

Homeschooling and extracurricular activities

Business



Like two spent boxers, struggling to dodge yet another blow from their bitter rival, advocates of homeschooling and traditional public schooling continue their endless and unproductive feud.

This fruitless battle leads to only two sad outcomes: more hostility between the adults involved, and the tragic loss of rich educational opportunities for the adolescent citizens trapped in the middle. Instead of continuing the feud where homeschooling families teach their children to fear and distrust all public school educators and most public school teachers ignorantly cling to their prejudiced stereotypes, would not it be better to find an alternative, win-win relationship between these educational enemies? Allowing homeschoolers to participate in all of a public school districts' sports, arts, and social functions would end the useless feud between homeschooling families and traditional public school educators benefiting both groups significantly, as well as their local communities. Mathematically, the greater the number of people that seek to participate in a group or team, the more selective the teachers, coaches, and directors can be when assembling the final lineup. Similar to a mall in which many stores compete to be the best, increased competition improves the overall quality. So, by permitting homeschoolers to try out for key positions in a school's extracurricular activities, the quality of student talent can only rise, thus leading to better and better results for the school districts.

But this is not the only way public schools can benefit from unchaining the doors to homeschoolers. Going back well over two hundred years, Ohio has a rich tradition of providing excellent and free education for all of its children. In AP U. S. History we recently learned about how Ohio's townships were

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originally developed and organized by the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 — a successful plan that for the most part is still followed to this day.

One of the greatest ideas of the Founding Fathers was to set aside some land for a school and a church, thus showing their desire to provide a strong education for every child. This spirit of free, universal education by our forefathers can be clearly seen in almost all public schools' mission statements. For example, Lake Local School's mission statement begins with, " The staff and community of Lake High School believe that every child is a unique and special individual who can learn. We believe it is our mission to serve as facilitators as we work to nurture and develop each student's potential." Therefore, if Lake is truly committed to nurturing and developing every child's potential, then by allowing all of the children within the district to participate in all the extracurricular activities can only aid the district in reaching its ultimate goals. In these tough economic times, with a double-dip recession looming on the horizon, school districts continue to encounter money problems.

School districts must pass levies to support their operations, and the community must help them reach this goal. Traditionally, parents of homeschoolers tend to feel little loyalty for their district, and they usually vote no on the levies because they foresee few benefits from supporting the levy. In a close election, opposition from the ever increasing number of homeschooling families can prove deadly for school districts attempts to pass a levy. Take for example the disappointing results of Lake Local Schools' attempted levy last year — a tax aimed at building a much needed, <https://assignbuster.com/homeschooling-and-extracurricular-activities/>

brand new high school. Though the district exerted its best effort, their supporters still came up only two hundred votes shy of passing the levy.

But what if all the homeschooling families within the district suddenly saw value in supporting the levy? This could create a powerful new ally for school districts, hundreds of voters willing to vote yes on school levies. Clearly then, allowing homeschooled children to join extracurricular activities could have long-term, significant benefits for the school district itself. But what about the homeschooled children? In order for this to be a win-win situation, the homeschooled students must feel like they are benefiting as well. Aside from the worn out stereotypes, there are actually many different motives for which people decide to homeschool. Some wish to escape bullies and gangs. Some wish to seek higher academic opportunities.

Some prefer the convenience of individual, online school. Some wish to schedule creatively to help them pursue the Olympic Dream or the PGA. Yet the most common and traditional motive to homeschool remains the parental concerns about atheism or concerns about public school teachers who push secular humanism, atheism, and radical liberalism. Legally, can the public school offer extracurricular activities to homeschoolers? Yes, the United States Supreme Court has for almost fifty years supported its Child Benefit Theory — a legal principle that allows public schools to use state funded equipment, personnel, and programs to directly support the safety and non-religious education of students attending private, religious schools. The key is that the money and the resources must benefit the children, not their parents, teachers, or the religious organization itself.

Thus allowing a homeschooled student to join the school football team, act in the fall play, or march with the band would clearly pass the test of the Child Benefit Principle. In conclusion, while it might be popular to cling to worn out stereotypes of homeschooling families, this feud is too old, too expensive, and too worthless to carry on any longer. In these times of economic turmoil, we as Americans need to band together and unite leaving behind the old win-lose arguments instead actively seeking win-win solutions that encourage collaboration. Just as people once said there was no place for black or blind students in a modern school, now let us break down another wall of bias and open the gyms, auditoriums, locker-rooms, and stadiums to all of a districts students, even those who happen to be homeschooled.