

# School Sport Participation under Two School Sport Policies: Comparisons by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Socioeconomic Status

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# Study Background

- School-based sport remains one of the most effective ways to facilitate PA among adolescents. McKenzie & Kahan, 2008
- Diminishing opportunities to achieve recommended PA through school sports. Sallis & Glanz, 2006
- Time constraints, school funding reductions, increased competition with various institutional academic demands. Carrel et al., 2005





# Study Background

- Traditional school sports dominated by competitive interscholastic athletics model. Lee, Burgeson, Fulton, & Spain, 2007
- Interscholastic sports have been criticized for perpetuating racial and gender segregation. Coakley, 2004; Hannon, Soohoo, Reel & Ratliffe, 2009
- More inclusive policies/programs such as intramurals recommended by the CDC. Koplan et al., 2005
- Little is known about sport participation in schools that offer intramural sports.





# Study Purpose

- Sport participation among middle school students
- Variations in sport participation between intramural & interscholastic sport schools;
- Variations in sport participation by Race, Gender, and SES
- Variations in participation by type of sport, sport delivery model, Race, Gender, and SES .

# Methods

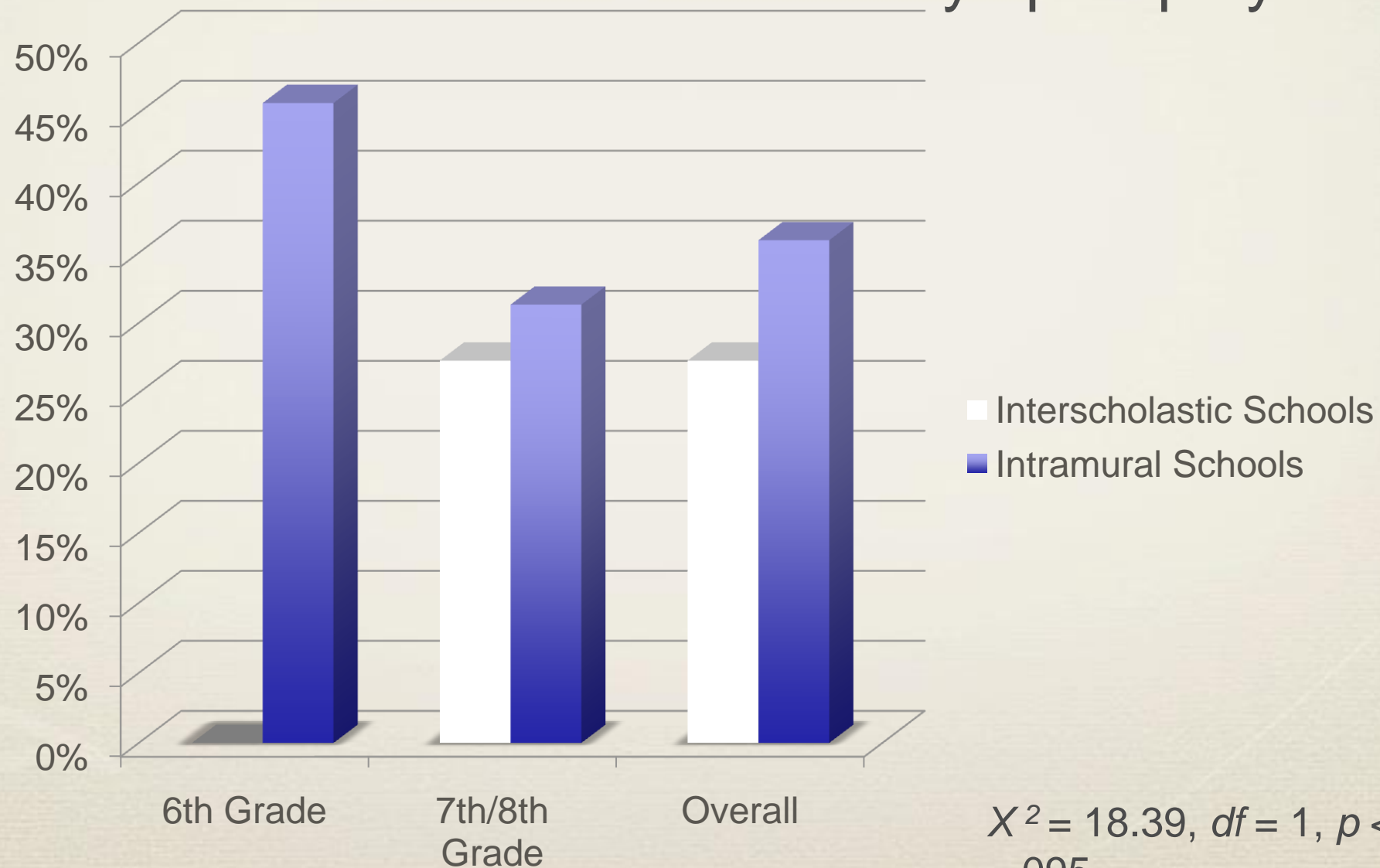
- Online survey administered at four public middle schools.
- Two schools only offered intramural sports to all students – 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Two schools only offered interscholastic sports – participation restricted to 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade only.
- n=2,582 (89.8% response rate).
- Students were asked to indicate sport participation during the school year, in and out-of-school sports, grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity.



