



Louisiana

Louisiana received \$2,643,972 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

Louisiana Sexuality Education Law

Louisiana does not require schools to offer sexuality or sexually transmitted disease (STD)/HIV education, but schools are permitted to offer it after fifth grade. Sexuality education cannot be offered in kindergarten through sixth grade, except in Orleans Parish, which may offer sexuality education in third grade and above.

Louisiana law defines sexuality education as “the dissemination of factual biological or pathological information that is related to the human reproduction system and may include the study of sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy, childbirth, puberty, menstruation, and menopause, as well as the dissemination of factual information about parental responsibilities under the child support laws of the state.” This education 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.”

Classes may not include “any sexually explicit materials depicting male or female homosexual activity.” They also may not in “any way counsel or advocate abortion.”

HIV/AIDS education can be included in sexuality education or can be included in a separate class. This class “must be structured and limited so as not to constitute sex education.” Classes must emphasize abstinence-only-until-marriage, teach that “each student has the power to control personal behavior,” and “encourage students to base action on reasoning, self-esteem, and respect for others.”

Selection of teachers for this class can only be made by the local school board. All curricula and materials used must be reviewed by a parental review committee that is appointed by the school board.

Parents may exempt their students from a sexuality education class. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Louisiana Revised Statute 17:281.

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 2003 begins on October 1, 2002 and ends on September 30, 2003.

Recent Legislation

The Louisiana legislature does not carry bills over from one session to the next. Related 2003 and 2004 bills are listed. Louisiana's regular session is scheduled to end on June 21, 2004.

Bill Requiring Parenthood Education, 2004 Session

House Bill 74, introduced in March 2004, would require that all high schools offer instruction in parenthood education as a requirement for graduation. At press time, the bill was in committee.

The same bill (HB 103) was introduced in 2003 and died at the end of the 2003 legislative session.

"Adoption Awareness" Requirement in Family Life Courses, 2004 Session

Senate Bill 740, introduced in March 2004, would require that adoption awareness be taught in any middle or high school courses which discuss family life topics. "Adoption awareness" as defined in the bill is "specific 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 that they are unable to care for."

The bill passed the Senate on April 21, 2004. At press time, the bill was in the House Committee on Education.

Events of Note

ACLU and Louisiana Governor's Abstinence Program Settle November 2002

In the spring of 2002, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Louisiana filed suit in a Federal District Court alleging that the Louisiana Governor's Program on Abstinence (GPA) was using tax dollars to promote religion.

In July 2002, a U.S. District judge ruled that the GPA had indeed illegally used some of its funds "to convey religious messages and advance religion" and ordered the program to cease funding organizations that did so. Governor Mike Foster and the GPA director filed an appeal in the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals challenging this ruling. In early November 2002, a settlement was reached that ended the lawsuit.

Under the settlement, the state agreed that GPA funding recipients must submit monthly reports certifying that the money they received was not used to fund religious activities. In addition, GPA officials are required to conduct quarterly reviews of grantees' activities that are funded with the federal dollars. GPA officials must also review lessons and curricula prior to implementation. Those programs found to violate the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution (which bans promoting religion with public funds) will not have their GPA funding renewed.²

In addition, the GPA is required to post a statement on its web site and all promotional materials that reads: "The GPA is a health and education program committed to promoting and publicizing the benefits of abstinence. Under limits imposed by the Constitution, the GPA's funds may not be used for activities, events or materials that include religious messages or otherwise promote or advance religion."

² K. McGill, "Settlement to Keep Religion Out of State's Abstinence Program," Associated Press, New Orleans, LA, November 13, 2002.; J. Gyan Jr., "Suit Settled; No Religion in Program," *The Advocate Online*, Baton Rouge, LA, November 14, 2002, Available online at http://www.theadvocate.com/stories/111402/new_settle001.shtml.

Louisiana's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2001, 80% of high school students in Louisiana reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 89% of high school students nationwide.³
- In 2000, Louisiana's abortion rate was 11 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁴
- In 2001, Louisiana's birth rate was 59 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 per 1,000 nationwide.⁵

*New Orleans, Louisiana's Youth: Statistical Information of Note*⁶

- In 2003, 48% of female high school students and 70% of male high school students in New Orleans reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 4% of female high school students and 27% of male high school students in New Orleans reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 9% of female high school students and 39% of male high school students in New Orleans reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 11% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 36% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students in New Orleans reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of females and 34% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 10% of females and 23% of males in New Orleans reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 30% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 71% of females and 76% of males in New Orleans reported having used condoms the last

³ J. Grunbaum, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 2001," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 51, no.SS-4, June 28, 2002, pp. 1-64. Available online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>. This does not include information regarding New Orleans' youth. Information regarding New Orleans' youth is collected separately and listed below. Louisiana did not participate in the 2003 YRBS, but New Orleans did.

⁴ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information*, (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004). Available online at www.guttmacher.org.

⁵ A. Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

⁶ J. Grunbaum, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 2003," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 53, no.SS-2, May 21, 2004, pp. 1-95. Available online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>.

time they had sexual intercourse compared to 57% of females and 69% of males nationwide.

- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 7% of females and 7% of males in New Orleans reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, 12% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students in New Orleans reported ever having been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant compared to 5% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 79% of high school students in New Orleans reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Louisiana received \$1.6 million in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2003. 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 can be provided in part or in full by local groups. The state matches the federal funding with \$1.2 million. The money is controlled through the Governor's Program on Abstinence (GPA).

