



MARYLAND

Maryland received \$970,653 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2006.¹

Maryland Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Maryland education code requires each local school board to work with the county health department in establishing a school health education program with a number of specified goals. Sexuality education falls under Goal F, which is designed to help students “recognize the family as a basic unit of society that perpetuates life and promotes healthy growth and development.” Under Goal F, schools must help students “develop and use skills for making responsible decisions about sexual behavior based on its consequences for the individual and others” and “develop and use skills for making responsible decisions about family planning and preventing pregnancy.” Goal F also includes teaching students about “[a] variety of family structures and roles of family members,” “male and female roles in American society,” “sexual variations,” “contraception,” and “family planning.”

Maryland education code requires that health education classes be taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade, in mixed gender groups. It also states when certain topics may and may not be addressed. For example, the code says, “Direct teaching of human reproduction may not begin earlier than age 10 or later than age 12.” Regulations also state that an elective sexuality education course must be offered in middle and high schools. This course must be designed with an appointed citizen advisory committee that broadly represents the views of the community and must cover a number of topics including contraception, family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The code states that teachers of sexuality education classes may have additional preparation for this class and that any teacher who feels “inadequate or uncomfortable” with the class does not have to teach it. Maryland State Regulations also mandate that “local school systems shall provide annual instruction in AIDS to all students at least once in grades three to six, six to nine, and nine to twelve.” Each local school board determines the actual grade.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any or all sexuality education classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy. The elective courses offered in middle and high schools require parental permission in order for a student to participate, this is known as an “opt-in” policy.

See Maryland Regulations 13A.04.18.02, 13A.04.18.03, and 13A.04.18.04.

Recent Legislation

SIECUS is not aware of any proposed legislation regarding sexuality education in Maryland.

Events of Note

Montgomery County School Board Approves New Sexuality Education Curriculum January 2007; Montgomery County, MD

From March to May of 2005, Montgomery County, Maryland garnered national attention as a few fringe right-wing groups, many of them not even from the area, let loose an all-out campaign against a new sexuality education curriculum for the county's public schools. A recent victory in this community just outside of Washington, DC shows that extreme opposition to common-sense sexuality education can be overcome.

In 2005, the county's school board approved a revised sexuality education curriculum that spoke positively of gays and lesbians and expanded instruction on the importance of contraceptives in protecting the health of sexually active students. Outside groups from Florida and Virginia, as well as major national right-wing groups like Concerned Women for America and the Family Research Council converged on this community in an effort to prevent the changes from taking place. Ultimately their efforts forced the school board to go back to the drawing board.²

The determination of the county's school board paid off on January 9, 2007 when revised sexuality education lessons for eighth and tenth graders were approved by a unanimous vote. The new program, which uses a curriculum titled *Respect for Differences in Human Sexuality*, is set to be field-tested in some middle and high schools as early as this spring. The new lessons discuss sexual orientation and gender identity in the eighth- and tenth-grade Family Life Curriculum, and tenth-grade health classes include expanded information about the importance of using condoms for sexually active youth.³

Jim Kennedy, a member of the citizen's advisory committee which includes parents, teachers, students, and other community members, said that the revised curriculum remains gay-friendly because it uses non-judgmental language in discussing sexual orientation and gender identity.⁴

The two main instigators of the 2005 uproar, Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum and Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (P-Fox) remain unsatisfied. They continue to argue that the new curriculum offers only biased views of premarital sex, anal sex, and homosexuality. The two groups called for any lessons on sexual orientation to include perspectives that "homosexuals can change, that transgenderism is a mental disorder, and that anal intercourse is dangerous."⁵ They have also stated that they are considering legal action.

Montgomery County's School Superintendent responded that the new curriculum was written by his staff, was built on specific academic objectives, and that it "circumscribes liability."⁶

Sex Parties Re-Ignite Sexuality Education Debate November 2006; Carroll County, MD

The Carroll County School Board once again rejected the proposal of the Family Life and Human Sexuality Committee which recommended revising the eighth-grade curriculum to include information about contraceptives and sexually transmitted diseases.⁷

The current curriculum for eighth-grade students focuses on abstinence. High school students receive information on the efficacy of contraceptives, although abstinence is still stressed. The county has an opt-in policy for its sexuality curriculum lessons, meaning that parents must give written permission in order for their children to attend the classes.

