

NEW TITLE IX REGULATIONS – TRAINING SESSIONS

TITLE IX INVESTIGATOR TRAINING

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PRESENTATION FORMAT



- Questions
 - Raise your hand for relevant questions during training.
 - You can email questions during the presentation and I will address those questions during our break or at the end.
 - Jessica@scottscrivenlaw.com
 - You can also use the chat function for questions.
 - Please keep your video on as much as possible so we can see your smiling faces.
- Please mute on your end unless you are asking or responding to a question.
- We will be sending certificates of completion after every training.

YOUR TITLE IX TOOLBOX



- Training materials from this session are available at the following link:
- https://scottscrivenlaw-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/p/jessica/Eo5Cs0_8vEROI-2nphneW0kBJPc4pea6sbyrklZqUISS-A?e=7ufTD2
- The folder also contains other useful resources we will reference during the training.

AGENDA



- 9:00 – 9:30 Overview of New Regulations and Definitions Relevant to Investigators
- 9:30 – 10:30 Investigating a Title IX Complaint – Providing Notice and Gathering Evidence
- 10:30 BREAK
- 10:45 – 11:15 Drafting an Unbiased Report and Allowing Party Input
- 11:15 – 11:45 Investigating a Title IX Athletics Complaint
- 11:45 – 12:00 Q & A

YOUR TRAINING OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE NEW TITLE IX REGULATIONS



TRAINING REQUIREMENTS



- Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, Decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process must receive training on:
 - the definition of sexual harassment in the regulations,
 - the scope of the recipient's education program or activity,
 - how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, **as applicable**, and
 - how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.

INVESTIGATOR-SPECIFIC TRAINING REQUIREMENT



- Districts must ensure that investigators receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, as set forth in the regulations.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS



- Any materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, must not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment.
- All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution must be made available on the school's website, if it has one.
- Training materials must be kept for 7 years.

TITLE IX BACKGROUND



TITLE IX BACKGROUND



No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

20 U.S.C. § 1681(a).

BACKGROUND ON TITLE IX REGULATIONS



U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issues a Dear Colleague Letter and Q&A; rescinds Obama-era guidance.

Sep. 2017

OCR released the highly anticipated final rule.

6 May 2020

?

2021

Nov. 2018

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comments on changes to the Title IX regulations.

14 Aug. 2020

August 14, 2020
• Final rule becomes effective.

TITLE IX BACKGROUND



- **Q: Whom does Title IX protect?**
- **A: Any person participating in an educational program in the United States that receives federal financial assistance.**
 - Students.
 - Staff.
 - Applicants for admission.
 - Visitors and community members.

TITLE IX BACKGROUND



- **Q: What does Title IX protect against?**
- **A: Exclusion from participation in, or denial of benefits of, any educational program or activity on the basis of sex.**
 - Admissions and Employment.
 - Classes and curricular activities.
 - Extracurricular activities (including athletics).
 - Discipline.
 - Social media.
 - Pregnant and Parenting Students
 - Retaliation
 - Treatment of Transgender Students
 - Sex-based harassment and discrimination

NEW TITLE IX TERMS AND DEFINITIONS



NEW TITLE IX LINGO (TERMS)



Recipients. School districts are now referred to as “recipients.”

Complainant. A person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Respondent. A person who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Supportive Measures. These are your “interim measures.”

Determination of Responsibility. This is your report/decision.

NEW TITLE IX LINGO (DEFINITIONS)



Actual Knowledge

- Notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment **to any employee.**

Obligation to Respond

- A school with **actual knowledge** of sexual harassment in a program or activity against a person in the U.S. must respond promptly and in a manner that is **not deliberately indifferent.**

NEW TITLE IX LINGO (DEFINITIONS)



Sexual Harassment: Conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., *quid pro quo* sexual harassment);
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, **and** objectively offensive that it **effectively denies** a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity; OR
- "Sexual assault," "dating violence," "domestic violence," or "stalking," as defined by the Clery Act.

THE TITLE IX COORDINATOR'S ROLE



- **Title IX Coordinator(s)**
 - Must promptly contact Complainant, discuss available supportive measures (with or without a formal complaint), and explain process for filing a formal complaint.
 - Responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.
 - New documentation requirements:
 - Measures taken to restore or preserve equal access to the program or activity;
 - The basis for the conclusion that the District's response was not deliberately indifferent.

