

SUMMARY REPORT

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION TASK FORCE ON MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION SURVEY

2025-26 School Year

Introduction:

With growing concern about overuse injuries and burnout among young athletes – and the potential long-term health consequences associated with both – early sport specialization has become an important health and safety issue in youth sports. In 2016, the Michigan High School Athletic Association established the Task Force on Multi-Sport Participation to strengthen its ongoing efforts to promote student-athlete well-being and better understand the factors that contribute to sport specialization.

As part of this work, the Task Force launched an initiative to measure multi-sport participation across MHSAA member schools. The project seeks to identify statewide trends and recognize “achievers” – schools whose multi-sport participation rates exceed expectations based on enrollment, geography, and other factors that may influence athletic participation. By identifying these schools and examining broader participation patterns, the research aims to uncover practices, conditions, and questions worthy of further study. Ultimately, these findings can help school sports administrators make informed decisions about policies, procedures, and programming that encourage multi-sport participation and enhance the overall student-athlete experience within Michigan’s interscholastic athletic programs.

The Spring 2026 survey represents the eighth year of multi-sport participation data collection among MHSAA member schools; data were not collected during the 2019–20 school year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As in previous years, all 759 MHSAA member schools were surveyed and asked to report the total number of students who participated on athletic teams in MHSAA-sponsored sports, as well as the number who participated in more than one sport. The 2025–26 survey also continued the practice of asking schools to report the number of sports in which each multi-sport athlete participated. This summary is based on usable data submitted by 560 responding schools.

Observations:

- Year-Over-Year Multi-Sport Participation Rates Summary 2017-18 to 2025-26

CLASS	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
A	35.9%	35.4%	36.4%	36.7%	36.9%	38.2%	38.5%	38.4%
B	46.7%	48.7%	48.4%	49.5%	49.6%	48.0%	49.3%	49.0%
C	55.2%	56.7%	57.3%	58.3%	59.0%	59.4%	59.6%	59.5%
D	58.1%	61.8%	62.9%	60.8%	62.5%	63.1%	63.1%	64.2%

- Multi-sport participation rates have remained relatively stable from year to year across all four school classifications, while generally trending upward over the eight survey years. From 2017–18 to 2025–26, the percentage of athletes participating in multiple sports increased in every class: from 35.9% to 38.4% in Class A, 46.7% to 49.0% in Class B, 55.2% to 59.5% in Class C, and 58.1% to 64.2% in Class D. The largest increase occurred in Class D, which rose 6.1 percentage points over the period.
- The relationship between school size and multi-sport participation is remarkably persistent. In every survey year, Class D has the highest rate, followed by Class C, Class B, and Class A. That consistency strengthens your earlier observation that

smaller-school environments are associated with greater multi-sport participation (Year-Over-Year Multi-Sport Participation Rates Summary 2017-18 to 2025-26 above).

