

Policy 4219.11: Sexual Harassment

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 12/01/2015 | **Last Revised Date:** 06/01/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 06/01/2025

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 231.5, 2 CCR 11023, and 34 CFR 106.8 mandate that districts have a written policy prohibiting sexual harassment against employees. As part of this mandate, the district is also required to adopt a written policy prohibiting sexual harassment against students; see BP/AR 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment and AR 5145.71 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

Sexual harassment is prohibited pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 USC 2000e-2000e-17) and/or Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC 1681-1688; 34 CFR 106.1-106.82), as well as the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (Government Code 12900-12996).

Although the Title IX regulations were amended by 89 Fed.Reg. 33474, effective August 1, 2024, these amendments were vacated nationwide by the United States District Court in Tennessee v. Cardona on January 9, 2025. Following this decision, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) February 4, 2025 Dear Colleague Letter clarified that OCR will enforce Title IX based on the regulations as they existed prior to August 1, 2024. Therefore, references in this Board policy to Title IX and its implementing regulations are to the Title IX regulations as they existed prior to August 1, 2024.

Whether a complaint of sexual harassment is investigated and resolved through federal Title IX complaint procedures in accordance with AR/E(1) 4119.12/4219.12/4319.12 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures, or procedures as specified in AR 4030 - Nondiscrimination in Employment is dependent on whether the alleged conduct meets the more stringent federal definition of sexual harassment or the state definition. In order to meet the applicable timelines, in some instances it may be necessary to review a complaint under both procedures concurrently. See the accompanying administrative regulation, AR 4030 - Nondiscrimination in Employment, and AR 4119.12/4219.12/4319.12 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

Pursuant to 2 CCR 11034, the district may be liable for sexual harassment committed by a supervisor, coworker, or a third party. Pursuant to Government Code 12940, employers may also be held liable for sexual harassment committed against their workers by clients, customers, or other third parties if they knew or should have known of the harassment and failed to take immediate and appropriate corrective action to stop the harassment. It is recommended that districts with questions about liability for sexual harassment consult CSBA's District and County Office of Education Legal Services or district legal counsel.

The district does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its programs or activities and complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations.

The Governing Board is committed to providing a safe work environment that is free of discrimination, harassment, and intimidation, including sexual harassment. The Board prohibits sexual harassment, as defined in the accompanying administrative regulation, in district programs and activities by and against district employees. For purposes of this policy and accompanying administrative regulation, employees include interns, volunteers, contractors, job applicants, and other persons with an employment relationship with the district.

Additionally, the Board prohibits retaliatory behavior or action against any person who complains or testifies about conduct that reasonably may constitute sexual harassment, reports such conduct, or otherwise participates or refuses to participate in the complaint process established for the purpose of this policy. (Education Code 220.1; 34 CFR 106.71)

CSBA NOTE: Federal and state courts have provided guidance that may help employers avoid liability or mitigate damages in sexual harassment cases. In Department of Health Services v. Superior Court (McGinnis), the California Supreme Court outlined measures that may constitute mitigating factors in the assessment of damages, including establishing anti-harassment policies, communicating those policies to employees, consistently enforcing the policies, preserving the confidentiality of employees who report harassment, and preventing retaliation against reporting employees. The U.S. Supreme Court in Burlington Industries v. Ellerth held that, for certain claims under federal law, an employer may defend against sexual harassment claims by proving that (1) reasonable care was exercised to prevent and promptly correct any sexually harassing behavior, and (2) the employee (victim) failed to take advantage of the preventive and corrective opportunities provided by the employer. Additionally, in Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, one of the factors relied on by the U.S. Supreme Court in finding liability for harassment by a supervisor was the failure of the policy to provide an assurance to its employees that harassing supervisors may be bypassed in registering complaints.

Policy 4219.11: Sexual Harassment

Status: ADOPTED

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The following policy shall apply to all district employees, interns, volunteers, contractors, job applicants, and other persons with an employment relationship with the district.

The Governing Board is committed to providing a safe work environment that is free of harassment and intimidation. The Board prohibits sexual harassment against district employees and retaliatory behavior or action against any person who complains, testifies, or otherwise participates in the complaint process established for the purpose of this policy.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, harassment that is based on the sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation of the victim and harassment based on pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

The Superintendent or designee shall take all actions necessary to ensure the prevention, investigation, and correction of sexual harassment, including but not limited to:

1. Providing training to employees in accordance with law and administrative regulation
2. Publicizing and disseminating the district's sexual harassment policy to employees and others to whom the policy may apply
3. Ensuring prompt, thorough, fair, and equitable investigation of complaints
4. Taking timely and appropriate corrective/remedial action(s), which may require interim separation of the complainant and the alleged harasser and subsequent monitoring of developments

The Superintendent or designee shall periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the district's strategies to prevent and address harassment. Such evaluation may involve conducting regular anonymous employee surveys to assess whether harassment is occurring or is perceived to be tolerated, partnering with researchers or other agencies with the needed expertise to evaluate the district's prevention strategies, and using any other effective tool for receiving feedback on systems and/or processes. As necessary, changes shall be made to the harassment policy, complaint procedures, or training.

