

	LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS Lincoln, Massachusetts	FILE: AC
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NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

The Lincoln School Committee and Lincoln Public Schools are committed to maintaining an education and work environment for all school community members. that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation. The members of the school community include the School Committee, employees, administration, faculty, staff, students, volunteers in the schools, and parties contracted to perform work for the Lincoln Public Schools.

Lincoln Public Schools does not exclude from participation, deny the benefits of Lincoln Public Schools from or otherwise discriminate against, individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, [sex stereotypes](#), [sex characteristics](#), religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities.

This commitment to the community is affirmed by the following statements. The School Committee commits to:

1. Promoting the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
2. Encouraging positive experiences in human values for children, youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups.
3. Working toward a more integrated society and enlisting the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
4. Using all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and address the grievances of individuals and groups.
5. Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school district, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on human relations.
6. Initiating a process of reviewing policies and practices of the school district in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

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The Lincoln Public Schools requires all members of the school community to conduct themselves in accordance with this policy.

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It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the school community to engage in any form of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, or to violate any other civil right of any member of the school community. We recognize that discrimination can take a range of forms and can be targeted or unintentional; however, discrimination in any form, including harassment and retaliation, will not be tolerated.

It shall also be a violation of this policy for any school community member to subject any other member of the school community to any form of retaliation, including, but not limited to, coercion, intimidation, interference, punishment, discrimination, or harassment, for reporting or filing a complaint of discrimination, cooperating in an investigation, aiding or encouraging another member of the school community to report such conduct or file a complaint, or opposing any act or practice reasonably believed to be prohibited by this policy.

LEGAL REFS: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375
Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972 Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972
Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 7905 (The Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act)
M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)

CROSS REF: AC-R Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harrassment and Retaliation
ACE, Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
GBA, Equal Employment Opportunity
IJ, Instructional Materials

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of September 14, 1981
Revised at School Committee Meeting of May 6, 1985
Revised at School Committee Meeting of October 16, 1989
Revised at School Committee Meeting of March 21, 1994
Revised at School Committee Meeting of March 2, 2006
Revised at School Committee Meeting of May 3, 2007
Revised at School Committee Meeting of February 26, 2009
Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of June 16, 2011
Revised at School Committee Meeting of April 25, 2013
Revised at School Committee Meeting of January 23, 2020

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Revised at School Committee Meeting of October 6, 2022



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Lincoln, Massachusetts

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NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

It is the policy of the Lincoln Public Schools to prevent unlawful harassment or discrimination of any individual working in or attending the schools and to encourage individuals to bring concerns about discrimination, including harassment and retaliation to the attention of a member of the Administrative Team or the Superintendent of Schools.

Lincoln Public Schools will respond promptly to any reports or complaints of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, or other violations of civil rights, pursuant to our detailed response protocol. Where it is determined that discrimination or harassment has occurred, LPS will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and will impose developmentally- appropriate disciplinary, restorative, and/or corrective action.

Any member of the school community who is found, after investigation, to have engaged in any form of discrimination, including harassment or retaliation, against another member of the school community, will be subject to consequences determined appropriate by the administration. Such consequences may include restorative measures and corrective action, and/or student discipline or staff disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Definitions

"Discrimination" and "Harassment" are defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on any individual's actual or perceived race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, [sex stereotypes](#), [sex characteristics](#), religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law. Discrimination and/or harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are degrading to a person or group described above.
- Verbal abuse or insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of, an individual or group described above.
- Any action or speech that contributes to, promotes or results in a hostile or discriminatory environment to an individual or group described above
- Any action or speech that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent that it either (i) interferes with or limits the ability of an individual or group described

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above to participate in or benefit from employment or a program or activity of Lincoln PS; or (ii) creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational or working environment.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to, any unwelcome, inappropriate, or illegal physical, written, verbal, graphic, or electronic conduct, and that has the intent or effect of creating a hostile education or work environment by limiting the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the district's programs and activities or by unreasonably interfering with that individual's education or work environment or, if the conduct were to persist, would likely create a hostile educational or work environment.

Harassment includes Sexual Harassment and Sex-Based Harassment which are more specifically addressed in File ACAB.

Retaliation means intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any person by the District, a student, or an employee or other person authorized by the District to provide aid, benefit, or service under the District's education program or activity, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or other Federal or State law providing protection against sex discrimination including sexual and sex-based harassment, or because the person has reported information, made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing as provided under District's , including in an informal resolution process, in grievance procedures and in any other actions taken by the District under § 106.44(f)(1) of Title IX.

Resources

If you believe you or your child has been discriminated against, you should report your complaint to one of the following individuals:

Principal, Lincoln School, Grades K-4
Principal, Lincoln School, Grades 5-8
Principal, Hanscom Primary School
Principal, Hanscom Middle School
Principal, Lincoln Preschool
Central Office Administrator

Inquiries regarding the district's compliance with Title IV, Title IX, and Section 504 and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Superintendent of Schools.

Civil rights regulations, procedures, timelines, and contacts regarding violations are available in the Student & Parent Handbook (a copy may be requested from the Superintendent's office or any school office). It is available on the district website at

Deleted: "Title IX Sexual Harassment" (effective August 14, 2020) means verbal, physical or other conduct that targets a person based on their sex, and that satisfies one or more of the following:

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Deleted: A school employee conditioning educational benefits or services on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo);

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Deleted: Any unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's educational program or activity;

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Deleted: Any instance of "sexual assault", "dating violence", "domestic violence", or "stalking", as those terms are defined by the Clery Act (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v)) and the Violence Against Women Act (34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), (10) & (30)).

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<https://www.lincnet.org/forms>). Additional information is available on the website of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

Inquiries about Title IX and other federal civil rights laws may be directed to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 33 Arch Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02110-1491 (phone number: 617-223-9662).

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375

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CROSS REF: ACE, Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
GBA, Equal Employment Opportunity
IJ, Instructional Materials
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities

Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure [Change to "Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure" \(and link\)](#)
Civil Rights Grievance Procedure

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of October 6, 2022



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Lincoln, Massachusetts

FILE:
ACA

NON-DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

The School Committee, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, declares that the school district does not and will not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, marital status, familial status, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including in admission and employment.

The School Committee will continue to ensure fair and equitable educational and employment opportunities, without regard to sex, sexual orientation or gender identity to all of its students and employees.

The Committee will designate an individual to act as the school district's Title IX compliance officer. All students and employees will be notified of the name and office address and telephone number of the compliance officer. This information is available in the Student and Parent Handbook.

The Lincoln Public Schools shall provide a notice of non-discrimination along with the contact information for its Title IX Coordinator as set forth below. The notice shall be given to students; parents, guardians, or other authorized legal representatives of elementary school and secondary school students; employees; applicants for admission and employment; and all unions and professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Lincoln Public Schools.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION & RELATED TITLE IX INFORMATION

The Lincoln School Committee and Lincoln Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to Lincoln Public Schools' Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both. Lincoln Public Schools' Title IX Coordinator is [name or title, office address, email address, and telephone number]. The Lincoln Public Schools' nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures can be located at [include link to location(s) on website or otherwise describe location(s)]. To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to [include link to location(s) on website or otherwise describe location(s)]. The District shall prominently include all elements of its notice of nondiscrimination set out above on its website and in each

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[handbook, catalog, announcement, bulletin, and application form that it makes available to persons entitled to notice under this section, or which are otherwise used in connection with the recruitment of students or employees.](#)

LEGAL REFS.: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
45 CFR, Part 86, (Federal Register, 6/4/75)
M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)
BESE 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF.: AC, Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harrassment and
Retaliation

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of October 6, 2022

NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX UNDER TITLE IX INCLUDING SEX-BASED HARASSMENT

- I. The Lincoln Public School's obligation to respond under Title IX requires the District to be aware of discrimination based upon sex, including sex-based harassment. The District has actual notice when an allegation is made known to any school employee. Schools must treat seriously all reports of sexual discrimination, including sex based harassment, that meet the definition of harassment and the conditions of actual notice and jurisdiction as noted whether or not the complainant files a formal complaint.

Title IX Sexual Discrimination applies to conduct that occurs within the United States in an education program or activity of the District, regardless of whether such District program or activity is conducted on or off school grounds. Additionally, under Title IX, the District has an obligation to address a sex-based hostile environment under its education program or activity, even when some conduct alleged to be contributing to the hostile environment occurred outside the recipient's education program or activity or outside the United States. A District education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the District exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurred.

II. Designation of a Title IX Coordinator, Responsibilities & Training

- (1) Title IX Coordinator. The District shall designate and authorize at least one employee, referred to herein as a Title IX Coordinator, to coordinate its efforts to comply with its responsibilities under Title IX. In the event the District designates more than one Title IX Coordinator, it must designate one of its Title IX Coordinators to retain ultimate oversight over those responsibilities and ensure the District's consistent compliance with its responsibilities under Title IX.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the District's compliance with its obligations under Title IX and when notified of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX is required to take actions to promptly and effectively end any sex discrimination in its education program or activity, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects, pursuant to Title IX 106.44(f), in part by:

- (i) Treating the complainant and respondent equitably;
- (ii) Offering and coordinating supportive measures, as appropriate, for the complainant and if the grievance procedures has been initiated or an informal resolution process has been offered, for the respondent as well.
- (iii) Notifying parties of the grievance procedure and the informal resolution process if available and appropriate;

- (iv) Initiating the grievance procedure or the informal resolution process if available, appropriate and agreed to by all parties;
- (v) In the absence of a complaint or the withdrawal of any or all of the allegations in a complaint, and in the absence or termination of an informal resolution process, determining whether to initiate a complaint of sex discrimination that complies with the grievance procedures. To make this fact-specific determination, the Title IX Coordinator must consider, at a minimum, the following factors:
 - (1) The complainant's request not to proceed with initiation of a complaint;
 - (2) The complainant's reasonable safety concerns regarding initiation of a complaint;
 - (3) The risk that additional acts of sex discrimination would occur if a complaint is not initiated;
 - (4) The severity of the alleged sex discrimination, including whether the discrimination, if established, would require the removal of a respondent from campus or imposition of another disciplinary sanction to end the discrimination and prevent its recurrence;
 - (5) The age and relationship of the parties, including whether the respondent is an employee of the District;
 - (6) The scope of the alleged sex discrimination, including information suggesting a pattern, ongoing sex discrimination, or sex discrimination alleged to have impacted multiple individuals;
 - (7) The availability of evidence to assist a decisionmaker in determining whether sex discrimination occurred; and
 - (8) Whether the District could end the alleged sex discrimination and prevent its recurrence without initiating its grievance procedures

If, after considering these and other relevant factors, the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct as alleged presents an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of the complainant or other person, or that the conduct as alleged prevents the recipient from ensuring equal access on the basis of sex to its education program or activity, the Title IX Coordinator may initiate a complaint.

