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**ACADEMICS AND THE STUDENT ATHLETE: A MIXED METHODS STUDY
ON THE ROLE OF ATHLETICS IN THE HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL
SETTING**

by

Meredith Ann McGee

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Doctor of Education
at
Rowan University
February 27, 2017

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Shari Lorraine Willis

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Dedication

For my daughter, Mary Grace. While I will never be able to give you a gift to compare to what you have given to me, this is a mere representation of what I wish for you. Let this be an example that you can accomplish any dream you have when you rely on your tenacity, strength, and perseverance. Understand that education is instrumental, that you must learn each and every day of your life and from everyone you meet. Sometimes the lessons you learn will be challenging, but it is in those challenges that you will flourish. Take the time to reflect, and never underestimate your worth. I will forever be grateful for your faith, inspiration, and love, I am proud to share this with you. Continue to lead. I love you past infinity!

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I would like extend a special thank you to my dissertation chair, Dr. Shari Willis. You have inspired me through your passion and dedication to your family, your work, and your students. I truly appreciate every conversation we have had, your patience, your understanding, your support, and above all your positivity and encouragement. You have motivated me to reach for greater opportunities academically and professionally.

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Abstract

Meredith Ann McGee

ACADEMICS AND THE STUDENT ATHLETE: A MIXED METHODS STUDY ON
THE ROLE OF ATHLETICS IN THE HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL SETTING
2016-2017

Dr. Shari Lorraine Willis
Doctor of Education

Athletics are a strong component in the educational experiences of students.

Without the proper social support, student athletes are presenting academically through a deficit lens (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Coaches, teachers, and administrators must work collaboratively to enhance the education of student athletes. As a result, high schools can better prepare their student athletes for post-secondary life specifically through the significant relationships formed between athletic personnel and their athletes.

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore athletic administrators' and coaches' practices related to fostering academic excellence through athletics in the high school environment (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Currently, there is only credit requirements for student athletes in New Jersey high schools. The data presented and analyzed in this study suggests that athletic personnel contribute to the academic lives and behaviors of student athletes by the nature of their positions. Collaboratively espousing academic priority and socially supporting the student athlete maximizes success and fosters education through athletics. To better serve the needs of this population, high schools could implement a framework for academic success specifically for student athletes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Education in America has historically attempted to produce the highest achieving students in the world. In the early days, education removed children from factories and gave them a chance to become part of the industrialization of America, however placing students in schools modelled after the factory environment prompted reproduction of one size fits all for students. Later, the 1950's education was about racing to the moon and giving children skills that would advance America to the forefront of globalization. The Scientific Revolution, technology, and the need for 21st century skills, have created innovators that could begin to take America to the top. Today, however, American education has evolved again through collaboration, specifically in professional learning communities (PLC), accounting for the individuality of students and high achievement (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The achievement we, educators, espouse does not necessarily equate to intellect and prowess in our global society. Instead, we are promoting students who believe that athletic ability trumps intellectual ability. We have changed our language to allow for the students sitting in our classroom chairs to believe that we are not teachers, we are coaches and that their ability on the field is more of a priority than their ability in the classroom. With the recent initiatives presented implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Partnership for Assessment and Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), there has been an increase emphasis on achievement for all students.

Student athletes should work to balance the requirements of athletics and academics. As educators, we often reinforce the importance of each of these roles, student and athlete, be it consciously or not (Mahoney & McCormick, 1993). However,

in some situations, the athletic component is so heavily weighted that the title “athlete, who is a student” may be more suitable (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). Although schools, specifically through athletic departments and athletic administrators, create a vision for student athletes, cognitive dissonance may be felt by students when educators espouse differently from common practice (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Festinger, 1957; Mahoney & McCormick, 1993). A coach who is paying attention to the number of wins, for example, may be overshadowing the athletic departments’ focus on teamwork and skill building. Relationships that student athletes foster with athletic personnel may contribute to how they understand their roles. In high school settings, the primary focus is the education for students, thus punctuating the goal of attaining readiness for college, careers, and life.

Academic integrity, at any level, comes into consideration for student athletes that lack the academic support services that they need for success (Gaston-Gayles, 2003). Because the focus is typically on the eligibility of the student athletes, some students are accused of taking easy classes to earn passing grades. At the high school level, this could mean opting out of honors or advanced placement courses to insure higher grades. Similarly, accusations of collegiate teams that received academic privileges have also arisen (Gaston-Gayles, 2003; New, 2014). Although the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is increasing standards for academics, students are still graduating because of credits (CollegeBoard.org, 2014; Gaston-Gayles, 2003). Coaches, athletic administrators, and teachers of student athletes must consider their personal and professional codes of ethics when approaching academic integrity. Unfortunately, student athletes may suffer a disadvantage of not doing well academically (Gaston-Gayles, 2003).

Recent incidents of college scandals regarding student athletes, did not require students athletes to meet the academic level expected of other students, indicating that schools may not be espousing high expectations (New, 2014). For example, the discovery that the University of North Carolina gave several student athletes “paper” classes, or classes that rarely meet or required just a final paper, supported this lack of expectation (Jacobs, 2015). “The culture of athletics works against academic achievement” (Lawry, 2005, p.21). It has almost become acceptable to manipulate the grades and programs of student athletes, accepting the minimal effort.

Correspondingly, in the State of New Jersey, at Rutgers University, football coach Kyle Flood, was in the limelight because of an e-mail he allegedly sent to a professor regarding a player’s grade in class. Coach Flood’s e-mail message had requested a grade change for one of his ineligible players, offering to make-up assignments during football (Bieler, 2015); a grade change would have made the player eligible for participation in athletics according to NCAA policy. In contacting the professor, the coach had crossed policy and procedural guidelines (Bieler, 2015). Due to the interwoven relationship of athletics and academics, messages such as this can be highly sensitive. “Rutgers and other schools in money-generating athletics conferences are under pressure to keep their player's grades up, so they are academically eligible to play under NCAA rules” (Heyboer, 2015, p.1). Coaches may feel the need to maintain relationships of support with student athletes and their professors or academic advisors to ensure success.

Role of Current Policies

Athletic policies work in a funnel-like system as demonstrated in Figure 1. National guidelines for high school athletics are created, then specified at the State, and

further at the local or school district level. Consequently, the collegiate guidelines may or may not match up to the national high school policies, because they are created by a separate organization that focuses only on post-secondary institutions current or potential athletes. The diversity of policies may occur at the local level, wherein athletic personnel from a school or school district are making decisions regarding student athletes.

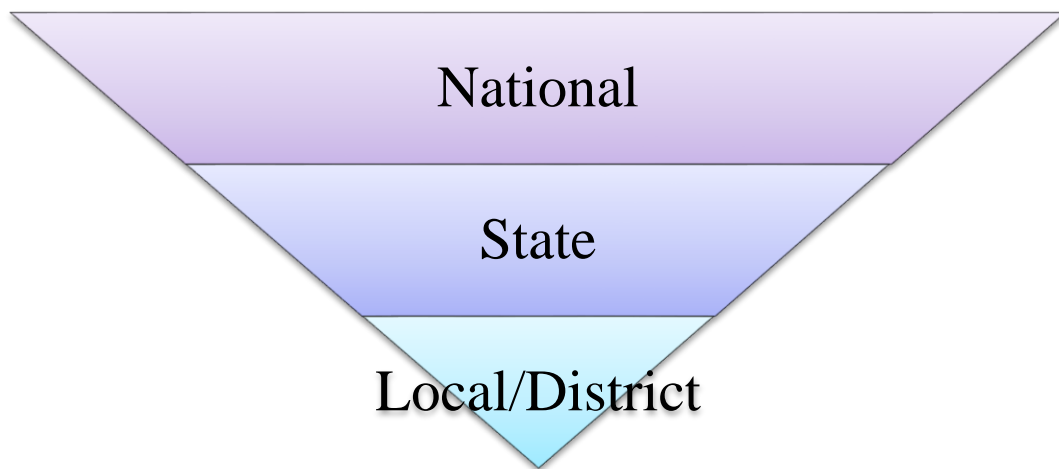


Figure 1. Representation of Policy Levels in Athletics

National Level

High school athletics is regulated by rules, regulations, and policies of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). The NFHS (n.d.) mandates that student athletes must be officially enrolled as students in a school and maintain adequate attendance (NFHS, n.d.). Academically, students are required to have passing work in four subjects needed for graduation. At the conclusion of each marking

period, eligibility must be revisited (NFHS, n.d.).

State Level

The NJSIAA governs high school athletics in the State of New Jersey in regard to academic eligibility, but mainly defers decisions on grading policies and standards to the school districts and their respective boards of education (NJSIAA, 2014). Student athletes are required to be passing their courses. For eligibility from September to January of a school year, “a pupil must have passed 25% of the credits (30) required by the State of New Jersey for graduation (120), during the immediately preceding academic year” (NJSIAA, 2014, p. 37). Eligibility in the second half of the year requires 12.5% of the total credits toward graduation being passed in the previous semester (NJSIAA, 2014, p.37).

Collegiate Level

In order to ensure that student athletes are prepared after college graduation, the NCAA is changing their policy for academic eligibility beginning in 2016 (Hosick, 2012). Changes will increase the minimum requirements for grade point average (GPA) and the sliding scale score, which places a student based on standardized test scores, such as the SAT (Hosick, 2012). Student athletes entering college will need a 2.3 GPA and an increased sliding scale score (Hosick, 2012). A minimum number of core classes in areas of English, mathematics, and science are also mandatory (Hosick, 2012). Requirements to continue athletic participation have been divided and differ for Division I and Division II schools (Collegeboard.org, Inc., 2015).

The changes that will go into effect in 2016 from the NCAA could change the future of the athletic eligibility issue. As the standard rises at the collegiate level, policy

at the national and state level for high school athletics will need to be re-evaluated. With all policies, as new issues arise there is the potential to change or add legislation. Hopefully, student athletes will begin to “adjust to the changes and improve their preparation” (Hosick, 2012, p.1). Future legislation and research would be required to increase achievement of student athletes at all levels by changing policy to reflect a higher standard for academic performance.

NCAA relevance to high school athletics. While the NCAA does not sanction high schools, it is important to consider the relevance of this organization to high school athletics. One of the goals of Kindergarten through twelfth grade education in the United States is to prepare students to be career and/or college ready upon graduation. For student athletes, this readiness may mean a transition to a collegiate athletic career. Thus, in order for our high school athletes to properly prepare for college athletics, we must consider the academic and athletic lifestyle they will be expected to lead in college. It would behoove athletic personnel in high schools to assist students in transitioning by giving the students an awareness of the expectations for college athletes, perhaps modelling this during the high school years. Due to the lack of a standard policy governing these details of student athletes’ lives in the high school setting, I draw upon the NCAA frequently for a comparison at a national level and as a means of adequately preparing future collegiate student athletes for NCAA expectations in all division levels.

Athletic Professionals

Athletic department and school district policies must be evaluated and adapted to provide greater access by requiring higher levels of accountability and achievement (Anderson, 2011). To support student achievement, we must begin to examine how

athletic administrators understand the relationship between athletics and academics. Schools' values of athletics and academics vary, thus creating an unclear relationship. By reflecting on action, athletic administrators may be able to assist athletes in attaining a balanced relationship of athletics and academics that support one another and are not in isolation (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Many athletes rely on sports to help them transition into college. With colleges offering academic scholarships instead of athletic scholarships, students are made aware that they must attain academic success. Furthermore, coaches on the front line with student athletes must learn how to extract high quality behavior from their student athletes. Coaches can then partner with teachers to deliver maximum educational outcomes.

Athletics and extra-curricular activities are additions to the academic curriculum that can enhance education. Namely, many of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) can be aligned to physical education and athletics (Spark, 2016). For example, students on a soccer team may watch an opponent play, analyze and discuss what they have seen, and synthesize a plan of action for their game, whereby applying language, listening, and speaking skills to communicate and successfully work as a group. The academic curriculum is, therefore, reinforced through athletic involvement (Spark, 2016).

In an educational setting, all stakeholders must be willing to act in the best interest of students and to push students to excel. For Kindergarten-12 educational settings, this impetus will better prepare students for college, thus providing greater access to higher education for all students (St. John et al., 2013). Academic eligibility policies for athletes set a standard. If policy makers at the national level continue to raise this standard to one of excellence, there will be incentive for increased achievement.

Higher achievement would positively impact student athletes' preparedness for college, work, and life. Together with funding and student aid, all students would succeed in gaining higher levels of college access (St. John et al., 2013).

Context of the Study

The context of this study is the State of New Jersey public high schools athletic departments. The schools that will be represented are public, four year, State accredited, high schools from school districts geographically located in New Jersey's various counties. In order to be included the school must have interscholastic varsity sports in their co-curricular program offerings. All schools are united as members of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association, and follow sanctions set forth by the organization.

Problem Statement

The level of preparedness, or the ability to succeed independently, needed for college, careers, and life, presented by graduating high school students, has dominated discussions. Concerns of inadequate readiness to explore life choices after graduation has become an issue that is affecting our global society. Institutions of higher education have begun to put pressure on the Kindergarten through grade twelve setting to raise the standards for completion in order to assure that newly admitted students are on a path to success, rather than spending time making up areas in which they did not have exposure. Similarly, graduates at the high school and college level are faced with difficulty pursuing careers. Students who leave high school inadequately equipped for life and careers can further add to our global economic issues. Those disadvantaged from lack of

academic preparedness in educational settings may lack the skills needed to be successful in life.

Specifically, in the State of New Jersey, the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) have brought light to the debate of student preparedness and achievement. The implementation of the Common Core State Standards sought to define expectations at each grade level (K-12) that would prepare students for college and careers (NJ Department of Education, 2010). The standards, adopted by over forty states, provide students experiences with critical thinking skills, collaborative work, real-world concepts, and new ideas, while setting expectations to prepare them for future success (NJ Department of Education, 2010). Public schools that do not meet adequate standards mandated by the State of New Jersey are in jeopardy of losing funding. For graduating high school students, academic achievement is essential for access to opportunities in higher education (St. John, Daun-Barnett & Moronski-Chapman, 2013). “Every year in the United States, nearly 60% of first-year college students discover that, despite being fully eligible to attend college, they are not ready for postsecondary studies” (The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2010, p.2). Students are often faced with having to take additional classes for remediation; therefore, high schools are working to provide the skills needed in higher education through the Common Core and collaboration with institutions of higher education (NJ Department of Education, 2010; The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2010).

Student achievement has been controversial because of the mixed standards espoused to various populations. “Increasingly, it appears that states or postsecondary

institutions may be enrolling students under false pretenses” (The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2010). Student athletes could be part of this population. New Jersey’s high school student athletes are required to meet academic standards to participate in athletics (NJSIAA, 2014). The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA), a group of school and athletic administrators, create eligibility requirements for student athletes. Criteria from grades and credit hours determine if a student may participate in a sport. At the collegiate level a non-profit organization, the National Collegiate Association of Athletics (NCAA), regulates student eligibility and the status needed to continue to be on an athletic team. By having accountability at all levels, student athletes are aware that they must maintain minimal academic standards. Unfortunately, these standards may be a stopping point for some student athletes allowing an exception of mediocrity.

Although colleges and universities offer a myriad of support services and programs for student-athletes, they have not managed to consistently and effectively enhance student-athletes’ learning and personal development (Comeaux, 2007; Hinkle, 1994, as cited in Comeaux & Harrison, 2011, p. 236).

With consideration to the role of athletics in education, educators should consider how academic achievement may be strengthened through athletic participation. Educational stakeholders may be able to assist athletes in attaining a balanced relationship of athletics and academics.

At first glance, it may seem that establishing academic connections in athletics will create high levels of student achievement. Educators have failed to notice, however, that eligibility standards are only providing a basis for participation. This does not take

into account that students may not be striving for higher levels of achievement. In other words, student athletes may be rising to mediocre academic expectations. Therefore, it is possible that student athletes are presenting through a deficit lens (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Unless we change our expectations by eliminating minimal standards and requirements for participation in athletics at the high school level, we will continue to have trouble with low levels of student achievement and high school graduates that are ill prepared for college, careers, and life. Coaches and teachers must work collaboratively to enhance the education of student athletes. Athletics can also be used to teach skills that will assist students in academic and social areas. By creating an awareness of the role of athletics in education, we can challenge students to a high standard of achievement and provide the resources to reach these standards. As a result, high schools can better prepare their student athletes for post-secondary life specifically through the significant relationships formed between coaches and their athletes. Athletics are a strong component in the education of our students, and we must examine how athletic administrators and coaches perceive this role.

Purpose of Research

This mixed methods study will explore athletic administrators' and coaches' practices related to fostering academic excellence through athletics in the high school environment. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design will be used to examine the lived experiences of athletic administrators and coaches. In the first, quantitative phase of the study, survey data will be collected from public high school head varsity coaches in the State of New Jersey to explain how coaches participate in the academic life of student athletes. During the second qualitative phase, approximately ten athletic

administrators throughout the state will be selected for interviews in order to follow up on significant results uncovered in the quantitative phase; data saturation will determine the exact number of interviews. These interviews will help to provide a greater depth of understanding of the role of athletics in enhancing educational contexts by capturing current practices related to student athletes. Based on prior research on student achievement and the role of athletics in educational institutions, this study will add to the current literature by providing a framework for athletic personnel supporting student athletes.

Research Questions

The study was guided by three research questions, which guided the exploration of the role of athletics in education:

1. What are the ways in which high school coaches encourage academic success for their athletes?
 - a. How often do head varsity coaches participate in academics related to the athletes in their programs?
 - b. To what extent do head varsity coaches convey their expectations for academics to their athletes?
2. What role does athletics play in fostering education in the high school environment?
 - a. What are the values that athletic administrators associate with education?
 - b. How do athletic administrators perceive the role of coaches in the student athletes' academic life?
3. How do the findings of this study lend themselves to a framework for academic

support of student athletes in a high school educational context?

Definition of Key Terms

A variety of essential terms, not previously defined, were used throughout this study.

They are defined as follows:

- Student Athlete- any high school student who is academically eligible (as per state, local, and school policies) to participate in extra-curricular athletics, and is currently an active member on a Varsity or Sub-Varsity level athletic team.
- Athletic Administrator- a public school employee who is charged with the supervision of the athletic department, including observation and evaluation of athletic staff. This person holds a state certification that renders them eligible to lead staff and create policy as needed. Any number of titles could be used to describe this position, not limited to: athletic administrator, assistant principal of athletics.
- New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA)- a group of school and athletic administrators, and state officials that create the rules, regulations, and eligibility requirements for student athletes in the State of New Jersey.
- Multidimensional- an approach in which there is an eclectic picture formed from various parts, facets, areas of a profession, skill sets, and expertise or knowledge brought together in collaboration of stakeholders. This is similar to a multidisciplinary approach, which draws from various academic disciplines to find a new understanding; however, the multidimensional approach herein refers to areas within the same discipline which are divided through expertise, for

example, pedagogical knowledge of teachers, counseling knowledge of social-emotional wellness, coaches for athletic knowledge, and school administrators for policy and leadership knowledge.

Theoretical Perspective

The role of athletic personnel can be a tool to student success both in and out of the classroom. Students succeed through the guidance and assistance of the school staff; “interpersonal connectedness” to a support network or environment helps adjustment and creates positive social relationships (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990, p.136). Social support theory posits that the perception of being cared for by others in your social environment can create a supportive network which in turn leads to success (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Lakey and Cohen (2000) further dissect social support into three perspectives: stress and coping, which deals with how support may protect an individual’s health by avoiding stress; social constructionist, positing that support plays into self-esteem independent of the level of stress an individual is under; and, relationship, or the co-existence of health and supportive relationships with others. Specifically, the social constructionist perspective accounts for people holding their own perceptions of the world and their role in the world, which is derived from how they view the world and others (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). Individuals, in the case of this study, student athletes, are provided feedback about themselves from their interactions with others, specifically based on the expectations that people hold (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). For instance, when looking at the relationship of student athletes and coaches, the students are understanding themselves from the input of a coach who has set a particular expectation in their world of the high school educational

setting. The perceived support of an individual, here the support of a student athlete from a coach, can affect their self-esteem and health (Lahey & Cohen, 2000). According the social support theory, significant players typically provide assistance to the supported person, whether it be emotional or physically tangible (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). The role of a coach, through this lens, is one of support simply by the nature of their position of employment, wherein they are responsible for the safety and participation of the student athlete. To a student athlete, this provides feedback that they are cared for. Therefore, in looking through this lens, the athletic department becomes a social network. It is important for athletic department staff to ensure that the vision is sustained in order for student athletes to find success.

Reflecting on social support theory, the integration of students into a social network will result in relationships that can function as a means for encouragement, trust, acceptance, caring, advice, and other assistance (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). The support serves as a “buffer” (Cohen & Wills, 1985, p.312) to potential and real stress felt by a person, or in this context, a student athlete. Based on this perspective, if athletic staff work closely with the academic mission of an educational institution, forging supportive relationships with student athletes, the athletes will be successful in and out of school. The perception that athletic department staff have a vested interest in the student athletes will make the student athletes feel that they are socially accepted into the group (athletic department) and therefore, result in positive outcomes in all areas espoused to be important presumably academics. Stressors, positive or negative, play a significant role in the support that an individual understands; the stressors affect how an individual deals with a

situation (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). Presuming that the student athletes are in an academic setting, coaches are aware of academic stressors their athletes face. If the demands of the stressor, for example time management, are met with support from the coaches and/or environment, the social support is effective (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). The availability of coping resources is also significant to the outcome of a stressor (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985); athletic personal may provide resources that assist in coping wherein they create social support. The term coach almost implicitly implies that those under their discretion will have support; perceived support from a coach, therefore, can be assumed by a student athlete especially in the educational structure. Perceived support can be defined as “the individual’s belief that he or she can obtain help or empathy when it is needed” (Sarason & Sarason, 1985, p.38); arguably this is part of the job of any athletic staff, only the level of support may be argued. “Health and well-being are influenced by objective and perceived characteristics of supportive relationships” (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985, p.8), hence, coping could be maintained by the perception of the coach-athlete relationship.

Worldview

Not only do my experiences as a teacher, coach, student and researcher shape how I conceptualized my study, but my worldviews as well. The two worldviews that I defer to are constructivism and pragmatism. Under the constructivist worldview, I am seeking to understand the world in which I teach and have coached. I have created meaning out my own experiences, however I realize that they could be subjective. In order to be more objective I will rely the views of my interview and survey participants’ responses and my conclusions on how they interpret the world. Additionally, I will construct knowledge by

seeking to further understand the social context. As a pragmatist, I am using mixed methodology to understand all aspects of the research problem. I plan to use various data collection techniques and analyses to find if the research I do fits into a larger construct.

Significance of Research

Although this study was focused on public high schools in the State of New Jersey, the findings and insights could lead to further research in pursuit of more specific knowledge for specific constituencies. The findings may have significant implications to future research, policy, and practice. As New Jersey athletic organizations begin to look at policy, the data and interpretations herein may guide policy stakeholders by providing more depth of knowledge. Finally, practice of athletic administrators and coaches can be changed to better foster academic growth for student athletes, as a result increasing college and career readiness.

Research

Student athletes are encompassed in an environment and culture. The role of supportive adults can extend far beyond athletic personnel. Future research may consider the role of the parent, local community, and media, and the impact that those roles have on the career of the student athlete. Additionally, research can explore school culture and the contribution that adults in the school community hold within this culture. This lends to creating an environment of success for college and career readiness that encompasses the whole child and their future as an adult. Further research may also consider teammates and the elements of team bonding and team dynamics in a variety of sports.

Due to the progression of student athletes through various levels of athletic and academic environments, a longitudinal study could follow student athletes from middle

school athletics, through high school, and collegiate athletics, gathering data on academic achievement. Student athletes already in NCAA sanctioned activities can be monitored to discover if the social supports they are provided are assisting in their academic performance. Lastly, an action research case study could be executed in which student athletes are members of an academy within a school program. The academy would be strictly for student athletes, providing supports via a smaller staff, concentrated on NCAA eligibility for those interested in collegiate athletic careers.

Policy

States and local athletic conferences have their own regulations and policies, in addition to national guidelines for athletics and academics. If a program that enabled a partnership of athletics and academics was created, local, state and national policy could be adopted to enforce a standard for educating student athletes. This would create a more stringent academic eligibility policy that goes beyond grades and focuses on the whole student. For example, students may create portfolios that they present prior to graduation, to show their academic growth over the course of their high school career. These portfolios may be monitored by a mentor throughout the students' school career and goals for the student could be set and assessed via the portfolio. Mandated provisions for academic support, such as study hall hours, could be implemented for student athletes while they are in season. Further, examining the current changes on the state level with the implementation of the Common Core Content Standards, athletics can enhance the academic setting by incorporating higher standards. In the same way that teachers are evaluated within the new teacher evaluation systems, coaches could be evaluated to ensure standard practice. Policy would need to mandate training and professional training

for coaches, as a result, to guarantee they are equipped with the skills for improvement in the profession.

Practice

Based on the literature from Mahoney and McCormick (1993) suggesting high schools poorly prepare student athletes, I want to prepare a program for schools to prepare students through athletics. Included in this program would be elements emphasized by athletic administrators, such as leadership, time-management, study halls (Ayers et al., 2012), life-skills (Garvis, 2013), and mentoring (Shulruf, 2010). Additionally, this would include creating in-service and pre-service training for coaches, and providing ways to incorporate intervention elements for student athletes need into practice. Looking further at training for coaches, future research could seek to understand the desired types of leadership styles of effective coaches. Here, leadership theory could be explored through a different lens. Critical attributes of coaches' leadership could be shared with pre-service coaches as preparation and training.

As states focus more on student achievement for all populations of students, it would be beneficial to have research on academic improvement of student athletes. For example, student athletes who are in programs where the school is working to support and improve academics could be monitored throughout the school year. Grades and other data could be collected to see how interventions and/or coaches training impact the level of academic achievement a student athlete is reaching. This data could also be compared to that of non-athlete students to see if there is a correlation between athletic involvement and achievement. These topics should be included in the education of pre-service teachers who will have student athletes in their classrooms.

