



## **Summer Football Camps Lead to Title IX Allegations Of Racism**

The Mead, Washington, school district is facing a lawsuit involving allegations of hazing, racial discrimination, and sexual assault within the Mead high school football team. The lawsuit, filed by at least four families, alleges that Black student athletes were specifically targeted and assaulted by their white teammates during summer football camps in 2022 and 2023.

The assaults were reportedly filmed and shared online, and the victims endured ongoing intimidation and racial slurs.

The district is accused of negligence, unlawful discrimination, and failure to report the abuse. It is alleged that district staff were aware of the discrimination and the assaults but did nothing to stop them. One white student who spoke out against the conduct was also assaulted. The families' attorney, Marcus Sweetser, described the situation as a "pervasive culture of indifference" within the district. [https://www.khq.com/assault-and-racial-discrimination-cited-in-lawsuit-filed-against-mead-school-district/article\\_7bb74d1e-a09d-11ef-973a-870530eb045a.html](https://www.khq.com/assault-and-racial-discrimination-cited-in-lawsuit-filed-against-mead-school-district/article_7bb74d1e-a09d-11ef-973a-870530eb045a.html) (Nov. 11, 2024).

### ***Commentary***

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex-based discrimination in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This includes protections against sexual harassment and assault, which are relevant to the allegations in the school district lawsuit.

The allegations involved the management of summer football camps, which were school events. The school received federal funding.

Title IX requires schools to take immediate and effective steps to respond to sexual harassment and assault complaints. This includes conducting a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation, and taking appropriate action to stop the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. Schools must also protect students from retaliation for reporting harassment or participating in an investigation.

Final takeaway is that Title IX mandates that school districts address allegations of sexual assault and racial discrimination at events associated with the school, like summer camps and athletic competitions. Failure to do so could result in loss from litigation, loss of federal funding, and other financial consequences. <https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/title-ix-and-sex-discrimination> (last accessed Feb. 12, 2025).