- (vi) If initiating a complaint under paragraph (v) above of this section, notifying the complainant prior to doing so and appropriately addressing reasonable concerns about the complainant's safety or the safety of others, including by providing supportive measures;
- (vii) Regardless of whether a complaint is initiated, taking other appropriate prompt and effective steps, in addition to steps necessary to effectuate the remedies provided to an individual complainant, if any, to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the recipient's education program or activity.

Parental, family, or marital status; pregnancy or related conditions.

The Title IX Coordinator shall coordinate actions on behalf of the District to promptly and effectively prevent sex discrimination and ensure equal access to the District's education program or activity pursuant to the provisions of Title IX, § 106.40 once a student, or a

person who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student, notifies the Title IX Coordinator of the student's pregnancy or related conditions. These actions shall include

- (i) Informing the student, and if applicable, the person who notified the Title IX Coordinator of the student's pregnancy or related conditions and has a legal right to act on behalf of the student, of the District's obligations under paragraphs Title IX, §§ 106.40(b)(1) through (5), § 106.44(j) and providing the District's notice of nondiscrimination.
- (ii) Providing reasonable modifications to the District's policies, practices, or procedures as necessary to prevent sex discrimination and ensure equal access to the District's education program or activity. Each reasonable modification must be based on the student's individualized needs following consultation with the student to determine what modifications are required. A modification is not reasonable if the District can demonstrate that it would fundamentally alter the nature of its education program or activity.
- (iii) Providing the student voluntary access to any separate and comparable portion of the District's education program or activity.
- (iv) Providing the student a voluntary leave of absence from the District's education program or activity to cover, at minimum, the period of time deemed medically necessary by the student's licensed healthcare provider. If the student qualifies for leave under a leave policy maintained by the District that allows a greater period of time than the medically necessary period, the student may take voluntary leave under that policy instead if the student so chooses. When the student returns to the District's education program or activity, the student must be reinstated to the academic status and, as practicable, to the extracurricular status that the student held when the voluntary leave began.
- (v) Providing the student access to a lactation space, which must be a space other than a bathroom, that is clean, shielded from view, free from intrusion from others, and may be used by a student for expressing breast milk or breastfeeding as needed.
- (vi) Not requiring supporting documentation under paragraphs (ii) through (v) above unless the documentation is necessary and reasonable for the District to determine the reasonable modifications to make or whether to take additional specific actions under paragraphs (ii) through (v) above
- (vii) Treating pregnancy or related conditions in the same manner and under the same policies as any other temporary medical conditions with respect to any medical or hospital benefit, service, plan, or policy the recipient administers, operates, offers, or participates in with respect to students admitted to the recipient's education program or activity.

- (viii) Not requiring a student who is pregnant or has related conditions to provide certification from a healthcare provider or any other person that the student is physically able to participate in the recipient's class, program, or extracurricular activity unless:
 - The certified level of physical ability or health is necessary for participation in the class, program, or extracurricular activity;
 - The recipient requires such certification of all students participating in the class, program, or extracurricular activity; and
 - The information obtained is not used as a basis for discrimination prohibited by this part.

(2) Delegation to designees. As appropriate, the District may delegate, or permit the Title IX Coordinator to delegate, specific duties to one or more designees.

(3) Training.

The District must ensure that the persons described in paragraphs (A) through (D) below receive training related to their duties under Title IX promptly upon hiring or change of position that alters their duties under Title IX and annually thereafter. This training must not rely on sex stereotypes.

A. All employees.

All employees must be trained on:

- (i) The District's obligation to address sex discrimination in its education program or activity;
- (ii) The scope of conduct that constitutes sex discrimination under Title IX, including the definition of sex-based harassment; and
- (iii) All applicable notification and information requirements in response to reports of sexual discrimination and pursuant to the District's Title IX Grievance Procedure.

B. Investigators, decisionmakers, and other persons who are responsible for implementing the District's grievance procedures or have the authority to modify or terminate supportive measures.

In addition to the training requirements in paragraph A. above, all investigators, decisionmakers, and other persons who are responsible for implementing the District's grievance procedures or have the authority to modify or terminate supportive measures must be trained on the following topics to the extent related to their responsibilities:

- (i) The District's obligations to respond to sexual discrimination under Title IX § 106.44;
- (ii) The District's grievance procedures;

(iii)How to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias; and

(iv)The meaning and application of the term “relevant” in relation to questions and evidence, and the types of evidence that are impermissible regardless of relevance under Title IX.

C. Facilitators of informal resolution process.

In addition to the training requirements in paragraph A. above, all facilitators of an informal resolution process must be trained on the rules and practices associated with the District’s informal resolution process and on how to serve impartially, including by avoiding conflicts of interest and bias.

D. Title IX Coordinator and designees.

In addition to the training requirements in paragraphs A. through C. above, the Title IX Coordinator and any designees must be trained on their specific responsibilities as set forth in paragraph (1) above and the requirements of the District’s recordkeeping system.

III. Receipt of Complaint

The Superintendent in consultation with the Title IX Coordinator shall designate the principal of each school in the district, or their designee (or some other appropriate employee(s)) as the initial entity to receive a sex discrimination complaint, including sexual and sex-based harassment. The Title IX Coordinator shall be informed, as soon as possible, of the filing of the complaint. Nothing in the District’s policy shall prevent any person from reporting the prohibited conduct to someone other than those above designated complaint recipients. The investigating officer may receive the complaint orally or in writing, and the investigation shall be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances and in compliance with applicable law. The investigation will be prompt, thorough, and impartial, and will include, at least, a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. Also, the alleged harasser will be interviewed. When the investigation is completed, the complaint recipient will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation.

IV. Notification Requirements and Confidential Employees

All non-confidential employees are required to notify the Title IX Coordinator when the employee has information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX.

- (1) The District shall notify all participants in the District’s education program or activity of how to contact its confidential employees, if any.
- (2) The District shall require a confidential employee to explain to any person who informs the confidential employee of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX:

- (i) The employee's status as confidential for purposes of Title IX, including the circumstances in which the employee is not required to notify the Title IX Coordinator about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination;
- (ii) How to contact the recipient's Title IX Coordinator and how to make a complaint of sex discrimination; and
- (iii) That the Title IX Coordinator may be able to offer and coordinate supportive measures, as well as initiate an informal resolution process or an investigation under the grievance procedures.

A confidential employee is:

- (1) An employee of the District whose communications are privileged or confidential under Federal or State law. The employee's confidential status, for purposes of this part, is only with respect to information received while the employee is functioning within the scope of their duties to which privilege or confidentiality applies;
- (2) An employee of the District whom the recipient has designated as confidential under this part for the purpose of providing services to persons related to sex discrimination. If the employee also has a duty not associated with providing those services, the employee's confidential status is only with respect to information received about sex discrimination in connection with providing those services.

V. Students With Disabilities

In the course implementing supportive measures, informal resolution, and/or a grievance procedure, and throughout the same, if either a complainant or respondent is an elementary or secondary student with a disability, the Title IX Coordinator must consult with one or more members, as appropriate, of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, 34 CFR 300.321, if any, or one or more members, as appropriate, of the group of persons responsible for the student's placement decision under 34 CFR 104.35(c), if any, to determine how to comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794.

VI. Emergency Removal & Administrative Leave

- 1. The District may remove a respondent from the District's education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the District undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of a complainant or any students, employees, or other persons arising from the allegations of sex discrimination justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. This provision shall not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794, or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*
- 2. The District may place an employee respondent on administrative leave from employment responsibilities during the pendency of the District's grievance procedures. This provision

shall not be construed to modify any rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794, or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*

VII. Use of Supportive Measures

Supportive Measures are individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the Complainant or Respondent, while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, and/or deter sexual discrimination

Supportive Measures may be offered before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint or where no Formal Complaint has been filed. Supportive measures are individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party, while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, and/or deter sexual discrimination.

Supportive measures available to complainants and respondents include but are not limited to: counseling; extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments; modifications of work or class schedules; campus escort services; mutual restrictions on contact between the parties; changes in work locations; leaves of absence; increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the building and/or campus; and other similar measures. Violations of the restrictions imposed by supportive measures may be considered a violation of school rules and may also be considered in determining whether sexual discrimination has occurred.

VIII. Grievance Procedure

Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX will be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure. Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX, and simultaneously meet the definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will also be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure.

Allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of sexual discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX, but could, if proven, meet the definition(s) of sexual harassment under Title VII (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will be addressed through the District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedure. (See exception under Section II, Part 4, Step 4 below). The definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII, M.G.L. c. 151B, and M.G.L. c. 151C are set out in the Civil Rights Grievance Procedure.

IX. Informal Resolution

After a Formal Complaint is filed, and prior to determining whether sex discrimination occurred, the District may, at its discretion, opt to offer and facilitate informal resolution options, such as mediation or restorative justice. Both parties must give voluntary, informed, written consent to

attempt any offered informal resolution. Any informal resolution under this Procedure will be facilitated by trained personnel.

- (1) The informal resolution process is not available to resolve allegations that an employee engaged in sex-based harassment of a student or if such a process would conflict with Federal, State or local law.
- (2) The informal process is voluntary, and the respondent may terminate or decline any informal process at any time and resume the Formal Complaint grievance process. The District, as a condition of participation, must not require the parties to waive the right to an investigation and determination of a complaint as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or the exercise of any other right.
- (3) The informal process shall not exceed thirty (30) calendar days, during which time the timelines of the Formal Complaint process will be stayed.

X. Due Process and Fairness

The District shall provide due process protections which include the following:

- 1) Equitable treatment of complainants and respondents.
- 2) Presumption that the respondent is not responsible until a determination is made.
- 3) Prompt timeframes for all major stages.
- 4) Reasonable steps to protect privacy of parties and witnesses during the grievance procedures.
- 5) Objective evaluation of relevant evidence and the exclusion of impermissible evidence.
- 6) If the District adopts procedures that apply to the resolution of only some complaints, articulate principles for how the District will determine which procedures apply.
- 7) Notice of allegations to the parties containing sufficient details to permit a party to prepare for any initial interview and proceed with a factual investigation.
- 8) Permitted dismissals in certain circumstances so long as the District offers an appeal and, as appropriate, supportive measures, and takes other steps to ensure sex discrimination does not continue or recur.
- 9) Permitted consolidation of complaints in certain circumstances.
- 10) Burden on the District to gather evidence and decide what is relevant or impermissible.
- 11) Equal opportunity for the parties to present fact witnesses and other evidence.
- 12) Equal opportunity for the parties to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence or an accurate description of this evidence (and if the District provides access to a description, it must provide access to the underlying evidence upon the request of any party); a reasonable opportunity to respond; and a requirement that the District take reasonable steps to prevent and address unauthorized disclosures.
- 13) A process for assessing credibility when credibility is in dispute and relevant.
- 14) Use of a preponderance of the evidence standard of proof to determine whether sex discrimination occurred, unless the clear and convincing evidence standard is used in all other comparable proceedings, in which case that standard may be used.
- 15) The decision maker shall not be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or investigator unless the District otherwise provides for the same in the Grievance Procedure and specifically sets forth under what circumstances a single-investigator model may be used.
- 16) The facilitator for any informal resolution process shall not be the same person as the investigator or the decisionmaker in the District's grievance procedures.

