State Title IX Gender Equity Coordinators, Methods of Administration

Coordinators & other State level Gender Equity Experts

The attached list was developed by the Title IX Action Network and the Education Equity Program of the Feminist Majority Foundation\(^1\). It is one of the ways the Network has started to identify and work with Title IX coordinators at all levels of education throughout the U.S.

Title IX is our federal law that says, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972).

Title IX prohibits discrimination against girls and boys, women and men, students and employees, in all levels of education. In accordance with the 1987 Civil Rights Restoration Act, Title IX applies to all institutions with education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. For example, it prohibits sex discrimination in facilities, access to courses, athletic and academic opportunities, career guidance, student financial aid, health and insurance benefits, employment in educational institutions, and sexual harassment. In addition to schools and almost all of the more than 5000 colleges and universities, it covers scientific laboratories, about 5000 institutions that confer certificates below the associate degree level, prisons, museums, libraries, and a variety of other public and private institutions.\(^2\)

Title IX regulations [http://feminist.org/education/TitleIXRegCoordinatorSection.pdf](http://feminist.org/education/TitleIXRegCoordinatorSection.pdf) specify that each recipient of federal financial assistance “designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out Title IX responsibilities” and that names and contact information for Title IX coordinators be made public. If everyone complies with this law there should be over a hundred thousand Title IX coordinators making sure that all students and staff are informed of their rights and protections against sex discrimination. However, it is difficult to find these coordinators so it is not surprising that a recent study found that fewer than 20 percent of teachers understand what Title IX covers and only a miniscule percent of students and parents are aware of their rights under Title IX. More Title IX coordinators doing their job in a proactive way with support

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1 For more information on The Title IX Action Network composed of Title IX coordinators and equity advocates, please visit: [www.feminist.org/education](http://www.feminist.org/education) or [http://www.feminist.org/education/TitleIXcoordinatorsNetwork.asp](http://www.feminist.org/education/TitleIXcoordinatorsNetwork.asp)

2 Colleges such as Grove City (including their students) do not receive federal financial assistance and are not covered under Title IX. These estimates are from *Ensuring Equal Access to High-Quality Education*, OCR 2011.
from their employers and external advisers can identify and prevent sex discrimination in addition to helping those who have suffered from discrimination file, resolve, and sustain resolution of complaints.

Over the past 40 years (See “Title IX at 40” www.ncwge.org and Ms. magazine “Triumphs of Title IX” http://www.feminist.org/education/TriumphsOfTitleIX.pdf ) there has been substantial progress in ending overt sex discrimination in U.S public education but the subtler manifestations of sex discrimination continue and the interpretations of compliance with Title IX and related civil rights laws have become more sophisticated and complicated. Additionally, the legal and financial risks for non-compliance have increased as plaintiffs have won multi-million dollar settlements http://www.feminist.org/education/consequences.asp

Thus, it is now more important for organizations that are covered by Title IX to employ well trained and proactive Title IX coordinators to prevent or quickly eliminate all types of sex discrimination. The frequent neglect of Title IX coordinators and related lack of knowledge of Title IX protections must end. This would help the U.S. regain its leadership role in using education to advance gender equality in society. This is especially critical for the most vulnerable student populations that often face discrimination on the basis of sex as well as other characteristics such as race, disability, limited English ability, or even gender non-conformity.

More Expertise is Needed Now than 40 Years Ago to Comply with Title IX

This means more well trained Title IX coordinators and team members with gender equity expertise in areas where sex discrimination is common are needed to address the following complexities:

- **Increasingly subtle discrimination.** Initially many Title IX violations were overt and seen as accepted practice. For example, girls were routinely denied access to training for male dominated careers and vice versa. Similarly, few questioned why males were suspended more often than girls for similar infractions. But as official discriminatory restrictions have been identified and generally eliminated, it is harder to end micro-inequities, indirect, and unintentional sex discrimination.

- **Detailed and complicated regulations and official guidance.** Title IX regulations and guidance from the federal government, often fine-tuned by state laws and policies, such as State Title IX type laws and legal precedents, help Title coordinators and gender equality advocates better identify unlawful but sometimes subtle sex discrimination. Federal guidance documents on the FMF Title IX Defined web page http://www.feminist.org/education/titleix.asp, related to preventing sex discrimination in athletics, sexual harassment, career-technical education and single-sex education are quite detailed but may not answer all questions. For example, even the counting of athletic opportunities can be tricky. Does participation by the same athlete in both indoor and outdoor track competition count as one or two participation opportunities? If there is evidence that a school is violating Title IX athletics regulations based on officially submitted data, should the Title IX coordinator be responsible for verifying this and related information on sex discriminatory treatment and for monitoring long
term compliance? How can they work with other gender equality advocates to maintain progress and prevent sex discrimination?

- **Related and overlapping laws and responsibilities.** To provide adequate guidance on ending sex discrimination, Title IX Coordinators need to understand related federal and state civil rights laws and legal precedents including interpretations of the U.S. Constitution, such as the Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection Clause which is especially helpful in providing guidance on why separate is not equal when schools practice sex segregation.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for the implementation of provisions in the Title IX regulation for Title IX coordinators, a similar provision in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for 504 coordinators, and for state Methods of Administration (MOA) coordinators to comply with the 1979 Vocational Education Guidelines to address court orders from the Adams v. Califano and Women’s Equity Action League (WEAL) cases to improve enforcement of Civil Rights laws to end race, sex, and other types of discrimination in vocational/now career & technical education.³

Every state except one now has anti-bullying legislation which generally overlaps with Title IX prohibitions against sexual harassment. Some of the new state laws designed to decrease sexual harassment and bullying also require a coordinator (often in each school). There is substantial confusion related to anti-bullying laws such as when is bullying a criminal act and/or a civil rights violation? For example, a Regional OCR Office investigated school districts that were treating incidents as bullying when they were actually also federal Title IX violations involving sexual harassment.

**State Title IX Coordinators**

While State Education Agencies (SEAs) are required to designate at least one Title IX coordinator, some states designate more than one. Many states have separate K-12 and post secondary education agencies, but we have just started to identify the postsecondary agency Title IX coordinators. States use two basic models for Title IX coordinator responsibilities.