# Results

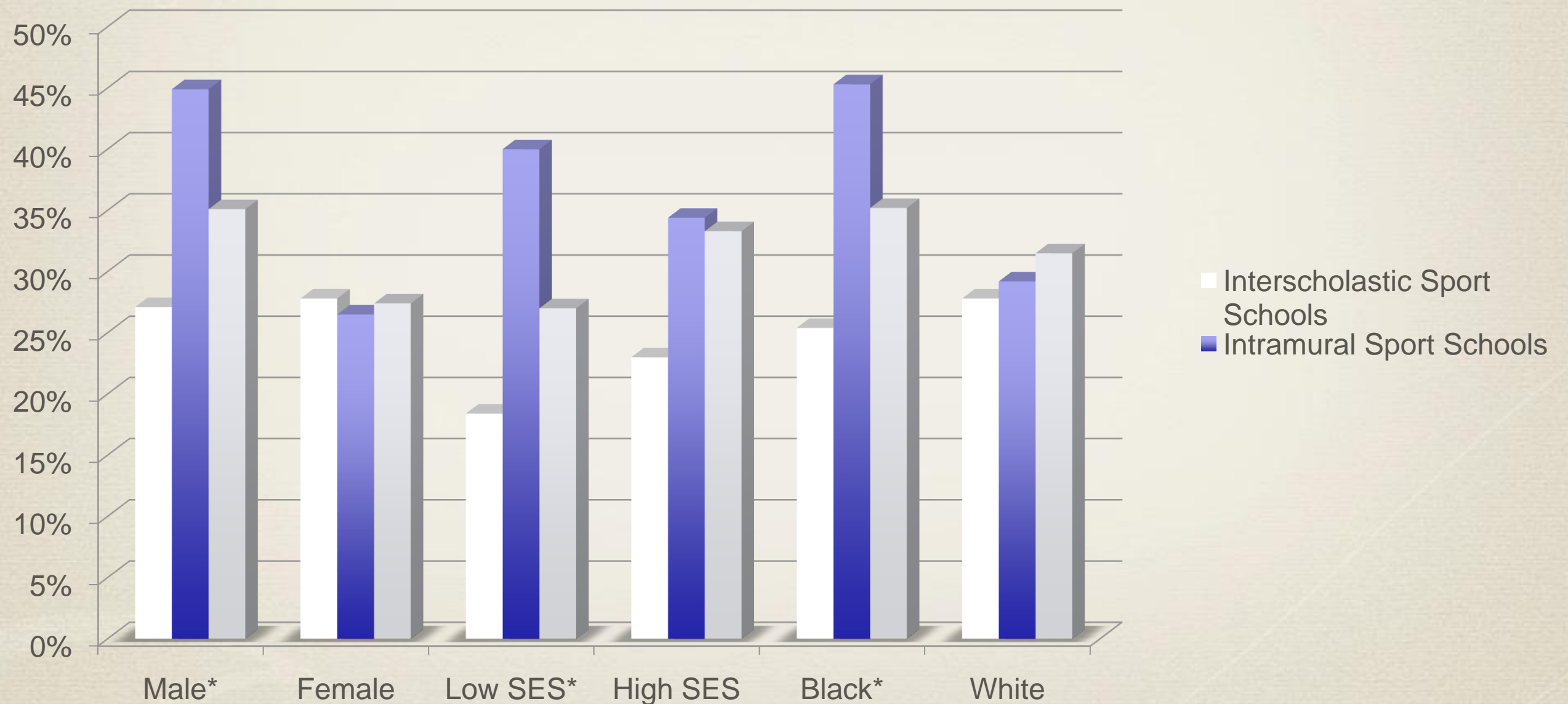
## Overall Sport Participation

- Across all four schools 31% of students played school sports.
- No difference in amount of community sport played.