- 17) The decisionmaker for any appeal shall not have taken part in an investigation of the allegations or dismissal of the complaint;
- 18) If it is determined that sex discrimination occurred, remedies for the complainant or others; disciplinary sanctions for those found responsible; and other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur.
- 19) Title IX Coordinators, investigators, and decision-makers must be free from bias or conflict of interest;
- 20) Equal opportunity for parties to appeal, where an appeal is offered;
- 21) Upon filing a formal complaint the school must give written notice to the parties containing sufficient details to permit a party to prepare for any initial interview and proceed with a factual investigation. For K-12 schools a hearing is optional but the parties must be allowed to submit written questions to challenge each other's credibility before the decision-maker makes a determination. After the investigation, a written determination must be sent to both parties explaining each allegation, whether the respondent is responsible or not responsible, including the facts and evidence on which the conclusion was based by applying either the preponderance of the evidence or the clear and convincing standard; however, a school can use the lower preponderance standards only if it uses that standard for conduct code violations that do not involve sexual harassment but carry the same maximum disciplinary sanction. As long as the process is voluntary for all parties, after being fully informed and written consent is provided by both parties, a school may facilitate informal resolution of a sexual complaint.
- 22) An informal investigation process that may, upon the request of the complainant be followed by a formal process.

XI. Record Keeping

The District shall create records in accordance with its obligations under Title IX as noted below and maintain the same for a period of seven (7) years:

- (1) For each complaint of sex discrimination, records documenting the informal resolution process and/or the grievance procedures and the resulting outcome.
- (2) For each notification the Title IX Coordinator receives of information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or records documenting the actions the District took to meet its obligations under Title IX.
- (3) For all training all materials used to provide training to meet its obligations under Title IX. A District must make these training materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.

CROSS REFS: ACGA, Civil Rights Grievance Procedure
 ACGB, Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure

SOURCE: MASC July 2024

SEXUAL & SEX-BASED HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

The Lincoln School Committee and Lincoln Public Schools are committed to maintaining an education and work environment for all school community members. that is free from all forms of harassment, including sexual and sex-based harassment as provided under MA and Federal law. The members of the school community include the School Committee, employees, administration, faculty, staff, students, volunteers in the schools, and parties contracted to perform work for the Lincoln Public Schools.

Because the District takes allegations of harassment, including sexual harassment, seriously the District shall respond promptly and meaningfully to every known report of sexual harassment and shall investigate every formal complaint of harassment including sexual and sex-based harassment as well as retaliation and following an investigation where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, the District shall act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth the District's goals of promoting an environment that is free of harassment including sexual and sex-based harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit the District's authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of harassment or sexual or sex-based harassment.

Definitions of Sexual Harassment

TITLE IX

Sex-based harassment prohibited by Title IX is a form of sex discrimination and means sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of sex, including as described in § 106.10 of Title IX, that is:

- (1) Quid pro quo harassment. An employee, agent, or other person authorized by the District to provide an aid, benefit, or service under the District's education program or activity explicitly or Impliedly conditioning the provision of such an aid, benefit, or service on a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- (2) Hostile environment harassment. Unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the District's education program or activity (i.e., creates a hostile environment).
- (3) Specific offenses. (i) Sexual assault (ii) Dating violence; (iii) Domestic violence; (iv) Stalking

TITLE VII

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits sexual harassment which is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

(1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. A hostile environment on the basis of sex is created when the conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of employment.

M.G.L. c. 151B

M.G.L. c. 151B, § 1 - the term “sexual harassment” is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment. Discrimination on the basis of sex shall include, but not be limited to, sexual harassment.

M.G.L. c. 151C

M.G.L. c. 151C, § 2 (g) prohibits the sexual harassment of students in any program or course of study in any educational institution and M.G.L. c. 151C, § 1 (e) defines “sexual harassment” as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of the benefits, privileges or placement services or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating an environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, to male, female, or gender non-conforming students or employees may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct, which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances-whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;

- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences;
- Discussion of one's sexual activities; and
- Sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse and sexual coercion as well as physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent (e.g., due to the student's age or use of drugs or alcohol, or because an intellectual or other disability prevents the student from having the capacity to give consent)

Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 119, Section 51 A , requires that public schools report cases of suspected child abuse, immediately orally and file a report within 48 hours detailing the suspected abuse to the Department of Children and Families. For the category of sexual violence, in addition to Section 51A referrals these offences and any other serious matters shall be referred to local law enforcement. Schools must treat seriously all reports of sexual harassment that meet the definition of sexual harassment and the conditions of actual notice and jurisdiction as noted above. Holding a school liable under Title IX can occur only when the school knows of sexual harassment allegations and responds in a way that is deliberately indifferent (clearly unreasonable in light of known circumstance).

Retaliation against a complainant, because they have filed a harassment or sexual harassment complaint assisted or participated in a harassment or sexual harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. A student or employee who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including student suspension and expulsion or employee termination.

The complainant does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The complainant, regardless of gender, may be a witness to and personally offended by such conduct.

Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX will be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure. Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX, and simultaneously meet the definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will also be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure.

The District's Title IX Grievance Procedure is available at: [\[Title IX Grievance Procedure\]](#).

Commented [1]: Need this link and the links/contacts highlighted below.

Allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of sexual discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX, but could, if proven, meet the definition(s) of sexual harassment under Title VII (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will be addressed through the District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedure. (See exception under Section II, Part 4, Step 4 below). The definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII, M.G.L. c. 151B, and M.G.L. c. 151C are set out in the Civil Rights Grievance Procedure.

The District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedure is available at: [\[Civil Rights Grievance Procedure\]](#).

This policy, or a summary thereof that contain the essential policy elements shall be distributed by the Lincoln Public Schools to its students and employees and each parent or guardian shall sign that they have received and understand the policy.

List the name and phone number of the District's Title IX Coordinator

List the appropriate party by name and phone number to receive a complaint in each District School

Please note that certain entities have specified time limits for filing a claim.

The Complainant may also file a complaint with:

- The Mass. Commission Against Discrimination, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617-994-6000.
- Office for Civil Rights (U.S. Department of Education)
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109.
Phone: 617-289-0111.
- The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission,
John F. Kennedy Bldg.
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [151B:3A](#)
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
BESE 603 CMR [26:00](#)
34 CFR 106.44 (a), (a)-(b)
34 CFR 106.45 (a)-(b) (1)
34 CFR 106.45 (b)(2)-(b)(3,4,5,6,7) as revised through June 2020
Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure

CROSS REF.: ACG, Civil Rights Grievance Procedure

CIVIL RIGHTS GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Lincoln Public Schools is committed to maintaining school environments free of discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or disability.

Harassment, discrimination, and retaliation in any form or for any reason is prohibited. This includes harassment or discrimination by administrators, personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. Retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or discrimination to the attention of school officials or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this Procedure is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Lincoln Public Schools.

Persons who engage in harassment, discrimination or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school district administration, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

Non-Applicability of This Procedure to Title IX Sexual Discrimination Allegations

This policy (ACGA, Civil Rights Grievance Procedure) shall not apply to reports of sexual discrimination as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 and its implementing regulations (“Title IX”) effective August of 2024.

Allegations of conduct that could, if proven, meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX shall be addressed through the District’s Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure (ACGB). Similarly, allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sex-based harassment under Title IX, and simultaneously meet the definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will also be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure (ACGB).

Allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of **sex-based** harassment under Title IX, but could, if proven, meet the definition(s) of sexual harassment under Title VII (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will be addressed through the *Civil Rights Grievance Procedure*.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Procedure:

- A. “Discrimination” means discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion by which an individual is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the school district.

- B. “Harassment” means unwelcome conduct on the basis of race, , age, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity disability, or religion that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to create or contribute to a hostile environment for the individual at school. Harassment may include insults, name-calling, off color jokes, threats, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures or other conduct which rises to the level of a hostile environment. A hostile environment is one which unreasonably interfered with an individual’s participation in, denied the individual the benefits of, or otherwise subjected the individual to discrimination under any program or activity of the District.

a. Non-Title IX Sexual Harassment

M.G.L. c. 151B, § 1 - the term “sexual harassment” is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment. Discrimination on the basis of sex shall include, but not be limited to, sexual harassment.

M.G.L. c. 151C, § 1 - the term “sexual harassment” is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of the benefits, privileges or placement services or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. A hostile environment on the basis of sex is created when the conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of employment.

When determining whether an environment is hostile, the District shall consider the context, nature, frequency, and location of the incidents as well as the credibility of witnesses and the identity, number and relationships of the persons involved. The District must consider whether the alleged harassment was sufficient to have created such an environment for a reasonable person of the same age, gender, and experience as the Complainant, and under similar circumstances. Off-campus conduct may constitute harassment if it creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; however, conduct does not constitute harassment where the incident occurs off-campus at a non-school sponsored activity and does not create a hostile environment at school for the victim.

- C. Retaliation: Retaliatory acts against any individual who exercises their rights under the civil rights statutes covered by this Procedure or the Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure are considered to be discrimination and are unlawful. Individuals are prohibited from coercing, intimidating, threatening, or interfering with an individual because the individual exercised any right granted or protected under these procedures and/or the Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure.
- D. Complainant: An individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under this Procedure. Parents and/or legal guardians of a complainant are not considered a complainant but may file formal complaints on behalf of a minor child and act on behalf of the minor child in any civil rights matter.
- E. Party or Parties: The complainant and/or respondent.
- F. Principal: The Principal or Principal's designee.
- G. Respondent: An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under this Procedure.

How to make a complaint

Any student or employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against or harassed should report their concern promptly to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. Students may also report incidents of harassing conduct to a teacher, administrator, or guidance counselor. Any complaint received by a school personnel shall be promptly reported to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. A complaint will not be dismissed because it was reported to the incorrect school personnel. Students or employees who are unsure whether discrimination, harassment, or retaliation has occurred are encouraged to discuss the situation with the Principal. There may be instances where another third-party, who has not experienced but is aware of the occurrence of prohibited conduct, may bring a complaint under this Procedure. In such circumstances, that person is referred to as the "reporter."

- A. Any District employee who observes or receives a report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation shall promptly notify the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator, identified below. Any District employee who observes discrimination, harassment or retaliation against a student should intervene to stop the conduct and report it to Principal. Upon receipt of a report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, the Principal shall promptly inform the relevant Civil Rights Coordinator of the report, and the District will respond in a manner consistent with this Procedure. If the report involves an accusation against the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator, the employee shall report the incident to the Superintendent or designee.
- B. Informal Reports: Individuals may wish to file a formal complaint of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, or to report informally (i.e., without initiating a formal complaint). Such informal reports may be made to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. The District shall inform anyone making an informal report that they may initiate a formal complaint at any time, regardless of what steps are being or have been taken in response to an informal report.