1. Some Title IX coordinators have multiple civil rights responsibilities. For example, the same person may be a Title IX, 504 (disabilities), and MOA coordinator or even the director of their state’s equity office.

2. In other states there is likely to be a lead or general K-12 Title IX coordinator plus other SEA staff with some Title IX responsibilities in their substantive area of responsibility ranging from the agency’s legal or personnel office to physical education and athletics, harassment and bullying, career and technical education, etc. Some states actively identify these experts and create Title IX teams.

³ [Jacqueline.Michaels@ed.gov](mailto:Jacqueline.Michaels@ed.gov) Tel. 202-453-6024 is the OCR Headquarters is the Title IX Team Leader & [David.Berkowitz@ed.gov](mailto:David.Berkowitz@ed.gov) Tel. 202-453-6026 is the OCR MOA Coordinator.
The roles and responsibilities of Title IX coordinators and other SEA agency staff with Title IX and related civil rights responsibilities vary widely so some states use both of these models. Their roles range from advising their agencies on personnel and education policy issues, to serving as legal experts, or providing leadership in gender equity by identifying, training, assisting, and helping Title IX coordinators in the school districts, community colleges or postsecondary institutions in their state. Some of these SEA Title IX coordinators help conduct periodic gender equity assessments or investigate complaints of non-compliance with Title IX often with help from regional OCR offices. Model state Title IX coordinators provide training, consultation, and oversight to all public school districts in their state as well as extensive web resources including lists of district, and other Title IX coordinators.

The attached listing of State Title IX coordinators includes a more comprehensive listing of state Methods of Administration (MOA) coordinators than previous Feminist Majority Foundation State Title IX Coordinator directories. The objective of the MOA program is to ensure equal educational opportunity with respect to career and technical education programs regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. Under the MOA program, state education agencies (specifically, MOA coordinators) are responsible for conducting targeted compliance reviews of secondary and postsecondary institutions that provide career and technical education based on the Vocational Education Guidelines as well as the regulations implementing Title IX, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. MOA coordinators are also responsible for reporting their MOA activities and findings biennially to the OCR in ED. OCR staff provide technical assistance and training to state MOA coordinators on MOA program requirements, investigative techniques, and requirements of the Vocational Education Guidelines, as well as the Title IX and other civil rights laws. (See the federal documents for vocational education listed on www.feminist.org/education/titleix.asp.)

To help continually improve this directory and the full coverage of Title IX issues by state Title IX coordinator teams, FMF requests that SEA Title IX coordinators identify any other state education agency staff with substantial Title IX related expertise and responsibilities in areas such as sexual harassment/bullying, athletics, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), teen pregnancy and parenting, charter schools, and postsecondary education. It would also help if a lead state education agency Title IX coordinator is identified to establish networks to communicate with Title IX coordinators and equity advocates in their state’s school districts, post secondary schools, museums, etc. Some states maintain lists of school district or and other Title IX coordinators on their website to provide better access to the public. See asterisk* next to the website.

**School District Title IX Coordinators**

The school district Title IX coordinators are often district office employees with related human resources or diversity office assignments. Ideally they network with each other across the state and work with the state Title IX coordinator(s).

Some district Title IX coordinators organize and train and provide assistance to Title IX coordinators in each school in their district and maintain web information on Title IX
requirements. When they do so they can create networks of Title IX coordinators across their district and also provide opportunities to work with gender equity experts and advocates. The district Title IX coordinators should also be responsible for verifying the Title IX related information such as on athletic participation and single-sex classes requested in the mandatory OCR Civil Rights Data Collection. They should be proactive in identifying and addressing sex discrimination to ensure that their district is advancing gender equality.

As in state education agencies, teams of Title IX experts may also be used in the more than 14,000 school districts. Many school districts have athletic directors with Title IX coordinator responsibilities. In addition to state legislation in NY to prevent bullying and harassment, the New York City school district has legislation that designates the appointment of a specific person in each public school to prevent sexual harassment, bullying and other demeaning behaviors. Since many of these behaviors relate to violations of Title IX, it is reasonable for these harassment/ bullying coordinators to also be part of the district Title IX team and for some of these experts to be given broader responsibilities as Title IX coordinators. ED and DOJ have specific guidance for Title IX coordinators at the K-12 and the postsecondary levels to prevent sexual harassment and assault.

**School Level Title IX Coordinators**

There are 98,000 elementary and secondary schools, but we do not know how many have designated Title IX coordinators. School level Title IX coordinators are often interested teachers or staff with related assignments such as the school Title I coordinator, anti sexual harassment coordinator, or even the principal. Although almost all of the 5000 public and private postsecondary institutions should have one or more Title IX coordinators (often in human resources, athletics, or equal opportunity or diversity offices), it is difficult to find these coordinators on school websites or staff directories.

At all levels of education, in addition to school Title IX gender equity coordinators there may also be other school or school district equity or diversity coordinators. These individuals can share strategies and provide support to address multiple educational equity issues. We encourage them to work with an advisory group of internal and external supporters who know and care about advancing gender equality.
State Title IX Gender Equity Coordinators, Methods of Administration Coordinators & other State level Gender Equity Experts

**Alabama**

THOMAS R. BICE  
State Superintendent of Education & Title IX Coordinator  
Alabama Department of Ed.  
5114 Gordon Persons Building  
P. O. Box 302101  
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101  
Phone: 334-242-9700  
Fax: 3342429708  
Email: tbice@alsde.edu  
Web: http://www.alsde.edu

PETRO JOHNSON  
Career-Technical Education, MOA Coordinator  
Alabama Department of Education  
5239 Gordon Persons Building  
P. O. Box 302101  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101  
Phone: 334-242-9108  
Fax: 334-353-8406  
E-mail: pjjohnson01@alsde.edu  
Web: www.alsde.edu

