



Civil Rights and Title IX Training: Level 1

with Melissa M. Bondy



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Our Presenter: **Melissa M. Bondy**

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Melissa has over 20 years of experience in the education arena, assisting K-12 and higher education institutions, in developing compliance frameworks for their anti-harassment and civil rights responsibilities, including Title IX. She has conducted numerous impartial Title IX and Section 504/Disability investigations, and assists clients with related policy development and training.



Melissa's Recent Trainings Include:

- **Title IX/Civil Rights Harassment Training** (Aug 2015, Mar 2015, Aug 2016, Nov 2016, Aug 2017, Sept 2017, Oct 2017, Nov 2017)
- **ADA/504 Issues and the Intersection with Title IX** (Oct 2019)
- **Title IX/Civil Rights Investigator Training – Higher Education and K12** (Jan 2020, Oct 2019, Oct 2018)
- **Title IX Athletics, Transgender Students, and Harassment** (Oct 2016)
- **Introduction to Title IX Investigations/BASA Workshop** (Feb 2016)

Disclaimers

We can't help ourselves. We're lawyers.

- We are not giving you legal advice
- Consult with your legal counsel regarding how best to address a specific situation
- Yes, we will send a copy of the slides after this presentation to all who registered their email address when signing in
- I will take questions at the end as time permits

Posting These Training Materials?

- Yes!
- Your Title IX Coordinator is required by 106.45(b)(10)(i)(D) to post materials to train Title IX personnel on its website
- We know this and will make this packet available to your district electronically to post

Agenda

- Civil Rights Laws
 - Notice of a Complaint
 - Discrimination on the basis of sex
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Hypothetical examples of potential harassment/discrimination
- Grievance Procedure Overview
 - Retaliation
 - Mandatory reporting obligations (Students)
 - District obligations
 - Employee obligations



Book	Policy Manual
Section	New Policy 2266
Title	Copy of Special Update - Title IX Regulations - July 2020 New NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX IN DISTRICT PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES
Code	po2266
Status	

2266 - NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX IN DISTRICT PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES

Bowling Green Policy 2266



Civil Rights Laws: Key Laws, Regulations, and Guidance

Discrimination = Treating people differently

Discrimination is the act of treating people **differently** based on a protected characteristic (or stereotypes based on that characteristic)

- Focus on access to education opportunities, resources, programs
- Disparate treatment in the workplace/school
- Disparate impact claims (neutral policies that have discriminatory impacts)

Common Types of Protected Traits

- Race
 - Color
 - Religion
 - Sex (gender)*
 - Military status
 - National origin
- Disability
 - Age
 - Ancestry
 - Marital status
 - Pregnancy
 - Genetic information

Sex Discrimination and Harassment

Title VII and Title IX

“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...”

Sex Discrimination under Title IX

34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)

- Treat one person **differently** from another in determining whether such person satisfies any requirement or condition for the provision of such aid, benefit, or service
- Provide **different** aid, benefits, or services, or provide aid, benefits, or services in a different manner
- Deny any person such aid, benefit, or service
- Subject any person to separate or **different** rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment

Sex Discrimination under Title IX

34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)

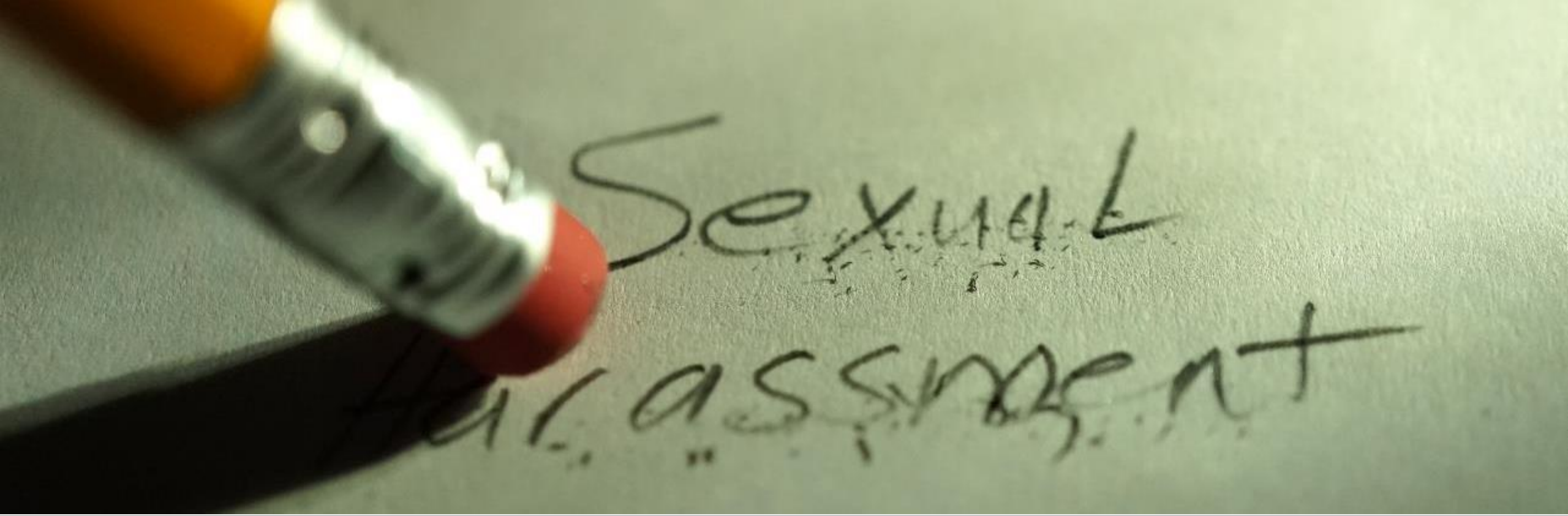
- Apply any rule concerning the domicile or residence of a student or applicant
- Aid or perpetuate discrimination against any person by **providing significant assistance to any agency, organization, or person which discriminates on the basis of sex** in providing any benefit or service to students or employees
- Otherwise limit any person in the enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity

What does “sex” mean?

- Biological sex
- Gender
- Sex stereotyping
- Sexual orientation**
- “Sex” as a verb



**BG's policy explicitly defines "sex" as including sexual orientation and gender identity



Sexual Harassment Definitions under the New Title IX Regulations

When does a school have notice of a complaint?

Actual knowledge = notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to a recipient's:

- Title IX Coordinator, or
- Any official of the recipient who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the recipient, or
- **To any employee of an elementary or secondary school**

34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a)

The School's Obligation

A recipient with **actual knowledge** of sexual harassment in an **educational program or activity** of the recipient against a person in the United States, must **respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent**. A recipient is only deliberately indifferent if its response to sexual harassment is unreasonable in light of known circumstances.

New Definitions of Sexual Harassment under Title IX

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- **Quid pro quo** – 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
- **Hostile environment** – 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
- **Clery crimes** – Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking [Clery regulatory definition cites omitted]

Final Regulations Apply to Employees

- Recipients that are subject to both Title VII and Title IX must comply with both
- “Deliberate indifference” standard applies
 - Because Title IX recipients are “in the business of education”
 - “Marketplace of ideas”

Quid Pro Quo

- They do/won't do this, so...
- They will/won't put up with this, so...
- If you do/don't... I will/won't...



Quid Pro Quo

- May involve a power differential
- “Everyone knows that so-and-so...”
- Voluntary conduct between some may put observers in the position of believing that something sexual is necessary to get something favorable

Hostile Environment – What does this look like?

Be aware of things that are **not** elements:

- “Happened more than once”**
- “Parties weren’t dating at the time”
- “Must involve two people of compatible sexual orientations”
- “Must occur on school property” ** (but remember state law restrictions)
- “Must have bad intent”

Jurisdictionally Important

From 34 C.F.R. § 106.44:

“If the conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment... even if proved, did not occur in the recipient’s education program or activity, or did not occur against a person in the United States, then the recipient **must dismiss the formal complaint with regard to that conduct for purposes of sexual harassment under Title IX or this part**; such a dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of the recipient’s code of conduct.”

Hypothetical #1

- Chuck and Mary Sue are bus drivers
- Chuck asks Mary Sue out on a date
- Mary Sue says no

Hypothetical #1

- Chuck brings flowers and asks again
- Mary Sue says no again

Hypothetical #1

- Chuck asks Mary Sue out over the radio, and Mary Sue says no again
- The transportation supervisor warns them both informally not to discuss personal matters on the radio

Hypothetical #1

- Chuck corners Mary Sue in the break room before the morning route to ask her why she won't date him and won't let her leave until she says yes
- The transportation supervisor writes both of them up for starting their routes late

Hypothetical #2

- Mr. Joe is a well-loved teacher
- He is always commenting on how pretty his female students look
- Josie, a student, is his helper and comes to his room during fourth period class to grade papers
- Josie's mother brings you text messages that Mr. Joe has been sending to Josie (not sexual in nature)

Hypothetical #3

- A student approaches a trusted teacher after class and mentions that she was at a party last Friday night
- The student tells the teacher she was kissing another student at the party and then he reached down her pants and touched her in a way that made her uncomfortable after she told him to stop
- The student asks the teacher not to tell anyone, saying she “doesn’t want to make a big deal out of it”

Hypothetical #4

- You're a custodian in the school district
- While working in the boys' locker room one evening, you overhear a student complaining to his friend about the annual "hazing ritual" that happens in the locker room
- The student tells his friends that he's "dreading the towel on his privates..."

