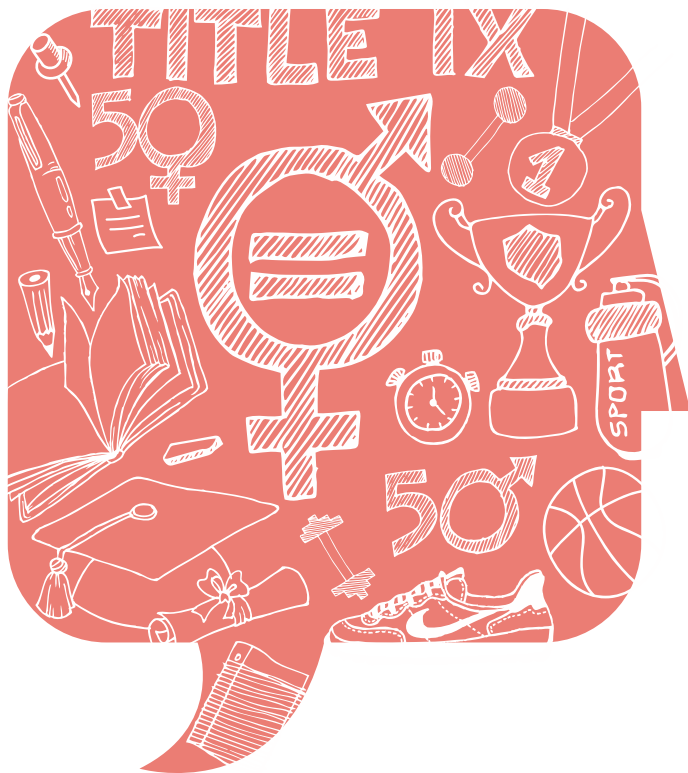


This week's issue:

DOES TITLE IX PROMOTE GENDER FAIRNESS IN SPORTS AND EDUCATION?



Mia Hamm is considered to be one of the world's best all-around women's soccer players. She held the record for scoring more international goals in her career than any other player, male or female, for nine years. Hamm helped the U.S. national soccer team win the gold medal in the 1996 Olympic Games.

Hamm was born in 1972, the same year the U.S. government passed a law called Title IX. The law forbids discrimination against girls or women in schools or colleges that receive money from the U.S. government.

Title IX reads in part: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

In 1971, the year before Hamm was born, fewer than 300,000 high school girls participated in school sports. That number has grown to over 3 million. Some people think that Title IX led to better, or more **adequate**, representation of women in colleges. For example, the year Hamm was born, only 9% of medical degrees were earned by women. That percentage has jumped to nearly 50%. Many say that these examples **illustrate** how important it is to have laws that give both men and women the same opportunities in athletics as well as in college admissions.

One case that highlighted the **inequities** of college funding for female sports was resolved in the early 1990s. A judge ordered Indiana University of Pennsylvania to restore funding for women's gymnastics and field hockey. The university wanted to focus its **resources** or funding on men's football. But the judge said that money problems and a desire for football prestige were not excuses for violating Title IX.

Is it appropriate for judges and lawyers to determine the sports programs at colleges? Some people feel that colleges know how to make the best decisions for their particular situations and that the law should be more flexible.

What do you think? At your school is there a **disproportionate** representation of boys or girls on your sports teams? In other programs?

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inequity | resources | adequate | illustrate | disproportionate

USE THE FOCUS WORDS

inequity (*noun*) lack of equality; unfairness

➡ **Sample Sentence:** A recent case highlights the **inequities** of college funding for female sports.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Why should boys care about **inequities** that affect girls? Explain.

resources (*noun*) supplies of money or helpful items

➡ **Sample Sentence:** The university wanted to focus its **resources** on men's football.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Would you rather see more **resources** go toward school sports or arts programs? Explain.

adequate (*adjective*) as much as necessary

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Some people think that Title IX led to better, or more **adequate**, representation of women in colleges.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** What is an **adequate** amount of time for you to complete your homework?

illustrate (*verb*) to demonstrate

➡ **Sample Sentence:** These examples **illustrate** the importance of giving men and women the same opportunities.

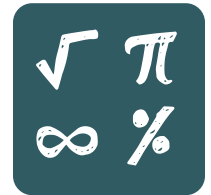
🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Can you think of a story from your life that **illustrates** how hard work paid off for you?

disproportionate (*adjective*) too large or too small in comparison with something else

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Some schools have **disproportionate** representation of boys or girls on their sports teams.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** How many hours per week do you consider a **disproportionate** amount of time watching TV?

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DO THE MATH


Title IX was passed to end gender **inequity** in universities and other places that receive public money. People disagree about what it means. What does it mean to give **adequate** support to both genders? What does proportionate representation mean? If more men than women play sports at a public university, is this **disproportionate** representation automatically a violation of Title IX? Or is it only a violation if female athletes are being denied a chance to play? At some colleges, some men's teams were cut so that **resources** could be given to new women's teams. Some people argue that men's and women's interest level should be considered. If fewer women than men want to play sports, they say, then it should be okay to have fewer women's teams.

