



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
Civil Rights Division, Educational Opportunities Section  
U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Washington



**Ellensburg  
School  
District**

Summary of  
Settlement Agreement  
between  
**The United States of America**  
and  
**The Ellensburg School District**



## Introduction

This document summarizes a Settlement Agreement between the United States and the Ellensburg School District (District). This Settlement Agreement is public and is available on both the United States' [website](#) and the District's website.

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Federal law requires that schools respond to address discriminatory harassment of students. The Educational Opportunities Section of the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington (United States) investigated complaints that students in the Ellensburg School District were harassed and discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, and national origin. The District fully cooperated with the United States during the investigation.

To resolve the investigation, the District has agreed to take certain steps. The District has committed to ensuring that all students have equal access to educational opportunities, regardless of race, sex, or national origin.

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**The goal of this summary is to raise awareness and improve understanding of the Settlement Agreement and the steps the District is taking to address harassment in its schools. This summary is designed for those who may not have a legal background.**



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# General Requirements

## Sections A, I, and J

**The District will not discriminate based on race, sex, or national origin.**

- The District will take the **necessary and reasonable steps** to:
  - **end harassment** involving students;
  - **prevent harassment from occurring again**; and
  - **support students** who have been impacted by harassment.
- The District **will not retaliate** against anyone for reporting harassment or for participating in the United States' investigation, monitoring, or enforcement of the Agreement.

### **What is harassment?**

This Agreement is about **harassment** based on a student's sex, race, or national origin. Harassment is unwelcome and offensive conduct and can include slurs, taunts, or other derogatory language, intimidation, threats, unwanted physical contact, or physical violence.



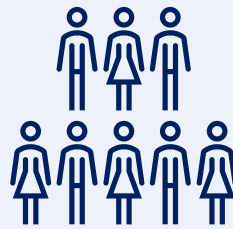
# Hiring a Consultant and Designating Employees to Respond to Reports of Harassment

## Sections B and C

The District will hire or designate staff to support its response to harassment.

The District will:

- Hire a **Consultant** with expertise in preventing and responding to harassment who will assist the District with implementing this Agreement;
- Designate a **District Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator (District Coordinator)** to oversee the District's response to reports of harassment; and
- Designate a **Spanish-speaking Liaison to Latino Families** to engage with Latino families and students and ensure that the District hears and responds to their complaints.





# Handling Reports of Harassment Involving Students

## Section D

The District will create an electronic Harassment Report Management System to document and manage all reports of harassment.

Schools will use the system to:

- **communicate with students and parents,**
- **track reports** of harassment in a central location, and
- analyze report data to **understand trends of harassment** affecting students.

The District will work with the Consultant to train all relevant staff on how to use it by the **start of the 2025-2026 school year.**

### What counts as a report of harassment?

The District will respond any time an employee **witnesses or receives a report about** conduct that reasonably may be harassment. This includes reports received **orally or in writing**, through the **[StopIt app](#)**, or through **online complaint portals.**





# Developing New Procedures to Respond to Harassment

## Section E

**The District will develop new policies and procedures to respond to reports of harassment in a timely and effective way.**

The new **harassment policies and procedures** will require the District to:

- Create and publicize an **online reporting form** that students, parents, employees, and community members can use to report harassment and provide feedback on the school's response to harassment. This form will allow **anonymous responses** and will be accessible for people with disabilities and those who are not fluent in English;
- **Document and maintain all reports of harassment** in the Harassment Report Management System along with a detailed summary of actions taken in response to the report; and
- Ensure that the District Coordinator **oversees the effective resolution** of all reports.





# Improving Other Policies and Procedures

## Section E

**The District will improve other policies and procedures that relate to harassment.**

The Consultant will **review all other District- and school-level policies**, procedures, and practices related to harassment and provide a report with recommendations on how to improve them. The District will revise its policies consistent with the Consultant's recommendations to ensure that the District:

- Identifies, addresses, and **prevents harassment in low-supervision areas**;
- Recognizes that **conduct that is not directed at a specific student** can still be harassment; and
- **Considers whether harassment was a factor** in an incident of student misconduct before deciding on discipline consequences.





# Assessing School Climate

## Section F

**The District will assess school climate, including harassment trends, by:**

- Conducting an **annual climate survey** for students, parents, and employees;
- Having the Consultant host separate **annual listening sessions** for students, parents, and employees to share concerns and feedback; and
- **Analyzing trends** in the results of climate surveys, listening sessions, harassment report data, and other feedback from students, parents, employees, and community members.
- The District will **publicly present the results** of this climate assessment to the School Board each year and use these results to help understand whether it is effectively responding to harassment.



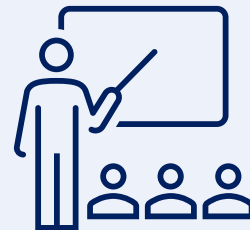


# Programming, Training, and Professional Development

## Section G

The District will develop and implement training for students and staff related to harassment.

- Student programming: **age-appropriate harassment intervention training** for all students on how to prevent, identify, and report harassment.
- Professional development: annual training for **all employees who interact with students** on how to identify, respond to, and report harassment.
- Administrator training: **additional training for school administrators**, the District Coordinator, and the Liaison to Latino Families on how to investigate reports of harassment and provide supportive measures for students impacted by harassment.





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# Reporting

## Section H

**The District will submit an Annual Report to the United States describing its efforts to comply with this Agreement.**

The United States will monitor the District's compliance with the Agreement through at least the 2026-2027 school year.





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## Contact Information

### Ellensburg School District

If you have concerns about discrimination or harassment in any Ellensburg School District school, please reach out to:

#### **District Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator**

Rhonda Schmidt

Email:

**[DistrictComplianceCoordinator@esd401.org](mailto:DistrictComplianceCoordinator@esd401.org)**

Phone: 509-925-8011

#### **Liaison to Latino Families**

Cindy Melchor

Email: **[LatinoFamilyLiaison@esd401.org](mailto:LatinoFamilyLiaison@esd401.org)**

Phone: 509-925-8042

### **U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Educational Opportunities Section**

If you have concerns about discrimination or harassment in any Ellensburg School District school, please reach out to the Department of Justice.

#### **Contact Information:**

Email: **[Community.ESD@usdoj.gov](mailto:Community.ESD@usdoj.gov)**

You may also submit a complaint to the Department: **[Civil Rights Division Complaint Portal](#)**