



PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETIC PROGRAMS INCREASES FOR FOURTH STRAIGHT YEAR

Athletic participation by high school students at MIAA member schools increased for the fourth consecutive year and reached an all-time high during the 2003-2004 school year. Figures collected from 356 member schools indicate that 196,687 student athletes participated on high school teams. This figure represents an athletic participation increase of 1,049 students from the previous year. Student enrollment during this same time frame in grades 9-12 at member schools increased by 8,230 students.

There were 110,659 boys and 86,028 girls playing sports this past school year compared to 109,668 boys and 85,970 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 20,221 players, up 414 student-athletes from the previous year. Once again soccer was the most popular girls' sport with 12,193 participants. However, participation in girls' softball jumped up to the second most popular female sport by increasing participation by 180 athletes. For the second year in a row Boys' lacrosse recognized the highest increase in participation with an additional 692 athletes, bringing the 2003-2004 total participants to 6,609. Girls' lacrosse noticed another considerable increase during the 2003-2004 school year jumping from 4,147 participants to 4,449 participants, a gain of 302 new female lacrosse players.