated that school-sponsored sports have had little or no influence on negative behavior of students.

Administrators are the individuals that must take action and deliver the disciplinary action when students misbehave. Since this is the case, it is possible that the administrators have seen a decrease in negative behavior of student-athletes after the implementation of the middle school athletics program. When the program was under the auspices of the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association, students who misbehaved did not jeopardize their opportunity to participate in their chosen sport.

Another significant difference was in the area of student-athlete attendance. The administrators and the faculty members differed in their opinions regarding attendance. Administrators agreed that

student-athletes were less likely to be absent from school due to their desire to participate, whereas faculty members tended to disagree.

Faculty members must take attendance each day in class; they see the students in a one-on-one setting each and every day. Administrators typically do not take attendance or meet with students one on one each day. This may have influenced the perceived differences.

In the area of student academic achievement, the differences occurred between the student-athletes and the faculty. Student-athletes indicated they are more likely to make passing grades due to their desire to participate in school-sponsored athletics. The faculty tended to disagree. Students are now faced with weekly grade checks since the athletic program is being administered by the school district. In prior years, grade checks were not as stringent or as frequent. This may have some influence regarding the student-athletes' response. In addition, student-athletes must now pass a minimum of five classes each semester or they lose their athletic eligibility for the succeeding semester. This also may have influenced student-athletes' responses. Faculty members may not see a substantial improvement in the overall level of student academic achievement and assume the lack of improvement is related to a lack of concern, regardless of the athletic program. Although the students' grades may not have improved significantly, the students' desire to improve academically may still be present. Students are the group directly affected by a school-sponsored athletic program. Their intrinsic

motivation or desire to improve academically would be difficult for faculty to recognize.

Finally, another area where significant differences occurred was in the area of faculty morale. The groups that differed were the administrators and the students. The administrators agreed that the morale of the faculty has been influenced by the implementation of school-sponsored athletics, whereas the students indicated that the morale of the faculty was unchanged by the implementation of school-sponsored sports. In a professional setting between administrator and faculty member, the administrators may sense an improvement in morale since the implementation of the school-sponsored athletic program. The relationship with the student and the teacher would remain unchanged, regardless of the athletic program. As indicated earlier, the research hypothesis was rejected since there were significant differences between the groups in the areas of student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement and faculty morale.

Another significant difference was in the perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics in Tulsa Public Schools compared to the middle school athletic program sponsored by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. As for familiarity with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association, the difference occurred between the administrators and the faculty. Administrators agreed they were familiar with the group that previously managed the middle school athletics program in Tulsa. The

faculty members tended to disagree. This difference could be because middle school administrators were asked to distribute Tulsa Junior Athletic Association material and to rent out their school gymnasiums for athletic practices. Faculty members, unless they had a child participate in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association program, would typically have had no contact with the organization. Administrators and faculty members also differed on their perceptions of how the Tulsa Public Schools behavior standards and attendance policies compared to those standards and policies under the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. In both instances, the administrators tended to agree that the Tulsa Public School's policies and standards were stricter than the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's, whereas, the faculty tended to disagree. This may be due to the fact that overall, the faculty was less familiar with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association as compared to administrators. There were significant differences in the perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics in Tulsa Public Schools compared to the middle school athletic program sponsored by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Finally, there was also a significant difference between the groups based on the overall perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics. The difference occurred between the ninth and tenth grade student-athletes and the faculty. The students agreed that the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program

was a positive addition for the middle school student in Tulsa Public Schools. The faculty tended to agree that the program was worthwhile for the middle school student. In other words, the student-athletes' responses to the perceived value of the overall athletic program were more positive than the responses of the faculty. This difference may have occurred due to the fact that student-athletes now have the opportunity to represent their school and to compete in Tulsa Public Schools' facilities. In addition, students no longer have to pay a fee to participate and can be guaranteed that the uniforms and equipment they use in their athletic program are in good condition. Students truly benefited from a school-sponsored athletic program, more so than any faculty member. The research hypothesis was rejected since there were significant differences among the groups on the overall perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics.

It is apparent that although there are differing views regarding the importance of middle school sports, the athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools program is deemed valuable by the individuals involved, especially the students. Duda, (1985) reminds us that athletics benefits young people because sports are fun and young people enjoy being involved. Competitive interscholastic athletics are a part of the middle school learning environment. Well-balanced interscholastic athletic programs are important toward making American middle schools effective places for all young adolescents (McEwin & Dickenson, 1996).



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V provides an overview of this study. This final chapter includes a summary of the study, major findings, conclusions and recommendations. Recommendations are further subdivided into 1) recommendations for school-sponsored middle school athletics in Tulsa Public Schools and 2) recommendations for further study.

#### Summary of Findings

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the value of school-sponsored middle school athletics as perceived by administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade students in Tulsa Public Schools. It was also the purpose of this study to examine perceived differences in the areas of student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement, faculty morale, the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association and the overall middle school athletics program.

Seven hundred and six subjects participated in this study. Twenty-nine subjects were middle school administrators in the Tulsa Public Schools middle schools. Four hundred and seventy-two subjects were faculty members at the Tulsa Public Schools middle schools. Two hundred and five subjects were ninth and tenth grade student-athletes attending the Tulsa Public Schools high schools. These student-athletes had attended a Tulsa Public middle school and had the opportunity to participate in both the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's middle school athletic program and the Tulsa Public School's school-sponsored middle school athletic program.