# Results

- Gender, Race/Ethnicity, SES Comparisons

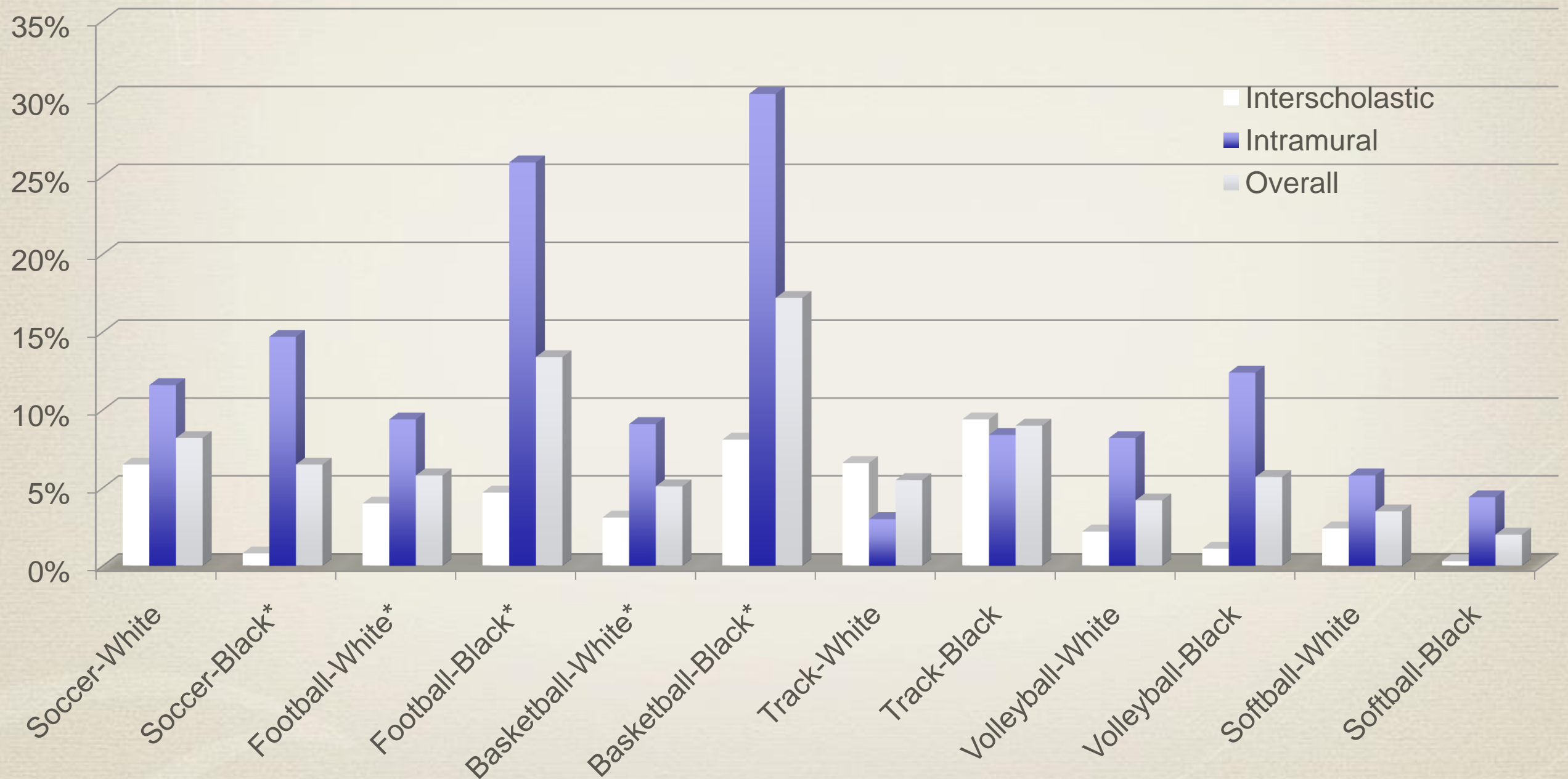


\*  $p < .001$ , significant difference between intramural and interscholastic sport schools



# Results

- Participation by Sport



\*  $p < .001$ , significant difference between intramural and interscholastic sport schools



# Summary of Findings

- More students played school sports at intramural schools.
- No difference (intramural vs. interscholastic) in the number of girls participating school sports.
- More boys play sports at intramural schools.
- More students from low income households played sports at intramural schools (no difference with high income).
- Black students at intramural schools were more likely to play sports (no difference with White students)

# Summary of Findings

- Black students at intramural schools were more likely to play football and basketball than Black students at interscholastic schools.
- Black students were twice as likely to play sports at intramural schools than White students (controlling for gender & SES).
- Girls are half as likely to play sports at intramural schools than girls at Interscholastic schools.



# Conclusions

- Differences in overall school sport participation may be partially due to state policy restricting 6<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Even if 6<sup>th</sup> graders play, limited sports and roster size would still prohibit more participation .
- Intramurals may encourage participation among low income & Black students
- Boys dominate participation at intramural sports schools.
  - Gender specific intramural sports may be an effective alternative.



Intramural sports as a complement to, or in replacement of interscholastic sports may encourage participation among a larger segment of the population.

Especially children from low income or racial minority families.