# Role and Function of the Educational Equity Coordinator

Iowa Department of Education
Division of Learning and Results
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One of the procedural requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 banning discrimination on the basis of sex, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 barring discrimination on the basis of disability and Chapter 95 of the Iowa Administrative Code banning discrimination in employment and requiring affirmative action plans is that educational agencies assign an employee the responsibility of coordinating their compliance efforts. There is no similar procedural requirement for Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bans discrimination on the basis of race and national origin in education. However for the sake of fairness it is recommended that the coordinator's responsibilities include issues related to race and national origin.

School districts may choose to designate one coordinator, or they may choose to assign two or more persons to serve as coordinators. This is often determined by the size of the district or educational agency. Some agencies choose to have one coordinator for employment and another for program issues. Others choose to have a coordinator for issues related to race and national origin, another coordinator for issues related to gender, and another for issues related to disability. If there is more than one coordinator, all should be identified in the notices that go out to staff, students, parents and the community. It is also important that if multiple individuals are assigned, they communicate with one another and work together as a team.

Although the designation of a coordinator does not diminish the ultimate legal responsibility of an agency's governing body and chief executive officer, it establishes responsibility and accountability for coordinating and monitoring the activities necessary to ensure compliance with educational equity laws. It is the responsibility of the chief executive officer to ensure that an equity coordinator has been named and that they are carrying out their responsibilities under the law. The effectiveness of the educational equity coordinator is critical to an agency's efforts to comply with civil rights related requirements. It is essential that the designated employee's job description and annual objectives include their equity-related responsibilities.

Coordination responsibilities must be pro-active and go far beyond solely investigating the complaints of students, parents, and employees. Coordinator responsibilities extend through every aspect of an agency's policies, programs, and practices. However they can be placed into six basic categories. They are:

1. **Knowledge of Federal and State Laws:** Develop and maintain a working knowledge of Title IX (gender equity), Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act (disability equity), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (race/national origin equity) and relevant state laws.

2. **Policies and Procedures:** To ensure that the agency has the required board policies and grievance procedures in place.

3. **Dissemination of Information**: To ensure that information about the non-discrimination policies, harassment/bullying/hazing policies, the name and contact information for the equity coordinator(s), and information about the related grievance procedure is disseminated annually to board members, administrators and all employees, students, parents, and applicants for employment. This information must be included in all major annual publications and the district's website.

4. **Professional Development:** To arrange for the training of staff and students that will make them aware of their rights under the legislation as well as assist them to carry out their responsibilities under the law.

5. **Facilitate the Grievance Process:** To mediate conflicts and to ensure prompt and effective processing of complaints through the facilitation of the agency's board adopted civil rights grievance procedure.

6. **Monitoring:** To monitor the agency's compliance with the legislation by reviewing and disseminating disaggregated student achievement data, building and course enrollment data, student activity data, and employment and personnel data. Membership on district advisory committees should be monitored for gender balance, the inclusion of individuals representing diverse racial/ethnic groups, as well as persons with disabilities. .

Questions regarding the responsibilities of the Educational Equity Coordinator can be referred to:

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