

implementation programming is something that often is overlooked, and usually is created quickly with little formal discussion and strategic planning. Policy documents and desired outcomes must serve a purpose, and districts need to continue to take into account stakeholder input as internal and external conditions change and evolve.

Evaluation of Policies

The last research question within this study focused on identifying what criterion school districts utilize when evaluating the success of pay to participate programs based on the outlined goals. This research question aligned directly with the fifth stage of Kraft and Furlong's (2015) policy process model regarding policy and program evaluation, and the overall "measurement and assessment of policy and program effects, including success or failure" (Table 3-1, p. 86). When I initially started this study, the evaluation component was the piece I was most excited about uncovering and describing further, and I had hoped to truly deliver some impactful data to help develop a supporting document outline that could be provided to other districts. This part unfortunately was where I was the most disappointed, as three of the five districts did not have a documented evaluation process, or specific criterion they utilized to analyze the success of the program. Of the five districts that I studied, one athletic administrator had not been there during a year end process yet, so he was unaware of the districts evaluation procedures, and did not have a definition of success from a district policy standpoint, other than to help offset costs. Two districts did not have an evaluation process, and stated that any evaluation would be completed by the treasurer in regards to overall success. When I tried to connect this statement with their overarching goal of recouping some of the costs of athletic operations, there was no process that could be strategically outlined to decide whether or not the policy was a success, which ultimately lead me to believe that the policy would just continue the way it was until the

treasurer gave a negative financial forecast, and the superintendent would tell the athletic administrator they needed to cut their budget further, resulting in a potentially higher fee. Even in positive financial times, without an evaluation process, a pay to participate fee most likely will remain a constant in the district. As witnessed within the study, all districts stated they had passed their levy which was the underlying theme for why the fee was developed, but they continued to maintain the fee even after stating they were financially sound as a district over a certain number of years. If the goal was to assist during times of financial distress or to help pass a levy, and that occurred, then reasoning for continued utilization needs to be understood by all involved through consistent, transparent evaluations and discussion.

Additionally, District 100 did not have a structured, outlined year end evaluation process, and was not required to present any formal evaluation overview to the board of education, but did work directly with an established athletic council that would discuss the policy and make recommendations for any changes. The athletic council was made up of the district administrators, as well as school board members, so the process at least felt as if they were having a sound, reflective discussion surrounding the overall policy, and strategic next steps. It is interesting to note that the only two districts that identified an evaluation process, no matter how unstructured, deposited at least a partial amount of their funds directly into the athletic accounts.

District 395 continued to be unique as he provided financial analysis documents immediately that he created for evaluation and manages himself. Due to his financial and accounting background, he developed a tracking and analysis process during the inception of the policy. He had a pie chart of all expenditures, all revenues, as well as sport participation broken down with percentages attached to each level, including overall income generated. The sheer

school funding, and the consistent need for additional revenue, as well as increased costs of athletic operations, the experience necessary for these increased financial analysis and reporting job duties is an important consideration in preparation for any potential athletic administrator. Key revenue growth opportunities such as corporate sponsorship development, marketing activations, contract negotiations, and nontraditional revenue program development are becoming increasingly necessary to explore and assist in not only helping maintain current district programming, but also to provide increased expansion and a level of quality expected by districts, especially those that are being asked to pay in the form of participation fees.

The pathway for most athletic administrators previously had been through teaching and coaching, and while valid and important, may not have provided ample experience in the financial, marketing, and policy development realms to tackle this increasingly integral part of the position. Pilot study data revealed that 51% of athletic administrators in Ohio during the 2014-2015 school year had less than five years' total experience, and 34% less than three years' experience (OHSAA & Grant, 2015). As more athletic administrators retire, or move into different roles vacating positions, it is important for districts to consider the financial educational background of potential candidates, and the experience they have with policy development, business development, and the overall understanding of school finance. Unless athletic administrators pursue an administrative license and their program of choice integrates a school finance course, most undergraduate education programs do not prepare students for the financial side of athletic operations.

