



In the wake of our current social unrest and racial inequality brought into the national spotlight by the killing of George Floyd, the MIAA Executive Director Bill Gaine recently addressed our members by writing, “We understand that true change takes time and persistence. We will remain steadfast in the pursuit of justice and equity for all. We guarantee that we will diligently and tirelessly examine our actions and our programs to promote equity and justice for all. We also recognize this will not be easy, but then again, no real accomplishment is ever achieved with ease. And finally, we welcome and value the input of our respective memberships and are committed to traveling this long and challenging road together with you. We owe this to the students whom we serve.” This statement encapsulates why this document is presented before you today.

The goal of this document is to provide a Competitive Equity Tool to be used by all member schools to help properly align schools using enrollment stability percentage rates and high needs percentage. This tool was created by Fitchburg Director of Athletics Craig Antocci with the help of the Urban AD Data Subcommittee. Washington state has just passed legislation this year using similar data to help align their schools athletically. Massachusetts is widely seen as having the best educational system in the United States. It can also be known as the state that does the most to support properly aligned educational athletics.

What is equal vs. equity in our schools? Equality is everyone has the same rights, opportunities, and resources. Equality does improve the situation but does not address specific needs. An example in our present day is giving each high school student a laptop. However, this does not address those students who don't have an internet connection. Schools that prioritize equity versus equality are more in tune to their specific students' needs and provide resources to overcome their specific challenges.

We believe that this competitive equity tool will help balance the playing field to not only look at enrollment (equal) but also to consider the constantly changing enrollment at schools with higher high needs percentages and lower stability enrollment percentages (equity). With enrollment as the only factor we don't consider the growing role that wealth plays in the success of high school athletics.

What is our current state of youth athletics?

According to the Washington Post, “The proportion of kids ages 6 to 12 who participate regularly in team sports keeps declining. In 2008, it was 45 percent, according to the Aspen Institute think tank. In 2018, it was 38 percent.

“That’s largely attributable to crumbling youth sports infrastructure — municipal recreational leagues are declining as parents push kids to chase college scholarships through more competitive teams — and the increased cost to play on travel or club squads.” (Washington Post, High School Sports Participation Drops for First Time in 30 Years, August 28, 2019

The Atlantic’s Linda Flanagan, also a high school cross country coach, reported, “Also pushing poorer kids out is the professionalization of kids’ sports: *Time* reports that the business of kids’



sports has grown 55 percent since 2010, and is now a \$15.3 billion industry. Driving that growth is the perception that a child's athletic achievement might improve her college prospects, lead to an athletic scholarship, and lend some prestige to the family name. Well-off-enough parents invest in specialized camps, leagues, equipment, and travel teams, while children from families without the financial resources or time—competitive kids' games are often played across state lines, devouring weekends for parents as well as players—fill out dwindling town leagues. On top of these factors, schools with shrinking budgets are dropping physical education or requiring kids to pay for their school teams. Seventy percent of kids leave sports entirely by age 13.”

The Seattle Times article entitled, “What Separates the Haves and Have-Nots of High School Athletics-and Washington’s Plan to Fix it”, writer Evan Webeck says, “The Aspen Institute, which every year conducts a national “State of Play” survey with the goal of increasing access to youth sports, reports growing participation overall but a drop among households with incomes below \$50,000, particularly precipitous among those making less than \$25,000. Only 34 percent of children from those households played at least one team sport in 2017, while 56.5 percent did overall — and 69 percent of kids in households making at least \$100,000.

“The gap between haves and have nots has widened over time,” says Tom Farrey, an executive director at The Aspen Institute. (Farrey was an investigative sports reporter for The Seattle Times in the 1990s.)

“There’s just been a general privatization of sport and recreation over the past generation and increasingly over the past 10 or so years,” he says. “It is driven by the creation of these travel teams, these club teams at ever earlier ages.”

By the time kids reach high school, the so-called haves and have-nots are almost predetermined, sifted out by the system one way or another. It’s not the elite athletes who are lost in the shuffle, but rather those who aren’t as naturally gifted, who might turn to the next best thing, something easier or less expensive.”