THE SCOPE OF YOUR ROLE AS INVESTIGATOR



FIVE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO INVESTIGATIONS



- Mandatory separation between the investigation function and decision-making.
- Respondent must be presumed not responsible for the conduct throughout the entire investigation process.
- Parties are entitled to view all of the evidence in the case.
- All Parties receive the investigator's report without redactions.
- No confidentiality of party and witness names.

DUTY TO AVOID BIAS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST



- Your focus is the integrity of the process. Never an outcome.
- Recognize and understand what your biases are so that you can put them aside.
- Cultural competency – understand your microaggressions or unconscious biases.
- Check ego at the door.

HOW MANY HATS CAN AN INVESTIGATOR WEAR?



Investigator

Person designated to investigate, gather evidence and compile an investigation report.

Investigator may also be the Title IX Coordinator.



Decisionmaker

Person who issues a written determination regarding responsibility.

Cannot be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or the Investigator.



Appeals Designee

Must offer both respondent and complainant an opportunity to appeal.

Cannot be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator, Investigator, or the Decisionmaker.

MORE ON THE SEPARATION BETWEEN INVESTIGATOR AND DECISION-MAKER



- The Preamble to the Regulations says that an investigation report can reach a conclusion or recommendation. However, this is not recommended.
- In response to questions, the DOE has clarified that an investigator can testify to their opinions at a hearing and that decision-makers can have discussions with the investigator about their opinions.
- No matter how much sharing occurs between Investigator and Decision-Maker, it is the Decision-Maker's job to issue an independent and objective decision.

CONFIDENTIALITY



Recipients cannot restrict either party's ability to discuss the allegations or gather and present evidence.

Recipients must keep confidential the identity of a person who complains or reports sexual harassment, including parties and witnesses, except as permitted by law or to carry out the purpose of these regulations.

Will these responsibilities be frustrated in practice?

INVESTIGATION #1: STUDENT COMPLAINANT AND RESPONDENT

Katie is a Junior on the school's dance team and has dated two different football players this year. She had sex with both of them and now that she has broken up with them, they've told the entire team about the details of everything they've done. The boys have shared intimate texts and sexting between the two of them and now the whole school knows. Katie has been called a "slut" and a "whore" by various classmates, but especially by Nick, her most recent boyfriend. Twice she has been in the hallway at school at her locker and had her butt grabbed by someone, and she doesn't know who it was. She files a formal complaint naming Nick as the Respondent and delivers it to the Title IX Coordinator.



INVESTIGATION #2: STUDENT COMPLAINANT/STAFF RESPONDENT

Emma is a Sophomore student who has struggled academically. Her math teacher suggested she start meeting with him after school for private tutoring/review, at no cost. Her parents are aware. Emma meets with her teacher for two months in his classroom with the door shut, and then during a tutoring meeting the teacher leans in towards her, puts his hand on her stomach, and kisses her. She was stunned, didn't say anything, and went home and told her parents. The following day the parents call the school counselor and tell her what happened. They do not want to see the teacher ever again and they do not want to participate in an investigation because it will be too traumatic for Emma.



**YOUR ROLE AS INVESTIGATOR:
STEP ONE – PROVIDING THE NOTICE OF
INVESTIGATION AND ALLEGATIONS**



- ✓ Notice of the grievance process, including any informal resolution process;
- ✓ Notice of the allegations, including sufficient detail (i.e., names of known parties, the conduct alleged to be sexual harassment, and the date and location of the conduct, if known) to allow the respondent to prepare a response before an initial interview;
- ✓ A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the conduct and that responsibility will be determined at the conclusion of the grievance process;
- ✓ Notice of the parties' right to have an advisor (who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney) and to inspect and review evidence; and
- ✓ Notice of any provision in the code of conduct that prohibits knowingly making false statements or providing false information in the grievance process.

Written Notice Start of Investigation of Formal Complaint

PARTIES TO THE INVESTIGATION



- May consolidate formal complaints against more than one respondent, by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against another party, where the allegations arise out of the same facts or circumstances.
106.45(b)(4).
- If new allegations emerge that will be part of the investigation, you must provide a revised written notice identifying the new allegations.

MANAGING AN ADVISOR'S INVOLVEMENT



- Both parties have an equal opportunity to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied by an advisor who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
- Employees will typically have a union representative and/or an attorney represent them.
- Students may bring a parent or advisor.
- Make sure to have a pre-interview discussion with representatives/advisors about the limitations of what they can do/say in the interview.
- You may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.