Practicing athletic administrators may benefit from the findings in this study by gaining an understanding of areas where coaches and student athletes need support. This knowledge could proliferate their leadership and effect the overall culture of schools. Schools in turn may develop a deeper level of commitment from the entire staff in improving the educational experience for all students. Teachers may benefit from a profounder understanding of the lived experiences of student athletes. In seeking a sense of teamwork with student athletes, teachers can expand on how they can support these student in the classroom, and in turn encourage them to engage in critical reflection on their teaching. As teachers have mandated professional development, coaches should be provided opportunities for professional development as well. By educating and informing coaches, they are better prepared to impart knowledge to students (Garvis, 2013). Additionally, athletic administrators and coaches must access and be accountable for reading research in their field and reflective practice as a means of professional growth (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Student athletes who may feel role confusion (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995) and isolation from their status, can apply the findings to how to advocate for themselves in educational environments.

Delimitations

As Bryman (2006) posited, “lack of integration suggests that mixed methods researchers may not always be making the most of the data they collect” (p. 9). Triangulation of data sources and collection techniques assisted in increasing the rigor of this study (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lather, 1986; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Multiple validities in both the qualitative and quantitative portions of the study helped to yield legitimization: an audit trail was kept in my

researcher journal to enhance reflection and reflexion (Janesick, 1999), I asked experts in the field to review my instruments (Johnson, 1997), I employed member checking of interview transcripts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), and member validation (Sandelowski, 1993). Throughout the process, I met with my community of practice and critical friends to assure rigor (Creswell, 2013; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Although bracketing of personal paradigms, belief, assumptions of meaning can be used to eliminate personal bias, past experience in coaching has allowed me to better understand the participants and therefore make more quality inferences (Gearing, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). To assure that the results are generalizable outside of the coaches and athletic administrators in New Jersey, and to improve the quality of inferences, I sought to diversify my sample (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Setting, Actors, and Sampling

The setting of this study was high schools in the State of New Jersey. A sampling was comprised of various high schools in counties around the state to ensure diversity and validity. Athletic administrators and coaches were chosen from these schools, and I ensured both male and female participation through the sampling. Coaches are a larger sample population representing many districts throughout New Jersey. Sampling initially began by stratified purposeful sampling, or choosing participants based upon characteristics of interest (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2003). Coaches and athletic administrators assisted my access by referring others to participate, evidencing snowball sampling (Patton, 2002; Toma, 2006). The limitations of this sample were that it only encompasses the State of New Jersey. Additionally, because I could not assure participation, the sample may not be completely representative of all areas in the state.

Researcher's Role

Athletics and academics is a partnership that has been the basis of my career. As both a teacher and a coach, I have always been passionate about creating ways for my students to excel and be best prepared for life. Working as a coach in both the high school and middle school setting, I have sat on committees and worked tirelessly with my coaching colleagues with regard to student athletes. A personal career goal that I have is to become a school administrator, potentially an athletic administrator. In this role I would be charged with supervising coaches, which I believe would be an area where I could apply various leadership theories and information from this research study. A primarily goal that I would have would be to facilitate high levels of academic achievement from student athletes.

Approaching this study at the high school level allowed some ease in access, in addition to a greater level of operational knowledge. Through my review of literature in the field, I have strengthened my base of information on athletics operation that will enhance my career as a coach and hopefully an athletic administrator. Similarly, my experience in the field not only provided me access to a sample population, but comfort with asking questions and understanding the culture of athletics. Coaches and teachers are my colleagues and I was able to approach them openly and honestly regarding my study. The school administration was also supportive of my endeavors as my goal is to create a better experience for student athletes, creating a foundation to be successful in the classroom and in their future careers, through my own growth and learning.

With a background as a coach and teacher, I operated out of a framework that I have created through my own experiences. I continuously journaled to monitor my own

assumptions and bracket them as I delved into data analysis (Gearing, 2004). To make up for a lack of foundational knowledge on collegiate athletic programs, I had focused a good deal of my research on that area to gain a deeper level of understanding collegiate requirements for student athletes. Although the concentration of my work was be on the high school setting, it is important to recognize the expectations that are mandated at the collegiate level so that I know what student athletes who would like to pursue a sports career in college are working toward.

Ethical Considerations

There are ethical considerations in most studies. Considering that this study will be seeking the lived experiences of athletic administrators who are currently in practice, there is a risk that revealing their identities or identifying characteristics of the schools in which they work, could compromise their position. In order to prevent this, I have created fictitious identifiers for all of the institutions, and each of the actors has been renamed with an alphabetic character. Additionally, in order to protect their position, those athletic administrators who chose to participate were given the option to choose the location for their interview. This acted as a safeguard that they are comfortable in the space to share information. Coaches were not asked to provide their names in the survey. As the researcher, I was not be able to identify any of the individual coaches. On the survey protocol there was a question that asks the coach to provide the name of the school at which they coach. This data was not used in the study and results; it was used solely by myself as the researcher to guarantee that the sample population attained coaches from various geographic locations around the state.

Organization of the Study

The organization of this dissertation is five chapters. This, the first chapter, includes the context and purpose of the study, narrowing it from broad to specific. The research problem and research questions are stated, along with a definition of key terms, theoretical framework, and significance of the study. In the second chapter, I have reviewed relevant literature on student achievement, athletics, the role of the student athlete, athletic policy, and interventions currently in place for student athletes. Methodology was discussed in the third chapter, including: participants, sampling, and data collection and analysis. Chapter Four presents my findings, and Chapter Five provides conclusions and implications that I have derived from the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The role of athletics in education lacks a clear explanation. Here, the prevailing information on athletics in academics is summarized with relation to the significance of influential contributions, such as the student achievement and policy. By evaluating past studies, discussing methods used in these studies, and providing an analysis of the literature, this review provides a general idea of findings and the connection to this plan of study. Survey research with a sample of head varsity coaches in New Jersey will help to provide descriptive statistics which will be explored and further illuminated by athletic administrators' interviews. Aimed at understanding how athletics are related to academics and applying this information, the qualitative portion of my study delves into ways that athletic administrators of high schools in the State of New Jersey understand the role of athletics in education

Student Achievement

Student achievement can be impacted by expectations of teachers, students, parents, community, culture, and school environment (Good & Nichols, 2001). The standard of achievement that any of these stakeholders set for a student can facilitate an impact in academic life. In 1968, Rosenthal and Jacobson (as cited in Rubie-Davies, 2010), conceptualized how the self-fulfilling prophecy, also referred to as *The Pygmalion Effect*, related to teachers. They proposed that students rise to teacher expectations. Teacher-student interactions satisfy expectations and enhance student development academically (Rubie-Davies, 2010; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Irving, Widdowson & Dixon, 2010). Teachers create positive or negative effects, intended or not, on student

achievement through their expectations and perceptions (Chang, 2011; Tsiplakides & Kermida, 2010). The research lacks a record of exact behaviors of teachers, which could be subject to different interpretations.

Brophy and Good (as cited in Rubie-Davies, 2010) explored further teacher behavior and high or low expectation of students, finding that teachers accept less from low level students than they would of their perceived higher level peers, at both the individual and class level. In a similar study, teachers were provided fictional data on students, which generated beliefs from perceptions onto students reflected in grades (Rolison & Medway, 1985). The vast beliefs and behaviors of teachers can shape and raise student expectations and consequently achievement (Guskey, 1982). Teachers' beliefs on education and interest in subject matter will transfer to style, classroom manner, and how they relate to students, which impacts students and/or classes (Rubie-Davies, 2010; Weinstein, Marshall, Sharp, & Botkin, 1987).

Students' perceptions of inspiring, supportive teachers may be a means to increasing their confidence and setting higher goals (Church, Elliot & Gable, 2001). Brookover & Lezotte (as cited in Guskey, 1982) concluded when principals and teachers held higher expectations for students, the students earned higher test scores. Teachers, therefore, are not the only means of influence on students; culture, school environment, and community are impactful (Good & Nichols, 2001). The classroom environment can lead to perceptions that not only influence the achievement of the student but the entire class; similarly, the environment can change the effect of students on the teacher, creating a level of expectation for classes (Veldman & Sanford, 1984; Weinstein, et al., 1987). Outside of the school environment, financial, community, and home support can

contribute to student self-perception and achievement (Good & Nichols, 2001; Neuenschwander, Vida, Garrett, & Eccles, 2007).

Previous studies on the correlation of student achievement and teacher expectations have focused on the disenfranchised student, namely young students in lower elementary grades, low academic performers, students with disabilities, and students studying English as a second language. The studies fall short in comparison of students in high school level and with undefined levels of teacher expectations. Additionally, studies often follow one teacher or one group of students with a teacher. Many of the findings become relevant only in a particular situation; different teachers with different students could produce skewed data. Teachers create predictions from information about students, which they acquire or form on their own, and use these predictions to influence students (Romain, 2010).

Impact of Perception

Overall, student age impacts their perception and attention to the expectations of others. The youngest students tend to be unaware of perceptions and expectations, older students (high school level) create their own perceptions based on past experience and achievement, negating views of others, and students in the middle tend to be most influenced (Humphreys & Stubbs, 1977; Rubie-Davies, et al., 2010; Weinstein, et al., 1987). Students' maturity and level of understanding cause different interpretations of teachers' interactions (Good & Nichols, 2001). Educators in and out of the classroom can impact students. Standards, set by policy, educators, or the school culture can influence outcomes in student achievement.

Students are influenced by a multitude of people in schools; the role of culture,

the school environment, and community are impactful (Good & Nichols, 2001). The environment can lead to perceptions that influence student achievement (Veldman & Sanford, 1984; Weinstein, et al., 1987). Financial, community, and home support can contribute to student self-perception and achievement (Good & Nichols, 2001; Neuenschwander, Vida, Garrett, & Eccles, 2007). Students' perception of inspiring, supportive educators may increase confidence and goals (Church, Elliot & Gable, 2001; Rubie-Davies, 2010). Research on teacher influence fails to separate coaches' impact on the academic welfare of students. In a similar fashion, the athletic culture of the school may or may not impact the student.

Academic Outcomes from Athletics

Researchers have completed qualitative and quantitative studies to look at the relationship between high school sports participation and positive academic outcomes; these results are often inconclusive or show a minor correlation (Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell & Sabo, 2005). Some note that academic achievement may be a precursor to athletic involvement (Ryska & Vestal, 2004). In this situation, the question becomes not whether students participate in athletics, but rather how they participate. Ryska and Vestal (2004) discussed achievement goal theory whereby athletes focus on principles of motivation and achievement and apply strategies of learning to accomplish tasks athletically and academically. Athletic participation can lead to academic improvement as student athletes gain an ability to transfer learning from the field to the classroom (Miller, et al., 2005). Incentives and rewards become tangible in the classroom as well, and expectations from themselves and support system carry over into academics (Miller, et al., 2005). Athletics and extra-curricular activities have positive educational outcomes

(Shulruf, 2010). Specifically, Shulruf (2010) noted that through improved attendance, academic and social outcomes are favorable. Result variances are small, causing a vague understanding of activities' relationships with academics (Shulruf, 2010). However, when activities have an educational objective and foundation, the students feel more connected to the school and seek academic success; absenteeism and academic achievement become a by-product (Trudeau & Shephard, 2008).

Athletics improves academics through the teaching of social behaviors. Pressley and Whitley (1996), suggested five factors of high academic performance of athletes including: “academic encouragement and assistance”; “discipline”; “eligibility requirements”; “prestige...may produce a more positive self-concept and higher aspirations”; and “membership in the ‘leading crowd’” (p.2-3). As athletes are taught these skills, educators reinforce them in use which better prepares students for college and career readiness beyond athletic life. Leadership roles learned in athletics can be fostered through service (Pressley & Whitley, 1996).

Physical activity may also strengthen academic performance. Studies suggest there was a slight positive relationship to academic achievement when physical activity was added to the school day or extracurricular program (Tremblay, Unman & Willms, 2000). Athletic success may promote academic success. Although the actual physicality may have little overlap in the classroom, self-esteem that is enhanced through physical activity can contribute to confidence and risk-taking to produce academic achievement (Tremblay, et al., 2000). “The personality of a person who is a ‘high achiever’ may lead to excellence in both sport and academic tasks” (Shephard, 1997, p. 115). Therefore, athletic involvement may propel a student’s interest in excelling academically. In a

similar fashion, students may become more connected to the school and that satisfaction may increase the drive to perform or seek the support needed to perform (Trudeau & Shephard, 2008). Tinto (1987, as cited in Tucker, 2000) presented a theory of student-attrition that posited if students were more integrated into schools they would be more successful academically. High schools provide a vision for education, ideally this balances performance across all areas of the curriculum and cross-curricular activities.

At the middle school, high school, and college level, athletic participation can help to build positive life skills that can better prepare student athletes for college, careers, and life. Extra-curricular involvement is tied to positive academic and social outcomes such as improved attendance and discipline (Elias & Weissberg, 2000; Miller et al., 2005; Shulruf, 2010; Stephens & Schaben, 2000). Participation can “help students build discipline, set goals, organize time, and develop self-confidence. Athletes who transfer these skills to their academics are greeted with success” (Stephens & Schaben, 2000, p.3).

Conversely, athletics could be a distraction to student athletes and this role may present a deficit. Athletics is intertwined within academics causing student athletes to allocate time and energy to different areas. Time restraints do not set up these students up for success (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). For some students, this creates a “zero-sum situation” (Miller, et al., 2005, p.7) in which one area suffers in order to for success to occur elsewhere. Comeaux (2007) and Hinkle (1994) as cited in Comeaux and Harrison (2011), offer

Although colleges and universities offer a myriad of support services and programs for student-athletes, they have not managed to consistently and

effectively enhance student-athletes' learning and personal development (p.236).

When students are unable to establish an overarching priority they may fall victim to low performance. A focus on maintaining eligibility allows a subculture of low academic expectations to emerge.

The positive self-image that is formulated through athletics could also be detrimental for student athletes. As students are praised more from family, friends, teachers, community, and others due to athletic achievement, they may lose focus on their academic role; they see themselves as athletes and fail to be concerned with academics (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Correspondingly, if teachers expect student athletes to have low student achievement they will often meet these low expectations (Rubie-Davies, 2010). These considerations are essential to the academic lives of student athletes.

Expectations of Student Athletes

Athletic departments in schools normally set an academic standard for participation; however, these standards are generally relatively low (McMillen, 1991). As a result, student athletes lack post-graduate skills that prepare them for the demands of college and/or career readiness; schools are sacrificing academics for athletics (McMillen, 1991). Some students who move on to college athletics experience familiarity in their new setting, where they may be held to lower standards than their peers, and/or earning lower grades, as the schools find athletic caliber more significant than academic (Mahoney & McCormick, 1993; Mixon, Trevino, & Minto, 2004). Although educators may stress and mandate academic success, allowing student athletes lower standards causes a misalignment between the theories they espouse and those in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Festinger, 1957; Mahoney & McCormick, 1993).

Similarly, student priorities are shifted, looking at colleges for athletic success over graduation rate creating a cycle of athletic priority (McMillen, 1991). Coaches often recruit with athletics as the grounds for competition, de-emphasizing academics (Thelin, 2002). Student athletes tend to share similar backgrounds and are often admitted with lower grades than peers (Mahoney & McCormick, 1993). Educators may be unintentionally teaching students what is to be valued through the lack of excitement for academic challenges unlike the illuminated athletics (McMillen, 1991; Morris, 2013).

Pressure and Role Confusion

Similar to coaches that also may work as teachers in the school, the student athlete is juggling two simultaneous careers. When academics and athletics are not balanced and academics are not given priority, research shows that students struggle with role confusion (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). Student athletes deal with the stress of managing both roles, the student and the athlete (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001; Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Gaston-Gayles, 2003). For some, goals may conflict which could also hinder their development. For example, when looking at an athlete faced with athletic retirement, the student may not have adequately prepared for a career or life outside of the sport (Chartrand & Lent, 1987). A retired athlete faced with a life change may need additional support through academic life. Chartrand and Lent (1987) recommend that at the collegiate level educators look at the whole child, and therefore prepare and develop student athletes for life after college through their collegiate experience. The role of education in the life of student athletes must consider positive and negative stressors. Considering the stressors that impact student athletes, this study seeks to explore areas where athletic administrators and coaches assess this role in education.

Life for student athletes is not typical. Unlike their peers, student athletes are met with various demands such as:

balancing athletic and academic endeavors; balancing social activities with the isolation of athletic pursuits; balancing athletic success or lack of success with maintenance of mental equilibrium; balancing physical health and injuries with the need to keep playing; balancing the demands of various relationships, including coaches, parents, family and friends; and dealing with the termination of an athletic collegiate career; and dealing with the termination of an athletic collegiate career (Broughton & Neyer, 2001, p.47).

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has recommended that all student athletes have an advising component in their college life to ensure support (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; Carodine et al., 2001). Models for advising consider services such as: orientation, career and life skills development; career planning and placement, academic advising, and eligibility monitoring (Carodine et al., 2001). Additionally, Broughton and Neyer (2001) offer that students in advising have mentors, use reflective journaling, are exposed to role-models, and workshops aimed at college and career readiness. The NCAA also has the Life Skills/CHAMPS program that is used at many colleges, which focuses on “academic achievement, athletic success and personal well-being” (NCAA, 2015). Notably, only the Lottes’ (1991, as cited in Carodine et al, 2001) model considered looking at academic tutoring to potentially improve academics versus just monitoring.

Athletic advising models vary, but much of the research on athletic advising also falls only at the collegiate level; little is noted on programs at the high school level.

Considering that student athletes need support at all levels, this is an area that needs further research. Additionally, advising in most situations is comprised of active monitoring, however, if educators want to increase performance, there is a need to go beyond validating eligibility. Athletic advising in the future may seek to increase student athletes' academic achievement. More research must be done on the high school level and its support system for athletes.

Time constraints intensify the balance needed for student athletes. For college athletes, the NCAA wants to put the "student" back into student athlete; through the implementation of the 20-hour rule for participation in season, athletes are restricted in practice time to make academics a priority (Ayers, Pazmino-Cevallos & Dohose, 2012; Mahoney & McCormick, 1993). Unfortunately, many teams were skating by with questionable hour counts which translate to athletic requirements (Ayers et al., 2012). Time spent in athletics affects academics; in-season athletes' performance is lower when there is more athletic time and less academic time (Ayers et al., 2012; Mahoney & McCormick, 1993). Study halls, academic support, and mentoring may assist students providing greater academic success (Ayers et al., 2012; Shulruf, 2010). Hence, some schools require study halls for academic regularity; however, students lack time-management skills due to the insufficient knowledge of budgeting time (Ayers et al., 2012; Mahoney & McCormick, 1993).

Although most studies on athletics are qualitative, Mahoney and McCormick (1993) have discussed various factors affecting academic achievement through quantitative research studies, comparing time spent in different sports. Similarly to time spent in academic study, student athletes' choice of major, grade point average (GPA),

and social interactions with peers and faculty may be impacted by athletic involvement (Ayers et al., 2012). McMillen (1991) offers in order to “reverse the imbalance of athletics and academics” (p. 489); academics must have a pass to play policy regulated by the NCAA. With this regulation comes the consideration for support services for student athletes (Gaston-Gayles, 2003).

Academic integrity comes into consideration for student athletes that lack the academic support services that they need for success (Gaston-Gayles, 2003). Because the focus is typically on eligibility of the student athletes, some students are accused of taking easy classes to earn passing grades. Similarly, accusations of teams have receiving academic privileges have also arisen (Gaston-Gayles, 2003; New, 2014). Although the NCAA is increasing standards for academics, students are still graduating because of credits (CollegeBoard.org, 2014; Gaston-Gayles, 2003). Coaches, athletic administrators, and teachers of student athletes must consider their personal and professional codes of ethics when approaching academic integrity. Unfortunately, student athletes may suffer a disadvantage of not doing well academically.

Supportive Environment

“It is important to provide an environment that encourages college student athletes to compete well and that promotes student learning first” (Broughton & Neyer, 2001, p.51). Having faculty and staff that can relate to students and serve as supportive adults can enhance the environmental climate. Coaches are a significant factor in this support team. The school and local community can also influence how student athletes are supported. With the strains student athletes face, they should be considered students at-risk.

Supportive Adults

Relationships with supportive adults lead to positive outcomes for students, especially those at-risk (Anderson, Cristenson, Sinclair, & Lehr, 2004). Similar to mentoring, these relationships can help to promote better behavior, teach social aspects, increase motivation, and improve achievement (Anderson et al., 2004). Formation of quality relationships between educators and students also improve engagement in schools which creates connections for students to the school environment (Anderson et al., 2004; Broughton & Neyer, 2001). Inspiring and supportive educators can increase the confidence level in their students and assist in attaining higher goals (Church, Elliot, & Gable, 2001). “Emotional attachment to teachers and school is a vital link in academic success” (Elias & Weissberg, 2000, p.188). This effect is applicable outside of the classroom as well (Good & Nichols, 2001; Neuenschwander, Vida, Garrett, & Eccles, 2007; Veldman & Sanford, 1984). The impact of a positive, inclusive environment, in turn, promotes student achievement (Good & Nichols, 2001). Further, the school can align with an educational goal as expectations set in athletics and academics overlap (Miller et al., 2005; Trudeau & Shephard, 2008).

Coaches training. Public high school coaches are often certified teachers, counselors, or substitute teachers. In the State of New Jersey coaches are employees of the school district, and often must be fingerprinted, hold a minimum of a substitute teaching certificate, and be certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (NJSIAA, 2014). Requirements do not enforce relevant coursework which leaves question as to the preparedness of coaches. As recent difficulties and litigation involving coaches have arisen, and the demands on coaches have become high and often stressful, education

could become a means to combat these pitfalls (Steward & Sweet, 1992). The position of coach is so ambiguous that coaches do not have all of the training they need for success. Education for coaches is neglected prior to their entrance into a position and while in the position (Elias & Weissberg, 2000; Steward & Sweet, 1992). Coaching is often supplemental to a role as a teacher (Steward & Sweet, 1992). Information via in-service training for coaches could assist coaches, their athletes, and the profession. Specifically in education, coaches learn to integrate academic skills into athletic practices (Steward & Sweet, 1992).

Ethical considerations for coaches. Educators must consider the lives of students placed in their care, and therefore consider the ethics they practice daily and how they can impact a student and educational system (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). Working with ethics assures that education holds those in the system steadfast to the belief of doing what is in best interest of students (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Wood & Hilton, 2012). Coaches must consider academic integrity when supporting their student athletes. Additionally, through use of reflective behavior and self-monitoring coaches ensure that they take ethics into consideration (Branson, 2006; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

A coach may exercise each of the ethical paradigms: ethic of justice, ethic of care, ethic of critique, ethic of the profession, and ethic of the local community (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Wood & Hilton, 2012). Coaches operate from an ethic of justice, in which decisions are resolved by rules and laws, as they apply rights of individual student athletes and the law (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Wood & Hilton, 2012). For many this may also include operating under an ethic of care, which is based on the concern to consider what is best for each student in a situation. Conversely, the ethic of critique can

help coaches evaluate their practice (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Wood & Hilton, 2012). Professional codes of ethics for educators will guide most coaches through an ethic of the profession (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Wood & Hilton, 2012). The ethic of local community, for athletics, could potentially be the most significant. Practicing the ethic of local community provides coaches a means to look at what is best for the group, the school, the community, and in essence, the future (Wood & Hilton, 2012).

A code of ethics can facilitate social justice in educational settings because it provides a standard for fairness and equal treatment. Student athletes are recipients of the thinking and behavior of supportive adults, if these adults have a standard to guide decision making that does not discriminate against any population. Providing fairness to all and promoting social justice allows the traditionally marginalized, in this case, student athletes, to be supported (Dantley & Tillman, 2010).

Athletic Administrators

Although coaches and teachers are on the front line with students, they are not typically charged with policy making; their impact is more localized. Athletic administrators, typically the primary decision makers, are not the only means of control in the athletic departments (Armstrong-Doherty, 1995). Armstrong-Doherty (1995) used surveys of athletic administrators to determine perceptions of control based on environmental factors, such as alumni and community. Control of environmental factors may lead to academic compromises, as groups may invest in areas other than academics (Armstrong-Doherty, 1995). This quantitative study helped focus my work in the field; qualitative research may be more helpful in ascertaining information from athletic administrators. As Armstrong-Doherty (1995) pointed out, athletic administrators are

usually the gatekeepers and decision makers in their department; therefore, an examination of their values, their vision, and how these are sustained in action are significant to this study.

Community At Large

With athletics in the forefront, higher education institutions especially, rely on athletic success to attract students and emphasize athletics over academics (Mixon et al., 2004). Athletics may build institutions (Morris, 2013); it seems that winning means more money, hence, more scholarships with a return to athletics over academics (Mixon et al., 2004; Thelin, 2002). Winning programs tend to increase both academic and athletic donors, and thus are an incentive for a return to the school (Stinson & Howard, 2008). Revenue generating sports seem to have students with decreased academic success (Mahoney & McCormick, 1993). The media also reinforces the role of athletics as superior to academics, creating cognitive dissonance for student athletes (Festinger, 1967; Thelin, 2002). Hill, Burch-Ragan, and Yates (2001) recommended that educational institutions reinforce their academic mission by using the school website and other media resources to espouse academic achievement. By using media as a positive outlet, athletics and academics can be equally promoted.

Interventions for Student Athletes

A large amount of research is focused on the support of a student athlete. Much of this support is monitoring by teachers, counselors, administrators, and coaches. Additional interventions to assist student athletes and provide the groundwork for achievement have also been identified. Schools use a variety of these methods in diverse combinations, and some schools may use none. Grade monitoring, mentorships,

informative parent meetings, and study halls are interventions that are most noted through the research. When considering these interventions, the research is weak in the correlation of the intervention to increased student achievement. Inevitably, the student athletes must take ownership over their achievement; they are the “only ones who can keep (themselves) eligible” (Meyer, 2005, p.15).