- The gap between Class A and Class D has widened somewhat. It was 22.2 percentage points in 2017–18 (58.1% vs. 35.9%) and is 25.8 points in 2025–26 (64.2% vs. 38.4%). That could be worth monitoring (Year-Over-Year Multi-Sport Participation Rates Summary 2017-18 to 2025-26 above).
- Recent results suggest more stability than continued growth in Classes A–C. From 2023–24 through 2025–26, Classes A, B, and C changed very little. Class D, however, reached a high of 64.2% in 2025–26 (Year-Over-Year Multi-Sport Participation Rates Summary 2017-18 to 2025-26 above).
- The overall response rate for the 2025–26 survey was 73.8% (Table 1), down from 82.7% in 2024–25. While this represents a decline from the previous year, the 2025–26 response rate remains higher than the 63.7% recorded in 2023–24, which marked a significant departure from the relatively consistent response rates of the preceding five survey years. During that period, response rates ranged from 79.9% to 85.2%: 85.2% in 2022–23, 85.0% in 2021–22, 81.5% in 2020–21, 82.9% in 2018–19, and 79.9% in 2017–18.
- Across all years of data collection, smaller schools have consistently reported higher rates of student participation in athletics. This trend is evident both when comparing participation rates across school classifications (Table 2) and when examining participation within the enrollment ranges of Class A schools (Table 5).
- Smaller schools consistently report higher rates of multi-sport participation among student-athletes. This trend is evident both across school classifications (Table 3) and within the enrollment ranges of Class A schools (Table 6), suggesting that school enrollment continues to be an important factor associated with multi-sport participation.
- Across all school classifications, boys consistently report higher rates of multi-sport participation than girls (Table 3). This pattern also holds across the different enrollment ranges within Class A schools (Table 6), indicating that the gender difference in multi-sport participation persists regardless of school size.
- Table 4 further reinforces the relationship between school enrollment and multi-sport participation. Larger schools report a higher proportion of single-sport athletes, while the proportion of athletes participating in multiple sports increases as school enrollment decreases. Single-sport participation declines from 61.6% in Class A to 35.8% in Class D, while overall multi-sport participation increases from 38.4% to 64.2%.
- The relationship between school size and multi-sport participation becomes more pronounced as the number of sports played increases. Two-sport participation is relatively consistent across classifications, ranging from 30.2% in Class A to 36.5% in

Class D. In contrast, three-sport participation increases substantially as school size decreases, from 7.8% in Class A to 23.0% in Class D. Participation in four or more sports follows an even stronger pattern, increasing from 0.4% in Class A to 4.7% in Class D.

- Gender differences are also evident across classifications, particularly among three-sport athletes. Girls have higher rates of single-sport participation than boys in every class, while boys have higher overall rates of multi-sport participation. The gender difference is relatively modest among two-sport athletes but becomes more pronounced among three-sport athletes. Statewide, 13.1% of boys participate in three sports compared with 10.1% of girls. Interestingly, this pattern does not extend to athletes participating in four or more sports, where the statewide rates for boys and girls are both 1.1% (Table 4).
- Two schools have appeared in the top 10% of their class for multi-sport participation seven times:

School	Class	Years in Top 10%						
Battle Creek Harper Creek	A	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Grand Rapids Northview	A	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26

- Four schools have appeared in the top 10% of their class for multi-sport participation six times:

School	Class	Years in Top 10%					
Decatur	C	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Detroit Cody	A/B	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Warren Michigan Collegiate	B	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26

- Four schools have appeared in the top 10% of their class for multi-sport participation five times:

School	Class	Years in Top 10%				
East Grand Rapids	A	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Lake Leelanau St Mary	D	2018-19	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Manton	C	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Parma Western	A	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25

Survey Data:

Table 1. Multi-Sport Participation Survey Responses by Class

	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Combined
Number of schools surveyed	188	188	190	193	759
Number of responding schools*	141	144	139	136	560
Response rate (# surveyed / # responding)	75.0%	76.6%	73.2%	70.5%	73.8%

*The term "responding schools" refers to schools submitting surveys with usable data - data that was clearly inaccurate based on the size of the school was excluded from analysis as it would have skewed the data. From this point forward, in order to avoid needless repetition, "responding schools" will just be referred to as "schools".

Table 2. Sport Participation among General Student Population by Class and Gender – (%) of Student Enrollment (Total # Athletes / Total # Students Enrolled)

Gender	Class A			Class B			Class C			Class D			Classes Combined		
	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%
Boys	43,916	91,416	48.0%	20,087	38,789	51.8%	10,376	18,103	57.3%	3,951	6,328	62.4%	78,330	154,636	50.7%
Girls	34,289	87,307	39.3%	16,616	37,084	44.8%	8,586	16,813	51.1%	3,368	5,982	56.3%	62,859	147,186	42.7%
Combined	78,205	178,723	43.8%	36,703	75,873	48.4%	18,962	34,916	54.3%	7,319	12,310	59.5%	141,189	301,822	46.8%

Table 3. Multi-Sport Participation among Athlete Population by Class and Gender – (%) of Athlete Population (# of Multi-Sport Athletes / Total # Athletes)