Survey research methodology was used in this study to gather and report data. An instrument that measured the perceived value of a middle school athletic program did not exist; therefore the researcher developed an instrument and conducted a preliminary study. The questionnaire construction method recommended by Borg and Gall (1989) in Educational Research: an Introduction was utilized. A 33-item Likert scale instrument was developed and was given to 42 Tulsa Public Schools middle school administrators, including principals, assistant principals, and deans. All questions and responses were specifically targeted at the Tulsa Public Schools school-sponsored middle school athletic program. Using SPSS 11.0 version for Windows, it was determined that the reliability of the instrument used in the preliminary study was .92. The researcher had a panel of experts substantiate the

readability of the survey. Based on the reliability value, the readability of the document and the lack of another instrument, this survey was used in this particular study.

Responses to the survey questionnaire were tabulated using descriptive statistics. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for the analysis of the data, to determine if there were significant differences in the perceived value of the Tulsa Public School's school-sponsored middle school athletic program, between the groups. The mean comparison test used was the Bonferroni.

The data collected in this study were analyzed at the .05 level of significance. Each of the stated hypotheses was examined to determine if differences occurred among groups in regards to the perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program as compared to a non-school-sponsored middle school athletic program in a variety of areas.

The data yielded the following findings:

*Hypothesis One - There will be no significant difference in the perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program as compared to a non-school-sponsored athletic program, as related to student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement, and faculty morale among administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes.*

There were significant differences in the perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics as it relates to student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement and faculty morale. Significant differences occurred in all of the ten variables on the perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics instrument. Hypothesis one was rejected.

*Hypothesis Two - There will be no significant difference in the perceived value of the school-sponsored middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools compared to the middle school athletic program sponsored by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association between administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes.*

There were significant differences in the perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program compared to a non-school-sponsored middle school athletic program. Significant differences occurred in three of the five variables related to the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's middle school athletic program. Hypothesis two was rejected.

*Hypothesis Three - There will be no significant difference in the overall perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program between administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade student-athletes.*

There were significant differences in the overall perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program. Hypothesis three was rejected.

### Conclusions

Conclusions are based on responses to the survey instrument that examined the value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program as perceived by administrators, faculty and ninth and tenth grade students in Tulsa Public Schools. The results of this study indicated there are significant differences in the perceived value of school-sponsored athletics related to student behavior, student attendance, student academic achievement, and faculty morale between the groups identified. Regarding student behavior, student-athletes agreed that having a school-sponsored middle school athletic program has influenced more positive student-athlete behavior. Students are now held to a stricter policy regarding their behavior. The behavior of middle school student-athletes is now addressed in the Tulsa Public Schools *School*

*Board Policy Manual* as well as in the *Tulsa Public Schools Code of Student Conduct*. Students who misbehave now have more at stake to lose than they did when participating in a non-school-sponsored athletic program. Students suspended from school for inappropriate behavior not only forfeit their privilege to participate in school-sponsored athletic events and practices, but may also face elimination from the school-sponsored team. These sanctions were not in place prior to the implementation of a school-sponsored athletic program. It seems reasonable that students are agreeable that their behavior is monitored at a stricter level than it was with the previous program.

Students also agreed that school-sponsored athletic programs help to develop positive behavior patterns in student-athletes. Faculty members rather than parent volunteers are now coaching middle school student-athletes. Coaches can have a tremendous influence over student-athletes. Middle school students now see and must face their athletic coaches on a day-to-day basis. Coaches are not simply volunteers who they may see a few days a week at a practice or at a game. Coaches are now also their classroom teachers who they see regularly through out the course of the school day. This obviously would help to develop and to influence positive behavior patterns with student-athletes, simply because student-athletes must now be more accountable for their behavior than they were with the non-school-sponsored athletic program.

As for student attendance, middle school administrators and student-athletes both tended to agree that athletes are less likely to be absent from school due to their desire to participate. It is apparent that student-athletes are aware of the standards that must be met regarding attendance in order to participate. The Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association rules state that student-athletes, who are absent more than 10% of the semester, are automatically athletically ineligible. In addition, students who do not attend school on the day of an athletic event are not eligible to participate in the event that evening. These rules were not in effect with the non-school-sponsored athletic program. In addition, having faculty members serve as coaches would also influence the attendance of student-athletes. If a student is absent from school, the coach is now aware of that fact. In addition, internal team rules may now be stricter since coaches are also faculty members. Obviously, middle school student-athletes are aware of these changes due to having a school-sponsored athletic program in place. Administrators now also have more influence over student-athletes regarding their school attendance. Prior to the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program, administrators had no control regarding the attendance of student-athletes and their ability to participate in middle school athletic events. Since the Tulsa Public Middle Schools are now a part of the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association and the

athletic program is school-sponsored, middle school administrators now have more control over student-athletes who miss school.