The NCAA has made attempts to bridge gaps for student athletes. Understanding communication could benefit student athletes, therefore the NCAA has instilled academic reforms that provide mentorships and advising for students (Meyer, 2005). Advising should help to keep student athletes eligible at minimum. However, Gerdy (1997, as cited in Gaston-Gayles, 2003) stated, “student athletes need academic support services to increase their likelihood of academic success” (p.50). These services would entail academic support that focuses on a higher level of achievement than just maintaining eligibility.

High schools need to lay a foundation for academics that will prepare college student athletes by emphasizing the student role over the athlete role (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). The parent, athlete, and coach must collaborate to support and develop the skills for students. The NCAA recommends parent workshops to explain and set goals based on academic requirements (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). These requirements could be translated to the high school environment as well to better prepare students who wish to move on to institutions of higher education.

Student athletes at the collegiate level often struggle with making career choices (Hill, et al., 2001). Again by focusing on goals developed with the “athletic triangle” (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995, p.5) of athlete, parent, and coach, resources can be shared

and used to assist the athlete. The NCAA has developed an alliance (Citizenship Through Sports Alliance) to help student athletes with academic and social adjustment (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995).

In addition to assisting the students through transitions, study halls can be used for continuous academic support. With the time-constraints student athletes are under, schools may require study halls for academic regularity (Ayers, et al., 2012; Broughton & Neyer, 2001). Study halls may help students to time-manage which could lead to great academic success by means of greater time on task (Ayers, et al., 2012; Maloney & McCormick, 1993).

Future research is needed to look at the interventions to help student athletes improve achievement. Perhaps quantitative studies could further delve into how interventions affect student achievement throughout an athletic season. Although there is qualitative and quantitative research on interventions for student athletes and research on the effect on grades during sport participation, there is little research that specifies how interventions may improve student achievement specifically.

Education and the Whole Child

Student athletes need to be taught what is important in their educational lives. By setting a minimal standard for academics in athletic achievements and supporting students, schools may be able to focus more on their educational mission and the idea of the “whole child” (McMillen, 1991). With policies like “pass to play” students are given a benchmark for achievement in hopes to improved academic priority (Burnett, 2000; Hosick, 2012; McMillen, 1991). As educators look at the role of athletics in education, questions of academic achievement are still left unanswered. More research must be done

to understand how student athletes can go beyond minimum requirements and get everything possible out of their educational experiences.

College and Career Readiness

Skills that are taught and explored in athletics can prepare student athletes for career and college readiness. Life skills training is also an important aspect of athletics, specifically through the emphasis on leadership (Garvis, 2013). As student athletes practice social and emotional tasks in athletic contexts, they are preparing themselves for future readiness (Elias & Weissberg, 2000). A school mission which includes these skills can be applied across academic and athletic areas, which will also build student connections to school and build their self-esteem (Elias & Weissberg, 2000; Hill, et al., 2001; McMillen, 1991; Tremblay, et al., 2000).

Coaches can form relationships that assist students in building these connections and cooperative learning throughout the school. In order to be more beneficial in the lives of student athletes, coaches should be trained on how to be better prepared to impart knowledge to students (Garvis, 2013). Coaches should access the emotional highs and lows of their student athletes due to competition, as it could affect their academic life. Together with coaches, student athletes can set personal goals, as well as team and school goals, can be monitored (Anderson et al., 2004; Elias & Weissberg, 2000). Training is needed to develop coaches in leadership roles (Elias & Weissberg, 2000).

Limitations in the Literature

There is a vague understanding in the literature reviewed to deduce a relationship between athletics and academics. Although evidence points to athletics and academics having a simultaneous role, outside factors are not often taken into consideration in the

synthesis of results. Moreover, there is a lack of qualitative research in this area; the research shows that there is a correlation between academics and athletics, but there is varying significance. Literature is deficient and inconclusive. Prior qualitative research provides some insight for necessary skills for student athletes; further research should examine programs that provide student athletes with skills, such as time-management, academic mentoring, and college and career readiness. This study seeks to discover what athletic personnel perceive to be the role of athletics in education and how this role is fostered in schools.

Further Research

Although evidence points to a simultaneous role between athletics and academics, it is unclear if athletics can improve an academic experience. There is a lack of qualitative research in this area and outside factors are not often taken into consideration in the synthesis of results. Moreover, there is a lack of focus on providing action through research; the research shows that student athletes are monitored but not necessarily challenged to meet higher standards of achievement. Literature is broad and inconclusive at the high school level. Collegiate athletics seem to have more policy that relates to student athletes and how they are monitored. Existing qualitative research provides case-based information, whereas quantitative research shows some correlations, both neglecting to explain the role of athletics in education. Due to varying significance, literature is deficient and inconclusive in deducing this relationship. Prior qualitative research provides some insight for necessary skills for student athletes; further research should examine programs that provide student athletes with skills, such as time-management, academic mentoring, and college and career readiness.

Although the current research informs this project, it has opened up more specialized questions for my research. As a coach, and through my prior research on athletics and academics, I am operating under a framework that there is a connection between athletics and academics. My initial assumptions, however, lack a solid understanding of this relationship. Future research should also examine how coaches and athletic administrators perceive the role of athletics and what they do to develop that role. To provide a complete picture from the data, my study will use a mixed methods approach. With the proposed study, I hope to discover the role of athletics in education and how coaches intervene in academics related to the athletes in their programs. This research will seek to provide answers that new and novice coaches can integrate into their programs to enhance levels of student athletes' academic achievement.

Theoretical Perspective

The role of athletic personnel can be a tool to student success both in and out of the classroom. Students succeed through the guidance and assistance of the school staff; “interpersonal connectedness” to a support network or environment helps adjustment and creates positive social relationships (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990, p.136). Social support theory posits that the perception of being cared for by others in your social environment can create a supportive network which in turn leads to success (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Lakey and Cohen (2000) further dissect social support into three perspectives: stress and coping, which deals with how support may protect an individual's health by avoiding stress; social constructionist, positing that support plays into self-esteem independent of the level of stress an individual is under; and, relationship, or the co-existence of health

and supportive relationships with others. Specifically, the social constructionist perspective accounts for people holding their own perceptions of the world and their role in the world, which is derived from how they view the world and others (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). Individuals, in the case of this study, student athletes, are provided feedback about themselves from their interactions with others, specifically based on the expectations that people hold (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). For instance, when looking at the relationship of student athletes and coaches, the students are understanding themselves from the input of a coach who has set a particular expectation in their world of the high school educational setting. The perceived support of an individual, here the support of a student athlete from a coach, can affect their self-esteem and health (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). According to the social support theory, significant players typically provide assistance to the supported person, whether it be emotional or physically tangible (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). The role of a coach, through this lens, is one of support simply by the nature of their position of employment, wherein they are responsible for the safety and participation of the student athlete. To a student athlete, this provides feedback that they are cared for. Therefore, in looking through this lens, the athletic department becomes a social network. It is important for athletic department staff to ensure that the vision is sustained in order for student athletes to find success.

Reflecting on social support theory, the integration of students into a social network will result in relationships that can function as a means for encouragement, trust, acceptance, caring, advice, and other assistance (Cohen & Wills, 1983; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). The support serves as a “buffer” (Cohen & Wills, 1983, p.312) to potential and real stress felt by a person, or in

this context, a student athlete. Based on this perspective, if athletic staff work closely with the academic mission of an educational institution, forging supportive relationships with student athletes, the athletes will be successful in and out of school. The perception that athletic department staff have a vested interest in the student athletes will make the student athletes feel that they are socially accepted into the group (athletic department) and therefore, result in positive outcomes in all areas espoused to be important presumably academics. Stressors, positive or negative, play a significant role in the support that an individual understands; the stressors affect how an individual deals with a situation (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). Presuming that the student athletes are in an academic setting, coaches are aware of academic stressors their athletes face. If the demands of the stressor, for example time management, are met with support from the coaches and/or environment, the social support is effective (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). The availability of coping resources is also significant to the outcome of a stressor (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985); athletic personal may provide resources that assist in coping wherein they create social support. The term coach almost implicitly implies that those under their discretion will have support; perceived support from a coach, therefore, can be assumed by a student athlete especially in the educational structure. Perceived support can be defined as “the individual’s belief that he or she can obtain help or empathy when it is needed” (Sarason & Sarason, 1985, p.38); arguably this is part of the job of any athletic staff, only the level of support may be argued. “Health and well-being are influenced by objective and perceived characteristics of supportive relationships” (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985, p.8), hence, coping could be maintained by the perception of the coach-athlete relationship.

Chapter 3

Methods

Purpose of Research

This mixed methods study explored athletic administrators' and coaches' practices related to fostering education through athletics in the high school environment. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used. This design involved first collecting quantitative data and then eliciting qualitative interview data for explaining the quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In the first, quantitative phase of the study, survey data was collected from public high school head varsity coaches in the State of New Jersey to explain how coaches intervene in the academic life of student athletes. The second, qualitative phase was conducted as a follow up to quantitative results to help explain the quantitative results. Athletic administrators throughout the state were selected for interviews. These interviews helped to provide a greater depth of understanding of the role of athletics in education by gaining examples of the lived experiences provided by athletic administrators, which assisted in explaining the quantitative results. The reason for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data was to develop a complete understanding of the research problem and look at data on a more detailed level by using qualitative data to assist in explaining survey responses.

Research Questions

Three research questions, and additional sub-questions, guided the exploration of the role of athletic professionals in education:

1. What are the ways in which high school coaches encourage academic success for their athletes?

- a. How often do head varsity coaches participate in academics related to the athletes in their programs?
 - b. To what extent do head varsity coaches convey their expectations for academics to their athletes?
2. What role does athletics play in fostering education in the high school environment?
 - a. What are the values that athletic administrators associate with education?
 - b. How do athletic administrators perceive the role of coaches in the student athletes' academic life?
 3. How do the findings of this study lend themselves to a framework for academic support of student athletes in a high school educational context?

Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research is an iterative approach that seeks to integrate and bridge the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to answer research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Combining skill sets for both quantitative and qualitative research, mixed methods researchers seek to assimilate data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Research practices can be strengthened as methodologies connect to enhance and integrate findings (Jang, McDougall, Pollon, Herbert, & Russell, 2008). After a qualitative or quantitative study, a second research method can support the understanding of the initial phase of the study. Data collection techniques are not restricted by the type of research, rather triangulation of data sources increases rigor (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Jang et al., 2008). Often mixed methods studies are more

complex in nature than a single methodology study and may warrant greater time and more resources (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Jang et al., 2008).

Rationale

Mixed methods research can strengthen the quality of research through a conglomeration of quantitative and qualitative data, wherein both types of data are collected and analyzed, and a better understanding of the research problem is possible (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). As this study began with quantitative data collection and analysis, I realized that qualitative data and analysis could help address the research problem and answer emerging questions. A survey of coaches elicited specific responses to areas of interests, and interviews with athletic administrators were able to facilitate more broadly applicable data and provoke insight into answering the questions that blossomed through my first stage of data collection. Mixed methods allowed for multiple viewpoints and enriched participant samples (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). Responses derived from quantitative data analysis aided the development of interview questions with greater fidelity (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). I used the qualitative phase to embellish the quantitative phase, by providing more specific and detailed information to support the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). I sought elaboration on certain areas from athletic administrators, as well as expansion on how to move forward and apply proposed ideas. Additionally, this design allowed corroboration of findings through triangulation of sources and methods (Greene, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). Using mixed methods elaborated the findings by using complementary methods, discovering and developing new ideas, and expanding with different methodology (Greene, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006).

Mixed Methods Design: Sequential Explanatory

The sequential explanatory mixed methods design begins with quantitative data collection and analysis, then builds on the findings to assess the initial results as the researcher interprets how the qualitative data can further explore the information provided in the quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The second phase seeks to explain the results from the initial stage in more depth by focusing on explanations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The nature of the study influenced my choice of methods; my quantitative data helped my qualitative inquiry (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). Specifically, I shifted to a constructivism paradigm as I sought a greater depth of understanding; I interpreted my quantitative results collectively with my qualitative results to gain insight over the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Considering the large scale problem of a lack of programs linking athletics and academics, I sought answers to survey questions from coaches. Later I used interviews to access the lived experiences of athletic administrators who oversee athletic programs in academic settings. Data analysis evolved throughout the design; I connected qualitative themes to quantitative data, confirming and strengthening the qualitative themes through further exploration of survey results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Design and theory. The design of this study was created to answer the research questions that I gleaned from experience in the field and literature. I questioned the role that athletic administrators hold in schools regarding the perception of athletics. With a belief that academics and athletics should be a partnership, I looked at the lived experiences of professionals in the field to gain information about what was currently occurring in schools in New Jersey. I also surveyed a broad range of coaches because, as

a former coach, I realized that the coaches are on the front line and work with students daily, they have an impact on students.

To discover specific activities that student athletes may experience, I surveyed coaches and to understand their role. Individuals' perceptions on the support they receive increase their likelihood to take risks in a setting (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990); by speaking directly to athletic administrators and coaches I used this buffering theory (Cohen & Wills, 1985) to understand how they perceive their interactions with student athletes. With this data, I was able to answer how coaches encourage academic success and participate in the academic lives of student athletes. I sought to find supportive responses of coaches toward their student athletes to understand how their connection, care, and commitment, as perceived by the student athletes, fosters success academically (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990).

Collaboration. The mixed methods nature of this research study lent itself to the collaboration. My worldview is one in that my prior experience gave me a direction for exploration in a qualitative form. To mix methods and answer research questions that I posed, I needed to use survey data to make connections and verify my assumptions. Specifically, as I shifted to a constructivism paradigm, I sought a greater depth of understanding; I interpreted my quantitative results collectively with my qualitative results to gain insight on the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). As the strategies of inquiry relied on the study design to inform the research questions, my worldview served as an umbrella encompassing all aspects.

Scope of Study

The study was limited in scope because I was looking only at public high schools in the State of New Jersey. Specifically, delimited the scope to focus on a specific problem located in high schools. In colleges, it seems that coaches are often removed from working directly with professors (Heyboer, 2015). Counselors or other athletic services personnel are often the people who communicate with professors on behalf of a student, if needed. Because high schools are more cohesive in nature and the goal of athletics is typically to be a supplement to the classroom, high school student athletes are operating differently than their collegiate peers. Therefore, the central phenomena is occurring at the high school level, wherein coaches and athletic administrators have the ability to impact student athletes and their experiences in educational institutions.

Additionally, I limited this study to public high schools, rather than open to private high schools. The rationale for this decision was that the public high schools are accountable to the State Department of Education. They must follow the same policies as one another. Private schools are susceptible to outside funding and resources that have the potential to affect athletic programs through power shifts.

Lastly, the scope of this study was restricted to the State of New Jersey. I was looking at a particular set of participants in this state in order to influence policy and practice in New Jersey. Each state has their own policies regarding athletics, therefore information cannot be generalizable across all states. I used New Jersey's current requirements to evaluate current practice in high school athletics.

Context of Setting

The context of this study was the State of New Jersey public high schools' athletic departments. The schools that were represented are public, four year, State accredited, high schools from school districts geographically located in New Jersey's various counties. In order to be included the school must have had interscholastic varsity sports in their co-curricular program offerings. All schools were united as members of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association, and follow sanctions set forth by the organization.

Mixed Methods Sampling

Data collection, including sampling techniques, are driven from the research design. In a mixed methods research design, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected through participant sampling. The objective of the study, research goal, purpose, and questions must be determined prior to deciding the sampling scheme (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Sampling should identify the site, the participants (including gaining access to these participants), and the sampling size (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

For qualitative research, purposeful sampling is generally used to ensure selected participants have experiences which provide the information necessary to answer the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Conversely, quantitative sampling is either probabilistic/random or non-probabilistic/non-random (selecting by availability to the researcher), and may be seeking specific characteristics of a population in the sample (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Sampling methods may be both random and purposeful within the same mixed

methods study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Relying on the sequential explanatory design, characteristics from the quantitative sample were used to direct purposeful sampling for the qualitative sample (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Sampling size in qualitative studies is typically smaller as the researcher looks at the depth of the information gleaned from the participant, rather than to generalize a finding as in quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Researchers seek to attain data appropriate to answer the research questions in their study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

Based on the theory of social support, social exchanges are responsible for well-being of individuals (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). Operating from this frame, I spoke with athletic personnel regarding their role with student athletes in the educational context. Environments provide social cues that help individuals understand themselves and their world (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). As I understood the role of coaches, I better understood how student athletes view their identity, and how that related to their academic well-being. Typically, as Lakey and Cohen (2000) state, “role concepts that are shared among a group of people help to guide social interaction by providing a common set of expectations about how people should act in different roles” (p.40). As teams and athletic departments interact, roles are contrived, and formed along with self-evaluations and performance in the environment (Lakey & Cohen, 2000); therefore, interviews and surveys of athletic personal elicited the role concepts and expectations on high school student athletes.

Participants

Quantitative. Multistage cluster sampling is a method by which cluster sampling is completed first, then another method. In this case I used stratified random sampling and snowball sampling to select coaches for the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The initial cluster sampling contained the schools where I had identified athletic administrators as points of contact and gatekeepers. Additionally, some county athletic organizations offered to forward the survey to their contacts at high schools in their conference/local area. In situations where I identified athletic administrators, I contacted each via electronic mail and asked them to forward the explanation of the study, informed consent, and survey to their head varsity coaches; phone calls and follow-up electronic mailings were made to athletic administrators for to gain participation. In some school districts, my primary point of contact was the superintendent. With this situation, the superintendent provided permission and access to the athletic administrators, who I then contacted via electronic mail with the study information, informed consent and survey for coaches. Additionally, coaches were contacted directly via e-mail when their e-mail addresses were available on the school websites. The selection of coaches exhibited stratified random sampling, as the subgroup of coaches was known, but the selection was random based on coaches choosing to participate (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Several of the athletic administrators asked me for permission to pass the survey to other athletic administrators, and I permitted this. Snowball sampling and the initial stratified random sampling resulted in participants (N=223) representing public high schools throughout the state, choosing to complete the survey.

Athletics tends to be grouped as a homogeneous population; however, each sport takes on its own culture and thus athletics as a whole can be considered a heterogeneous population. In order to not marginalize any population, various sports were taken into account and represented; a mixed methods study is the best approach to ensure that no populations are marginalized by a false representation as a homogeneous population (Buck, Cook, Quigley, Eastwood & Lucas, 2009). With this consideration, the survey asked coaches to indicate the sport(s) that they were currently coaching, to identify the heterogeneity of the sample.

Qualitative. Stratified purposeful sampling, or choosing participants based upon characteristics of interest, was used to attain the perspective of public school athletic administrators (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2003). The athletic administrators had various position titles, but all have the responsibility of overseeing the school's athletic program and coaches. Each athletic administrator was contacted initially via electronic mail which presented the study, and via electronic mail or phone call based on preference to set up an interview. The interviewees chose the time, date, and location of the interview. For any interviews being held on school grounds, prior written permission was ascertained by a district approved designee (i.e. superintendent, school board of education). The initial athletic administrators interviewed recommended additional interviewees, which created a snowball sampling, a means of identifying participants from people who know others (Patton, 2002; Toma, 2006). The athletic administrators (n= 10) were male and female, some who were former coaches, athletes, and teachers with job experience ranging from a few months to several years.

Data Sources

Approval of the Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects (IRB) at Rowan University was sought prior to the commencement of data collection. When the IRB granted permission for the research, I entered the field and began collecting data.

Instrumentation

Quantitative. A cross-sectional survey instrument (Fink, 2013) was constructed to help me answer research sub-questions. A 20-question self-developed survey instrument included the following core items: four demographic items; five 5-point Likert-type scale questions on coaching philosophy, and four 4-point Likert type scale questions on academic monitoring (Fink, 2013). The other questions allowed multiple, comparative, or open-ended responses to seek demographics and time spent on academic and athletic tasks (Fink, 2013). Prior to distribution, the survey was peer-reviewed and examined by experts in the field to improve the validity of the instrument (Fink, 2013; Ivankova & Stick, 2007). A survey field test was sent to coaches in the school where I currently work and experts in the field, in order to enhance validity and the survey quality (Fink, 2013); based on the field test I revised some items slightly.

Qualitative. Interview protocols will include demographic and “grand tour questions” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p.132) to enhance conversation with the participants. Interactive, semi-structured interviews, lasted approximately forty minutes, and probed participants to provide greater depth of information (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Tjora, 2006). Graphic elicitations, which are exercises provided to some participants to elicit meaning in a visual form, diagram, or picture, helped demonstrate relationships between concepts in a less concrete manner than verbally (Bagnoli, 2009; Crilly,

Blackwell & Clarkson, 2006). The explanation on the graphic elicitation asked the athletic administrators to depict how they envision the role of athletics in relationship to areas in the school and community. Participants were instructed that the circle on the page represented their role, and they should draw relationships in proximity to the circle. Each of the graphic elicitations and interview transcripts was accompanied by analytic memos which were written conversations with the data during and after collection, inclusive of connections to the literature and theory that emerged (Saldaña, 2013).

Data Collection Phases

Following the sequential explanatory design of this project, quantitative data was collected prior to qualitative data. The data from the coaches' surveys were utilized to target lived experiences of athletic administrators in the interview process. Probing questions helped to elicit more specific data in the interview, specifically with the sources of data I sought to answer my research questions, as demonstrated in the chart below.

Table 1

Data Source Matrix

Research Question	Data Source 1 Interviews	Data Source 2 Graphic Elicitation	Data Source 3 Surveys
1. What are the ways in which high school coaches encourage academic success for their athletes?	Experience of AA	N/A	Coaches experiences

Table 1 (continued)

Research Question	Data Source 1 Interviews	Data Source 2 Graphic Elicitation	Data Source 3 Surveys
a. How often do head varsity coaches participate in academics related to the athletes in their programs?	Experience of AA	N/A	Coaches experiences
b. To what extent do head varsity coaches convey their expectations for academics to their athletes?	Experience of AA	N/A	Coaches experiences
2. What role does athletics play in fostering education in the high school environment?	Information from AA on programs in place	How AA envision role	Coaches applications
a. What are the values that athletic administrators associate with education?	Espoused values	Espoused importance	Perception of AA or school
b. How do athletic administrators describe the role of athletics in a school?	Words used to discuss athletics	How areas are connected	Perception of AA or school
3. How do the findings of this study lend themselves to a framework for academic support of student athletes in a high school educational context?	Experiences of AA	Role of athletics and connections	Coaches experiences

Quantitative. Based on field tests and prior research studies, I created a survey. I distributed the link to the electronic survey, informed consent, and letter about the study, to athletic administrators via electronic mail. The athletic administrators forwarded these documents to their respective coaches and a time frame of two weeks was provided for responses. The survey was administered online, accessed via a web link provided by Qualtrics, a web-based survey site. Responses were recorded electronically and submitted anonymously to protect the participants. The results were immediately available to me. Due to the role of athletic administrators as gatekeepers, the number of coaches who declined participation was unknown. Additionally, coaches of multiple sports were asked to only complete the survey once, but indicate all sports that they coach. A total of 223 surveys were completed, a few participants ended the survey prior to completion decreasing the sample size for some questions. This survey allowed me to capture and examine data from a larger sample of coaches throughout the State of New Jersey in a short period of time. Questions on the instrument provided answers to the research sub-questions regarding: the ways coaches participate in academics related to athletes; the amount of time coaches devote to addressing academics; what coaches espouse to be their academic standard and how do they convey these standards to their athletes; and what supports, if any, coaches provide to student athletes to reach high academic achievement and how do they ensure that they are reached.

Qualitative. Data collection began after survey data analysis, as I conducted interviews, graphic elicitations, and took field notes. Each of these instruments or protocols were created by me after reviewing the data in the surveys, and identifying areas that I still question. Descriptive field notes drafted during the interview were

elaborated upon after leaving the location (Glesne, 2006; Tjora, 2006). After the graphic elicitation, I asked probing questions and took notes to help me understand the graphic and interpret it for an analytic memo (Glense, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Saldaña, 2013). Analytic memos, or conversations with the data during and after collection, inclusive of connections to the literature and theory that emerged (Saldaña, 2013), accompanied each of the graphic elicitations and interview transcripts. These sources of data collection were appropriate to the research questions as they elicited the values athletic administrators hold regarding education and the role athletics has in education (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Data Analysis

Consistent with the sequential explanatory design, I analyzed the quantitative data first by reviewing the descriptive statistics from the survey (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Correlations of variables were calculated to examine relationships among the data (Fink, 2013). Qualitative data was then analyzed separately through coding and discovery of themes. To complete the gaps in the data sets and increase transparency, I further analyzed both the qualitative and quantitative data through a parallel mixed data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Merged Analysis

The integration of data from qualitative and quantitative analysis allowed for greater breadth and depth of analysis. Using the sequential explanatory design, I was able to redevelop my research questions as my analysis merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003, as cited in Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006) noted seven stages to analyzing data in mixed methods: reduction, display, transformation,

correlation, consolidation, comparison, and integration. As recommended, data was reduced by first organizing and displaying data in charts or tables. Next, I correlated and consolidated the data to bring the qualitative and quantitative responses together and compare the findings. Finally, the data was integrated to the findings as I took the overarching qualitative themes and filled in the specifics from the quantitative data. The sequential explanatory design allowed for exploration of specific questions through quantitative research; then, from the findings, qualitative research honed in on key areas to attain the perspective of athletic administrators charged with overseeing athletic programs, coaches, and student athletes. Conversations with the data emerged as I continuously returned to the research questions and sought to answer the questions by interpreting their results and drawing inferences to verify and make sense of the data (Greene, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Rigor. As Bryman (2006) suggests, “lack of integration suggests that mixed methods researchers may not always be making the most of the data they collect” (p. 9). A resulting barrier for mixed methodology legitimization is the lack of inference quality (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Triangulation of data sources and collection techniques assisted in increasing the rigor of this study (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lather, 1986; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Transferability of findings was assured through a diverse sample (population transferability) in a variety of school settings (ecological transferability), while the commonality of the qualitative and quantitative samples provided integration for meta-inferences (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Multiple validities in both the qualitative and quantitative portions of the study yielded legitimization: an audit trail was kept in my researcher journal to enhance

reflection and reflexion (Janesick, 1999), review of instruments for data by an expert in the field (Johnson, 1997), member checking of interview transcripts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), member validation (Sandelowski, 1993), and code-recode procedure (Krefting, 1991). Throughout the process, I met with my community of practice and critical colleagues to assure the study was rigorous, which assisted in peer review from an etic viewpoint (Creswell, 2013; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). To prevent misinterpretation of data and inferences that may not be accepted by others, experts in the field and peer reviewers were used throughout the study to hold discussions about my understandings of data and explore alternative interpretations of data to develop better quality explanations (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Although bracketing of personal paradigms, belief, assumptions of meaning was used to eliminate personal bias, past experience in coaching allowed me to better understand the participants and therefore make more quality inferences (Gearing, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). To assure that the results are generalizable outside of the coaches and athletic administrators in the State of New Jersey, and to improve the quality of inferences, multiple sports and many diverse schools were included in the sampling (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Quantitative Analysis

In order to analyze and create understanding from my data, I first looked at descriptive statistics. Using the frequency, percentages, and modes question responses I drew conclusions to answer my research questions. Additional tests were conducted as needed to look at correlations in the data, but were not found to be significant.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data must be examined and analyzed in a cyclic manner over time to ensure that findings are valid. Researchers seek and question emerging patterns while continuously coding, reviewing literature, understanding data, sharing findings, and reflecting (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Initial data analysis began with interview transcription, as the researcher begins to hear key phrases emerge (Bird, 2005; Hammersley, 2010). Together with observational notes and records from the field, interview transcripts were organized (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2013). Key questions, related to the research questions and connected to the literature, were asked to analyze data and establish patterns through the form of analytical memos (Saldaña, 2013).

