

Gender Equity in Youth Sports to Level the Playing Field (+ Title IX)— 9 Insights



Gender Equity in Youth Sports

■ Equity is a Game-Changer!

Girls want to play sports, deserve quality in their athletic experiences, and benefit health wise and generally when getting to play. Girls getting ample opportunities to play and day-to-day practice and game experiences on par with boys are able to get into the game, positively engage, and continue playing. **Program-wide gender equity establishes throughout schools and the community that fairness is key, not only in sports, but everywhere!**

■ Great progress has been made on gender equity, and there



is more work to do, especially for girls of color and in low-income communities, in terms of offering greater opportunity and evening out program quality and treatment for girls.



What Is Title IX?

■ Title IX is a federal law passed June 23, 1972 by Congress applying throughout the U.S., **requiring gender equity in any and all federally-funded**

educational programs – in preschools, middle, elementary and high schools, colleges and universities, including athletic programming (e.g., public high school athletics).

■ Some states and areas further have gender equity requirements in community / park and recreation-based sports (e.g., CA's AB 2404). Check your local area for guidelines. With or without the law, equity is key and the right thing to do!

“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.”

– Title IX (1972)



What Is Gender Equity in Youth Sports and Sports Generally?

■ Gender equity means, e.g., girls' and boys' teams in an elementary, middle, high school or college program have equity in opportunities to play on teams and amenities, such as uniforms, schedules, coaching, facilities, equipment, and more.



Strides Made Under Title IX

■ Progress! As Title IX passed, fewer than 300,000 girls played high school sports; **today over 3.4 million girls are playing high school sports**, yet boys have 4.5 million slots—there's work to do to close the opportunity gaps as girls want to play more!



What Does Title IX Cover?

■ Title IX requires gender equitable opportunities for students to play sports. E.g., **if a school has ~49% girls in its student body, the athletic program should afford ~49% of roster slots across its teams to girls** in line with girls' interests (i.e., sports girls want to play).

■ Title IX requires equitable treatment and benefits across the board of an athletics program such that girls' and boys' teams should have, for example, equitable facilities, schedules, and equipment.

■ Title IX prohibits retaliation (or backlash) against, for example,



coaches, students, parents / guardians that raise concerns or complaints of gender inequity. Institutions should welcome input to fix issues!



What to Do if You See Gender Inequity in Your Athletic Program?

■ Highlight and address gender-based inequity in a school or community-based program; there is much we can do to level the playing field. Speak up and start dialogue (such as with fellow teammates and families, school leadership or the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Education). **No matter your role, age, or gender you can be an advocate and ally for gender equity** in school-oriented sports. We're stronger and better together, on a level playing field.

More Resources re: Title IX

National Women's Law Center
"Check It Out Guide"
nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Checkitout.pdf

Women's Sports Foundation
"Play Fair Guide"
womenssportsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/play_fair_final.pdf

This is general topline information regarding Title IX and does not contain further details / legal advice / opinion. Consult help as needed.