As for student academic achievement, middle school administrators and student-athletes both agreed that athletes are more likely to make passing grades due to their desire to participate. Since the middle school athletic program is now school-sponsored and under the auspices of the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association, students are now held to a different set of academic rules and policies than they were with the non-school-sponsored middle school athletic program. Student-athletes are now faced with weekly grade checks. Student-athletes must now be passing all classes weekly to maintain athletic eligibility. Student-athletes must now pass a minimum of five subjects each semester to maintain athletic eligibility. These standards and policies were not in place prior to the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools. If students do not meet the minimum academic standards, they will not be athletically eligible and cannot participate in events. Obviously the academic standards and policies for middle school student-athletes are now more advanced and clearly the sanctions for not meeting minimum requirements are more punitive. It makes sense that both the student-athletes and the administrators agree that middle school student-athletes are more motivated to make passing grades, given that the



opportunity to participate in school-sponsored athletics is dependent on the students' academic success.

Regarding the morale of the faculty, administrators indicated that since the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program, the morale of the faculty has improved. The student-athletes indicate that the morale of the faculty has remained unchanged. It is apparent through out this study, that the group of people least receptive to school-sponsored athletics is the faculty. It is possible that the student-athletes are aware of this feeling, hence the indication that the morale of the faculty has not changed. In addition, regardless of the implementation of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program, the student-teacher relationship is one that would remain unaffected. Administrators on the other hand, may sense an improvement in the morale of the faculty given that now some of the faculty members are directly involved in the athletic program serving as coaches. These individuals may express an improvement in the faculty morale, as they are directly involved in a positive program for their middle school students.

There were also significant differences between the groups when asked about the comparison of the school-sponsored middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools and the program sponsored by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. The groups most familiar with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association were the administrators and the

students. This makes sense, considering these two groups would have had the most contact with the organization. Administrators leased out their facility to the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. Student-athletes are the individuals who actually participated in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's middle school athletic program. Because these two groups had the most contact with the organization, one can conclude that they also would be most familiar with the organization. In addition, both the administrators and the student-athletes agreed that the behavior standards and the attendance policies as set forth by the Tulsa Public School's middle school athletic program are stricter than those standards and policies previously set forth by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. Considering the faculty was the group least familiar with the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association, it would make sense to conclude that the administrators and the student-athletes are correct in their evaluation. In addition, administrators are faced with implementing the new rules and policies as set forth by the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association into their athletic program, while student-athletes are faced with having to adhere to the new rules and policies. Both groups have had to face significant changes as the school-sponsored athletic program evolved. Considering that good behavior and consistent attendance are crucial to the middle school student-athlete, one can conclude that the school-sponsored middle school athletics program is perceived as more valuable to middle school administrators and to middle school student-

athletes than the program once coordinated by the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association. As for the faculty members, since they did not appear to be as knowledgeable regarding the comparisons of the two middle school athletic programs, it may in the best interest of Tulsa Public Schools to educate middle school faculty members regarding the rules and policies of the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association. Faculty must understand that the standards of behavior, attendance and academic achievement for the school-sponsored middle school athletic program are in fact very different from those standards in the non-school-sponsored middle school athletic program. If faculty members were educated regarding the rules and policies that are now in place, their appreciation for school-sponsored athletics may progress.

As for the overall perceived value of the school-sponsored middle school athletic program, all three groups tended to agree that the program was a positive addition for the middle school student-athlete. The group most in favor of the program was the student-athletes. The group least in favor of the program was the faculty. Both the student-athletes and the administrators had a slightly more favorable attitude regarding the perceived value of the school-sponsored middle school athletics program than the faculty. It is interesting that student-athletes are the group most in favor of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program. These students are now held to much higher standards in the areas of academic achievement, attendance and behavior. However,

these students now have the opportunity to participate in athletics without having to pay a fee. Middle school student-athletes also now have the opportunity to represent their particular middle school and play games in the Tulsa Public School facilities. Regardless of the fact that the program is more demanding in some areas for middle school students, it appears these young people appreciate the chance to participate in a program that has discipline, guidance and opportunity. It would seem that Tulsa Public Schools should look to expand the middle school athletic program to include more sports. By adding sports, the number of opportunities for all middle school students would improve. In addition, because a school-sponsored middle school athletic program was deemed a positive addition by student-athletes, it would make sense to make every attempt to involve more students at the middle school level. Considering the research presented in this study suggests the faculty appear to perceive the value of the program not as favorably as the other groups, possibly the principals at each middle school should conduct meetings with the faculty to answer questions and explain the school-sponsored athletic program. The research does not suggest that faculty are opposed to the program, but possibly that faculty are not as familiar with the non-school-sponsored athletic program and compared to the school-sponsored athletic program. By educating faculty members, their perception of the value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program may eventually improve.

In conclusion, it is apparent that although administrators, faculty and student-athletes differed on several items, the overall perception of school-sponsored middle school athletics is positive. The student-athletes seemed to be the most receptive of the program, which is interesting considering that the expectations of behavior, attendance and academics are set at a higher standard than they were when the program was operated by an outside entity. It seems that student-athletes appreciate the opportunity to represent their own middle school and be required to those meet higher expectations of their performance. Administrators also appeared to be receptive to the school-sponsored athletic program. Although having school-sponsored sports is sure to make their job more challenging, overall, the administrators also agree that the program is valuable to the middle school student-athlete. As for the faculty, although they tended to be less positive regarding the program, they did agree that it was a positive addition for the middle school student. The addition of this program created a major change for many people, including the faculty. Faculty members, the group with the least knowledge of the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association, now had to take some responsibility for the operation of the school-sponsored middle school athletic program in Tulsa Public Schools. Although some of their responses were not as favorable as others, they too support school-sponsored middle school athletics. The research produced by this study suggests that Tulsa Public Schools made a wise investment for its middle

school student-athletes by implementing a comprehensive, school-sponsored middle school athletic program. Information from this study should contribute valuable data for those persons responsible for the future direction of the program.

