

CLIENT NEWS BRIEF

New Federal Guidance Reminds School Districts of their Obligations Relating to Pregnant and Parenting Students

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights' (OCR) recently issued Dear Colleague Letter provides a helpful reminder to school districts of their legal requirements regarding support and accommodation of pregnant and parenting students as they strive to stay in school. The Dear Colleague Letter explains school districts' obligations pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 (Title IX) and its implementing regulations relating to school retention problems associated with young parents.

Title IX prohibits school districts from discriminating against any student on the basis of sex, including "a student's actual or potential parental, family, or marital status." Specifically, school districts may not exclude pregnant students (or students who have been pregnant) from participating in any part of an educational program, including extracurricular activities. While schools are permitted to implement special instructional programs or classes for pregnant students, these programs must be comparable to the programs offered to non-pregnant or non-parenting students with regard to the range of academic, extracurricular and enrichment opportunities. Also, any participation by a pregnant or parenting student in these programs must be completely voluntary.

To further assist secondary school administrators, teachers and counselors who work with pregnant or parenting students, the OCR has also prepared a detailed pamphlet to provide background regarding school retention problems associated with young parents and school districts' related legal obligations for supporting these students. The OCR pamphlet can be obtained at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>.

For further information regarding OCR's Dear Colleague Letter, discrimination based on parental status or discrimination based on sex in general, or practical steps that can be taken relating to these issues, please feel free to contact one of our [eight offices](#) located statewide. You can also visit our [website](#), follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#), or download our [Client News Brief App](#).

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