Basic Requirements for Formal Grievance Process

§ 106.45(b)(1)

- Treating complainants and respondents equitably
- Remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to District's education program or activity
- Objective evaluation of all relevant evidence and credibility determinations
- Presumption that respondent is not responsible for alleged conduct

Basic Requirements for Formal Grievance Process

§ 106.45(b)(1)

- Reasonably prompt timeframes for filing and resolving appeals and informal resolution processes
- Providing a list, or describing a range, of possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies
- Describing standard of evidence to be used to determine responsibility
- Describing procedures and permissible bases for appeal
- Describing range of available supportive measures

Reporting Under BG's Grievance Policy

- Any person may report at any time
- Students, Board Members, and Board employees are **required** (and third parties encouraged) to promptly report allegations to the TIX Coordinator or another Board employee
- Any **Board employee** receiving a report **must** report it **within two days** to the TIX Coordinator
- Allegations against the TIX Coordinator should be made to the Superintendent

Overall Timeline

- Within **two days** of receiving a report, the TIX Coordinator will contact the Complainant/parent to discuss supportive measures and explain formal complaint process
- District will seek to conclude the grievance process, including resolution of appeals, within **60 days** of receipt of formal complaint
- **Voluntary** informal resolution process available (except for student-adult allegations or any allegation of sexual assault), but cannot be used to delay investigation

BG's Standard of Evidence

- The standard of evidence applied by the decision-maker in BG's Title IX investigations is **preponderance of the evidence**

Evidence and Interviews

- Investigator(s) and decision-maker(s) must provide a minimum of **one day's notice** of investigative interviews and other meetings
- **During** investigation, parties have the opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation
- Parties are to be provided **at least 10 calendar days** to submit a written response to the evidence before completion of report

Written Investigative Report

- Parties are to be sent the report **at least 10 calendar days** in advance of reaching a determination of responsibility
- Decision-maker will allow each party to submit **written, relevant questions** they want asked of any party or witness (including limited follow-up questions)
- Decision-maker will explain to the party proposing it any decision to exclude a question as not relevant

Written Determination Regarding Responsibility

- The decision-maker will apply a **preponderance of the evidence** standard
- Determination will include:
 - Findings as to responsibility
 - Any recommended disciplinary sanctions/consequences if the Respondent is found responsible

Determination and Remedies

- TIX Coordinator will need to disseminate the written determination to the parties simultaneously
- Superintendent will consider decision-maker's recommendations and implement ultimate disciplinary sanctions/consequences
- TIX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies

Offer Opportunity to Appeal

§ 106.45(b)(8)

- TIX Coordinator will want to offer both parties an equal opportunity to appeal determination regarding responsibility, or dismissal of formal complaint or any allegations therein
 - Procedural irregularity that would affect the outcome
 - New evidence that was not available at the time of the determination that would affect the determination
 - Member of TIX Team had conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome

Appeals

- Written appeals must be submitted within **three days** after receipt of decision-maker's determination of responsibility (or dismissal of some/all of the allegations in a Formal Complaint)

Retaliation

Section added to new Title IX regs

Retaliation defined in part: “No recipient or other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or this part, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this part...”

34 C.F.R. § 106.71

Retaliation

- Report this **immediately** to the Title IX Coordinator
- Is there already a no-contact order and, if not, do you want one?
- Adverse action against an individual
- Abuse, violence, threats, and intimidation
- More than just someone expressing their opinion

Mandatory Reporting

- Child Abuse
- Felonies
- If a school employee engages in sexual conduct with a student, it must be reported
 - Even if the student is 18
- ODE Conduct Reporting



District Obligations

- Address complainant and provide supportive measures
 - Mandatory reporting
 - Informal resolution
- Investigation
 - Formal grievance process:
 - Notice
 - Report
 - Decision
 - Appeal

Employee Obligations

- Know who the District Title IX Coordinator is
 - **BG's are the Human Resources Administrator and the Middle School Principal**
- Recognize a potential Title IX violation
- Report any potential Title IX violation to the Title IX Coordinator **the same day** you receive notice of it

How do you make a report on your own behalf?

- Promptly report incidents of unlawful discrimination and/or retaliation to your District's Title IX Coordinator so that the Board may address the conduct
- Remember – retaliation is prohibited



How do you make a report on your own behalf?

- The Title IX Coordinator can describe for you the difference between formal and informal complaints, discuss the criminal reporting process, determine appropriate supportive measures, and identify other available resources
- You can then choose how you wish to proceed (i.e., a formal or informal resolution process)

How do you make a report on your own behalf?

- If you make a report, the Title IX Coordinator should discuss **supportive measures** with you
- May include counseling, extensions of deadlines, modifications of work or class schedules, escort services, mutual no-contact orders, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures

Key Takeaways for Staff

- Understand the definition of sexual harassment
- Know to whom you should report any complaints of sexual harassment (whether witnessed yourself, or reported to you by someone else)
- Recognize or know responsibility to report any acts of retaliation
- Understand supportive measures you may need to help implement

Key Takeaways for Administrators

- Everything listed in the previous slide for staff
- Follow notice and posting requirements for anti-discrimination, Title IX policies, and training materials
- Additional training requirements if you are designated to play a role in the District's TIX response (as investigator, decision-maker, etc.)

Training Requirements for Your Title IX Team

- The definition of sexual harassment as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 106.30
- The scope of the district's education program or activities
- How to conduct an investigation
- How to consistently apply definitions used by the district with respect to consent (or the absence/negation of consent)
- The grievance process, including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable
- How to serve impartially and avoid prejudgment of facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias

Thank you for attending!

Remember – additional information available at:

Title IX Resource Center
at www.bricker.com/titleix

Find us on **Twitter** at
@BrickerEdLaw

