



IOWA

Iowa received \$1,057,205 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2005.¹

Iowa Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Iowa mandates that health education be taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Iowa law details what must be included in health education by grade. In first through sixth grade, “the health curriculum shall include the characteristics of communicable diseases including acquired immune deficiency syndrome [AIDS].” In seventh and eighth grade, health education must “include the characteristics of sexually transmitted disease and acquired immune deficiency syndrome.” In ninth through twelfth grade (students must take health education at least once during these four grades), health education must include information on “the prevention and control of disease, including sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] and acquired immune deficiency syndrome.”

The state does not require or suggest any particular curricula, leaving this decision to the local district. However, Iowa’s educational mandate states that: “the rules of the state board shall require that a multicultural, nonsexist approach is used by schools and school districts. The educational program shall be taught from a multicultural, nonsexist approach. Global perspectives shall be incorporated into all levels of the educational program.”

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any part of health education courses if the course conflicts with the student’s religious beliefs. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Iowa Code 279.50, 256.11, and Iowa Administrative Code 281-12.5.

Recent Legislation

Legislation Would Add Sexual Orientation to Antidiscrimination Statutes

House Bill 596, introduced in March 2005 and referred to the House Committee on Judiciary, would amend Iowa’s civil rights statutes to prohibit discrimination, including access to educational institutions, on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. HB 596 includes an exception for “bona fide religious institutions, if related to a bona fide religious purpose.”

Bill Would Require Age-Appropriate and Science-Based Education; Allow Sexuality Education

House Bill 605 would require schools to teach age-appropriate and science-based human growth and family education. The bill states that comprehensive sexual health education could be taught as part of the aforementioned instruction. HB 605 was introduced in March 2005.

Events of Note

Despite Parents' Objections, Books Dealing with Homosexuality Will Remain October 2004; Solon, IA

A middle school teacher in Solon, IA, came under fire from a group of parents demanding that she stop using stories with gay, lesbian, or transgender characters in her classroom. In the fairy talk lessons for her eighth-grade language arts class, students read two short stories: "Am I Blue?," about a boy who is confused about his sexual orientation, and "In the Time I Get," about a man who befriends a young man dying of AIDS. The teacher explained that both books are intended to promote tolerance and teach respect for all people.

Seven parents filed complaints; however, only one of them had a child in the class. The parents argued that the stories had no instructional value and were about controversial issues that should be left up to families to discuss. One father wrote, "The material directly contradicts and undermines the beliefs and teachings of our faith. It introduces a very adult and mature subject to an inappropriately young audience. It is likely to introduce sexual confusion to a group of children who are just becoming sexually aware."²

The teacher argued that the material has been used on and off for the past five years and that parents have the option of excusing their children from reading the stories. The teacher explained, "I'm trying to teach tolerance and respect for all people. And I can't do that and ignore a whole group of people. Furthermore, I wouldn't present a curriculum that ignored women or African-Americans or Hispanics. How can I possibly teach my students to embrace diversity if I systematically exclude an entire group from my literature?"³

A meeting was held in late October 2004 at which parents presented their complaints to a nine-member material reconsideration committee. Over 100 people, mostly parents, attended the meeting. One parent accused the district of being "disrespectful" and criticized administrators for not having told parents that the stories would be used. He said the materials promote a "gay agenda" and advocate promiscuity and gay fantasies.⁴ Another parent suggested the school hire a new teacher.

Many people spoke in support of the teacher, including both former and current students who wore rainbow buttons that read "Stop Bullying." Some said that the material had spurred important discussions at home and in the classroom. One alum remarked that "it seems Solon still has an atmosphere of hostility toward gay people."⁵ The committee chairwoman discussed the speakers and said, "the students who spoke requested respect for their innate intelligence to be able to deal with controversial material in a mature manner. What struck me most was their repeated admonition, 'Do not underestimate our intelligence.'" She went on to say, "I hope that the teachers in the Solon school district continue to stretch our children, and not underestimate their intelligence."⁶

Eight of the nine committee members voted to keep the material in the eighth grade curriculum. All nine members recommended instituting a policy to inform parents of controversial materials before the school year. Several parents have filed an appeal.

