

Title IX at 50

Brief History & Significance of Title IX

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 was a landmark piece of legislation that changed the face of education in the United States at all levels and in all areas. Title IX legislation prohibits discrimination in access to equal educational programs that includes academic majors at universities, graduate school programs, physical education classes, and sport programs. While competitive sport programs are one major area in which compliance to Title IX is measured, the legislation covers much more than sport alone. Title IX compliance was mandated for all schools that receive public funding which was almost all schools public and private in the United States. Title IX states that, “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 educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

The single biggest intended consequence of Title IX was explosive increases in girls and women’s participation in high school and collegiate athletics. In 1972 approximately 1 in 25 high school girls played sports. Today that number is 1 in 4. Girls and women’s teams were added across the nation. Girls and women’s athletics, although they had a long history of participation, competition and skill, were finally funded by the institutions and treated with the respect they so deserved. Despite this, half a century after the landmark 1972 ruling the fight for equality is still ongoing.