

Unit 3

Title IX: Gender Equality in Public Education

Unit Questions

What does it mean to provide equal opportunities for men and women in the context of education, including school sports? How does federal law protect the civil rights of women in public education?

Overview

Through most of U.S. history, women had limited access to educational programs and extra curricular activities. Most women were excluded from elite academic institutions, and those schools that accepted female applicants required them to have higher test scores and grades than their male counterparts. Even when women were admitted to schools, they did not have the same financial aid opportunities, were excluded from many programs, and faced more restrictive rules. In the 1960s and 1970s, civil rights activists advocated for federal enforcement of equal opportunities for male and female students. In response, Congress enacted Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. That law, known as Title IX, bans educational programs that receive federal funding from discriminating on the basis of gender. This applies to a wide range of activities, including admissions, athletics, employment opportunities, and financial assistance. Over the past four decades, Title IX has greatly improved access to educational opportunities for women.

This unit asks you to consider the scope and application of Title IX through the examination of statutory text, federal regulations, enforcement policies, and court decisions. You will confront questions about how the provisions of Title IX ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of gender, and think about what sex equality means across different contexts.

Unit Objectives and Standards

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Summarize the facts and identify the legal issues in Title IX cases.
- Explain the requirements and purpose of Title IX and the different theories of equality that it embodies.
- Assess whether women are treated fairly in a variety of educational scenarios and defend their positions.
- Evaluate the degree to which civil rights litigation protects the civil rights of women in public education and promotes gender equality in the United States.

Unit Assessment

You will write a policy reform proposal for Title IX.