School District in Iowa Approves Sexual-Orientation Policy Despite Objection September 2004; Clinton, IA

The Clinton, Iowa school board voted to adopt an equal access to education policy, despite one school board member's objection to the policy's inclusion of "sexual orientation."⁷ According to the school board president, the policy change was recommended by the Iowa Board of Education "to promote a safe school environment free of discriminatory and harassment practices."⁸ The

school policy had last been updated in 1997 and since then legal changes require public school districts to protect students of all backgrounds (including gay and lesbian students) from harassment.

The school board member disagreed with the proposal to add “sexual orientation” to the policy and read a statement during a prior board meeting announcing that his “conservative and moral values are in conflict with this policy amendment.”⁹ He said that the change would help bring, “[w]idespread acceptance—legitimization—of sexual orientation as a unique and protected class....Anything that smoothes the path to public acceptance, legitimization and eventual legalization is morally wrong. I also believe that most religions represented in our community believe and teach that gay and lesbian sexual activity is morally wrong, and therefore the majority of our constituents will agree with me on this issue.”¹⁰

The school superintendent supported the proposal and said the issue really “comes down to what is right for kids,” which he said is making school a safe environment. He said “it’s really about sending a message to all kids, regardless of who they are, that you can come here and should expect a safe environment, regardless of who you are, what you think, how you feel.”¹¹

Iowa’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note¹²

- In 2005, 44% of female high school students and 43% of male high school students in Iowa reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 3% of female high school students and 5% of male high school students in Iowa reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 12% of female high school students and 14% of male high school students in Iowa reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 35% of female high school students and 31% of male high school students in Iowa reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 60% of females and 64% of males in Iowa reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 32% of females and 28% of males in Iowa reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.

- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 18% of females and 28% of males in Iowa reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, 86% of high school students in Iowa reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Iowa's abortion rate was 12 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.¹³
- In 2002, women ages 15–19 accounted for 19% of the 6,230 total abortions performed in Iowa.¹⁴
- In 2002, Iowa's birth rate was 33 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.¹⁵

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Iowa received \$318,193 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2005. The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant requires states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The state match may be provided in part or in full by local groups. In previous years, the state provided the full three-to-four match; however, due to recent budget cuts, Iowa no longer provides the match and instead the Title V sub-grantees go beyond the federal requirement by providing a one-to-one match.

There are 10 sub-grantees in Iowa and they use a variety of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula and programs, including Mike Long's *Everyone is Not Doing It* video; *Girl Talk*, *Guy Talk*; *STARS*; a video produced by Focus on the Family entitled *Sex, Lies, and Truth*; and the *Choosing the Best* series. The University of Iowa is evaluating the program.

SIECUS reviewed *Choosing the Best LIFE* and found that it names numerous physical and psychological consequences of premarital sexual activity, suggests that sexually active teens will never have happy futures, and implies that only teens with low self-esteem and poor judgment become sexually active. For example, *Choosing the Best LIFE* states that, "relationships often lower the self-respect of both partners—one feeling used, the other feeling like the user. Emotional pain can cause a downward spiral leading to intense feelings of lack of worthlessness."¹⁶

SIECUS reviewed *Choosing the Best PATH* and found that it provides endless information on the negative consequences of premarital sexual activity and utilizes a variety of tactics to suggest that teens should feel guilty, embarrassed, and ashamed of sexual behavior. For example, *Choosing the Best PATH* asks students: "How does being sexually active as a teen affect how a person feels about himself or herself?" The suggested answer is: "Can feel sad about losing virginity, loss of self-respect, blames self for getting pregnant or contracting an STD." It goes on to say, "sexual activity also can lead to the trashing of a person's reputation, resulting in the loss of friends."¹⁷

Title V Evaluation

The Iowa Department of Public Health evaluated its Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs during the 2002–2003 academic year. The programs targeted young people ages 10–17 and used multiple curricula that included *Choosing the Best* and *A.C. Green’s Game Plan*.

Iowa’s review involved pre- and post-test surveys of students in abstinence-only-until-marriage programs and data from a comparison group of 4,954 students who participated in comprehensive sexuality education programs. Students in the abstinence-only programs were slightly more likely to feel strongly about postponing sex; however, in four of the five programs the number of participants reporting having had sex increased between the pre- and post-test.¹⁸ In addition, students in the comprehensive sexuality education programs were found to be more knowledgeable about body changes during puberty and more comfortable asking questions about sex.¹⁹ According to the Iowa Department of Public Health report, “APP [comprehensive sexuality education] programs also had higher scores among youth who understood how their decisions about sex could change their futures and felt their goals should not include teen pregnancy.”²⁰

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE)²¹ and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are two CBAE grantees in Iowa: Sexual Health Education, Inc. and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). There are no AFLA grantees in Iowa.