Gender	Class A			Class B			Class C			Class D			Classes Combined		
	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Total Athletes	%	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Total Athletes	%	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Total Athletes	%	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Total Athletes	%	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Total Athletes	%
Boys	17,642	43,916	40.2%	10,480	20,087	52.2%	6,449	10,376	62.2%	2,647	3,951	67.0%	37,218	78,330	47.5%
Girls	12,416	34,289	36.2%	7,502	16,616	45.1%	4,836	8,586	56.3%	2,051	3,368	60.9%	26,805	62,859	42.6%
Combined	30,058	78,205	38.4%	17,982	36,703	49.0%	11,285	18,962	59.5%	4,698	7,319	64.2%	64,023	141,189	45.3%

Table 4. Number of Sports Played among Athlete Population by Class and Gender - (%) of Athlete Population (# of athletes participating in that number of sports / total # of athletes)

Class A											
Gender	Total Athletes	Single Sport	%	2 Sports	%	3 Sports	%	4 or More Sports	%	TOTAL Multi-sport Athletes	%
Boys	43,916	26,274	59.8%	13,602	31.0%	3,886	8.8%	155	0.4%	17,642	40.2%
Girls	34,289	21,873	63.8%	10,039	29.3%	2,195	6.4%	183	0.5%	12,416	36.2%
Combined	78,205	48,147	61.6%	23,641	30.2%	6,081	7.8%	338	0.4%	30,058	38.4%
Class B											
Gender	Total Athletes	Single Sport	%	2 Sports	%	3 Sports	%	4 or More Sports	%	TOTAL Multi-sport Athletes	%
Boys	20,087	9,607	47.8%	7,193	35.8%	3,092	15.4%	195	1.0%	10,480	52.2%
Girls	16,616	9,114	54.9%	5,428	32.7%	1,912	11.5%	162	1.0%	7,502	45.1%
Combined	36,703	18,721	51.0%	12,621	34.4%	5,004	13.6%	357	1.0%	17,982	49.0%
Class C											
Gender	Total Athletes	Single Sport	%	2 Sports	%	3 Sports	%	4 or More Sports	%	TOTAL Multi-sport Athletes	%
Boys	10,376	3,927	37.8%	3,766	36.3%	2,332	22.5%	351	3.4%	6,449	62.2%
Girls	8,586	3,750	43.7%	3,103	36.1%	1,537	17.9%	196	2.3%	4,836	56.3%
Combined	18,962	7,677	40.5%	6,869	36.2%	3,869	20.4%	547	2.9%	11,285	59.5%
Class D											
Gender	Total Athletes	Single Sport	%	2 Sports	%	3 Sports	%	4 or More Sports	%	TOTAL Multi-sport Athletes	%
Boys	3,951	1,304	33.0%	1,519	38.4%	963	24.4%	165	4.2%	2,647	67.0%
Girls	3,368	1,317	39.1%	1,154	34.3%	717	21.3%	180	5.3%	2,051	60.9%
Combined	7,319	2,621	35.8%	2,673	36.5%	1,680	23.0%	345	4.7%	4,698	64.2%
Classes Combined											
Gender	Total Athletes	Single Sport	%	2 Sports	%	3 Sports	%	4 or More Sports	%	TOTAL Multi-sport Athletes	%
Boys	78,330	41,112	52.5%	26,080	33.3%	10,273	13.1%	866	1.1%	37,218	47.5%
Girls	62,859	36,054	57.4%	19,724	31.4%	6,361	10.1%	721	1.1%	26,805	42.6%
Combined	141,189	77,166	54.7%	45,804	32.4%	16,634	11.8%	1,587	1.1%	64,023	45.3%

Table 5. Sport Participation among General Student Population at Class A Schools by Enrollment and Gender – (%) of Student Enrollment (Total # Athletes / Total # Students Enrolled)

