Poster Presentation P9

THE EFFECT OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON EARLY SCHOOL DROPOUT

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This study examined the relation between involvement in school-based extracurricular activities, particularly athletic involvement, and early school dropout. The Mahoney and Cairns (1997) model that shows that extracurricular involvement protects against early school dropout, especially among at-risk students, was tested in a large, middle class, predominantly white suburban sample. Assessments were completed for 501 8th grade students, 1,082 10th grade students, and 386 students at both levels. These students were also followed up at the 12th grade level only to assess school dropout status. Extracurricular activity data was collected from high school yearbooks. Logistic regression analyses showed that athletic involvement protected against early school dropout even after gender, attendance, achievement and antisocial behavior were controlled for. Subsequent analyses revealed that athletic involvement protected against early school dropout for both male and female students. Further analyses will assess the relation between extracurricular activities and early school dropout in high and low risk groups, as defined by achievement and antisocial behavior.