

Tawas Area Schools

245 West M-55 • Tawas City, MI 48763
Sarah Danek, Superintendent
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NOTICE OF CHANGES TO THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS AND NONDISCRIMINATION UNDER FINAL RULE OF FEDERAL 2024 TITLE IX REGULATIONS

August 23, 2024

Dear Tawas Area Schools Community,

Recent changes to federal Title IX regulations require that the school district publish and disseminate information regarding discrimination on the basis of sex. These changes came into effect on August 1, 2024 and communication is being distributed now in accordance with the law and to reach the intended audience when they are most likely to read it.

Background

The Title IX regulations of 2020 focused on sexual harassment and are narrower in scope than the new 2024 Title IX regulations. The regulations of 2020, and the associated processes and procedures for reporting, investigating, and decision-making are still in place for all incidents that are reported to occur on or before July 31, 2024, regardless of when they are reported.

The 2024 Title IX regulations revise the grievance process for sex discrimination (including sexual harassment) complaints and extend protections for pregnant students and employees. The new regulations also define sex discrimination to include discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. All incidents reported to have occurred on or after August 1, 2024 must follow the broader in scope 2024 Title IX regulations. Here the definition of what qualifies is more than "sex-based harassment" and includes: claims of unequal athletic opportunities, admissions discrimination, discrimination in courses or academic programs, pregnancy discrimination, unequal treatment based on parental, family, or marital status, discrimination in employment (including hiring, promotion, and compensation), and retaliation. The list of people who can file a formal complaint (oral or written) has also been expanded to include persons who participated or attempted to participate in the District's education program or activity at the time of the alleged sex discrimination, and those who no longer are.

At the local level TAS has been working within the new guidelines to craft new policies and procedures to meet these requirements. At the July 8, 2024 Board of Education meeting TAS adopted a new policy (po 2264) in compliance with these changes, while retaining policy 2266 which covers the process for incidents reported to have occurred prior to August 1, 2024. This policy contains the full broader scope of Title IX, an updated list of definitions regarding impacted groups, and the grievance procedures.

Internally; we have met the training requirements of the law which includes the specialized training of the Title IX positions named by the new rules. The fulfillment of the training requirement of all TAS staff was met this week during our professional development days. Staff each took a Title IX course and were required to pass a comprehension course in demonstration of their understanding. This was followed by additional training on the Tawas Area Schools processes and points of contact, provided by the administration to the full staff. Per the new regulations, this training is required for all new hires, anyone moving positions in which responsibilities will change, and then annually thereafter.

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Status of Title IX

It is important to note the new 2024 Title IX regulations are current and valid for the State of Michigan. Around the country, different states have filed lawsuits through the circuit courts to delay the implementation of the Title IX regulations and/or to challenge the definitions and scope of their impact. Some of these injunctions have been successful, but *they do not apply to Michigan (as of the writing of this communication)*. The State of Michigan is not a party in any pending litigation.

Notice and Statement of Nondiscrimination

The Board of Education of the Tawas Area School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including admission and employment.

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights ("OCR"), or both.

The District's Title IX Coordinator is:

Mrs. Sarah Danek
Superintendent
245 W M-55, Tawas City, MI 48763
sdanek@tawas.net
(989) 984-2250

The Board's nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures are publicly available on our district website in our policy manual under po2264 NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES. You may access this policy directly here:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/mi/tawas/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=D7FV6V7F45CC>

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to policy 2264, [viewable here](#).

Contact information for OCR is available here: <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/contact-ocr>

Sincerely,



Mrs. Sarah Danek
Superintendent
Tawas Area School District

Tawas Area Schools are committed to inspiring and empowering students to become critical thinkers, engaging in evolutionary experiences, and cultivating lifelong learners.

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