



# INFORMATION

## Hot Spots for Title IX Career & Technical Education

*Although Title IX outlawed school policies and practices that assigned students to courses and programs based on stereotypes about their gender, girls remain concentrated in traditional courses and programs for their gender, such as clerical, health and home economics classes. Too often, counselors and teachers rely on gender stereotypes to steer girls toward more traditionally female occupations. These old patterns of sex segregation threaten to leave girls in the lurch in the new economy as schools update traditionally male programs by launching high-tech opportunities, offering industry-sponsored certification programs and creating career-focused academies for students. The promise of these programs is limited for female students who remain clustered in traditional programs, while their male counterparts are encouraged to pursue subjects that provide access to high-tech training and higher salaries. Below are recent examples of inequities that women and girls face and how some communities are responding:*

**California** – Los Angeles public high school students are being placed in vocational classes because there are not enough teachers available to offer more academic courses and electives. Female students, many of who are interested in attending a four-year college, are placed in cosmetology classes based on gender stereotypes. These decisions tend to be made for students early on by school counselors who handle caseloads of up to 600 to 700 students.

**Connecticut** - Connecticut's Regional Vocational-Technical School System continues to be monitored by the federal government after a compliance review by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) found some schools to be as much as 90% single sex. As part of its effort to increase the number of girls in technology courses in public high schools, the State Department of Education is partnering with Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund to promote "World of Technology," a class geared specifically toward girls. As a result, a school in Greenwich increased its percentage of female students in technology classes from 5% to 20% in just over three years. Eight high schools now offer the course and four others plan to introduce it this fall.

**Hawaii** – The family of a female high school student filed a lawsuit in federal court against the state Department of Education for failing to respond properly to sexual harassment by a male student. The female student said she felt robbed of the opportunity to pursue her interest in computers after a male student downloaded pornographic images on a school computer, superimposed the girl's face on the pictures and circulated them in school. She stopped attending her computer class because she felt uncomfortable being in the room with the boy who created the images.

**Iowa** – Mason City Schools were warned by the state Department of Education that they have too many female students in Family Consumer Science courses while most students in the traditionally male industrial technology classes are boys. The school district has been asked by the state Department of Education to study why students continue to enroll in courses that are traditional for their genders.



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**Maine** – The federal government continues to monitor female enrollment, counseling, recruiting tools, and harassment of female students at Portland Arts and Technology High School as part of an agreement with OCR after an investigation found gender biased counseling, inadequate recruiting, and harassment of female students.

**Massachusetts** – Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School continues to be monitored for its Title IX compliance after an OCR investigation found sex segregation in the school's programs. To help combat sex segregation in public high schools, educators and administrators in Massachusetts are pushing to make sure young women are exposed to engineering and technology careers at an earlier age.

**New York** – A NWLC investigation into New York City's vocational high school system revealed that the city's Board of Education operates a "separate and unequal" system of schools for male and female students and provides inferior education opportunities for female students. Of the city's 18 vocational-technical high schools, 13 are highly sex-segregated – four have student bodies that are more than 70% female and nine have student bodies that are more than 70% male, including three schools that are more than 90% male. In addition, on average, the mostly-female schools offer half as many Advanced Placement courses as the mostly-male schools. Further, the Board has failed to place the Cisco Networking Programs, which leads to industry certification in computer networking, in any of the predominately female schools.

**Rhode Island** – James L. Hanley Career & Technical High School and William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School continue to be monitored by the federal government after an OCR investigation found problems of sex discrimination. Both schools agreed to establish activities that will increase female student enrollment in technical and other nontraditional programs.

**Virginia** – Research by the Fairfax County Office for Women found gender disparities in technology related courses in Fairfax high schools. According to the data, boys out-number girls in every technology class in Fairfax County. In 2000-2001, girls were only 5% of design and technology courses, 10% of network administrations courses, 13% of computer tech/electronic courses, 13% of computer architecture courses and 27% of computer science classes. The Cisco courses offered at three schools in Fairfax County also show gender disparities. This year, girls made up only 5% of the students in the Cisco courses. In Richmond, several public high schools have very low numbers of girls in their computer classes. One teacher said that of his 100 students in advanced programming classes, only 13 are girls. Teachers say they tend to lose girls between the beginning and advanced computer courses, and that guidance counselors can "make or break a program" by introducing students to non-traditional opportunities.

**Washington** – High-tech companies such as Microsoft and Cisco are partnering with public high schools across the state to provide computer-certification classes. Microsoft works with 19 schools statewide. Cisco has 79 schools that participate in certification classes. Yet these classes are predominately male, leaving girls behind in this lucrative field.