

Iowa Branch Connector

April 2016

A Monthly Electronic Bulletin for AAUW Leaders in Iowa

The Value of Affiliation with AAUW: By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

Welcome to this monthly electronic publication. You are invited to share this information with other members and branch leaders by forwarding it to them or providing a hard copy.

Maureen White, AAUW Iowa President 2014-16

The article this monthis written by Maureen White.

**Title IX**

Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to ensure equal opportunity in education for all students, from kindergarten through postgraduate school, regardless of sex. It includes any educational institution or program that receives federal funds: schools, colleges, universities, for-profit schools, career and technical agencies, schools and libraries, and museums. This landmark legislation states:

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

Contrary to the opinion of critics, Title IX is not an entitlement program; it offers no special benefits or advantages for girls and women. Rather, it is a gender-neutral piece of legislation designed to ensure equality in education for all students by eliminating sex-based discrimination.

Girls and women have made great strides in education since the passage of Title IX. The days when girls were blatantly told that they couldn’t take shop or advanced math are, for the most part, gone. Females make up a growing proportion of students in many math, science, and technology-related fields, particularly in the life sciences. Given greater opportunities to participate in athletics, they are now doing so in record numbers. They have also made gains in career and technical education at the high school and community college levels. Time and again, girls and women have proved that they have the interest and aptitude to succeed in areas once considered the exclusive purview of males.

**Who Benefits from Title IX?**

Title IX and related regulations provide guidelines, procedures, and tools for preventing and addressing inequities that can hinder students’ ability to succeed in school and beyond.

Despite tremendous progress, however, challenges to equality in education still exist. Women’s advancement in some areas, including computer science and engineering, has stagnated or even declined in recent years. Pregnant and parenting students are frequently subjected to unlawful policies and practices that deter them from completing their education. Nearly half of all middle and high school students report being sexually harassed in school. And single-sex classrooms often cater to stereotypes about how boys and girls learn, to the detriment of both sexes.

These and other challenges affect the ability of all students—male and female—to get the most out of their education. This in turn endangers the ability of U.S. schools and universities to produce skilled workers who can succeed in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

***Following are ten facts about Title IX, including both familiar and lesser-known aspects of the legislation.***

1. In schools that receive federal funding, Title IX protects all students—male and female—from discrimination on the basis of sex.
2. Title IX also prohibits sex discrimination in employment, protecting school staff as well as students.
3. Title IX requires schools to provide male and female students with equal opportunities to participate in athletics; it does not set quotas or demand equal funding for different sports.
4. Title IX mandates equity in career and technical education programs, including those traditionally dominated by men (e.g., construction, IT), as well as those traditionally dominated by women (e.g., nursing).
5. Title IX protects girls’ and women’s rights to equity in STEM education, including equal opportunities and access to institutional resources.
6. Title IX offers both male and female students protection against sex-based harassment from teachers, school staff, other students, and school visitors.
7. Title IX sets strict limits on programs that separate girls and boys, and prohibits the discrimination that can occur when such programs are based on gender stereotypes.
8. Title IX protects students from being refused enrollment or excluded from school-related activities because of pregnancy or parenting status.
9. Title IX requires schools to adopt and disseminate policies prohibiting sex discrimination, develop grievance procedures, and designate a Title IX coordinator to oversee compliance. Title IX also protects students and staff from retaliation for reporting violations.
10. Over the past 40 years, major gains in female participation in areas such as math, science, business, and athletics have shown that girls and women have both the interest and the aptitude to succeed in these fields—without detracting from opportunities for males.

For more resources and information about Title IX, type Title IX in the search box on the AAUW website.

**Branch Action**

*Has your branch taken action to deliver the Resource Guide to Title IX Coordinators at your area schools? If not, plan to do so sometime in 2016.*

Because some schools didn’t have a Coordinator or the person didn’t have training, AAUW encouraged the US Department of Education to develop resources for Title IX Coordinators at local school districts, colleges, and universities. The resources help the Title IX Coordinators better understand and perform their responsibilities in ensuring that learning environments are free from sex discrimination.

Find complete information at aauw.org/resource/TitleIXDelivery about who should receive the resources, what to say to them, steps to follow, sample letters, in addition to the resource guide for Title IX Coordinators.