Lastly, when a school district implements a fee for any activity, whether it be extra-curricular or co-curricular, they are essentially placing a door that must be unlocked by the student and their family in order to participate. From an athletic perspective, as stated in

research by C.S. Mott-Children's Hospital, 14% of parents whose children did not participate in school sponsored athletics cited cost as the reason for non-participation (2016). They also found that the average national cost per sport for the 61% of students who paid a fee was \$139, increasing nearly \$40 in just under 4 years (2016). This barrier, whether it is necessary to maintain athletic programs or not, is the initial key element to a student athlete participating as part of a district athletic team, as well as having the opportunity to receive many of the aforementioned benefits of sport participation discussed in the previous chapters. Ultimately, discussions and data gathering within districts regarding their pay to participate policies and fees needs to be plentiful, and districts must work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders regarding the development, implementation, and evaluation of potential, or currently utilized pay to participate policies to develop a clear definition of success to ensure their policies are operating in the best interest of their students and district.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several recommendations can be made regarding further research in the area of pay to participate policies utilized for extracurricular athletic programs. First, research should be conducted considering perceptions of pay to participate policies of residents and other stakeholders within one specific district. Initiating a mixed methods approach surveying district employees, parents, students, and board members would yield interesting and impactful results. Because school districts are operated through local control, and rely on their community for funding and support, it is important for the communication and understanding surrounding pay to participate policies, and the overall funding of athletic operations be transparent, clearly communicated, and critically analyzed. Voices from within the community population need to be continuously heard to understand the current political and economic climate that may impact

the policy formulation and implementation. This case study approach could also be presented with a focus on a specific outlier typology or model, such as where districts take the overall costs to administer a sport, and divide it by the number of participants in that sport, leading to a different cost for each sport with routinely high variations.

Another area of additional study would be to analyze school districts that have utilized the threat of pay to participate policy implementation, or cutting of sports entirely during levy campaigns, and the resulting outcomes of those levies. It would be interesting to describe the outcomes of the levy campaigns with specific consideration of a pay to participate threat or sport cancellation, as well as the length of time it may have taken to gain community approval, and whether the threat of pay to participate implementation or athletic discontinuation was utilized during previous levy campaigns. Based upon the cases within this study, all five stated the policies were implemented during times of financial distress, with three specifically articulating the reason for development being levy failures.

Research could also analyze the environment of support programming specifically focused on assisting in combatting student athlete pay to participate fees, and the structure that they employ. For example, after the study I conducted with the OHSAA, there were numerous media outlets that shared information due to Secretary of State John Husted and Senator Cliff Hite discussing pay to participate policies and the potential of legislation controlling their usage. Senator Hite also held traveling discussions in numerous districts throughout the state and asked me to speak at one of the events. I was contacted this past year by Right to Win (www.righttowin.org), a nonprofit organization based out of New York City specifically focused on helping fund students pay to participate policies with a target focus on Ohio schools. After having numerous calls with the founder and other personnel, their structure of financial

distribution was unique as they required each student who applied to complete tasks, one which required them to develop an academic goal. Their goal would become their contract, and Right to Win would provide the athletic department directly with the funds to cover the pay to participate fee. If the student athlete met their academic goal, they would automatically be eligible for funding the following year. Other programs are available through national corporate entities such as the Meijer rewards program, Kroger rewards program, and the Sports Matter program by Dicks Sporting Goods (<http://www.sportsmatter.com/>), as well as through local nonprofit organizations such as the Help All Kids Play Foundation (<http://www.helpallkidsplay.org>) which aims to serve students with funding need in seven specific counties within the Central Ohio region. Foundations are also present throughout the United States, such as the Kids in The Game Organization which serves the state of Oregon. This type of research focus might help bring light to the environment of assistance, and provide awareness to programs that students and families can utilize to assist with pay to participate fee costs.

Additional areas of research would also include completing in depth case studies of school districts that have chosen to incrementally cut, or fully discontinue pay to participate policies, describing their policy analysis and evaluation process, as well as perceptions of board members and school administrators. Recently, Grandview Heights eliminated their fees for sports, as well as arts and lab workbooks for the 2016-2017. Westerville Schools along with New Albany Plain Schools also reduced their fees by \$120 and \$200 respectively (Gilchrist, 2016). It is interesting, a stakeholder from Grandview Heights was attending The Ohio State University Sport and Society Initiative panel discussion where I had the opportunity to present last spring, and they asked a question regarding where should they start. My response, and my

sincere belief is that every district administrator as well as board member should be fully aware of the exact amount of money needed to cover their athletic operations, and the amount they are currently bringing in with their pay to participate policies. This information should also be extremely easily to access on the district websites, and provided in documents sent to the stakeholders within the community. In the article by Gilchrist (2016), a Grandview Heights board member was interviewed stating that their fee elimination “is about public access and public education” and that “sports, band, and other activities are an essential education experience and that fees are a barrier for working families” (Para. 5)

Along those same lines of inquiry, a research study could be conducted surveying school board members of districts that implement pay to participate policies focusing on uncovering their views of pay to participate policies, and how they fit within their respective districts. as well as describing the ways in which they evaluate their policies and define success. Ultimately, it would be extremely interesting school board member’s beliefs in regards to why a policy should or should not be in place. Getting to the root of the motivations and development agendas are important for further discussion and analysis for all districts, as well as state governing entities.