Linda Flanagan, in her article for the Atlantic titled “What’s Lost When Only Rich Kids Play Sports”, says, “Lots of factors keep lower-income children from being active. Some sports, like ice hockey, swimming, and golf, require costly facilities just to play. And while sports such as basketball and track might be open to all in theory, parks in low-income areas tend to lack organized activities for kids, which are correlated to park use.

She continues, “Early sports participation matters because the advantages that come with it can serve as an inoculation against some of life’s unhappier outcomes. Compared to those who don’t play sports, students on high-school teams graduate at higher rates, perform better on tests, secure higher grades, and are more apt to aim for college. Sports participation is also correlated with happier families, better physical and emotional health, and an overall higher quality of life, including less drug and tobacco use in high school.”

She concludes with, “Girls in particular seem to benefit from athletics: Participation reduces the chances of developing heart disease and breast cancer, cuts rates of unplanned pregnancies, lessens obesity, and boosts body self-esteem. And the advantages extend into adulthood: Four out of five female business executives played sports as kids, and women who go on to play sports in college are 25 percent more likely than those who don’t to develop political aspirations. “Kids who are excluded for socioeconomic reasons are missing out on all of that,” said Mark

Hyman, an assistant teaching professor at the George Washington School of Business and the author of *Until it Hurts: America's Obsession with Youth Sports and How It Harms Our Kids*. "Sports would help them develop more fully as people."

What is the Competitive Equity Tool?

The first data that we look at is the school's Stability Rate. The Stability Rate measures how many students remain in a district or school throughout the school year. The lower the stability percentage the more students are in and out of that school and is particularly prevalent among low-income, immigrant and minority children, whose families are often susceptible to changes in housing that precipitate changes in the schools they attend. The state average stability percentage is 94.4%. These students who are in and out of a school during the same year would not have a meaningful impact on athletics, extra curriculars, or clubs.

The next data we use is the High Needs percentage. The Massachusetts state average for High Needs is 47.39%. If one is truly trying to make it equitable for all schools, and provide a level playing field for all schools, the High Needs numbers should be used as part of our competitive equity tool. The High Needs number provides a better overall comparison of the level of need that each community is facing. Not only does it include the students who are economically disadvantaged, but it also includes special education and EL/Former EL students. If students are in multiple categories, they are only counted once in the High Needs group. For example, if a student is Economically Disadvantaged and SPED, they would only count as 1 single High Needs student but appear in both the ED and SPED subgroups for all other considerations. By just using the Economically Disadvantaged, you are leaving out other pockets of students who are significantly impacted with equitable access to sports. Special Ed and ELL students also play sports, but due to the additional demands that they need to exert at school in order to be successful, they may not be able to participate in as many sports as a student that is not Special Ed or ELL.

Based on the state High Needs % average of 47.39 we then use a sliding scale to determine the amount by which the individual school is aided. See scale at end of report. The cap of support cannot exceed 45%.

So, using Chicopee Comp and Chicopee High as two examples:

| | Enroll-ment | Stability % | Stable Enrollment | High Needs % | Adjusted Enrollment |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Chicopee Comp | 1183 | 95.9 | 1134 | 49.2 | 1077 |
| Chicopee High | 987 | 91.2 | 900 | 60.3 | 765 |

The Competitive Equity Tool does not affect Comp that much as its enrollment is mostly stable and its High Needs % is just above the state average. However, Chicopee High has a lower Stability % and greater High Needs % so this data reduced Chicopee High's enrollment.

Let's analyze this data using the past Massachusetts' state champions from this past year. We cannot get information from private schools, but we can state in all probability that their Stability Rate % is high and High Needs % is low. Schools with a High Needs % above the state average

are highlighted in yellow. Co-op highlighted light green that is above state average in High Needs%.