Gender	Enrollment less than 1,000			Enrollment 1,000-1,500			Enrollment 1,501-2,000			Enrollment over 2,000			All Class A Combined		
	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%	Total Athletes	Student Enrollment	%
Boys	11,018	20,496	53.8%	18,801	39,252	47.9%	10,951	24,728	44.3%	5,715	12,737	44.9%	46,485	97,213	47.8%
Girls	8,201	19,507	42.0%	14,289	37,125	38.5%	8,751	23,819	36.7%	5,017	12,644	39.7%	36,258	93,095	38.9%
Combined	19,219	40,003	48.0%	33,090	76,377	43.3%	19,702	48,547	40.6%	10,732	25,381	42.3%	82,743	190,308	43.5%

Table 6. Multi-Sport Participation among Athlete Population at Class A Schools by Class and Gender – (%) of Athlete Population (# of Multi-Sport Athletes / Total # Athletes)

Gender	Enrollment less than 1,000			Enrollment 1,000-1,500			Enrollment 1,501-2,000			Enrollment over 2,000			All Class A Combined		
	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Total Athletes	%	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Total Athletes	%	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Total Athletes	%	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Total Athletes	%	# Multi-Sport Athletes	Student Enrollment	%
Boys	5,093	11,018	46.2%	7,553	18,801	40.2%	3,861	10,951	35.3%	2,093	5,715	36.6%	18,600	46,485	40.0%
Girls	3,507	8,201	42.8%	5,001	14,289	35.0%	2,617	8,751	29.9%	1,833	5,017	36.5%	12,958	36,258	35.7%
Combined	8,600	19,219	44.7%	12,554	33,090	37.9%	6,478	19,702	32.9%	3,926	10,732	36.6%	31,558	82,743	38.1%

Table 7. Top 10% of Class A Schools with Regard to Multi-Sport Participation (Ranked by % of Multi-Sport Athlete Population – Boys and Girls Data Combined)

Rank	School	Total Boy Athletes	# Boy Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Boy Athletes	Total Girl Athletes	# Girl Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Girl Athletes	Total Athletes	Total Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Athletes
1	Battle Creek Harper Creek	269	194	72.1%	224	167	74.6%	493	361	73.2%
2	Saginaw United	166	131	78.9%	156	103	66.0%	322	234	72.7%
3	Harper Woods	125	100	80.0%	72	42	58.3%	197	142	72.1%
4	Macomb L'Anse Creuse North	286	186	65.0%	227	152	67.0%	513	338	65.9%
5	Parma Western	212	126	59.4%	165	97	58.8%	377	223	59.2%
6	Grand Rapids Union	297	185	62.3%	244	135	55.3%	541	320	59.1%
7	Flint Kearsley	164	102	62.2%	156	87	55.8%	320	189	59.1%
8	Bay City Western	305	178	58.4%	240	138	57.5%	545	316	58.0%
9	Midland Dow	234	116	49.6%	272	175	64.3%	506	291	57.5%
10	Grand Rapids Northview	330	186	56.4%	241	129	53.5%	571	315	55.2%
11	Detroit Cass Tech	778	411	52.8%	953	532	55.8%	1,731	943	54.5%
12	Chelsea	293	171	58.4%	215	104	48.4%	508	275	54.1%
13	Coopersville	234	133	56.8%	225	109	48.4%	459	242	52.7%
14	Midland	293	162	55.3%	236	114	48.3%	529	276	52.2%

Table 8. Top 10% of Class B Schools with Regard to Multi-Sport Participation (Ranked by % of Multi-Sport Athlete Population – Boys and Girls Data Combined)

