

## School Spirit Check-In: Interviews and an Opinion Poll for *You*

By Maddy Grant

Most students want to go to a school where they can get an amazing education *and* experience fun school activities and strong school spirit. Below are interviews with a sampling of students and with our Athletic Director about school spirit at Altamont. Below that is a short, anonymous opinion poll where you can share your thoughts.

### Interviews

#### **Aubrey Sanders, junior, varsity baseball player**

##### **What's your honest opinion about Altamont school spirit?**

"School Spirit at Altamont is a complicated issue. With being a smaller school, there is a large sense of community at Altamont. Most students are very close with one another, and I feel like there is a strong sense of shared identity at Altamont. In terms of manifesting that school spirit, there definitely could be some improvement. Most people at Altamont don't consistently wear school colors or attend a lot of school events ... [Unlike now], when [boys] basketball was advancing to state last year, I felt like school spirit was at an all-time high.



##### **How do you feel about game attendance?**

"... Attendance isn't bad in my opinion. Considering how small our school is, 20 to 25 students at a game is not bad."

##### **Do you wish you could attend more school games?**

"Yeah, I wish I did attend more games, but it's difficult to choose between studying and going to support my friends. Since I and many students at Altamont prioritize academics over athletics, it's difficult to attend games when I have things to do for school."

##### **Given that, how do you feel about the Altamont academic workload?**

"I believe that the academic workload at Altamont is not bad. I do not struggle to finish my homework or study in between practices and games. Also, since Altamont is a place that focuses a lot on academics, I don't think it would make sense to reduce the academic workload for a student solely because they play sports. Having to balance school with sports and other activities has helped me develop good time management skills for the future."

##### **What do you think would encourage more students to participate in school events?**

"I think that implementing incentives for students to come attend events (merch) and advertising games more would help increase participation."

**Do you have an idea how to raise school spirit that doesn't involve attending games?**

"We used to do this in the past, but posting the results of games on Blackbaud the next day helped raise a lot of awareness. Also, we could host more spirit weeks," have banners for sports, and give gold/white points for attending any school event."

**Which option sounds best to you: halftime shows, special game-day photos of fans for social media, "Player of the Week," or more frequent spirit or dress-up days?** "Player of the Week!"

**Greyson Horton, sophomore, varsity basketball player**

**What's your honest opinion about Altamont school spirit?**

"I feel like it could be better, but also, we're not winning a whole bunch of games, so it's tough for everybody to show up. For the good games, we're all there, but it could be better."

**What do you think would encourage more students to participate in school events?**

"It would start with us winning more games."

**Do you have any ideas on how to raise school spirit that don't involve athletic games?**

"Raising the school spirit can also start with [Homecoming costume] themes people want to participate in and how they show their ability to dress out."

**Which option sounds best to you: halftime shows, special game-day photos of fans for social media, "Player of the Week," or more frequent spirit or dress-up days?**

"I feel like all of them are really important but mostly ... I wouldn't spotlight one player because it's really a team effort. So, I think halftime shows .. we would get [people taking shots from the] halfcourt line. If you win, you win like a t-shirt or something."

**Lizzy Lee, sophomore, club (non-school affiliated) volleyball player**

**What's your honest opinion on Altamont school spirit?**

"I think it's really lacking ... [but] I think we have the potential to do some great stuff and have great spirit..."

**How do you feel about sports attendance?**

"I think it's kind of bad unless it's like a homecoming game, but I think the games that have good attendance are the ones with themes."

**Do you wish you could attend more school games?**

"Yes."

**What do you think would encourage more students to participate in or attend school events?**

"Themes for games, prizes, and if [students'] friends are going, then they're going to want to go."

**Do you have any other ideas of how to raise school spirit?**

"Talking about the games on the morning report – we don't do that anymore. We don't talk about recaps of high scores and stuff like that ... We [also] need to do posters around the school of players."

**Kelsei Manley, freshman, track and field**

**What's your honest opinion about Altamont school spirit?**

"Honestly ... the dress-up days are usually boring, and we don't have pep rallies or spirit weeks very often."

**How do you feel about the sports attendance?**

"I think pretty good, but more people should come to *girls'* games."

**Do you wish you could attend more school games?**

"Yes, but often times there's a lot of homework."

**How do you feel about the Altamont academic workload?**

"I think the workload is good some days but other days it can be really heavy. It's not evenly distributed."

**What do you think would encourage more students to participate in school events?**

"I think advertising them more and having incentives could make people want to participate more in school activities."

**Sheri Salmon, Altamont Athletic Director**

**What's your honest opinion about Altamont school spirit?**

"I am excited about the opportunity the Altamont students have for school spirit. School spirit does not always revolve around sports but that is the norm today. School spirit is being proud of your school out in the community by wearing your 'colors' or Altamont logo gear. I think getting the students involved in our home sporting events is very important and can give our teams a competitive home court or home field advantage. It is important for our student leaders on other teams to attend games and encourage others to attend and cheer and support their fellow classmates, just as it is important for them to support their classmates who participate in the arts."

**How do you feel about game attendance?**

"I wish we had more students and fans at games for sure. I realize everyone is stretched with outside commitments and involvements. We will do a better job in the future by having more games on Friday nights to allow for better attendance. Fans play a very big part in the outcome of many games, so we would like as many students as possible in attendance."

**What do you think would encourage more students to participate in school events?**

“I think students must make it a priority to get a group of friends together and say, ‘Let’s go to the game tonight.’ After all, it’s certainly more fun to go as a group. We could incentivize students with prizes or games, but at the end of the day, it should be a fun, energetic, contagious atmosphere that students should want to be a part of.”

### **Opinion Poll**

Please take [this short, anonymous opinion poll](#), where you can share your thoughts on Altamont school spirit, and which will help shape future reporting and opinion writing in *your* student newspaper.