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Louisiana Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Louisiana does not require schools to offer sexuality or sexually transmitted disease (STD)/HIV education, but schools are permitted to offer it after sixth grade. State law mandates that sexuality education cannot be offered in kindergarten through sixth grade, except in Orleans Parish, which may offer sexuality education in the third grade and above. Schools must provide this education “regardless of the student’s grade level” if the student is parenting or pregnant.¹ The education must be integrated into “an existing course study such as biology, science, physical hygiene, or physical education.”² It cannot include “religious beliefs, practices in human sexuality, nor the subjective moral and ethical judgments of the instructor or other persons. Students shall not be tested, quizzed, or surveyed about their personal or family beliefs or practices in sex, morality, or religion.”³ According to the *Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators*, students must be taught “the principle modes by which communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, HIV infection, are spread and the best methods for the restriction and prevention of these diseases.”⁴ Schools are prohibited from distributing any “contraceptive or abortifacient drug, device, or other similar product.”⁵

Classes may not include “any sexually explicit materials depicting male or female homosexual activity.”⁶ They also may not in “any way counsel or advocate abortion.”⁷ In addition, this education must emphasize that:

- abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage is the expected standard for all school-age children;
- abstinence from sexual activity is a way to avoid unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, including acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and other associated health problems; and
- each student has the power to control personal behavior and to encourage students to base action on reasoning, self-esteem, and respect for others.⁸

Louisiana also requires that all public high schools that offer home economics classes must also provide “parenthood education,” which must include the topics of family living and community relationships, the consequences of the lack of adequate prenatal care, home management, and the responsibilities of parenthood. In addition, Louisiana now requires that adoption awareness be included in any health education or appropriate class. This includes instruction on “the benefits of adoption for families wishing to add a child, for potential adoptees, and for persons who are pregnant or who have a child for whom they are unable to care.”

Parents or guardians may remove their children from sexuality education and/or STD/HIV education classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Louisiana Revised Statutes Annotated §§ 17:263, 17:279, and 17:281, and *Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators- Bulletin 741*.

Recent Legislation

Bill to “Require Rather Than Authorize” Sexuality Education

House Bill 529, introduced in March 2010, would have required sex education for public school students in grades four through 12. Instruction would have had to be medically accurate and age-appropriate, and would have included: information about human sexuality as a normal aspect of human development; the benefits of abstinence; the importance of using contraceptives and barrier methods for preventing unwanted pregnancy and STDs; and an emphasis on encouraging students to talk with their parents about sexuality. Sex education would not be allowed to advocate or support abortion. The state board of education would have been responsible for developing guidelines and determining appropriate curricula and teaching materials, and parents would have been allowed to review all materials and request that their child be excused from instruction. The bill would have also allowed public school districts to accept federal funds for sex education, provided that the use of these funds would not violate the provisions of the bill. The bill passed out of the House Committee on Education, but was rejected by the full House by a vote of 67–23.

Louisiana’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note¹⁰

- In 2009, 76% of high school students in Louisiana reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 87% of high school students nationwide.

Louisiana Youth Sexual Health Statistics

Teen Pregnancy, Birth, and Abortion

- Louisiana’s teen pregnancy rate ranks 19th in the U.S., with a rate of 70 pregnancies per 1,000 young women ages 15–19, which is equal to the national rate of 70 pregnancies per 1,000.¹¹ There were a total of 11,560 pregnancies among young women ages 15–19 reported in 2005, the most recent year for which data are available.¹²
- Louisiana’s teen birth rate ranked 13th in the U.S. in 2005, with a rate of 41.9 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 40.5 births per 1,000.¹³ In 2005, there were a total of 8,151 live births reported to young women ages 15–19 in Louisiana.¹⁴
- In 2006, the U.S. teen birth rate increased for the first time in 15 years by 3% from 40.5 to 41.9 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19, after having steadily declined between 1991 and 2005.¹⁵ In contrast, Louisiana’s teen birth rate increased 10% between 2005 and 2006, from 41.9 to 53.9 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19.¹⁶

HIV and AIDS

- Louisiana ranks 11th in cases of HIV infection diagnosed in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 642 new cases of HIV infection diagnosed in Louisiana.¹⁷
- Louisiana ranks 8th in cases of HIV/AIDS diagnosed among young people ages 13–19 out of the 34 states with confidential, name-based HIV infection reporting. In 2007, there were a total of 70 young people ages 13–19 diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana.¹⁸
- Louisiana’s AIDS rate ranks 5th in the U.S., with a rate of 20.5 cases per 100,000 population compared to the national rate of 12.5 cases per 100,000.¹⁹