- C. Anonymous Reports: Complainants and reporters should be aware that although the District will often be able to maintain confidentiality of reporting persons, the District may sometimes be required to take actions to protect the safety of the school community that may result in the identity of the reporting person being disclosed (to the police, for example). When reporters or Complainants seek to remain anonymous or have their identities kept confidential, they will be informed that honoring such a request may limit the ability of the District to respond fully to any reported event, including limitations on the ability to take disciplinary action against an Respondent.
- D. Informal Process: If the District concludes that it is possible to resolve a matter, whether after formal complaint or an informal report, in a prompt, fair and adequate manner through an informal process involving, and with the consent of, the Complainant and Respondent, the District may seek to do so. The informal process is voluntary, and the Complainant and/or Respondent may terminate or decline any informal process at any time, without penalty.
- E. Formal Process: A formal complaint shall state (if known to the reporter or Complainant) the name(s) of the persons involved and witnesses to the conduct, describe the conduct, and identify, to the extent possible, the dates and locations of the conduct. The complaint shall be signed and dated by the reporter and/or Complainant. Complaints will be investigated promptly and equitably by the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal. Investigations may be initiated whenever warranted, in the absence of a formal complaint, or after a formal complaint has been withdrawn.
- F. Initial Assessments: The Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will make an initial assessment following a complaint. Based on that assessment, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may: (a) if the conduct, even if substantiated, would not constitute harassment, discrimination or retaliation, dismiss the complaint; (b) if the alleged conduct (or complaint) could not, even if true, constitute discrimination, harassment or retaliation, but is within the scope of another procedure, the Civil Rights Coordinator shall refer the matter to the appropriate personnel; (c) if the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal concludes that it is possible to resolve the complaint in a prompt, fair and adequate manner through an informal process involving and with the consent of both parties, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may seek to do so in accordance with Section D, above; or (d) if the alleged conduct, if substantiated, would constitute discrimination, harassment or retaliation, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will initiate an investigation. The Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may also identify and initiate any interim measures. See Section G.
- G. Interim Measures: The District will provide prompt and reasonable interim measures during the pendency of the investigation, if appropriate, to support and protect the safety of the parties, the educational environment, and the District and/or school community; to deter retaliation; and to preserve the integrity of the investigation and resolution process. Any interim measures will be monitored to ensure they are effective based on the evolving needs of the parties. Violations of the restrictions imposed by interim measures could be considered a violation of school rules and may be considered in determining whether discrimination, harassment or retaliation has occurred.
- H. Timeframes: The District will seek to complete any investigation within twenty (20) school days after receipt of a complaint and provide the written notice of the outcome of the investigation within twenty-five (25) school days. The investigator may impose reasonable timeframes on all

parties to facilitate the timely completion of the investigation. The investigator may extend the investigation period beyond the time period identified due to extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to availability and cooperation of witnesses, complexity of the investigation, school vacation periods, and the involvement of law enforcement and other outside agency investigations. If a complaint or report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation is received within three (3) weeks of the end of the academic school year, the investigator will attempt to complete the investigation by the end of the school year. In the event that the investigation extends beyond the last day of school, the District will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within the above-referenced time frame, but may extend the investigation period to account for the availability of witnesses during the summer vacation period. If the investigator extends the investigation, they will notify the Complainant and Respondent of the extension. A report to the law enforcement will not automatically delay an investigation; however, a request from law enforcement to delay the investigation may require a temporary suspension of an investigation, and the District will promptly resume its investigation upon being advised that law enforcement's evidence gathering is completed. Any interim measures provided to the parties may continue during the period of postponement. See Section G.

- I. Under the formal resolution procedure, the complaint will be investigated by the Principal, Civil Rights Coordinator or other individual designated by the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator who has responsibility for seeking and gathering evidence relative to the investigation. A formal complaint against an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. During the formal resolution procedure:
 1. The Complainant shall be provided with an opportunity to be heard and have the opportunity to identify witnesses and other relevant evidence to the investigator.
 2. The Respondent will be provided with an opportunity to be heard as part of the investigation including the opportunity to provide relevant information and identify witnesses for the investigator's consideration.
 3. The privacy rights of the parties shall be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.
 4. The investigator will keep a written record of the investigation process.
 5. The investigation will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
 6. The notification of the outcome of the investigation, including, if appropriate, a description of the remedies taken, will be provided to the parties within twenty-five (25) school days of the receipt of the complaint, unless extended for good cause.
 7. Nothing in this Procedure will preclude the investigator, in their discretion, from completing the investigation sooner than the time period described above.
- J. Standard of Proof: The investigation shall made factual findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard.
- K. If the investigator determines that discrimination, harassment or retaliation has occurred, the District shall take steps to eliminate the discriminatory or harassing environment, which shall include but not be limited to:

1. Identifying what steps are necessary to prevent recurrence of any discriminatory behavior, including but not limited to harassment or retaliation, and to correct its discriminatory effects if appropriate; and
2. Informing the Complainant and Respondent or, in the case of minor children, the parties' parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the results of the investigation (in accordance with applicable state and federal privacy laws) in accordance with the above timelines. The notification will include the notice of the opportunity for appeal; however, failure to provide notice of appeal shall not constitute a violation of this policy.

The school district administration may also refer the offender for disciplinary procedures to be conducted in accordance with federal and state law. Nothing in the Civil Rights Grievance Procedure shall be interpreted as limiting or prohibiting the District's ability to take appropriate disciplinary action against the offender in accordance with the applicable code(s) of conduct or employment contracts or policies, where appropriate, prior to completion of the investigation, in accordance with the due process rights of employees and students, as applicable. When informing the parties' parent(s)/legal guardian(s) about the results of the investigation, the school district may consider appropriate notification processes when special circumstances may apply (e.g., disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression).

- L. Appeal: If the Complainant or the Respondent is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, an appeal may be made to the Superintendent or designee within seven (7) calendar days after receiving notice of the outcome of the investigation, except for circumstances in which the Respondent is subject to long-term suspension as a result of a finding of discrimination, harassment or retaliation. In such an instance, the appeal rights of the Respondent will be provided in a manner consistent with the disciplinary due process requirements applicable to the circumstances (e.g., M.G.L. c. 71, 37H, 37H ½ or 37H ¾). Appeals must be made in writing (email is sufficient) to the Superintendent, Lincoln Public Schools, 8 Ballfield Rd, Lincoln, Massachusetts 01773; or by email to pgraham@lincnet.org. The Superintendent will decide the appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of receipt of the written appeal.
- M. Identification of Civil Rights Coordinator for complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation under this Procedure is:

Title, Name, address, phone, email

- N. Employment Agencies: The contact information for state and federal employment discrimination enforcement agencies is as follows: (1) Federal: United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); John F. Kennedy Federal Building; 15 New Sudbury Street, Room 475; Boston, MA 02203-0506; 1-800-669-4000; [EEOC Boston Area Office Website: https://www.eeoc.gov/field-office/boston/location](https://www.eeoc.gov/field-office/boston/location); and (2) State: Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD); Boston Headquarters; One Ashburton Place; Sixth Floor, Room 601; Boston, MA 02108; (617)-994-6000; [MCAD Website: https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination).

LEGAL REFS.: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Act;
M.G.L. c. 151B and c. 151C; M.G.L. c. 76, § 5;

CROSS REFS.: JICFB, Bullying Prevention
AC, Nondiscrimination
ACGB, Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure

SOURCE: MASC July 24

TITLE IX SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

OVERVIEW

The Lincoln Public Schools is committed to maintaining school environments free of sexual discrimination.

Sexual discrimination in any form or for any reason is prohibited. This includes sexual discrimination by administrators, personnel, students, vendors, and other individuals in school or at school related events.

The School Committee, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, declares that the school district does not and will not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, marital status, familial status, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including in admission and employment.

Retaliation against any individual who has brought sexual discrimination to the attention of school officials, or against an individual who has participated, or refused to participate, in the investigation thereof is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Lincoln Public Schools. Conduct that reasonably may constitute retaliation is subject to this Grievance Procedure.

The Lincoln Public Schools has adopted grievance procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints made by students, employees, or other individuals who are participating or attempting to participate in its education program or activity, or by the Title IX Coordinator, alleging any action that would be prohibited by Title IX or the Title IX regulations.

SCOPE

The Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure has been developed in accordance with the revised Title IX regulations, 34 CFR Part 106, effective August 1, 2024, which mandate specific procedures for responding to and investigating allegations of sexual discrimination under Title IX. This Grievance Procedure applies to all allegations of sexual discrimination under Title IX, including sex-based harassment which is further defined in the Definitions section below. For the purposes of this procedure the term “sexual discrimination” shall include the terms “sex-based harassment” and “sexual harassment” except as may otherwise be distinguished.

The Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure applies to conduct that occurs within the United States in an education program or activity of the District, regardless of whether such District program or activity is conducted on or off school grounds. Additionally, this Grievance Procedure applies to the District’s obligation under Title IX to address a sex-based hostile environment under its education program or activity, even when some conduct alleged to be contributing to the hostile environment occurred outside the recipient’s education program or activity or outside the United States. A District education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the District

exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurred.

Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX will be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure. Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX, and simultaneously meet the definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will also be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure.

Allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of sexual discrimination, including sex-based harassment under Title IX, but could, if proven, meet the definition(s) of sexual harassment under Title VII (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will be addressed through the District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedure. (See exception under Section II, Part 4, Step 4 below). The definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII, M.G.L. c. 151B, and M.G.L. c. 151C are set out in the Civil Rights Grievance Procedure.

Essential Requirements of Title IX Grievance Procedure:

- A. The Lincoln Public Schools will treat complainants and respondents equitably.
- B. The Lincoln Public Schools requires that any Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decision-maker not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. A decision-maker may be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or investigator.
- C. The Lincoln Public Schools presumes that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sex discrimination until a determination is made at the conclusion of its grievance procedures.
- D. The Lincoln Public Schools has established timeframes for the major stages of the grievance procedures which are set forth in detail below. See: II Filing a Title IX Formal Complaint
- E. The Lincoln Public Schools allows for the reasonable extension of timeframes on a case-by-case basis for good cause with notice to the parties that includes the reason for the delay as set forth below. See II. Filing a Title IX Formal Complaint, Step (10); Step 10, paragraphs (2) and (6).
- F. The Lincoln Public Schools will take reasonable steps to protect the privacy of the parties and witnesses and keep the identity of complainants, respondents, and witnesses confidential, except as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as otherwise required by law, and/or as necessary during its grievance procedures. These steps will not restrict the ability of the parties to obtain and present evidence, including by speaking to witnesses; consult with their family members, confidential resources, or advisors; or otherwise prepare for or participate in the grievance procedures. The parties cannot engage in retaliation, including against witnesses.
- G. The Lincoln Public Schools will objectively evaluate all evidence that is relevant and not otherwise impermissible, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. Credibility determinations will not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.