TRISH JONES  
Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education  
MOA Coordinator  
135 S. UNION ST.  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2130  
Phone: 334-293-4555  
Fax: 334-293-4559  
E-mail: Trish.Jones@dpe.edu  
Web: http://www.acs.cc.al.us/

**American Samoa**

SALU HUNKIN-FINAU  
Director of Education & Title IX Coordinator  
American Samoa Department of Education  
P.O. Box 656  
Pago Pago, AS 96799  
Phone: 684- 633-5237x222  
Email: HunkFins252@gmail.com  
Web: http://www.doe.as

**Arizona**

BILLYE BELANGER  
Title IX Coordinator, Human Resources Manager, Arizona Department of Education  
1535 West Jefferson St.  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007  
Phone: 602-542-3186  
Fax: 6025423073  
Email: billie.belanger@azed.gov  
Web: http://www.azed.gov

DEBBIE JACKSON  
Division Director, Administrative Services, Office of the Attorney General  
Title IX Coordinator responsibilities for Human Relations  
1535 West Jefferson Street, Bin #9  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007  
Phone: 602-542-3186  
Fax: 602-542-3073  
Email: Debbie.Jackson@azag.gov

JEANNE ROBERTS  
CTE Grants Program (MOA)  
Arizona Department of Ed. Career and Technical Education  
1535 W. Jefferson, Bin #60  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007  
Phone: 602-364-2211  
Fax: 602-364-4035  
Email: jeanne.roberts@azed.gov  
Web: http://www.ade.az.gov/cte/federal programs/

**Arkansas**

OLIVER DILLINGHAM  
Title IX Coordinator and Title IV Contact  
Arkansas Department of Ed.  
#4 Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
Phone: 501-682-4212  
Fax: 501-682-5177  
Email: Oliver.Dillingham@arkansased.gov  
Web: http://arkansased.org/

MARYLENE TATE  
Office of Support for Special Populations (MOA)  
Arkansas Department of Workforce Education  
Three Capitol Mall, Luther S. Hardin Building  
Little Rock, AR 72201-1083  
Phone: 501-682-1535  
Fax: 501-682-1805  
Email: marylene.tate@arkansased.gov  
Web: http://dwe.arkansased.org/SpecialEds/EA.html

**California**

SHARON FELIX-ROCHON  
Director, Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX, MOA and 504/ADA Coordinator  
California Department of Education  
1430 N. St., Suite 4206  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: 916-445-9174  
Fax: 916-324-9818  
Email: sfelix@cde.ca.gov  
Web: www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct  
http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct

Alternate:  
TONI VALADEZ  
Phone: 916-324-9820  
Email: tvaldez@cde.ca.gov

SHARON WONG  
Office of the Chancellor (MOA)  
California Community Colleges Career Education Practices Unit  
1102 Q Street  
Sacramento, California 95811-6539-6511  
Phone: 916-327-5486  
Email: swong@ccccco.edu  
Web: http://www.cccco.edu/

**Colorado**

WENDI KISPERT  
Title IX Coordinator  
Colorado Dept. of Education  
Office of Language, Culture and Equity
**District of Columbia**

CHAD E. KEE, Ph.D.  
State Performance & Accountability, Title IX & MOA  
Coordinator, Adult & Career Education Division, Career & Technical Education, Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), Government of the District of Columbia  
810 First Street, NE, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20002-4227  
Phone: 202-741-0279  
Fax: 202-741-0229  
Cell: 202-368-5791  
Email: chad.kee@dc.gov  
Web: http://www.osse.dc.gov

TONY D. JOHNSON  
Civil Rights and Gender Equity Coordinator, Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)  
Director, State Office of Career and Technical Education  
810 First Street, NE, 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20002-4227  
Phone: 202-727-8576  
Fax: 202-741-0229  
Email: Tony.Johnson@dc.gov  
Web: http://www.osse.dc.gov

CLARK RAY  
Statewide (OSSE) Director of Athletics DC State Athletic Association, DCSAA  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education, 810 First Street, NE, 4th Floor  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: 202-654-6115 (Office)  
202-277-8395 (Cell)  
202-724-7656 (Fax)  
Email: clark.ray@dc.gov  
Web: www.dcsaasports.org

MARIE RUDOLPH  
Senior Women’s Administrator and Title IX Coordinator for Athletics, DCSAA  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education  
Government of the District of Columbia  
810 First Street, NE, 4th Floor  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: 202-724-5383 (Office)  
Email: marie.rudolph@dc.gov  
Web: www.dcsaasports.org

HEATHER HOLADAY,  
DCPS Title IX Coordinator, Director  
Health, Physical Education, Music, Visual Arts, World Languages,  
Fillmore Arts, DC Public Schools,  
Office of Teaching & Learning  
1200 First Street, NE | 8th Floor  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: 202-442-9439  
Fax: 202-442-5523  
Email: Heather.Holaday@dc.gov  
Web: http://dcps.dc.gov/

DONNA RUSSELL  
DCPS Title IX Coordinator  
Office of the General Counsel, DC Public Schools  
1200 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: 202-442-5170  
Email: donna.russell@dc.gov  
Web: www.k12.dc.us

STEPHANIE EVANS  
Director of Athletics, DCPS  
Phone: 202.729.3288  
Email: Stephanie.evans@dc.gov

Chaz A. Green  
Associate Athletic Director and Title IX Athletic Coordinator  
District of Columbia Public Schools/DCIAA  
Washington, DC 20020  
Office: 202-729-3798  
Email: Chaz.Green@dc.gov

RENAE LEE  
Human Resources Specialist & Title IX Coordinator  
Univ. of the District of Columbia  
Office of Human Resources  
4200 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Building 38 - Suite 301-14,  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
Phone: 202-274-5452  
Fax: 202-274-6300  
Email: rlee@udc.edu  
Web: www.udc.edu