Sexual Harassment Reports and Complaints

District employees who feel that they have been sexually harassed in the performance of their district responsibilities or who have knowledge of any incident of sexual harassment by or against another employee shall immediately report the incident to their direct supervisor, a district administrator, or the district's Title IX Coordinator. Employees may bypass their supervisor in filing a complaint if the supervisor is the subject of the complaint. A supervisor or administrator who receives a harassment complaint shall promptly notify the Title IX Coordinator.

Once notified, the Title IX Coordinator shall ensure the complaint or allegation is addressed through AR 4119.12/4219.12/4319.12 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures or AR 4030 - Nondiscrimination in Employment, as applicable. Because a complaint or allegation that is dismissed or denied under the Title IX complaint procedure may still be subject to consideration under state law, the Title IX Coordinator shall ensure that any implementation of AR 4119.12/4219.12/4319.12 concurrently meets the requirements of AR 4030.

The Title IX Coordinator shall offer supportive measures to the complainant and respondent, as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Upon investigation of a sexual harassment complaint, any district employee found to have engaged or participated in sexual harassment or to have aided, abetted, incited, compelled, or coerced another to commit sexual harassment in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with law and the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Pursuant to Government Code 12950.1, districts are required to provide sexual harassment training to supervisory and nonsupervisory employees which includes training in regard to sex discrimination.

Additionally, 34 CFR 106.8 requires specified training related to sexual harassment for Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decisionmakers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. See the accompanying administrative regulation for timelines and training requirements.

The Superintendent or designee shall take all actions necessary to ensure the prevention, investigation, and correction of sexual harassment, including but not limited to: (Education Code 231.5; Government Code 12950.1; 2 CCR 11023; 34 CFR 106.8, 106.45)

1. Providing training to employees in accordance with law and administrative regulation
2. Publicizing and disseminating the district's sexual harassment policy to employees and others to whom the policy may apply

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to 34 CFR 106.8, districts are required to provide specified notifications to students, parents/guardians, employees, bargaining units, and applicants for admission and employment related to the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes sexual harassment. For more information about the content and publication requirements for such notices, see E(1) 4119.12/4219.12/4319.12 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.

3. Publicize as specified in Exhibit (1) 4119.12/4219.12/4319.12 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures, the required notifications related to Title IX to employees, applicants for employment, and bargaining units
4. Ensuring prompt, thorough, fair, and equitable investigation of complaints through the appropriate state and/or federal procedures
5. Taking timely and appropriate corrective/remedial action(s)

The Superintendent or designee may periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the district's strategies to prevent and address harassment. Such evaluation may involve conducting regular anonymous employee surveys to assess whether harassment is occurring or is perceived to be tolerated, partnering with researchers or other agencies with the needed expertise to evaluate the district's prevention strategies, and using any other effective tool for receiving feedback on systems and/or processes. As necessary, changes shall be made to harassment policy(ies), complaint procedures, or training, as appropriate and in accordance with law.

Reports and Complaints

CSBA NOTE: 34 CFR 106.8 requires the district to designate at least one employee to serve as the Title IX Coordinator and to coordinate the district's responsibilities under Title IX. See the accompanying administrative regulation.

Pursuant to 34 CFR 106.44, the district is required to respond promptly when there is actual knowledge of sexual harassment and in a manner that is not unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. 34 CFR 106.30 defines "actual knowledge" as notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment being submitted to the district's Title IX Coordinator, any official of the district who has authority to institute corrective measures, or any employee of an elementary or secondary school. For this reason, it is recommended that the district train all employees regarding the reporting process.

The district should modify the timeline in this section to reflect district practice.

Any district employee who has experienced sexual harassment in the district's education program or activity may file a complaint with the district's Title IX Coordinator. (34 CFR 106.8)

Any employee with knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sexual harassment by or against another district employee, a student, or a third party in a district education program or activity shall notify the Title IX Coordinator within one workday.

Once notified, the Title IX Coordinator shall ensure that the complaint alleging sexual harassment is addressed through Administrative Regulation 4119.12/4219.12/4319.12 - Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures or Administrative Regulation 4030 - Nondiscrimination in Employment, as applicable. Additionally, the Title IX Coordinator shall ensure that any implementation of Administrative Regulation 4119.12/4219.12/4319.12 - Title IX

Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures, concurrently meets the requirements of Administrative Regulation 4030 - Nondiscrimination in Employment.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to 34 CFR 106.44, when the Title IX Coordinator is notified of conduct that reasonably may constitute sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator is required to offer and coordinate supportive measures to the complainant. Thus, districts should not wait to respond until a formal complaint is made. Supportive measures are also required to be offered to the respondent as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed, the Title IX Coordinator shall offer and coordinate supportive measures to be provided to the complainant and the respondent, as deemed appropriate under the circumstances. (34 CFR 106.30, 106.44)

CSBA NOTE: In addition to district discipline imposed on employees who engage in sexual harassment, Government Code 12940 provides that such employees may be held personally liable in a court of law for any damage to the victim(s).

Upon investigation of a sexual harassment complaint, any district employee found to have engaged or participated in sexual harassment or to have aided, abetted, incited, compelled, or coerced another to commit sexual harassment in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with law and the applicable collective bargaining agreement.
