



Media Advisory

For Immediate Release

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Coalition Demands Equal Treatment of Girls and Boys in Athletic Programs in Michigan Schools

Representatives from the Michigan Gender Equity Team (MGET), the Michigan National Organization of Women (NOW) and the American Association of Women (AAUW) of Michigan will address the Michigan State Board of Education on Tuesday, May 11 about several gender equity issues facing Michigan's schools today. Specifically the coalition is concerned about the Board's commitment to promoting gender equity in school sports and other programs as required by Title IX of the federal Education Amendments of 1972 and Michigan's education and civil rights laws.

Title IX is the federal legislation that prohibits sex discrimination in federally funded education programs and activities. Since it became law in 1972 it has led to an 800 percent increase in female participation in sports at the high school level. Female athletes are more likely to develop positive school and lifestyle habits and benefit just as boys do from athletic participation.

Instances of discrimination in the scheduling of middle school girls' teams out of season have occurred, as well as irregularities in the appointment, training and public identification of Title IX coordinators. Whereas it took an 8-year court challenge that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court to convince Michigan schools to treat girls' sports fairly, the coalition hopes the Board and the Superintendent of Public Instruction will assure gender fairness in middle school programs.

The following issues are of particular concern.

- There is a need for schedule changes to allow middle school girls' teams to play in season.
- Athletic programs need to be monitored to be sure there is comparable support for both genders.
- Title IX Coordinators should be appointed, trained and publicly identified, as required by law.
- The results of Title IX audits should be made available to the State Board of Education on a regular basis to demonstrate compliance with the law.

For more information about the coalition partners, access the following websites:

- www.mi-gender-equity.com
- www.michnow.org
- www.aauwmi.org