**Florida**

LYDIA SOUTHWELL  
Title IX Coordinator  
& Educational Policy Development Director and MOA  
Equal Educational Opportunity Office, Division of Public Schools  
Florida Department of Education  
325 W. Gaines St. Turlington Bldg,  
Rm 644C  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
Phone: 850-414-5556  
Fax: 850-414-5558  
Email: lydia.southwell@fldoe.gov  
Web: http://www.firn.edu/doe/eeop/
LYNDA EARLS
Director, Equity & Civil Rights Compliance, Title IX Coordinator
Florida Department of Education
Division of Florida Colleges
325 West Gaines Street, Turlington
Bldg. Suite 1544, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
Phone: 850-245-9468
Fax: 850245-9468
Email: lynda.earls@fldoe.org
*Web: http://www.fldoe.org

Georgia
THERESE MCGUIRE
Title IX Program Specialist/Coordinator
Georgia Department of Education
1754 Twin Towers East 205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE Atlanta, GA 30334
Phone: 404-651-7859
Email: tmguire@doe.k12.ga.us
*Web: http://www.doe.k12.ga.us

STEFFANIE MORRISON
Technical College System of Georgia, Attorney (MOA)
Attorney MOA Coordinator
1800 Century Place, Suite 400
Atlanta, Georgia 30345-4304
Phone: 404-327-6833
Fax: 404-679-1615
Email: smorrison@tcsg.edu

BRENDA BARKER
Career, Technical & Agricultural Education (MOA)
Georgia Department of Education
1752 Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, Suite 1752
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-5040
Phone: 404-463-5279
Fax: 404-651-8984
Email: Brbarker@Doe.K12.Ga.Us

Guam
REBECCA M. PEREZ
Legal Counsel (Atty IV), Title IX Coordinator
Guam Department of Ed.
P.O. Box DE
Hagatna, Guam 96932
Phone: 671-300-1612
Email: rebecca.perez@doe.net
Web: www.gdoe.net

MICKI L. LONSDALE (MOA)
Education Equity Officer
Guam Community College
P.O. Box 23069

GMF, GU 96921-0307
Phone: 671-735-4422
Web: www.Guam_Community_College.edu

ELAINE FACULO-GOGUE
EEO /ADA & Title IX Institutional Compliance Officer
University of Guam
Mangilao, Guam 96923, USA
Phone: 671 – 735-2244/2971
Fax: 671-734-0430
Email: efgogue@uoguam.uog.edu
Web: www.uoguam.uog.edu

Hawaii
SUSAN H. KITSU
Director, Civil Rights Compliance Office
Hawaii Department of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, HI 96804
Phone: 808-586-3322
Fax: 808-586-3331
Email: Susan.Kitsu@notes.k12.hi.us
Web: http://www.doe.k12.hi.us/

DANA TAKAHARA-DIAS
Title IX Coordinator
Phone: 808-586-3327
Email: Dana.Takahara-Dias@notes.k12.hi.us

RYAN TANAKA
Office of State Director for Career and Technical Education (MOA)
University of Hawaii
Lower Campus Road
Lunalilo Freeway Portable -Room 4
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822-2489
Phone: 808-956-4052
Fax: 808-956-9096
Email: Ryan.Tanaka@hawaii.edu

Idaho
RHONDA HEGGEN
Title IX Coordinator and Physical Activity, Nutrition & Tobacco Prevention
Idaho State Department of Education
650 W. State Street
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720
Phone: 208-332-6950
Email: rheggen@sde.idaho.gov
Web: http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/csh

AMY LORENZO
Idaho Division of Professional-Technical Education (MOA)
Planning and Policy Coordinator
650 West State Street
Suite 324
Boise, Idaho 83720-0095
Phone: 208-429-5535
Fax: 208-334-2365
Email: Amy.Lorenzo@pte.idaho.gov
Web: www.pte.idaho.gov

Illinois
CHERYL BRADLEY
Title IX Coordinator & MOA
Principal Education Consultant
Title Grant Administration Division
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001
Phone: 217-524-4832
Fax: 217-785-0090
Email: cb Bradley@isbe.net
Web: http://www.isbe.net

DEBORAH L. HOPPER
Chair Gender Equity Advisory Committee
Illinois State Board of Education
Phone: 217-524-4832
Email: dhopper@isbe.net
Web: http://www.isbe.net

AMANDA CURSO
Director for Career & Technical Education, Illinois Community College Board (MOA)
401 East Capitol Ave.
Springfield, IL 62701
Phone: 217-785-0068
Fax: 217-785-0095
Email: Amanda.Curso@illinois.gov
Web: www.isbe.net

Indiana
MICHELLE GOUGH OR MCKEOWN
Assistant Director of Legal Affairs & Title IX Coordinator
Indiana Department of Ed.
151 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Phone: 317-232-0592
Fax: 317-232-0744
Email: mgough@doe.in.gov
Web: http://www.doe.in.gov/

DAVIS MOORE
Civil Rights Coordinator (MOA)
Indiana Department of Education
Division of College and Career Readiness
115 West Washington Street
Suite 600, South Tower
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Phone: 317-232-0512
Fax: 317-232-9121
Kentucky

LISA K. LANG
Title IX Coordinator & Assistant General Counsel
Kentucky Department of Education
500 Mero Street, Room 822
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: 502-564-4474
Fax: 502-564-9321
Email: Lisa.Lang@education.ky.gov
Web: http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/

REBECCA OGDEN
Title IX Compliance Officer
Division of Human Resources
Kentucky Dept. of Education
Phone: 502-564-3716
Fax: 502-564-9321
Email: Rebecca.Ogden@education.ky.gov
Web: http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/

DANIEL DAVISON
Instructional Equity & MOA Coordinator
Division of Federal Consolidate Plans and Audits (MOA)
Kentucky Department of Ed.
500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: 502-564-3791
Fax: 502-564-8149
Email: Daniel.Davison@education.ky.gov
Web: http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/

KARLA TIPTON
Kentucky Department of Education
Office of Career & Technical Education (MOA)
20th Floor Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: 502-564-4286
Fax: 502-564-2241
Email: Karla.Tipton@education.ky.gov

Louisiana

CHRIS FRUGE
Attorney, Office of the General Counsel
Title IX Agency Coordinator
Louisiana Dept. of Ed.
P.O. Box 94064
1201 North Third Street

