WELCOME

When I left high school six years after the signing of Title IX, my school still didn't have a girls' soccer team. Now, in the 40th anniversary year of Title IX, more than 500 girls play soccer just in the community league in my small town, not to mention the many female players on school-sponsored JV and varsity teams.

"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 educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

—Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

As a lifelong community sports team coach and educator, I am moved by the tremendous influence of the 37 words that make up Title IX. I grew up on sports teams and have coached my own daughters in their sports endeavors. It is not a leap for me to connect sports participation with the development of important academic, emotional, and social skills. Ellen Markowitz's article "Exploring Self-Esteem in a Girls' Sports Program" (page 11) is timely in its examination of the value sports participation brings to girls' lives, including the development of competence, social acceptance, self-perception, and self-esteem.

Title IX and its implementation have been transformational in girls' and women's lives—and not just in sports. Title IX rejects gender discrimination in any education program or activity. Another area in which girls and youth of color are underrepresented is science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The National AfterSchool Association and the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program office have emphasized the critical role that out-of-school time (OST) programs can play in developing and delivering STEM experiences for children and youth.

Through the generous funding of the Noyce Foundation, we are devoting part of this issue to the converging issues and priorities that currently make up OST STEM. Project Exploration's Youth-Science Matrix (page 48) offers a unique STEM engagement model that values multiple entry points and promotes a continuum of opportunities throughout a young person's social and intellectual development. "Build IT" (page 58) focuses on designing a girls' computer science program for sustainability. A substantial benefit of the program is that it enhanced the IT skills not only of participating girls but also of the facilitators, themselves largely young women of color with little background in computer science.

We are thrilled in this 40th anniversary year of Title IX to call attention to girls' experiences and to highlight the important contribution of OST programs to STEM learning, particularly for populations that traditionally have been on the sidelines looking in.

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