



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

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

Date: March 4, 2020
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Michigan State University
College of Education, Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824

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

Task Force Attendees

	Present	Absent
Chairperson/Secretary Benson	X	
Penny Allen-Cook		X
Ketra Armstrong*	X	
Kathy Beauregard	X	
Keri Becker	X	
Lorin Cartwright	X	
Carolyn Cassin	X	
Ramona Cox	X	
Cali Crawford		X
Joanne Gerstner	X	
Jennifer Granger	X	
Mike Guswiler	X	
Carol Hutchins*	X	
Samantha Mullet	X	
Erika Swilley	X	

*Dr. Ketra Armstrong and Carol Hutchins participated via telephone for the meeting.

Task Force Advisory Members attending in person included: Dr. Dan Gould, Meg Seng, Mark Uyl and Bridget Wilson.

Task Force Advisory Members participating by telephone included: Val Ackerman, Deborah Antoine, Heather Lyke

Welcome, Introductions, Updates

Chairperson/Secretary Benson welcomed everyone to the third Task Force meeting, and thanked Michigan State University's Institute for the Study of Youth Sports and Dr. Dan Gould for hosting.

Chair's Report

Chairperson/Secretary Benson reiterated the current status of the task force as Phase I, assessing the research and status of women in sports. The research falls into the following 3 categories:

1. Opportunities for girls to play k-12 in youth sports
2. Opportunities for women to play at the collegiate and professional level
3. Opportunities for women to serve as coaches, athletic directors and front office sports executives

Since the last meeting:

- **New Appointment:** Romana Cox appointed as Task Force Member
 - Judi Browne Clark has taken a position at Stony Brook University and will continue to serve as an advisory member to the Task Force.
- **Athletic Facility Site visits:** Visited Alma, SVSU and Wayne State University
 - Scheduling visits to MSU (likely on March 26th), UofM Ann Arbor, GVSU, Western
 - Will circulate invite once logistics are confirmed
- **MHSAA Workshop:** Led a workshop session at the MHSAA WISL Conference that provided insights from high school coaches and administrators
- **Sports Advocacy Network of the Women's Sports Foundation:** A day-long discussion on how to turn Equity Project research into action with stakeholders across the sector
- **NFL Combine:** hosted a focus group discussion among aspiring female football coaches about barriers to access

Public Comment

Jennifer Smith, Deputy Athletic Director at Michigan State University, addressed the Task Force about the state of women's athletics at MSU.

- Bridging the gap in salaries between male and female athletics professionals.
- Creating a pipeline of student athletes for professions in sports.
- Contact Information: smith170@ath.msu.edu

Cara Jones with the Great Sports Great Kids program, a division of Grand Rapids Student Advancement Foundation, addressed the Task Force about the work their non-profit is doing in the Grand Rapids School District.

- GSGK privately funds K-8th grade athletics for public school students.
- Offers a full variety of sports at elementary school levels and 15 sports at middle school level.
- Great Girls is a group of 20 female corporate leaders in Grand Rapids with a background in athletics who advocate for the importance of girls sports and removing barriers.
- GSGK uses a database to track youth participation in sports at all levels and to track key indicators including why girls drop sports in transition years.
 - GSGK is being proactive in addressing this issue and collecting data.
- GSGK is the only program in the state operating in this manner.
- Contact Information: cara@grsaf.org

Sean Mann with the Detroit City Football Club addressed the Task Force about Michigan women's soccer league and his plan to launch a women's soccer team in Detroit

- First game on May 9th at Keyworth Stadium in Hamtramck. Invited task force to attend.
- Contact information: sean.mann@detcityfc.com

Mike Price, Executive Director of Greater Lansing Sports Authority, addressed the Task Force about considering amateur sports in the Phase I research being collected.

- Spoke about Pure Michigan Sports, a statewide coalition aimed at raising the profile of Michigan as a sports destination.
- Contact Information: mprice@lansing.org

Gary Quitquit, head coach of the University of Michigan Women's Ice Hockey Team, addressed the taskforce about differences seen at UofM between men's (NCAA) and women's (ACHA) ice hockey teams and resources.

- Women's team is given no admissions preference, scholarship or financial assistance and men's team does.
- Women's team does not receive academic support and men's team does.
- Women's team must furnish their own equipment and men's team has it paid for and provided.
- Women's team must pay to use Yost Arena and rarely are able to use it for games.
 - Other games are played at Arctic Edge ice arena as a general public admit.
- Contact Information: garyquitquit@hotmail.com

Update on Research Status

Ketra Armstrong provided an update on the survey, that has launched and is being distributed to women and girls who work and play in sports.