The committee, composed of parents, teachers, students, and health officials, first approached the board suggesting a more comprehensive sexuality education curriculum for eighth-grade students in July 2006. It cited a county survey that found that 78 percent of respondents approved of comprehensive sexuality education for students ages 11–17 as support for its proposal. Despite the committee's report, the board decided to continue to use the abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculum that was in place.⁸

Toward the end of 2006, the committee once again recommended changes after news surfaced that many teenagers in Carroll County are participating in sex parties. The information came from two health counselors at a county clinic whose teenaged patients are reportedly engaging in sex games and sexual activity with multiple partners at these parties. “We are going to have an STD epidemic with the sharing of bodily fluids,” one of the health counselors said.⁹

Committee members stressed the importance of a comprehensive sexuality education for young people in their community. One resident who attended the committee meeting voiced her support of a new curriculum: “The more the kids are informed, the better off we are.”¹⁰

The board, however, has said that it will accept the proposal only if the Health Department can prove that middle school students are engaging in sexual activity. The manager of the county’s Family Planning Clinic contended that collecting information regarding sexual activity would be very difficult and the school superintendent has refused to pursue the idea.¹¹

The committee plans to be persistent with its proposition. SIECUS will continue to monitor this situation.

PFOX Flier Distribution Stirs Controversy
November 2006; Silver Spring, MD

The group Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX) caused an uproar when it handed out fliers that promoted the organization’s anti-gay message at Montgomery Blair High School.

Students responded in opposition to PFOX’s handouts, but administrators could do little to stop the flier circulation. Last year, the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the Montgomery County Public School System could not discriminate against any non-profit group’s distribution of materials.¹²

Sexuality is a sensitive issue in Montgomery County, where there is continued debate over the revisions to the school’s sexuality education curriculum. PFOX has been very vocal throughout dispute, condemning the district’s attempt to include a discussion of homosexuality in the curriculum. A spokeswoman for PFOX defended the organization: “What we’re saying is that if you have unwanted same sex attraction—and there is a difference—then there are alternatives, and homosexual feelings can be overcome.”¹³

Students Protest Principal’s Response to Day of Silence
May 2006; Columbia, MD

Controversy broke out at Hammond High School over the observance of the National Day of Silence on April 26, 2006. Student participants claim that the school’s principal was intolerant of those who remained silent throughout the day.

The National Day of Silence, organized by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) is intended to raise awareness of homosexual discrimination. Teens at Hammond High School who observed the day carried talking cards to explain their silence. According to some students, administrators started to send observers to the principal’s office, where she threatened to send them home or to suspend them if they remained silent. One student recounted her interaction with the principal, stating, “She said I was disrupting learning...she called it stupid.”¹⁴

Students staged a sit-in near the cafeteria to show their disapproval of the principal’s actions. The principal disagrees with the students’ reports, stating that threats of suspension came after the sit-in started.

Howard County school officials are investigating the situation further, collecting accounts from both sides. The county encouraged students to report any issues either to the grievance committee at the high school or to the school system office.

Hammond High School does not have a Gay-Straight Alliance, although attempts have been made to start one. Students say that the administration has been reluctant to work with the club's supporters.

County Creates Sexuality Education Assembly

March 2006; Washington County, MD

In March 2006, the Washington County Board of Education discussed the implementation of sexuality education programs for high school freshmen. The initiative was sparked by the rise of teenage pregnancy in the county, which has the fourth highest rate in the state.

The program, developed by the organization Girls, Inc., will provide pertinent sexual health information to ninth graders in the county. The presentations will provide information about sexually transmitted diseases and contraceptives, including a condom demonstration, and will stress the importance of abstinence. One slide in the PowerPoint presentation states, "ABSTINENCE Saying NO is 100% effective AND the best choice."¹⁵ Students will need parental permission to attend the assembly because of the graphic material presented.

The county hopes to hold the same assemblies for parents, to help with open communication at home. The school board and education officials are excited about the endeavor. The Associate Director of Girls, Inc. said, "I think this is a baby step, starting out small and eventually making it bigger."¹⁶

County Changes Sexuality Education Program, Includes Homosexuality

March 2006; Prince George's County, MD

Influenced by the Montgomery County controversy, Prince George's County is revising its sexuality education curriculum to adhere to the Maryland state education code.

The county is working on the sixth-grade programs first and will then address the other middle school and high school grades. The Supervisor of Health Education stated that the changes will be learning-centered, allowing students to apply their newly acquired knowledge.¹⁷

The district will continue its plans to include information about homosexuality and bisexuality in the high school curriculum despite the court battles that have erupted in Montgomery County over the same issue. Sexual orientation has been part of the curriculum in the past. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction looks to Montgomery County as a learning experience, stating, "We read about what was going on in the other jurisdiction, and we wanted to be careful and thoughtful."¹⁸

Maryland School Board Updates Sexuality Education Curricula

May 2004; Harford County, MD

For the first time in two decades, the Harford County Board of Education updated the middle school sexuality education curriculum. The curriculum had previously not been updated since 1983 and the district's Family Life Committee found that the school district lagged behind others in the area.

The Family Life Committee was commissioned to research what other counties were teaching in their middle schools and to compare it to its own school district. One Committee member said that, in their interviews with 22 of the state's 24 jurisdictions, members discovered that "Harford County is the only county...that has not included information about STDs (except for HIV/AIDS) or teen pregnancy in the middle school curriculum."

