



Executive Summary: Suggestions for Evaluation Guidelines for Schools Contemplating or Using Single-Sex Education

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[See <http://www.feminist.org/education/pdfs/SuggestedEvaluationGuidanceSingleSexEd.pdf> for the full 4/15/13 Evaluation Guidelines]

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) should specify the purposes and types of rigorous evaluations needed to justify initial approval for single-sex education as well as its continuation. The standards for the evaluations should be based on equality/non-discrimination requirements in Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as well as other federal and state anti-discrimination laws. This guidance should also describe strategies and procedures to maximize the validity and utility of the evaluation reports.

Phase I evaluations should provide initial conceptual justifications and detailed implementation and evaluation plans for single-sex education to address the following questions.

- Is the initial written justification for each single-sex class, activity, or school, based on rigorous research and evaluation evidence that the single-sex education is needed to accomplish specific goals to decrease sex discriminatory outcomes and to attain other related education achievement goals in the designated school/class better than comparable coeducation?
- Does the school's plan for specific single-sex education comply with safeguards to prevent sex discrimination and to comply with related requirements such as completely voluntary participation and comparable coed options?
- Is there an adequate evaluation plan that will provide written verifiable results for Phase II and Phase III decisions to stop or continue the single-sex education?

Phase II process evaluations should reveal if the implementation of single-sex education is in full compliance with the laws and guidance in the Title IX regulations as they address these questions.

- Is there any evidence that what is being done increases, rather than decreases, sex stereotyping?

- Is there any evidence that what is being done increases, rather than decreases, sex discrimination when comparing education opportunities for girls and boys and for single-sex and coeducation?
- Do the evaluation results document full implementation of the plans approved in Phase I such as compliance with requirements for voluntary participation and adequate evaluations?

To ascertain full compliance with Title IX and other equal protection laws, both single-sex and coed activities should be examined to ensure that they do not increase sex stereotyping or other types of deliberate or non-deliberate sex discrimination. This process evaluation also provides important information on the implementation of the planned single-sex education and the coed comparisons to increase understanding of the evaluation outcomes.

Phase III outcome or impact evaluations should document if the single-sex education has the intended effect on decreasing sex discriminatory outcomes and attaining other education achievement goals better than comparably well-resourced non-sexist coeducation?

These evaluations of the effectiveness of single-sex programs should examine multiple indicators to learn if the sex separation meets the originally identified and justified needs for single-sex education better than comparable coeducation. They should also determine if the single-sex education has a positive or negative impact on other important outcomes for boys and girls.

Implementation strategies and procedures will increase the validity and utility of the evaluation results by:

- Assigning important responsibilities to Title IX coordinators and encouraging other gender equality advocates to participate in ensuring that the evaluations are rigorous and that their results are used to comply with Title IX and other laws and policies prohibiting discrimination.
- Ensuring that the proposed single-sex education plan and all the evaluation plans and reports are freely available on public websites (along with the official decisions to approve or disapprove initiation and continuation of the single-sex education.)
- Using the high quality rigorous evaluations to share information about what works or does not work related to specific types of single-sex education. This should facilitate knowledge syntheses to better understand the advantages or disadvantages of specific single-sex and coed interventions.