



STATE OF MICHIGAN
 JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 LANSING

**Task force on Women in Sports
 Meeting Minutes**

Date: June 27, 2019
 Time: 1:00 p.m.
 Location: Michigan State Police Headquarters
 1917 Conference Room
 7150 Harris Drive
 Dimondale, Michigan 48821

The first meeting of the Task Force on Women in Sports was called by Chairperson/Secretary Benson at 1:10 p.m.

Task Force Attendees

	Present	Absent
Chairperson/Secretary Benson	X	
Penny Allen-Cook	X	
Dr. Ketra Armstrong	X	
Kathy Beauregard	X	
Keri Becker	X	
Lorin Cartwright*	X	
Carolyn Cassin	X	
Dr. Judi Brown Clarke	X	
Cali Crawford		X
Joanne Gerstner	X	
Jennifer Granger	X	
Mike Guswiler	X	
Carol Hutchins	X	
Sam Mullet	X	
Erika Swilley	X	

*Lorin Cartwright participated via telephone for first part of the meeting.

Karen Issokson-Silver, Vice President, Research & Evaluation; and Sarah Axelson, MPA, Senior Director, Advocacy were invited and attended as national experts from the Women’s Sports Foundation.

Agenda Items

Chairperson/Secretary Benson welcomed and thanked all the Task Force members for their willingness to serve. She thanked the Women's Sports Foundation for their attendance and assistance.

History/Goals of the Task Force

- Michigan leading the way – first ever task force of its kind.
- Women's Sports Foundation will be informing the task force on research and serve as a catalyst.
- Sports and women and girl's ability to play sports generates women leaders in every other industry.
- Come together to collectively advise the Governor on what laws, what policies, what financial investments and programs the State can invest in to move forward to create more opportunities for women in sports.
- Goals task force charged with:
 - 1) Making historic assessment of opportunities for women to play sports and work in sports here in Michigan and nationally, essentially to help define the problems for any recommendations the task force will bring forth.
 - 2) Report issued to the Governor in February of 2021 (hope to coincide with Girls and Women's Sports Day). Report will fall into four areas of recommendations with two goals in mind:
 - Report Goal 1 - opportunities for women to play sports at every level – youth, high school, college, professional.
 - Report Goal 2 - opportunities for women to work in sports – coaches, athletic directors and executives at the professional level.

Four Areas of Recommendations:

- Task Force will recommend legislation that the new Legislature can evaluate and hopefully pass into law.
 - Recommend funding that the Governor and Secretary can look to for programs, policies/incentives, possible tax breaks.
 - Recommend additional programs/promote current programs where women can meet other people in the professional arena and provide additional pathways.
 - Recommendations on policies or executive directives that the Governor and/or Department of State can enact/encourage colleges or high schools to adopt, as well as professional teams.
- 3) Develop stakeholders – engage local and national stakeholders to inform them on how they can follow suite in developing the type change that the task force is advocating for. Not just make a recommendation and walk away, but act as stakeholders yourselves and actively advocate and implement changes. Role is not only to identify solutions, but also work to implement them.

Meeting Goals

Chairperson/Secretary Benson discussed today's meeting goals, including discussion on the task force infrastructure, which will consist of two National Advisory Councils:

- 1) Women Playing Sports
 - 2) Professional Pathways
- Task force was provided with a list of potential advisory council members.
 - Have discussion on those recommendations / additional input on others, including Michigan and national levels.
 - Advisory councils will be advisory.
 - Executive committee of the task force will be voting members and making decisions on recommendations.
 - Hope to announce national advisory council members in the fall (major women events in October, one of which is the 40th Anniversary of the Women's Sports Foundation Salute to Female Athletes).
 - Additional meeting goals included discussion on who else should be at the table, research agenda, and timeline:
 - 1) Quarterly meetings of task force and advisory members (once in place)
 - 2) Conversations between quarterly meetings.
 - 3) First benchmark (biggest benchmark) is having report ready for the Governor in 2021.

Introductions

Task force members introduced themselves to get to know each other; provided their background, current position, and provided a brief overview of what brought them to the table.

Public Comment

Melinda Russell, Founder and CEO of International Women's Motorsports Association in 2017 (Kalamazoo) attended and spoke to the task force:

- Very excited to see the announcement of this initiative on behalf of women in sports.
- Her granddaughter is in her 7th year of racing at age 15. Thousands of women motor race, ranging from age 4 to 76.
- Started the association because of the predominately male presence in motor sports, more so than any other sport; faces same challenges. Publishes online newsletter and blogs.
- Attended meeting today to learn more about the task force.
- Wrote a letter to the Governor and Secretary and is interested in being part of the advisory committee regarding opportunities in women's sports for executives/professionals.

Presentation by Women's Sports Foundation

Karen Issokson-Silver and Sarah Axelson from the WSF provided a PowerPoint presentation with slides and information including a background of WSF, research, coaching through a gender lens, why participation matters, the status of girls and women in sports, Title IX overview, athletic scholarships, equal treatment and transparency (copies of the slides were provided as a handout to the task force).

