

Youth panel webinar: “What Does Title IX Mean for K-12 Students Today?” September 24, 2024

This transcript has been minimally edited for clarity.

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The information provided here does not constitute legal advice. Visit the National Women’s Law Center to learn more about the [2024 Title IX rule](#).



In this screenshot left to right:

Top: Cathy, Chardae Brockman, Susan Moen

Middle: ASL interpreter, Jocelyn, Krithvi

Bottom: Jeff, Jamey, Katie [tech]

[Susan Prout] Welcome to What Does Title IX Mean for Students Today, [cohosted by [Stop Sexual Assault in Schools, I Have The Right To](#), and the [Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health](#). I'm Susan Prout, cofounder of I Have The Right To. This new webinar series highlights practices we know effectively prevent and address sexual harassment and assault both on and off-campus. Today's webinar features a youth panel sharing their experiences with Title IX. Title IX is the 1972 landmark civil rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in all federally funded education programs. In August, the Biden administration released the new rule governing how Title IX is enforced. This rule makes it easier for students to bring a Title IX protection complaint to their schools and restores previous protections that

removed from the Trump era rule. I'll turn this over to our panel moderator Chardae Brockman to introduce our participants.]

[Chardae] We're going to take a minute for a couple of brief introductions. I'm Chardae Brockman, the Program Director with MOASH, the Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health. We have a few youths joining us today from our youth advisory council [and Jocelyn from Stop Sexual Assault in Schools].

[Jamey] Hi, I'm Jamey. I use he/him pronouns and right now I am a freshman at the University of Michigan. I've been working with MOASH for a little over two years now as a member of their MY Share Committee.

[Jocelyn] Hi, I'm Jocelyn. My pronouns are she/her and I'm a current senior in high school and I'm working with Stop Sexual Assault in Schools.

[Cathy] My name is Cathy and I'm a high school senior at Skyline High School and also part of MOASH Michigan Youth Racial Equity Council. I've been with MOASH for little over one year now and I look forward to talking more about this for next hour.

[Krithvi] I'm Krithvi, I use she/her pronouns and I'm a freshman at Barnard College of Columbia University. I've been with MOASH for a little bit over two years in their Racial Equity Council.

[Jeff] I'm Jeff, my pronouns are he/him, and I am a high school junior and here with MOASH.

[Chardae] I'll also pass it over to Susan, who will be speaking for the adults on our panel today.

[Susan] My name is Susan Moen. I'm a confidential advocate and the Executive Director of an organization called [Jackson County Sexual Assault Response Team](#) in Oregon. I use she/her pronouns, and I have a particular passion for working with youth particularly around Title IX issues.

[The panel then discussed the webinar agreements before beginning.]

[Chardae] Let's start with the first question. When did you first learn about Title IX and what it means for students and how did you learn about it?

[Jocelyn] I first learned about Title IX when I started working with Stop Sexual Assault in Schools. That was about my junior year in high school. And I just learned about it through posting on social media for them and by going through and editing videos. I did a lot of learning. I did a lot of listening to what it meant and how it affected people in my community.

[Jamey] For me personally, sort of like Jocelyn, I also ended up learning about Title IX and its protections way too late. I learned about it through working with MOASH and that was in my sophomore year. One of

the first trainings I ever went to on Title IX and I remember it blew my mind--like how would I not have known about this before?!

[Cathy] Similar thing. I learned about Title IX two months ago, which is way too late because I'm already at the end of my high school career. And personally, I feel pretty good that there is something that's protecting us but also feel that there is lack of education about this because none of my friends actually knew about this before I brought it up in the group chat.

[Krithvi] I wasn't exactly sure what Title IX was until probably a couple weeks ago because the first formal training I had about it was in college, and I had just gotten here. And I think when I was learning about it, even now, and before, it was kind of like a passing thought. I had known what it was generally, and I think like most people know generally that it's to stop like any type of like gender-based discrimination. But people don't really know what that encompasses and what rights we have as students.

[Chardae] Thank you for sharing. Similar sentiments across-the-board: learned about it way too late. Our next question: What experiences have you had connected to Title IX? Do you wish those experiences would've been handled differently?