- 250 individuals who have completed the survey. 70 – 80 in progress.
- 60% female respondents.
- Majority of responses are from collegiate level but also community sports and professional sports. Need more community college responses.

- Requested assistance in circulating the survey to sports leadership (men and women who work in any faction of leadership, officiating, media, conditioning, sports medicine etc) – hoping to get 350 more prior to close.
- Survey will be closed on Friday, March 13th.

Edward Elliot, a graduate student at University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, spoke on his progress collecting qualitative data via interviews and research.

- Collecting data via site visits and one-on-one phone call interviews.
 - One-on-one interviews with coaches, student athletes and administrators.
 - The goal is to interview 60 – 70 athletes.
 - Collective data will be anonymized.
 - Interview topics include obstacles and barriers, discussion of what’s working and what recommendations they have, where they see the state of women’s athletics and where the task force can help. Also discussed are hiring practices and work/team culture.
 - Recommendations from the Task Force for additional question topics include mental health and family culture.
- Researching best practices in countries and regions around the world, what policies exist and what research is being done. Current research indicates recommendations fall into three categories:
 - Governance, structure and oversight
 - Communication and promotion
 - Educational programs and trainings

Dr. Dan Gould and Jill Kochanek of the MSU ISYS presented their research on women’s sports participation in high schools across Michigan.

- Thank you to MHSAA who made HS data available and to Gwen Norrell fellowship fund at MSU.
- School sport participation data from 523 senior high schools in Michigan (public and private)
- Key findings indicate that where a girl lives and the socioeconomic status of her school greatly impact participation in high school sports.
 - Girls living in suburban areas and cities and who attend schools with more students who qualify for a higher percentage of free and reduced lunch (low SES) are less likely to participate in high school sports.
 - Girls from town and rural areas and who attend higher SES schools are more likely to participate.

Karen Issokson-Silver and Sarah Axelson presented findings from Chasing Equity, a report from the Women’s Sports Foundation examining the landscape of girls and women in sports.

- Used secondary data and proprietary data; 500 research report data collections, 2300 survey collection of female leaders in sport.
 - Topics covered youth level, access opportunity and participation. Benefits and barriers to participation. Health and safety, title ix awareness and compliance.

- Women working in sports, climate, pay equity and media coverage of female athletes.
 - Inundated with great commentary on experiences women have in sport. Call to action in summary report.
- Sarah informed the Task Force of a grant currently open to support aspiring female coaches.
 - Closes on March 16th
- Discussed the Equity Project Initiative
 - Held a convening of sports advocacy sectors to discuss five key areas and collaborate towards a collective goal
 - More information will be available on International Women's Day, Sunday, March 8th.
 - Please reach out if you have interest in attending these convenings on behalf of the task force.

Open Discussion: Remaining Research Needs

- Data Collection
 - Quantitate data survey closes March 13th
 - Qualitative data collection is ongoing (contact Edward with suggestions for interviews)
- Both data sets will be ready the week of April 14th
 - Focus Discussion Calls: plan to schedule 2 calls on each data set in April to discuss findings
- MSU ISYS research next steps
 - Include boys participation data.
 - Examine majority minority students schools
 - Analysis on access to data and what is provided, what's not.
 - Provide visuals on geographic trends in the state of Michigan.
 - Look into de-identifying a few exemplar schools to examine best practices.
 - Circulate updated data by early April.

Future Meetings

Annual Meeting

- Report will be published and presented
 - Report will be circulated to Task Force and Advisory members prior to the meeting
- Annual meeting structure
 - Dinner for Task Force and Advisory Members for informal discussion
 - 10am May 7th at Wayne State Ilitch School of Business
 - Begin discussing report and have final research presentations
 - Discuss solutions in 3 buckets
 - K-12 and youth, collegiate and professional and senior sports executives.
 - Brainstorm and generate ideas on solutions, big and small
- Open Sessions and breakouts by topics.
 - Have a moderator or facilitator
 - Send suggestions for a moderator to Sally or Jennette.

Fall meeting at UofM and winter meeting at Grand Valley

Chairperson/Secretary Benson thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 4:00 p.m.