- H. The following types of evidence, and questions seeking that evidence, are impermissible (i.e., will not be accessed or considered, except by the Lincoln Public Schools to determine whether one of the exceptions listed below applies; will not be disclosed; and will not otherwise be used), regardless of whether they are relevant:
- Evidence that is protected under a privilege recognized by Federal or State law or evidence provided to a confidential employee, unless the person to whom the privilege or confidentiality is owed has voluntarily waived the privilege or confidentiality;
 - A party's or witness's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional in connection with the provision of treatment to the party or witness, unless The Lincoln Public Schools obtains that party's or witness's voluntary, written consent for use in its grievance procedures; and
 - Evidence that relates to the complainant's sexual interests or prior sexual conduct, unless evidence about the complainant's prior sexual conduct is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged conduct or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the [complainant's](#) prior sexual behavior with respect to the [respondent](#) and are offered to prove [consent](#). The fact of prior consensual sexual conduct between the complainant and respondent does not by itself demonstrate or imply the complainant's consent to the alleged sex-based harassment or preclude determination that sex-based harassment occurred.
- I. In the course implementing supportive measures, informal resolution, and/or a grievance procedure, and throughout the same, if either a complainant or respondent is an elementary or secondary student with a disability, the Title IX Coordinator must consult with one or more members, as appropriate, of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, 34 CFR 300.321, if any, or one or more members, as appropriate, of the group of persons responsible for the student's placement decision under 34 CFR 104.35(c), if any, to determine how to comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq., and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794.

DEFINITIONS

Complainant: An individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual discrimination under Title IX. Parents and/or legal guardians of a complainant are not considered a complainant but may file a Formal Complaint on behalf of a minor child and act on behalf of the minor child in any Title IX matter. For the purpose of this Procedure the terms "complainant" and "alleged victim" shall have the same meaning.

Formal Complaint: A document or electronic submission filed by a complainant, that contains the complainant's physical or digital signature or otherwise indicates that the complainant is the person filing the Formal Complaint, or a document signed by the Title IX coordinator, that:

- (1) alleges sexual discrimination against a respondent; and
- (2) requests that the District investigate the allegation of sexual discrimination

At the time of filing a Formal Complaint, the complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the District's education program or activity with which the Formal Complaint is being filed.

Sex-Based: Under Title IX, Sex-Based is a form of sexual discrimination which includes three (3) types of misconduct based on sex:

- (1) any instance of quid pro quo harassment by a school employee;
- (2) unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex, including unwelcome conduct based on sex stereotyping or on the basis of traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, that is sufficiently severe and pervasive and objectively offensive conduct, effectively denying a person equal educational access; or
- (3) any instance of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking as defined below.

Sexual Assault: An offense that meets the definition of rape, fondling, incest, or statutory rape as used in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system and set out below:

- Rape: The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.
- Fondling: The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or because of their temporary or permanent mental incapacity. In Massachusetts, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 265, § 13B, a child under the age of 14 is incapable of giving consent to indecent touching.
- Incest: Sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.
- Statutory Rape: Sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent. In Massachusetts, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 265, § 23, the statutory age of consent is 16 years of age.

For the purposes of the definition of sexual assault, the term “consent” shall be defined in a manner consistent with Massachusetts laws.

Dating Violence: Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party’s statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. For the purposes of this definition, dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

Domestic Violence: A felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim; by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; by a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred; by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.

Stalking: Engaging in a “course of conduct” directed at a specific person that would cause a “reasonable person” to fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others or suffer “substantial emotional distress.”

For the purposes of this definition:

“Course of conduct” means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person’s property.

“Reasonable person” means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the victim.

“Substantial emotional distress” means significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

Party or Parties: The complainant and/or respondent.

Principal: The Principal or Principal’s designee.

Respondent: An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual discrimination

Superintendent: The Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee.

Supportive Measures: Individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the Complainant or Respondent, while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, and/or deter sexual discrimination

- Supportive Measures may be offered before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint or where no Formal Complaint has been filed. Supportive measures are individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party, while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, and/or deter sexual discrimination
- Supportive measures available to complainants and respondents include but are not limited to: counseling; extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments; modifications of work or class schedules; campus escort services; mutual restrictions on contact between the parties; changes in work locations; leaves of absence; increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the building and/or campus; and other similar measures. Violations of the restrictions imposed by supportive measures may be considered a violation of school rules and may also be considered in determining whether sexual discrimination has occurred.

Title IX Coordinator: Employee(s) designated by the District to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX.

I. REPORTING SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

- A. Who May Report Sexual Discrimination: Anyone may report an allegation of sexual discrimination
- B. How to Report Sexual Discrimination: Individuals are encouraged to report allegations of sexual discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator or the Principal, but any District employee who receives a report of sexual discrimination will respond to the report as outlined below.
- C. Internal Reporting: Any District employee who receives a report of sexual discrimination shall respond by promptly informing the Principal or Title IX Coordinator of the report. Any District employee who observes sexual discrimination of a student should intervene to stop the conduct and shall promptly inform the Principal or Title IX Coordinator of the incident. If a report involves an allegation against the Principal or Title IX Coordinator, the District employee shall instead report the allegation to the Superintendent.

Any Principal who receives a report of sexual discrimination shall promptly inform the relevant Title IX Coordinator of the report.

- D. District's Response to Report: The District will respond to all reports of sexual discrimination promptly and equitably, and in a manner consistent with this Procedure and any other relevant District procedures and policies. Upon receipt of a report, the Title IX Coordinator shall:
- (1) Promptly and confidentially contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures;
 - (2) Inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint;
 - (3) Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
 - (4) If the District does not provide the complainant with supportive measures, document the reasons why such response was reasonable; and
 - (5) Explain to the complainant the process for filing a Title IX Formal Complaint. Only the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint will trigger the Title IX Formal Complaint grievance process, outlined in Section II.

II. FILING A TITLE IX FORMAL COMPLAINT

Only the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint will trigger the Title IX Formal Complaint grievance process, outlined below.

- A. Who may file a Title IX Formal Complaint: Although anyone may report sexual harassment, only a complainant or a Title IX Coordinator may file a Title IX Formal Complaint. If a complainant chooses not to file a Formal Complaint, the complainant's choice to not initiate an investigation will generally be respected, unless the Title IX Coordinator determines that signing a Formal Complaint to initiate an investigation over the wishes of the complainant is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The Title IX Coordinator will take into account concerns articulated by the parties, the best interests of the community, fairness to all concerned, and the District's legal obligations under applicable state and federal laws. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs the Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a complainant or a party during the grievance process and must comply with the requirement to be free from conflicts or bias.
- B. Processing of a Title IX Formal Complaint: Title IX Formal Complaints will be investigated promptly and equitably by the Title IX Coordinator or designee, as follows:

Step 1: Title IX Formal Complaint is filed:

- (1) A Formal Complaint shall state (if known to the reporter or alleged victim) the name(s) of the persons involved, witnesses to the conduct, if any, a description of the conduct, and to the extent possible, the dates and locations of the conduct. A Formal Complaint will not be dismissed solely because it was not completely filled out or it was filled out incorrectly.
- (2) A Formal Complaint may be filed at any time, including during non-business hours. Formal Complaints submitted outside of normal business hours will be deemed received on the following school working day.

- (3) At the time of the filing of the Formal Complaint, the alleged victim must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the school district with which the Formal Complaint is filed.
- (4) A Formal Complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information for the Title IX Coordinator listed in this Procedure, and by any additional method designated by the school.
- (5) Consolidation of Formal Complaints: The District may consolidate complaints of sex discrimination against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against another party, when the allegations of sex discrimination arise out of the same facts or circumstances. When more than one complainant or more than one respondent is involved, references below to a party, complainant, or respondent include the plural, as applicable. The District is not permitted to consolidate complaints if consolidation would violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Consolidation would not violate FERPA when the District obtains prior written consent from the parents or a student who has reached 18 years of age to the disclosure of their education records.
- (6) The District may consider the use of the Informal Resolution Process with the consent of the parties. See Section II(E).
- (7) Throughout this process, there shall be a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

Step 2: Consider Supportive Measures for both the complainant and the respondent: Once a Formal Complaint is filed, the Title IX Coordinator will ensure that supportive measures are considered for both parties. See Section I(D).

Step 3: Written Notice of Allegations: Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the District shall send written notice to the parties which shall include:

- 1) The District's Title IX grievance procedures and any informal resolution process;
- 2) Sufficient information available at the time to allow the parties to respond to the allegations, including the identities of the parties involved in the incident(s), the conduct alleged to constitute sex discrimination, and the date(s) and location(s) of the alleged incident(s);
- 3) A statement prohibiting retaliation.
- 4) A statement prohibiting knowingly submitting false information;
- 5) A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct;
- 6) That a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process;
- 7) that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney; and

- 8) That the parties are entitled to an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence or an accurate description of this evidence. If the District provides a description of the evidence the parties are entitled to an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence upon the request of any party.

If, in the course of the investigation, the District decides to investigate allegations of sexual harassment that are not included in the initial written notice of allegations, the District shall provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Step 4: Consider Whether Dismissal of Formal Complaint Warranted: Some Formal Complaints will be subject to mandatory or discretionary dismissal under Title IX.

- 1) The District may dismiss a complaint of sex discrimination if:
 - The District is unable to identify the respondent after taking reasonable steps to do so;
 - The respondent is not participating in the District's education program or activity and is not employed by the District;
 - The complainant voluntarily withdraws any or all of the allegations in the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator declines to initiate a complaint, and the District determines that, without the complainant's withdrawn allegations, the conduct that remains alleged in the complaint, if any, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX even if proven; or
 - The District determines the conduct alleged in the complaint, even if proven, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX. Before dismissing the complaint, the District will make reasonable efforts to clarify the allegations with the complainant.
- 2) Upon dismissal, the District will promptly notify the complainant in writing of the basis for the dismissal. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then the District will also notify the respondent simultaneously of the dismissal and the basis for the dismissal.
- 3) The District will notify the complainant that a dismissal may be appealed and will provide the complainant with an opportunity to appeal the dismissal of a complaint. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then the District will also notify the respondent that the dismissal may be appealed. Dismissals may be appealed on the following bases:
 - Procedural irregularity that would change the outcome;
 - New evidence that would change the outcome and that was not reasonably available when the dismissal was made; and
 - The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decision-maker had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that would change the outcome.
- 4) If the dismissal is appealed, the District will:
 - Notify the parties of any appeal, including notice of the allegations, if notice was not previously provided to the respondent;
 - Implement appeal procedures equally for the parties;

- Ensure that the decision-maker for the appeal did not take part in an investigation of the allegations or dismissal of the complaint;
 - Ensure that the decision-maker for the appeal has been trained consistent with the Title IX regulations;
 - Provide the parties a reasonable and equal opportunity to make a statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome; and
 - Notify the parties of the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result.
- 5) When a complaint is dismissed, the District will, at a minimum:
- Offer supportive measures to the complainant as appropriate;
 - If the respondent has been notified of the allegations, offer supportive measures to the respondent as appropriate; and
 - Take other prompt and effective steps, as appropriate, through the Title IX Coordinator to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the District's education program or activity.
- 6) Dismissal of a Formal Complaint for purposes of Title IX shall not preclude the District from addressing the allegations under any other relevant District policies or procedure(s), including but not limited to, the Civil Rights Grievance Procedure, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, the Student Code of Conduct, and/or a collective bargaining contract, nor will it preclude the District from addressing the allegations pursuant to the grievance process set out in Section II of this Procedure. The Title IX Coordinator shall have the discretion to make any such referrals and proceed as appropriate in regard to the allegations.

