

Final Report of  
Seattle Public Schools  
Task Force for  
Prevention of and  
Response to  
Sexual Harassment and  
Sexual Assault

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Submitted December 9, 2015  
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The Seattle Public Schools Task Force for Prevention of and Response to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault (SHSA) was formed in November 2014 to respond to community dissatisfaction with the Seattle Public School (SPS) District's lack of compliance with the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights' guidance on addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment under Title IX.

The SHSA Task Force, made up of volunteers representing students, parents, community members, SPS District and school staff, and educators, met at least once per month from November 2014 through December 2015. An interim report was submitted to the District on May 29, 2015, along with an addendum on July 30, 2015. While significant steps were taken during this period, the SHSA Task Force believes there is more work to be done. To that end, our Final Report includes a summary of the recommendations made by the SHSA Task Force during its tenure, progress made by the District towards those goals, and SHSA Task Force suggestions for moving forward.

In addition, upon the sunseting of the SHSA Task Force, we propose the formation of an SHSA advisory committee. Committee members would provide ongoing support and advice to SPS regarding the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations and creation of an environment where sexual assault and sexual harassment are less likely to occur and where all students feel safe and supported.

The recommendations of the SHSA Task Force can be summarized under five overarching goals:

1. **Understand the current climate.** It is important to collect information from students, families, and staff regarding their feelings of safety, support, and knowledge in the area of sexual harassment and sexual assault.
2. **Create awareness of students' rights under Title IX and how to identify sexual harassment and sexual assault.** It is clear that students, their families, and SPS staff are not widely aware of what students' rights are and how to respond to situations in which those rights may be violated. Clear information appropriate for students' age groups and accessible in the major languages spoken in the District must be disseminated.
3. **Develop an effective infrastructure to support Title IX compliance at both the District and building level.** SPS must have a designated, qualified Title IX Coordinator with expertise in the area of sexual harassment and sexual assault, and dedicated investigators able to resolve the issues and incidents that occur within the District. In addition, each school must have an appropriately trained Title IX Compliance Officer with the resources to devote to response, support, and prevention. Ideally each school will have at least two fully trained staff members.
4. **Provide educators, counselors, school support staff, and school administrators the tools they need to prevent and respond to instances of sexual harassment and sexual assault.** School staff report feeling ill-equipped to identify and respond to instances of sexual harassment and sexual assault. They require regular, comprehensive, professional training in how to identify and respond to these incidents and an effective infrastructure that helps them provide support to students.
5. **Enhance primary prevention to ensure a school climate where all students are respected and sexual harassment and sexual assault are not tolerated.** SPS must prioritize and provide resources for the implementation of research-based social emotional and health curricula that involves educating students, parents/caregivers and staff on how to treat others with respect and build empathy, improve their social and emotional skills, problem solve and cope with strong emotions, understand and respect boundaries, and foster a school climate that promotes safety, healthy relationships, and gender equality.

**1. UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT CLIMATE.**

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>A - Student assessment</b>	
A - 1	RECOMMENDATION	Develop and include a set of questions regarding sexual harassment and sexual assault in District annual student climate survey.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	SPS Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (REA) Department will coordinate a process to review and approve new survey items to be added to the District's annual student climate surveys.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Ensure this occurs in 2015-16 school year.
A - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Provide a corresponding set of questions regarding sexual harassment and sexual assault to middle and high schools and request they include them in any school specific surveys.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The District does not have an infrastructure in place to do this. However, the REA Department will explore the possibility of creating a more detailed follow-up Title IX survey that could be given to schools identified as negative outliers based on District climate survey results.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Ensure the follow up Title IX survey occurs in 2015-16 school year.
A - 3	RECOMMENDATION	Create new strategies for administering climate surveys that encourage greater participation. For example, online completion, incentives for completion, or time for in-class completion.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	District will carefully explore options for a survey format and environment that ensures students feel as safe and comfortable as possible when taking a detailed follow-up survey on this topic.
	SHSA RESPONSE	SHSA suggests contacting student government officers, school leadership teams, etc., from specific schools to ensure the options explored are youth-informed. Ensure that follow-up survey is administered in 2015-16 school year and set participation goals to improve students' response.
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>B - Staff Assessment</b>	
B - 1	RECOMMENDATION	Develop and distribute a survey of key informants regarding issues of sexual harassment and sexual assault
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The SHSA Task Force created the key informant survey and SPS distributed the survey widely to health teachers, counselors, principals/vice principals, and appropriate support staff in April 2015. Responses were received from 230 staff members and teachers.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Revise and re-administer the survey to gather follow-up information for at least the next 2-3 years while infrastructure and training are being implemented

B - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Analyze the data collected from the key informant survey to inform recommendations.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	These analyses are included in the July 30, 2015 Addendum to the Interim SHSA Report dated May 29, 2015. District agreed that the Student Civil Rights Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator will use this data to inform the support they provide to District staff.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Continue to analyze the data collected from the key informant survey to inform recommendations.
B - 3	RECOMMENDATION	Make the results of these surveys publicly available through the Title IX web page on SPS website.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The survey results will be made available on SPS Title IX web page in a pdf format in multiple languages that can be downloaded.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Results are currently only available on the web page in English. Ensure that the results are available in other languages.

**2. CREATE AWARENESS OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS UNDER TITLE IX AND HOW TO IDENTIFY SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT.**

GOAL	<b>C - District and Building supported awareness campaign</b>	
C - 1*	RECOMMENDATION	Develop proactive public campaign led by the Superintendent explaining the District's emphasis on Title IX compliance and highlighting how SPS is building a District-wide climate of prevention of incidents and supportive responses to incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	Student Civil Rights Compliance Officer is working with Communications Department on communications plan.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Suggest targeting students, families/caregivers, staff, and wider-community through press release, school websites, and newsletters, staff email, coordinating support from ASBs, PTAs, etc. where possible.
C - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Distribute age appropriate printed materials to families/caregivers and students. Include OSPI Title IX information, Know Your IX [Know Your Rights], District Resources, and Prevention Resources: Information for Teens, and Information for Caregivers of Children aged 0-12.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	Plans for distribution via "kid mail," printed copies in appropriate offices, posted on building walls/bulletin boards, and available on schools and SPS websites. Translations are in progress. Printed materials anticipated in January 2016 with distribution in April 2016 in conjunction with Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Because of the sensitive nature of the materials and to ensure they are

		<p>received and reviewed appropriately, send materials to parents/caregivers of K-8 students through US Mail (rather than “kid mail”). Distribute materials to and review materials in-class with students in 9-12 grades before the students take them home.</p> <p>In the weeks prior to distributing the materials, inform school administrators and counselors of the distribution date and remind them of the related SPS resources available. Also in preparation, provide talking points for schools to insert in school newsletters and on school websites to help prepare parents/caregivers for the arrival of the materials. Consider hosting parent forums in conjunction with PTSA and FEAT teams to allow for Q&amp;A.</p> <p>Distribute materials annually to parents/caregivers of Kindergartners and other new students to the District, as well as all students entering high school.</p>
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>D - Well-organized, comprehensive, and prominent web site information</b>	
D – 1	RECOMMENDATION	Develop a new Title IX web page with input from Task Force.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	Launched on September 29, 2015, after approval by SPS.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Continued improvements and updates to web page to be made by the Office of Student Civil Rights’ staff.
D - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Make all printed materials that are distributed to SPS students available on the website in a downloadable format.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The former versions are currently available, and when the updated versions are completed and translated, they will be available on the SPS Title IX web page.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Ensure these documents are posted by January 2016.
D - 3	RECOMMENDATION	SPS website provides access to comprehensive list of Title IX resources and information available in multiple languages.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	Completed.
D - 4	RECOMMENDATION	Prominently display access to Title IX/sexual harassment/sexual assault web page and resources on SPS home page.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	Completed.