Conclusion

The findings from this multiple case study analysis provide contextual evidence for districts to utilize in furthering discussions regarding the development, implementation, and evaluation processes of their own current, or future pay to participate policies. I believe it also helps set the stage regarding the importance of continuously analyzing pay to participate policies through the lens of the policy process model, and taking a deeper look into whether or not there are intentional or unintentional barriers being placed upon students that may negatively impact their growth and future opportunities. If districts do not clearly understand the why, what, and

how behind their pay to participate policies, they need to develop a structure to gain a deeper meaning of the purpose, process, and impact of their interscholastic athletic fees.

It is time for districts and the states to clearly identify what the definition of a free and appropriate education is, and where athletics falls within that, providing clear documentation and sound evidence moving forward on how a pay to participate policy fits into, and aligns with the districts overall mission, vision, values, and strategic plan. Roth (2003) stated that “if the fundamental task of the school is to prepare children for life, the curriculum must be as wide as life itself” (p. 739), and it is important for districts to discuss the overall impact athletics has on student development and long term success, and where it fits within their educational offerings. If a pay to participate policy is a necessity within a district, then it is the responsibility of the athletic administrator, school administrators, and school board to fully understand every component of its development, implementation, and evaluation to ensure it provides the students with the most opportunities to develop.

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APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL



INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date:

Time of Interview:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

_____, I will start the audio-recording now. Do I have your permission to audio-record our conversation?

I am a doctoral student at Bowling Green State University, and am conducting research focused on the development, implementation, and evaluation of interscholastic athletic pay to participate policies, and how specific districts define success of these policies.

I am requesting your participation in this culminating dissertation, as the final requirement to obtain the Degree of Doctor of Education. I am hoping that the results of this study will inform others about pay to participate policy development, implementation, and evaluation methods and procedures, as well as consider further how success is defined. There is no direct benefit to you from participating in this study.

The research will consist of an analysis of relevant documents related to the pay to participate policy, the athletic department, as well as the school district, coupled with interviews of the respective district athletic administrators. The data collected will provide a better understanding of the intricacies to policy development, implementation, and evaluation of pay to participate policies, as well as specific definitions of success.

I will protect the identities of participants through the use of pseudonyms in this and any future publications or presentations. Participants should understand that they may be quoted directly but that their names will not be used in any part of the written report. All data will be

stored in a secure location and will be destroyed after three years. Please understand that you may withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice.

Interview Questions: (Structured Questionnaire)

A. Focus #1: Development

1. What factors contributed to the pay to participate policy development?
 1. What problem is / was faced?
 2. What alternatives, if any, were considered in dealing with the problem?
2. When the pay to participate policy discussion began, what steps were taken to develop the pay to participate policy, and ultimately put this on the board agenda?
3. Why / How did _____ school district decide to implement the specific consistent fee based type of pay to participate structure?
4. What, if any, were/are the specific goals of the pay to participate policy at _____ school district?
5. How did the school district gain support for the policy approval / implementation?

B. Focus #2: Implementation

1. What resources were / are required for implementation?
2. What concerns have been raised in regards to the way in which the policy is implemented
3. Are there any groups within the school or district that help pay or defray the costs of the fee for students?
4. How is the policy communicated with the school & district community / stakeholders?

C. Category #3: Evaluation

1. How is the pay to participate policy evaluated?
2. Who is part of the evaluation, and how often does it occur?
3. Does the school board discuss the policy each year at a school board meeting, and if so, has that discussion changed since the policy has been implemented?
4. Has an evaluation ever caused the pay to participate fee to be discontinued? If so, why?