**REVIEW OF TEMPLATES:
NOTICE OF ALLEGATIONS AND INVESTIGATION
DESIGNATION OF ADVISOR FORM
CONSENT TO INFORMAL PROCESS**

**NOTE: THE INFORMAL PROCESS IS NEVER
AVAILABLE WHEN AN EMPLOYEE IS THE
RESPONDENT**

YOUR ROLE AS INVESTIGATOR: STEP TWO – GATHERING EVIDENCE



GATHERING EVIDENCE – COMPLYING WITH THE REGULATIONS



- Burden of proof rests on the Recipient at all times.
- Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- Cannot restrict the parties from discussing the allegations under investigation or from gathering and presenting relevant evidence.
- Must provide to any party whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

GATHERING EVIDENCE – BEGIN WITH AN ORGANIZED FILE



- Binders are great. Set up an automatic protocol for each investigation. A binder with pre-determined tabs and a Table of Contents that you can fill in as you go.
- Tabs: Notice of Allegations, Advisor Forms, Complainant Interview, Respondent Interview, Witness Interviews, Text Messages and Social Media, Evidence from Complainant, Evidence from Respondent, Draft Report, Final Report, Correspondence with Complainant and/or Advisor, Correspondence with Respondent and/or Advisor, Notes, etc.
- Start a Timeline and a Witness List to use throughout your investigation.
- Remember that all of your evidence must be provided to the parties eventually, and so keep original copies of things clean.

GATHERING EVIDENCE – HOW TO BEGIN



- What records should you be looking and/or asking for?
- Who do you interview first?
- What witnesses have the Complainant and Respondent asked you to interview?

INTERVIEW CONSIDERATIONS



- Identify potential witnesses.
- Determine what questioning is appropriate based on the following factors:
 - Age of the student(s);
 - Nature of the offense;
 - Involve students?
 - Staff?
 - Sexual background of Complainant?
 - Video or other evidence available;
 - Trustworthiness/credibility of witnesses; and
- Balance thoroughness and disruptiveness.

TAKING STATEMENTS

-
- Begin interview process as soon as possible.
 - Never promise confidentiality, but explain the safety precautions the District will take (e.g., no disclosure of personally identifiable information in public records).
 - Consider the role of the parents: Notification? Representation?
 - Get their story in their own words, first in general, then more specifically.
 - Follow up to get specific facts, not generalities.
 - Don't forget to use "anything else?"

INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

-
- Do not avoid interviewing students.
 - Determine if you will have a parent present (Board Policy typically does not require this for school interviews.)
 - Consider if Children Services should interview first (consider age of child, subject matter of interview, etc.)

INTERVIEWING CHILDREN



- Interview Structure:
 - Introductory - set general ground rules regarding discussion.
 - Agreement to tell the truth.
 - Reminder that they should not guess.
 - Correct you if you are wrong.
 - Rapport-Building--talk about things other than the target incident.
 - Free-Recall - ask open-ended questions.
- Open-ended questions provide higher quality information.
 - Ex: “Where were the other students?” v. “Were the other students in the hallway?”
- Young students - look for the core of the story to be true; minor inconsistencies are common and do not speak to the larger credibility of the narrative.

SPECIAL WITNESS CONSIDERATIONS: DIFFICULT WITNESSES



- What if a student witness refuses to testify?
- Do not allow witnesses or parties to provide ambiguous answers, or to not fully answer your question.

SPECIAL WITNESS CONSIDERATIONS: DIFFICULT WITNESSES



- What if a Respondent-Employee refuses to testify?
- You can force testimony under *Kalkines v. United States*, 473 F.2d 1391, 1393 (Fed. Cir. 1973).
- Failure to cooperate may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- Note: testimony provided in the above scenario may not be used for a criminal prosecution.

SHORT BREAK



SPECIAL WITNESS CONSIDERATIONS: CONDUCTING A TRAUMA-INFORMED INTERVIEW



Trauma-informed investigating and interviewing include the following key components:

- 1) understanding the impact of trauma on a neurological, physical, and emotional level;
- 2) promoting safety and support;
- 3) knowing positive ways to respond that avoid re-traumatization; and
- 4) providing choice with a goal of empowerment.