[Jocelyn] So I had an assault incident my sophomore year of high school, and at the time I didn't even know what Title IX was, that Title IX Coordinators even existed, and that they were a resource that was available to me. And I wish that I had known because I think a lot of times in these situations students are looking for control and they're looking for some autonomy in their situation. And I think if I had known that Title IX Coordinators existed, it would've really changed how I dealt with the experience and how it affected not only me but like my peers around me.

[Jamey] I also had an experience with Title IX. It was later on in high school. It was right at the beginning of my senior year. Actually, we had an issue with our school board. We got a bunch of new people in our school board. I don't know if anyone here has heard of Brandywine Community Schools before, but there was a big controversy of them coming in and deciding to start banning books in the library that gave resources to LGBT youth and tearing down posters with resources and supportive spaces. And also, one of the things that they tried to enact was a ban on the GSA club. And me and a couple of my friends and adults that they were related to were able to protest this because it was a direct violation of Title IX. If our school allowed student clubs and did not allow us to have this specific club just because of its topics of gender and sexuality, so Title IX was super helpful for me at that point. I wish that more students knew about it so that they could also get those protections. [See [Equal Access Act.](#)]

[Chardae]. So, what part of Title IX do you think all students should know about and when should they be taught these things?

[Cathy] One of the facts that I figured out during the training session for this webinar was that there is a right to not disclose some information if a student doesn't feel comfortable sharing it. I know a lot of my friends who experience different kinds of sexual assault and similar incidents were scared they would

have to provide all the information they're not comfortable sharing. But under Title IX they actually have the right not to disclose; it's super important in making sure to lower that one barrier for my peers seeking support and help.

[Jeff] I think all students should generally know that Title IX exists and what protections are guaranteed under Title IX to youth. I was completely unaware of the protections that Title IX gave to youth before I learned about it through MOASH. And I ended up kind of “suffering in silence discrimination” [sic] because I didn't know they [the protections] existed. Just like some general education may be at a certain lower level for people who are just introduced to it, but they [should] at least educate about the rights. And I think it's super important for youth to know that they have legal protection and this security regarding discrimination; but from my experience it isn't taken entirely seriously.

[Jamey] I agree. I think a lot of what youth are told about Title IX is kind of just the basic: “Oh, it exists to prevent discrimination,” but we're not really told at all about the specific protections and the specific identities that might actually benefit from it. I think another thing that a lot of youth don't know is that you don't have to be the actual victim of something happening to you in order to report a Title IX violation. You can make a report for someone else as long as you have their written permission and not only that but someone else can make a report for you, so you don't have to be the one to do it if that's something that you're not comfortable with.

A lot of the time the idea of filing a full report for something especially when you're not typically told how to do that in a straightforward way seems like a really daunting experience. This causes a lot of youth to maybe not even try to seek out those protections. And I think definitely, as Jeff said, it should be taught about much sooner because I didn't learn about it until I was 16 years old -- and even six graders could benefit from this. It's important for youth to know the power that they have and that the people in their educational spaces cannot just treat them however [they want].

[Krithvi] I want to say everything I completely agree with everything that you said, Jamey. Definitely students need to be as young as sixth grade and learn about Title IX because I think going into high school with that information is so, so important. I think that especially now students should know their rights because the Biden administration has made a lot of changes with Title IX and now we have a lot more rights than we did before and so we definitely need to know about these things. I think some things that are really important about Title IX that students need to know are that it's not just about gender-based discrimination but also discrimination with the LGBT community; and also people that are parents and people that are pregnant as well as the fact that schools are required to provide supportive measures to students, even if there is no investigation or if the case is dropped. I think that's very, very important.

[Susan Moen] To add onto something that Cathy said about the right to not participate or to not entirely participate in an investigation. [The degree to which you participate] doesn't mean that you lose the right to supportive measures or accommodations. So if, for example, somebody else brought something forward that involved you and you don't want to participate in an investigation or if you don't want to do it to the level where they are able to do a full investigation because you don't want to provide all of the

information, you still have the right to ask for support and accommodations regardless of your level of participation--and also even regardless of whether it [the harassment] is found to be somebody's responsibility or not.

[Chardae] Can you tell us more about the process for reporting a sexual harassment or assault incident and what students or parents can do if they think a report isn't being addressed?