Interview Questions: (Unstructured Questionnaire)

A. Background / Ice Breaker

1. Tell me a little about the athletic program at _____ High School.
 - i. Potential probe areas
 1. Mission, Vision, Values
 2. # of sports and participants
 3. Financial status

B. Focus #1: Development

1. Tell me a little about the pay to participate policy at _____ High School?
 - i. Probing / Clarifications:
 1. Typology – why chosen
 2. Process
 3. Policy type
 4. Positives / Negative experiences
2. What factors contributed to the policy's development?
 - i. Probe areas:
 1. What problem is / was faced?
 - a. What alternatives, if any, were considered in dealing with the problem?
 2. How did that develop?
 3. What were the major causes?
 - a. How were the causes affected by the policy action?
 4. Areas of concern?
 5. Specific constituents involved?
3. What, if any, are the specific goals of the pay to participate policy at _____ school district?
4. How were equity concerns addressed in the development of the policy?

C. Focus #2: Implementation

1. Tell me about how the pay to participate policy is implemented at _____ school district?
 - i. Clarifications: (questions developed further from the documents)
 1. Payment Schedules
 2. Refunds
 3. Waivers / Scholarships
 4. Handling of fees
 5. Communication with students & parents
2. What efficiencies or inefficiencies do you see in the implementation processes?
 - i. Probe areas: (Feedback)
 1. From the athletic administration perspective?
 - a. Administrative concerns
 - b. Feasibility
 2. Feedback from coaches, parents, community members?
 - ii. Least cost for a given benefit or largest benefit for a given cost?

D. Category #3: Evaluation

1. Tell me about how the pay to participate policy is evaluated at _____ High School?
2. What methods / procedures are utilized to evaluate the pay to participate policy?
 - i. Participation rates?
 - ii. Amount of income generated?
 - iii. Expenses covered?
3. Has an evaluation ever caused the pay to participate fee to be discontinued?
 - i. Why?
 - ii. Who were the main opponents?
 - iii. What caused it to be unsuccessful?

APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT LETTER



Informed Consent Form – Athletic Administrators

Investigator: Scott S. Grant
Doctoral Student, Leadership Studies

Phone: 419-306-3002

NAME OF STUDY: INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PAY TO PARTICIPATE POLICIES: A CASE STUDY OF OHIO HIGH SCHOOLS

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The primary purpose of this study is to investigate further pay to participate policies within the state of Ohio utilizing a multiple case study analysis, with a specific focus surrounding policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Utilizing data from a 2015 Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) study on pay to participate policies, school district pay to participate policy design can be divided into seven distinct types that are currently being implemented throughout the state. Of the 822 OHSAA member, 58% responded with a fully completed survey. From the data collected regarding the actual policy type, one main typology where student athletes are charged a fee for each sport they choose to participate in, but the fee is the same for every sport, was utilized by 152 districts statewide accounting for 63% of the respondents that had an implemented pay to participate fee policy. Evaluation measures are not currently publicly available for many districts, and although this type of policy is visible and prevalent throughout the country, very little research regarding factors that lead to the development, implementation, and assessment of policy is available. As a result of this study, pay to participate policies will be analyzed and described through an analysis of the policy itself, as well as through interviews with district athletic administrators and/or individuals with policy knowledge. The goal is to describe the development, implementation, and assessment policies and procedures further, which may be of use to school officials who currently have, or are considering a pay to participate policy in their district. This study will fill the void currently present in this research environment.

POPULATION: Adult (18 or older)

SELECTION: You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Scott S. Grant, doctoral candidate from the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio. The results of this research will contribute to the researcher's doctoral dissertation. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an athletic administrator at an Ohio High School Athletic Association member school that currently implements a consistent fee amount pay to participate policy.

PROCEDURES: If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will do the following things:

- 1) You will participate in an interview related to your school districts pay to participate policy, which will focus on the development, implementation, evaluation methods and procedures, as well as the definition of success of the specific policy. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and will take place in the privacy of an office designated by you at your districts location. With your permission, the interview will be digitally-audio recorded. If you object to being audio recorded, the researcher will take hand written notes.
- 2) Provide any pertinent documents regarding the district pay to participate policy.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY: You may be uncomfortable answering questions about the topic of pay to participate policies specific to your district. All information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential, and will only be disclosed with the subject's permission. The audio recorded interviews conducted will be strictly for researcher's use, and after each interview is transcribed, a copy of the transcription will be provided to the interviewee. Pseudonyms will be utilized for all transcripts and documentation, to provide an additional layer of confidentiality. The interviewees will be provided the opportunity to edit the interview transcripts so as to reflect their intended responses, and the audio recordings will be housed in a locked safe for the duration of three years, after which

