



## A Letter to Members September 12, 2019

Dear Members,

We usually address you through the weekly newsletter, but I wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to you with an update. Clearly, the *Chronicle* article from last week on the stresses of Title IX work has had an impact on the field, and we have been hearing about it from many members.

Perhaps the article reinforced some of the morale issues you have been experiencing in your work, or maybe it made you feel less alone? Or, maybe it caused you to realize you'd be happier doing something else, or that you need more support from your president or superintendent in order to be more successful in your position? We are hearing a wide range of reactions and are aware of a lot of the effects of burnout and compassion fatigue. I talked with one member this weekend who feels they have been chased out of the field for good, though I hope that is not the case. Nothing worthwhile is ever easy, so the saying goes, and I am writing to ask you to stay engaged, to fight for what is right, and to keep your talent in the field. Sometimes institutional politics are unbearable, and I get that. My request to you: if you need to move on from one job, to stay engaged in the field. There are supportive institutions out there, and while you might not work with one currently, we need you to stay in the field.

The impending OCR regs will soon land like a Title IX bomb on PreK-12 districts. Over the next few years, PreK-12 will experience what higher ed did in 2011-2013, with an explosion in jobs, hiring, and budgets. We are at a critical point where we need more talent in the field, not less. It's already hard to recruit for higher ed Title IX positions. Think about how much harder it will be when 93,000 PreK-12 schools search for personnel with the background and experience to take on Title IX at the PreK-12 level? Use this opportunity as leverage, if you can, to demand more authority, better institutional support, larger budget, salary bumps, or whatever else you need. A dearth of supply is a boon to those with marketable talent. Use it to demand what you need to do your job, and to ensure you are compensated appropriately for this difficult work.

As you look to fill positions, some Title IX professionals rotate jobs frequently because they can't cut it. Too much turnover from job to job can be a warning sign. But, for those of you making hiring decisions, delve deeper. Is your applicant searching because they can't keep a job, or because they are fighting the good fight and their institutions don't support their dedication to compliance? Weeding the incompetent from the idealists is worth the effort. We can't tilt at windmills, but the Title IX job requires us to challenge institutional power structures on occasion. We need to hire people who are willing to do so. They have integrity in a field with more than its fair share of corrupting influences and politics.

I spoke with Sarah numerous times to provide background for the *Chronicle* piece and shared with her the names of Title IX folks who might want to talk about their experiences. I am so impressed with the courage many of our members showed in taking her call, sharing your stories, and being unafraid to tell it like it is. It showed the best of ATIXA's members, and while I know it was a risk to speak out, those who did have done so much to benefit your colleagues in this profession. Thank you.

A young profession always has growing pains, so this is not entirely unexpected. But, at moments like this, you can and should expect more from your professional association. Your association – ATIXA – is strong and stands with you. We are growing and expanding but making strides to ensure that we don't get too big or feel impersonal to you. I still answer all your emails and calls to me personally, and don't intend to change that. A high level of member service has always been a point of pride for your ATIXA staff.

ATIXA now has over 3,500 participating members, with about 1,800 people subscribed to the listserv. To keep the tone you have come to appreciate with ATIXA – the feeling of being professional home and a venue for collegial support – we have made changes that not only seek to accommodate you, but the influx of new PreK-12 members your Advisory Board anticipates will join our ranks in the coming years. We may soon have more PreK-12 members than higher education members, and we are planning for that and preparing so that we keep the best of what you love about ATIXA, while also changing with the times.

One of our biggest changes is to initiate an annual West Coast conference in addition to our East Coast event in Philadelphia. We want to keep Philly in the 500-650 attendee range for the near future, so that the conference doesn't become cold and impersonal. Having a West Coast opportunity allows us to keep the numbers manageable in Philly, and also offer a full-fledged, high-quality alternative for our West Coast members or those who want to travel. For 2019, we are capped at 250 for the West Coast event by the venue size, but we are on track to fill the event, and anticipate having a waiting list (So don't wait to the last minute to register!) We will expand the venue for next year so the West Coast conference can accommodate close to the same number of people as the East Coast event.

We are also stepping up to meet your needs with respect to content. Based on member requests, we have four different webinars addressing the new Regs which we will calendar as soon as the Final Regs drop. We have been preparing for them for months. We already have created a certification course for hearing officers, and we will increase the number and frequency of these hearing-specific courses over the next few years, especially as regional offerings. We are also finalizing a course on the new Regs as a certification opportunity and are hard at work preparing a certification course for advisors who will assist students and employees in the resolution and hearing processes. As always, each of our new courses will feature slides, materials, and implementation guides. The ATIXA team has been writing all summer to get these ready for you. Upcoming publications we are preparing include:

- ATIXA Investigation in a Box 2.0
- ATIXA Sexual Misconduct Hearing Panel Training Manual
- ATIXA Guide for Hearing Advisors
- ATIXA Guide to the 2019 (2020?) OCR Title IX Regulations
- ATIXA Sample MOU Template Packet
- ATIXA Guide to Chairing a Sexual Misconduct Hearing

Finally, I encourage you to register now for the [ECAC](#) or [WCAC](#) (the East and West Coast Annual Conferences). The chance to come together at the conference - a signature event for ATIXA each year - is one of the things our members tell us they value most about ATIXA membership. We believe the conference is important to maintaining your connection to the profession. It is restorative and inspiring, and often provides members with the impetus to bring renewed energy and passion to advancing sex and gender equity in education, which is our mission and yours. We look forward to seeing you in Philly or Napa, and to continued dialogue and growth in this profession we have chosen.

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