[Susan] So part of this is going to depend on a little bit about your own school's policies. The goal is to make it as easy as possible to report and to have a whole variety of different ways. For example, making a disclosure about something that happened to you or something that you're experiencing to any staff member, volunteer at your school. That should be enough to initiate the beginning of an investigation. That would be a reportable incident or reportable information to a Title IX Coordinator at your school. So that can be a bit problematic sometimes because, as we've talked about, a lot of students don't know about Title IX and don't know therefore that if they say something that discloses harassment or assault that they've experienced that it falls under Title IX, it will have to be reported. But the caveat there is, as Cathy pointed out, that if it is reported and you didn't want it to be, you do have the right to simply not engage. But it should be easy. So, if you want to report, you can talk with anybody who's staff or a volunteer at the school and know that the information must be passed on to Title IX Coordinator. So sometimes you might have a particular safe adult at a school that you want to start with, and you can go to them and say this thing is happening and I and I need it to be reported. So technically pretty much anywhere in the school that information should go to a Title IX Coordinator.

I want to emphasize that for some folks they don't understand what a Title IX investigation means. They don't know what the process is going to look like and that's incredibly scary. So we always recommend that if you can find a confidential advocate, maybe with somebody outside of the school but in the community, a confidential advocate who can explain what the process would be like when and if you decided to file a Title IX [report], that can be really useful; because it can be very hard to go into a process that you don't understand fully and you don't know what to expect. So, getting that information about the process before initiating it could be important.

Anybody who is a mandatory reporter at your school, like if you have a health center, places like that, those [people] are going to be a pipeline to a Title IX investigation as well, or a Title IX report at least. And then if something isn't going [properly, smoothly] if you intentionally report and it is not following the process, I think the first place to start is looking at your school's Title IX policies. Schools are required to have published policies on their website provided to schools. It's often in the student handbook, so make sure that you know what the timeline is; and then they are also required to say this is how you can file a complaint or if things aren't moving the way you think they're supposed to be, these are the people you should be talking to, and it's usually the Title IX Coordinator. And then above and beyond that there will be an appeal situation [option] if you are not getting the help that you need after filing a Title IX report. There is always appeal outside of the school and all of this should be clearly put down in your school policy.

[Chardae] Thank you so much Susan. I'm actually going for the next question I'm going to kind of pass this to you too, and then any of our youth if you want to chime in, please feel free. So where can people go to learn more about Title IX, including what their rights are and where can they report violations? We spoke a little bit to this, but can we give some more specific details.

[Susan] Sure. So, the first place to always start is to see what your school has because you're going to be working with their system, so finding out whether they have a very clear Title IX policy that is published, hopefully they do on their website, in the student handbook. So that's the first place to look at. And then if it doesn't look like it is robust or if you can't find it, there are a lot of different national resources. Some of them are right here [on this webinar], Stop Sexual Assault in Schools, I Have The Right To. There's an organization called Know Your IX at Advocates for Youth. There's an organization called ATIXA. So, there are a lot of national places that have very clear guidelines that can help you see if your school has the appropriate policy and if they're abiding by it appropriately. [Know Your Rights](#). [Quick Facts](#). [Filing Complaints](#). [Title IX Coordinators](#).

And then another place that you can look: depending on the state and the city where you are, most areas are covered by a community-based domestic violence sexual assault nonprofit. So, for example, in my area we are on the sexual assault response team, we are a nonprofit and often times those folks will have confidential non-mandatory reporter advocates who are probably very well versed in Title IX, we would hope. So, in addition to those broader national websites and organizations, your community might have a place to go to ask if your school is not clear on it. And if you are in anywhere near any kind of institute of higher education, a college or university, they often have a more robust Title IX office or response than maybe a K-12 system, so that is another place that you could potentially find information about Title IX.

[Jamey] There are so many resources out there and often it can be daunting as a youth to look up national resources and organizations. It can be really hard to navigate your way around these things and especially with legal resources, protective resources, and sexual health resources, I've come to learn that the Internet is your friend a lot of the time. Even if you don't know where to start finding information, a quick search can find you resources that can get you to where you are. And there are multiple, different websites that have curated resources as someone said in the chat just now, they're different, there are so many different options that you can find just with a Google search, and I feel like that's one of youth's strongest tools today for education.

[Cathy] I definitely agree with Jamey. The information that I was never taught for these three straight years of high school I found on 10 seconds in Google through my school's website. So, the Internet is your friend for this information

[Jocelyn] Just to add on to that, Stop Sexual Assault in School is also tied to something called SASH Club, which stands for Students Against Sexual Harassment, and on that website there is something called Power Topics, which is a really easy, digestible way to cover a lot of topics about the stigma surrounding sexual assault and sexual harassment. And there's a really good one on just the [Title IX basics](#), which I think is always such a good resource to have.