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- Louisiana ranks 11th in number of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 879 new AIDS cases reported in Louisiana.²⁰
- Louisiana ranks 10th in number of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. among young people ages 13–19. In 2007, there were a total of 13 AIDS cases reported among young people ages 13–19 in Louisiana.²¹

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- Louisiana ranks 9th in reported cases of Chlamydia among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 24.66 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 19.51 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 7,968 cases of Chlamydia reported among young people ages 15–19 in Louisiana.²²
- Louisiana ranks 5th in reported cases of gonorrhea among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 8.58 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 4.52 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 2,773 cases of gonorrhea reported among young people ages 15–19 in Louisiana.²³
- Louisiana ranks 1st in reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 0.25 per cases 1,000 compared to the national rate of 0.04 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 82 cases of syphilis reported among young people ages 15–19.²⁴

Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Education

SIECUS is not aware of any examples of model programs, policies, or best practices being implemented in Louisiana public schools that provide a more comprehensive approach to sex education for young people.

We encourage you to submit any updated or additional information on comprehensive approaches to sex education being implemented in Louisiana public schools for inclusion in future publications of the SIECUS State Profiles. Please visit SIECUS' "Contact Us" webpage at www.siecus.org to share information. Select "state policy" as the subject heading.

Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs

The Governor's Program on Abstinence and community-based organizations in Louisiana received approximately \$1,941,310 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2009.²⁵

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until Marriage Funding

- Louisiana received approximately \$962,672 in federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2009.²⁶ Due to the expiration of the grant program on June 30, 2009, three months prior to the end of the federal fiscal year, the state received three quarters of the total funding allocated for the full fiscal year.
- Louisiana Governor's Program on Abstinence uses the Title V funding to support its activities including implementing curricula, training educators, and forming clubs in high schools to train abstinence advocates.
- The Title V abstinence-only-until marriage grant required states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The state match could have been provided in part or in full by local groups.

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Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) Funding

- Organizations in Louisiana received \$978,638 in CBAE funding for Fiscal Year 2009.
- There are two CBAE grantees in Louisiana, including one community-based organization and one faith-based organization.

Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Funding

- There are no AFLA grantees in Louisiana.

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Curricula Used by Grantees

Some abstinence-only-until-marriage grantees in Louisiana use commercially available curricula. These include, but are not limited to:

- *Why kNOW*
- *Worth the Wait*

To read reviews of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula commonly used by federal grantees please visit the “Curricula and Speaker Reviews” webpage of SIECUS’ Community Action Kit at www.communityactionkit.org.

Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2009²⁷

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Title V	CBAE (Length of Grant)	AFLA (Length of Grant)
Louisiana Governor’s Program on Abstinence www.abstinencedu.com	\$962,672 (federal grant)		
The Church United for Community Development		\$589,258 (2007–2012)	
Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc. www.quadarea.org		\$389,380 (2007–2012)	

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Adolescent Health Contact²⁸

Daniel Kirk
Executive Director
Louisiana Governor's Program on Abstinence
150 Third Street, Suite 129
Baton Rouge, LA 70801
Phone: (225) 342-5818

Louisiana Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Louisiana
P.O. Box 56157
New Orleans, LA 70156
Phone: (504) 522-0617
www.laclu.org

AIDS Law of Louisiana
3801 Canal Street
Suite 331
New Orleans, LA 70119
Phone: (504) 568-1631
www.aidslaw.org

The Philadelphia Center:
Northwest Louisiana HIV/AIDS Resource
Center
2020 Centenary
Shreveport, LA 71104
Phone: (318) 222-6633
www.philadelphiacenter.org

NO/AIDS Task Force
2601 Tulane Avenue, Suite 500
New Orleans, LA 70119
Phone: (504) 821-2601
www.noaidstaskforce.org

PFLAG New Orleans
P.O. Box 15515
New Orleans, LA 70175
www.pflagno.org

Planned Parenthood of Louisiana and the
Mississippi Delta
4018 Magazine Street
New Orleans, LA 70115
Phone: (504) 8979200
www.plannedparenthoodlouisiana.org

Louisiana Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Louisiana Family Forum
655 St. Ferdinand Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone: (225) 344-8533
www.lafamilyforum.org

Louisiana Right to Life Federation
P.O. Box 7962
Metairie, LA 70010
Phone: (504) 835-6520
www.prolifelouisiana.org