Rank	School	Total Boy Athletes	# Boy Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Boy Athletes	Total Girl Athletes	# Girl Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Girl Athletes	Total Athletes	Total Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Athletes
1	Detroit Denby	42	37	88.1%	25	19	76.0%	67	56	83.6%
2	Warren Michigan Collegiate	70	60	85.7%	50	40	80.0%	120	100	83.3%
3	Ecorse	58	53	91.4%	56	36	64.3%	114	89	78.1%
4	Detroit Osborn	45	35	77.8%	40	30	75.0%	85	65	76.5%
5	Dearborn Heights Robichaud	65	44	67.7%	57	49	86.0%	122	93	76.2%
6	Flint Hamady	55	45	81.8%	37	25	67.6%	92	70	76.1%
7	Clare	127	93	73.2%	125	95	76.0%	252	188	74.6%
8	St Clair Shores South Lake	65	47	72.3%	57	43	75.4%	122	90	73.8%
9	Eaton Rapids	85	65	76.5%	86	61	70.9%	171	126	73.7%
10	Sault Ste Marie	146	114	78.1%	113	72	63.7%	259	186	71.8%
11	Detroit East English	136	112	82.4%	66	31	47.0%	202	143	70.8%
12	Fremont	97	69	71.1%	69	47	68.1%	166	116	69.9%
13	Parchment	129	91	70.5%	97	60	61.9%	226	151	66.8%
14	Ovid-Elsie	127	87	68.5%	81	50	61.7%	208	137	65.9%

Table 9. Top 10% of Class C Schools with Regard to Multi-Sport Participation (Ranked by % of Multi-Sport Athlete Population – Boys and Girls Data Combined)

Rank	School	Total Boy Athletes	# Boy Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Boy Athletes	Total Girl Athletes	# Girl Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Girl Athletes	Total Athletes	Total Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Athletes
1	Detroit Community	35	35	100.0%	37	37	100.0%	72	72	100.0%
2	Galesburg-Augusta	69	58	84.1%	64	52	81.3%	133	110	82.7%
3	Kingston	125	113	90.4%	37	20	54.1%	162	133	82.1%
4	Niles Brandywine	104	84	80.8%	103	83	80.6%	207	167	80.7%
5	Martin	65	53	81.5%	47	37	78.7%	112	90	80.4%
6	Decatur	50	41	82.0%	31	23	74.2%	81	64	79.0%
7	Monroe St Mary Catholic Central	121	94	77.7%	108	85	78.7%	229	179	78.2%
8	Blissfield	94	74	78.7%	82	63	76.8%	176	137	77.8%
9	Pewamo-Westphalia	138	121	87.7%	142	94	66.2%	280	215	76.8%
10	Cass City	87	66	75.9%	72	56	77.8%	159	122	76.7%
11	Shelby	106	79	74.5%	100	76	76.0%	206	155	75.2%
12	Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett	126	94	74.6%	118	89	75.4%	244	183	75.0%
13	Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary	83	67	80.7%	68	45	66.2%	151	112	74.2%

Table 10. Top 10% of Class D Schools with Regard to Multi-Sport Participation (Ranked by % of Multi-Sport Athlete Population – Boys and Girls Data Combined)

Rank	School	Total Boy Athletes	# Boy Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Boy Athletes	Total Girl Athletes	# Girl Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Girl Athletes	Total Athletes	Total Multi-Sport Athletes	% Multi-Sport Athletes
1	Watersmeet	13	13	100.0%	14	14	100.0%	27	27	100.0%
2	Lake Leelanau St Mary	11	10	90.9%	11	11	100.0%	22	21	95.5%
3	Carney-Nadeau	30	28	93.3%	28	27	96.4%	58	55	94.8%
4	Onkama	29	27	93.1%	24	22	91.7%	53	49	92.5%
5	Atlanta	18	17	94.4%	26	23	88.5%	44	40	90.9%
6	Portland St Patrick	49	45	91.8%	32	27	84.4%	81	72	88.9%
7	Detroit Davis Aerospace	54	54	100.0%	13	5	38.5%	67	59	88.1%
8	Brethren	24	21	87.5%	26	23	88.5%	50	44	88.0%
9	Mancelona North Central Academy	11	10	90.9%	4	3	75.0%	15	13	86.7%
10	Gaylord St Mary	43	38	88.4%	27	22	81.5%	70	60	85.7%
11	Baraga	28	22	78.6%	40	36	90.0%	68	58	85.3%
12	Fairview	26	23	88.5%	25	19	76.0%	51	42	82.4%