The first-cycle of coding was used as an initial interaction with the data (Merriam, 1998; Saldaña, 2013). Initial coding allowed me, as the researcher, to separate data into pieces and look at the relationships between the pieces (Saldaña, 2013). Analytic memos completed after the first cycle began to make sense of the data, as I held a conversation with myself about the data and connected it to my early assumptions and the literature reviewed (Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Saldaña, 2013). A codebook was created to assist in analysis and organization, to find patterns, and develop resulting themes (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011; Saldaña, 2013).

Approaching the second-cycle of coding, diagrams of the connections helped process emerging themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). According to Saldaña (2013), pattern coding is a way to code data into themes or overarching ideas, which can begin to explain how data is related; pattern coding was used in the second cycle to make sense of the patterns amongst athletic administrators.

Trustworthiness in qualitative research. For qualitative research, especially in education, trustworthiness is essential for the work to be valued in the field (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Triangulation of data sources and collection techniques assisted in increasing the validity and rigor of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lather, 1986); multiple participants, servicing different school districts, were used for interviews and graphic elicitations. In addition, material culture, field notes, and a researcher journal were used for triangulation of data (Janesick, 1999). The confirmability and credibility of the study were maintained through an audit trail kept in a researcher journal, which allowed for notes of the events taking place in the study to enhance reflection and reflexion while simultaneously examining material culture and other data sources (Creswell, 2013; Hodder, 1994; Janesick, 1999; Lather, 1986; Krefting, 1991; Schein, 2004; Toma, 2006). In bracketing personal paradigms, beliefs, and assumptions of meanings, notations were made (Gearing, 2004). The interview protocol was reviewed and critiqued for change by an expert in the field to increase dependability (Johnson, 1997). For transferability and creditability, the interview transcripts were sent to the participants to review as a means of member checking (Creswell, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Toma, 2006). The findings were also sent to some of the interviewees for member validation (Sandelowski, 1993). Peer review and debriefing was ongoing through the study (Creswell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Although I was the only coder, I shared my process with peers to enhance reliability (Creswell, 2013); the codebook assisted in consistent coding (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). To assure dependability, I practiced a code-recode procedure, revisiting the data at a later time and recoding it; data duplication occurred by sharing the data with critical colleagues and communicating about my

research process (Krefting, 1991; Merriam, 1998).

Table 2

Trustworthiness Strategies and Justification

Criteria for assessing research quality and rigor	Strategy employed	Justification
Transferability	Diverse sample	Cross section of coaches/AA in NJ, but commonality between qual and quan samples
Legitimization	Audit trail, researcher journal, review of instruments by expert, member checking, member validation, code-recode, community of practice, peer review, bracketing, and alternative interpretations	Lived experiences of coaches and AA
Generalizability	Diverse sample	Coaches and AA could be similar to those in the sample of NJ
Triangulation	Multiple data sources and collection techniques	Mixed methods research
Confirmability and credibility	Audit trail, researcher journal	Qualitative research
Dependability	Protocol reviewed and critiques by expert, code-recode	To understand lived experiences
Creditability	Member checking	To understand lived experiences
Reliability	Review process with experts	Mixed methods research

Merged Analysis and Framework Construction

Merged analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data was examined to construct a framework for athletic departments to support student athletes academically. Guided by the research questions and social support theory implications (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990; Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985), the researcher established themes while pattern coding (Saldaña, 2013) that explained how data is related and answered the research questions. Next, the researcher outlined the themes into elements that must be accomplished by coaches at the team level and elements that needed to be set at the athletic department level. Based off the quantitative data, specifically regarding time spent by coaches on academically relevant tasks, the researcher created a timeline for implementation of the framework elements. The framework was then organized and composed to be presented to an athletic administrator for distribution to their department staff and the school community.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are important to guarantee the credibility and trustworthiness of mixed methods research, specifically in the qualitative portion of the research where the participant and researcher are in close proximity, the rights of participants must be insured (Creswell, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Toma, 2006). Interviewing participants, especially those who are in administrative roles and answering questions that represent their institutions, can be very political. Additionally, there are power relationships by the nature of the position of the participant. In order to provide protection throughout the research process: the participants choose the time and location

for interviews; names and identifying characteristics were replaced with pseudonyms; written consent and an explanation of the study were provided to each participant prior to the interview; and participants were granted confidentiality. Throughout the interview process, I was careful to bracket my views and beliefs and not to interject my opinion into the interviews.

For the survey, all coaches were granted confidentiality. Demographic questions and school names were optional in the survey, and were used for myself to make certain that participants covered a range of locations in the state. Athletic administrators were asked to share the explanation of the study, written informed consent, and website link to the survey with their head varsity coaches. Due to potential influence of power relationships, I wrote a cover letter to all participants that explained that they were not obligated to participate in the study, and their participation would not be known to their school or administrative staff. Prior to completing the survey, the participants were provided the study description and informed consent. A screen prompted participants to select that they consented to the survey, those who did not consent were immediately exited from the site. The survey could be terminated by the participant at any time.

All ethical considerations were made to ensure ethical practices in my research and the just and fair treatment of my participants. Given the subjective nature of qualitative inquiry, emic and etic perspectives played a significant role in my research.

Researcher Role

Athletics and academics is a partnership that has been the basis of my career. As both a teacher and a coach, I have always been passionate about creating ways for my students to excel and be best prepared for life. Working as a coach in both the high school

and middle school setting, I have sat on committees and worked tirelessly with my coaching colleagues with regard to student athletes. A personal career goal that I have is to become a school administrator, potentially an athletic administrator. In this role I would be charged with supervising coaches, which I believe would be an area where I could apply various leadership theories. A primary goal that I would have would be to facilitate high levels of academic achievement from student athletes.

Beliefs, Assumptions, and Interests

One of my philosophies is our athletes are students first and we must support them. Support must go beyond observing, for example, I have noticed that coaches in the school where I am currently working monitor student grades, provide extra help, and mandate study halls to support academics. Reflecting on students and athletes that I have worked with, I can recall how students who were supported were often able to excel athletically and on the field. To foster a higher level of academic achievement, conversely, coaches and other school staff (primarily teachers and counselors) need to provide students tools to raise performance level. Merely stating that a student must maintain a minimum grade point average or pass all of their classes, does not encourage students to raise the academic bar. Additionally, minimal standards do not provide coaches with motivation to give students the skills to raise achievement levels. Many athletes relied on sports to help them transition into college; with colleges offering academic scholarships instead of athletic scholarships, students are aware they must be academically successful.

The idea of looking at the *whole* child then becomes relevant to success for college and career readiness. Secondly, I believe that students need to be met with means

for motivating them as individuals. Athletes, motivated by sports participation, can be offered learning experiences through athletics that enhance their academic life. Practical life skills, such as working collaboratively, can be taught through athletics. As learning moves outside of the classroom, students gain a more integrated approach to learning. The skills both in and out of the classroom nurture learning that shapes the individual for life outside of the high school classroom and sports environment.

Lastly, coaches are influential mentors to the success of student athletes both in and out of the classroom. Sports participation requires a large time commitment; much of the time athletes are with their coaches, thus they often form a strong bond of respect and rapport. If this is a positive relationship, coaches can be integral components in the academic life of students by being members of a support system that pushes a student to set, monitor, and achieve goals in academic and athletic realms. When considering academic achievement of student athletes, I believe that we must look at the espoused beliefs of influential people in their lives, mainly coaches and teachers. Schools offer the forum for collaboration between various stakeholders. To ensure success, I believe coaches, teachers, student athletes, and their parents need to communicate often and openly.

Approaching this study at the high school level allowed some ease in access, in addition to a greater level of operational knowledge. Through my review of literature in the field, I have strengthened my base of information on athletics operation that will enhance my career as a coach and hopefully an athletic administrator. Similarly, my experience in the field provided me comfort with asking questions and understanding the culture of athletics. Coaches and teachers are my colleagues and I was able to approach

them openly and honestly regarding my study. The school administration was also supportive of my endeavors as my goal is to create a better experience for student athletes, creating a foundation to be successful in the classroom and in their future careers, through my own growth and learning.

With a background as a coach and teacher, I operated out of a framework that I have created through my own experiences. I was sure to continuously journal to monitor my own assumptions and bracket them as I delved into data analysis. To make up for a lack of foundational knowledge on collegiate athletic programs, I focused a good deal of my research on that area to gain a deeper level of understanding collegiate requirements for student athletes. Although the focus of my work was on the high school setting, it is important to recognize the expectations that are mandated at the collegiate level so that I know what student athletes who would like to pursue a sports career in college are working toward.

As a researcher, I have methodological assumptions. Mixed methods research can strengthen the quality of research through a conglomeration of quantitative and qualitative data; when both types of data are collected and analyzed, a better understanding of the research problem is possible (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). I have found that mixed methods research has provided the best possible means to understand a topic at great depth. In order to get an overall understanding I used quantitative data collection, through survey research of coaches. With the foundation of my quantitative data analysis, I further explored the role of athletics in education and address the research problem and answer emerging questions through interviews with athletic administrators.

This order allowed me to get general information from the coaches and then embellish on details by speaking with athletic administrators about specific actions.

Worldview

Not only did my experiences as a teacher, coach, student, and researcher shape how I conceptualized my study, but my worldviews did as well. The two worldviews that I deferred to were constructivism and pragmatism. Under the constructivist worldview, I was seeking to understand the world in which I teach and have coached. Because I have created meaning out my own experiences, however I realize that they could be subjective. In order to be more objective I relied on the views of my interview and survey participants' responses and my conclusions on how they interpret the world. Additionally, I constructed knowledge by seeking to further understand the social context. As a pragmatist, I used mixed methodology to understand all aspects of the research problem. I used triangulation of various data collection techniques and analyses to find how the research I completed fits into a larger construct.

Chapter 4

Findings

Athletic personnel are on the front line in the lives of student athletes in an educational setting. While their primary role may be to foster athletic growth, it is evident at the high school level that athletic coaches and athletic administrators share an interest in the academic welfare of a student athlete. High school coaches encourage academic success in their athletes. To maintain perspective during the exploration of data from this research study, social support theory was the lens through which the data was analyzed when exploring the relationships athletic personnel have with student athletes. A social network of connectedness is created for student athletes, causing the creation of positive social relationships and outcomes (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). While athletics engage students, it fosters education in the high school environment outside of the walls of the classroom. Understanding and synthesizing interview data from athletic administrators and survey response data from coaches, a framework for academic support of student athletes was created.

Through merged data analysis, a trinity of broader themes emerged as answers to the research questions (Saldaña, 2013). Three research questions, and additional sub-questions, guided the exploration of the role of athletic professionals in education:

1. What are the ways in which high school coaches encourage academic success for their athletes?
 - a. How often do head varsity coaches participate in academics related to the athletes in their programs?
 - b. To what extent do head varsity coaches convey their expectations for

academics to their athletes?

2. What role does athletics play in fostering education in the high school environment?
 - a. What are the values that athletic administrators associate with education?
 - b. How do athletic administrators perceive the role of coaches in the student athletes' academic life?
3. How do the findings of this study lend themselves to a framework for academic support of student athletes in a high school educational context?

In order to analyze the quantitative data, descriptive statistics were calculated to examine relationships among the data (Fink, 2013). Those relationships and the content of the quantitative data was later compared to the qualitative data responses, to reduce and consolidate data for integration of methods (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003, as cited in Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006)

After coding the qualitative data, a code map (see Table 3) was used to organize themes. The code map specifically examined the second research question regarding the role that athletics plays in fostering education in a high school environment. As overarching qualitative themes were developed, the quantitative data was inserted into themes using the coding of survey questions. Next, a concept map (see Figure 2) created an analytical framework regarding the merged data (Anfara et al., 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Table 3

Code Mapping and Subsequent Theme Generation- Research Question 2
What role does athletics play in fostering education in the high school environment?

Research Sub-Question 1		Research Sub-Question 2			
What are the values that athletic administrators associate with education?		How do athletic administrators perceive the role of coaches in the student athletes' academic life?			
Theme 1		Third Iteration: Themes/Second-Cycle Coding			
Academic Support		Theme 2	Theme 3	Multidimensional Approach	
College and Career Readiness					
Second Iteration: Patterns					
1A. Academic Priority	1B. Academic Assistance	2A. Education via Athletics	2B. College and Career	3A. Communication	3B. Community
First Iteration: Initial Codes/First Cycle Coding					
Academic Priority, Eligibility Requirements, Accountability	Study Halls, Tutorials, Coaches Role, Grade Monitoring	Role of Athletics, Values, Learning in Sports, Behavior, Coaches Role, Life Lessons	Time Management, Leadership, Student Success	Communication, Athletic Liaison, Coaches Role	Community, Motivation, Peer Influence, Partnership, Culture

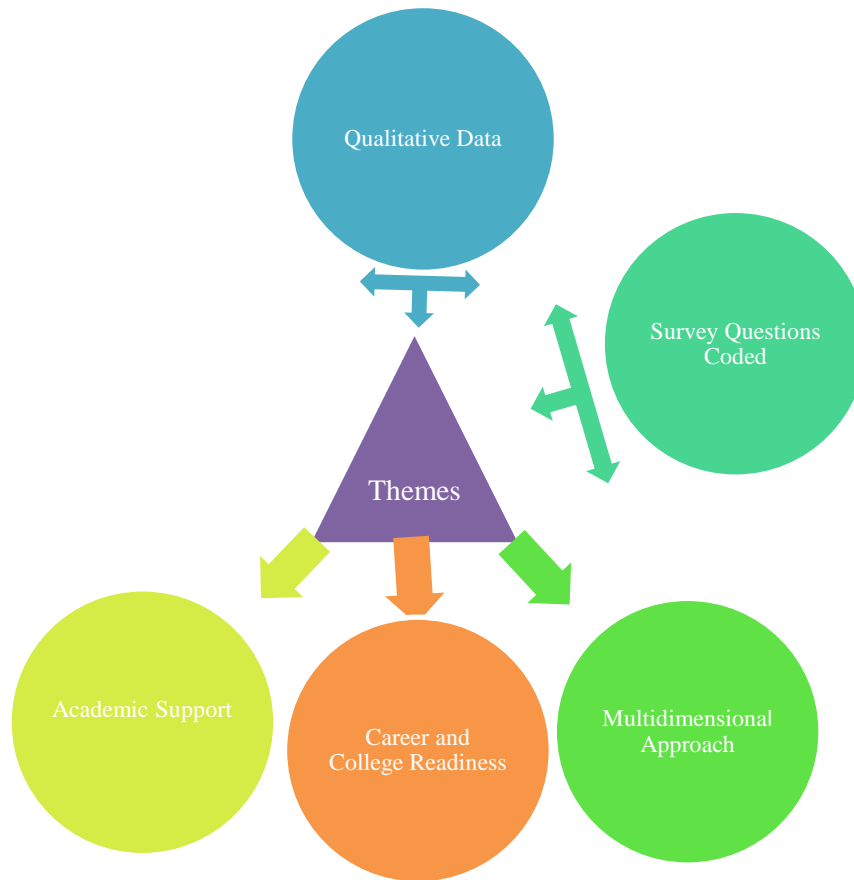


Figure 2. Concept Map for Merged Analytical Framework

The concept map depicts how the qualitative data was analyzed and coded, and through several iterations three themes appeared. The three themes were vessels for the input of quantitative data. Before placing the quantitative data into these themes, the survey questions for coaches were coded into the same themes.

Using Codes and Themes

The initial cycle of coding identified topics that were directly discussed by athletic administrators in interviews. Some of the topics were key points in the interview questions. For example, athletic administrators were asked about the interaction between

coaches and teaching staff, which was coded as communication. Similarly, if someone was working with a group to encourage academics, academic liaison was the code. Responses that contributed to community were areas where the athletic administrator mentioned motivational forces on student athletes, school culture, and the role of the school or local community. Communication and community were combined during the second cycle of coding as a multidimensional approach as the community communicated for student athlete success.

The theme of academic support was based heavily off of input from athletic administrators' on requirements and eligibility for athletics. Also, questions about the athletic administrators values provided insight to accountability and the role of coaching staff. When quantitative data was merged with qualitative data, survey responses on academic interventions were included; some of these specific codes were also words stated by athletic administrators, such as study halls and tutorials.

College and career readiness was a theme that emerged from smaller components of the qualitative and quantitative data. In the first cycle of coding, ideas on values and the role of athletics were directly asked of athletic administrators; however, other areas such as life lesson in sports, and behavior were topics that athletic administrators brought up frequently in their interviews. The areas under the pattern coding of college and career were ideas found in coaches' surveys derived from coding of survey questions and open-ended responses.

Themes Emerge to Form a Framework

Through several iterations of data coding and merged analysis, themes of academic support, college and career readiness, and a multidimensional approach to

athletics surfaced. The role of athletics in an educational setting, specifically in the high school context, is to enhance the academic program and adequately prepare students for college and careers. When functioning as a multidimensional effort, teachers, coaches, counselors, students, and parents can collaborate to ensure academic success. Athletics promotes well-rounded individuals prepared for college and career, providing emphasis on academic learning with experiential learning through participation in activities which gleaned themes that included: leadership, promotion of positive behavior, accountability, and time management. The themes of academic priority and career and college readiness highlighted the values athletic administrators connected with education. Career and college readiness paired with a multidimensional approach expound the role of athletics in schools and was viewed by athletic administrators as a key to success. Collectively, these themes encompassed the role of an educational athletic program.

Using the elements athletic administrators identified as essential to the success of a student athlete, a framework of academic support for high school student athletes was created (see Figure 3).

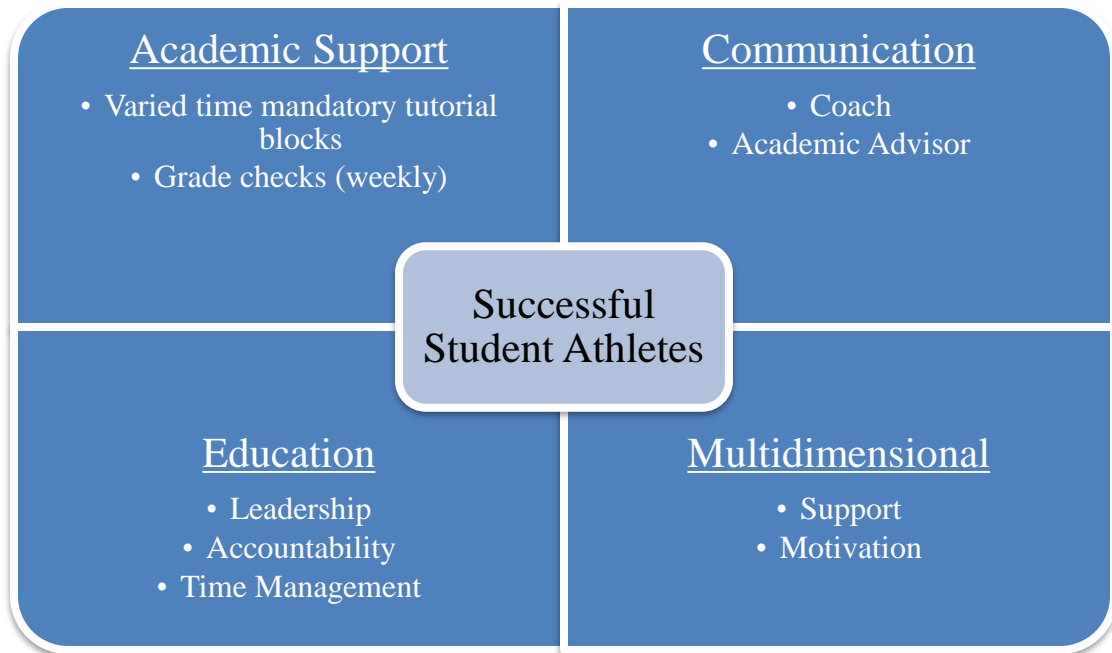


Figure 3. Framework of Academic Support for Successful Student Athletes in the High School Context

This framework outlines ideas that emerged through the coding process, specifically through initial coding and analysis of current practices in coaches. Areas to assist students academically were pinpointed and recoded through a second cycle, under the code of “Framework”.

Research Participants

Due to the sequential exploratory design of this research study, two phases of data collection took place. The first phase of data collection was quantitative, which featured a survey of coaches in the State of New Jersey. The following phase included interviews and graphic elicitations of athletic administrators in the State of New Jersey. The participant selection and pool are described herein.

Quantitative Phase Participants

Stratified random sampling and snowball sampling was used to select coaches for the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The initial cluster sampling contained the schools where I had identified athletic administrators as points of contact and gatekeepers. Additionally, some county athletic organizations and athletic administrators offered to forward the survey to their contacts at high schools in their conference/local area or for schools that provided coaches' e-mail addresses on their website, the coaches were contacted directly via e-mail. A total of 223 coaches participated in the survey. Some coaches did not complete the entire survey, so sample size varied on particular questions.

The gender of the coaches was not important to the study, therefore that information was not collected. However, data that reflected the sport that was coached was attained to insure a plethora of athletic experiences. Many sports were represented, including but not limited to: football, basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, swimming, field hockey, soccer, track and field, cheerleading, and rowing. The coaches represented male and female teams, as well as a limited number of co-ed teams.

Further demographic information about coaches was collected. This study examined that academic life of student athletes in educational institutions, therefore it was significant to understand the position the coaches held in the school. Additionally, because coaches were asked how they intervene in the academic lives of student athletes, coaches were questioned about their working in the school in which they coach, and their possession of a teaching certificate. Figure 4 below visually depicts a breakdown of these areas in percentages. It can be noted that the majority of coaches surveyed were certified

teachers, currently teaching, and in the school in which they coach (see Figure 4).

Coaches were instructed to select all areas that applied, therefore it is possible that some of these responses overlap or may represent another category. In the other category, coaches indicated roles of school counselor, administrator, substitute teacher, and retired teacher. These still indicate a connection to the educational institution for which they are coaching.

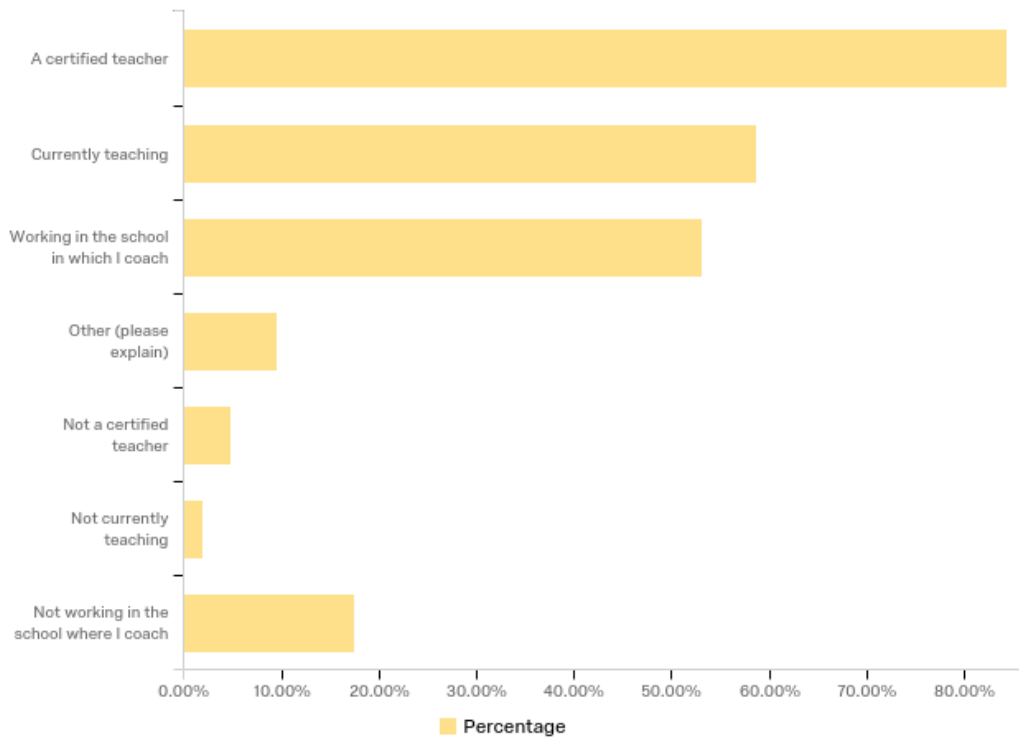


Figure 4. Representation of Coaches' Position Demographic

Coaches ideas, philosophy, and actions may change over their tenure. I asked coaches to indicate their time coaching (see Figure 5). The majority of the coaches surveyed have been coaching more than 10 years, with only a small amount of new

coaches indicated. There was no significant difference in responses by these two groups however.

