



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

June 6, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: New Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights Regarding Sexual Violence and Public Schools' Obligations under Title IX

On April 29, 2014, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued new guidance describing the responsibilities of colleges, universities, and public schools to address sexual violence and other forms of sex discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This new guidance, *Questions and Answers on Title IX and Sexual Violence*, was developed out of requests from elementary and secondary schools and postsecondary institutions for technical assistance regarding their obligations under Title IX.

Included in the guidance document are examples of proactive efforts schools can take to prevent sexual violence and remedies schools may use to end such conduct, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects. The frequently asked questions examine critical issues, including when schools should respect students' request for confidentiality, when schools should take immediate steps to protect students who complain about sexual violence from the alleged perpetrator and potential retaliation, and how to determine whether sexual violence occurred and the appropriate remedies for such violence. The guidance also clarifies that its terms apply to all students, including lesbian and gay students, transgender students, and undocumented students.

A copy of the guidance document, *Questions and Answers on Title IX and Sexual Violence*, can be found on the Web site at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/qa-201404-title-ix.pdf>. A related document, *Know Your Rights*, printed in English and in Spanish can be found at <https://www.NotAlone.gov>.

If you need further information or technical assistance in complying with Title IX or other civil rights laws, you may contact Dr. Sandra E. Ruffin, Director of Federal Program Monitoring, Virginia Department of Education, by telephone at 804-225-2768 or via e-mail at Sandra.Ruffin@doe.virginia.gov. You may also contact Mrs. Bonnie B. English, Civil Rights Monitoring Specialist, Virginia Department of Education, by telephone at (804) 225-2618 or via e-mail at Bonnie.English@doe.virginia.gov. You may receive assistance from the Virginia office of the OCR at: Washington DC (Metro), Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-1475; Telephone: 202-453-6020; FAX: 202-453-6021; TDD: 877-521-2172; E-mail: OCR.DC@ed.gov

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