



PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETIC PROGRAMS INCREASES FOR THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR

Athletic participation by high school students at MIAA member schools increased for the third consecutive year and reached an all-time high during the 2002-2003 school year. Figures collected from 352 member schools indicate that 195,638 student athletes participated on high school teams. This figure represents an athletic participation increase of 1,758 students from the previous year. Student enrollment during this same time frame in grades 9-12 at member schools increased by 6,069 students.

There were 109,668 boys and 85,970 girls playing sports this past school year compared to 108,864 boys and 85,016 girls the previous year. (This methodology of the survey does not account for students who play more than one sport). Nineteen sports were included in the survey.

Football continued to have the highest number of participants with 19,807 players, up from 19,592 the previous year. Once again soccer was the most popular girl's sport with 12,173 participants, up from 11,929 the previous year. Boys' lacrosse recognized the highest increase in participation with an additional 422 athletes, bringing the 2002-2003 total participants to 5,917. Girls' indoor track & field saw the highest increase in participants with 404 new athletes joining indoor track & field teams, bringing the total to 6,765. Also notable, girls' lacrosse noticed another considerable increase during the 2002-2003 school year jumping from 3,845 participants to 4,147 participants, a gain of 302 new lacrosse players.