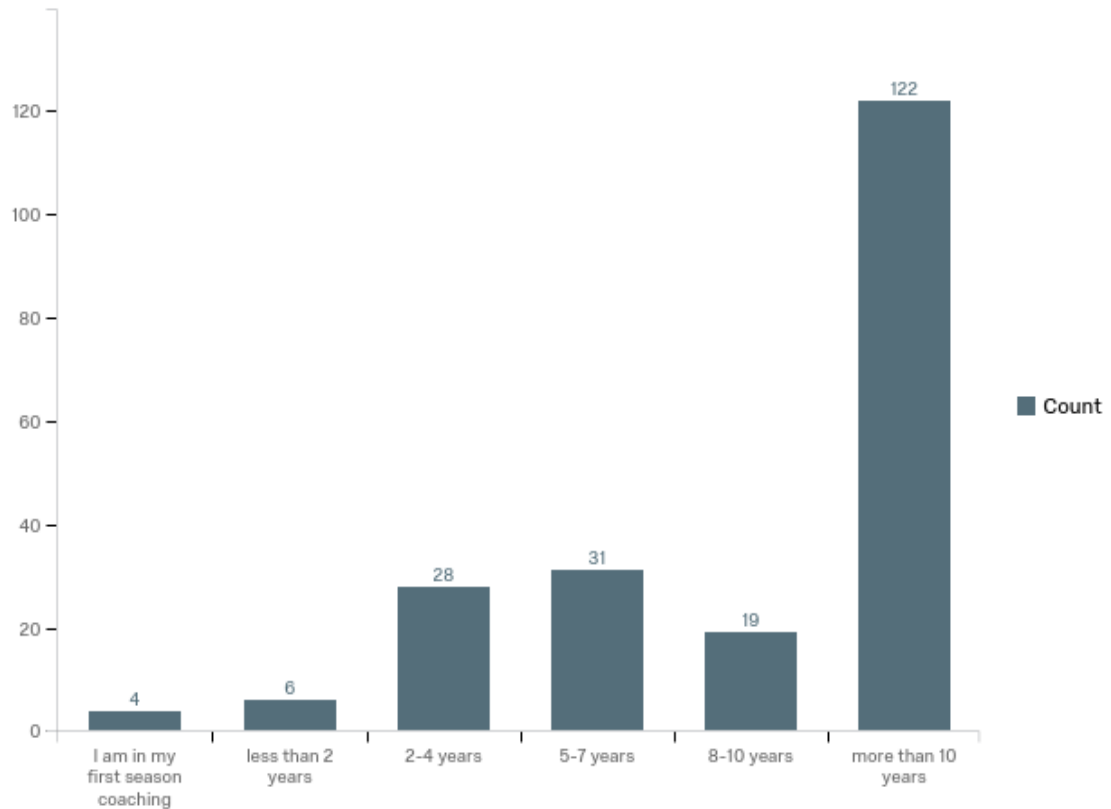


Figure 5. Representation of Coaches' Years of Coaching

Qualitative Phase Participants

Athletic administrators were selected primarily via stratified purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2003). Some athletic administrators interviewed recommended additional interviewees, which created a snowball sampling (Patton, 2002; Toma, 2006). Each athletic administrator was contacted initially via electronic mail which presented the study, and via electronic mail or phone call based on preference to set up an interview. Of the ten total athletic administrators interviewed, eight were male and two female. All

athletic administrators worked for public high schools in the State of New Jersey. Many were former coaches, athletes (both college and high school), and teachers with job experience ranging from a just over a year to several years.

Coaches Encouragement of Success

High school varsity/head coaches espouse that academics are more important than athletics and that athletics enhances education, as represented by frequencies on coaching philosophies noted in Table 4. Only a small percentage of coaches believed that athletic success is more important than academics; in an educational setting academics are important, and according to coaches' responses, athletics enhances education.

Table 4

Coaching Reported Responses on Coaching Philosophy (n=201)

Coaching Philosophy	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Athletic success is more important than academics	3	1.5	2	1.0	21	10.5	88	43.8	87	43.3
Athletics enhances education	146	72.6	50	24.9	3	1.5	1	0.5	1	0.5
Academics performance prominent in philosophy	92	46.0	92	46.0	13	6.5	1	0.5	2	1.0

Note. Frequency is represented by *f*. Percentage is represented by %.

Coaches also indicated various means of participating in the academic life of their athletes. For example, coaches may conference with student athletes and/or their teachers, suggest study halls and extra-help, or espouse academic priority in their team meetings.

When following up in interviews with athletic administrators, it can be derived that the administrators, and the school community-inclusive of the parents and students- expect that coaches are assisting in encouraging students to attain academic success. Student athletes gain information on the care and concern that athletic personnel hold for them through feedback about themselves from their interactions with others (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Athletic Administrator G explained that sometimes this is a directive, “from a support standpoint, both academically and athletically, there is a lot that comes out of this office between myself, my secretary, coaches. We’re really out for the number one thing, and that’s the kids.” Supportive adults have a positive impact on students in academic settings (Anderson, Cristenson, Sinclair & Lehr, 2004). Athletic Administrator I stated that many people need to be involved with student athletes:

I don’t think anybody’s necessarily any more important than the other, outside of the actual student athlete, but I think they all kind of have to work hand in hand in their own respective fields, and make sure that we’re giving as many options to the student athlete that we can. And when they have a question, we have to be able to answer them. When they need somebody to lean on, we have to be able to help them. Basically, I think everybody plays an important role.

Social support theory reiterates the important role of adults who are present and positive in the lives of young adults, such as these student athletes (Anderson, Cristenson, Sinclair & Lehr, 2004). In a similar way, Athletic Administrator E recommended that coaches help to support and develop student athletes; he believes that teachers and coaches working together can enhance academic success.

I would give them (new coaches) examples of staying in contact with the teachers, stay in contact with the student out of season. Don't just be a basketball coach from Thanksgiving to the end of February. Be interested in your student athlete; be interested in them 12 months a year. Send them an email, "How is the summer going, how is your studies going?"-things like that. To develop those relationships with the player that's the biggest thing. Again they don't always have the support at home, and a lot of times the coach is the one example, the one person they can talk to during the course of the day to develop those relationships with all players and you never know how much of an influence you're going to make on any individual.

Establishing a lasting relationship, school staff can assist a student athlete, to enhance academics. "There is such a relationship between a player and coach, and overseeing the academic piece of it and I think that is a big part of what a coaches does off the field" (Athletic Administrator E). While all members of the school community participate differently and at varying frequencies, the social support strengthens the goals set by student athletes (Sarason, Sarason & Pierce, 1990).

Frequency of Coach Participation in Academics

Overall, coaches (n=190), who were asked the percentage of time devoted to educationally-based activities spend a mean of 34 % of their time on educationally-based activities with their teams, with a standard deviation of 25.91. Most coaches (n=200) either agreed (46%) or strongly agreed (46%) that athletics is prominent in their program philosophy as evidenced further by their coaching behaviors of meeting with student athletes, being available for discussion of academics, contact with athletes on goals and

expectations, allowing for academic priority, and having consequences for sub-par academics. For example, Athletic Administrator I stated that “A lot of coaches put out their rosters to the entire school so that the teachers know that if they have a football player or a soccer player in their class, and both positive or negative experience, they can contact the coach;” coaches are available to assist the student athletes. Additionally, Athletic Administrator F stated that the football coach “runs some study halls for his team in the season”. Coaches are not separating academics from athletics, but rather making them a priority to participation in athletics.

Head varsity coaches, as shown through responses from the survey instrument, do intervene in academics related to the athletes in their programs. Coaches’ time spent with student athletes is important to promoting positive support; social support theory posits that the coach can affect self-esteem and buffer stressors by physical and/or emotional proximity (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). The time spent on intervention and addressing academics related to student athletes varied among the coaches and the factors in question (see Table 5). The data indicated that 83% of the coaches surveyed spend 30 minutes or less each week addressing academic performance of their student athletes. Though this is time spent intervening, it is not a great deal of time, perhaps due to time constraints of the job of coach and/or teacher.

Table 5

Coaching Reported Responses on Time Spent Addressing Academic Performance
(n=192)

Time Spent by Coaches each week	<i>f</i>	%
Less than 15 minutes a week	87	45.1
16-30 minutes a week	73	38.0
31-45 minutes a week	22	11.5
46 or more minutes a week	10	5.2

Note. Frequency is represented by *f*. Percentage is represented by %.

Forty-five percent (n=192) indicated they spent 15 minutes or less per week speaking with other school staff regarding student athletes, while another 56 percent indicated they spent 16 or more minutes per week speaking with school staff regarding student athletes. Further, 49 percent of the coaches specified that their most common intervention was following up with students, while the second most common intervention was to work with school staff, which may infer a collaborative team (see Table 6).

Table 6

Coaching Reported Responses on Academic Intervention (n=192)

Academic Intervention	<i>f</i>	%
No contact	5	2.6
Contact with parents/guardians	11	5.7
Follow up with students	94	48.9
Work with teachers	73	38.0

Note. Frequency is represented by *f*. Percentage is represented by %.

Seven other coaches also specified that they worked with student, teacher, and parent. Two never incurred an issue.

The data on reported academic interventions of coaches indicated that a multidimensional and school-centered approach to student athletes is commonplace. To enforce this, coaches indicated that they mainly checked on academic progress and on student grades weekly or monthly during the sports season. Athletic Administrator B said that though coaches in the school were provided access to Genesis, the online gradebook system, she would like to see a weekly update of each student athletes' grades sent to the coaches.

Conveying Expectations to Athletes

School culture can dictate actions and philosophies, especially as expectations for student athletes are conveyed from the school community. Athletic Administrator E discussed the role of culture:

I think the school culture and the athletic culture go hand in hand. Let me give you a couple examples. Basically, there is always a perception in any school that the jocks get handed everything and they can do whatever they want in the building. I try to change that, that you know what the jocks are held to a higher standard. There are much higher standards than the average student. The average student comes in here and leaves at two o'clock and things like that. These guys are in earlier, they leave later, and they are supposed to do things right.

Athletic personnel must continue to hold these students to high standards and influence academic priority in their expectations. Coaches spend time relating their expectations for academics to student athletes; this becomes a part of their role as a coach and also the expectation of schools and athletic administrators. Athletic Administrator G explained that,

I have a whole coaching framework that I give them. They get a copy ahead of

time, of their evaluation, what I'm going to be looking for. It's expansive...I'm very eclectic in my approach. I allow you to coach. I don't micro-manage you, but at the same time, I have very clear expectations of what you're to do with your kids in your programs, and if that becomes compromised, then yeah, we're going to sit down and we're going to have a talk about that.

Athletic Administrator G expects that his coaches are following through on the philosophies of the school and athletic department, which becomes part of their job.

Coaches may do this throughout the season periodically and/or address it in the beginning of the season as part of an introductory meeting.

During the season every coach will have a parent night to explain what their goals are for the team and what their expectations are for the children on the team, mostly academic, but sure they're going to give consequences or outline the things that they're not participating and doing what they should, they're going to put parameters to it (Athletic Administrator C).

Coaches also indicated their use of team meetings with students, study halls, extra help, academic coaching, tutoring, student athlete groups, and in and out of season evaluations, as means of attending to academics. Furthermore, on a day-to-day basis, coaches may be forced to make a decision regarding academic interests of their team. Academic interests are areas that promote academic success attention to academic affairs of student athletes. For a team, this could mean beginning practice with a study hall so that students can prepare for a test or ending practice early during State testing. Athletic Administrator A described a situation that recently occurred in his school:

Our coaches though are very aware of the academics of their students. Just

yesterday, for example, our soccer girls practiced very late. They didn't start practice until 4:30 and the reason is that a lot of the kids have a lot of high level classes and big tests coming up, so the coaches said, "Hey, look, go for your extra help. Do what you need to do and we'll start practice late today." And that's pretty common. I mean I don't know of any coaches that would tell a kid, "No, you can't go for extra help. You need to be at practice." It just doesn't happen.

Coaches are enabling academic success by prioritizing academics over athletics. Through their behavior and actions, coaches assist student athletes as they deal with the stress of managing athletics and academics (Sarason & Sarason, 1985). The role of athletic personnel can enhance the educational experience for high school student athletes, as academics become a priority.

Fostering Education via Athletics

School personnel are in the business of educating students, be it an academic education, vocational training, or teaching foundations of life skills for readiness outside of the classroom walls. The nature of athletics allows students to strengthen skills of collaboration, leadership, time management, dealing with adversity, accountability, and promotion of positive behavior. Using an eclectic approach that institutes academic priority, an emphasis on college and career readiness, and the collaboration of multidimensional staff, schools can effectively manage student athletes' educational success.

Academic Priority

Coaches survey results revealed academic priority, and athletic administrators conclude that academics come first in the setting of an educational institution. Academics

take precedence over all other school activities, such as sports and clubs, because they are the overall focus for students. Participants identified academics as having a central role in the education experience. Athletic Director J stated, “Obviously our main role in any high school, middle school, elementary school, is education first, and I am a big believer in the philosophy that we are here for an educationally-based athletic program.” Athletic Administrator A added, “I think it is an extension of the classroom that we’re support to be teaching proper values and lessons that we have here in sports,” acknowledging that academics is bettered by athletics.

Some schools even place policies for academics in their athlete and/or coaches’ handbook. For example, Athletic Administrator C noted that his coaching manual requires “academics first” and the coaches must adhere to allowing students to see teachers or work on schoolwork after school in place of practice. While policy may govern, in some schools, the administrative team and culture of the school staff may also foster academic priority. Athletic Administrator D stated,

One of the things that’s been really good for us is having a very academically-centered building administration. The principal’s very supportive of highlighting the academic achievements of our athletes.

The building administration, however, are not the only people responsible for this philosophy. Coaches and athletic administrators must share a philosophy to pass to the students. Athletic Administrator J explained that the coaches in the school are responsible for establishing a mission for their team/athletes that promotes academics at the forefront:

I think that each coach needs to develop their own mission statement or their own philosophy for their program. I think at the forefront of that mission statement,

there needs to be some type of commitment to academics. I think that them providing guidance on how to succeed, whether it be budgeting, studying, getting extra help, kids advocating for themselves, I think those are the pieces that I would recommend the new coach, say, “Hey, we value your athletic program but we also value academics and these are the pieces that we hope to assist kids with to be successful.” (Athletic Administrator J)

Philosophies that encourage academic achievement alert students that the coaches expect them to do well, and the standard alone can impact success (Good & Nichols, 2001).

Interactions between students and adults in school settings mold expectations and students can develop performance to meet these standards (Rubie-Davies, 2010; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Irving, Widdowson & Dixon, 2010). Athletic Administrator E works for a large school district with multiple high schools. When speaking with coaches he explains:

There is so much more than just winning games. If you do all these little things then they are not little things per se, but if you pay attention, you have the relationship (with the athletes), you get on them about the academics, the winning comes, and that’s part of our quality program (Athletic Administrator E).

Likewise, students understand that there is a consequence when you do not keep up with academics.

Obviously, they want to win, or they want to practice hard, and do this and that, but just keeping an open mind too, that academics do come first. If they don’t have, and they are not doing what they’re supposed to be doing in school, then they can’t even have the extra-curricular (Athletic Administrator F).

Schools enforce that the academic basis and eligibility set out by the NJSIAA is mandatory for participation in athletics. They do not allow students who are not achieving these academic standards to participate.

Eligibility. In the State of New Jersey, under the sanctions of the NJSIAA, students must pass their courses. For eligibility from September to January of a school year, “a pupil must have passed 25% of the credits (30) required by the State of New Jersey for graduation (120), during the immediately preceding academic year” (NJSIAA, 2014, p. 37). Eligibility in the second half of the year requires 12.5% of the total credits toward graduation being passed in the previous semester (NJSIAA, 2014, p.37). As Athletic Administrator A stated, “we abide by the NJSIAA rules as far as credits are concerned for each students’ year, so I have no choice. We are pretty much cut and dry according to the academic rules.” Some schools add to these however, and others, such as Athletic Administrator B’s school, have discussed adding to this criterion to improve student academic performance. This practice sets students up to reach greater goals, have increased confidence, and depend on the perceptions and support of significant teachers and/or coaches (Church, Elliot & Gable, 2001). Athletic Administrator G stated that he uses a “two F rule...the NJSIAA has their requirements, 30 credits from that perspective, and then I went with something that I feel is very simple and very fair...If you get two Fs you’re trying. You’re trying to get two Fs. You’ve done a good job with that so we’ll make sure that you don’t do that again, and you won’t play.” These consequences deter students from allowing a slip in their academics.

In other schools, there are incentives for student athletes to succeed academically; Athletic Administrator D explained, “we have a thing called the Principal’s Cup that we

do, and that is the highest academic team each season.” He further discussed that the entire school community makes a big deal about this accomplishment, which encourages all student athletes to pursue success in the classroom. Similarly, Athletic Administrator A shared:

Last year, we had ten Academic All-Americans so I know that she really pushes the kids to apply for that particular honor each year and I don’t recall us ever having more than ten in a given year which was great sense of pride and something that we try to communicate out to the public. And so I would say our field hockey team-that’s one way that she emphasizes the importance of grade is by pushing kids to achieve Academic All-American status in that sport.

When schools, specifically through the athletic departments, are espousing academic prowess and following up in their action, students are given the support to rise to high levels of success. Athletic Administrator J pointed out that the obligation of coaches is to develop this philosophy:

I think that each coach needs to develop their own mission statement or their own philosophy for their program. I think at the forefront of that mission statement, there needs to be some type of commitment to academics. I think that them providing guidance on how to succeed, whether it be budgeting, studying, getting extra help, kids advocating for themselves, I think those are the pieces that I would recommend the new coach, say, “Hey, we value your athletic program but we also value academics and these are the pieces that we hope to assist kids with to be successful.”

Thus, the way athletic administrators perceive the role of coaches is evidenced by their

philosophy and vision passed on to the coaches and in turn the student athletes.

Some coaches may not be equipped with the tools they need to instill a philosophy in their program. In these situations it is the athletic administrator's role to assist the coaches. In some schools, there is a procedure for acclimating new staff and coaches. Athletic Administrator D explained an example of this process:

Well, we don't really allow first year teachers to coach; they can volunteer. We discourage it because we require an awful lot academically through professional development for our first year teachers. They'll be given a mentor. They have to go to separate mentor meetings that are held after school. We kind of transition people into the actual world of teacher so that the teacher is more comfortable because if you're not getting it done in the classroom, we have seen good coaches not be renewed. Nothing to do with coaching, it's just they weren't getting it done in the classroom. But I think by sending that message they understand the importance of academics from the teaching side and also from the student side. When we actually transition them into these things, into a position, it's not like here are the keys, good luck. Don't bother me. It's an ongoing process.

This transition period might assist coaches as they learn requirements for athletes, as well as how to manage the dual role of student athletes who may be on their teams.

Student athletes who wish to pursue athletics in college are required to meet academic criteria under the NCAA. Coaches must be aware of these requirements and assist student athletes. For example, Athletic Administrator J mentioned:

What our coaches say and what we are hearing from some colleagues and college coaches is the academic piece is going to open a lot of doors. Without the grades

in high school or without the grades on the SATs or the ACTs or whatever you are taking, that's going to limit your choices at the end of the day and may limit your ability to play at the next level. I know that, us as coaches and our guidance department, we really stress that, "Hey, if you are going to play in college, we believe we can find the college for you in which you can play and achieve, but we need to make that sure that you have the academic piece to open that door.

Because without that academic piece, ... that door will never open for them.

Furthermore, Athletic Administrator I provided an example of how the coaches might follow-up with academics by exercising academic priority:

We're in educational athletics, they (coaches) are teacher, their classroom is just sometimes outside or it's a basketball court or whatever it may be, but they have to stress the same values that our teachers stress every single day. We have been very lucky here to be consistent winners in a lot of different sports but we also, we don't take lightly academics. That's really what comes first and they have to stress that to their students on a daily basis. Listen, we are talking about sometimes 14 to 18-year-old kids, you have to tell them, "Guys, get home, do your homework." Okay. You have to send them emails. I mean, listen, you and I both know as parents, you have to tell them every single day.

Consistent support and planning for the future is needed by student athletes.

Coaches are not the only school staff available to assist student athletes who may want to move on to the next level. When considering social support theory, a network of support will assist the student athlete by providing relationship that promote encouragement, trust, acceptance, and advice (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson,

& Landis, 1998; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Athletic Administrator I explained how these students are often counseled by athletic administrators, coaches, or guidance counselors about these requirements: “I also have a responsibility to our guidance department, and making sure they know the rules, both scholastically, in the high school setting, and if we have a kid or anybody that wants to participate in the NCAA, they have to know those eligibility rules too.” Likewise, Athletic Administrator B provided an example of a student athlete she was working with that was not taking the proper courses needed for NCAA eligibility. She worked with the student and guidance counselor to get the student athlete back on track for eligibility. Eligibility is important at all levels of athletics and it is not secluded to the responsibility of the student athlete. Regarding student athletes, Athletic Administrator J noted:

A lot of the NCAA mandates that are set up via the college institutions, our guidance counselors are having those discussions with our kids and without coaching staff to say, ‘Hey, what are your goals?’ and we are asking these questions when they are freshmen and sophomores. That way they are on track... We may need to ramp things up a bit.

Athletic Administrator F also posited, “especially when it comes to recruitment time, and they’re realizing that they can’t get into certain places because they didn’t have the grades. Again, we do the minimum eligibility, but they need to understand that to go anywhere, D1 or even D2, you really need to have the grades.” An emphasis on academic priority holds athletic personnel, school staff, and student athletes to accountability for success.

While eligibility may seem black and white, it is not an inevitable end to the

career of student athletes. Coaches may take a student on their roster that cannot participate in games in order to assist them. These students are provided opportunities to grow athletically while also being monitored for academic progress. Athletic

Administrator H explained the situation of one particular student:

Okay, so that student transferred here at the end of his freshman year, came with five credits, lovely kid. And I talked to him and I said, “What happened last year?” He said, “Nobody had told me I have to go to class they didn’t care if I showed up, they didn’t care if I did homework, they didn’t care, nothing.” I said, “Okay.” So he wanted to play football as a sophomore and he couldn’t because he just didn’t have the credits. So he kind of hung around as the manager, this and that, and then really wanted to play basketball. And again, they couldn’t at the start of the year, because again, he had no credits from the previous year. But he really busted his tail here because we made him go to class. We made him do homework, and this and that. He had enough credits at the end of the first semester, then he played basketball the second semester. At the end of the year he had enough credits to play football the next year.

Occasionally it is a tough call for a coach to not allow a talented athlete to play because they are ineligible academically. As Athletic Administrator C explained:

One of the hardest parts as any coach is being told that your child is not academically eligible and the downturn to it is that some coaches will look the blind eye. We say that the majority of coaches, but I’m sure there are still a few that would play somebody who is failing a class and just because they’re looking for that winning season, and it’s maybe not necessarily just the individual coach’s

mind. He may be thinking of the whole team because athletics are a team concept, but yet we still have to have the rules of “Listen, if you’re not academically eligible, then you are going to have to sit, and you could be the best player on the team. The best thing for the entire team would be for you to become eligible or improve your grades,” so on a whole, things could improve.

However, eligibility requirements hold students, coaches, and schools to academic priority. Coaches may choose to monitor students outside of the season as well. In an example provided by Athletic Administrator C, a coach helped several students:

For instance, the football team, they have the largest group of students and many times that student who is seen the doldrums of not passing the year prior and the coach has reached out for that entire year, didn’t lose track of him, kept track of him, and said, “Listen, in order to participate next year, you’ve got to stay, you know, academics where they need to be”. The following year, if they’re doing a good job, the coach, outside of their season to keep track of those particular students, then success rate of them participating the following year has been very good actually. Without that, that child who was not academically eligible one year, if there is no support from their coaches, they are not going to be participating probably for the rest of their high school career.

Social support from coaches and the environment are effective means of enhancing student success (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). As coaches keep track of students and communicate, putting time and interest into an investment of a student athlete, the student athlete has a better chance of succeeding in the classroom and on the field.

Motivational Force of Athletics

Athletics can be a motivating factor for student athletes that is transferred over to academic behaviors and performance. Student athletes learn how to multi-task, work collaboratively, take on leadership roles, time manage, correct mistakes, apply skills from practice, and strategize through participation in athletics. These, and other behaviors, can be transferred to the classroom setting and applied to performance, thus strengthening academic achievement. The support of coaches and a community can reinforce the motivation. As student athletes want to continue their athletic career, they may work hard in school to meet eligibility requirements and meet the grades needed for recruitment to institutions of higher education. Athletic personnel can increase this motivation by playing an active role in academics, as Athletic Administrator F explained:

Student athletes are motivated by that sport, so as much as we can tie into that motivation of the student on the academic side is going to be huge. So it's just so valuable that we have to just start doing a better job at that, so that tying the two together I think is just really important.

Sometimes coaches serve roles that are way beyond teaching athletic strategy. Athletic Administrator G tried to define the role of a coach as follows:

You've got assistant coaches, head coaches, almost becoming a surrogate to a lot of these kids on many levels. You can listen to their hall of fame speeches by anybody that's been there, and somewhere along the line, they're going to talk about a coach, or someone in their life that supplemented something that was missing, that continued them on the right path, or pushed them to be the best that they could be. The role of a coach, you can't even define it. You couldn't even

write it all down on paper. What, psychologist, psychiatrist, counselor, father, mother, supporter, disciplinarian? I mean the list goes on, and on.

Beyond coaches supporting student athletes, so that they are more apt to perform well in all aspects of their lives (Sarason, Sarason & Pierce, 1990), student athletes can be motivated by opportunities that athletics leads toward. Athletic Administrator G professed the benefits of athletics in his life: “what athletics gave to me is everything that I have now. The work ethic, the ability to lose with class, win with class. It got me into a very competitive academic school.” The lessons learned through athletics are also a motivational factor, and these lessons can be translated off of the field for life-long learning.