**3. DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT TITLE IX COMPLIANCE AT BOTH THE DISTRICT AND BUILDING LEVEL.**

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>E - Establish permanent Title IX Office at the district level</b>	
E - 1	RECOMMENDATION	Hire a permanent Title IX Coordinator immediately, a separate case manager, and additional personnel designated to adequately address discrimination issues related to students and staff, including individuals with expertise related to athletics, special education students, civil rights, and employee-employer relations.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The District has created a new Office of Student Civil Rights, which will be responsible for student civil rights, Title IX, ADA, Web Accessibility, student harassment, intimidation and bullying, and 504 issues.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Although the establishment of the Office of Student Civil Rights addresses the original SHSA recommendation, and the Compliance Officer and Accessibility Coordinator have been hired, the critical role of Title IX Coordinator has not been filled and should be completed as soon as possible.
E - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Allow SHSA Task Force members to provide input for job descriptions and participate in the interview process for final candidates.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	One member of the SHSA Task Force participated in the interviews for the Student Civil Rights Compliance Officer and another in the interviews for the Title IX Coordinator.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Former Task Force (and possibly future Advisory Committee) members will be available if needed for future interviewing panels.
E - 3	RECOMMENDATION	New Title IX Coordinator should respond in writing to the SHSA Task Force recommendations and the recommendations made by the Interim District Title IX Coordinator with the Task Force's support.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	District agreed that the new Student Civil Rights Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator will review and respond to the recommendations from the interim District Title IX Coordinator within their first 90 days and that response will be in Friday Memo and made available to School Board Operations Committee.
	SHSA RESPONSE	SHSA suggests the review and response be prepared by the Student Civil Rights Compliance Officer within her first 90 days, due to the delay in hiring the Title IX Coordinator.
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>F - Create a comprehensive set of policies for the response to Title IX complaints</b>	
F - 1	RECOMMENDATION	Create a manual of protocols following recommendations outlined by Interim District Title IX Coordinator that addresses issues with intake; support for both complainants and respondents; sexualized

		cyberbullying; safety plans and no contact contracts; and investigations.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The new Student Civil Rights Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator will review the recommendations from the Interim District Title IX Coordinator within their first 90 days
	SHSA RESPONSE	Task Force suggests the review be completed by the Student Civil Rights Compliance Officer within her first 90 days, due to the delay in hiring the Title IX Coordinator.
F - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Create a uniform, centralized process for record keeping for sexual assault and sexual harassment allegations, and produce an annual report on the data gathered.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	Interim District Title IX Coordinator made recommendations for a work group to resolve this issue that Office of Student Civil Rights staff will review.
	SHSA RESPONSE	The review and implementation needs to occur as soon as possible so the aggregate data from the 2015-16 report is published on the SPS website before the start of the 2016-17 school year. The 2016-17 report should be published before the start of the 2017-18 school year, etc.
F - 3	RECOMMENDATION	Hire internal investigators and develop clear and specific protocols for investigations. Ensure investigators are fully trained on child sexual assault and trauma response.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	Interim District Title IX Coordinator made specific recommendations that Office of Student Civil Rights staff will review.
	SHSA RESPONSE	The review and implementation needs to occur as soon as possible so the investigators are prepared and the investigations are handled appropriately and in a timely manner.
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>G - Establish Title IX compliance infrastructure in each building</b>	
G - 1	RECOMMENDATION	Identify and train a Title IX Compliance Officer in each school building. Currently the principal is designated as the Title IX Compliance Officer with only minimal training. Give consideration to identifying at least two people at each school, provide them sufficient training to comply with the legal requirements of Title IX, and ensure they are given the necessary resources and District support to fulfill this role.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	No response from the District to-date on future training protocols
	SHSA RESPONSE	Training is the critical component to appropriately responding when sexual harassment and sexual assault occur; preventing future incidents; and changing the culture within SPS to one of respect and equality.