### Recommendations

Prior to August of 2001, the Tulsa Public Schools was the only school district in the state of Oklahoma that did not offer some level of school-sponsored middle school athletics. The athletic program was coordinated by an outside organization known as the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association, an organization that had no affiliation with the school system. Upon the implementation of the program, the rules, policies and procedures of the program were under the auspices of Tulsa Public Schools and the Oklahoma Secondary Activities Association. Based on the data generated by this study and the practical knowledge of the researcher, who also serves as the Director of Athletics for the Tulsa Public Schools, the following recommendations are being made:

#### Recommendations for Tulsa Public Schools

1. Tulsa Public Schools should look to expand the middle school program to offer more athletic opportunities to middle school students.
2. Tulsa Public Schools should increase the stipend money paid to middle school coaches/faculty members. The increase in pay may contribute to a more positive perception of the program with the middle school faculty.

If there are any inconsistencies at any Tulsa Public Middle School regarding the enforcement of the rules and policies for middle school athletics, then:

3. The standards as set forth by the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association regarding attendance and grades must be enforced without question at all Tulsa Public middle schools.

### Recommendations for Further Study

Given the findings of this study and the importance of research in the field of middle school students, the recommendations are made for further study:

1. A qualitative research method would be able to provide more in-depth information as to the perceived value of school-sponsored middle school athletics in Tulsa Public Schools.

2. This same study design could be used to compare the perceived value of a school-sponsored middle school athletic program between ninth and tenth grade students. Ninth grade students who participated in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's middle school athletic program for one year and the school-sponsored middle school athletic program for two years. Tenth grade students who participated in the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association's middle school athletic program for two years and the school-sponsored program for one year.
3. A quantitative research study that surveys high school principals, faculty and coaches in Tulsa Public Schools regarding the readiness of student-athletes coming from the Tulsa Junior Athletic Association program as compared to those student-athletes who participated in the school-sponsored program.
4. A quantitative research study could be conducted that compares competitive school-sponsored middle school athletics with non-competitive middle school intramural programs.
5. A quantitative research study could be conducted that compares the attendance and the academic achievement of athletes and non-athletes.



## REFERENCES

- Agnew, R. & Peterson, D. (2002). Athletes' expectations for success in athletics compared to academic competition. *The Sport Journal*, 5(2), 5.
- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2001). Organized Sports for Children and Preadolescents (RE0052). [www.aap.org/policy/re0052].
- Berryman, J. (1988). The rise of highly organized sports for preadolescent boys. In F. Smoll, R. Magill, & M. Ash (eds.), *Children in Sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.
- Borg, W., & Gall, M. (1989). Educational Research: An introduction (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Longman
- Burns, P. (1993). Meeting the sports needs of all young people. *Scholastic Coach*, 62(8), 4, 6.
- Butterfield, S., Brown, B., & Perrone, J. (1991). Student-Athletes' perceptions of high school sports participation. *Physical Educator*, 48(3), 123-129.
- Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. (1989). *Turning Points: Preparing American youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> century* New York: Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2000). Physical activity and health; A report of the Surgeon General. [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/].
- Covrig, D. (1996). Sport, fair play, and children's concepts of fairness. *Journal for a Just & Caring Education*, 2, 263-282.
- Curry, T., & Weaner, J. (1987). Sport identity salience, commitment, and the involvement of self in role: Measurement issues. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 4, 280-288.
- Darst, P., & Pangrazi, R. (2002). *Dynamic physical education for secondary school students*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) San Francisco: Benjamin Cummings.
- Doering, L. (1997). Middle-school athletics: Make it a beginning, not an end. *Coach & Athletic Director*, 66(6), 4.

- Duda, J. (1985). Consider the children: Meeting participants' goals in youth sport. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 56, 55-56.
- Fortanasce, V. (1995). Life Lessons from Little League: A guide for parents and coaches. New York: Doubleday.
- Gall, M., Borg W., & Gall, J. (2002). Educational Research: An Introduction (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Allyn and Bacon.
- Goldberg, A. (1991). Counseling the high school student-athlete. *The School Counselor*, 38, 332-340.
- Goldberg, A., & Chandler, T. (1989). The role of athletics in the social world of high school students. *Youth and Society*, 21, 238-250.
- Kelley, J., & Brightwell, S. (1984). Should interscholastic coaches be certified? *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance* 55(3): 49-50.
- Kohut, S. (1988). *The middle school: A bridge between elementary and high schools* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington, D. C.: National Education Association.
- Lapchick, R. (1985). Center prepares high school athletes for a non-athletic future. *National Association of Secondary School Principals' Newsletter*, (Sept.): 4.
- Lapchick, R. (1987-1988). The high school athlete as the future college student-athlete. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 11, 104-124.
- Lapchick, R. (1989). Pass to Play: Student Athletes and Academics. National Education Association of the United States, May.
- Lipsyte, R. (1982, Winter). Varsity syndrome: The unkindest cut. *National Forum*, 28-31.
- Martens, R. (1977). Sport competition anxiety test. Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics.
- McEwin, C. (1994). Interscholastic sports and young adolescents. *Transcendence: The Journal on Emerging Adolescent Education* 22: 21-28.
- McEwin, C., & Dickinson, T. (1996). Placing young adolescents at risk in