PAUL THERIOT
Office of Career & Technical Ed. (MOA)
Louisiana Department of Education
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
Phone: 225-219-0489
Fax: 225-219-1691
Email: Paul.Theriot@LA.GOV
Web: www.louisianaschools.net

SANDRA KINNEY
Louisiana Community and Technical College System
265 South Foster Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
Phone: 225-308-4370
Fax: 225-922-2865
Email: jsawtelle@lctcs.edu
Web: www.lctcs.net

PATRICIA DOUCET
Office of School Programs
MOA Coordinator
Louisiana Department of Education
Caliborne Building,
P.O. Box 94064
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
Phone: 225-219-0489
Fax: 225-219-1691
E-mail: pat.doucet@la.gov
Web: www.louisianaschools.net

Maine

DWIGHT LITTLEFIELD
Education Specialist
Title IX & MOA Coordinator
Maine Department of Education
Career and Technical Education Team
23 State House Station
Maine Department of Education
**Maryland**

RENEE YARBOUTH WILLIAMS  
**Title IX Coordinator**  
*Equity Assurance & Compliance Office*  
Maryland State Department of Education  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
**Phone:** 410-767-0180  
**Fax:** 410-767-0180  
**Email:** rwilliams@msde.state.md.us  
*Web:* **http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE**  

PATRICIA MIKOS  
**Division of Career and College Readiness (MOA)**  
Maryland State Department of Education  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
**Phone:** 410-767-0180  
**Fax:** 410-333-2099  
**Email:** pmikos@msde.state.md.us  
*Web:* **http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE**  

**Massachusetts**

VALIAN NORMIS  
**Title IX Coordinator**  
Human Resources, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Massachusetts Department of Education  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148-5023  
**Phone:** 781-338-6100  
**Fax:** 781-338-3387  
**Email:** vnorris@doe.mass.edu  
*Web:* **http://www.doe.mass.edu/**  

LISA SANDLER  
Career/Vocational Technical Education (MOA)  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023  
**Phone:** 781-338-3956  
**Fax:** 781-338-3950  
**Email:** lsandler@doe.mass.edu  
*Web:* **http://www.doe.mass.edu/cte**  

**Michigan**

NORMA R. TIMS  
**Title IX & MOA Coordinator**  
Office of Career and Technical Education  
Michigan Department of Education  
P.O. Box 30712  
Lansing, MI 48909  
**Phone:** 517-241-2091  
**Fax:** 517-373-8776  
**Email:** timsn@michigan.gov  
*Web:* **http://www.michigan.gov/mdcd/0,1972,00.html**  

**Minnesota**

CAROLYN ELLSTRA  
**Division of Compliance and Assistance (MOA)**  
Minnesota Department of Education  
1500 Highway 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113-4266  
**Phone:** 651-582-8366  
**Fax:** 651-582-8725  
**Email:** Carolyn.Ellstra@State.Mn.us  
*Web:* **http://www.education.state.mn.us**  

WHITNEY HARRIS  
**Executive Director for Diversity and Multiculturalism**  
Minnesota State Colleges & Universities  
Wells Fargo Place, 307th St. E., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55101-7804  
**Phone:** 651-201-1746  
**Fax:** 651-492-6687  
**Email:** whitney.harris@so.mnscu.edu  

RENEÉ HOGOBOOM  
**Associate Director for Diversity and Equity (MOA)**  
Minnesota State College & Universities  
Wells Fargo Place, 307th St. E., Suite 300, St. Paul, MN 55101-7804  
**Phone:** 651-201-1592  
**Fax:** 612-296-7590  
**Email:** renee.hogoboom@so.mnscu.edu  

Alternate Gender Equity Contact  

**Missouri**

JOYCE WALLACE  
**Division Director, Office of Human Resources, Title IX Coordinator**  
Mississippi Department of Education  
359 North West St.  
P.O. Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205  
**Phone:** 601-359-3511  
**Fax:** 601-576-2185  
**Email:** jwallace@mde.k12.ms.us  
*Web:* **http://www.mde.k12.ms.us**  

VALERIA WILLIAMS  
**Director, Office of Compliance and Reporting (MOA)**  
Mississippi Department of Ed.  
Office of Career and Technical Education  
P.O. Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771  
**Phone:** 601-359-3974  
**Fax:** 601-359-6619  
**Email:** vwilliams@mde.k12.ms.us  
*Web:* **http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/vocational/OVTE/**  

ED ROBERSON  
**MOA Coordinator, Career and Technical Education Division**  
Mississippi State Board for Community & Junior Colleges  
3825 Ridgewood Road  
Jackson, Mississippi 39211  
**Phone:** 601-432-6221  
**Fax:** 601-432-6353  
**Email:** eroberson@sbcjc.cc.ms.us  
*Web:* **http://www.mccb.edu**  

**Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed., P.O. Box 480**  
Jefferson City 65102  
**Phone:** 573-751-3527  
**Fax:** 573-751-8613
Email: Mark.Vanzandt@dese.mo.gov
Web: http://www.dese.mo.gov/

DAVID HALL
Compliance & Access Program Manager (MOA)
Montana University System
PO Box 203201
2500 Broadway
Helena, Montana 59620-3201
Phone: 406-444-0608
Fax: 406-444-1469
Email: davidhall@montana.edu
Web: www.mus.edu

Marina McChatton
Title IX Coordinator
Office of Career, Technical & Adult Education
755 N. Roop Street, Suite 201
Carson City, NV 89701
Phone: 775-687-7285
Fax: 775-687-8636
Email: mmchatton@doe.nv.gov

Randi Hunewill
Title IX Coordinator
Office of Career, Technical & Adult Education
755 N. Roop Street, Suite 201
Carson City, NV 89701
Phone: 775-687-7284
Fax: 775-687-8636
Email: rhunewill@doe.nv.gov
Web: http://www.doe.nv.gov/cte

New Hampshire

LISA HATZ
Title IX Coordinator
New Hampshire Department of Education, Office of Guidance, Counseling and School Psychology
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20
Concord, NH 03301
Phone: 603-271-7080 or 6691
Email: lisa.hatz@doe.nh.gov