SPECIAL WITNESS CONSIDERATIONS: CONDUCTING A TRAUMA-INFORMED INVESTIGATION



- Making the interview more comfortable and build rapport— having a box of tissues in the room; letting them choose their drink; maybe a white noise machine if it is in a busy space; letting them choose their seat/side of the table. Never “rank” the trauma (e.g., “you’re lucky you don’t remember” or ranking based on whether you were drugged or not drugged, or whether it was someone you know or a stranger, etc.)
- Avoid Asking “why” questions. “Why did you...” It sounds too judgmental.
 - Why assumes that there was another option that they didn’t choose.
 - Instead, can ask “how did it happen that...?”

**YOUR ROLE AS INVESTIGATOR:
STEP THREE – TURNING EVIDENCE INTO A DRAFT
REPORT**



- ✓ **Fairly summarize relevant evidence.**
- ✓ **Evaluate all relevant evidence objectively, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.**
- ✓ **Make credibility determinations that are not based on a person's status as a Complainant, Respondent, or Witness.**
- ✓ **"Show your work" for all of the above in order to have a complete report.**

Written Investigation Report

FAIRLY SUMMARIZING RELEVANT EVIDENCE



Do...

- Be specific.
- Memorialize witnesses interviewed, records reviewed/created.
- Document the District's efforts. (e.g., if a witness would not cooperate/be interviewed).
- Come to a factual conclusion about what happened and make credibility determinations.

Don't...

- Be too general or conclusory.
- Use legal definitions or terms.
- Refer to conversations with legal counsel.
- Make conclusions to make someone happy. This is our one chance to get it right.

FAIRLY SUMMARIZING RELEVANT EVIDENCE



DON'T	DO
<p>"He has the party classroom."</p>	<p>"Mr. Jones stays after school every day for at least 1.5 hours and allows students to come to his classroom to listen to music and socialize with the classroom door shut."</p>
<p>"She swore."</p>	<p>"Mrs. Smith told Sam that if he didn't meet her before school for sex that he was a pussy."</p>
<p>"He stalked her every day."</p>	<p>"Michael left his last period class every day last week in order to be at Melinda's class when it ended. He then followed her to her locker and out to her car."</p>
<p>"The coach used sexual innuendo as jokes."</p>	<p>"The coach made the comment that No. 6 and No. 9 were standing right next to each other and laughed at the combination of '69.'"</p>

TURNING EVIDENCE INTO A REPORT – ASSESSING CREDIBILITY



- Credibility is the process of weighing the accuracy and veracity of evidence.
- Evaluate the source, content, and plausibility of testimony in light of other evidence.
- Assessment of credibility does not include making conclusions about whether a witness or evidence is credible, or judging the comparative credibility of evidence or witnesses. It stops just short of that, pointing to discrepancies without deciding them.

EVALUATING INFORMATION: EVALUATING CONFLICTING EVIDENCE



- You are the finder of fact;
- Common sense and credibility determinations;
- Consider the witnesses' opportunity to observe what happened versus hearsay;
- Consider whether testimony matches up with hard evidence such as texts, photographs, videos, social media, etc.; and
- Demeanor of witnesses. What do they have to lose/gain?

TURNING EVIDENCE INTO A REPORT: AVOIDING BIAS



- Distinguish undisputed evidence from contested evidence.
- Let the evidence lead to a conclusion – do not interpret the evidence with a goal to reach a particular conclusion.
- Avoid having a “hunch” from the beginning or judging based upon appearance or the “type” of girl/boy.
- Avoid “first impression bias.”
- There will be gaps in evidence – if you cannot fill those gaps, do not use your assumptions or speculation.

**YOUR ROLE AS INVESTIGATOR:
STEP FOUR – PROVIDING THE PARTIES WITH
EVIDENCE**



OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE



- Must provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as a part of the investigation that is **directly related to the allegations raised in the formal complaint**, including the evidence upon which the recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a determination.
- Must do this before your report is final so that each party can “meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to the conclusion of the investigation.”
- You must provide the evidence in an electronic format or hard copy and give the parties at least 10 days to submit a written response. If a written response is provided, consider it in completing your final report.

**YOUR ROLE AS INVESTIGATOR:
STEP FIVE – DRAFTING YOUR FINAL REPORT AND
PROVIDING IT TO THE DECISION-MAKER**





REVIEWING THE FINAL REPORT TEMPLATE



**YOUR ROLE AS INVESTIGATOR:
STEP SIX – PREPARE TO BE A WITNESS AT A HEARING**



INVESTIGATOR TESTIMONY AT A HEARING



- Yes, you may be called as a witness at a hearing by the Decisionmaker, Complainant, or Respondent!
- Testimony should be factual. It is OK to have a copy of your report and your evidence to review.