- interscholastic sports programs. *Clearing House*, 69(4), 217-221.
- McEwin, C., Dickinson, T., & Jenkins, D. (1996). *America's middle schools: Practices and progress: A 25 year perspective*. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association.
- McEwin, C., & Dickinson, T. (1998). What role for middle school sports? *The School Administrator*, Nov. (52-56).
- Micheli, L. (1984). Sports injuries in the young athlete: Questions and controversies. In *Pediatric and adolescent sports medicine*, edited by L. Micheli, 1-8. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Mohnsen, B. (1997). Teaching middle school physical education. Campaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (1990). National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988: Base Year Student Survey. U. S. Department of Education: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Report: NCES 90-458.
- National Middle School Association (1997). *Sports in middle schools*. NMSA Research Summary #10. Westerville, Ohio: National Middle School Association. [www.nmsa.org].
- Rasmussen, K. (2000). The changing sports scene. *Educational Leadership*, 57(4), 26-29.
- Seefeldt, V. & Vogel, P. (1986). *The value of physical activity*. Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.
- Siedentop, D. (2001). *Introduction to physical education, fitness, and sport*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Smith, J. (1994). Interscholastic Athletic Programs: A positive factor in school reform. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 78(559), 93-98.
- Smith, R., & Smoll, F. (1982). Psychological stress: A conceptual model and some intervention strategies in youth sports. In *Children in sport*, edited by R. A. Magill, M. J. Ash, and F. L. Smoll, 178-95. Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics.
- Smith, R., Zane, N., Smoll, F., & Coppel, D. (1983). Behavior assessment

in youth sports: Coaching behaviors and children's attitudes. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 15, 208-214.

Smoll, F., & Smith, R. (1978). Psychological perspectives in youth sports. Washington and New York, Hemisphere.

Steinberg, L. (1996). *Beyond the classroom: Why school reform has failed and what parents need to do*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Swaim, J., McEwin, C., & Irvin, J. (1998). Responsive middle level sports programs. *Middle School Journal*, 30(2), 72-74.

Valentine, J., Clark, D., Irvin, J., Keefe, J., & Melton, G. (1993). *Leadership in middle level education: A national survey of middle level leaders and schools* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Van-Raalte, Judy L., & Brewer, B. (1996). Exploring sport and exercise psychology. Washington DC.

Vaugh, L. (1984). Psychological impact of organized sports on children. In L. J. Micheli (ed.), *Pediatric and adolescent sports medicine*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Viadera, D. (1999). Research Notes. *Education Week*, 18(34), 29.

World Health Organization. (1998). Sports and children: Consensus statement on organized sports for children. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 76, 445-447.

Wuest, D. & Lombardo, B. (1994). *Curriculum and instruction: The secondary school Experience*. St. Louis: Mosby.

## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

ADMINISTRATOR COVER LETTER

**ADMINISTRATOR INFORMATION  
TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS SURVEY**

<b>INVESTIGATOR</b>	Stephanie Spring, Director of Athletics, Tulsa Public Schools
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	(918) 746-6454
<b>FACULTY SPONSOR</b>	Dr. Steve Edwards, Oklahoma State University
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	(405) 744-7476

**STUDY**

*The value of middle school athletics as perceived by middle school administrators, faculty, and ninth and tenth grade students in Tulsa Public Schools.*

**PURPOSE**

Tulsa Public Schools is currently in its third year of school sponsored middle school athletics. Prior to the involvement of Tulsa Public Schools, middle school sports were sponsored by an outside group and the school system had no involvement in the program.

Stephanie Spring, Director of Athletics for the Tulsa Public Schools would like to survey middle school administrators regarding the perceived value of school sponsored middle school athletics.

**PROCEDURES**

If you would like to be included in the study, please complete the attached survey. It is a fairly short survey and should not take much of your time, maybe 5 to 10 minutes.

I hope that by getting the opinions of middle school administrators, I can make improvements or adjustments to the middle school athletics program if needed.

Thanks for your time.

Stephanie Spring

APPENDIX B

ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY



QUESTIONNAIRE**Administrator Questions**

1. Currently, the position you hold in TPS is: (please check appropriate answer)  
 (a) Principal                      (b) Assistant principal                      (c) Dean
2. How many years have you served in this capacity at this particular school? \_\_\_\_\_ (please write in number of years)

The following questions will address the issue of middle school athletics. Please circle the most appropriate response.