Through its CBAE grant, the Iowa Department of Public Health funds three organizations: Bethany Christian Services of Northwest Iowa, Empower Through Crossroads of Pella, and North Iowa Community Action Organization. These organizations work in multiple communities, focusing on rural areas. The three organizations use a variety of curricula, including *Choosing the Best PATH*; *A.C. Green’s Game Plan*; *No Apologies: The Truth About Life, Love, and Sex*; and *Worth the Wait*.

SIECUS reviewed *Game Plan* and found that in order to convince high school students to remain abstinent until marriage, the curriculum relies on messages of fear and shame, inaccurate and misleading information, and biased views of marriage, sexual orientation, and family structure. In addition, *Game Plan* fails to provide important information on sexual health, including how students can seek testing and treatment if they suspect they may have an STD. Finally, the format and underlying biases of the curriculum do not allow for cultural, community, and individual values, and discourage critical thinking and discussions of alternate points of view in the classroom. For example, *Game Plan* states that, “even if you’ve been sexually active, it’s never too late to say no. You can’t go back, but you can go forward. You might feel guilty or untrustworthy, but you can start over again.”²²

SIECUS reviewed *Worth the Wait* and found that it covers some important topics related to sexuality such as puberty, anatomy, and sexual abuse, and that the curriculum is based on reliable sources of data. Despite these strengths, *Worth the Wait* relies on messages of fear, discourages contraceptive use, and promotes biased views of gender, marriage, and pregnancy options. For example, the curriculum explains, “teenage sexual activity can create a multitude of medical, legal, and economic problems not only for the individuals having sex but for society as a whole.”²³

SIECUS also reviewed *Choosing the Best PATH*, for more information on this review see the Title V section.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2005

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, and AFLA)
Iowa Department of Public Health DUAL GRANTEE 2002–2005 www.idph.state.ia.us	\$318,193 federal \$317,512	Title V CBAE
Allen Memorial Hospital (Women’s Health Department) www.allenhospital.org	\$21,878	Title V sub-grantee
American Home Finding Association	\$13,714	Title V sub-grantee
Bethany Christian Services DUAL GRANTEE www.bethany.org	\$35,728 \$88,382	Title V sub-grantee CBAE (through IDPH)
Community Opportunities Inc.	\$10,388	Title V sub-grantee
The Crittenton Center	\$23,455	Title V sub-grantee
Hillcrest Family Services www.hillcrest-fs.org	\$12,234	Title V sub-grantee
North Iowa Community Action Organization DUAL GRANTEE www.nicao-online.org	\$13,078 \$45,395	Title V sub-grantee CBAE (though IDPH)
Unity Public Health/ Unity	\$7,013	Title V sub-grantee

I O W A

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, and AFLA)
Healthcare www.unityiowa.org		
University of Iowa www.uiowa.edu	\$37,500	Title V sub-grantee
Webster County Health Department http://webstercountyia.org/Health%20Department.htm	\$17,151	Title V sub-grantee
Empower Through Crossroads of Pella	\$59,902	CBAE (through IDPH)
Sexual Health Education, Inc. 2002–2005 www.equippingyouth.org	\$421,500	CBAE

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

Alison Monsma
Iowa Department of Public Health
Division of Planning and Administration
Lucas Building
321 E. 12th St.
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 281-7184

Iowa Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Iowa FutureNet
Neveln Community Resource Center
406 S.W. School St.
Ankeny, IA 50023
Phone: (515) 965-7855
www.iowafuturenet.org

IA NOW
PO Box 41114
Des Moines, IA 50311
www.iowaNOW.org

IA Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice
PO Box 41307
Des Moines, IA 50311
Phone: (515) 279-2936

Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa
PO Box 4557
Des Moines, IA 50306
Phone: (515) 280-7000
www.ppgi.org

Iowa Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Christian Coalition of Iowa
PO Box 65066
West Des Moines, IA 50265
Phone: (515) 457-9266
www.iowachristian.com

Iowa Family Policy Council (IFPC)
1100 N. Hickory Blvd., Suite 105
Pleasant Hill, IA 50327
Phone: (515) 263-3495
www.iowaprofamily.org