Fall 2020 Massachusetts High School Champions:

| Girls Soccer | Stability % | High Needs % | State HN % |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Bishop Feehan | na | na | 47.9 |
| Holliston High School | 97.90% | 17.90% | 47.9 |
| South Hadley High School | 97.10% | 33.50% | 47.9 |
| Millbury High School | 95.90% | 38.30% | 47.9 |

| Boys Soccer | | | |
|-------------|--------|--------|------|
| Longmeadow | 97.80% | 22.10% | 47.9 |
| Winchester | 99.00% | 23.20% | 47.9 |
| Belchertown | 98.50% | 26.70% | 47.9 |
| Bromfield | 98.30% | 15.70% | 47.9 |

| Football | | | |
|---------------------|--------|--------|------|
| St John's Prep | na | na | 47.9 |
| Mansfield | 97.00% | 24.10% | 47.9 |
| Springfield Central | 90.80% | 74.50% | 47.9 |
| Melrose | 97.50% | 24.10% | 47.9 |
| Swampscott | 97.00% | 28.40% | 47.9 |
| Ashland | 98.00% | 28.40% | 47.9 |
| Abington | 95.50% | 33.90% | 47.9 |
| St. Bernard's | na | na | 47.9 |

| Girls Volleyball | | | |
|------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Needham | 98.70% | 20.60% | 47.9 |
| Canton | 98.30% | 21.30% | 47.9 |
| Frontier | 97.40% | 31.10% | 47.9 |
| | | | |

| Field Hockey | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Somerset Berkley Regional High School | 97.20% | 24.30% | 47.9 |
| Longmeadow High School | 97.80% | 22.10% | 47.9 |
| Dover-Sherborn Regional High School | 98.20% | 17.50% | 47.9 |
| Hopedale Jr Sr High School | 97.10% | 24.50% | 47.9 |

Winter 2020

Stability % High Needs % State Average HN

| Boys Basketball | | | |
|---------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Lynn English | 87.00% | 71.90% | 47.9 |
| Springfield Central | 90.80% | 74.50% | 47.9 |
| Whitman Hanson | 94.20% | 25.10% | 47.9 |
| Taconic | 94.00% | 58.40% | 47.9 |
| Burke | 71.20% | 84.20% | 47.9 |
| Sutton | 99.00% | 18.70% | 47.9 |
| Abington | 95.50% | 33.90% | 47.9 |
| Hopedale | 97.10% | 24.50% | 47.9 |

| Girls Basketball | | | |
|------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Andover | 98.10% | 24.90% | 47.9 |
| Franklin | 99.10% | 20.20% | 47.9 |
| Foxboro | 98.00% | 28.20% | 47.9 |
| Taconic | 94.00% | 58.40% | 47.9 |
| St. Mary's | #N/A | #N/A | 47.9 |
| Hoosac | 92.80% | 53.7% | 47.9 |
| Cathedral | #N/A | #N/A | 47.9 |
| Maynard | 95.00% | 28.20% | 47.9 |

| Boys Hockey | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Belmont High School | 98.60% | 17.80% | 47.9 |
| Walpole High School | 97.60% | 24.10% | 47.9 |
| Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School | 98.30% | 22.70% | 47.9 |
| Canton High School | 98.30% | 21.30% | 47.9 |
| Hanover High School | 99.10% | 20.40% | 47.9 |
| Longmeadow High School | 97.80% | 22.10% | 47.9 |
| Greenfield High School (Co-op) | 94.50% | 55.00% | 47.9 |

| Boys Wrestling | | | |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| | | | |

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Springfield Central | 90.80% | 74.50% | 47.9 |
| Central Catholic | #N/A | #N/A | 47.9 |
| Melrose | 97.50% | 24.10% | 47.9 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Girls Wrestling | | | |
| Chicopee High | 91.20% | 60.30% | 47.9 |

Spring 2019

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| Baseball | Stability % | High Needs % | State Average HN |
| Taunton | 93.60% | 50.30% | 47.9 |
| St Mary's | #N/A | #N/A | 47.9 |
| Taonic | 94.00% | 58.40% | 47.9 |
| Manchester-Essex | 97.70% | 18.00% | 47.9 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|------|
| Softball | | | |
| Wachusett | 97.40% | 21.70% | 47.9 |
| Hudson | 94.50% | 37.10% | 47.9 |
| Austin Prep | #N/A | #N/A | 47.9 |

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------|--------|------|
| G Lacrosse | | | |
| Notre Dame Academy | #N/A | #N/A | 47.9 |
| Cohasset | 98.70% | 15.40% | 47.9 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------|--------|------|
| B Lacrosse | | | |
| Lincoln Sudbury | 98.30% | 22.70% | 47.9 |
| Winchester | 99.00% | 23.20% | 47.9 |
| Dover Sherborn | 98.20% | 17.50% | 47.9 |

When we look at the state champions and finalists in the past calendar year, we see that 82% of this group are schools with a low High Needs % and high Stability Rate % compared with the remaining 18% consisting of schools with a High Needs % above the state average. The private schools have won 13% of these championships/finalists and only represent 11% of the schools in MA. Public schools with High Needs % above the state average represent 34-39% of schools in Massachusetts.