Newspapers in Louisiana²⁹

The Advocate

Newsroom

P.O. Box 588

Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Phone: (225) 388-0282

www.theadvocate.com

The Daily Advertiser

Newsroom

221 Jefferson Street

Lafayette, LA 70501

Phone: (337) 289-6300

www.theadvertiser.com

Lake Charles American Press

Newsroom

4900 Highway 90 E

Lake Charles, LA 70615

Phone: (337) 494-4080

www.americanpress.com

The News-Star

Newsroom

411 North 4th Street

Monroe, LA 71201

Phone: (318) 322-5161

www.thenewsstar.com

The Times

Newsroom

22 Lake Street

Shreveport, LA 71101

Phone: (318) 459-3200

www.shreveporttime.com

Times-Picayune

Newsroom

3800 Howard Avenue

New Orleans, LA 70125

Phone: (504) 826-3300

www.nola.com/t-p

Political Blogs in Louisiana

American Zombie

www.theamericanzombie.blogspot.com

Daily Kingfish

www.dailykingfish.com

Ian McGibboney

www.ianmcgibboney.blogspot.com

Liberty and Justice for All

<http://blog.lj4a.com>

Moldy City

www.bayoustjohndavid.blogspot.com

Your Right Hand Thief

www.righthandthief.blogspot.com

¹ La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:281(A)(1)(b), <<http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=80423>>

² La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:281(A)(1)(a), <<http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=80423>>

³ La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:281(A)(2)

⁴ *Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators*, p. 29, <<http://www.winnpsb.org/WPSB/Bulletin%20741%20-%20Louisiana%20Handbook%20for%20School%20Administrators.pdf>>

⁵ La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 281(A)(b)(3).

⁶ La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:281(A)(3), <<http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=80423>>

⁷ La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:281(F), <<http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=80423>>

⁸ La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:281(A)(4), <<http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=80423>>

⁹ La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:7(13)(b), <<http://www.legis.state.la.us/lss/lss.asp?doc=81172>>

¹⁰ Danice K. Eaton, et. al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2009,” *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 59, no. SS-5 (4 June 2010): 98–109, accessed 4 June 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss5905.pdf>>. Note: Louisiana did not participate in the full 2009 YRBS.

¹¹ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, (Washington, DC: Guttmacher Institute, January 2010), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPtrends.pdf>>, Table 3.1.

¹² *Ibid.*, Table 3.2.

¹³ Joyce A. Martin, et. al., “Births: Final Data for 2006,” *National Vital Statistics Reports*, vol. 57, number 7 (Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 7 January 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_07.pdf>, Table B.

¹⁴ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, Table 3.2.

¹⁵ Martin, et. al., “Births: Final Data for 2006,” 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Table B.

¹⁷ “Cases of HIV Infection and AIDS in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2007,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*, vol. 19, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/2007report/pdf/2007SurveillanceReport.pdf>>, Table 18.

¹⁸ Slide 6: “Estimated Numbers of HIV/AIDS Cases among Adolescents 13 to 19 Years of Age, 2007—34 States,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents and Young Adults (through 2007)*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2009), accessed 25 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/adolescents/index.htm>>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; “AIDS Case Rate per 100,000 Population, All Ages, 2007,” (Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparetable.jsp?ind=513&cat=11&sub=120&yr=62&typ=1&sort=a>>.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Table 16.

²¹ Slide 15: “Reported AIDS Cases among Adolescents 13 to 19 Years of Age, 2007—United States and Dependent Areas,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents and Young Adults (through 2007)*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2009), accessed 25 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/adolescents/index.htm>>.

²² “Wonder Database: Selected STDs by Age, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender, 1996-2008 Results,” (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), 30 June 2009, accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://wonder.cdc.gov>>; see also Table 10:

“Chlamydia: Reported Cases and Rates Per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of STD Prevention, November 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats08/surv2008-Complete.pdf>>, 95.

²³ *Ibid.*; see also Table 20: “Gonorrhea—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 106.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; see also Table 33: “Primary and Secondary Syphilis—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 121.

²⁵ This refers to the federal government’s fiscal year, which begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2009 began on October 1, 2008 and ended on September 30, 2009.

²⁶ SIECUS estimated this amount based on the amount of total funding the Louisiana was allocated in previous fiscal years. Despite repeated attempts to contact the Governor’s Program on Abstinence, representatives in the office refused to provide SIECUS with the exact amount of funding received by the state.

²⁷ Through the Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations process, Congress eliminated all discretionary funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, including the entire CBAE program and the abstinence-only-until-marriage portion of AFLA. The grant years listed in the chart reflect the years for which funding was originally approved; however, the grants effectively ended in Fiscal Year 2009.

²⁸ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

²⁹ This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means exhaustive and does not contain the local level newspapers which are integral to getting your message out to your community. SIECUS strongly urges you to follow stories about the issues that concern you on the national, state, and local level by using an internet news alert service such as [Google alerts](#), becoming an avid reader of your local papers, and establishing relationships with reporters who cover your issues. For more information on how to achieve your media goals visit the SIECUS [Community Action Kit](#).