

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
ATHLETIC EQUITY COMMITTEE MEETING
East Lansing (Virtual Meeting), September 30, 2021

Members Present:

Sean Jacques, Calumet	Anika McEvans, Detroit
Aaron Biggar, Traverse City	Orlando Medina, New Haven
Tania Woodard, Detroit	Kimberly Thornton, Grandville
Ross Gauthier, Almont	Meg Seng, Ann Arbor
Leroy Hackley, Muskegon	Tammy Wilson, Lawton

Staff Members Present:

Will McKoy (Recorder)
Brent Rice

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 am. Following the welcome and introductions, the committee reviewed the Equity Committee authority and responsibility along with a synopsis of the meeting minutes from 2020. 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 to 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.

Sports Officials

The committee was provided information relating to officials registration and current plans for recruiting new officials. The committee suggested the following strategies to assist in recruiting new officials:

1. Assignors attending parent meetings to stress the importance of:
 - a. Spectator patience with new officials.
 - b. Encourage schools to use legacy and new student official vouchers.
 - c. Talk about the benefit of officiating.
2. The committee also mentioned the importance of athletic directors not allowing coaches to harass officials during athletic contests.
3. Suggested a presentation to college students participating in intramural sports and college athletes in particular to encourage their start in officiating during or after college.

New Title IX Regulation

The committee reviewed:

1. Title IX release dated Aug. 27, 2020. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) continues to determine whether a school's athletic program provides adequate participation opportunities through the "three-prong test."

2. Article released in September 2021 (“San Jose State to Pay \$1.6M to Shaw’s Abuse Victims”) which referred to the new Title IX regulation’s effect on the prosecution of sexual harassment cases.
3. PowerPoint presentation slide show “The History and Importance of Title IX” from NFHS which outlines the origin of the legislation and its importance.
4. NFHS Title IX Fact Sheet.
5. Article released in September 2021 “50 Anniversary of Title IX Coming in June of 2022.”

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. Feedback:

1. Committee suggested more time during AD In-Service for networking.
2. Committee members were also not sure if schools would know in time if they are able to field a team in certain sports to answer #7 on the survey (classification).

Cooperative Programs

The committee was provided a copy of the 2021-22 Cooperative Program Summary. The committee briefly discussed the summary and wanted to ensure that the MHSAA took into consideration any rising trends in cooperative programs instead of the organic building of sports teams.

Sports Participation Survey

The committee discussed the drop in participation by gender: (Boys down 10%, Girls down 12%).

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Use of Racial Slurs During Contests
2. Transgender Students
3. Head Adornments
4. Offensive Mascots/ Nicknames

Use of Racial Slurs During Contests:

The committee was given *MHSAA Handbook* language regarding taunting and the use of derogatory language to include racial, religious, and sexual orientation (Interpretations 289 & 290). The committee discussed in length the role the MHSAA should play when it’s alleged that a racial slur has been used during a contest. Committee members also discussed the MHSAA’s role, if any, when schools decide to protest the use of racial slurs by forfeiting contests. The committee suggested that the MHSAA should issue a statement condemning the use of racial slurs or any derogatory language during the athletic contest. They also discussed the possibility of the MHSAA creating an anti-racism curriculum for any persons ejected from a contest for the use of a racial slur. The proposed training should also include support for officials and coaches on how to address these issues as they occur. The committee also discussed the use of ejections for student-athletes who may use words that are seen as racial slurs against students of that same race.

Transgender Students:

The committee was given a copy of the MHSAA policy for eligibility for transgender student-athletes and a Detroit Free Press article from Aug. 17, 2021, regarding a Michigan State Senate bill that would require students to participate in athletics under the gender for which they were born. The committee discussed at length the MHSAA policy and felt the policy as written was sufficient. The committee wanted to ensure that the MHSAA was being proactive regarding this topic and not reactive.

Head Adornments:

The committee was provided a post from the NFHS regarding NFHS playing rules committees addressing religious and cultural concerns of participants, along with an article from the Grand Rapids Press "Efforts Increase to Confront Hair Bias." The committee discussed the NFHS's efforts to ensure students are not discriminated against for religious or cultural headwear by eliminating the requirement of state associations to approve religious and cultural headwear during contests. The committee also discussed restrictions on beads and other head adornments worn during competition. The NFHS has charged each of its rules committees to discuss head adornments.

Offensive Mascots/Nicknames

The committee was asked to discuss the current climate within our state as it relates to mascots with a negative connotation. MHSAA staff reminded the committee of the position statement drafted after the 2020 Equity Committee meeting by recommendation to the Representative Council.

The committee continued its previous discussions centered around the MHSAA's role related to mascots and Native American imagery. The committee discussed the possibility of sanctions being leveled by the MHSAA to member schools that continue to use Native American and/or minority insensitive mascot names or imagery. The committee continues to believe that this is a community issue that should be handled by local school administration and their communities.

Open Floor

During the open floor portion of the meeting, the committee suggested for future discussion the topic of the socio-economic disadvantages some of our student-athletes are dealing with and how our rules and policies may further disadvantage that population of students (example: transfer rules).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MHSAA REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

The committee did not put forth any motions for recommendation(s) to the Representative Council.