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
3. School sponsored athletic programs at the middle school level are important to the social development of the middle school child.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
4. School sponsored athletic programs contribute to a more positive middle school environment.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
5. School sponsored athletic programs play an active role in developing positive behavior patterns for students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
6. The implementation of athletics into TPS middle schools has played a key role in creating an improved learning environment in my school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
7. The implementation of middle school athletics has created little or no change in the morale of my faculty of my school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
8. Since the implementation of middle school athletics, the negative behavior of my student-athletes has decreased significantly.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
9. The implementation of middle school athletics has had little or no influence on the negative behavior of my student-athletes.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
10. Students who participate in athletics are less likely to be absent from school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
11. Students who participate in athletics are more likely to make passing grades in all classes due to their desire to participate.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
12. Since the implementation of athletics into the middle schools, the concept of “school pride” has taken on a much more positive meaning to my students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
13. I am familiar with the outside organization (TJAA) that previously ran the middle school athletics program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
14. The implementation of middle school athletics by TPS was well organized and well planned.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
15. During the implementation of the middle school athletics program, building administrators were given the opportunity to provide input and suggestions.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
16. Based on your knowledge of TJAA, the TPS athletics program is more consistent and more organized than the previous program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
17. Students participating in TPS athletics are held to a higher academic standard than were students in the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
18. Students participating in TPS athletics are held to a higher behavior standard than were students in the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
19. Students participating in TPS athletics are held to a more strict attendance policy than were students in the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
20. Tulsa Public Schools should add more sports at the middle school level in an effort to provide more athletic opportunities for students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
21. If more students were involved in athletics at my school, it would positively impact the morale in my building.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
22. An adequate number of athletic opportunities are currently available to middle school students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
23. The addition of middle school athletics has made my job as a middle school administrator more difficult.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
24. Since the implementation of middle school athletics, the positive involvement of parents has improved at my school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
25. Since the implementation of middle school athletics, students display more respect amongst their peers.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
26. School sponsored middle school athletics has had a strong influence on the sportsmanship qualities displayed by my students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
27. Having teachers in my building that also serve as coaches for my teams, provides for positive behavior reinforcement for my student-athletes.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
28. Since the implementation of middle school athletics, there is more positive cooperation between student-athletes.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
29. My faculty endorses the concept of "school sponsored" middle school athletics.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
30. My faculty would say that the overall behavior of student athletes has improved since the implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
31. My faculty would say that the concept of "school pride" has improved since the implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
32. My faculty would agree that the higher academic standards as set forth by the OSSAA, have improved the academic achievement of the middle school student athlete.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
33. Overall, middle school athletics has been a positive addition for the middle school student.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

APPENDIX C

FACULTY COVER LETTER

**FACULTY INFORMATION  
TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS SURVEY**

<b>INVESTIGATOR</b>	Stephanie Spring, Director of Athletics, Tulsa Public Schools
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	(918) 746-6454
<b>FACULTY SPONSOR</b>	Dr. Steve Edwards, Oklahoma State University
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	(405) 744-7476

**STUDY**

*The value of middle school athletics as perceived by middle school administrators, faculty, and ninth and tenth grade students in Tulsa Public Schools.*

**PURPOSE**

Tulsa Public Schools is currently in its third year of school sponsored middle school athletics. Prior to the involvement of Tulsa Public Schools, middle school sports were sponsored by an outside group and the school system had no involvement in the program.

Stephanie Spring, Director of Athletics for the Tulsa Public Schools would like to survey middle school faculty members regarding the perceived value of school sponsored middle school athletics.

**PROCEDURES**

If you would like to be included in the study, please complete the attached survey. It is a fairly short survey and should not take much of your time, maybe 5 to 10 minutes.

I hope that by getting the opinions of middle school faculty members, I can make improvements or adjustments to the middle school athletics program if needed.

Thanks for your time.

Stephanie Spring

APPENDIX D

FACULTY SURVEY

## MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS QUESTIONNAIRE

### Faculty Questions

1. How many years have you served as a teacher in **Tulsa Public Schools**?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (please write in number of years)
2. Please indicate the number of years of teaching experience in Tulsa Public Schools, you have had at each level:  
Elementary \_\_\_\_\_ Middle School \_\_\_\_\_ Junior High \_\_\_\_\_  
High School \_\_\_\_\_

The following questions will address the issue of middle school athletics. Please circle the most appropriate response.

- |   | Agree | Tend to<br>Agree | Tend to<br>Disagree | Disagree |
|---|-------|------------------|---------------------|----------|
| 3. School sponsored athletic programs at the middle school level are important to the social development of the middle school child.        | [1]   | [2]              | [3]                 | [4]      |
| 4. School sponsored athletic programs contribute to a more positive middle school environment.  | [1]   | [2]              | [3]                 | [4]      |
| 5. School sponsored athletic programs play an active role in developing positive behavior patterns for students.                            | [1]   | [2]              | [3]                 | [4]      |
| 6. The implementation of athletics into TPS middle schools has played a key role in creating an improved learning environment in my school. | [1]   | [2]              | [3]                 | [4]      |
| 7. The implementation of middle school athletics has created little or no change in the morale of the faculty of my school.                 | [1]   | [2]              | [3]                 | [4]      |
| 8. Since the implementation of middle school athletics, the negative behavior of student-athletes has decreased significantly.              | [1]   | [2]              | [3]                 | [4]      |



