

Educational Athletics—A School Subject

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There is no subject in the curriculum of the junior and senior high school that demands the attention of school administrators so much as that of athletics. There are forty-two states with state high school athletic associations. In many of these states such as Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, practically every high school is a member of the athletic association. Their control is statewide, affecting every high school.

Millions of dollars are being spent on athletic fields, stadiums, and playgrounds. The junior high school of one middle-western city of 20,000 population has just completed a stadium costing \$200,000. An eastern city of half a million population has just finished a high-school stadium with a seating capacity of 14,000 at a cost of \$250,000. In one state high school basketball tournament there were 16,000 paid admissions last season, and the high school athletic association of that state has on hand a cash reserve of \$100,000.

School athletics cost money. The equipment and facilities are expensive. Trained leadership must be employed. In brief, here is a most engrossing school subject that affects vitally the whole school life and its morale, costing millions in equipment, facilities, administration, and leadership, yet we do not administer it on the same basis as other school subjects.

As educators we are handling most of the school subjects according to educational principle and procedure and our problems in control and management of these subjects have been almost solved. Yet this subject of athletics, fraught with dynamite for good or evil, and the cause of a multitude of school problems, we have for some reason handled differently. We have not given to it the same educational guidance and control we have to other school subjects. This is an educational paradox difficult to explain. Why don't we handle athletics as a legitimate part of the educational program for which we are responsible according to the best educational procedure and method?