

2026-27 MHSAA ATHLETIC EQUITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 9:30 a.m. – East Lansing

MEMBERS PRESENT

Joy Bullis, Alcona
Angelique Gaddy-McElveen, Grand Rapids
Jason Malloy, Westland
Paris McCarthy, Eastpointe
Anika McEvans, Detroit
Lisa O'Brien, Ann Arbor

Chace Palmateer, Yale
Kimberly Thornton, Grandville
Tammy Wilson, Bangor

MHSAA STAFF

Will McKoy (Recorder)
Tricia Wieferich

Following the welcome and introductions, the committee reviewed the Athletic Equity Committee's authority and responsibility, and a synopsis of the meeting minutes for 2025-26. The committee members introduced themselves and shared their school duties.

The Athletic Equity Committee, as with any other MHSAA standing committee, has the duty and responsibility to discuss matters of specific interest relating to equity opportunities individuals within the membership.

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 school districts, the MHSAA, governing boards, professional associations, and higher education regarding the need for balanced staffing of athletic programs.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

UPDATE MEETING SURVEY

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

SPORTS PARTICIPATION SURVEY

The committee reviewed the most recent participation survey results and noted that there was little year-to-year change. The committee discussed continued efforts to increase participation in girls basketball. The Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan (BCAM) will host the 28.5 Invitational in January, featuring 32 teams. The committee discussed ways the MHSAA and its partners could help increase participation in all girls' sports.

Suggestions included:

1. Increasing social media promotion of individual sports and participation opportunities.
2. Providing greater exposure for girls sports at the high school level.
3. Highlighting and promoting women serving as coaches and encouraging more women to enter the coaching profession.
4. Increasing participation opportunities at the junior high/middle school level.
5. Creating opportunities for younger students to attend and become connected with high school athletic programs, events, and contests.
6. Having additional conversations with students to better understand why some girls choose not to participate in high school athletics.

The committee also discussed the appeal of newer girls' sports. Because all participants may be relatively new to an emerging sport, students may perceive a more level playing field when deciding whether to participate. The committee discussed the importance of community recreation and

education programs in developing interest and participation at younger ages. Examples included modifying activities for younger participants, such as lowering basketball hoops.

The committee discussed several barriers that may limit student participation, including:

1. Access to athletic fields and appropriate facilities.
2. Access to equipment.
3. Availability of opponents.
4. Participation fees.
5. Limited family financial resources.
6. Students working outside of school.

The committee recognized that these factors may affect a student's ability to participate regardless of interest.

MHSAA AWARDS

The committee was updated on the MHSAA awards selection and nomination process and briefly discussed the need to communicate the awards deadline and nomination process locally.

TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

Staff updated the committee on the current conflict between longstanding state law and recent federal changes.

NAME, IMAGE, LIKENESS (NIL)

The committee received an update regarding Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL), which is referred to as Personal Branding Activities (PBA) under MHSAA regulations. The MHSAA policy took effect in January 2026. To date, the number of students involved has remained relatively small compared to the overall number of athletes in the state.

HATE SPEECH POLICY

The committee continued its review of the Illinois High School Association Hate Speech and Harassment Policy and Procedure as a possible resource for developing MHSAA procedures. The review focused on procedures to be followed during an athletic contest and resolution procedures to be followed after an incident. Committee members were asked to identify portions of the procedure with which they agreed or disagreed and to suggest additions, deletions, or revisions.

The committee also discussed several additional elements that could be incorporated into the policy or supporting materials:

1. Connecting hate speech and harassment procedures more directly to MHSAA sportsmanliness expectations.
2. Developing a Hate Speech and Harassment Incident Reporting process.
3. Establishing guidelines for addressing incidents involving participants on the court or field.
4. Establishing separate guidance for incidents involving spectators, bands, or other individuals associated with an event.

The committee also discussed whether sportsmanliness messaging should be included or strengthened within public-address scripts used at MHSAA events.

Further consideration was given to what additional steps may be appropriate when an incident is not adequately addressed at the athletic department level, including whether escalation to the school administration or the local board of education is warranted.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

None.