Lessons Translated Off the Field

Sports can provide life-long lessons to student athletes that assist them in their post-graduate life and prepare them for college and career readiness, a common goal for all high schools in the United States. Athletic Administrator D explained that the motivation of athletics and how goal of high school athletics: “Our goal is to get you out of here as a productive person for the next level, whether it’s college, or vocation, or whatever the case may be.” Athletic Administrator J created links on his graphic elicitation (see Figure 6) that indicated learning, life skills, and citizenship as part of the educational relationships created in the lived of student athletes.

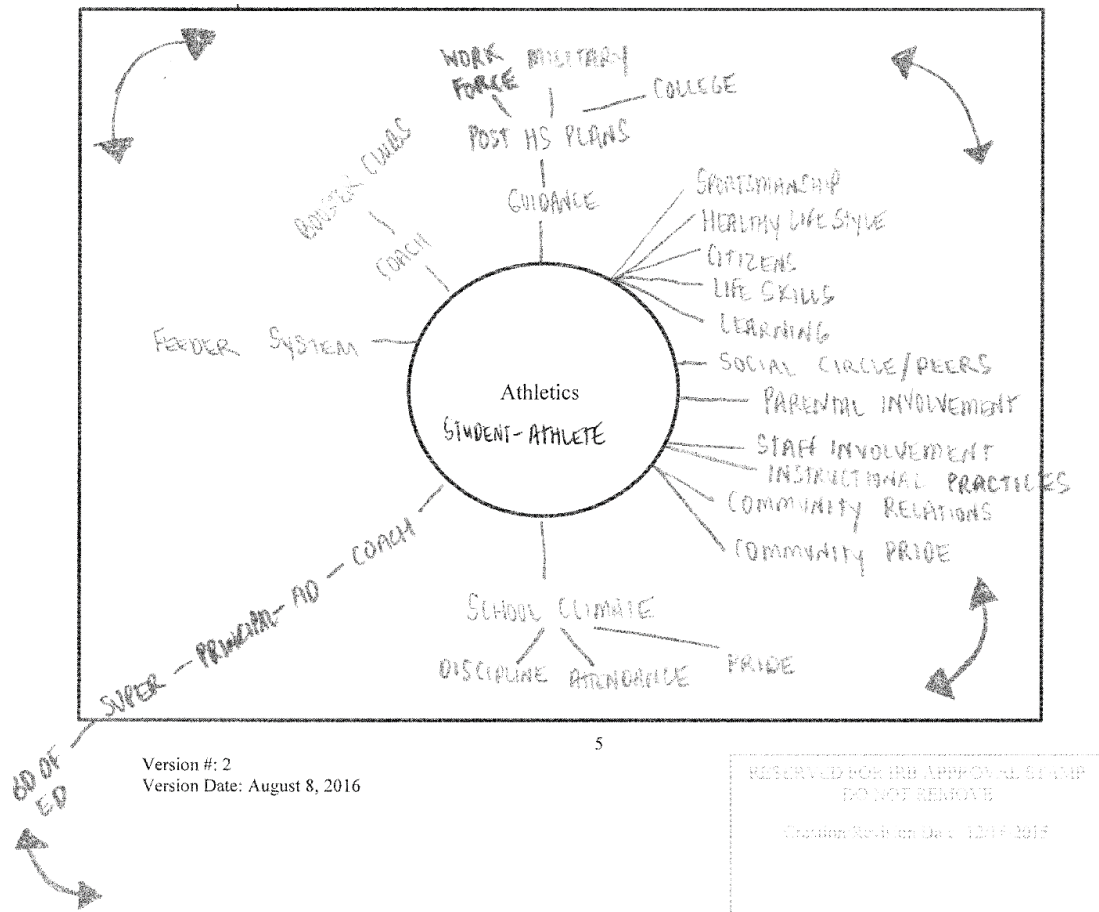


Figure 6. A Graphic Elicitation of the Connections to Athletics by Athletic Administrator J

Student athletes learn and apply skills such as healthy lifestyle choices, leadership, time management, and teamwork through athletics. Athletic Administrator A clearly articulated the role of athletics in education:

Athletics are an extension of the classroom. It's an opportunity to teach real-world lessons about hard work, perseverance, commitment, and I think that sports are a great teacher for our students about all those things. There's lots of adversity and setbacks that need to be overcome and I think it's a great way that people prepare for life. We do believe that student athletes get great leadership opportunities and

I think that that hold very true throughout their work and their personal lives afterwards that they're able to handle situations much better having been part of an athletic program.

Particularly in high schools, athletic coaches may facilitate tools to help student athletes find success. For example, coaches reported that they participate in activities to enhance academic excellence, such as study halls, peer tutoring, extra help, team meetings, and academic coaching (see Figure 7).

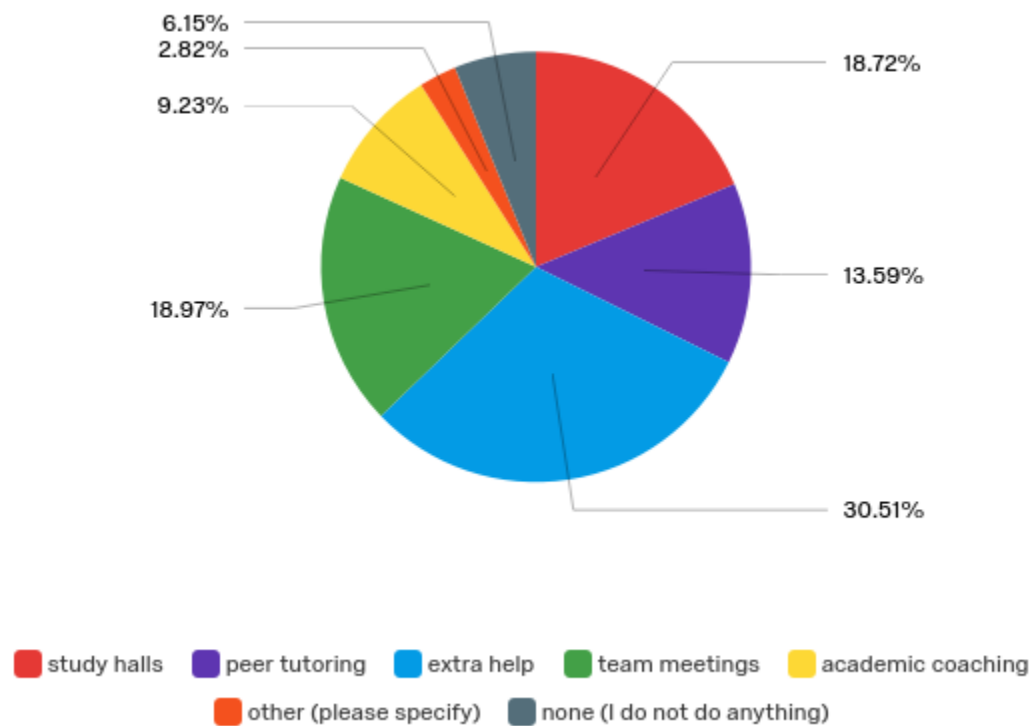


Figure 7. Representation of Coaches' Efforts to Enhance Academics

Administrators and coaches cited that students engaged in leadership and teamwork activities; however, explained that student must also learn effective time management to

be successful student athletes. Learning for student athletes is transcended across the field and classroom (Miller et al., 2005). Athletic Administrators further explained that with a limitless budget and resources they would like to provide more ways to assist student athletes. For example, Athletic Administrator C proposed that if possible he would like:

A forced study hall that didn't have to be manned by the coaches, similar to what they have in colleges. If I had an unlimited budget, I would basically hire outside people to come in and they would be the tutorials for every subject area that would be fantastic because then that would relieve some of the issues or pressure of coaches...I would provide one before school and after school.

Athletic Administrator D explained the need for this academic assistance before and after school: "that could be flexible enough to be before or after school, so that they would work with our athletes because of their training schedules, I think that would be a help."

Though, student athletes learn time management and often how to balance their athletic and academic lives, as stated by Athletic Administrator A, "student athletes learn how to manage their time better than anybody- the issue isn't so much time, it's time organization". The social support of coaches and a multidimensional team at the high school is beneficial; these supports will have a role in how the student athlete handles stressors and demanding situations (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). Lessons learned can transcend the high school atmosphere. Athletic Administrator E mentioned the value of athletics:

The value obviously you are learning that goes with the education and the values that you learn from athletics are more...they go hand in hand but athletics are more life skills, how to deal with teenage things like that. A lot of the things you

do in academics, you do have group projects, you do have to manage your time, there is a sense of priority work and things like that. From an athletic standpoint, I think it emphasizes a lot of life skills that you don't learn in the classroom, but they do go hand in hand in my eyes.

Athletics and academics together are a powerful learning combination. Student athletes tend to have improved attendance, academic success, less discipline issues, and are better socially adjusted (Shulruf, 2010; Trudeau & Shepard, 2008). Student athletes work to attain and maintain eligibility, perhaps through academic support, and applying skills they learn through athletics, such as working with a group, setting goals, leadership, self-esteem, and time management (Elias & Weissberg, 2000; Miller et al., 2005; Pressley & Whitley, 2006; Shulruf, 2000; Stephens & Schaben, 2000).

Multidimensional Approach

School systems are often looked at as a community with a unique culture derived from the various stakeholders that comprise the school. In this manner, the athletic personnel, along with the student athletes and larger school and local community, make up a sphere in which high school athletics falls. "Communication is key," says Athletic Administrator C. Communication must be multidimensional to allow for a voice of every member of the community. A multidimensional perspective allows for stakeholders with different expertise to unite to benefit the student athletes with a stronger collective understanding of their needs. Culture, community, and the school environment, which includes the staff, are impactful for student achievement (Good & Nichols, 2001). The resulting multidimensional approach creates a successful experience for student athletes as deduced from interviews with athletic administrators and surveys of coaches.

Coaches Communication

Coaches take on many roles in the lives of their student athletes, be it a parental figure, a teacher, advisor, counselor. Out of 201 coaches surveyed, 195 (97%) believed that a coach should have a role in the academic life of a student athlete. Coaches further explained that they are available to discuss academic issues involving their students (see Table 7). The majority of coaches also meet with student athletes to discuss academic progress, have contact with their student athletes regarding academic goals and expectations of academics, and give priority to academics (see Table 7).

Table 7

Coaching Reported Responses on Role as a Coach (n=192)

Role as a Coach	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Available to discuss academic issues involving student athletes	176	91.7	15	7.8	0	0	1	0.5
Meet with students athletes to discuss academic progress	57	29.7	102	53.1	29	15.1	4	2.1
Have contact with student athletes regarding goals and expectations (academic)	76	39.6	85	44.3	27	14.1	4	2.1
Give priority to academics	163	84.9	27	14.1	2	1.0	0	0

Note. Frequency is represented by *f*. Percentage is represented by %.

Additionally, coaches speak with school staff regarding the academic performance of their student athletes (see Table 5). In the event of a behavior issue with a student, a coach may also be involved. For example, Athletic Administrator A stated:

It extends beyond the academic. If there is a kid that's from a disciplinary or disruptive angle, they'll (teachers) reach out right to a coach too and let them know like, "I know this person is on your team and I just want you to know that in my classroom, he has been disruptive". And the coaches address it on that end as well.

When students perceive that they are cared for by the adults in their social network, they are met with success (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Coaches and teachers can work together for improved performance.

Coaches were asked who they believe was primarily responsible for ensuring that student athletes have a successful educational experience. Results from coaches were varied, including: teachers, student, coach, parent, guidance counselor, and administration. Similarly, Athletic Administrator J's graphic elicitation provided multiple connections to various school staff (i.e. coaches, guidance, parents, peers, and staff and administration (see Figure 6). These examples posit that the academic aspects of a student athlete's life are a collective responsibility. Athletic administrators provided some clarity to these responses in interviews. Athletic Administrator A stated, "Our coaches though are very aware of their students," and he further explains:

I think it works more from the teacher to the coach than the coach to the teachers.

I think there's an understanding that if a student athlete isn't cutting it in the classroom, the teacher reaches out to the coach just to let them know and the coach then makes it clear that the school is your first priority and you need to go to extra help you need to make that test up or make those test corrections and

that's... I think it works better that way and then, coaches aren't constantly making all the teachers feel harassed about it...we don't want to put pressure on teachers but we certainly want them to know that we have an open door and if there's a kid that's struggling in the classroom, we want to take care of it.

Similarly, Athletic Administrator E referred to the misconception of student athletes when discussing the way his coaches communicate:

Some of our coaches do it, some of our coaches don't-email all the teachers, tell them who your players are, a little email here or there. "Mrs. Smith, how is Johnny doing in English." And again it breaks that stigmatism that the jocks can do whatever they want and run the school and they don't have to go to class and things like that, because again it's cliché but they are student athletes. We have some coaches that really do a great job at staying on top of things. I have had coaches hold their star player out of practice because they were missing homework assignments and they had to write a paper...Athletics kind of round out the entire student and again that's what we're teaching from the standpoint of our coaches.

Communication goes from the coach to the teacher and vice versa. The onus is not on only one group for student athletes; there is a support team of adults that can monitor the success of the student (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990).

Additionally, it also appears as though at the high school level, the coaches and teachers work together for academic success of student athletes which avoids situations such as that of Rutgers University football coach Kyle Flood who was accused of requesting a grade change for his athlete (Bieler, 2015). High school coaches appear to

take a joint approach at the learning experience for student athletes, rather than requesting success is given to them. “I think they go hand in hand (coaches and teachers). I think there needs to be not necessarily a constant communication but somewhat of a communication between the two” (Athletic Administrator I). Athletic Administrator H explained that the coaches and teachers mirror a standard:

You have to have the same consistent message that the teachers give them every single day that we’re not going to accept missing homework. So, we’re not going to accept any sort of failures in those sort of things, the same thing that the teachers preach every day.

It was clarified that because of this standard of academic priority, coaches and teachers work well together:

We’re so small that our coaches can go right down to the Guidance Office and say, “Okay, can you tell me... print out how Joe and John...” You just get it in print-out and look at their grades quickly. Also, they have... students get a progress report repeatedly from their teachers every other week just about and it’s really simple to do with all the new technology and the student information systems. Everybody’s using it. It’s so simple that the teachers don’t mind doing it. It takes some like 30 seconds a kid and that’s about it.

Then, you have the old-fashioned way of doing it like my football coach. It’s old-school but it’s still as effective as the other way. He goes around to a lot of the teachers and just sits down and talks with them and he asks, “Hey, how’s Jim doing? How’s John doing?” (Athletic Administrator H).

In many schools, athletic administrators explained that the coaches are given

access to the student's grades and are encouraged to monitor academic progress; Athletic Administrators B and I mentioned that coaches may also be sent progress reports via these systems (i.e. Genesis). Some coaches will be proactive and share the list of student athletes with the school, each with their own way of sharing the information as illustrated below:

A lot of coaches put out their rosters to the entire school so that teachers know if they have

a football player or a soccer player in their class, and both positive or negative experiences, they can contact the coach (Athletic Administrator I).

Every coach will send out notification to all of their teachers or all staff with a roster and say if a student here are-not just academics, but mainly academically not doing well in their classroom, that they need to reach out and see if they can help in any way (Athletic Administrator C).

PowerSchool that is our attendance, discipline, grading system that we use. All of my coaches have access to PowerSchool. At any time, they can go in and review and take a look at kids. Most coaches do that I would say. The coaches that I think go above and beyond, are the ones that give weekly or bi-weekly progress reports for their student athletes and that they are meeting with the kids not only during season but in the off-season. (Athletic Administrator J).

Athletic administrators (B, D) also attributed achievement to the hiring of in-house coaches, who are available to the students during the school day and are visible in the school building. Coaches in the building are able to be a supportive presence to student athletes (Anderson, Cristenson, Sinclair & Lehr, 2004).

As coaches frequently monitor their student athletes' success in and out of the classroom and communicate openly with the student athlete and other stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, and guidance counselors, it becomes quite clear that the student athlete is cared for. This perception of being cared for by the coach and others in the school setting can create the feel of a network of support. This network, as referenced by Social Support Theory can lead to success in all facets of the student athletes' high school educational career (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason & Pierce, 1990). The coach's role is a tangible and significant support to the student athlete (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). Assistance from athletic personnel will provide the perceived support needed for a student athlete to be influenced positively.

The Community: A Vision

High schools are not stand-alone entities. Within the physical make-up of a high school, there are administrators on various levels, teachers, counselors, and various support staff. Some of these members also participate as club advisors and/or coaches. The high school entity may also fall under the umbrella of a larger school district, a board of education, and other administration. Coaches surveys reflected a great deal of interaction with students, parents, and teachers (see Table 4), and mention various people responsible for the success of student athletes. Table 4 depicts the reported interventions that coaches utilize to respond to academic issues with their student athletes; intervention is mainly with the students or teachers, which is probably because it is occurring within the school setting. Only five coaches indicated they do not make contact. Athletic administrators, however, clarified through graphic elicitations and interviews that there is a united community approach to the academic success of student athletes. For example,

Athletic Administrator H depicted this relationship in his graphic elicitation (see Figure 8), where he links students, coaching, and the community to athletics.

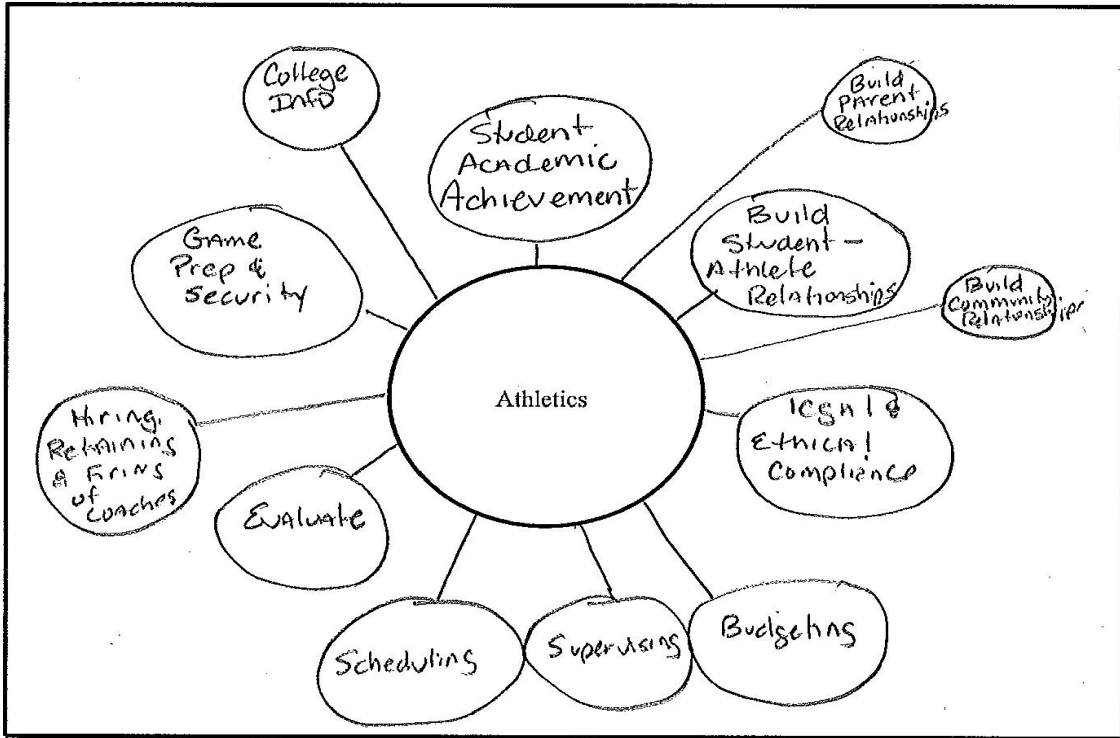


Figure 8. A Graphic Elicitation of the Connections to Athletics by Athletic Administrator H

Perhaps this partnership is best explained by Athletic Administrator E’s statement, “The academics are the heart of the school; however, the athletics are the soul of the school...so there is a direct correlation and connected but academics to the heart, athletics to the soul in my option.” The two pieces work together, as the school community fosters an approach of unity. “We’re kind of all in it together,” Athletic Administrator D stated when referencing the academic life of student athletes. While he offered that the guidance department does have a liaison to athletics, he cited communication and coordination as the ingredients of success.

The athletic administrator, as an intermediary between the athletic department

and entire school, often sets the expectations of conversation among the school community. Athletic Administrator I described the role of athletic administrator:

As the athletic director you have to make sure that all of the athletes are eligible, and meeting the minimum requirements of what they need to do in school. I also have a responsibility to our guidance department, and making sure they know all of the rules, both scholastically, in the high school setting, and if we have a kid or anybody that wants to participate in the NCAA, they have to know those eligibility rules too...And then, just maintain –academically. I don't have as much of a hands-on thing. Just make sure everyone's doing what they're supposed to do, and again, it's based on more of an individual basis, if any student or any teacher comes to me personally, then I'll work with them as much as I can.

The athletic administrator holds all of the pieces together and can work across the community.

Conversations between teachers and coaches must be framed properly so that neither is pressured nor felt that they are solely responsible for the success of a student athlete. Athletic Administration F shared beliefs on this topic:

Sometimes in the past, the way that communication has come off has been in the wrong way. I think it's gonna be more of I have to have the conversation with just all teachers in general of what my goal is, and then the coaches. So that it's not like the coaches are going to the teachers like, "Well, why did they get this grade?" or "What can they do to make it better?" and I think that's what the piece was before. Then it was more, "Well, just because they play a sport, let's do something so this kid can play or this kid can do better.

However, Athletic Administrator J emphasized the respect coaches and teachers hold for one another: “I think that collectively our coaches and teachers try to get ahead of the problem...If something happens with a kid, that kid is deemed not eligible because of grades, our coaches respect that piece...no one is going to question the teacher on it.” When school communities frame their support as a collective means of preparing the students for post-graduate life, there is a more unified vision for success.

Social Support Theory with Community Vision

Coaches, teachers, counselors, and athletic administrators serve as support systems for student athletes. Student athletes’ assistance is not purely for academic areas; Athletic Administrator D explained tactics used at his school:

What happens here is when a kid is involved in either an academic or an emotional crisis, whatever it would, the coaches are involved in the process and that happens through guidance. So if their needs will be a 504 plan, the coach will be involved. If they need to go for extra academic help, the coach will be involved. If they are getting disciplines, the coach will be involved. Because honestly they have a lot more influence and a better hold on a lot of our kids.

The focus is on all aspects of the student, as Athletic Administrator F noted regarding coaches, “It’s not just what you’re doing on the field, but you’re cultivating a whole child over here, and somebody that’s growing up to be a young man or woman in our community.” It is important, however, to not just offer support, but to build the support into action. For example, in his graphic elicitation, Athletic Administrator H includes the idea of “build community relationships,” “build student-athlete relationships,” “build parent relationships” (see Figure 8). Simply espousing or offering relationships does not

offer the social support needed to have a positive relationship that benefits the student athlete (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Conversely, athletics can enhance the school culture, as Athletic Administrator J offered, “I think that the success of athletics does enhance the environment and make the environment more inviting for kids to be a part of.” Athletic Administrator J also depicted this relationship in his graphic elicitation (see Figure 6) where he notes the school climate and role of pride. He includes in this graphic community relations, social circles, school staff, and parents. Because athletics offers a community context, all stakeholders are possible means of support.

Post-graduation plans are important to parents specifically. Athletic Administrator F explained that parents want to be involved as their student athletes approach college recruitment and focus highly on their grades. On the other hand, Athletic Administrator C encountered difficulty when parents are dissatisfied by what their student athletes are receiving or not receiving academically.

Student athletes are also supported by their peers. Athletic Administrator G boasted:

We have a very active and supportive student body that loves to go to football games and basketball games and things like that...That definitely plays a part in athletic success. And when you have a bunch of people that are supporting you, it kind of motivates you to stay on task with what you're trying to do.

Additionally, Athletic Administrator C talked about how student are willing to help one another for overall success: “many times their peers are probably a big influence as well. They could help them out. Sit in a study hall, sit on a bus and talk about math or something that they're missing or an English assignment, how they could help them.” A

community approach, where all stakeholders are involved is beneficial as evidenced by the different athletic administrators' responses and examples in their interviews. Social support theory mirrors this ideas, as an interpersonal network creates positive relationships which in turn strengthen confidence and success of student athletes (Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990).

Engaging students is beneficial to their overall success. As Athletic Administrator D asserted, "We have a tremendously high percentage of kids in both sports and co-curricular and we found those kids are less at risk in every way, whether it's emotionally, socially, or academically, when they're engaged." Athletics can create meaningful experiences outside of this setting. Athletic Administrator I noted that, "it's those kind of life lessons that you learn through sports and athletics that mold you into the person that you are." This must occur from a collaborative standpoint. When discussing the graphic elicitation, Athletic Administrator G asked to depict this as a tree. "(It is) All in the same tree, if you will. You know, I mean, everybody's got their own little branch: guidance, coaches, teachers, students, parents, administrators. You know, everybody kind of belongs; they're all part of the equation (Athletic Administrator D)." When speaking about the relationship between athletics and academics, or coaches and teachers, Athletic Administrator G praised the connection, saying, "it blossoms into an unbelievable circle of people that you become involved in." At the center of this circle, is usually the coach, who becomes a mentor to the student athlete. Athletic Administrator F proposed more contact time for student athletes and coaches:

It would be more of that personal connection, mentoring/coaching, that I would love to see some of our student athletes who are serious about that. Again, I think,

when the coach has that personal connection with the kid, I think that makes all those other conversations or other pieces much easier to have. “Hey, you are struggling in advanced calculus. How can I help you? What can we do for you? Are you budgeting your time enough?” Again, having that constant... having the personal relationship and also having contact with that kid, I think, opens all those doors.

The coach plays the role of a main support for student athletes, but is not in isolation. Although from a Social Support Theory standpoint, this collaborative approach of people focusing on various facets of the educational experience will cause the student athlete to feel supported, and with the proper academic reassurance, promoted success for them (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990).

Conclusion

Athletic personnel, specifically coaches and athletic administrators, contribute to the academic lives and behaviors of student athletes. By the nature of their positions, coaches and athletic administrators work closely with student athletes, providing social support within their school and athletic environments. Student athletes are guided by a driving philosophy on success which is espoused by the school culture and community, the athletic department, coaches, athletic administrators and/or other school personnel. Through communication from supportive adults, student athletes create their understanding of success and how they will attain this success.