Discussion

- Latest research report - The Status of Girls & Women in Sport Report – idea was to create a very digestible/accessible report on the status of girls and women in sport. Everything from participation and media, to trends and representation of the highest level of women working in the sport industry.
 - Over 2,000 women participated in survey across the country.
 - Work in progress - findings to be released in October.
 - Opportunity to administer the survey to female leaders working in women sports in Michigan if want to pursue.
 - Establish own baseline - analyze and compare Michigan to national.
- Discussion on looking at girl's participation in community sport programs.
 - Go Out and Play study in 2008 showed 40% gap
 - Girls drop sports in middle school; need to engage and retain them.
 - Lack of gym class – ownership slides to families to sustain.
 - Large difference in communities where transportation, cultural and language issues, and other obstacles.
 - WSF will send best practices.
- Discussion about the Title IX Reporting
 - Chairperson/Secretary Benson asked if statistics were broken down by state, and available for not only four-year colleges, but community colleges as well?
 - Sarah Axelson stated she will get Michigan breakdown.
 - EADA (Equities and Disclosure Act) reports would have that information.
 - Every co-ed college with athletics has to submit an EADA report to the US Department of Education (passed in 1994).
 - User-friendly – can generate by year or download complete report, look up specific school, etc., so can look at state-specific.
 - Further discussion on EADA report –
 - Needs a lot of work.
 - Data collection part is a problem.
 - You can make the report look any way you want it to look.
 - No existing version for high schools.
 - Should State of Michigan create something similar for high schools?
 - Enforcement mechanism for accuracy – what can be done?
 - Currently no fines or other penalties for inaccuracy of report at federal level.
 - Required to fill out report, but no one monitors.
 - Further discussion on federal funding for Title IX compliance.
 - Many schools losing millions in civil lawsuits, but no schools have ever lost federal funding for non-compliance with Title IX.
 - Opportunity to enter into resolution – will not admit non-compliance, but school will enter resolution to do better.
 - No other penalties. “Feel-good” policy/recommendation with no teeth.
 - WSF not aware of any other states that withhold state funding for non-compliance.
 - The ability to bring attention to non-compliance is on the person being discriminated against.
 - Need mobilized watchdog groups (national and regional allies) – the right people making the right noise continuously.
 - Discussion on transparency laws at state level.

- Some states have Title IX laws / some have state transparency laws.
 - Michigan does not have state-specific laws.
 - Sarah Axelson indicated need to look into states further - CA has newest law and MN has a great participation rate.
 - Chairperson/Secretary Benson asked if state laws were exactly same as federal laws?
 - Sarah indicated some similar; some added exceptions.
 - What are the different state penalties for non-compliance?
 - Need to research further and compile the best of each state.
- Things to consider for transparency laws in Michigan:
 - What data should be collected?
 - How is that data submitted/to whom is it submitted?
 - How is the data accessed and available to parents/public?
 - Sarah challenged task force to pick a state on the list that claims they have a transparency law and try to find the participation data for a high school under that state - not nearly as accessible so need to think through.
- Various reports on the quality of career education reveal the majority of women in executive positions, if not all, have had athletic backgrounds and are using those core sport strategies to be successful.
 - Need to tie in beyond athletics to the academics and how it can empower the State of Michigan.
 - Discussion on career day to hire women athletics – driven and competitive.
 - Athletic experience counts on traditional resumes as asset.

Task Force recessed for break at 3:40 p.m.

Task Force meeting resumed at 3:50 p.m.

Discussion on Next Steps

Chairperson/Secretary Benson asked the task force to review the list of potential advisory board recommendations provided in the packet and asked for input on who else should be at the table. What other research does the task force need?

- Chairperson/Secretary Benson stated MDOS staff can compile a lot of the research that the task force needs to determine next steps.
- What other research and data can the task force generate?
 - Discussion on WSF national survey for Michigan.
 - Survey is 12-minutes and very easy to complete with a link. Biggest challenge is getting people to complete the survey.
 - WSF can send to the task force who can share with peers and colleagues and ask them to do the same.
 - Can craft some language to send it from the task force.
 - Can easily be done for a 2 to 3-week window.
 - WSF will do the data and analytics.
 - Possible media release/communication plan on survey from SOS and Governor?
 - Chairperson/Secretary Benson stated MDOS would get it out and will talk to Governor's office as well.
- Discussion on under reporting of women who used to be in sports, but no longer.

- Need data on why?
- Feel it's critical data missing to understanding some of the barriers.
- Send survey to those you know that are no longer active.
- Chairperson/Secretary Benson proposed breaking into three subcommittees to answer question of what other research needs to be compiled.
 - Female athletes at youth and high school level
 - Female athletes at college and professional level
 - Professional pathways for women to work in executive level in sports.
- Data on men's perspective would be helpful. Document mindset, not just numbers.

Open Actions / Next Steps

- 1) WSF survey link will be sent to the task force members to take the survey and also get it out to your networks (community leaders to the highest level of sports).
 - a. MDOS will send media/communication release about survey.
 - b. Have results to view at fall meeting.

- 2) Task Force will meet quarterly.
 - a. Those identified to serve on National Advisory Committee members can join group in 2020; will be announced in the fall.
 - b. Meet in person in October/November to digest research, including survey results.
 - c. Chart course for 2020 and what need to do to get to the February report.
 - d. Will have three phone conversations (as opposed to calling them actual subcommittees) between now and October.
 - i. Task force members can decide which conversations they want to join.
 - ii. When reconvene in October, can share the three separate conversations with whole task force.
 - e. MDOS will develop contact group and send so everyone has contact information to continue to converse between official meetings.
 - f. Consider having future meetings at different college locations geographically and possibly having specific groups that the task force wants to hear from attend a meeting.

- 3) Women Leaders in College Sports Foundation has national convention in Phoenix (October 13-15).
 - a. Small delegation of Task Force will attend, as well as some advisory members – please let Chairperson/Secretary Benson know if you are interested in attending.

- 4) National Advisory Committee member invite – who else needs to be added?
 - a. Mark Guel
 - b. Heather Lyke
 - c. Nicole LaVoy (University of MN)
 - d. Someone from Nike – they have new program called Game Growers on why middle school girls are leaving sports.
 - e. Amy Brooks (NBA)
 - f. Others? Please submit names for consideration.

- 5) WSF will send best practices as discussed.

- 6) MDOS staff will research state laws, compile and send to task force.

Chairperson/Secretary Benson thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 4:22 p.m.