		Training needs to be of the highest priority for our principals who oversee and provide leadership to this effort .
G - 2	RECOMMENDATION	In addition to the school Title IX Compliance Officer, designate at least one staff person, such as a teacher or school counselor, known to the entire student body as a “Safe Person” for issues related to sexual harassment and sexual assault, to provide support, answers and education for students. Clearly identify this staff member and provide specialized training in sexual assault and sexual health for them along with each school’s Title IX Compliance Officer.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	This recommendation is a successful strategy used in other districts and can also expand the scope of the support to related topics such as LGBT issues, bullying, drug/alcohol prevention and intervention, and link students and families to necessary services and supports. The new Student Civil Rights Compliance Officer will work with the District to consider this issue in her first 90 days.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Designate and train these individuals by the beginning of the 2016-17 school year and annually update training.
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>H - Establish trust and continued feedback between the District administrative offices and the community of families, educators, and staff on Title IX issues.</b>	
H – 1*	RECOMMENDATION	Create an ongoing Advisory Committee based on the work of the SHSA Task Force ensuring the inclusion of members from marginalized communities that reflects the geography and diversity of SPS.
H – 2*	RECOMMENDATION	Ensure that timely and transparent reports of progress on Title IX issues are made to the public and the school board.

**4. PROVIDE EDUCATORS, COUNSELORS, SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF, AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO INSTANCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT.**

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>I - Provide adequate counseling services to students through appropriate caseloads.</b>	
I - 1	RECOMMENDATION	Follow the recommended guidelines of the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) and employ a counselor for every 250 students. At a minimum, ensure there is a counselor in every school.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The District recognizes the importance of school counselors. At the present time, the District does not have the resources to achieve the ratio recommended by ASCA.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Counselors are key supports to students around Title IX issues as well as myriad other issues. Counselors need to be in place at each school to ensure all students are supported. We reiterate our recommendation to follow the ASCA guidelines.

I - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Support counselor job duties by following the objectives of the ASCA model. Provide appropriate guidance and resources to ensure this happens in every school.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	SPS will continue to educate counselors on their role in helping to minimize the impact of harassment and assault on students' ability to be successful in school. This will be part of the secondary counselors' annual five-day professional development. The District is analyzing the cost of adding additional counselors if additional funding becomes available.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Make the presence of dedicated counselors in each school of the highest priority to ensure the emotional, psychological, and intellectual development of SPS students and allocate funding accordingly to not only respond to but to prevent future occurrences of sexual assault and sexual harassment in the District.
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>J - Provide appropriate training for staff and teachers</b>	
J - 1	RECOMMENDATION	Train all staff and teachers and provide at-hand resources regarding legal compliance with Title IX as it relates to sexual harassment and sexual assault.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	SHSA key informant survey revealed that most teachers and staff do not have adequate training and that most want more training.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Plan future staff trainings, beginning in the 2015-16 school year, according to responses received in key informant survey.
J - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Train all staff and teachers and have at-hand resources that will help them identify and respond to incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault that affect the educational environment so they are able to appropriately process complaints.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	Topics of special interest and appropriate for each building grade level have been identified in the key informant survey.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Continue to ask staff and teachers what type/topic of training they need and provide it as appropriate.
J - 3	RECOMMENDATION	Ensure all staff know a) who their points of contact for Title IX are at the school and District level; b) how to implement Superintendent Policy 3208; and c) when mandatory reporting is required.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The Student Civil Rights Compliance Officer was hired on October 22, 2015. In her first 90 days she will develop a plan to make all staff aware of their Title IX contacts, how to implement SP3208, and when mandatory reporting is required.