MARIANNE GFROERER
MOA Coordinator for Civil Rights; Supervisor
Office of Guidance & Psychology
Phone 603-271-6691
Email: Mariane.Gfroerer@doe.nh.gov/Mgfroerer@ed.state.nh.us

New Mexico

DEAN HOPPER
Title IX Coordinator
Director, School and Family Support Bureau
New Mexico Public Education Department
120 S. Federal Place, Room 206
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-1806
Fax: 505-827-1826
E-Mail: dean.hopper@state.nm.us
Web: http://www.ped.state.nm.us

ERIC SPENCER
Director, College & Career Readiness Bureau (MOA coordinator)
New Mexico PED
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-6420
Fax: 505-827-6531
E-Mail: Eric.Spencer@State.Nm.Us
Web: www.ped.state.nm.us/ctweb

New Jersey

WAITING REPLACEMENT FOR RETIRED BARBARA GANTWERK
Title IX Coordinator
N.J. Department of Education
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500
Interim contact: Sue Martz,
Assistant Commissioner, Student services
Susan.Martz@doe.state.nj.us
or Marlene.Leona@doe.state.nj.us
Phone: 609-292-9899
Fax: 609-633-1046
Email: Sue.Martz@dese.state.nj.us
Web: http://www.education.nh.gov

Nebraska

JOEL SCHERLING
Title IX Coordinator, Director of Human Resources, Nebraska Department of Education
Phone: 402-471-4736
Email: Joel.scherling@nebraska.gov

BONNIE SIBERT
Nebraska Career Education (MOA)
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
Post Office Box 98987
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987
Phone: 402-471-4818
Fax: 402-471-0117
Email: bonnie.sibert@nebraska.gov
Web: http://www.education.ne.gov/BMIT

Nevada

MARIANE GFROERER
MOA Coordinator for Civil Rights; Supervisor
Office of Guidance & Psychology
Phone 603-271-6691
Email: Mariane.Gfroerer@doe.nh.gov/Mgfroerer@ed.state.nh.us

New Mexico

DEAN HOPPER
Title IX Coordinator
Director, School and Family Support Bureau
New Mexico Public Education Department
120 S. Federal Place, Room 206
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-1806
Fax: 505-827-1826
E-Mail: dean.hopper@state.nm.us
Web: http://www.ped.state.nm.us

ERIC SPENCER
Director, College & Career Readiness Bureau (MOA coordinator)
New Mexico PED
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-6420
Fax: 505-827-6531
E-Mail: Eric.Spencer@State.Nm.Us
Web: www.ped.state.nm.us/ctweb

New Hampshire

LISA HATZ
Title IX Coordinator
New Hampshire Department of Education, Office of Guidance, Counseling and School Psychology
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20
Concord, NH 03301
Phone: 603-271-7080 or 6691
Email: lisa.hatz@doe.nh.gov

MARIANNE GFROERER
MOA Coordinator for Civil Rights; Supervisor
Office of Guidance & Psychology
Phone 603-271-6691
Email: Mariane.Gfroerer@doe.nh.gov/Mgfroerer@ed.state.nh.us

New Mexico

DEAN HOPPER
Title IX Coordinator
Director, School and Family Support Bureau
New Mexico Public Education Department
120 S. Federal Place, Room 206
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-1806
Fax: 505-827-1826
E-Mail: dean.hopper@state.nm.us
Web: http://www.ped.state.nm.us

ERIC SPENCER
Director, College & Career Readiness Bureau (MOA coordinator)
New Mexico PED
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-6420
Fax: 505-827-6531
E-Mail: Eric.Spencer@State.Nm.Us
Web: www.ped.state.nm.us/ctweb

New Hampshire

LISA HATZ
Title IX Coordinator
New Hampshire Department of Education, Office of Guidance, Counseling and School Psychology
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20
Concord, NH 03301
Phone: 603-271-7080 or 6691
Email: lisa.hatz@doe.nh.gov

MARIANNE GFROERER
MOA Coordinator for Civil Rights; Supervisor
Office of Guidance & Psychology
Phone 603-271-6691
Email: Mariane.Gfroerer@doe.nh.gov/Mgfroerer@ed.state.nh.us

New Mexico

DEAN HOPPER
Title IX Coordinator
Director, School and Family Support Bureau
New Mexico Public Education Department
120 S. Federal Place, Room 206
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-1806
Fax: 505-827-1826
E-Mail: dean.hopper@state.nm.us
Web: http://www.ped.state.nm.us

ERIC SPENCER
Director, College & Career Readiness Bureau (MOA coordinator)
New Mexico PED
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-6420
Fax: 505-827-6531
E-Mail: Eric.Spencer@State.Nm.Us
Web: www.ped.state.nm.us/ctweb
New York

CAROL LITRIDES
Title IX Coordinator, Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Field Services (OCIFS) Career and Technical Education Team (MOA)
New York State Education Department
315 Education Building
89 Washington Ave.
Albany, New York 12234
Phone: (518) 486-1547
Fax (518) 402-5114
Email: clitride@mail.nysed.gov
Web: http://www.nysed.gov/

DAN NICOLAESCU
(Higher Education MOA coordinator) Associate in Higher Education, Collegiate Development Programs Unit
Office of K-16 Initiatives and Access Programs @ NYSED
Room 960A EBA
89 Washington Ave.
Albany, N.Y. 12234
Phone: (518) 486-6042
Fax: (518) 474-0060
Email: dnicola@nysed.gov

New York City Department of Education

VICTORIA AJIBADE
Title IX Attorney/Coordinator
Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Management
65 Court Street, Room 1102,
Brooklyn NY 11201
Phone: (718) 935-4797
Email: vajibade@schools.nyc.gov
Web: title_ix_inquiries@schools.nyc.gov

North Carolina

ELLEN ESSICK
Lead Title IX Coordinator & NC Healthy Schools Section Chief
North Carolina Dept. of Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601
Phone: (919)-807-3859
Email: Ellen.essick@dpi.nc.gov
*Web: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/federalprograms/titleIX/