[Susan] I also want to mention that sometimes in addition to Title IX specifically, some states will have laws that address what K-12 school districts are required to have in a response to sexual harassment and sexual assault. I know here in Oregon we have a pretty robust bill that came out and it's actually more expansive than Title IX at the federal level. So, don't forget about possibly state-specific resources that also might provide private protections and clarification, in addition to your Title IX rights.

[Chardae] I know we spoke a little bit about when should you learn more about Title IX, but from our panelists we want to know why you feel it's so important that young people learn about Title IX and not just parents or staff. What should they know about their Title IX rights and why is it so important?

[Cathy] So, in terms of importance of learning Title IX, youth want to know because these are *their* rights; no one can exercise your rights for you [unless there is a legal case underway]. You're the one who is in charge of your body and the one who is mainly concerned about yourself, and you want to have a device [law] that can actually protect you legally in school. And in terms of when should students learn about Title IX, I think it's preferable to learn as early as possible. My sister went through an incident in her fifth-grade year. And there was no reason for her to not be able to protect herself. And you know things happen no matter how much you try, so it's really important that people, even at the young age, know their rights. But I'm pretty sure these kinds of topics are normally considered as a health class topic but nowadays due to weighted GPA and college admission stuff, a lot of kids test out or take online substitute classes, which don't really touch on this type of content. So, it would be really nice if schools talked about this in advisory or any other core classes that youth don't normally skip.

[Jeff] I agree with Cathy that students should definitely learn about Title IX a lot earlier, as soon as they're old enough to understand it. I think because unfortunately discrimination can happen to anyone at any age it's super important for those people to know their rights and the protections and how they can pursue legal action in those types of situations. And it's also super important that the young people themselves, not just adults, know about their own Title IX rights. It's super vital for everyone to know their rights, especially more vulnerable groups like minorities or youth that oftentimes are neglected in a lot of different government situations. And also, from my experience having an in-classroom or an in-school [right] usually doesn't have the same weight to students as opposed to like a large-scale legal protection. So, I think it's important that students are educated on the difference between the two, just that everyone can know.

[Jamey] I think part of the importance of making sure that youth understand these protections and not just adults is because it's important to empower youth, it's important that you know that they can get these protections and stick up for themselves, that you don't need an adult do it. I know if there's one thing youth like it's speaking for themselves, and if there's one thing they don't like it's speaking to adults and then having adults speak for them. And I think oftentimes youth are worried about being misrepresented, they're worried about being misheard, they're worried about not having their issue properly portrayed to the right people, and they're worried about like mandated reporting and it being out of their hands.

But knowing that these reports and things like that can be in their hands is often something that'll push them to take that responsibility for themselves. The important part is knowing how. I agree that this should be taught sooner. I think honestly grade school would be ideal: somewhere in the range between fifth, sixth grade or even somewhere earlier like third or fourth grade because the discrimination, exactly as Jeff said, doesn't just start when you get older. Sexual discrimination doesn't just start when you start having sex. It starts in fourth grade when you're told that you can't join the baseball team because there's no there's no girls team and there are no girls allowed. It starts in eighth grade when your school board tries to ban your GSA meetings. It starts everywhere and it's important to know the protections that you have so that you can stick up for your rights any time, so you actually know what can be stuck up for! If you don't know what protections there are, you don't know what protections are being violated, and so you won't know how to stick up for them!

[Krithvi] Jamey did a really good job explaining that. But I do want to add to what Cathy said. You can face discrimination at any age. Cathy said that her sister had was having issues in fifth grade. Jamey was talking about things that happened in fourth grade or eighth grade. And when you're that young, you have to know what you can do to rectify that situation for yourself because you shouldn't just be allowed to sit with the fact that injustice has happened to you. You should feel like you have agency to take matters into your own hands and do what you can to fix the situation. Grade school is a really good time to learn about Title IX, even in elementary school where there are really subtle ways subtle examples of discrimination. That is when you should start learning about our rights and how we can fight the discrimination that's happening to us.

