

2024-25 MHSAA ATHLETIC EQUITY COMMITTEE MEETING #1

Tuesday, September 24, 2024, 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jean LeClair, Bronson
Jason Malloy, Westland
Anika McEvans, Detroit
Rob McRae, Flint
Ramona Mendez, Lansing
Matt Moffett, Cedar Springs

Keith Stephens, Romulus
Stephanie Wilson, Bay City

MHSAA STAFF

Will McKoy (Recorder)
Tricia Wieferich

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 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 2023-24. The committee members introduced themselves and shared their school duties.

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.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

SPORT OFFICIALS

The committee was provided information on officials' registration and current plans for recruiting new officials, and there was a discussion about the need to recruit minority officials (gender and racial minorities). The committee was introduced to Ref-Reps and how this program makes conducting an officiating class in local schools more accessible. The committee also discussed the importance of students seeing game officials that look like them (ethnicity or gender). The committee suggested the following strategies to assist in recruiting new officials:

1. Incentivize schools that get students registered to officiate.
2. Participate in job fairs on college campuses and target current college athletes.
3. Look into the Ralph Wilson grant program.
4. MHSAA should increase the use of social media to interview, praise, and recognize officials.

UPDATE MEETING SURVEY

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

SPORTS PARTICIPATION SURVEY

The committee discussed the continued post-COVID-19 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 the proliferation of club sports and specialization as reasons for decreased participation in certain sports (e.g., volleyball, soccer, hockey).

MHSAA AWARDS

The committee was updated on the MHSAA awards selection and nomination process. The committee discussed the need for the Equity Committee to nominate minority candidates for each award and create a database using a document-sharing program (Google Docs, etc.) to compile a list of worthy candidates.

HEAD ADORNMENTS

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

MIAAA DEI COMMITTEE UPDATE

The MIAAA DEI committee provided an update on what they are doing and their plans for the future.

TITLE IX

The committee discussed the role, if any, the MHSAA should play in ensuring compliance by member schools regarding facility usage, budget considerations, and equipment/supplies. The committee also discussed the MHSAA's need to add new sports (boys volleyball and girls field hockey) in compliance with Title IX.

TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

The MHSAA staff reminded the committee that the current policy is in the *MHSAA Handbook*. Staff provided the committee with statistics about current transgender athletes in Michigan, reviewed the policy, and felt it was sufficient.

MASCOTS & NATIVE AMERICAN IMAGERY

The committee was provided with a list of MHSAA schools with current mascots and nicknames that refer to Native Americans in some way. The committee was reminded of the statement proposed by the Equity Committee during its October 2020 meeting to the Representative Council for action. The Representative Council mainly adopted all of the statements but omitted the line related to removing mascot names from the MHSAA website and during MHSAA tournament events. The committee discussed the need to allow MHSAA staff to remove those names and images if deemed offensive by proposing a slight modification to the original statement that the Representative Council removed.

MHSAA TRAVEL RULE

The committee discussed the new travel rules and how they have affected minority students and schools. The committee believes the changes to the travel rules have been overall positive.

NAME, IMAGE, LIKENESS (NIL)

The committee was provided with a copy of a possible updated MHSAA Amateur Status policy related to NIL and discussed how the state legislature could affect that policy. The committee also discussed the importance of the MHSAA staying informed of trends associated with NIL and the national landscape.

EMERGING SPORTS

The committee discussed the start of boys volleyball and girls field hockey in the 2025 school year and if any other emerging sports are on the horizon. MHSAA staff updated the committee on the progress toward the start of girls flag football and what would need to happen. The committee discussed the effect new sports could or will have on sports already offered at schools. The committee acknowledged that school communities would need to decide about emerging sports and how adding sports could negatively affect currently offered sports.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

The committee recommended that the Representative Council update the statement approved in May of 2021 regarding MHSAA member schools and the use of Native American Mascots and Imagery. (9-0)