

# Study: Participation in extracurricular activities and high school completion among off-reserve First Nations people, 2012

*Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Wednesday, May 13, 2015*

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First Nations male and female students living off reserve are more likely to complete high school when they participate in certain weekly extracurricular activities.

A new study, based on the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, found that many First Nations people aged 18 to 24 living off reserve were involved in weekly extracurricular activities during their last year of high school—and that doing so was positively correlated with high school completion by age 18.

Weekly participation in sport activities was the most common extracurricular activity among First Nations youth, as it was reported by 54% of males and 40% of females.

Another common extracurricular activity was weekly participation in groups or clubs, which was reported by 14% of First Nations males and 24% of First Nations females.

Also, about one-quarter of First Nations male and female students living off reserve reported weekly participation in art activities.

## **Extracurricular activities are associated with high school completion**

In 2012, 59% of First Nations people aged 18 to 24 living off reserve had completed high school by age 18. The remaining respondents completed high school at a later age (12%) or left school before finishing (29%).

Participation in extracurricular activities was associated with an increased probability of completing high school by age 18 among off-reserve First Nations people.

For example, off-reserve First Nations males aged 18 to 24 who participated in sport activities on a weekly basis had a 68% probability of finishing high school by age 18, compared with 55% among those who reported less-than-weekly participation.

As well, First Nations males who participated in art activities on a weekly basis had a 74% probability of finishing high school, compared with 58% of those who reported less-than-weekly participation.

Among First Nations females aged 18 to 24, those who participated in clubs or groups on a weekly basis had a 77% probability of completing high school by age 18, compared with 58% of those who reported less-than-weekly participation.

The results above take into account other academic, family, school and peer characteristics that may have an impact on the high school completion of First Nations people living off reserve.

## **Other factors associated with high school completion among First Nations people**

In addition to extracurricular activities, other factors were also associated with high school completion by age 18 among off-reserve First Nations youth.

For example, off-reserve First Nations males and females aged 18 to 24 who reported that their grade average in the last year of school was mostly A or B had a 7 in 10 chance of completing high school by age 18.

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This compared with 40% among First Nations females and 51% among First Nations males who reported C or below as their overall grade average.

At the family level, both First Nations males and females who had a mother with at least a high school education were more likely to complete high school than those whose mother was not a high school graduate.

Living with at least one family member on a full-time basis in the last year of school was also associated with higher high school completion rates among First Nations females. For First Nations males, having a sibling who dropped out was associated with lower completion rates.

Peer and school characteristics were also important. For instance, First Nations males whose friends had low educational aspirations and engaged in high-risk behaviours were less likely to have completed high school. First Nations females, in turn, who reported a 'positive school environment' were more likely to have completed high school by age 18.

Another factor measured by the survey was family history of residential school attendance. Previous research has suggested that the residential school system may have affected not only those who attended such schools, but also subsequent generations.

The probability of completing high school by age 18 among First Nations people who stated that their family had a residential school history was 54% among males and 57% among females.

This compared with 69% of off-reserve First Nations males and 76% of females who did not have such a family history.

#### Note to readers

*The Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) is a national survey on the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal Peoples (First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit) aged six years and older. The 2012 APS represents the fourth cycle of the survey and focuses on issues related to education, employment and health.*

*For the purposes of this study, **extracurricular activity participation** is separated into three different categories: sports; arts, drama or music; and clubs or groups. These activities include those organized by the school, outside school, or both. More specifically, this study focuses on the frequency of participation in each of these activities, comparing those who reported weekly participation (once per week or more) with those who reported less-than-weekly participation (or non-participation). Multivariate techniques were used to examine the relationship between high school completion by age 18 and other factors including participation in extracurricular activities.*

*Readers should note, however, that the results shown are associations between variables, and should not be interpreted as cause and effect relationships.*

#### Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3250](#).

The article "Participation in extracurricular activities and high school completion among off-reserve First Nations people," which is part of *Insights on Canadian Society* ([75-006-X](#)), is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publication*.

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