[Jamey] I wanted to highlight something that was said in the chat. It says even being told you don't look like a stereotypical girl or boy is a type of sex discrimination. I agree with that. It's not only that but there's sex discrimination that happens every single day in the form of harmless little comments, for example "That boy is pulling your hair in the playground because he has a crush on you," directly perpetuating abuse. Things like that, that are told to youth every single day and then internalized, and youth have no way of fighting back against it because they don't know how.

[Susan] For most students the first person they're going to tell about something that they're experiencing is most likely another student, a peer, and so knowing what is available to help is not only useful for the student themselves but also to be able to explain that to friends, to peers. When somebody comes to you and says this thing is happening, the ability to be able to say, "I am so sorry, and there's this thing called Title IX," or "There are these processes." So, knowing that [is important] in order to help someone else. And the other positive is that the earlier we talk about it the better, because if we normalize these conversations then folks who commit these crimes, whether they're super-intentional offenders or if they're students who are bullying and things like that, if it's talked about then the space is less likely to be supportive of offenders. Offenders can do what they do when they know that people are going to be silent about it and when they think that other people are too scared or too unknowing to report or to come forward and ask for help. So, conversations about Title IX protections, about what is not allowed and what a school will do to investigate these types of harassment, all of that can really put offenders on notice that their targets are not going to accept this behavior quietly.

[Chardae] So now we're going to get into some questions from the audience. Panelists, feel free to jump in at any point to answer these questions. I do have one specifically for Jocelyn, and that is just to give us a brief description of what a Students Against Sexual Harassment club would look like in your school, and what's a good starting point for like activities and workshops to get one established.

[Jocelyn] SASH Club stands for Students Against Sexual Harassment, and you can start a club a lot of different ways. If you go on the [website](#), it will give you all the directions, and you can contact them to be in touch with other clubs. There are also virtual clubs that you can access through Instagram and things like that. SASH Club has a strong social media [presence](#), and if you go on there, there are a lot of different things, like survivor resources and videos. A big thing on there are the [Power Topics](#), which range on a lot of different topics from obviously [Title IX](#) to date rape culture and things like that, and a lot of those are accompanied by videos. And there are also interactive activities, which can be really good for clubs that are just starting out.

[Chardae] Thank you, Jocelyn. Any of our other panelists have experience with a SASH club and want to comment on that question?

[Jamey]. While I actually did not have experience with the club, but I wish that I did, especially as a student that went through a sexual assault experience in my high school. I feel like having that supportive space and support system, especially during one of the hardest times of my life while pursuing that report and pursuing the filing and documentation, it was a really hard time, and having a support system there in general is one of the most important things that someone can have when they're going through something like this.

[Chardae] Next question: What support do you think your school or teacher should provide to students when an incident of sexual violence is under investigation?

[Jamey] I know one thing that I struggled with at the time was the lack of attention given to scheduling and things like that. I had classes with the person that I was filing a report on, and it was an extremely hard situation. Even though I was able to go out of my way to pursue a no contact order, I still had little to no support with things like class switching, which was virtually impossible and staying as far away from that person as I could. I feel like those supports could definitely be helped.

[Cathy] I will emphasize the confidentiality. High school is a wild place and whatever you talk about in the building does not just stay there, it goes everywhere. And even when things happen in an individual counselor or adult's room, things actually get spread out; people outside hear about it and they talk about it. Having a safe place that nobody actually can access to the story that we're sharing will be the best thing that a school or teacher can provide to people going through this. [Note see: [Limits to Confidentiality When Reporting Harassment](#)]

[Chardae] Susan, can you tell us, what does the Title IX Coordinator do? I know you spoke to this a little bit earlier but just give us like the job description.

[Susan] Well again, part of this will be dictated by your school's policy. But the idea is that in the Title IX process there needs to be one person who is held responsible for making sure that the policies are followed. So that Title IX Coordinator has to do everything in preparation in terms of making sure that all staff are trained; that's a new a new piece to the regulations. It's not just Title IX Coordinators that need the training; all staff are supposed to be trained on Title IX response and how to pass on a report to the Title IX Coordinator. So, training of staff is super important for a Title IX Coordinator to do, and then they ultimately are going to receive any type of report whether it's from the person who is impacted or it might be a third-party report. [Note: see [Title IX Coordinator](#)]

And then they are going to set the process in motion and make sure that the process is clearly followed up: all of the next steps that include giving notice that an investigation is going to be initiated, that notice needs to go out to all the parties involved, figuring out who's going to investigate, what are the steps in the investigation. So, making sure that the process is followed according to what the school has deemed that process to be, and making sure that all the parties both have notification about every step, and also that all the rights that the different parties are due get followed.

