In 1990, the federal government passed the Student-Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act (P.L. 101-504). This act “required universities that receive federal funds to report graduation rates for all students, and more specifically to report separately the graduation rates for student athletes” (LaForge & Hodge, 2011, p.217). As a result of this act, in 1991, NCAA Division I schools adopted a proposal which mandated tutoring services and academics counseling in order to maximize academic performance for all Division I student athletes (Meyer, 2005). Most universities, particularly at Division I institutions have extensive support systems for student athletes. Athletic administrators have resourced student success centers with academic advisors, intervention specialists, tutoring personnel, private study spaces, state of the art classrooms, and the most up to date technology. From 1991 until 2004, federal graduation rates for student athletes did improve from about 57% to about 65% for those respective cohorts (NCAA, 2011). However, even though student athletes are graduating at higher rates, many still struggle to earn a diploma.

In 2003, the NCAA implemented new legislation requiring student athletes to make adequate degree progress by declaring their major and completing 40% of their degree requirements by the time they enter their third year, 60% by the time they enter their fourth year and 80% by the time they enter their fifth year with the goal of graduation for most student athletes in five years. Furthermore, with the implementation of this 40/60/80 legislation, student athletes are held to more stringent academic progress requirements than students from the general population. If student athletes fail to make adequate progress, their respective teams face sanctions in the way of scholarship loss and penalties. These sanctions can impact team success in the form of fewer scholarship athletes and ultimately be a black eye for the head coach. If the team becomes less competitive, the athletic department as a whole could lose revenue, particularly if sanctions occur in high profile sports. The NCAA and university presidents continue to pass new legislation that increases academic progress rates for current student athletes and require higher minimum grade point averages for incoming freshmen athletes and community college transfers (Grasgreen, 2011).

At the high school level, student athletes are held to academic eligibility requirements and face game suspensions if these expectations are not met. Coach and school penalties are not incurred if athletes are ineligible for competition, however, if star athletes must sit out of important or meaningful games due to academic failings, the end result could be a loss that is devastating to a whole community of supporters. Academic struggle can start very early for some kids and can result in athletic ineligibility in high school or college if not intentionally addressed at a young age. Precollege educational experiences and preparation relate to college performance (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). According to the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), high school GPA has a substantial positive relationship with future college success (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Access to college preparatory services directly and indirectly affect the students' high school GPAs as well as their motivation, aspirations, and expectations of college (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). These statements suggest that educational experiences, as well as academic preparation and success can positively impact a young student's life. Athletic administrators and coaches can constructively influence the academic achievements of young student athletes.

Based on the information presented above, aspiring high school and intercollegiate athletic administrators and coaches will spend a great deal of time and energy on academic issues. Whether they have concerns over athlete eligibility, class/grade checking, or issues of academic integrity, athletic administrators and coaches are impacted by a wide range of academic minutia. The presenter recommends for sport administration programs and coaching minors to incorporate a curriculum that demonstrates how to teach young student athletes the academic strategies to help them be successful at an early age so they may be better prepared students at the high school and collegiate level.

This presentation focuses on an academic curriculum which could easily be implemented as a course or part of a course in a sport administration or coaching minor curriculum. The presenter will introduce three educational
guidebooks that are geared to student athletes in elementary school, junior high, and high school. Additionally, the presenter will discuss a teaching curriculum which corresponds with the books. The curriculum incorporates lesson plans and activities that aspiring athletic administrators and coaches could easily implement with their young student athletes. The overarching goal would be to improve the academic strategies that contribute to the overall development of aspiring student athletes.