



EDUCATION MATTERS

FALL 2018

HHS activities: more than just fun and games

The Hawks' homecoming football game showcased nearly two thirds of the High School's 596-member student body—players, cheerleaders, band members and the student cheering section.

It's the type of participation Assistant Principal Josh Johnson likes to see. "But," he notes, "still one-third wasn't there."

Research shows that involvement in school activities promotes greater academic achievement for every type of learner.

That's why over the past two years HHS's counselors and administrators have focused on reaching out to disengaged students to help them find—and create—activities they want to pursue.

"If we can give a kid a reason to come to school, then we can create one more reason to stay. One more reason to stay gives us one more opportunity to teach them," Johnson says. "There is no reason why we can't get to 100 percent graduation."

HHS's graduation rate is already at a noteworthy 96 percent, and between 60 and 65 percent of HHS students have been involved in at least one activity over the past couple of years.

"I know there are a few kids who, if it wasn't for band, wouldn't be coming to school," says HHS band director Corey McEnry. He says music and other activities provide a place for students to succeed when academics are hard.



Participating in activities teaches many skills, including how to balance multiple commitments.

"I don't really think it matters what the activity is—athletics, band, mock trial or robotics," observes Beth Tugaw, HHS's athletic coordinator, ASB Leadership adviser and PE teacher. "They're part of something bigger than themselves, and that experience is very beneficial."

Student-athletes Olivia Beuselinck, Peyton Brammer, Garret Gundy and Aidan Mallory say their activities have taught them time management, self-discipline, perseverance and trust.

"It becomes not just school," says Aidan, a senior involved in football, wrestling and track. "It's a community."

For Band Council President Olivia Gaines, being part of band, Key Club, swim team and National Honor Society has taught her how to make friends with all types of people.

"I've learned I have to reach outside my circle and find people who I may never have been friends with before," she says. "By the end of the season, we're like a family."

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