

10 TIPS

FOR PREK-12 TITLE IX INVESTIGATORS

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- 1** Be knowledgeable of your District's Title IX policy and procedures and follow them!! Even if your investigation is fair and impartial, not following your policy and procedures can leave the district vulnerable to challenges by a party.
- 2** Communicate early and often with parents about the process and procedures with the goal of providing parents with as much information as you can to ensure they understand what is occurring.
- 3** Work with your School Resource Officer/local law enforcement and/or local child protective agency and try to coordinate interviews. This will decrease the number of times students have to talk about potentially traumatic experiences and will serve to ensure the district is working collaboratively with these external agencies who are likely conducting their own investigation of the same matter.
- 4** Be visible. We are all busy, but when you go out to a school to interview people, try to stay an extra 10 minutes to visit the lunch room and talk to the students. The more they see you around, the less scary you are. Selfishly, it's also a great break to just be around them and be reminded of why you do what you do.
- 5** Attend yearly trainings. Never think you know it all. Even if you are well versed on the legal mandates, there is always an opportunity to network and get new and fresh ideas from your colleagues in other districts.
- 6** Get second opinions and don't work alone. If your policy allows, talk to your Title IX Coordinator or other school professionals and have them read your report before it is finalized, especially if you are stuck trying to determine whether the "feather" puts you above preponderance.
- 7** Continuously offer support and resources to the parties and students' families. Be aware of what internal and external support and resources are available for both parties and provide that information to the parties throughout the process. Work with the Title IX Coordinator to loop them in when needed to help facilitate the provision of appropriate support and resources for the parties.
- 8** Stay consistent but know there is always room for improvement. Don't follow the "it's always been done that way so why change" philosophy. If something isn't working or you find a better way, bring it to the attention of the district's Title IX Coordinator so it can be fixed.
- 9** Probably the most important...DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT! If it's not written down, it didn't happen. Not only interview notes, but dates of phone calls and emails, content of conversations with the parties and parents, reasons for delay, etc. You will thank me when OCR comes knocking and you don't have to rely on your memory to recall when you called that one person that one time. Every detail matters.
- 10** On your hard days when you have millions of things going on, you are being screamed at by parents or students, and you feel like there is no good resolution or no end in sight, and maybe your pay stinks, remember why you do it. You are helping provide children a safe place to learn and employees with a safe place to work. So, after a hard day, go home, have a glass of wine, and think about all the good you do (even if people don't notice it all the time).