

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.  
ATHLETIC EQUITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
East Lansing, September 26, 2023

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Nikki Norris, East Lansing  
Matt Moffitt, Cedar Springs  
Tania Woodard, Detroit  
Stephanie Wilson, Bay City  
Keith Stephens, Romulus

Anika McEvans, Detroit  
Dave Pratt, Hillsdale  
Kimberly Thornton, Grandville  
Leroy Hackley, Muskegon  
Jason Malloy, Westland

**MHSAA STAFF**

Will McKoy

Tricia Wieferrich (Recorder)

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. Following the welcome and introductions, the committee reviewed the Equity Committee's authority and responsibility and a synopsis of the meeting minutes for 2022. The committee members introduced themselves, sharing their school duties.

**EQUITY COMMITTEE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

The Equity Committee, as with any other MHSAA standing committee, has the duty and responsibility to discuss matters of specific interest relating to equity opportunities for women and minority men and women and to make recommendations of action to the Representative Council.

Goals are to include, but are not limited to:

1. Gather statewide data to define equity problems, direct actions, and monitor progress.
2. Promote through motivation, support, and training competent coaches, officials, athletic directors, and governing board members regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender.
3. Sensitize and encourage organizations and employers to affirmatively seek women and minorities for athletic leadership training, placement, and promotion.
4. Promote the benefits of athletics and athletic leadership to students, educators, parents, and community members.
5. Improve communication between the school districts, the MHSAA, governing boards, professional associations, and higher education regarding the need for balanced staffing of athletic programs.

**SPORT OFFICIALS**

The committee was provided information on officials' registration and current plans for recruiting new officials with a discussion around the need to recruit minority officials (gender and racial minorities). The committee suggested the following strategies to assist in recruiting new officials:

1. Assignors and associations make recruiting minority officials an agenda item when strategizing ways to recruit new officials.
2. Solicit more minorities to become assignors.
3. Leagues and conferences should conduct "job fair" like workshops centered around high school seniors who may be interested in becoming a game official.
4. Having more sports officiating classes in high schools.

**UPDATE MEETING SURVEY**

The committee was provided a copy of this year's Update Meeting survey. The committee was asked to share its feedback regarding the AD In-Service and Update Meeting they attended.

**SPORTS PARTICIPATION SURVEY**

The committee discussed the surprising rise in athletic participation in certain sports while others continue to decrease. The committee was reminded of the statistics suggesting that 70% of athletes who decide to stop participating do so before they reach high school. The committee discussed possible ways to encourage young athletes to continue participation in athletics into and through high school. The committee listed specialization and participation fees, especially in economically depressed communities, as a significant barrier to athletic participation.

## **MHSAA AWARDS**

The committee was provided an update on the MHSAA awards task force formed to examine the MHSAA awards selection and nomination process. Staff also updated the committee on the naming of the Nate Hampton Champion of Progress Award. The committee questioned why the WISL and NHCPA awards do not require a minimum number of years of service for the candidate to qualify for the recognition, and the other awards still list a certain number of years of service to be eligible for the award.

## **HEAD ADORNMENTS**

The committee was provided a list of the most current NFHS head adornment policies for all the tournament sports we offer. A quick discussion occurred with no action needed.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Title IX**

The committee also discussed the role, if any, the MHSAA should play in ensuring compliance by member schools.

### **TRANSGENDER STUDENTS**

MHSAA staff informed the committee that the current policy can now be found in the MHSAA handbook. Staff provided the committee statistics about current transgender athletes in Michigan, reviewed the current policy, and felt while the policy is sufficient, that we are one challenge away from seeing a significant change to the policy. The committee believes a more proactive approach to the policy may be prudent.

### **MHSAA TRANSFER REGULATION**

The committee discussed how, if any way, the current sport-specific transfer rule disproportionately affects minority communities. Some within the committee like the current transfer regulation, while others on the committee believe the current regulation hurts certain minority groups of students/communities. The committee believes that most parents do not understand the current transfer regulation well and think parents are making transfer decisions based on wrong information given to them by people outside of the school district. The committee suggested parent educational opportunities coordinated by member schools, in conjunction with local leagues and conferences and the MHSAA, to help educate parents on the importance of education athletics and the specifics of the transfer regulation.

The committee also feels that the executive committee "waiver" process needs to be more racially diverse and more representative of urban communities where some waiver requests are generated. Some on the committee believe that a "one time" no-questions-asked transfer policy would help students/parents who experience unforeseen circumstances that have dictated the need to transfer schools.

### **HAZING**

The committee briefly discussed the topic and acknowledged that it probably happens more than we know. The committee believes that most coaches probably do not understand that even the simplest traditions could be considered hazing in the current climate. The committee believes more discussions need to be had surrounding this subject.

### **OPEN FLOOR**

During the open floor portion of the meeting, the committee discussed the updated social media restrictions passed in May of 2023 by the Representative Council. The committee also discussed the need to discuss further the scheduling of athletics during religious holidays and how local schools can navigate that.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

There were no recommendations to the Representative Council.