

MSH Girls Wrestling Board Proposal

03/24/2025

Introduction

Beginning in 2026-27, the WIAA will implement a State Girls Wrestling Team Tournament. The WIAA Board of Control also approved a mandate that requires a sponsored girls' school program to only wrestle against other schools that sponsor a girls' wrestling program, starting in 2025-26. Furthermore, eligibility for the State Girls' Wrestling Tournament will only be afforded to wrestlers participating in sponsored girls' wrestling programs. Please note without a sponsored/sanctioned program at a school, any female wishing to participate in wrestling will be forced to only compete on the boys programming.

Rationale

1. **Increasing Popularity and Demand:** Girls' wrestling is one of the fastest-growing sports at the high school level, with state and national governing bodies recognizing the need for official programs. This growth can be seen all around the state of Wisconsin and at all age levels.
 - a. Three seasons ago, the WIAA established a girls wrestling individual state series by sanctioning the sport. Over the past three years, numbers around the state have significantly increased. Prior to the 2022-23 season, girls could only compete within the boys schedule/competition.
 - i. 2017/18: 227 girl participants
 - ii. 2018/19: 289 girl participants
 - iii. 2019/20: 368 girl participants
 - iv. 2020/21: 245 girl participants
 - v. 2021/22: 452 girl participants
 - vi. 2022/23: 749 girl participants. (Year one of a sanctioned sport with its own girl's individual state series)
 - vii. 2023/24: 1,253, another 66% growth in numbers from the prior year
 - viii. 2024/25: 1,868 participants. 51% increase in numbers from the previous year.
 - b. The NCAA has just voted and announced earlier this year that women's wrestling will be the 91st recognized and offered sport at the collegiate level.
 - c. WIAA championship tournaments for this sport start in 2026
 - d. At the BRC wrestling coaches meeting this past month, the coaches voted and are moving forward to establish a girls individual conference tournament as well as crowning the first girl team conference winner in the 2025-26 season.
 - i. All other conference members either have sanctioned a girls team with coaches and funding or are in the process of establishing this progressive growth in the sport of wrestling.

2. **Gender Equity and Title IX Compliance:** Establishing a girls' wrestling team will contribute to gender equality in athletics, ensuring compliance with Title IX requirements by providing female students with opportunities equivalent to those available to male students.
3. **Physical and Mental Benefits:** Wrestling builds discipline, strength, self-confidence, and teamwork, benefiting students both academically and personally.

Implementation Plan

1. **Assessment of Interest:**
 - a. **Interest levels already seen in the district:**
 - i. 3 female participants on the team in the 2022-23 season at MHS
 - ii. 3 female participants on the team in the 2024-25 season at MHS
 - iii. 6 female participants at the Middle School this year (with an additional half dozen that signed up and/or came out for the first week).
 - iv. 10 female participants in the youth program this year.
2. **Facilities and Equipment:** Utilize existing wrestling facilities, mats, and equipment, ensuring adequate space and scheduling.
3. **Coaching and Staffing:** Identify qualified coaches, possibly leveraging existing wrestling staff or hiring new personnel with experience in girls' wrestling.
4. **Competition Opportunities:** Establish a competition schedule by coordinating with other schools that have girls' wrestling teams or participating in state-sanctioned events.
5. **Funding and Budget:** Explore funding options through school athletic budgets, booster clubs, fundraising initiatives, and potential grants for women's sports programs.
 - a. **Proposed budget**
 - i. Coaches- \$4,355.16
 - ii. Gameworkers- \$200
 - iii. Officials fees- \$400
 - iv. Transportation- \$3,000
 - v. Supplies- \$250
 - vi. Dues/fees- \$1,000

Conclusion

Adding girls' wrestling to our school's athletic program is a timely and beneficial decision that aligns with national and statewide trends, provides equal opportunities, and supports student development. By approving this proposal, the school board will be taking a progressive step toward expanding athletic diversity and empowering female athletes in our community.

We appreciate your consideration of this proposal and look forward to your support in making girls' wrestling an official school sport. We welcome any feedback and would be happy to discuss further details at the upcoming board meeting.