High school athletics in Massachusetts are not the great equalizer according to this data. This data tells schools with higher High Needs % that their students need to limit their expectations and to not aspire to athletic success.

However, by using the Competitive Equity Tool, we can start to realign schools according to their adjusted enrollment and provide opportunities to have the kind of competition that is appropriate for their school. Below is a sample of Central Mass Schools and their adjusted enrollments using the Competitive Equity Tool:

| | Enrollment | Stability % | Stable Enrollment | High Needs% | Adjusted Enrollment |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Wachusett Regional High School | 2,031 | 97.40% | 1,978 | 21.70% | 1978 |
| Shrewsbury Sr High School | 1,885 | 98.30% | 1,853 | 22.80% | 1853 |
| Algonquin Regional High School | 1,383 | 98.00% | 1,355 | 22.10% | 1355 |
| Doherty Memorial High School | 1,485 | 90.80% | 1,348 | 60.60% | 1146 |
| Leominster High School | 1,112 | 89.90% | 1,000 | 45.50% | 1000 |
| Marlborough High School | 1,040 | 89.30% | 929 | 57.40% | 790 |
| Fitchburg High School | 1,187 | 93.60% | 1,011 | 64.80% | 809 |
| Burncoat Senior High School | 1,100 | 90.10% | 991 | 76.70% | 694 |
| Nashoba Regional School | 917 | 96.90% | 889 | 18.20% | 889 |
| Grafton High School | 868 | 97.90% | 850 | 24.20% | 850 |
| Auburn High School | 733 | 93.90% | 688 | 26.10% | 688 |
| Northbridge High School | 536 | 94.90% | 509 | 29.90% | 509 |
| Quabbin Regional High School | 617 | 93.70% | 578 | 28.70% | 578 |
| Quaboag Regional High School | 350 | 95.20% | 333 | 39.40% | 333 |

The short-term goal is for this Competitive Equity Tool to be used by any school looking to make an appeal in winter 2020 so that they can properly align themselves with appropriate competition. The long-term goal is for all schools in Massachusetts to be aligned using this tool for the next alignment cycle with an understanding that by using this we are more in tune with each school and their specific needs.

I want to thank the tireless work of Craig Antocci who has dedicated his time and energy to this pursuit of equity and fairness in Massachusetts high school athletics. His understanding of data and how to interpret it is a major reason this document is before you. The Competitive Equity Tool is a beta tool using readily available information from DESE. With the addition of more data we feel that this can be even more attuned to each schools' needs.

Finally, by using the Competitive Equity Tool, we are aligning our schools with Mr. Gaine's pursuit of equity and justice for all. We are meeting schools and their students where they are and offering a classification that better meets their needs.

Yours in Sport,

Sean Mackin

Director of Athletics

Chicopee Public Schools

Definitions:

Students with Disabilities: Students with special needs who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

High Needs: Students who belong to one or more of the following groups: students with disabilities, current or former English learners, and/or economically disadvantaged students.

Sliding Scale for High Needs above the state average of 47.9:

| Thresholds | MIN | MAX | Enrollment Modifier |
|------------|--------|--------|---------------------|
| 1 | 0.00% | 5.00% | 5.00% |
| 2 | 5.00% | 10.00% | 10.00% |
| 3 | 10.00% | 15.00% | 15.00% |
| 4 | 15.00% | 20.00% | 20.00% |
| 5 | 20.00% | 25.00% | 25.00% |
| 6 | 25.00% | 30.00% | 30.00% |
| 7 | 30.00% | 35.00% | 35.00% |
| 8 | 35.00% | 40.00% | 40.00% |



Stability Rate %: measures how many students remain in a district or school throughout the school year.