BURT JENKINS
Health/PE/Athletics Consultant & Title IX Coordinator
Phone: 919-807-3637
Email: burt.jenkins@dpi.nc.gov

SHANNON BAKER
Consultant, CTE Support Services
North Carolina Career & Technical Education
301 N. Wilmington Street
6359 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27600
Phone: 919-807-3872
Fax: 919-807-3656
Email: Shannon.Baker@Dpi.Nc.Gov
Web: www.ncpublicschools.org

NANCY MASSEY
North Carolina Community College System (MOA)
200 West Jones Street
5016 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699
Phone: 919-807-7131
Fax: 919-807-6971
Email: MasseyN@nccommunitycolleges.edu

North Dakota

ROBERT V. MARTHALLER
Assistant State Superintendent, Title IX Coordinator
ND Department of Public Instruction
Education & Community Support
600 E Boulevard Ave.,
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440
Phone: 701-328-2267
Email: rvmarthaller@nd.gov
Web: http://www.dpi.state.nd.us

MARILYN K. ORGAARD
Curriculum and Standards Specialist (MOA)
North Dakota Department of Career & Technical Education
State Capitol Building, 15th Floor
600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 270
Bismarck, ND 58505-0610
Phone: 701-328-3163
Fax: 701-328-1255
Email: maorgaard@nd.gov

Ohio

P.R. CASEY
Legal Counsel & Title IX Coordinator
Ohio Department of Education
25 S. Front Street
Phone: 614-995-5927
Email: P.R.casey@ode.state.oh.us
Web: http://www.ode.state.oh.us/

RAY TIMLIN
Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (MOA)
Ohio Department of Education
25 S. Front Street, Mail Stop 607
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4183
Phone: 614-644-0627
Fax: 614-466-2573
Email: Raymond.Timlin@education.ohio.gov

Oklahoma

JONI YOUNTS
Title IX Coordinator
Oklahoma State Dept. of Education
2500 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Room 111
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105
Phone: 405-522-3319
Email: joni.younts@sde.state.ok.us
Web: http://sde.state.ok.us/home/default.html

RANDY FEAGAN
Oklahoma Dept. of Career and Technical Education (MOA)
Federal Legislation Services
1500 West 7th Avenue
Stillwater, OK 74074-4364
Phone: 405-743-5575
Fax: 405-743-6809
Email: rfeagan@okcareertech.org
Web: www.okcareertech.org

Oregon

WINSTON CORNWALL
Civil Rights Specialist & Title IX Coordinator
Oregon Department of Ed.
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310-0203
Phone: 503-947-5675
Fax: 503-378-5156
Email: winston.cornwall@ode.state.or.us
Web: http://www.ode.state.or.us/

KARIN MOSCON
(MOA) Office of Educational Improvement & Innovation
255 Capitol St., N.E.
Salem, OR 97310-0203
Phone: 503-947-5706
Fax: 503-378-5156
Email: karin.moscon@state.or.us
Web: http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results?id=151
http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results?id=151
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Web Url</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>SUZANNE TALLMAN</td>
<td>Title IX Coordinator</td>
<td>School Services Office</td>
<td>717-214-8212</td>
<td>717.214.4389</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Stallman@pa.gov">Stallman@pa.gov</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.education.state.pa.us">http://www.education.state.pa.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TERESA SHAKESPIRE</td>
<td>Title IX Coordinator/Athletics</td>
<td>School Services</td>
<td>717-783-6746</td>
<td>717-214-4389</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tshakespea@pa.gov">tshakespea@pa.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CYNTHIA GROSS</td>
<td>Civil rights &amp; Nontraditional Programs &amp; MOA Coordinator</td>
<td>Pennsylvania Department of Education</td>
<td>717-772-4864</td>
<td>717-783-6672</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cygrosso@pa.gov">cygrosso@pa.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data Analysis, Assessment and Contracts Division, Bureau of Career and Technical Education, 333 Market Street, 11th Floor Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.education.state.pa.us">www.education.state.pa.us</a></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>DR JUDITH SANTOS GUIDSON</td>
<td>Assistant Sec. Career and Technical Education, Puerto Rico Dept. of Education (May be able to identify Title IX Coordinator.)</td>
<td>Phone: 787 -773-6668</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:santosgju@DE.GOBIERNO.PR">santosgju@DE.GOBIERNO.PR</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>GEORGE M. MUKSIAN</td>
<td>Chief Legal Counsel &amp; Title IX &amp; MOA Coordinator</td>
<td>Rhode Island Department of Education</td>
<td>401-222-8979</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:George.Muksian@ride.ri.gov">George.Muksian@ride.ri.gov</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ride.ri.gov/">http://www.ride.ri.gov/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>MICHAEL ADDISON</td>
<td>Human Resources Director and Title IX Coordinator</td>
<td>South Carolina Department of Education</td>
<td>803-734-8505</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:maddison@ed.sc.gov">maddison@ed.sc.gov</a></td>
<td><a href="http://ed.sc.gov/agency/os/Human-Resources/">http://ed.sc.gov/agency/os/Human-Resources/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>ABBY JAVUREK-HUMIG</td>
<td>Title IX Coordinator and Director of Assessment &amp; Accountability</td>
<td>South Dakota Department of Education</td>
<td>605-773-4708</td>
<td>605-773-6139</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Abby.Javurek-Humig@state.sd.us">Abby.Javurek-Humig@state.sd.us</a></td>
<td><a href="http://doe.sd.us">http://doe.sd.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>PEACHIE L. JONES</td>
<td>Assistant General Counsel for Civil Rights &amp; Title IX Coordinator</td>
<td>Tennessee Department of Education</td>
<td>615-741-2921</td>
<td>615-532-2599</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Peachie.Jones@tn.gov">Peachie.Jones@tn.gov</a></td>
<td>TennesseeEducationWeb: <a href="http://www.state.tn.us/education/">http://www.state.tn.us/education/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DERYL GENTRY</td>
<td>MOA Coordinator, Office of Special Education</td>
<td>Tennessee Department of Education</td>
<td>615-741-7775</td>
<td>615-532-9412</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Deryl.K.Gentry@tn.gov">Deryl.K.Gentry@tn.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: Web links may not be fully accessible as they are in the form of raw text)
LEANN HALE BLEVINS
Tennessee Board of Regents
Grants Coordinator (MOA)
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology
1415 Murfreesboro Road, Suite 314
Nashville, Tennessee 37217-2833
Phone 615-366-4459
Fax: 615-366-3999
E-mail: LeAnn.Blevins@tbr.edu