	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
9. The implementation of middle school athletics has had little or no influence on the negative behavior of student-athletes.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
10. Students who participate in athletics are less likely to be absent from school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
11. Students who participate in athletics are more likely to make passing grades in all classes due to their desire to participate.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
12. Since the implementation of athletics into the middle schools, the concept of "school pride" has taken on a much more positive meaning to students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
13. I am familiar with the outside organization (TJAA) that previously ran the middle school athletics program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
14. The implementation of middle school athletics by TPS was well organized and well planned.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
15. During the implementation of the middle school athletics program, building administrators were given the opportunity to provide input and suggestions.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
16. Based on your knowledge of TJAA, the TPS athletics program is more consistent and more organized than the previous program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
17. Students participating in TPS athletics are held to a higher academic standard than were students in the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
18. Students participating in TPS athletics are held to a higher behavior standard than were students in the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
19. Students participating in TPS athletics are held to a more strict attendance policy than were students in the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
20. Tulsa Public Schools should add more sports at the middle school level in an effort to provide more athletic opportunities for students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
21. If more students were involved in athletics at my school, it would positively impact the morale in my building.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
22. An adequate number of athletic opportunities are currently available to middle school students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
23. The addition of middle school athletics has made my job as a middle school teacher more difficult.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
24. Since the implementation of middle school athletics, the positive involvement of parents has improved at my school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
25. Since the implementation of middle school athletics, students display more respect amongst their peers.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
26. School sponsored middle school athletics has had a strong influence on the sportsmanship qualities displayed by students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
27. Having teachers in the building that also serve as coaches for school teams, provides for positive behavior reinforcement for student-athletes.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
28. Since the implementation of middle school athletics, there is more positive cooperation between student-athletes.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
29. The faculty endorses the concept of “school sponsored” middle school athletics.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
30. The faculty would say that the overall behavior of student athletes has improved since the implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
31. The faculty would say that the concept of “school pride” has improved since the implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
32. The faculty would agree that the higher academic standards as set forth by the OSSAA, have improved the academic achievement of the middle school student athlete.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
33. Overall, middle school athletics has been a positive addition for the middle school student.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

APPENDIX E

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

**PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

<b>INVESTIGATOR</b>	Stephanie Spring, Director of Athletics, Tulsa Public Schools
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	(918) 746-6454
<b>FACULTY SPONSOR</b>	Dr. Steve Edwards, Oklahoma State University
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	(405) 744-7476

**STUDY**

*The Value of Middle School Athletics as Perceived by Middle School Administrators, Faculty, and Ninth and Tenth Grade Students in Tulsa Public Schools.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) is currently in its third year of school sponsored middle school athletics. Prior to the involvement of TPS, an outside group sponsored middle school sports and the school system had no involvement in the program. Current ninth and tenth grade students are the group of students who potentially had the opportunity to participate in both the non-school sponsored middle school athletic program as well as the middle school athletic program sponsored by Tulsa Public Schools.

**PURPOSE**

Stephanie Spring, Director of Athletics for the Tulsa Public Schools wants to get the opinion of your ninth or tenth grade student regarding the perceived value of school sponsored middle school athletics. This is a research project for a doctoral degree program at Oklahoma State University (OSU). The researcher intends to compare the opinions of administrators, faculty and student-athletes in Tulsa Public Schools regarding the perceived value of school sponsored middle school sports.

**PROCEDURES**

If you consent for your child to be included in the study, your child will be asked to complete the attached survey. It is a fairly short survey and should not take much of his or her time, maybe 5 to 10 minutes. No names are used on the surveys; subjects will not be able to be identified other than knowing if they are administrators, faculty, or student-athletes. In addition, the student assent form and parental consent form will be separated when your child returns the survey to his or her coach at school. Collected data will be stored in a locked file cabinet at OSU, Willard Hall and will only be available to researchers. Data will be reported in aggregate form and no individual responses will be reported.

**PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your child may withdraw at any time and there is absolutely no penalty if a child chooses to not participate in this study.

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) CONTACT INFORMATION**

For information on subject's rights, contact: Dr. Carol Olsen, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Phone number (405) 744.1676

I hope that by getting the opinions of students I can make improvements or adjustments to the middle school athletics program if needed.

Your signature below means that you consent to your child participating in the study.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX F

STUDENT ASSENT FORM

**ASSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS STUDY**

<b>INVESTIGATOR</b>	<b>Stephanie Spring</b>
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	<b>(918) 746-6454</b>
<b>FACULTY SPONSOR</b>	<b>Dr. Steve Edwards, Oklahoma State University</b>
<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	<b>(405) 744-7476</b>

**PURPOSE**

Stephanie Spring, Director of Athletics for the Tulsa Public Schools wants to get your opinion regarding the value of school sponsored middle school athletics.

**PROCEDURES**

If you want to be included in the study, you will be asked to complete the attached survey. It is a fairly short survey and should not take much of your time, maybe 5 to 10 minutes. If you do not want to be a part of the study, that is OK too.

If you have questions about this study, please ask those at any time.

I hope that by getting the opinions of students I can make improvements or adjustments to the middle school athletics program if needed. Also by having your opinion, it helps us with the future direction of the program.

Your signature below means that it is OK with you to be in the study.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX G

STUDENT SURVEY



## MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS QUESTIONNAIRE

### Student Questions

1. Please indicate your current grade level:  
     9<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_      10<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_      Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Please check the years you **participated** in Middle School Athletics, either with TJAA or with Tulsa Public Schools (TPS): (check each grade level that participated)  
     6<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_    7<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_    8<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_    I did not attend middle school in TPS \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Note:** If you did not attend a TPS middle school you do not need to answer the remaining questions.