Step 5: Initial Investigation: All Formal Complaints will be investigated by the Title IX Coordinator or other individual designated to serve as the investigator by the Title IX Coordinator. The investigator shall be responsible for seeking and gathering evidence relative to the investigation. Any Formal Complaint against an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. During the Formal Complaint resolution process:

- (1) The District will provide for adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of complaints.
- (2) Standard of Proof: The investigator shall make factual findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard.
- (3) The burden is on the District—not on the parties—to conduct an investigation that gathers sufficient evidence to determine whether sex discrimination occurred.
- (4) The District will review all evidence gathered through the investigation and determine what evidence is relevant and what evidence is impermissible regardless of relevance.
- (5) The District shall provide equal opportunity for the parties to present fact and expert witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- (6) The District shall not restrict the ability of the parties to discuss the allegations or gather evidence (e.g., no "gag" orders).
- (7) Each party may have one (1) advisor of their own selection and at their own expense participate in this grievance process. In the case of a student under the age of 18, this advisor may be in addition to the student's parents/guardians. Any restrictions on the participation of an advisor will be applied equally to each party. The advisor may, but

is not required to, be an attorney. Any evidence received by an advisor in this process is subject to confidentiality and may be used only for the purpose of the grievance process. Advisors are prohibited from disseminating or disclosing such evidence outside of the grievance process.

- (8) The District shall send prior written notice to the parties of any investigative interviews, meetings, or hearings in which their participation is invited or expected.
- (9) Privacy of Medical Treatment and Mental Health Treatment Records: The District may not access or use either the complainant's or the respondent's medical, psychological, or similar treatment records unless the District obtains the party's written consent to do so.
- (10) The investigator may impose reasonable timeframes on all parties as required to facilitate the timely completion of the investigation. The investigator may extend any of the timeframes beyond the time periods identified in this Procedure for good cause. If a complaint or report of sexual discrimination is received within three (3) weeks of the end of the academic school year, the investigator will attempt to complete the investigation by the end of the school year. In the event that the investigation extends beyond the last day of school, the District will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within the applicable time frames, but may extend the investigation period to account for the unavailability of witnesses while school is not in session. If the investigator extends the investigation, the investigator will notify the parties of the extension and the reasons therefore in writing.

Step 6: Opportunity for Parties to Access and Respond to Evidence: The District must provide the parties with an equal opportunity to access either the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence, or an accurate description of this evidence. send the parties, and their advisor(s) (if they have one), in electronic format or hard copy. If the District provides a description of the evidence it will provide the parties with an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence upon the request of any party Parties shall be afforded ten (10) calendar days to inspect, review and respond to the evidence. The District shall not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use evidence that constitutes information protected from disclosure by a legally recognized privilege, unless it has been waived by the holder of the privilege.

- (1) Prior to providing evidence to the parties, the investigator may redact confidential information that is not directly related to the allegations or that is otherwise barred from use under Title IX or by privilege (e.g., treatment records), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and/or 603 CMR 23.00. Information that is directly related to the investigation, and that is not expressly barred from disclosure under Title IX (e.g., treatment records), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and/or 603 CMR 23.00, must be made available for review by both parties.
- (2) The parties and their advisors shall be prohibited from dissemination of any of the evidence for any purpose not directly related to this grievance procedure.

Step 7: Completion of the Investigative Report: The District must send the parties, and their advisor, an Investigative Report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence but does not reach any conclusions regarding responsibility, in electronic format or hard copy, within twenty-five (25) school days of receipt of the Formal Complaint, unless otherwise extended for good cause. A copy of the Investigative Report will also be sent to the decision-maker. The decision-maker shall not be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or investigator unless the District has

otherwise provided for the same in this Grievance Procedure and has specifically sets forth under what circumstances the single-investigator model may be used.

Step 8: Parties' Opportunity to Respond to Investigative Report: The District shall provide each party ten (10) calendar days for the parties to respond to the investigative report. The Investigative Report will notify the parties of the opportunity to submit to the decision-maker directed questions of the other party and/or any witness within that same ten (10) calendar days. (See Step 9).

Step 9: Directed Written Questions from the Parties: After the Investigative Report has been sent to the parties, but prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker shall afford both the complainant and the respondent the opportunity to submit to the decision-maker written, relevant questions of the other party or any witness, provide the party with the other party's and/or witness's written responses to said written questions, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party in writing. Questions that seek disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and/or 603 CMR 23.00 shall not be permitted, unless the person holding the privilege has waived the privilege.

- (1) The complainant shall be protected from answering questions about the complainant's prior sexual behavior unless such questions and evidence about the [complainant's](#) prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the [respondent](#) committed the conduct alleged by the [complainant](#), or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the [complainant's](#) prior sexual behavior with respect to the [respondent](#) and are offered to prove [consent](#). The fact of prior consensual sexual conduct between the complainant and respondent does not by itself demonstrate or imply the complainant's consent to the alleged sex-based harassment or preclude determination that sex-based harassment occurred.
- (2) Upon receipt of the Investigative Report, each party shall have ten (10) calendar days to submit directed relevant questions to the decision-maker in writing.
 - a. All questions must be posed in a respectful manner (e.g., without profanity and without attacking a person's character or motivations).
 - b. Questions that are not relevant will be excluded, and the decision-maker shall explain to the party posing the question the reason(s) for excluding any question.
- (3) Upon receipt of the directed questions from the District, each party and witness shall have five (5) calendar days to respond to those questions in writing.¹
- (4) After receipt of the answers by the parties, any follow-up questions by the parties shall be submitted to the decision-maker in writing within three (3) calendar days, and those follow-up questions shall be responded to in writing within three (3) calendar days of receipt.
- (5) Each party will be provided a copy of the other party's or witness's written answers.

Step 10: Determination of Responsibility/Findings of Fact by the Decision-Maker:

¹ The parent or guardian may act on behalf of the party in drafting questions and submitting written answers. In the case of young children, reasonable accommodation based on disability, and/or other good cause, either party and/or any witness may request and have their oral responses reduced to writing by the investigator or Title IX Coordinator.

- (1) The decision-maker shall issue a written determination of responsibility for any sex discrimination that was determined to have occurred under Title IX. The determination shall be sent to all parties and shall include a description of the procedural steps taken, findings of fact, conclusions about whether the alleged conduct occurred, rationale for the result as to each allegation, the range of disciplinary sanctions to which the respondent may be subject, whether remedies will be provided to the complainant, and procedures and bases for appeal. The decision-maker's written determination shall not be completed by the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator.
- (2) Standard of Proof: The decision-maker shall make factual findings to determine whether sex discrimination occurred based on a preponderance of the evidence standard. The standard of proof requires the decision-maker to evaluate relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence for its persuasiveness. If the decision-maker is not persuaded under the applicable standard by the evidence that sex discrimination occurred, whatever the quantity of the evidence is, the decision-maker will not determine that sex discrimination occurred
- (3) The decision-maker's findings shall be based on an objective review of all relevant evidence, inculpatory and exculpatory, and avoid credibility determinations based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
- (4) The decision-maker shall not draw inferences about the determination of responsibility based solely on a party's failure or refusal to answer questions.
- (5) The written determination must be sent simultaneously to both parties.
- (6) This determination shall be sent within twenty (20) school days of the issuance of the investigative report unless an extension is agreed upon by the parties or if the process is otherwise reasonably delayed. Except where the parties have agreed to an extension of the timeline or where the process is otherwise reasonably delayed, the written determination shall be issued within sixty (60) school days of receipt of the Formal Complaint.

C. Remedies: If the decision-maker determines that sexual discrimination has occurred, the Title IX Coordinator will, as appropriate:

- (1) Coordinate the provision and implementation of remedies to a complainant and other people the District identifies as having had equal access to the District's education program or activity limited or denied by sex discrimination;
- (2) Eliminate the harassing environment, which must include but need not be limited to providing remedies to a complainant that are designed to restore or preserve the complainant's equal access to the District's education programs and/or activities. These remedies may be the same individualized services as the supportive measures outlined in Section I(D) above and/or may consist of alternative interventions and/or punitive or disciplinary sanctions that burden the respondent.
- (3) Take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the District's education program or activity.

D. Discipline: Persons who engage in sexual discrimination or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, termination, expulsion (if applicable under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H ½), or other sanctions as determined by the District administration, subject to applicable procedural requirements. The Title IX Coordinator will, as appropriate:

- (1) Coordinate the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions on a respondent, including notification to the complainant of any such disciplinary sanctions
- (2) Take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the District's education program or activity.
- (3) Comply with the grievance procedures before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions against a respondent; and
- (4) Not discipline a party, witness, or others participating in the grievance procedures for making a false statement or for engaging in consensual sexual conduct based solely on the determination whether sex discrimination occurred.

Although the respondent may, in accordance with Title IX, be subject to emergency removal at any time, the respondent may not be subject to disciplinary sanctions for the misconduct defined under this Procedure until after this grievance process has been completed.

No discipline may be imposed on a respondent for sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX unless there is a determination at the conclusion of the grievance procedures that the respondent engaged in prohibited sex discrimination.

Notwithstanding the above paragraph a determination of no responsibility for purposes of Title IX shall not preclude the District from addressing the allegations under any other relevant District policies or procedure(s), including but not limited to, the Civil Rights Grievance Procedure, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, the Student Code of Conduct, and/or a collective bargaining contract, nor will it preclude the District from addressing the allegations pursuant to the grievance process set out in Section II of this Procedure. The Title IX Coordinator shall have the discretion to make any such referrals and proceed as appropriate in regard to the allegations.

E. Informal Process: At any time prior to determining whether sex discrimination occurred pursuant to the district's grievance procedure, the district, at its discretion, may opt to offer and facilitate informal resolution options, such as mediation or restorative justice. The district may determine whether or not it is appropriate to offer an informal resolution process when it receives information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or when a complaint of sex discrimination is made. Both parties must give voluntary, informed, written consent to attempt any offered informal resolution. Any informal resolution under this Procedure will be facilitated by trained personnel.

- (1) The informal resolution process is not available to resolve allegations that an employee engaged in sex-based harassment of a student or such a process would conflict with Federal, State or local law.
- (2) The informal process is voluntary, and the alleged victim and/or respondent may terminate or decline any informal process at any time and resume the Formal Complaint grievance process. The District, as a condition of participation, must not require the parties to waive the right to an investigation and determination of a complaint as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or the exercise of any other right.
- (3) The informal process shall not exceed thirty (30) calendar days, during which time the timelines of the Formal Complaint process will be stayed.

