

September 28, 2015  
PORTLAND, OR

### ***New Website Provides Resources on Sexual Assault in Schools and Education Equality***

Stop Sexual Assault in Schools (SSAIS) announced today the launch of its unique website that provides a practical, one-stop resource for students, families, and school administrators. The SSAIS website educates students about their Title IX right to an education free from sexual harassment and violence, identifies resources for survivors, makes the reporting process simple, provides sample complaints, and empowers through its engaging toolkit programs.

“Families have no idea how vulnerable their children are to the devastation of sexual harassment and assault in the school environment until it happens. When it does, with alarming frequency, families don’t know where to turn. School administrators are woefully ignorant of their Title IX responsibilities,” Dr. Warkov, Executive Director of SSAIS said.

SSAIS is a new national non-profit organization founded by two educators who sought accountability from the Seattle Public School District for its failure to respond adequately after a student reported being raped on a field trip. The launch of its website follows on the heels of a US Dept. of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) Title IX investigation SSAIS brought to the Seattle Public School District for violating the victim’s rights. The outpouring of national support compelled SSAIS to spearhead a movement to combat the epidemic of sexual harassment and violence in K-12 schools.

Sexual violence and harassment, homophobic name-calling, and unwanted sexual touching are now recognized as public health concerns for adolescents according to the CDC, 2012. While the Obama administration is visibly engaged in efforts to address sexual assault in schools, the majority of these measures target higher education institutions. These actions must extend to the 55 million students enrolled nationwide in 132,000 K-12 schools. Fatima Goss Graves, Vice President for Education and Employment at the National Women’s Law Center, states, “But what’s missing in the wave of attention on college campuses is that Title IX’s long-standing mandate applies equally to K-to-12 schools” in the March 2015 *National Law Journal* op-ed “We Must Deal With K-12 Sexual Assault.”

Although Title IX has been law for over 40 years, OCR reports receiving more sex-discrimination complaints in 2014 than ever. The fear of liability and concerns about public opinion cause schools to downplay, ignore, or deny altogether reports of sexual harassment/assault and subsequent retaliation against survivors. School districts are harming the very students they are mandated to serve.

SSAIS offers free prevention programs, trainings, and engagement programs for students, families, and organizations anywhere in the US. Its trainings for school districts illustrate how Title IX applies in complex circumstances; as a result school staff will know how respond in compliance with Title IX and cultivate a school culture free of sexual harassment and violence.

SSAIS’s inclusive approach also addresses male survivors of sexual harassment/violence, LGBTQ+ youth, and sexual assault hazing. SSAIS connects organizations, individuals, advocates, and diverse

communities across the nation for a united campaign against the scourge of sexual harassment and violence impacting our nation's students.

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