**5. ENHANCE PRIMARY PREVENTION TO ENSURE A SCHOOL CLIMATE WHERE ALL STUDENTS ARE RESPECTED AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT ARE NOT TOLERATED.**

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>K - Increase resources for primary prevention</b>	
K - 1	RECOMMENDATION	Reinstate health classes as a required core semester-long class in middle schools. Early adolescence is the ideal age for students to receive prevention education, particularly with regard to drug and alcohol education, sexual health, and sexual assault prevention.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The District recognizes the need to provide additional and ongoing training and support to middle school science teachers on how best to incorporate and teach the Family Life and Sexual Health (FLASH) curriculum. This training would require funding to pay for release time for middle school teachers. We will add this to our 2016-17 budget request to be considered during the prioritization process.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Training science teachers is a good interim step, but a comprehensive health curriculum for middle school students is critical to healthy adolescent development and sexual violence prevention. We recommend including the full FLASH curriculum in a reinstated middle school health class (rather than a small number of lessons within a middle school science class) as part of a comprehensive overhaul of health education in the District. Note: This recommendation was strongly echoed by school staff in the SHSA key informant survey.
K - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Provide more central support at the District for Health Education Managers, including increased FTE. These positions are critical to train and support health teachers.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	To accomplish this, the District will add a modest staff increase to SPS 2016-17 budget request to be considered during the prioritization process.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Only modestly increasing time for Health Education Managers may not address this issue. This recommendation involves training all teachers who teach FLASH curriculum in 5 <sup>th</sup> through 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, and providing building oversight and support to teachers to ensure these lessons are being taught with fidelity.
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>L - Emphasize creating a district wide climate that fosters respect, gender equity, and does not tolerate sexual harassment or sexual assault of any kind.</b>	
L - 1	RECOMMENDATION	Emphasize social emotional learning and sexual health/ relationship skills in student curriculum and instruction. Focus curriculum and programming on both on student skill-building and improving school climate to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault. Use research-based and/or a proven program content.
	INITIAL DISTRICT	SPS schools currently teach lessons that address these topics in the FLASH

	RESPONSE	curriculum (board adopted, research-based) at grade 5, some lessons in middle school science classes, and in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade health class (a semester-long graduation requirement). District believes that the weakest areas are where minimal or no health is taught.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Current SPS health education is unacceptably insufficient. It generally consists of two weeks in 5 <sup>th</sup> grade, some lessons in middle school, and the option of one semester in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade, but is inconsistently administered. The District and School Board, in conjunction with the District's Health Education Manager, should explore ways to ensure FLASH is taught consistently and comprehensively, and to expand health education, social emotional skill-building, and violence prevention equitably into all grades.
L - 2	RECOMMENDATION	Designate the sexual assault prevention series of lessons in the District approved FLASH curriculum as one of the mandatory modules/priority lessons to be taught in health classes at all applicable grade levels.
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	To accomplish this, the District will add a modest staff increase to SPS 2016-17 budget request to be considered during the prioritization process.
	SHSA RESPONSE	The implementation of these particular FLASH lessons at all applicable grade levels will not be addressed if the District only modestly increases staff. In order to meet the varying needs of elementary, middle school, and high school students, the FLASH curriculum needs to be taught in health classes at all applicable grade levels by trained teachers.
L - 3	RECOMMENDATION	Consider additional ways to expand on the District's current initiatives to develop social and emotional skills among students. Work with sexual assault prevention experts to include sexual assault prevention concepts (such as boundaries and consent) into current curriculum and programming (such as health and social emotional curricula).
	INITIAL DISTRICT RESPONSE	The District will maintain and seek to expand partnerships with local and state agencies as well as community-based organizations that have capacity to assist students, families, and schools to achieve this.
	SHSA RESPONSE	Fostering partnerships with community agencies and organizations is a good approach. SHSA recommends formalizing partnerships with experts in the field who specialize in sexual assault, trauma, and social emotional health; building on current efforts to enhance students' social emotional health that is well-integrated into basic education; and implementing District oversight to ensure that social emotional interventions and supports are available to all students, with particular attention to students who have been both victims and aggressors of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

\* These recommendations were added based on information received after the Addendum to the Interim Report was submitted in July 2015.