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APPENDIX C. PAY TO PARTICIPATE POLICY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Pay to Participate Policy Discussion Guide – Scott Grant (2017)

DEVELOPMENT	OUTCOMES
<p>Internal Analysis & Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do we currently have, or why are we considering a pay to participate policy? What are our measurable GOALS? • When and how did the policy begin? What was the problem & contributing factors? Is that problem still present? What data do we have to support this? • How much does it cost to operate our athletic department as a whole? How is this communicated to our stakeholders? • What percentage of our overall district budget does this account for? How much does each sport individually cost to operate? • How many participants do we have in each sport? Has this increased or decreased over the past few years? • What is our rate of participation for one sport, two sport, and three sport athletes? Has, or will this be impacted based upon our policy? • How much are students "required" to pay for additional components of participation on each team? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples – camps, spirit wear, fundraisers, team shoes, necessary equipment – What's the base number taking into account all other school fees? <p>Internal Operations & Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What policy type is, or will best serve our district & help achieve our GOALS? • What types are other districts using? Have we discussed their experiences? What are potential outcomes for using other types? • Will, or do, we include any financial assistance programs? What resources will, or do we need to implement these? What will, or do those resources cost us? • How do, or will we communicate these financial assistance programs to our stakeholders? • Who manages, or will manage, the pay to participate policy operationally? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, Collection of Fees, Implementation of Financial Assistance Programs (if applicable), Refunds, Questions, Financial Analysis, Overall Evaluation • How is, or will this process be communicated? What do our documents currently say? What documents will need created, and how do we make sure they are helpful to internal and external stakeholders, and not creating unintentional barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we receive feedback from community members? • How is, or will this policy be evaluated: By when, by whom, and what will be produced from the evaluation? How is, or will that be communicated to district stakeholders? • <i>How is, or will success be evaluated?</i> 	<p>STRATEGIC GOALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the goals we would like the pay to participate policy to achieve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Need to be measurable – example, generate \$20,000; Pay for transportation of all athletic teams at a cost of ?) • Perception of Fiscal Responsibility – How will you measure? <p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear communication of all goals • History / Purpose / Intent / Accessibility • Overview of WHY & Implementation • Administrators / AD / Coaches – Education & understanding – Goals & Message <p>RESOURCES & IMPACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear identification of resources & costs needed to implement & evaluate policy. • Clear identification of impact on athletic administrators role, and need for professional development regarding policy process & financial analysis for management. <p>DEFINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How your district will be transparent regarding all components of the policy development, implementation, and evaluation, as well as take into account stakeholder input. • Success in regards to a pay to participate policy. • Value of athletics & where it fits within your district. • How the goals and ultimate reason why your district has implemented a fee will be articulated to your internal and external stakeholders?
<p>IMPLEMENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are, or will the fees be deposited? How is, or will be money spent? • How is, or will this be communicated transparently to district stakeholders? • Do the documents state processes that are in the best interest of our stakeholders and athletic administrator – deadlines, requirements, waiver programs, etc. • What are the major issues that our athletic administrator & stakeholders sees with the implementation procedures concerning equity, effectiveness, and overall efficiency? • Is it ok for an athletic administrator to work with students on case by case basis? Does the document & policy provide flexibility & safety? • Where will our policy documents be housed? How will we communicate our policy, as well as the reasoning to our stakeholders? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online, in person at OHSAA meetings, through community discussions? • How are we making sure everyone is on the same page regarding why we have it, where the money will go, and what it will be used for? • What resources will be need for implementation? What will these resources cost? 	<p>Sources: Drawn from Michael E. Kraft & Scott R. Furlong, <i>Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives</i>, 5th ed. (CQ Press / Sage Publishing).</p>
<p>EVALUATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have a formal evaluation process set in place? • By what date will this evaluation take place? • Who will be part of this evaluation? • What will be produced to provide to the internal and stakeholders to ensure they understand the outcomes of the policy for that calendar year? • By what time will be make a decision regarding the follow year? <p>OVERALL & Cycle Restart</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did we achieve our goals for the policy? • Was our policy a success? • What do we need to change for next year? • Revisit Development components – GOALS, participation rates, costs of additional fees for participation in each sport (intended for the next year), etc. 	