

Akron Public Schools
OFFICE OF CAREER EDUCATION
BULLETIN #2 : SEX EQUITY

SEX EQUITY IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

▸ **What is Sex Equity?**

Sex equity is freedom from discrimination based on sex. The intent is to ensure that all students, both male and female, have the freedom of basing their career goals on individual interests, aptitudes and abilities. The goal of sex equity is to provide unrestricted opportunities for all people. When a student is able to make a decision without the influences of sex discrimination, sex bias and sex-role stereotyping, that student benefits by coming one step closer to the person he or she wants to be. Career and Technical educators are in a position to help bring about this atmosphere of exploration and independent choice.

▸ **Glossary of Sex Equity Terms**

Nontraditional Programs: Those in which the enrollment of one sex is 0-20%; occupations which traditionally have been held by members of one sex. For example, carpentry is a non-traditional occupation for women; nursing for men.

Sex Bias: Behavior resulting from the assumption that one sex is superior to the other.

Sex Discrimination: Any action limiting or denying a person or group of persons opportunities, privileges, roles or rewards on the basis of their sex.

Sex Fairness: Treating both sexes in the same manner.

Sex Stereotyping: Attributing behaviors, abilities, interests, values and roles to a person or a group of persons on the basis of their sex.

Title II of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984: Requires career and technical educators to take affirmative steps to eliminate sex bias and sex stereotyping in career and technical programs.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972: Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

▸ **Legal Basis for Sex Equity in Career Education**

Career and technical educators have more than economic, social and humanistic reasons for implementing sex-fair education. Two major pieces of legislation provide the legal basis for sex equity. The legislation directed at achieving sex equity in education is Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Carl D. Perkins Career Education Act of 1984.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX was passed by Congress in 1972 to address sex discrimination in education. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex against students and employees of education programs and activities receiving federal funds.

Title IX

- Requires that persons may not be excluded from, denied participation in, or be treated differently in education programs on the basis of sex.
- Requires each school district to designate a Title IX coordinator and to have grievance procedures for complaints of Title IX violations.
- Prohibits sex discrimination in:
 - Admission to career and technical schools
 - Student access to courses and programs
 - Guidance and counseling tests, materials and practices
 - Career and Technical education programs
 - Treatment of married and/or pregnant students
 - Use of facilities and equipment
 - Employment of education personnel
 - Cooperative career and technical education and job placement services

Title II of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act

Sex equity was first mentioned in federal career education legislation in 1976. States were required to hire a full-time person to work in eliminating sex bias and stereotyping from career programs. The sex equity provisions are expanded and emphasized in the Perkins Act of 1984. As in the 1976 legislation, state are required to assign one person to work at achieving sex equity and providing resources to meet the career needs of single parents and homemakers. Funding for these two activities accompanied the Act.

There are three themes in the sex equity provisions: (1) Assisting single parents, homemakers and young women to gain marketable skills; (2) Creating greater access for women to a broad range of occupations; (3) Reducing the limiting effect of sex-role stereotyping.

SEX-FAIR CLASSROOM

Most teachers are unaware of any bias in their behavior. However, studies indicate that teachers do have a different set of expectations, behavior standards, rewards and punishments for female and male students. The following list identifies which areas may need improvement:

1. Do bulletin boards and displays apply to all students in the classroom?
2. Are students of both sexes encouraged to enroll in all classes?
3. Do your textbooks and other written materials show examples of men and women in nontraditional roles and careers?
4. Do the activities you do in class apply to all students in the classroom?
5. Are all students expected to do the same kinds and amounts of work?
6. Do students have equal opportunities to do tasks?
7. Is the classroom environment interesting to all students regardless of sex, race or ability?
8. If a job placement is related to this class, are all students provided equal opportunities?
9. Is your nonverbal behavior free of bias?
10. Do your textbooks and other written materials include examples of persons with varied cultural backgrounds in a wide range of careers?
11. Are females asked to do light work and secretarial chores while males are asked to do heavy work?
12. Are males taken less seriously than females?
13. Does the teacher have higher expectations for women students than men students?
14. Are textbooks and current resource materials sex-fair in photographs and language?
15. Do you feel it is more important to help males to sort out career options than it is to help females?

▸ **Sex-Fair Instructional Materials**

Teachers have a responsibility to determine if the curricular materials they are using treat females and males differently. If the materials do this, teachers need to take measures to counter this influence. Listed below are indicators of sex-fair classroom materials:

1. Sex-free titles are used, such as server instead of waitress/waiter.
2. The language is sex-fair, for example, he and she or mutual terms are used.
3. Occupations are shown as appropriate for both women and men.
4. Males and females are depicted in non-traditional occupations.
5. Males and females are pictured performing a variety of home tasks which are not necessarily traditional for their sex.
6. Both minority and non-minority males and females are pictured equally in varied levels of occupational status and responsibility.
7. Approximately the same number of females and males are portrayed in both active and passive roles throughout the materials.
8. Males and females show a variety of human traits rather than those that are stereotypic for the sex.
9. Written reference is made to physical appearance only when there is a purpose.
10. Males and females appear in approximately the same number of illustrations throughout the materials.
11. Women and men are not assigned the traditional roles of male as breadwinner and female as caretaker of home and children.
12. Opportunities were not overlooked to present equality in occupational or social roles.

Through careful analysis, the teacher will become more aware of the content in curricular materials. The teacher can then address the attitudes toward men and women. Thus, the students will gain an awareness of themselves and others which will expand their horizons and open new opportunities.

INTERNSHIP, COOPERATIVE AND EARLY PLACEMENT IN CAREER EDUCATION

School job placement services may not discriminate on the basis of sex. Specifically, a placement service operated by the local educational agency:

- Must 'assure' that host-site employers do not discriminate in employment on the basis of sex.
- Must obtain assurances of nondiscrimination from potential employers on the training agreement.
- May not accept employment requests from or refer any student to employers who:
 - Specify that only members of one sex will be considered for positions or that preferential consideration will be given to members of one sex
 - Have not furnished assurances of nondiscrimination
- Must stop providing referrals to employers who discriminate on the basis of sex in hiring.
- May not differentiate on the basis of sex in jobs posted or referrals made.
- Should keep records by sex of referrals made and the outcomes, including whether students were employed, the position in which they were employed, and the salaries. The recipient should periodically analyze such records to assure nondiscrimination.
- Should not refer only males to fields which are predominantly 'male' while referring females to fields traditionally thought of as 'female.'

RECOMMENDED STATEMENT FOR TRAINING AGREEMENTS

The employer does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in recruitment, hiring, placement and pay.