IA Right to Life Committee
1500 Illinois St.
Des Moines, IA 50314
Phone: (515) 244-1012
www.irlc.org

Newspapers in Iowa

Courier
Catherine Kittrell
Community News Editor
501 Commercial St.
Waterloo, IA 50701
Phone: (319) 291-1462

The Daily Nonpareil
Tim Johnson
Medical/Health Reporter
535 W. Broadway
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
Phone: (712) 328-1811

Des Moines Register
Tony Leys
Health & Medicine Reporter
715 Locust St.
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 284-8449

Des Moines Register
Dawn Sagario
Health & Medicine Reporter
715 Locust St.
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 284-8351

The Gazette

The Gazette

I O W A

Cindy Hadish
Health & Medicine Reporter
500 3rd Ave. SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Phone: (319) 398-8428

Globe-Gazette
Peggy Senzarino
Community News Reporter
300 N. Washington Ave.
Mason City, IA 50401
Phone: (641) 421-0532

The Messenger
Sandy Mickelson
Medical/Health Editor
713 Central Ave.
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
Phone: (515) 574-4467

The Sioux City Journal
Julie Weeder
Medical/Health Reporter
515 Pavonia St.
Sioux City, IA 51101
Phone: (712) 293-4228

Annette Schulte
Health & Medicine Editor
500 3rd Ave. SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Phone: (319) 398-8386

The Hawk Eye
Craig Neises
Medical/Health Editor
800 S. Main St.
Burlington, IA 52601
Phone: (319) 758-8149

Quad-City Times
Cherie Black
Medical/Health Reporter
500 E. 3rd St.
Davenport, IA 52801
Phone: (563) 383-2329

Telegraph Herald
Erik Hogstrom
Medical/Health Reporter
801 Bluff St.
Dubuque, IA 52001
Phone: (563) 588-5670

¹ This refers to the fiscal year for the Federal Government, which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2005 begins on October 1, 2004 and ends on September 30, 2005.

² Deidre Bello, "Parents Want Gay Literature Removed," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 23 October 2004, accessed 26 October 2004, <<http://www.press-citizen.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20041023/NEWS01/410230322/1079>>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Deidre Bello, "Solon Debates Class Material," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 27 October 2004, accessed 23 November 2004, <<http://www.press-citizen.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20041027/NEWS01/410270308/1079>>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Deidre Bello, "School Group OKs Gay Literature," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 29 October 2004, accessed 23 November 2004, <<http://www.press-citizen.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20041029/NEWS01/410290311/1079>>.

⁷ Dave Vickers, "Orientation Policy Gets OK," *The Quad-City Times* (IA), 13 October 2004, <<http://www.qctimes.com/internal.php?f=Search&doc=/2004/10/13/stories/gatetms/1037124.txt>>.

⁸ K. Luna, "School board member speaks against sexual-orientation policy," *The Quad-City Times*, 30 September 2004, accessed 21 March 2006 <<http://www.qctimes.net/articles/2004/09/30/gatetms/export77995.txt>>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 8 June 2006, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>.

¹³ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: Guttmacher Institute, February 2004), accessed 28 January 2005, <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/state_pregnancy_trends.pdf>. Angela Papillo, et. al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

¹⁴ Jingjing Chen, et. al., *2002 Iowa Termination of Pregnancy Report*, (Iowa: Iowa Department of Public Health State Center for Health Statistics, 2002), accessed 10 February 2005, <<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/common/pdf/publications/itoprept02.pdf>>.

¹⁵ *National Vital Statistics Reports 52.10* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2003), 48, accessed 4 February 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm#stat%20tables>>.

¹⁶ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best LIFE* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Choosing the Best LIFE* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

¹⁷ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best PATH* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Choosing the Best PATH* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

¹⁸ E.J. Saunders et al., *Evaluation of Abstinence Only Education in Iowa: Year Five Report* (Iowa City, IA: Iowa Department of Public Health, October 2003).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, 80.

²¹ In Fiscal Year 2004 SPRANS–CBAE was administered within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In Fiscal Year 2005 this funding stream was moved to HHS' Administration for Children and Families and is now referred to simply as Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE).

²² Scott Phelps and Libby Gray, *A.C. Green's Game Plan* (Golf, IL: Project Reality, 2001). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *A.C. Green's Game Plan* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

²³ Patricia Sulak, *Worth the Wait* (Temple, TX: Scott & White Memorial Hospital, 2003). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Worth the Wait* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.