INVESTIGATOR TESTIMONY AT A HEARING



- You should not be required to testify regarding evidence that you may have learned that was not directly related to the complaint.
- Allow time before responding for objections to be ruled upon.
- Decisionmaker should not solicit your opinion on responsibility at the hearing.

Q & A



CONDUCTING AN ATHLETICS INVESTIGATION UNDER TITLE IX



TITLE IX AND ATHLETICS



- Title IX requires school districts to:
 - 1) offer boys and girls substantially equal participation opportunities to play sports (measured by the “student interests and abilities test”);
 - 2) provide boys and girls equal treatment in their athletic programs (measured by the “benefits and opportunities test”); and
 - 3) give boys and girls their fair share of athletic financial assistance.

TITLE IX AND ATHLETICS



- Title IX compliance is assessed through a total program comparison. In other words, the entire boys' program is compared to the entire girls' program, not just one boys' team to the girls' team in the same sport.
- Title IX does not require the creation of mirror image programs. Title IX specifically provides that “[u]nequal aggregate expenditures...will not constitute noncompliance with this section, but the Assistant Secretary may consider the failure to provide necessary funds for teams for one sex in assessing equality of opportunity for members of each sex.”
- Title IX provides that legitimate and justifiable discrepancies for nongender related differences in sports could be taken into account (i.e., the differing costs of equipment or event management expenditures).

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



- Must consider District financing and all money provided by outside sources, including Booster programs.
- OCR's guidance explains:
 - “The District has a responsibility under Title IX to ensure that boys’ and girls’ programs are provided with equivalent benefits, treatment, services or opportunities regardless of their source. When determining equivalency, benefits, services or opportunities attained through the use of private funds, such funds are considered in combination with all benefits, services or opportunities. This interpretation is consistent with the OCR ‘Title IX Athletics Investigator’s Manual,’ pertinent Federal court decisions, and the legislative history of Title IX and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987.

DOCUMENTS YOU ARE LIKELY TO REVIEW



- Board policies and administrative guidelines.
- Athletic Handbooks.
- Athletic Code of Conduct.
- Individual team rules and discipline policy.
- Funding by the District and Outside Groups (such as Booster Programs) for each sport.
- Data on the number of total boys and girls at the District; Data on the total number of boys and girls participating in each District sport.

ATHLETICS PARTICIPATION: THE STUDENT INTERESTS AND ABILITIES TEST



A school district is compliant under Title IX's requirement to provide equal participation opportunities for both boys and girls if it meets any one of the following three prongs:

- 1. Participation opportunities for boys and girls are provided in numbers substantially proportionate to their respective enrollments; or
- 2. Where the members of one sex have been, and are, underrepresented among athletes, the District must show a history and continuing practice of program expansion, which is demonstrably responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the members of that sex; or
- 3. Where the members of one sex are underrepresented among athletes, and the District cannot show a history and continuing practice of program expansion, the District must demonstrate that the interests and abilities of the members of that sex have been fully and effectively accommodated by the present program.

SCHOOL YEAR	SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT*	2,000
BOYS ENROLLED #	1,100
GIRLS ENROLLED #	900
% ENROLLMENT BOYS	51.7%
% ENROLLMENT GIRLS	48.3%
TOTAL # OF ATHLETES	1500
BOY ATHLETES #	815
GIRL ATHLETES #	675
% OF ATHLETES (BOYS)	54%
% OF ATHLETES (GIRLS)	46%
VARIANCE (BOYS)	2.3%
VARIANCE (GIRLS)	-2.3%

*Numbers slightly changed for anonymity of District.

In accordance with guidance from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), any athlete who participates in more than one sport is counted as a participant in each sport in which he or she participates. This results in multi-sport athletes being counted more than once for athletic participation purposes.

BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES



In determining equal treatment compliance under Title IX, OCR Regulations articulate the specific “benefits and opportunities” that should be considered. They are the following:

- 1. The provision of equipment and supplies;
- 2. Scheduling of games and practice time;
- 3. Travel and per diem allowance; (N/A)
- 4. Opportunity to receive coaching and academic tutoring;
- 5. Assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors; (N/A)
- 6. Provision of locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities;
- 7. Provision of medical and training facilities and services;
- 8. Provision of housing and dining facilities and services; (N/A)
- 9. Publicity.

Q & A



THANK YOU!