Academic priority must be at the forefront of every high school athletic program. To ensure maximum success for student athletes, however, a team of supportive adults in

and outside of the school need to encourage and assist each student athlete. Head varsity coaches participate in the academic lives of their student athletes by encouraging success by including academic performance in their philosophy, communicating about grades or communicating with teachers and counselors regarding grades, and allowing for academic priority, such as attending extra help prior to athletic practices. Coaches also convey their expectations and philosophy of academics in meetings with students, and may provide study halls, academic coaching, or tutoring to student athletes.

Athletics fosters education by providing student athletes with opportunities to strengthen skills of collaboration, leadership, time management, dealing with adversity, accountability, and positive behavior; therefore, athletics is also a motivating factor for student athletes. As school systems increase collaboration, a multidimensional approach affords opportunities for frequent and open communication between all stakeholders. The multidimensional approach includes communication between coaches and other school staff (i.e. teachers, counselors) and creates a community vision for academic success. A social network of teachers, coaches, counselors, school administrators, and parents that are available to assist student athletes as they manage their time and potential stressors then supports the vision. The collaboration of athletics and academics prepares student athletes for success in college, work, and life.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to examine the role of athletic personnel in the lives of student athletes in educational settings using surveys and interviews. The study was designed to offer implications in the field of academic pursuits of athletes, and to enhance the current literature on the academic lives of student athletes in the high school educational context. In this chapter, I discuss my findings regarding the role of athletic personnel in the academic lives of student athletes. Additionally, I explain a framework that I have crafted based on the data and literature compiled herein, which is meant to be applied by athletic personnel to strengthen academic prowess of student athletes in high schools in New Jersey and around the country. I discuss the implications of the findings from this study for research, practice, and policy. Lastly, a conclusion is offered to culminate this project.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data are organized by theme and broadly answer the research questions. A top-down organizational pattern is used to arrange this discussion, beginning with the school community, culture, climate, and the role of the athletic administrator, and following with coaches and student athletes. These responses serve to answer the research questions: What role does athletics play in fostering education in the high school environment? (a) What are the values that athletic administrators associate with education? (b) How do athletic administrators perceive the role of coaches in the student athletes' academic life? Next, I discuss the findings regarding the coach and the role of the coach and how

athletics fosters academics to answer the questions: What are the ways in which high school coaches encourage academic success for their athletes? (a) How often do head varsity coaches participate in academics related to the athletes in their programs? (b) To what extent do head varsity coaches convey their expectations for academics to their athletes? Finally, there is a discussion of the *Framework for Academic Athletes*, which I created from the data collected and analyzed throughout the study, literature review, and my personal experiences in the field coaching and teaching student athletes.

Encouragement for Academic Success

Basic human needs are met by encouragement (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2016). In the field of education, by the nature of their position, adults can meaningfully foster pathways for student success. As social support theory posits, the role of a supportive adult can foster positive feelings in students and result in achievement of success (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). When athletic personnel, alongside school personnel, foster a culture and community that warrants academic success, students can flourish. It becomes a collaborative approach for the student and all members of the school community to work toward a goal or standard of success.

The role of the athletic administrator. The job of the athletic administrator in a school or school district is to oversee the entire athletic program, inclusive of the coaches, athletes, and events. Therefore, the athletic administrator has the ability to establish the direction of the program. They must be the one to create a vision and/or philosophy for the way coaches will interact with student athletes and set the expectations for student athletes. Often, athletic administrators are in a supervisory role for academic areas within

the school and are responsible for ensuring that student athletes meet the requirements for graduation and entrance into higher education. It is critical that the athletic administrator does not work in isolation, but rather takes a multidimensional approach to support the educational experience of student athletes.

New Jersey high schools are focused on 21st century learning and career and college readiness. Schools prioritize academics by setting requirements for graduation; however, these requirements only mandate a minimum level of achievement for students. It is the role of the athletic administrator, along with other school administrators, counselors, teachers, coaches, and parents, to push students to excel beyond this minimum set forth by state policy. For student athletes, who have the benefit of having multiple supportive adults in their lives, there are many opportunities for positive reinforcement (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Good & Nichols, 2001; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990).

Unfortunately, school communities are not trained in ways to support students to take on academic challenges (Elias & Weissberg, 2000; Steward & Sweet, 1992). Coaches, teachers, parents, counselors, and administrators must be educated on how to work together and guide student athletes to achievable goals. Once these goals are set, a collaborative force needs to ensure that students are being supported and encouraged to achieve the goals and requirements needed to pursue college and careers. This collaborative effort should involve academic support through before and after school study halls and tutorials for student athletes, training coaches on how to instill leadership and teamwork skills throughout their coaching, and providing student athletes best practices for time management. In addition, all members of the school community need

to foster a collegial culture where they communicate often and openly to share information and work to improve the educational experience of student athletes, for example through a professional learning community for coaches.

School culture. Typically, athletics creates a strong culture and significance through awards and recognitions. As a result, these programs can be visualized under Bolman & Deal's (2008) symbolic framework, which explains how past practices, artifacts, beliefs and values of the organization (or school community) shape its culture (Evans, 1996; Schein, 2004). The values and beliefs of the organization must be infused through all parts of the high school in order to align with the vision of the school. To maintain the culture, all members of the organization must be using in action what is being espoused by the vision of the school (Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Schon, 1974). In college settings, scandals involving lack of academic integrity and academic dishonesty are often cited for inappropriate communication between teaching faculty and coaches; however, when both coaches and faculty require a certain level of performance from the student athlete, there may be a shift (Wolverton, 2015). Therefore, if academic priority is espoused, the athletic personnel, along with the rest of the school community are responsible for encouraging academic success.

The role of coaches. Coaches are on the front line with student athletes. These are typically the individuals that spend the most time with student athletes, and most of this time together is in an educational context. Athletics can certainly promote learning for students. In surveys, the coaches indicated that they spent most of their time on athletic content; however, the teaching of athletic skills and practice is applicable to the academic setting and learning of academic subject matter. Specifically, student athletes

acquire skills of time management, overcoming adversity, working collaboratively, and growing through trial and error, which are skills not only required in sports, but also skills necessary to be successful in life. Coaches also set the tone for their team, which can take the form of a stated or written team philosophy or an underlying theme and way of living that is modelled by the coach and expected of the student athletes. In team meetings, practices, and communication among coaches and student athletes, a team philosophy is evident and espoused. As coaches hold expectations for academic work of student athletes, their vision of academic importance is gleaned. It becomes critical for coaches to foster academic priority by matching their actions to their espoused beliefs (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Often, the role of the coach is informally one of a parent, counselor, teacher, and friend. To support students academically, coaches reflected in their survey responses, that they communicate with teachers, parents, and guidance counselors. Communication regarding student athletes' academic progress must take the form of a multidimensional approach. Each stakeholder has a different expertise and viewpoint which can insure, through collaboration, that the needs of the student athlete are being met. Survey findings indicated that coaches do participate in the academic life of student athletes; however, it is unclear if one individual can take on sole responsibility for academic achievement. For example, in many schools, athletic administrators explained that the coaches send out a list of their student athletes to all of the teachers, and offer that they may be contacted in the event of any classroom issue (i.e. a decline in grades). In this case, the onus is on the teacher to ask the coach for assistance; however, the coach may not be trained to assist with the content of school work to get the student on track, so they must foster

communication between the teachers, student, and any others they believe are necessary. This is not typically a job requirement of coaches as set by the athletic administrator. Therefore, it is important for the athletic administrator to create a culture in the athletic department and the school that fosters open communication and allows for a multidimensional effort for student athletes to achieve academically. Together, all of the members of this group share the responsibility and expertise to collectively prepare the student, not only for academic success in high school, but for college, work, and life.

A multidimensional approach should be created by a team that meets periodically as a professional learning community (PLC) to discuss specific student athletes, their needs, and the circumstances in the school climate (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Initially, the PLC would need to plan for and create means of academic assistance, including, but not limited to: study halls and tutorials, multidimensional team meetings for student athletes, communication guidelines, and workshops. Student athletes are expected to effectively manage their time due to the nature of their athletic and academic responsibilities; study halls would provide a scheduled time for the student athletes to complete academic work. Subject/content-specific study halls would be established to further support the student athlete. By having the study halls broken down into subject/content- specific academic tutorials, assistance would be provided to student athletes by a certified teacher who would be able to deliver extra help. This is more beneficial than expecting a coach to assist an entire team with each subject in a team study hall. Additionally, while practices are often held after the school day, similar to academic extra help, tutorial study halls should grant a means for student athletes to receive academic assistance outside of time that conflicts with their athletic practices.

Communication is the center of success with a multidimensional effort. Teachers and coaches, as well as other stakeholders, need to have the time to speak with one another on level and open terms. For example, if a teacher and coach try to catch one another in passing in the hall or during a class, the meeting may cause a negative impact. Meetings should be scheduled during a mutually agreed upon time, and the communication should focus on assisting the student athlete in any aspect of their educational career. As these meetings extend to guidance counselors and parents, there must also be transition planning. Transition planning will assist the student athlete as they are moving in and out of athletic seasons, and also as they may be preparing to transition to college athletics and the requirements of the NCAA. Adults who are working with the student frequently are able to provide social support by the nature of their position (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Open, frequent, and honest communication of a multidimensional team can create the social support that will strengthen the student athlete's overall educational experience.

Athletics Fostering Education

Involvement in athletics helps to foster a well-rounded education for high school student athletes. By the nature of the practice, learning, and competition involved in athletics, athletes are exposed to teamwork and collaboration, which are essential skills in the 21st century workplace. Through this teamwork, they also learn leadership skills and develop a leadership style. Student athletes are sometimes looked upon as leaders to their non-athlete peers because of the dual role they take on in the classroom and in athletics. Additionally, student athletes learn to manage their time by juggling the schedules and requirements for school and sports. Research has shown that expectations and goals in

athletics and academics can partner to create greater educational outcomes (Miller et al., 2005; Trudeau & Shepard, 2008). The eclectic experience of the student athlete in a high school allows for the acquisition of 21st century skills needed for college and career readiness.

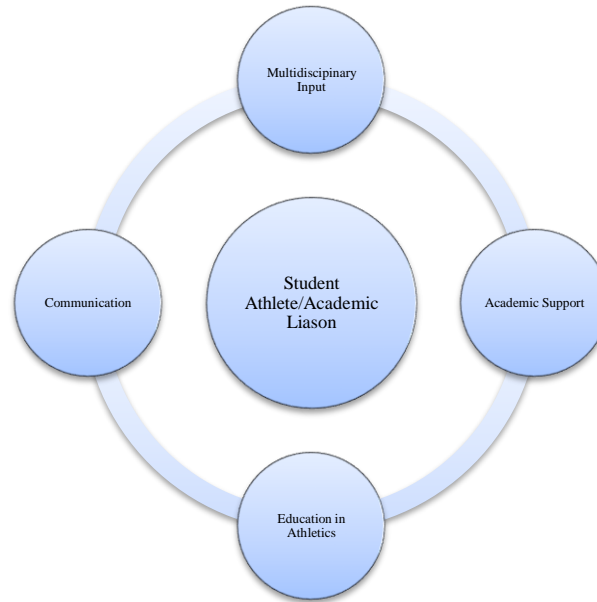
Collaboration. Educators stress the importance of group work as schools in the State of New Jersey move toward the Common Core State Standards and 21st century skills, emphasizing college and career readiness for all students. As teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators, and parents work together they model collaboration for the student athlete. Likewise, the student athlete must learn to collaborate with peers, teammates, and classmates understanding how to be an active citizen in the school and the community. Through communication and modelling of appropriate communication with and from school personnel, the student athlete is able to learn and apply the proper communication skills needed to succeed outside of school. As an example, a student athlete learns how to communicate properly with a coach when they are unhappy with a play; this ability to effectively communicate translates to the classroom as a student may be struggling with work and need to advocate for themselves to attain a better grade. These same conversational skills can be applied to college, work, and life.

Framework for Academic Athletes

Student athletes and coaches often struggle with role confusion as they manage their academic and athletic responsibilities (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001; Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Gaston-Gayles, 2003; Goldberg & Chandler, 1995). This research project unveiled important concepts regarding the experience of student athletes in a high school educational context. Through input from coaches and athletic

administrators in this project, I have created a framework that can be applied by high school personnel to more effectively support their student athletes academically. Due to the role that athletic personnel hold, they naturally become a means for support as posited by social support theory (Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). Student athletes are often considered at-risk because of the time constraint and responsibilities of managing an athletic and academic career (Ayers et al., 2012; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Mahoney & McCormick, 1993; Stephens & Schaben, 2000; Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985); therefore, this framework seeks to minimize their risk by providing a supportive environment in which all stakeholders participate to ensure the success of the student athlete.

Themes that emerged from my research gleaned a four-component approach to supporting student athletes, which includes: multidimensional input, communication, academic support, and educating through athletics (see Figure 9). Much of the ideas for these areas came from conversations with athletic administrators regarding advice that they would provide to new coaches and changes they would make to their current program if they had access to unlimited funds and resources. However, with creativity and some trial and error, I believe these supports could be integrated into schools with little to no impact on the budget.



Multidimensional Input	Communication	Academic Support	Education in Athletics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts from areas work together • Contributions from all stakeholders • Shared philosophy on academics • Examine areas of strength and difficulty • Remediation collaboratively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, honest, frequent • No one person is targeted or solely responsible • Blameless • Common ground is the student athlete • Common time during the day for more productive work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time management • Academic tutorials before/after school • Subject/content area teachers in tutorials • Mandatory study halls to complete academic work • Tracking of academic progress (Grade Checks) weekly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach lessons in leadership • Provide opportunities for collaboration • Learning time management • Vested interested in sport learning • Prepare for college, work, and life • Reflection and skill building
Role of the Academic Liason			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of the athletic department • Speak to all members of multidimensional team (per athlete) • Relays information and needs • Seek assistance on behalf of the student athlete • On staff and available during the school day • Deal with academic matters for student athlete • Review academic progress of student athletes weekly (run progress reports) • Serve as a counselor or supportive adult by building a rapport with student athletes • Transition planning into higher education and intercollegiate athletic programs • Set up learning opportunities for all stakeholders (teachers, coaches, parents, students) • Run a student athlete orientation for acclimation to role and academic-athletic partnership 			

Figure 9. Framework for Academic Athletes (Visual Depiction)

Multidimensional input. The *Framework for Academic Athletes* primarily requires experts in various areas to work together. Multidimensional input includes contributions from teachers, coaches, administrators, counselors, parents, and the student athlete, in order to understand the specific circumstances for that particular athlete. Input comes from various areas of expertise that allows for the knowledge base of multiple stakeholders positions within the educational setting i.e. the teacher with pedagogical knowledge or guidance counselor for social-emotional wellness. The coaches surveyed in this study provided that they communicate with one or more of these stakeholders while coaching student athletes. Athletic administrators also indicated, through interviews and graphic elicitations, that multiple members of the school community contribute to success of student athletes. This data connects to the social support theory and the concept that supportive adults can enhance student performance by their proximity and relationship (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990).

To attain multidimensional input, school personnel must follow the same philosophy for academics and understand the challenging schedule of the student athlete. With this approach, all stakeholders share a vested interest in the student athlete and seek to support and motivate that student for academic success, while also being able to succeed athletically. Furtherance of this vested interest could include examining the deficits of the student athlete as a whole and remediating areas of need. For example, if a student athlete struggles with time management, as indicated by many of the athletic administrators interviewed, the counselor may ensure that the student athletes are placed in a course on time management or may take a look at altering their academic schedule to balance time constraints. Similarly, if the deficit is in an athletic area, the coach would

work with the student athlete during practice time. Overall, the goal is to identify the areas of need and remediate the issue by working collaboratively so that one individual is not responsible for all areas of the educational experience.

Communication. As with a multidimensional approach, it is essential that all stakeholders have open, honest, unguarded, and frequent communication. Frequent communication is important because of the constant changing tide in the life of a high school student. What may not be considered is the type of communication; communication needs to be unguarded, open, and honest, so that no one person feels solely responsible or targeted. Several athletic administrators in this research study indicated that other teachers and coaches feel attacked or blamed when approached about a student athlete's progress. For example, a coach may feel they are being blamed when a teacher comes to discuss one of their student athletes failing class. The coach in turn may be defensive and explain his/her need for the student athlete to be successful on the team. When communication is guarded, it is difficult to find a common ground and positive outcome for the student. On the other hand, if teachers, counselors, and coaches were provided common time during the school day to meet and discuss any issues, the communication could be more productive and a plan could be developed to ensure the success of the student athlete.

Academic liaison. Moreover, each school should have an academic liaison in the athletic department. The position of the academic liaison would be to speak to all stakeholders or members of the multidimensional team for each athlete. This person would be able to take in all of the information for each student athlete and then relay needs and seek assistance on behalf of the student athlete. The academic liaison would be

on staff and available during the school day for teachers, coaches, counselors, parents, and student athletes to speak with specifically with regard to managing the dual role of student and athlete. They may assist in communication among various stakeholders by dealing with academic matters for student athlete; for example, making up missing classwork from attending an athletic competition. Additionally, academic liaisons could review academic progress of student athletes and run periodic progress reports to help student athletes, their teachers, coaches, and other supportive adults, monitor academic progress. In this research study, coaches indicated that they checked on student progress, however, the majority were not monitoring student progress on a weekly basis. This was perhaps due to job constraints as a teacher and/or coach. The academic liaison may serve as a counselor or supportive adult by building a rapport with student athletes so that they may speak comfortably with the student athlete (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990).

All college and universities that offer NCAA-sponsored intercollegiate athletics have Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) who serve in a similar role as the academic liaison described above. “Faculty Athletics Representatives (or FARs) serve as a liaison between athletics and academics and play a critical role in the institutional control and academic integrity of athletes as well as the welfare of student-athletes on campus” (Munger, 2014, p. 63). FARs are faculty that typically teach classes as well as work with multiple stakeholders at the institution to assist student athletes academically (Munger, 2014). In Division II institutions, the NCAA expects FARs to be committed to “learning, sportsmanship, service, resourcefulness, passion, and balance...(and) should provide oversight in both academics and athletics to ensure integrity and institutional control of

the athletics program” (Inaugural NCAA Division II Faculty Athletics Representative Participants, 2011, p.6). These supportive faculty members help to espouse academic priority to student athletes. Specifically with academics, FARs ensure that student athletes receive the same treatment and access as their non-athlete peers, and are considered a student before an athlete (Munger, 2014). Coaches and faculty must also expect a standard of achievement from the student athletes to enhance the academic priority (Wolverton, 2015). As student athletes transition to higher education settings, the liaison could work with the college NCAA Compliance Officer, Faculty Athletic Representative, coach and student athlete to set up a network of social support in the new setting (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990).

The academic liaison also could be used to set up learning opportunities. For example, teachers and coaches could take a day to shadow student athletes to better understand their daily schedule and stressors. This may allow for the coaches and teachers to alter their own activities to better accommodate the needs of the student athlete. Similarly, the academic liaison could invite student athlete alumni to talk to current students to explain their experience and give perspective on the transition from high school to college and provide ways to manage the dual role of student and athlete. Academic liaisons may also choose to run a student athlete orientation at the beginning of each school year to acclimate the student athlete to the role of the liaison and provide strategies for a positive academic-athletic partnership. Overall, the role of the academic liaison is to acclimate and assist the student athlete through the tumultuous dual careers of student and athlete.

Academic support. One of the challenges for the student athlete is attaining academic support while managing time and requirements outside of academics. This framework seeks to resolve this issue by affording academic tutorials for student athletes before or after school. Athletic administrators in this research project indicated that practices and extra help were often at the same time after school, so student athletes were unable to attend both. Academic tutorials should provide content specific teachers to teach or supplement with extra help for student athletes struggling academically. These tutorials could also be simultaneous study halls that are mandated for student athletes as a time and place to accomplish their homework, serving as a time management tool to assist in their hectic schedule.

While these tutorials and study halls are important, it is also important for the academic liaison mentioned above, or teachers, coaches, counselors, parents, and student athletes, to stay abreast of academic progress and grades. Grade checks by the academic liaison should be completed weekly. While coaches in this research project indicated that they monitor student athletes' academics and may check on their grades, the interval of time varied. A weekly check would guarantee that issues are being identified in a timely manner before they are too far gone to be fixed. Utilizing the academic liaison to check grades, paired with the academic tutorials, supports the student athlete to achieve academic success.

Educating through athletics. Athletics is the perfect outlet to teach lessons in leadership, collaboration, and time management. Athletic administrators cited various examples of positive relationships with academic-athletic partnerships during interviews. Monitoring student athletes' success provides information to the overall success of the

school (Inaugural NCAA Division II Faculty Athletics Representative Participants, 2011; Munger, 2014). Student athletes typically are vested in their sport and want to learn and improve. As a result, their time spent with the team and coach is engaging. Coaches should be trained in leadership theory and how to foster leadership skills in their student athletes. Future research may consider creating and mandating a short workshop or course on leadership for student athletes and their coaches, which would be beneficial to students' athletic and academic careers. Additionally, as students prepare for college, work, and life, they will need to learn to work collaboratively. Team sports provide opportunities to learn to collaborate meaningfully. School personnel can be trained in workshops to use these lessons and translate them into the classroom setting for reflection and skill building. Academic liaisons, like FARs at the collegiate level, can be a source of support for student athletes as they grow academically, athletically, and socio-emotionally (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Inaugural NCAA Division II Faculty Athletics Representative Participants, 2011; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Finally, time management is a skill that all students need to acquire. All members of the school community, including parents and students, should be provided training to assist in focusing the student athlete to learn to time manage and apply this skill in all facets of life.

Budgeting for a change. Change can cost money; money which often high schools do not have or need to allocate elsewhere. Implementing this framework could require the hiring and payment of an academic liaison, subject specific teachers to lead the tutorials, and presenters for workshops. However, if a school district could creatively work within their budget or resources, they could find other ways to cover these costs.

One suggestion would be to offer the tutorials as a duty or extra period assignment for teachers occurring before, during, or after school. The school guidance counselors or athletic administrator could serve as academic liaisons. Maximizing the strengths of current staff members to offset the weaknesses in others may be accomplished by having staff member lead workshops (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). A survey of the school staff could indicate various member's strengths and staff could train one another on areas of leadership, time management, collaboration, or other areas to assist student athletes. Similarly, the school staff could provide these workshops to students and parents. Cost should not hinder student success and support.

Implications

Implications for research, policy, practice, and leadership can be derived from this study. Those implications are outlined in this section based on the findings in this research project.

Research

The findings of this study indicated that athletic personnel are not the only supportive adults in the lives of student athletes. Social support theory stresses these positive supports in the success of students (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). In Table 3, coaches expressed their role in academics and how they support student athletes. Further, in Table 5, coaches responded to how they communicate and intervene in the academic lives of student athletes. Several athletic administrators expressed the importance of communication specifically when asked what advice they would provide to new coaches in their schools. Athletic Administrator C's simple statement that, "Communication is key" reinforced

this, whereas Athletic Administrator J spoke strongly about contact time between coaches and athletes to foster a mentor relationship. The mentorship relates to the theory of social support. Therefore, future research should consider the role of the parent, local community, and media, and the impact that those roles have on the career of the student athlete. With these implications for research, a case study of a particular sports program at one school should be considered. It would allow for a closer look at the situation, the staff, and students involved, considering any special circumstances and influence. Additionally, the role of parents who are active versus non-active in the students' career should be examined to understand the impact of parental support.

As mentioned previously, coaches are inadequately prepared for the multiple tasks involved in coaching student athletes to high levels of academic success. Future research should consider areas of education needed for coaches to assist them in their positions. For example, research could seek to understand the desired types of leadership styles of effective coaches. Here, leadership theory could be explored through a different lens. Critical attributes of coaches' leadership could be shared with pre-service coaches as preparation and training.

Educational organizations rely on a culture, for example artifacts, beliefs, or values that define their existence (Schein, 2004). Through leadership, educational leaders promote a level of achievement with expectations. One athletic administrator noted in the interview, "I think the school culture and the athletic culture go hand in hand" (Athletic Administrator E). Traditional school culture and educational experience, however, may not be a sufficient fit for all students. Students whose needs are not being met often feel "othered" by the culture of education, causing a degeneration of academic behaviors and

achievement (De La Rosa, 1998; Johnson & Perkins, 2009; Takaki, 2008). Student athletes could easily feel this way. Student achievement can be impacted by expectations of teachers, students, parents, community, culture, and school environment (Good & Nichols, 2001). Therefore, further research can explore school culture and the contribution that adults in the school community hold within this culture. This lends to creating an environment of success for college and career readiness that encompasses the whole child and their future as an adult. Likewise, a case study could compare two schools with various cultures.

With the role of media in the lives of athletes, it would be important to explore how the media impacts success and culture. Potentially, academic prowess of athletes who hold a status of fame from their athletic ability could be examined, and followed up with a longitudinal case study of these students as they move on to advanced athletics where they are influenced by the media. The study could examine the effect that the media and culture of the athletic program have on achievement outside of athletics.

Further research may also consider teammates and the elements of team bonding and team dynamics in a variety of sports. Athletes may also provide social support to one another by nature of their time spent together and common goals (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Good & Nichols, 2001; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Coaches and athletic administrators have shared that student athletes learn skills from being involved in athletics, specifically time management, leadership, and working collaboratively. For example, Athletic Administrator A explained:

We do believe that student athletes get great leadership opportunities and I think that that holds very true throughout their work and their personal lives afterwards,

that they're able to handle situations much better having been part of an athletic program.

The framework presented in this chapter could be used with a follow-up case study to further examine a team of students who were exposed to the framework and a team which was not to study the effect of the framework.

Due to the progression of student athletes through various levels of athletic and academic environments, a longitudinal study could follow student athletes from middle school athletics, through high school, and collegiate athletics, gathering data on academic achievement. Student athletes already in NCAA sanctioned activities can be monitored while they are in post-secondary settings to discover if the social supports they were provided are assisting in their academic performance. This would indicate if New Jersey schools are accomplishing the goals that have been set for career and college readiness. Additionally, the academic liaison from the high school could transition the students from the high school setting into the college by attending meetings with the college NCAA compliance officers, Faculty Athletics Representative, college coach and student athlete. The network of social support from the high school would be transferred over to the college.

