

August 1, 2023

## Blog – Co-Curricular Activities

As we look at the calendar, school will be set to open in about four weeks. However, if you have a student that participates in a fall co-curricular activity, such as football, cross country, volleyball, spirit squad, pep band or the musical then the school year has already or will soon start for you and your child. I am a strong proponent of co-curricular activities and feel that the more you are involved in school activities the more fun and meaningful school will be for you both now and in the future. I think that it is also true that individuals who are involved in school activities tend to do better academically than those who are not involved in after school activities. I believe that one reason for this is time management – when you are involved in after school activities you have to find a balance between your studies and your practice and game schedules. I think another benefit of co-curricular activities is learning how to work as a member of a team and knowing that your individual efforts are a part of a larger team effort.

During my educational career, I have been an athlete, coach, advisor, athletic director and a huge fan for all of the students that I have cheered on at home and away events. In high school, I participated in cross country, wrestling, track and the school musical. I was a long-distance runner and held the school record in the two-mile for a few years, but that was many years ago. I also loved music and played the role of Tommy in the musical *Brigadoon* when I was a senior. Co-curricular activities provided me with a positive outlet for all of my excess energy and emotion and helped me establish strong relationships with my fellow cast members and teammates. In college, I wrestled for the University of Wisconsin – River Falls and as a teacher I coached cross country, forensics, drama and wrestling. I also served as a junior high basketball coach, even though my knowledge of basketball at the time was extremely limited. As a coach and advisor, I was able to see my students in a different setting than the classroom and my students were able to see me in a different role. In the areas of forensics and drama, I saw my students make the transformation from being nervous and afraid of speaking in front of others to becoming individuals who were confident, composed and excited to make their forensic pieces or dramatic characters come to life for the judges and audience. They learned skills of expression that served them well beyond school into adulthood. In cross country and wrestling, I saw individuals push themselves each day to become better, stronger and faster; if for no other reason than they wanted an opportunity to beat their coach (me). My memories of being an athlete, drama participant and coach are extremely pleasant and I know that providing our students with these same opportunities and many more will also leave a lasting mark on them as they grow to be the next generation of leaders that we will need and depend upon.

As an administrator, I have had the opportunity to watch countless events and see our students perform at some of their highest levels. I know that they truly appreciate when individuals come out to see the results of their hard work. I know that when I was young and staff members or community members mentioned that they saw me perform, it always made my day a little brighter, even on those days when I was not pleased with how I had done in a particular event. So I hope that when our co-curricular events are occurring throughout the year that you find some time to come to watch them – I am sure it will brighten their day.

However, on a not so positive note, this year we will not be able to have Pizazz, our show choir. This was one of the co-curricular activities that was cut from the budget due to the failed referendum. We also had to make the change of having the school musical and drama presentation go to every other year each. This year we will have the school musical and next year the school play, but they will not both be in the same year. Cuts like this always have a negative impact. I remember that my son Erik loved the arts and though he also participated in athletics, one of his main reasons to come to school was for music – he loved band, choir and drama and participated in jazz band, barbershop quartets, and especially the school plays and musicals. These activities kept him involved in school and helped him develop traits that he still uses each day in his adult life. If they would have been taken away from him, I know that his high school career would not have been as rich and fulfilling as it was.

Nevertheless, I need to give a shout out to Pat Abrahamson, our Jr./Sr. High School Assistant Principal and Activities Director. He was able to work with the Brodhead School District to give our students the opportunity to participate in Brodhead High School's show choir. They have to find their own way to practice on Sunday afternoons and to the show choir events, but they can still have the experience, just not as a member of our show choir.

In closing, I am looking forward to watching our coaches, advisors and students show off their skills and abilities throughout this school year. I hope that as I see you at events that you will take a moment to come over and introduce yourself. I truly value your thoughts, opinions, ideas and comments.

Go Vikings!