



Extracurriculars, Athletics & Physical Education

OPRF data show that participation in extracurriculars boosts academic success and improves attendance. Last school year, 78% of students participated in at least one of the school's 75 activities or clubs and 30 sports. The average grade point average for these students was 3.2, compared to 2.8 for non-participating students. Also, participating students had 45% fewer unexcused absences than non-participating students.

General Themes

Connection & Community

Our students confirm that extracurricular activities and athletics enhance academic performance, promote equity, foster a sense of school pride, and establish a connection to both the school and larger community.

Condition

Current student needs cannot be met effectively due to the poor condition of many athletics and physical education facilities.

Capacity

Student participation in extracurricular activities and athletics is limited due to lack of space. Activities/teams are displaced, must physically overlap, and/or be scheduled late into the evening.

Efficiency

Many spaces are either too large or too small for the learning activities they support. A piecemeal process over 90 years has shoehorned the growing number of activities into limited existing spaces.

Equity

Non-ADA compliant facilities limit student access to some spaces. Students report that the condition, lack of capacity, and inefficiency of facilities contribute to their perception of inequity related to race and gender.



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General Findings

- Research shows that student participation in extracurricular clubs and athletics is strongly associated with improved academic performance and decreased disciplinary issues ■
- 78% of OPRF students participate in extracurricular activities and rates closely mirror the diversity of our student population ■
- Overcrowding negatively affects student participation in and satisfaction with extracurriculars ■ ■

Clubs & Activities

- Many conduct business on floors in hallways due to a lack of flexible-use space ■
- Poor lighting in some spaces negatively affects club activities ■
- Lack of ADA-compliant spaces limits participation of students with disabilities ■

Field House

- Space is far too large for most activities which take place here, such as basketball and wrestling, yet too small for indoor track ■ ■
- Both the indoor track and the basketball court are in poor condition ■
- Sound system is unreliable and interferes with delivery of quality programs and events (assemblies, commencement, competitions, etc.) ■
- The track team, the largest no-cut sport at OPRF with the largest number of students of color, has no adequate facilities on campus and is frequently displaced from its main practice facility due to overcrowding ■ ■ ■

Athletics Locker Rooms

- The boys locker rooms have inoperable fixtures, poor air quality, and lockers in disrepair ■
- Student privacy needs, including those of gender-expansive students, are not being met ■
- Insufficient dedicated facilities for visiting teams, coaches, or game officials ■

Gymnasiums

- Current gym space cannot meet the demand for physical education, athletics, and activities, necessitating late evening practices for multiple extracurriculars ■
- Dance groups and Drill Team do not have access to practice rooms with appropriate flooring to prevent injury ■ ■
- Most gyms have insufficient spectator seating ■



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Swimming Pools

- The current pools are in poor condition, and difficult to repair in a cost-effective manner ■
- The air quality in both pool areas is unacceptable ■
- The pools do not meet the current or expected future needs for Physical Education, aquatic sports, or community groups ■ ■ ■

Physical Therapy (Trainer) Rooms

- Training rooms are insufficient to meet current number of 8,000 annual student visits ■
- Female students report discomfort visiting stadium training room, because it is surrounded by boys locker rooms ■ ■

Tennis Courts

- Playing surfaces have deteriorated to the point that two of the courts are unusable ■
- Lack of windshields and adjacency to softball fields create periodic hazards for students ■ ■

Stadium

- The field has to accommodate five varsity teams, over 500 athletes, plus the 125-member marching band ■
- Interior spaces: locker rooms, officials rooms, and storage areas are in poor condition ■
- Entry and exit ways do not ADA compliant and are prone to overcrowding ■ ■

West Fields

- Field spaces are poorly drained, limiting usage following rainstorms ■
- Overlapping of softball fields plus proximity to other activities limits flexibility ■

Lake Street Field

- Utilized at full capacity, serving over 280 athletes and shared with community ■
- Track is not regulation size and or shape (has almost square corners) ■
- Spectator seating is not well positioned and is non-ADA compliant ■ ■

Wrestling Room

- Not accessible to persons with disabilities ■
- Leaks in ceiling and poor ventilation ■



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Research Completed

- Full inventory of 44 indoor and outdoor facilities and spaces used for physical education (PE), athletics, and clubs. Assessment included understanding current capacity and overall usage, current and future demand, and key issues/concerns for each individual space.
- Surveyed 175 current coaches, club sponsors, and PE teachers to understand overall satisfaction with current facilities in terms of student and spectator satisfaction, safety, and accessibility.
- Entire team took a comprehensive 3-hour walking tour of the campus (*many of us more than once!*), documenting impressions of facilities and space.
- Several members participated in site visits to peer schools New Trier, Deerfield, Lake Forest, Naperville Central, and Highland Park, to better understand how they use space.
- Reviewed current intergovernmental agreements with local community groups (e.g., Park District of Oak Park) to better understand current arrangements for shared use of space and facilities.
- Conducted an online literature review to better understand (1) future trends in athletics and (2) the impact of athletics and extracurricular activities on overall student achievement.