During the 2001-2002 school year, the GPA claimed to have reached over 10,000 students. The GPA is also working to establish GPA clubs in all 420 Louisiana high schools. The program is divided into five components:

1. Community projects: This component allocates money to community based groups.⁷
2. Pilot Parish Project: By 2004, 67 parishes in Louisiana will be funded to provide abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.
3. Statewide Grassroots Campaign: The state is divided into sections, each of which has its own coordinator who focuses on organizing and mobilization.
4. Clearinghouse Program: The Clearinghouse evaluates "abstinence centered" programs throughout the United States. It "will serve as a resource center on abstinence programs with medically correct and age appropriate information."
5. Media Campaign: This component is used to enhance the other four sections.

The program's website, www.abstinencedu.com, includes a question and answer section in which youth ask questions regarding sexual activity. The answers often encourage them to turn to churches for guidance and strength. One answer states that abortion can cause breast cancer. The section also includes the following exchange:

Question: "Freeing myself to reach for the best life has to offer, I promise to abstain from sexual involvement from this day until I enter a marriage relationship."

That's fine, at least for those who desire and plan to get married at some point in their lives. What about people like me (now in my 40's), and there are many like me, who have no

⁷ SIECUS was unable to secure a complete listing of these groups

desire to get married (note-I regularly have monogamous relationships with women). Are we supposed to stay abstinent all of our lives?

Answer: Why would you want to have a series of monogamous relationships instead of marriage? God's plan is for us not to be alone, but to have one spouse for life. When you are 55 and have a heart attack or cancer of the colon, which of these many women will be there for you? No one. Your commitment is to self-indulgence, not to wholly loving a woman—and being loved – as God intended. You will end up a lonely old man unless you move from selfishness to selflessness. It is your decision, but you have made the wrong one for 20 years. At the time I was in my 40's, my sons were teenagers, and are now in their 30's, and are a blessing to my wife and me. Where is your investment in the next generation? However, there is still time to build a marriage that could give you joy for the next 30 or 40 years. It would be sad to choose bachelorhood, as I see it.

Michael J. McManus
Co-Founder & President
Marriage Savers

The website also includes a religious disclaimer mandated by the court:

The GPA is a health and education program committed to promoting and publicizing the benefits of abstinence. Under the limits imposed by the Constitution, the GPA funds may not be used for activities, events or materials that include religious messages or otherwise promote or advance religion. The GPA does not discourage or encourage private religious exercise. If you have any spiritual or religious questions that arise in the context of events sponsored by the GPA, the GPA encourages you to consult with a spiritual advisor from your faith or system of belief.

Special Projects of Regional and National Significance–Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS–CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There is one SPRANS–CBAE grantee in Louisiana: Inner Reflections Too. There are no AFLA grantees in Louisiana.

Inner Reflections Too (IRT) is based in Baton Rouge and receives both Title V and SPRANS funding. This program works with youth between the ages of ten and 16 who live in the inner city and are considered “high risk.” According to the executive director of IRT, “We are actively engaging youth with the truth regarding the ‘safe sex’ myth. Inner Reflections Too is teaching youth that the safest sex is ‘saved sex.’” This program works in local housing developments, a youth group home, and a prenatal facility that serves teen mothers.

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Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2003

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
Louisiana Governor's Program on Abstinence (GPA) www.abstinencedu.com	\$1,600,000 federal/ \$1,200,000 state	Title V
Inner Reflections Too DUAL GRANTEE 2002-2003	\$73,244	Title V sub-grantee SPRANS-CBAE (Planning Grant)
Council for the Advancement of Social Services and Education 2003-2006	\$798,122	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Rize Up Louisiana 2002-2003	\$73,244	SPRANS-CBAE (Planning Grant)
YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge 2001-2002	\$99,362	SPRANS-CBAE (Planning Grant)

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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Louisiana Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

LA NOW
P.O. Box 750356
New Orleans, LA 70175
Phone: (504) 364-4444
www.accesscom.net/now

AIDS Law of LA, Inc.
P.O. Box 30203
New Orleans, LA 70190
Phone: (504) 568-1631
www.aidslaw.org

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

Planned Parenthood of Louisiana and the
Mississippi Delta
2601 Tulane Ave., Suite 701
New Orleans, LA 70119
Phone: (504) 821-5423
www.plannedparenthoodlouisiana.org

Louisiana Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

LA Christian Coalition
P.O. Box 1695
Mandeville, LA 70470
www.mylacc.com

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

LA Right to Life Foundation
P.O. Box 8807
Metairie, LA 70011
Phone: (504) 834-5433
www.lartl.org

Newspapers in Louisiana

The Advocate
Laurie Smith-Anderson
Medical/Health Editor
525 Lafayette St
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone: (225) 388-0645

Alexandria Daily Town Talk
Suzan Manuel
Community News Reporter
1201 3rd St.
Alexandria, LA 71301
Phone: (318) 487-6387

The Courier
Marty Authement
Medical/Health Editor
3030 Barrow St.
Houma, LA 70360
Phone: (985) 857-2206

The Daily Advertiser
Phyllis Walters
Medical/Health Editor
221 Jefferson St.
Lafayette, LA 70501
Phone: (337) 289-6328

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The Daily Iberian
Jeff Moore
Community News Reporter
926 E. Main St.
New Iberia, LA 70560
Phone: (337) 365-6773

Lake Charles American Press
Scott Rogers
Medical/Health Editor
4900 Highway 90 E.
Lake Charles, LA 70615
Phone: (337) 494-4088

Leesville Leader
Kelly Moore
Community News Reporter
206 E. Texas St.
Leesville, LA 71446
Phone: (337) 239-3444

The News-Star
Assignment Editor
411 N. 4th St.
Monroe, LA 71201
Phone: (318) 322-5161

The Times-Picayune
Valerie Faciane
Community News Editor
3800 Howard Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70125
Phone: (504) 826-3325

The Times
Kathie Rowell
Medical/Health Editor
222 Lake St.
Shreveport, LA 71101
Phone: (318) 459-3258