Texas

EMI JOHNSON
Title IX Coordinator for TEA programs
Texas Education Agency 1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas, 78701
Phone: 512-463-9342
Fax: 512-305-9447?
Email: E.mJohnson@tea.state.tx.us
Web: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb

DARRELL MCKNIGHT
Title IX Coordinator for school districts & charter schools
Email: Darrell.Mcknight@tea.state.tx.us
Phone: 512-463-9290
Email: Chris.Maska@tea.state.tx.us
Phone: 512-463-9720

TIMOTHY PETTY
Program Monitoring and Interventions (MOA)
Texas Education Agency 1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494
Phone: 512-463-5226 (Direct Line: 512-475-3487)
Fax: 512-463-3136
Email: timothy.petty@tea.state.tx.us
Web: http://www.tea.state.tx.us

DONNA CARLIN
Workforce, Academic Affairs and Research Division (MOA)
Texas Higher Ed Coordinating Board
1200 East Anderson Lane
PO Box 12788
Austin, Texas 78711
Phone: 512-427-6241
Fax: 512-427-6168
Email: donna.carlin@thech.ep.ed.gov
Web: http://www.thech.state.tx.us

Utah

RICHARD GOMEZ
Coordinator Education

Equity Section
Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
PO Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah
Phone: 801-538-7643
Fax: 801-538-7596
Email: rpgomez@schools.utah.gov
Web: http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/equity/

MURRAY MESZAROS
Utah State Office of Education
Career and Applied Technology Education (MOA)
Phone: 801-538-7870
Fax: 801-538-7868
Email: murray.meszaros@schools.utah.gov

Vermont

HELEN LAMBERTON
Legal Counsel & Title IX Coordinator
Vermont Department of Education
120 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2501
Phone: 802-828-3136 or 802-479-1030
Email: Helen.Lamberton@state.vt.us
Web: http://www.state.vt.us/educ/

JAY RAMSEY
CTE Workgroup and MOA Coordinator (MOA)
Vermont Department of Ed.
High School and Adult Division
120 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05620
Phone: 802-828-5140
Fax: 802-828-3146
Email: Jay.Ramsey@state.vt.us
Web: education.vermont.gov

Virginia

KENT DICKEY
Deputy Superintendent-Finance & Operations &Title IX Coordinator
Virginia Department of Ed.
P.O. Box 2120
101 North 14th Street, 25th Fl
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120
Phone: 804-225-5025
Email: Kent.Dickey@doe.virginia.gov
Web: http://www.pen.k12.va.us

SANDRA RUFFIN
Director of Federal Program Monitoring, 20th Floor
Phone: 804-225-2768
Fax: 804-371-8796
Email: Sandra.ruffin@doe.virginia.gov

BONNIE B. ENGLISH
Monitoring Specialist for Special Education & Civil Rights Laws & MOA Coordinator, Office of Federal Program Monitoring
Virginia Department of Education, 101 N. 14th St., 20th flr., James Monroe Building, Richmond, VA 22319
Phone: 804-225-2618
Fax: 804-371-8796
Email: bonnie.english@doe.virginia.gov

VANESSA WIGAND
Specialist for Health, Physical Education & Driver Education 23rd Floor
Phone: 804-225-3300
Vanessa.Wigand@doe.virginia.gov

SCOTT KEMP
Workforce Development Services & MOA Coordinator
Virginia Community College System
101 North 14th Street 17th Floor
James Monroe Bldg.
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: 804-819-4968
Fax: 804-819-1699
Email: skemp@vccs.edu
Web: www.vccs.edu

Virgin Islands

ROSE ANNE FARRINGTON
Virgin Islands Department of Education: Career, Technical and Adult Education (MOA)
1834 Kongens Gade, Charlotte Amalie
St Thomas, VI 00802
Phone: 340-776-3484
Fax: 340-776-3488
Email: RFarrington@stj.k12.vi
Web: http://www.usvi.org/education/ or www.vide.vi or name@doe.virginia.gov

Washington

YVONNE RYANS, ED.D.
Equity & Civil Rights Director
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200
Executive Director, Office of Human Resources  
West Virginia Department of Education  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East, Building 6, Room 264  
Charleston, WV 25305-0330  
Phone: 304-558-2702  
Fax: 304-558-0882  
Email: kburdett@access.k12.wv.us  
Web: http://wvde.state.wv.us/

CAROLYN SUPPA  
Office of Career & Technical Instruction (MOA)  
West Virginia Department of Education  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East Building 6, Room 243  
Charleston, WV 25305-0330  
Phone: 304-558-2348  
Fax: 304-558-3946  
Email: csuppa@access.k12.wv.us  
Web: http://careertech.k12.wv.us/

JUNE HECKEL  
West Virginia Council for Community & Technical College Ed (MOA)  
Suite 700  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Phone: 304-558-0265  
Fax: 304-558-1646  
Email: heckel@wvtcs.org

Wisconsin  

MICHAEL THOMPSON,  
Deputy State Superintendent  
Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction  
125 S. Webster St.  
PO Box 7841  
Madison, WI 53707-3584  
Phone: 608-266-3584  
Email: michael.thompson@dpi.wi.gov

SARA BAIRD  
Assistant Director, Career & Technical Education (MOA)

Notes  
* These State websites maintain lists of Title IX coordinators (for school districts and/or other categories)  

Produced for the Title IX Action Network by the Feminist Majority Foundation’s Education Equality Program, www.feminist.org/education 4-11-2014  
Please send updates to: Dr. Sue Klein, Education Equity Director, sklein@feminist.org