

Exploiting a Passion for Athletics to Motivate Scholarship

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The general point of this essay is to argue that there are a lot of viable replacements for the “Athletics” in the title. That is, there are a lot of subject themes that, as vehicles for delivering basic and advanced instruction, can significantly increase student engagement in academics. And since many of the subject themes that will increase some students’ engagement in academics will bore other students, subject themed schools have to be schools of choice. Attendance zoned, traditional public schools cannot have a single subject theme, or even just a few.

I have already argued that a [‘sports’ themed school](#) could succeed as a school of choice in entrepreneur-friendly school systems, which means with price decontrol and potential for profit, which would require breaking public schools’ monopoly on taxpayer funding. So, two secondary objectives of this essay are to differentiate ‘sports’ and ‘athletics’ themed schools, and to provide another dose of entrepreneurial adrenaline to my readers.

Another reason I chose the ‘athletics’ theme is that inter-school athletic competition is an especially popular aspect of the current system. Fear that a dynamic system of schools of choice as diverse as our children – my repeated description of what we need from a school system – might contain a lot less inter-school athletic competition than the current system might create some significant opposition to the kind of school system transformation I’ve argued we need. Athletics’ popularity also seems to make it one of the largest subject theme niches; one of the more profitable subject themes until copycat entrepreneur market entry drives tuition levels down to the profit rate that is the norm for other schools.

A ‘sports’ theme school does not necessarily involve its students in athletic competition, though an intramural option is very likely to be attractive for a significant number of the children

passionate about sports. An 'athletics' theme school is about competition and planning for competition. All of the academic basics can be taught as part of the process of preparing to participate in team sports or individual sports, and from dissecting the reasons for the outcomes of competition. There is rulemaking and enforcement. There is the science and math involved in training and nutrition, and in discouraging use of 'bad' drugs like steroids. How about the issues of motivating team performance; writing and rhetoric? Each child could be required to develop and deliver some motivational speeches.