Lastly, a case study could be conducted in which student athletes are members of an academy, or separated grouping of like-intended students, within a school program. The academy would be strictly for student athletes, providing supports via a smaller staff, concentrated on NCAA eligibility for those interested in collegiate athletic careers. The student athletes in this program would be adhering to the framework presented.

Policy

States and local athletic conferences have their own regulations and policies, in addition to national guidelines for athletics and academics. If a program that enabled a partnership of athletics and academics was created, local, state and national policy could be adopted to enforce a standard for educating student athletes. This would create a more stringent academic eligibility policy that goes beyond grades and focuses on the whole student. A case study could implement student athletes' creation of portfolios to present prior to graduation to show their academic growth over the course of their high school career. These portfolios may be monitored by a mentor or academic liaison to athletes throughout the students' school career, and goals for the student could be set and assessed via the portfolio. Mandated provisions for academic support, such as offered in the presented framework, could be implemented for student athletes.

Further, examining the current changes on the state level with the implementation of the Common Core Content Standards, athletics can enhance the academic setting by incorporating higher standards. In the same way that teachers are evaluated within the teacher evaluation systems, coaches could be evaluated to ensure standard practice. Policy could mandate training and professional development for coaches. Specifically, training could entail how to support the student athlete, how to teach time management, collaboration, and leadership skills, and the role of a coach in socially supporting their student athletes. Part of this training should reflect how to apply and utilize the presented framework in this chapter. Professional development to athletic personnel would guarantee they are equipped with the skills needed for improvement in the profession.

Practice

Unfortunately, American higher education students are taking longer to graduate, and potentially dropping out prior to graduation. According to Complete College America, an association that published an article on the “Four-Year Myth” of college completion, 19% of full time, four-year Bachelor’s (Non-Flagship) students and 36% of full time, four-year Bachelor’s (Flagship/Very High Research) students graduate on time (2014). These statistics are alarming, and in conjunction with literature from Mahoney and McCormick (1993) suggesting high schools poorly prepare student athletes, it would be beneficial to take the framework presented in this chapter to create a program for schools to prepare students through an athletic-academic partnership. Students need the social support and guidance to attain their potential and athletic personnel can foster this support along with school staff (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). In my own practice, I would like to use the framework for my student athletes, while educating coaches in my school on the program. Included in this program would be elements emphasized by athletic administrators, such as leadership, time-management, study halls (Ayers et al., 2012), life-skills (Garvis, 2013), and mentoring (Shulruf, 2010).

Additionally, this would include creating in-service and pre-service training for coaches, specifically providing ways to incorporate intervention elements for student athletes need into practice. In fact, Athletic Administrator D mentioned:

Well, we don’t really allow first year teachers to coach; they can volunteer. We discourage it because we require an awful lot academically through professional development for our first year teachers. They’ll be given a mentor. They have to

go to separate mentor meetings that are held after school. We kind of transition people into the actual world of teacher so that the teacher is more comfortable because if you're not getting it done in the classroom, we have seen good coaches not be renewed. Nothing to do with coaching, it's just they weren't getting it done in the classroom. But I think by sending that message they understand the importance of academics from the teaching side and also from the student side. When we actually transition them into these things, into a position, it's not like here are the keys, good luck. Don't bother me. It's an ongoing process.

During first year teaching, perspective coaches could be enrolled in a course to train and prepare them for athletic coaching positions. This could be a course at colleges and/or presented in the form of workshops in professional development that would be required in order to coach. In the simplest form, training may be a coach and/or teacher shadowing a student athlete for a better perspective on the components of their typical day.

As states focus more on student achievement for all populations of students, it would be beneficial to have research on academic improvement of student athletes. For example, student athletes who are in programs where the school is working to support and improve academics could be monitored throughout the school year. A program, or extension of the online gradebook system many athletic administrators mentioned in this study, could be set up to share data between coaches, teachers, students, parents, and other applicable stakeholders. Grades and other data could be collected to see how interventions and/or coaches training impact the level of academic achievement a student athlete is reaching. This data could also be compared to that of non-athlete students to determine if there is a correlation between athletic involvement and academic

achievement. These topics should be included in the education of pre-service teachers who will have student athletes in their classrooms.

When asked what they would do with an unlimited budget and resources, athletic administrators looked for ways to improve academics for student athletes. They cited supervised study halls with tutoring by non-coaching staff. Several athletic administrators mentioned specified study halls for athletes, where Athletic Administrator C clarified that these were necessary before school when athletes were free and not in sports, and that they should be staffed by someone other than coaches. Athletic Administrator H, conversely would request requiring the study halls each day before practice, adding that this may result in the need for lights on fields to allow practices to start and end later in the evening. While the time for the study halls/tutorials may vary from school to school, commonality lies in the need for study halls at a time that fits the schedule of student athletes.

Practicing athletic administrators may benefit from the findings in this study by gaining an understanding of areas where coaches and student athletes need support for academic success, presented through conferences or publications. This knowledge could proliferate their leadership and effect the overall culture of schools. Schools in turn may develop a deeper level of commitment from the entire staff in improving the educational experience for all students. Similarly, teachers may benefit from more profound understanding of the lived experiences of student athletes. In seeking a sense of teamwork with student athletes, teachers can expand on how they can support these athletes in the classroom, and in turn encourage teachers to engage in critical reflection on their teaching.

As teachers have mandated professional development, coaches should be provided opportunities for professional development as well. By educating and informing coaches, they are better prepared to impart knowledge to student athletes (Garvis, 2013). Additionally, athletic administrators and coaches must access and be accountable for reading research in their field and practicing reflection as a means of professional growth (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Student athletes who may feel role confusion (Goldberg & Chandler, 1995) and isolation from their status, can apply the findings of this study to understand how to advocate for themselves in educational environments.

Leadership

Student athletes are in a unique and potentially vulnerable position while in high school. They must maintain a dual role, with pressure to succeed in both areas. It is important as school leaders- teachers, coaches, administrator- to ensure that these students are not disenfranchised by the school organization and culture (Dantley & Tillman, 2010). Student athletes must be provided an equitable high school experience with the same access to opportunities as their peers. As social justice leaders, we are charged with providing education that is equitable for all students. Student athletes, therefore, must be met with social support throughout their educational athletic journey (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). The *Framework for Academic Athletes* depicts a way for schools to integrate practices to provide all student athletes a path to academic success.

The findings of this research study demonstrate that athletic administrators and athletic departments would like to instill academic success for their student athletes, but may be short on the tools to adequately provide assistance. Using transformational

leadership wherein leaders and followers work together for betterment and change, I would like to present the *Framework for Academic Athletes* to coaches, athletic administrators, and school administrators to promote opportunities of equity for all student athletes through a socially supportive network (Fullan, 2004; MacGregor Burns, 1978). Specifically, the research and findings attained in this study can be provided to the study participants. Sharing my knowledge through these presentations would serve as training for in-service and/or pre-service coaches (Fullan, 2001). Additionally, presenting this framework will allow me to advocate for student athletes. By educating athletic and school personnel with the elements of this framework, they could reflect on their own practice and utilize that information to transform their leadership of student athletes (Fullan, 2011; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

Conclusion

Student athletes need support to foster an education in both athletics and academics. Without appropriate support, student athletes could falter in one or both roles. As athletic departments, by way of the leadership and philosophy of the athletic administrator, outline a vision for academic success, student athletes can begin to achieve higher expectations. The findings from this research study suggest that coaches, along with the entire personnel of the school, the community, and parents of the student athlete, should work collaboratively to best support each individual student athlete. Student athletes that will transition to institutions of higher education to study and play a sport will be guided by the NCAA requirements. It is the job of high schools to adequately support and prepare these students while in the high school setting. This can be a vulnerable time for students, and the social support of significant adults can strengthen

the focus of success. This study has significant implications for the way in which student athletes at the high school level can achieve academic success. It is the obligation of educators to insure that the students are given the tools necessary to excel in their chosen future.

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Appendix A

Text of Recruitment E-mail to Coaches

Dear Coach:

My name is Meredith McGee and I am currently enrolled in studies for a Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Rowan University, Glassboro, New Jersey. As a research study for my dissertation, I am exploring the extent, if any, which coaches intervene in academics related to the athletes in their programs. After seeking permission from your athletic administrator, I am now inviting you to participate in this study, due to your position as a high school coach in the State of New Jersey.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a 20-question electronic survey regarding your role as a coach, in relation to your school and student athletes. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes of your time. You will not be compensated for your participation. To ensure there are no risks in participation, your name will not be included; however, demographic information will be attained for data analysis purposes. Participation is voluntary and as such, you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will provide useful information regarding academics and student athletes. If you have any questions regarding the survey or research project in general, including the findings, please contact me at mcgeem0@students.rowan.edu. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, please contact Rowan University.

By completing and submitting this survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in the study. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Best of luck in your upcoming athletics pursuits!

Meredith McGee

Student, Rowan University

Appendix B

Survey for Coaches

ONLINE SURVEY (ALTERNATE CONSENT)

You are invited to participate in this online research survey entitled Academics and the Student Athlete. You are included in this survey because you are a Head/Varsity coach for a New Jersey high school athletic team sanctioned by the NJISAA.

Approximately 200 coaches are expected to complete the survey. The survey may take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this online survey. Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey.

The purpose of this research study is to explore the extent, if any, coaches intervene in academics related to the athletes in their programs. During this project, you will be asked to complete a survey regarding your role as a coach, in relation to your school and student athletes.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may help us contribute to the advancement of knowledge on how coaches enhance the academic life of their student athletes.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will be destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact Meredith McGee or Dr. Shari Willis at Rowan University, Department of Health and Exercise Science, 201 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro, New Jersey 08028, (856)-256-4000 Extension 3702, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

Please complete the checkbox below.

To participate in this survey, you must be 18 years or older. Place a check box here

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey

The purpose of this research will explore the extent, if any, coaches intervene in academics related to the athletes in their programs. Please consider your role as a coach, in relation to your school and student athletes, when answering the following questions. For some questions, you may choose more than one response, or write in your own response.

Demographics

1. I am currently (select all that apply)
 - A certified teacher Not a certified teacher
 - Currently teaching Not currently teaching
 - Working in the school I coach Not working in the school where I coach
 - Other (please explain)

2. At what school(s) do you currently coach (optional response)?

3. What sport(s) do you currently coach (For example: Boys Cross Country)?

4. How many years have you been coaching (select one)?
 - a. less than 2 years
 - b. 2-4 years
 - c. 5-7 years
 - d. 8-10 years
 - e. more than 10 years

Coaching Philosophy (select the best response for the following)

5. Being successful in athletics is more important than academics.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

6. Athletics enhances education.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

7. Academic performance of student athletes is a prominent part of our program (team/department) philosophy.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree

- e. Strongly disagree
8. Should a coach have a role in the academic life of a student athlete?
- Yes
 - No
9. Approximately what percentage of the time you spend with your team (practice, meetings, etc.) is educationally based?
- None
 - 10%
 - 20%
 - 30%
 - 40%
 - 50%
 - 60%
 - 70%
 - 80%
 - 90%
 - All of the time is educationally based

Academic Monitoring

10. Considering your role as a coach, please select the response which best represents your answer to each of the following statements:

	Grade			
	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I am available to discuss academic issues involving my students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I meet with my students athletes to discuss academic progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have contact with students regarding academic goals and expectations of academics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I give priority to academics (i.e. students going for extra help, missing athletics for academics).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. The student athletes I coach receive consequences from my staff or myself in athletics for subpar academic performance (select one).
- Always
 - Sometimes
 - Never

12. I check on the academic progress/grades of my student athletes (select one).

- a. Never
 - b. Daily during the season
 - c. Weekly during the season
 - d. Monthly during the season
 - e. Once a season
13. Which **best** describes the amount of time you spend speaking with school staff regarding student athletes academic performance (select one)?
- a. less than 15 minutes a week
 - b. 16-30 minutes a week
 - c. 31-45 minutes a week
 - d. 46 or more minutes a week
14. What activities do you participate in to enhance academic excellence (choose all that apply)?
- a. study halls
 - b. peer tutoring
 - c. extra help
 - d. team meetings
 - e. academic coaching
 - f. other (please specify)
 - g. none (I do not do anything)
15. How effective do you believe you are in promoting academic success of your student athletes (select one)?
- a. Not effective
 - b. Somewhat effective
 - c. Effective
 - d. Very effective
16. How do you **mostly** intervene with an academic issue (select one)?
- a. I do not
 - b. Contact made to parent
 - c. Follow up with student
 - d. Work with teachers
 - e. Other (please explain)
17. Overall, do you spend more time addressing athletics or academics with your student athletes (select one)?
- a. Athletics
 - b. Academics
 - c. Equal time with athletics and academics
18. Do your student athletes struggle with coursework when they lack support (select one)?
- a. No
 - b. Yes
 - c. I do not know

19. Do you believe that time management assists in educational success for student athletes (select one)?
- No
 - Yes
 - I do not know
20. At your school, who should be responsible for ensuring that student athletes have a successful educational experience? _____.

Appendix C

Text of Recruitment E-mail to Athletic Administrators

Dear Athletic Administrator:

My name is Meredith McGee and I am currently enrolled in studies for a Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Rowan University, Glassboro, New Jersey. As a research study for my dissertation, I am exploring the extent, if any, which coaches intervene in academics related to the athletes in their programs. I am seeking your permission as athletic administrator, to both participate in this study via an interview, and to invite your head varsity coaches to participate in a survey.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete an interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. Prior to the interview, I am asking that your head varsity coaches complete a 20-question electronic survey regarding their role as a coach, in relation to your school and student athletes. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes of their time. No one will be compensated for participation. To ensure there are no risks in participation, names will not be included; however, some demographic information will be attained for data analysis purposes. Participation is voluntary and as such, anyone is free to withdraw participation from this study at any time.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will provide useful information regarding academics and student athletes. If you have any questions regarding the interview, survey, or the research project in general, including the findings, please contact me at mcgeem0@students.rowan.edu. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, please contact Rowan University.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. **If you are willing to participate, I ask that you send a signed response to me on your school letterhead, with a brief statement acknowledging and approving the above mentioned research.** Best of luck in your upcoming athletics pursuits!

Meredith McGee

Student, Rowan University

Appendix D

Informed Consent for Interviews of Athletic Administrators

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

You have been invited to participate in a research study entitled “Academics and the Student Athletes” which is being conducted by Meredith McGee, a student at Rowan University. This study is being conducted by researchers in the College of Education at Rowan University. The Principal Investigator of the study is Dr. Shari Willis. The purpose of this this research will explore the role of academics in the lives of high school student athletes.

Participation in this study is voluntary. The interview data will be used for data analysis purposes only. You must be 18 years or older to participate in the study. If you agree to participate in this study, you would be interviewed for about 30 minutes. The number of participants in this study is twenty.

Risks: There is little risk in participating in this study; after the interview, you may have questions which will be answered immediately by the researcher. Your data will be kept secure and confidential. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number that is unique to this study. Study findings will be presented only in summary form and your name will not be used in any report or publications. You can withdraw from this study at any time.

Benefits: Participation in this study may not benefit you directly, but it will help us contribute to the advancement of knowledge on how educational institutions may enhance the academic life of their student athletes. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this study, this will have no effect on the services or benefits you are currently receiving. You may skip any questions you don't want to answer and withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

Extent of Confidentiality: All of your responses, writings, or other materials will be kept confidential, meaning no one will be made aware of your participation. Since this research data will be developed into a written paper and/or published articles and presentations, your name will not be disclosed in any discussion or written documents about the research.

Freedom to Withdraw: Participation is completely voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Your signature below gives me permission to use the data collected from your interview during the project. Participation does not imply employment with Rowan or the prime investigator.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Shari Willis Rowan University, Department of Health and Exercise Science, 201 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro, New Jersey 08028, (856)-256-4000 Extension 3702. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the **Rowan University** Glassboro/CMSRU IRB at 856-256-4078.

ROWAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

AUDIO/VIDEOTAPE ADDENDUM TO CONSENT FORM

In addition to agreeing to participate in a research study conducted by Meredith McGee and Dr. Shari Willis, we are asking for your permission to allow us to include audiotaping as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for review of transcripts for

- review of transcripts;
- analysis by the research team.

The recording(s) will include any identifiers that you utilize during the interview. However, written transcripts will use pseudonyms in place of all names and identifiers.

The recording(s) will be stored on the researcher's computer in a secure, password protected file. Transcripts will also be stored as secure electronic files. All recordings will be destroyed upon publication of the study, and retained for no more than 6 years.

The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM WHETHER OR NOT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE.

Research Agreement

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and **I have received a copy of this description.**

Please check below in regard to the recording of your interview:

- Agree to be recorded
- Do NOT agree to be recorded

Name (Printed) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E

Interview Protocol for Athletic Administrators

Thank you for meeting with me today. You have been selected to participate in my study regarding the role of athletics in education. As we have discussed, our interview will be recorded and last about 30 minutes. Your participation is voluntary; if at any point you do not feel comfortable, you may terminate the interview. Are you ready to begin?

1. How long have you been in this position? Explain to me your role in regard to athletics.

Probing Question: What are your past athletic experiences in an academic setting?

2. Describe how you believe athletics and academics are connected at your school.
3. Tell me about the values that you associate with academics.
4. Do you believe that participating in a sport helps or hurts a student's education? Please explain.
5. What do you consider a good relationship between athletics and academics, from your perspective?
6. How does the school culture impact the athletic program? For example, how do the expectations of staff drive athletics? How does the community feel about athletics in this school?
7. Describe your academic expectations of your athletes. In what ways do your coaches ensure students attain and maintain high grades?
8. Describe a student who has been affected by an athletic/academic partnership.
9. What tools do you believe your coaches should provide to student athletes? Imagine your budget and resources were endless!
10. What advice (expectations) would you give to a new coach coming to your

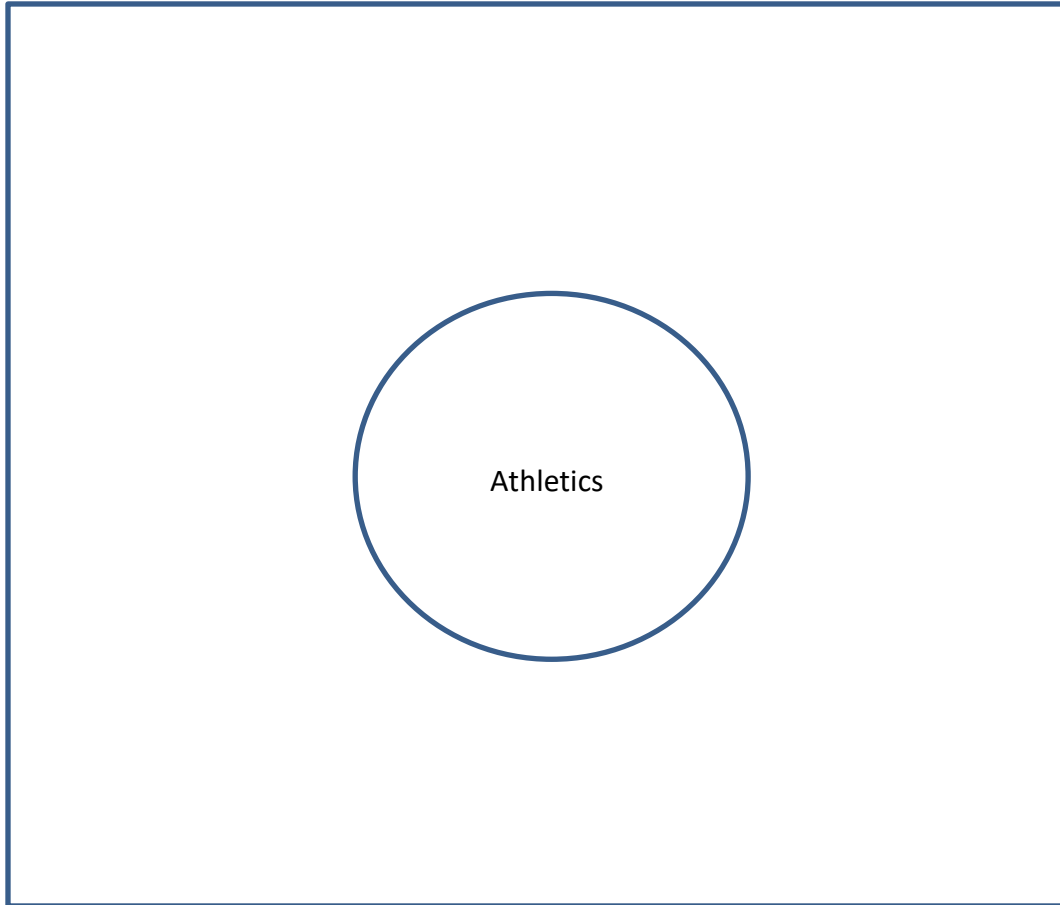
school, related to academics and student-athletes?

* Is there anything you would like to add to the interview to describe the role athletics has in education?

Appendix F

Graphic Elicitation for Athletic Administrators

INSTRUCTIONS: The purpose of this exercise is to elicit information about your perception of the educational relationships with athletics. The circle below indicates you, as athletic director representing your school's program. In relation to this circle, please draw a diagram depicting how you envision the role in athletics connecting with areas in your school and/or community. Draw areas closer to the "Athletics" circle that you feel have a close connection, and further away if you seldom have a relationship. Try to make the size of the circle represent the importance of the relationship. Larger circles would represent the most important relationships.



Appendix G

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Letter

12/7/2016

<https://airb.rowan.edu/airb/Doc/036T3E0F7BIIKDD9RCJ28JCGR5D/#fromString.html>



** This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.
The originating e-mail account is not monitored.
If you have questions, please contact your local IRB office **

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier: FWA00007111

IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman

IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy

Effective Date: 8/18/2016

eIRB Notice of Approval

STUDY PROFILE

Study ID: Pro2016001067
Title: Academics and the Student Athlete: A Mixed Methods Study on the Role of Athletic Professionals in Education
Principal Investigator: Shari Willis
Study Coordinator: None
Co-Investigator(s): Meredith McGee
Other Study Staff: JoAnne Bullard
Ane Johnson
Sponsor: Department Funded
Approval Cycle: Twelve Months
Risk Determination: Minimal Risk
Device Determination: Not Applicable
Review Type: Expedited
Expedited Category: 6
7
Subjects: 250

CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

Submission Type: Research Protocol/Study
Submission Status: Approved
Approval Date: 8/18/2016
Expiration Date: 8/18/2017
Pregnancy Code: No Pregnant Women as Subjects
Not Applicable
Pediatric Code: Not Applicable
No Children As Subjects
Prisoner Code: Not Applicable
No Prisoners As Subjects
Protocol: Protocol
Consent: There are no items to display
Recruitment Materials: Recruitment E-mail

* Study Performance Sites:

Florence Township School System 201 Cedar Street Florence, New Jersey 08518

ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
2. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a

<https://airb.rowan.edu/airb/Doc/036T3E0F7BIIKDD9RCJ28JCGR5D/#fromString.html>

1/2

continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.

3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued. **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of individual subjects to continue.** (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) **No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**

4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions:** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators, advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.

5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations:** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.

8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor or the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application or final report.

9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.

10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email communication may contain private, confidential, or legally privileged information intended for the sole use of the designated and/or duly authorized recipient(s). If you are not the intended recipient or have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and permanently delete all copies of this email including all attachments without reading them. If you are the intended recipient, secure the contents in a manner that conforms to all applicable state and/or federal requirements related to privacy and confidentiality of such information.

Appendix H

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Modification Approval Letter

2/8/2017

Rowan University Mail - Rowan University eIRB: Modification Request Approved



McGee, Meredith <mcgeem0@students.rowan.edu>

Rowan University eIRB: Modification Request Approved

eIRB@rowan.edu <eIRB@rowan.edu>
Reply-To: eIRB@rowan.edu
To: mcgeem0@students.rowan.edu

Mon, Feb 6, 2017 at 1:46 PM



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DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier:
FWA00007111

IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman
IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy

Effective Date: 2/3/2017
Study Expiration Date: 8/18/2017

eIRB Notice of Approval

STUDY PROFILE

Study ID: Pro2016001067
Title: Academics and the Student Athlete: A Mixed Methods Study on the Role of Athletic Professionals in Education
Principal Investigator: Shari Willis
Co-Investigator(s): Meredith McGee
Sponsor: Department Funded Internal / Institutional Funding
Risk Determination: Minimal Risk
Review Type: Expedited
Subjects: 250
Study Coordinator: None
Other Study Staff: JoAnne Bullard
Ane Johnson
Approval Cycle: Twelve Months
Device Determination: Not Applicable
Expedited Category: 6
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CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

Submission Type: Modification
(Mod201600000222)
Submission Status: Approved

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/?ui=2&ik=b3896fdcc&view=pt&search=inbox&msg=15a14bfd8840ab2f&siml=15a14bfd8840ab2f>

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Approval Date: 2/3/2017 **Review Type:** Expedited
Pregnancy Code: Not Applicable **Pediatric Code:** Not Applicable **Prisoner Code:** Not Applicable

Protocol: Protocol 0.05 **Consent:** Interview Consent .pdf 0.01
 Recruitment E-mail.pdf 0.01 **Recruitment Materials:** Recruitment E-mail 0.02
 Survey Consent .pdf 0.01

Modifications: Changes to Protocol Document(s)
 Changes in Research Site(s)

*** Study Performance Sites:**

There are no items to display

Florence Township School System
 Monmouth Regional High School

201 Cedar Street Florence, New Jersey 08518
 One Norman J. Field Way Tinton Falls, New Jersey 07724

ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
2. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.
3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued: **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of individual subjects to continue. (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**
4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions :** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators, advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.
5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations :** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.
8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor or the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application or final report.
9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.
10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*

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2/8/2017

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Study.PI Name:
Study.Co-Investigators:

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