The problems below **illustrate** two different ways to think about proportionate representation. In **Option 1**, a school thinks in terms of numbers. In **Option 2**, a school thinks in terms of interest level.

Option 1: At University X, the student body consists of 8,000 men and 8,500 women. Three hundred men play a varsity sport. This is 3.75% of male students. If a proportional number of women participate in varsity sports at University X, how many female varsity athletes are there?

- A. 300
- B. 310
- C. 319
- D. 331

Option 2: To be in compliance with Title IX, schools have to show progress towards equity. At University Y, the student body consists of 10,000 men and 10,000 women. Five hundred men play varsity sports, and 150 women. A poll of the student body showed that twice as many men as women are interested in playing sports. Therefore, the athletic department wants to increase the number of female athletes by 20% each year until there are at least 250 female athletes. How many years will it take?

 **Discussion Question:** Does Title IX create new **inequities** in college sports? Some schools have cut men's teams to fund women's teams. Title IX opponents say that this helps only a few women, and inflicts **disproportionate** harm on male athletes in sports that don't earn a lot of money, like wrestling or men's gymnastics. Title IX supporters disagree. They point out that for years, far more **resources** have been given to men's sports than women's sports. If more men want to play sports, this just **illustrates** the consequences of past **inequity**. To give today's women **adequate** opportunities to play sports, they must be given equal funding. What do you think? Is it okay to cut a men's sport to fund a women's sport? If not, where should the money come from?

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THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

Ms. Kahn’s class is discussing whether or not Title IX, a law enacted over 40 years ago, has been effective in reducing **disproportionate** spending in boys’ and girls’ sports.

“My sister plays college basketball, and there wouldn’t even be a team, let alone **adequate** funding for uniforms and games, if it weren’t for Title IX,” says Marie.

“Yeah? Well, my brother is on the wrestling team at Central High,” says Alex, “and his team has to raise money for uniforms because they have to share half their **resources** and budget with girls! I mean, who ever heard of a girl wrestler?”

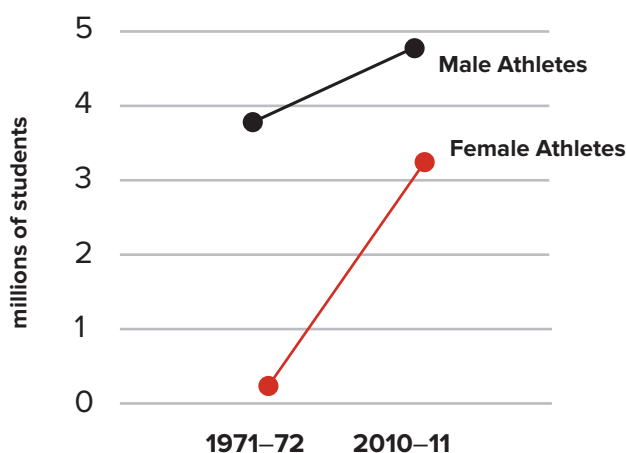
“That’s sexist! And totally old-school,” blurts Ally. “Wrestling—and water polo, and boxing, and even race car driving—are serious sports with professional athletes, both male and female. Your brother’s attitude just **illustrates** why Title IX is still so important.”

“But I’ve heard on the news that Title IX just takes money away from boys’ and men’s sports,” counters Alex. “So there might be more girls playing, but that’s because there are fewer boys. That’s unfair!”

“Alex, you are making a claim that Title IX laws, in effect, reduce the amount of boys participating in sports in favor of girls’ participation,” says Ms. Kahn, “but as a scientist you must remember that claims have to be supported with evidence.”

“I have some research data here that might help us decide if what Alex heard is true,” says Ms. Kahn. “We need to look at real evidence, not just opinions, to decide if there is **inequity**.”

Male and Female Participation in High School Sports, 1972–2011



Data Source: National Coalition for Women & Girls in Education
<http://www.ncwge.org/TitleIX40/Athletics.pdf>



Do these data provide evidence to support Alex’s claim that fewer boys play sports now than in the past? Why or why not?



What other evidence would you need to determine whether Title IX has been effective or not?

Title IX became a law in 1972. After that, girls’ participation in sports increased by 980%. Many sports are played by both males and females; however, there are certain sports that are dominated by either males or females, not both. Do you think associating sports with a certain gender will ever end?

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DEBATE THE ISSUE

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A

It is appropriate for colleges and schools to focus their **resources** on programs that generate more money.

OR

B

Athletic programs for males and females should receive equal funding.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:



““ Can you show me evidence in the text that...””

““ I believe that...””

““ You make a good point, but have you considered...””

““ I agree with you, but...””



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TAKE A STAND



Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

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