- (4) During the informal process the Title IX Coordinator shall take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the District's education program or activity.
- F. Emergency Removal under Title IX: The District may remove a respondent on an emergency basis at any time provided that the District: (1) undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis; (2) determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual discrimination justifies removal and that there is no alternative to the respondent's emergency removal to mitigate the threat presented; and (3) provides the respondent with notice and the opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.
- G. Anonymous Reports: The District may be on notice of an allegation of sexual discrimination through receipt of an anonymous report. In cases of anonymous reports, the District's obligation is to respond in a manner that is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. If the anonymous reporter is the complainant and they request confidentiality, the District can and should offer supportive measures to the extent consistent with maintaining the request for confidentiality. If an anonymous report is received without a disclosure of the complainant's identity, the District will be unable to provide the complainant supportive measures in response to that report. The District may in conformance with applicable state laws and regulations be required to report sexual discrimination identified in an anonymous complaint to state and/or local authorities such as the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families in conformance with state statutes and regulations and/or take actions to protect the safety of the school community (contacting the police, for example) that may result in the identity of the reporting person being disclosed. Although the District shall respond to anonymous reports of sexual discrimination in accordance with this Procedure, a Formal Complaint cannot be filed anonymously.
- H. Appeals: The complainant or respondent may appeal from a determination regarding responsibility and/or from the District's dismissal of a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein, only on the following bases:
- (1) procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
 - (2) newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome of the matter; and/or
 - (3) Title IX personnel had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome of the matter.

An appeal may be made to the Superintendent or designee within five (5) calendar days after receiving the determination of responsibility or dismissal. Appeals must be made in writing (email is sufficient) to the Superintendent, Lincoln Public Schools, 8 Ballfield Rd, Lincoln, Massachusetts 01773; or by email to pgraham@lincnet.org

The Superintendent or designee shall:

- (1) Notify the parties of any appeal, including notice of the allegations consistent with paragraph (c) of this section if notice was not previously provided to the respondent;
- (2) Implement appeal procedures equally for the parties;
- (3) Ensure that the decision-maker for the appeal did not take part in an investigation of the allegations or dismissal of the complaint;

- (4) Provide the parties a reasonable and equal opportunity to make a statement in support of, or challenging the outcome;
- (5) Decide the appeal no later than thirty (30) calendar days of the date of receipt of the written appeal.

In cases in which it has been determined that a respondent student is subject to long-term suspension as a result of a finding of sexual discrimination in accordance with this Procedure, the respondent may elect to exercise their appeal under the disciplinary due process requirements applicable to the circumstances (e.g., M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H, 37H ½ or 37H ¾) in place of this appellate procedure.

The Title IX Formal Complaint grievance process is deemed complete when either the time period for appeal has lapsed or upon the issuance of the Superintendent's decision on a timely filed appeal.

- I. Recordkeeping: Records related to this Procedure will be maintained for a period of seven (7) years:
 - (1) For each complaint of sex discrimination, records documenting the informal resolution process and/or the grievance procedures and the resulting outcome.
 - (2) For each notification the Title IX Coordinator receives of information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or records documenting the actions the District took to meet its obligations under Title IX.
 - (3) For all training all materials used to provide training to meet its obligations under Title IX. A District must make these training materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.
- J. Employment Agencies: The contact information for state and federal employment discrimination enforcement agencies is as follows: (1) Federal: United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); John F. Kennedy Federal Building; 15 New Sudbury Street, Room 475; Boston, MA 02203-0506; 1-800-669-4000; [EEOC Boston Area Office Website: https://www.eeoc.gov/field-office/boston/location](https://www.eeoc.gov/field-office/boston/location); and (2) State: Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD); Boston Headquarters; One Ashburton Place; Sixth Floor, Room 601; Boston, MA 02108; (617)-994-6000; [MCAD Website: https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination)
- K. Identification of key personnel involved in Title IX process for reports and/or Formal Complaints of sexual discrimination:

Identification of key personnel involved in Title IX process for reports and/or Formal Complaints of sexual discrimination:

- Title IX Coordinator: [NAME], [TITLE] , _____ Public Schools, [ADDRESS, [TEL] [FAX] [EMAIL]
- Investigator(s):
 - Elementary Level: Title, Name, Phone, Email
 - (Each) High School: Title, Name, Phone, Email

- (Each) Middle School: Title, Name, Phone, Email
- All Staff: Title, Name, Phone, Email
- Decision-maker:
 - (list each School Title, Name, Phone, Email)
 -
- Appeal Officer: Title, Name, Phone, Email
- Informal Resolution Facilitator: Title, Name Phone, Email

The District will notify students, employees, applicants for admission or employment, parents and legal guardians of students, and unions of the name, title, office address, email address and telephone number of the Title IX Coordinator. This information will be prominently displayed on the District's website.

LEGAL REFS.: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
 Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
 Title VII of the Civil Rights Act;
 Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Act;
 M.G.L. c. 151B and c. 151C; and M.G.L. c. 76, § 5

CROSS REFS.: JICFB, Bullying Prevention;
 AC, Nondiscrimination
 ACGA, Civil Rights Grievance Procedure
 JIC, Student Discipline

SOURCE: MASC July 24



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Lincoln, Massachusetts

FILE: ADF

WELLNESS

The Lincoln Public Schools acknowledges the important relationship between students' wellness and their academic learning as well as the role that schools have in developing the behaviors students need for lifelong wellness. Accordingly, the district will promote practices, programs and learning environments that comprise a comprehensive approach for meeting these needs. The following goals, practices and standards related to nutrition and physical activity, outlined in five policy areas, specify the expectations.

Coordinated school health approach

The district expects this Wellness policy to be part of a coordinated school health approach that encompasses all aspects of health education, physical education, social and emotional learning, health services, food services, and student and staff wellness.

1: Physical Education Goals

Physical Education: time, frequency, intensity

Students enrolled in the Lincoln Public Schools will have a scheduled Wellness class for a minimum of one period per week throughout the school year. The total number of minutes for Physical Education instruction will not be less than 30-50 minutes per week. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity. Student participation in other activities that involve physical activity (e.g. intramural or interscholastic athletics) will not replace the physical education requirement. Decisions about scheduling Physical Education should take into consideration the time recommendations of various health and educational professional organizations.

Physical Education: staff training/certification

All physical education classes will be taught by a licensed physical education teacher. In addition, the district will support efforts for physical education teachers to remain current in their specialization as well as attain additional relevant certifications such as CPR and First Aid credentials.

Physical Education: teacher-to-student ratio

The number of students assigned to Physical education classes should be consistent with the Lincoln Public Schools class size policy. In addition, administrators and teachers should be mindful of class size when considering how best to maintain a safe setting and to achieve the specified learning expectations for the classes.

Physical Education: standards/requirements

The curriculum of the Lincoln Public Schools will include instruction about knowledge and concepts associated with physical activity and fitness. Students will, by repeated practice, acquire and refine a variety of manipulative, locomotor, and non-locomotor movement skills, and will utilize principles of training and conditioning, will learn biomechanics and exercise physiology, and will apply the concept of wellness to their lives. The Curriculum Frameworks of the Massachusetts Department of Education will serve as the primary guidance concerning topics to be taught and grade levels at which topics should be taught.

The main topics should include but not be limited to Motor Skill Development, Fitness, and Personal and Social Competency in physical activity settings.

Teachers and other school personnel will not use physical activity (e.g. running, laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (physical education class) as punishment.

Physical activity outside Physical Education

As part of the curriculum planning and instructional design process it will be the practice of the district to consider how movement, hands-on involvement or other forms of physical activity may enhance learning in the given curriculum area. Based on the extent to which that impact is genuine, the integration of physical activity will be encouraged.

Recess

The district will aspire to provide all students with supervised recess, preferably outdoors throughout the school year, during which there will be sufficient direction, space and equipment that will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity or social emotional wellness. Ordinarily, other required activities for a student (e.g. a tutoring session) will not be scheduled to occur simultaneous with the student's recess period. The administration of each school will monitor recess practices so that recess occurs during the school day at appropriate times. The administration of each school will also monitor participation in recess to ensure there are no adverse or repetitive patterns of recess being withheld as punishment.

Walking/biking to schools

Rules and procedures at each school regarding walking or bicycling will to the greatest extent possible encourage these options and offer appropriate suggestions (e.g. use of safety equipment; advice about safe routes) and establish appropriate conditions (e.g. designated areas for parking bicycles).

Key issues to be monitored:

- knowledge and concepts related to physical education as indicated by Frameworks are being taught teachers responsible for physical education have appropriate licensing and training
- continual assessment of whether there is sufficient time for physical education and physical activity
- school handbooks include information about walking/bicycling to and from school

2: Health Education:

Classroom

The health education curriculum of the Lincoln Public Schools will include instruction about knowledge and concepts associated with the development of life-long healthy behaviors. The Curriculum Frameworks of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will serve as the primary guidance concerning topics. The main topics should include but are not limited to nutrition, body systems, bullying prevention, personal hygiene, reproductive system and sexuality (grades 5-8), personal safety, substance abuse prevention/education (5-8)

Teacher Training

All health related concepts will be taught by licensed health education teachers or other licensed teachers who have received guidance and/or training from qualified health educators.

Staff wellness

Staff and faculty behaviors can influence students' perceptions of wellness. The district encourages the dissemination of information to staff that promotes physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices. These efforts contribute to their improved health status, reduced stress, improved morale, and a greater personal commitment to the school's overall health program which in turn make it more possible for staff to be positive role models for students.

Key issues to be monitored:

- health topics are taught during designated wellness class periods
- frequency and duration of the lessons are determined by the wellness teacher
- teachers responsible for health education require appropriate licensing and/or training

3: Nutrition Standards for All Foods/Beverages

The Lincoln Public Schools provides school food environments in which every food option meets or exceeds USDA guidelines. LPS will provide choices which support healthy decision making, academic achievement, physical activity, and individual choice. In providing foods that promote good health, pleasure in eating and reinforce important health education objectives, LPS will allow for a diversity in family resources, food knowledge, exposure, cultures, and food practices.

Student Access and Participation in Meal Programs

1. LPS is committed to provide a stigma-free meal environment where all students are provided fresh, nutritious foods that support physical growth and learning. Specifically, free and reduced priced meals will be served and sold in a manner indistinguishable by students or staff from the regularly priced meals.
2. LPS will meet or exceed best administrative practices for enrollment, participation, and payment of food, including:
 - a. Ensuring that the direct certification process is being complied with for automatically eligible students;
 - b. On a regular basis checking and coordinating with county social services and similar public benefit administering agencies to ensure that every eligible child is enrolled in free/reduced price meal programs;
 - c. Developing a coordinated, comprehensive outreach and promotion plan directed at both students and families, including a language access component to ensure language-appropriate documents and highlighting access options for students with disabilities.
 - d. Implementing and maintaining pin numbers or similar payment systems in place that eliminates the stigma of accepting "free/reduced" lunch.
 - e. Accommodate special dietary needs and offer foods that permit individual choice.