For example, the right to have a personal representative or an advocate with you, the right to certain levels of confidentiality, the right to accommodations or interim measures, so all of these things that are under the responsibility of a Title IX Coordinator. And they can say, "We are going to have somebody else investigate this and I'm then going to be the decider of this." They can sort of deputize other people to do pieces of it, but ultimately they are the responsible, they are responsible for the process being carried out to the letter of the law.

[Chardae] Thank you, Susan. You spoke to one of the updates being that everyone should be trained. Are there any other updates that you can share with us? [Note: [summary](#) of new rule]

[Susan] Oh, there are so many and maybe the youth panel can weigh in as well on the ones that they find particularly impactful and important. One of the ones that really stands out for me is that under the last set of regulations [2020 Regulations], they said if the incident didn't happen at the school or on a school-based activity, something like that, then it wasn't a Title IX issue. But now they clearly say if an incident happened say off campus or overseas or some other place, but the impact of that incident is creating a hostile environment for the folks involved at school, then it becomes a Title IX issue. So, there might've been an assault that was off campus, but the impact is being felt on campus, like was said before about you're in a class with this person who harmed you, things like that. So, if you are unable to freely access a safe education because of an impact of something, even if that incident happened off campus, it would fall under Title IX now and that's super big. And then, there are changes regarding gender identity, sex characteristics, exactly what sexual harassment involves; maybe one of the youths would like to expand on.

[Krithvi] Yeah, I can talk about what I thought was like the biggest thing for me. I think the new rule that states that the case has to be addressed if a student was a student at the time of the incident first at the time of the filing is super important because I think we seem like if students feel unsafe but a lot of the time they might not be an active student like at the school anymore but they should still be able to have the resources that they need. [In other words, schools must address complaints of sex-based harassment by individuals who are not students or employees of the school, so long as the individual was participating or trying to participate in the school's program or activity at the time of the harassment].

[Susan] It [the new rule] lowered the level of how intense the hostile environment needs to be. It used to have to be pervasive and ongoing and all of these things. ["Schools must address sexual harassment if it is so "severe" and "pervasive" that it "effectively denies" a person equal access to a school program or activity. § 106.30(a)]. And now they just say it needs to be either this or that ["Schools must address sex-based harassment if it is so "severe or pervasive" that it "denies or limits" a person's ability to participate in a school program or activity." §106.2]. So, it's easier to say that this level of hostile environment, this level of harassment rises to the level of something that must be addressed under Title IX. That's super important because some schools were just saying, "Well it's not happening all the time and it's not bad enough," and the old regulations had ways of sort of agreeing with that. And now they have made it clear that it is easier for incidents of harassment to fall under the Title IX guidance.

[Chardae]. Next question, please tell us about the school staff you tap for support, or the ones you trust on issues of sexual violence at your school. What qualities in that school staff person encourage you to trust them? Is there a particular adult at your school you would tell a peer to go to?

[Jamey] For me, the school staff that was a supportive space was of course our guidance counselor because that's their job. That was who I reached out to and talked to when I was going through my situation in high school and that's usually where most students will go who end up wanting something done. One of the problems with trusting school staff is that youth keep things more to themselves if they're afraid of retaliation or if things getting worse, or of starting issues that weren't previously there besides just the issue that they're [already] having. And there are fears --but there are actually protections specifically in Title IX, against retaliation. But I know a lot of youth still struggle with talking to someone who they know will have to report something. At the same time, though, the important qualities that school staff can have are being nonjudgmental, being an open space they're not accidentally crossing and making students shut down or become uncomfortable [respecting boundaries]. It's important to make sure that youth are aware that it is a supportive space, not a forceful space. These are the most important things, just making sure that students know that you're there *for them* and not against them.

[Chardae] Thank you Jamey. Love "for the students and not against them." Who is your person at your school?

