



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

01-11-2024

EEOC Sues Houston Independent School District for Pay Discrimination

Federal Agency Charges That School District Paid Female Employees Less Than Their Male Colleagues

HOUSTON – The Houston Independent School District (HISD) violated federal law when it paid female senior Career & Technical Education (CTE) program specialists lower wages than male senior CTE program specialists for performing substantially equal work based on their sex, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit it filed today.

According to the EEOC’s lawsuit, since at least February 2019, HISD has been paying lower wages to a class of female senior CTE program specialists than it paid to male senior CTE program specialists for equal work in a job requiring substantially equal skill, effort and responsibility and performed under similar working conditions.

The EEOC further charged that HISD implemented a stringent interpretation of its compensation manual for female senior CTE program specialists that limited their ability to qualify for a higher starting salary based on their previous work experience. This resulted in male senior CTE program specialists being compensated at higher rates than their female colleagues who sometimes had just as much, if not more, related experience.

Such alleged conduct violates the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits discrimination in compensation based on sex. The lawsuit, EEOC v. Houston Independent School District, Civil Action No. 4:24-cv-00125, was filed in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas in Houston after the agency first attempted to reach a pre-litigation settlement through the conciliation process. The EEOC is seeking back pay, liquidated damages, the elimination of the pay disparities, and other injunctive relief to correct and prevent future pay discrimination.

“The EEOC is fully and absolutely committed to ensuring that gender is not factored into compensation and that employees receive equal pay for equal work,” said EEOC District Director Rayford Irvin.

Rudy Sustaita, the EEOC’s regional attorney in Houston, said, “Equal pay for equal work – it’s a simple premise and important legal obligation. The EEOC will hold employers accountable when they violate this obligation.”

N. Joseph Unruh, a trial attorney for the Houston District Office, added, “A person’s gender should not - and must not - be a factor in determining her pay.”

Ensuring equal pay protections for all workers is one of six national priorities identified by the EEOC’s Strategic Enforcement Plan. More information about pay discrimination can be found at <https://www.eeoc.gov/equal-paycompensation-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/equal-paycompensation-discrimination>)

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov (<https://www.eeoc.gov/>). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our [email updates \(https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new\)](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new).

Recent Press Releases from the Houston District Office

[Cash Depot Pays \\$55,000 to Settle EEOC Disability Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cash-depot-pays-55000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cash-depot-pays-55000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-lawsuit)

EEOC Sues Ecoserv, Charging a Pattern or Practice of Not Hiring Black, Female and Older Applicants (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-ecoserv-charging-pattern-or-practice-not-hiring-black-female-and-older>)

EEOC Sues Employment & Training Centers, Inc. for Disability Discrimination (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-employment-training-centers-inc-disability-discrimination>)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Sex, Equal Pay

Corning to Pay \$120,000 to Settle EEOC Sex Discrimination Case (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/corning-pay-120000-settle-eeoc-sex-discrimination-case>)

Alternate Solutions Health Network and Inova Home Health to Pay \$105,000 to Settle EEOC Pay Discrimination Lawsuit (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/alternate-solutions-health-network-and-inova-home-health-pay-105000-settle-eeoc-pay>)

Verona Area School District Settles EEOC Equal Pay Lawsuit (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/verona-area-school-district-settles-eeoc-equal-pay-lawsuit>)