The following questions will address the issue of middle school athletics. **Please answer based on your experience at a TPS middle school.** **\*Note:** If you attended more than one TPS middle school, base your answer on your overall experience. These questions are not directed at your current high school athletic experience! Please "X" the most appropriate response.

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
3. School sponsored athletic programs at the middle school level are important to the social development of the middle school student.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
4. School sponsored athletic programs contribute to a more positive middle school environment.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
5. School sponsored athletic programs play an active role in developing positive behavior patterns for students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
6. The implementation of athletics into TPS middle schools played a key role in creating an improved learning environment at my middle school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
7. The implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics created little or no change in the morale of the teachers at my middle school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
8. After the implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics, the negative behavior of student-athletes decreased significantly.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
9. The implementation of middle school athletics had little or no influence on the negative behavior of student-athletes.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
10. Students who participated in middle school athletics were less likely to be absent from school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
11. Students who participated in middle school athletics were more likely to make passing grades in all classes due to their desire to participate.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
12. After the implementation of athletics into the middle schools, the concept of "school pride" took on a much more positive meaning to students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
13. I am familiar with the outside organization (TJAA) that previously ran the middle school athletics program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
14. The implementation of middle school athletics by TPS was well organized and well planned.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
15. During the implementation of the middle school athletics program, individuals were given the opportunity to provide input and suggestions.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
16. Based on your knowledge of TJAA, the TPS middle school athletics program is more consistent and more organized than the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
17. Students participating in TPS middle school athletics are held to a higher academic standard than were students in the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
18. Students participating in TPS middle school athletics are held to a higher behavior standard than were students in the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
19. Students participating in TPS middle school athletics are held to a more strict attendance policy than were students in the TJAA program.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
20. Tulsa Public Schools should add more sports at the middle school level in an effort to provide more athletic opportunities for middle school students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
21. If more students had been involved in middle school athletics, it would have positively impacted the attitude at my middle school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
22. An adequate number of athletic opportunities are currently available to middle school students.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
23. The addition of TPS sponsored middle school athletics made my workload as a middle school student more difficult.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
24. After the implementation of middle school athletics, the positive involvement of parents improved at my middle school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
25. After the implementation of middle school athletics, students displayed more respect amongst their peers at my middle school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
26. TPS school sponsored middle school athletics had a strong influence on the sportsmanship qualities shown by students at my middle school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
27. Having teachers in the building that also served as coaches for my middle school teams, provided for positive behavior reinforcement for student-athletes.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
28. After the implementation of middle school athletics, there was more positive cooperation between student-athletes at my middle school.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree
29. The faculty at my middle school endorsed the concept of “school sponsored” middle school athletics.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
30. The faculty at my middle school would have said the overall behavior of student athletes improved after the implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
31. The faculty at my middle school would have said that the concept of “school pride” improved after the implementation of school sponsored middle school athletics.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
32. The faculty at my middle school would have agreed that the higher academic standards as set forth by the OSSAA, improved the academic achievement of the middle school student athlete.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
33. Overall, school sponsored middle school athletics was a positive addition for the middle school student.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]

APPENDIX H

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 5/26/2005

Date: Thursday, May 27, 2004

IRB Application No ED0494

Proposal Title: The Value of Middle School Athletics As Perceived by Middle School Administrators,  
Faculty, and Ninth and Tenth Grade Students in Tulsa Public Schools

Principal  
Investigator(s):

Stephanie Spring  
432 Willard  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Steven Edwards  
432 Willard  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Expedited (Spec Pop)

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved \*

---

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact me in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, colson@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Carol Olson, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

\*NOTE: On consent form, correct spelling of 'Olsen' to 'Olson'

VITA

Stephanie S. Spring

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE VALUE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS AS PERCEIVED BY ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY AND NINTH AND TENTH GRADE STUDENT-ATHLETES IN TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Biographical:

- **Education:** Received a Bachelor of Science in Education degree with a major in Biology and a minor in Health from Abilene Christian University, in Abilene, Texas, December, 1989. Graduated *Cum Laude*. Became certified to teach in Oklahoma in the fields of Biology, Health, and Anatomy and Physiology. Received a Master of Education with a major in School Administration from Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, December, 1995. Graduated *Summa Cum Laude*. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree with a major in Applied Educational Studies at Oklahoma State University, December, 2004.
- **Employment:** The Director of Athletics for the Tulsa Public School district, April 1997 to present. Science teacher teaching Biology, Anatomy/Physiology, Biology II-Honors, and Health. Also served as girl's basketball coach, girl's volleyball coach, girl's softball coach and Assistant Director of Athletics at Tulsa East Central High School, August 1990 to April, 1997.
- **Professional Organizations:** National Interscholastic Athletic Administrator's Association, Oklahoma Interscholastic Athletic Administrator's Association, Oklahoma Coaches Association, Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activity Association Reconstitution Committee, 2000, 2004, Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activity Association Public – Non Public School Relations committee, 2001, Oklahoma Athletic Directors Advisory Board, Secretary, 1999-to July 2004, Oklahoma Athletic Directors Advisory Board, President-Elect, July 2004 to present.