[Cathy] It wasn't specifically about sexual violence, but on a similar track about how youth decide who to trust and who to disclose this information to. I think one of the big things is consistency. I've seen in school staff members saying to a student looking for help, "Oh I would not report this," and then the day

after they will tell them, “Actually I’m a mandatory reporter so might have to report this.” And those types of [contradictions] spread around to people. Like they tell their friends, “Oh apparently they have to do this, apparently they have to do that.” So really being consistent with what you tell people and what you actually do is one of the things that makes me and my peers trust adults. And also, someone who’s been kind of sly [inconsistent or evasive] [suddenly] expressing their availability and willingness to help.

[Susan] I just want to jump onto that and say that staff, anybody who works for a school, should always be making sure kids know that they’re a mandatory reporter from the first moment. And they should always know how to refer [students] to a non-mandatory reporter, like a community-based advocate, if they sense that something’s coming [about to be said]. If somebody looks like they’re starting to disclose, just that kind way of saying, “You know I’m so glad you want to talk to me about something, I just want to make sure that you understand I’m a mandatory reporter. So, if this involves harm, I’ll have to report that. But there also are folks who are not mandatory reporters if there’s something that you need to get figured out with that kind of [confidential] help.”

[Chardae] We have about five more minutes and we five more questions. Does Title IX cover colleges and universities that accept government money?

[Jamey] It does: any educational facility that takes government funding does have to follow Title IX. But there are specific cases like with colleges that are historically all female or historically all male that technically is gender-based discrimination on who they allow in, but since that’s just historically how that school has been and they’re not discriminating towards the students that are at their school, it’s not counted under Title IX.

[Susan] I’ll just mention that when you bring up accept government funding, that can include a private school but if they get government funding to support, for example publicly funded meals, or pretty much any kind of public support from the government, it doesn’t have to be a public school or public university in order to fall under that threshold that makes them responsible to Title IX. [See [Private Schools](#).]

[Chardae] What is the role of restorative justice in Title IX investigations?

[Susan] Well it is allowed, people are allowed to choose restorative justice, that path as a way that they want something to be dealt with. But it doesn’t take away from a school’s requirement to do an investigation. So, you can choose or say “I want this kind of outcome,” or “I want to engage in restorative justice.” But the first path still has to be the report in a Title IX investigation. And if somebody chooses to go that path [restorative justice] they are still allowed to have, as we mentioned before, the same types of interim measures, supportive measures, accommodations even if they choose that less official type of type of pathway.

[Chardae] Do you feel hopeful for the future of gender diverse youth in the public school system?

[Cathy] I do feel really hopeful that there is so many organizations supporting these issues, there is policy, and more youth are getting educated. But I'm scared if this feeling is particularly to me because I'm from a liberal town. I'm scared if there are other towns where the youth are not uplifted or supported. But in my situation, I feel pretty good about it.

[Krithvi] Yeah, I think I definitely agree too about feeling hopeful about this because especially with all the changes that have been made in the past four years with the Biden administration I have a lot of hope that we can have even more change and students can have even more rights, even more support when it comes to Title IX and discrimination in schools. [This webinar was recorded prior to the Nov. 2024 election]

[Jocelyn] With the increase of things like GSA clubs and SASH Clubs that are providing safe spaces for kids, it's become a lot better since at least I've been little, and that they're a lot more conversations being held about student safety and about topics like Title IX.

[Jamey] I agree. I think I'm also hopeful for the future and I feel like conversations about taking back power and reporting these things are getting less taboo. I know a lot of the time in the past youth have been told to just, "Suck it up or deal with it" or "That's just boys will be boys" like it's OK. I think we're finally actually acknowledging this power is important. And especially with the new revisions that have been made with specific protections based on gender identity and not just sex. I think there are changes that are being made every day and they're equally as important. I'm excited to see where we go.

[Chardae] Jeff, any last thoughts?

[Jeff] I'm honestly super hopeful specifically regarding LGBTQ and minority rights and acceptance in schools. I grew up as a transgender male teenager in high school and things have gotten a lot better. Like I've seen this myself, from the first person [perspective], people have gotten a lot more supportive. I think just in general there is a move towards more acceptance of gender diverse people and that's such a beautiful thing to see.

[Chardae] Thank you so much for all of your insights and expertise. Please, wherever you are clap it up for our youth panelists: Krithvi, Cathy, Jocelyn, Jeff, Jamey. Thank you so much for your time. Susan, thank you for joining in on the conversation with our youth; we sincerely appreciate you. And that's all that we have for tonight.