- f. Striving to reflect the cultural preferences represented within our diverse community.
- 3. Ensure the safety and inclusion of students with food allergies and other special health concerns by following LPS Management Guidelines for Students who have Life-Threatening Allergies**

School Meal Content Guidelines

LPS adheres to the following School Meal Content Guidelines

1. Meet and, when possible, exceeds the Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs as posted at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals> and the Massachusetts and USDA Competitive Foods and Beverage Nutrition Standards <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mass-in-motion-improving-school-nutrition> taking advantage of exemptions for unprocessed fruits and vegetables. To the extent possible, the highest standard should be met. LPS endeavors to use food that is sourced locally and regionally when available.
2. Serves real, minimally processed food without additives when budgetarily possible and available. Fresh and freshly prepared food options should be available to every student at every meal. Foods that are high in added sugar will be limited, and every effort will be made to minimize their use.
3. Makes ingredient, nutrition and allergy information for all foods and beverages, except for fresh fruits and vegetables and other whole foods, readily available to students before purchasing meals, and to families in advance of the school day.

Snacks offered or sold to students as part of the food service program or through vending machines will comply with Smart Snacks or Massachusetts DESE snack standards per regulations 7 CFR 210.11 105 CMR 225.000. Snacks sold through vending machines shall not compete with meals offered by the school food service program.

Competitive Foods and Beverages & Food Marketing

1. Foods should compare favorably with meal program offerings, and meet or exceed the same standards set forth above.
2. These standards apply in all locations where food and beverages are offered or sold in schools: cafeterias, restaurants, student run culinary programs, cafes, vending machines, stores, and snack or other food carts.
3. Only foods that meet or exceed district standards may be marketed or promoted to students.
4. LPS will prioritize marketing whole or minimally processed foods to students.
5. Fruit and non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale wherever food is sold.
6. The Food Service Program will make every attempt to honor the School Committee Policy KHB: Advertising and Commercialism. However, the Superintendent or designee may approve brand names, trademarks, or logos from companies that offer only product lines (both in and outside of schools) that are consistent with the Wellness Policy nutrition guidelines. These messages may appear in schools, during school activities, or in school materials, including, but not limited to curriculum or educational materials, food and beverage containers, menus, school publications, posters, electronic media, or vending machines; and
7. In Compliance with [105 CMR 225.000: Nutrition Standards For Competitive Foods And Beverages In Public Schools](#) and the <https://johnstalkerinstitute.org/resources/school-snacks/alist/>

Ensure the safety and inclusion of students with food allergies and other special health concerns by following LPS Management Guidelines for Students who have Life-Threatening Allergies.

Commented [1]: I propose moving this above to "Student Access and Participation in Meal Programs"

Qualifications of food service staff

The district will hire and retain qualified nutrition professionals to administer the school lunch program. Staff development will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for all staff according to their level of responsibility and as required by law. All cafeteria managers and cooks will be required to have current ServSafe certificates. Cafeteria workers also take the ServSafe exam. Cafeteria staff will keep the kitchen area safe, clean and allergen free, to the best of their ability.

Staff will be expected to participate in regularly scheduled and appropriate professional development on topics including but not limited to food safety, choke prevention, allergy training, epi-pen use and fire safety.

Parties, celebrations, meetings

The district recognizes that food and beverages often have an appropriate place in celebrations, special events and other occasions when members of a school community come together. In all of these instances there should be a balanced approach and are in compliance with [105 CMR 225.000: Nutrition Standards For Competitive Foods And Beverages In Public Schools](#) and the [John Stalker Institute A-List](#). Planners of these events should also consider portion size guidelines and whether there should be limits for children regarding how many portions they may have of certain food items being served. Administrators, teachers, parents and others responsible for class or school parties should consult regarding healthy party ideas. Prior consultation with the school nurse should occur with event planners to ensure the health and safety of students with life-threatening allergies.

Food-related fundraising

The district discourages fund-raising activities that involve food items that are not consistent with the nutritional value or portion size standards used for its food services programs. Moreover, the district encourages fund-raising activities that promote physical activity. In addition, organizers should refer to and be aware of [School Committee Policy KHB: Advertising and Commercialism](#).

Food rewards

The district discourages the use of food as a reward for academic performance or behavior unless indicated in a student's individual education or accommodation plans. Schools and school staff will also not withhold food as a punishment.

Sustainable food practices

To the extent reasonable the school lunch program should obtain and serve locally grown and seasonal fruits and vegetables throughout the school year. In addition, the district encourages the use of environmentally safe products and utensils, as well as options to recycle and compost where feasible

Food or beverage contracts

Food or beverage contracts must follow state procurement laws and local purchasing practices. Food service distributors and vendors will be monitored to ensure that they provide predominately healthy food and beverage choices that comply with this policy's purpose in all venues.

Timing and scheduling school meals

School schedules should be designed so that students have adequate time to enjoy lunch in a non-rushed atmosphere at an appropriate time near the middle of the school day. Ordinarily, other required activities for a student (e.g. a tutoring session) will not be scheduled to occur simultaneous with the student's lunch period.

Surroundings for eating

Meals served at school will occur in an environment that is clean with appropriate lighting. Both hand-washing facilities and water fountains should be nearby and easily accessible. The routines and coordination of serving will be designed to avoid delays and long lines. Coordination will include arrangements for adequate seating areas with tables and chairs/benches that are an appropriate size for the students. There will be a plan at each school that is responsive to the needs of students with food allergies. The plan should include proper cleaning provisions and efforts to educate staff and peers about these needs.

Communication with Parents and Students

Monthly menus will continue to be posted on the district website and posted at each cafeteria.

The Food Service Department website will continue to post nutrition tips and any other relevant information. Parents seeking free or reduced meals can apply online at <https://www.myschoolapps.com/Home/PickDistrict> Parents can access the required application on the website.

Parents with questions regarding school meals can reach the food service director via phone and/or email, which is also listed on the website. The cafeteria manager and cook at each school cafeteria is also available for any questions or concerns.

Key issues to be monitored:

- appropriate scheduling and facilities for lunch
- continuing assessment of student nutritional needs throughout the school day
- lunch menus comply with nutrition guidelines
- individuals with responsibilities in the food services program have appropriate qualifications and training
- efforts to disseminate alternative ideas for fundraising and parties

4. Other School-Based Wellness Activities

Social Emotional Learning

The Lincoln Public Schools has committed to training all faculty and staff that work with students in the Responsive Classroom program. This program is evidence-based and focuses on supporting educators with being able to implement practices in the educational environment to enhance the educational experience. This will support educators to enhance academics, as well as create a positive community and improve upon classroom

management. Responsive Classroom ensures that educators focus on using Social Emotional Learning practices by increasing their understanding of child development and supporting skill based learning that is appropriate for a student's age and grade. Through this and an increased focus on embedding time into the schedule for social and emotional learning practices, elementary and middle school educators will be able to create engaging classrooms and school communities where students have an opportunity to develop the social and emotional skills they need for overall educational and personal success.

Students who require increased support will have access to various providers, including school adjustment counselors, school social workers and school psychologists, who can support students through both short and long term counseling services. These services will be determined based on a student's needs and will focus on ensuring students are supported within the school setting in order to access their education.

Access to facilities for physical activity after school hours

The district will have easy-to-use procedures for accessing school physical activity facilities during after school hours for youth athletic programs, student and family physical activities, walking clubs, and other recreation activities.

After school programs

School staff members should encourage and support the participation of all eligible students in school-sponsored extracurricular physical activities such as interscholastic sports programs. When such after school programs are established, staff will communicate and coordinate information regarding health and safety needs of participants and they will operate programs according to applicable procedures and rules (e.g. MIAA requirements). Staff members who oversee after school athletic teams will have appropriate certifications (e.g. CPR/First Aid), model sportsmanlike attitudes and behaviors. Student athletes will be taught good sportsmanship, such as treating opponents with fairness, courtesy and respect, and are held accountable for their actions. The district will also collaborate as appropriate with such organizations as LEAP, Hanscom Club House, Child Development Center, and Youth Center, Lincoln Recreation, and other sponsors of youth programs to coordinate among staff and assist with student transitions from school to these programs.

Community/family involvement

Like other school endeavors, efforts to promote student wellness are much more effective when schools actively solicit family involvement and engage community resources and services. The district encourages schools to enhance school experiences with other events such as nutrition education programs for parents and physical activity programs that involve families.

Key issues to be monitored:

- Teachers are trained in Responsive Classroom
- Evidence of improved classroom management and social/emotional learning
- Community / family involvement

5. Governance and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating

The Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's designee will ensure compliance with the provisions of the established Wellness policy. Principals will monitor activities such as the physical education program, meal and snack scheduling, enrichment or after school programs, role of food in special events, fostering an environment that encourages healthy food and fitness choices among students, staff, and parents. District food service program staff will monitor the nutritional content of the school lunch program. Central Office staff will monitor district-based wellness activities such as professional development, training, licensure and certifications, food and beverage related contracts, and facilities needs. The administration will report to the School Committee periodically about the compliance with the Wellness policy.

District Health Advisory Council

This Wellness policy requires the formation of a District Health Advisory Council to facilitate understanding and cooperation among those interested in developing, monitoring and improving the local school health program. Members should include representatives from administration, school nurses, Health and Physical Education teachers, students, parents, food services program representatives, community members with an interest in health issues, and, as needed, other town officials who focus on youth concerns (e.g. youth officer, recreation officials). This council is charged with supporting the effective implementation of this policy. The District Health Advisory Council will review compliance reports and national school health trends in order to suggest improvements or changes to the district program. The District Health Advisory Council will coordinate their efforts with the district administration and collaborate with the administration on reports to the School Committee.

The District Health Advisory Council recognizes that during times of a pandemic these policies may need to be amended or suspended to ensure prioritizing student health and safety impacted by a pandemic. Input from the local board of health and town nurse will be considered as well. During these times, the School Committee will be informed that this policy may be temporarily suspended to reflect these changes.

Funding

It is the responsibility of the district to provide through its operating budget or through resources available from state or federal grants targeted for nutrition, food services or wellness programs sufficient funding to support at a reasonable level activities aimed at meeting the requirements of this policy (e.g. instructional time, staffing, food program quality, professional development, facilities, and administrative needs).

Key issues to be monitored:

- establishment and/or continuance of District Health Advisory Council
- monitoring of funding
- reports to School Committee as requested

NOTE: In a few instances ideas or sentences from the "model policy" offered by National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity", from the policy of the Groton-Dunstable (MA) Regional Schools and from the policy of the Plymouth (MA) Public Schools have been used in compiling this policy for the Lincoln Public Schools.

References:

DESE National School Lunch Program: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/nprograms/nslp.html>

FILE: ADF

USDA Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Tools and Resources:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy-implementation-tools-resources>

Approved at School Committee Meeting of DATE