

Nerds and Freaks: A Theory of Student Culture and Norms

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By a two-to-one margin (60 to 28 percent), American parents say that "if forced to choose, they would prefer their sons or daughters to make C grades and be active in extracurricular activities rather than make A grades and not be active." Why do parents think it so important for their children to participate in extracurricular activities? Certainly, they are not expecting their child to make it into the National Football League or the National Basketball Association. They probably believe extracurricular activities teach teamwork, time management, self-discipline, and other skills that are important in later life. Those students who participate in sports during high school do spend more time doing homework and less time watching TV, are less likely to drop out of high school, are more likely to attend college, and earn 3 to 11 percent more as an adult. Controversy exists, however, about whether the association between sports and earnings reflects a causal relationship or a selection effect.