In deciding to update the curriculum, school administrators also considered a long list of questions that middle school students had asked in class about sexual situations, STDs, and teen pregnancy. One of the Committee members noted that instruction at the school had suffered because of a school policy that limits discussions on topics such as STDs and teen pregnancy. She

said that, because of the limitations, teachers had to answer students' questions in an "around-the-barn kind of manner."

In February 2003, the school board voted to bring the middle school curriculum in line with other schools and approved a revised sexuality education curriculum that was originally intended to be taught in eighth-grade physical education classes. In April 2004, on the advice of the school committee, the Board of Education voted to update the school's sexuality education curriculum and to start the curriculum in seventh rather than eighth grade, as originally intended. Parents may remove their children from the class if they prefer.

Maryland's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2005, 90% of high school students in Maryland reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.¹⁹
- In 2000, Maryland's abortion rate was 38 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.²⁰
- In 2004, Maryland's birth rate was 32 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 41 nationwide.²¹

*Baltimore, Maryland*²²

- In 2005, 63% of female high school students and 77% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 9% of female high school students and 31% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 18% of female high school students and 43% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 48% of female high school students and 55% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 64% of females and 77% of males in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 10% of females and 7% of males in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 9% of females and 21% of males in Baltimore, Maryland 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 Baltimore, Maryland reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Maryland received \$569,675 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2006. 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 Maryland, the federal funding is matched with \$427,256 from state and private funds.

The funding is used to run the Maryland Abstinence Education and Coordination Program (MAECP), which is administered by the Center for Maternal and Child Health. The MAECP provides grants to local health departments in addition to providing them with *Managing Pressures Before Marriage: An Educational Series for Young People*, a curriculum developed by Marion Howard, Ph.D., and Marie Mitchell, R.N., that targets three age groups; pre-teens (fifth and sixth grade), young teens (seventh and eighth grade), and older teens. It provides age-appropriate information and skill-building strategies for youth in an effort to assist them in making positive decisions. Local programs use the pre-teen, young teen, and teen manuals as well as the accompanying video tapes. Some programs also supplement their lessons with other curricula such as the *Developmental Assets Profile (DAP)*.

MAECP also funds the Campaign for our Children to run a statewide media campaign and the Maryland School of Social Work to provide training, professional development, and parent and community education, and to hold youth-oriented conferences.

Title V Evaluation

The Maryland Center for Maternal and Child Health evaluated its Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program in 2002. This evaluation process was reviewed by Advocates for Youth in its 2004 report, *Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact*.²³ Advocates for Youth was forced to cite only an abstract of the full evaluation because the Center for Maternal and Child Health chose not to release the final report. From the information available, however, Advocates for Youth determined that participants' pre- and post-test scores showed no significant change in attitudes or practices regarding abstinence.²⁴ In addition, the proportion of youth who reported that they would remain abstinent until the completion of high school and the proportion of youth who reported abstinent behavior in the year prior to the survey both declined between pre- and post-test.²⁵

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

There are no CBAE grantees in Maryland. There are two AFLA grantees: University of Maryland, Baltimore and the YMCA of Cumberland County.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore runs the abstinence-only-until-marriage program *Realizing Excellence through Abstinence Education Career Exploration and Healthy Lifestyle Choices (REACH)*. The program is provided through the College of Medicine’s Department of Community Affairs, which partners with community organizations.²⁶

REACH aims to give pre-adolescent and adolescent students the skills to “practice abstinence as a peer-accepted alternative to early sexual activity.” The program is made up of 24 two-hour sessions that cover peer pressure, self-esteem, decision-making, abstinence, and the consequences of early sexual activity. Students also may receive a college-age or professional mentor to help them through the program. *REACH* uses an expanded version of the *Sex Can Wait* curriculum as well as *Baby Think It Over*, a program that uses computerized dolls to simulate teen parenthood.²⁷ There is also a 12-week class for parents of students in the program in which they discuss communication, parenting styles, and physical and mental changes of adolescents.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2006

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene www.dhmh.state.md.us	\$569,675 federal \$427,256 state	Title V
Allegany County, Local Health Department	\$30,000	Title V sub-grantee
Baltimore City, Local Health Department	\$66,700	Title V sub-grantee
Calvert County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Campaign for our Children www.cfoc.org	\$200,000	Title V sub-grantee
Cecil County, Local Health Department	\$43,048	Title V sub-grantee
Charles County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Dorchester County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Frederick County, Local Health Department	\$48,557	Title V sub-grantee
Garret County, Local Health Department	\$37,195	Title V sub-grantee
Prince George's County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Talbot County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
University of Maryland, School of Social Work www.ssw.umaryland.edu	\$225,000	Title V sub-grantee
Talbot County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Washington County, Local Health Department	\$26,685	Title V sub-grantee
Wicomico County, Local Health Department	\$47,204	Title V sub-grantee
Worcester County, Local Health Department	\$48,574	Title V sub-grantee
University of Maryland 2002–2007 http://medschool.umaryland.edu/community/reach.asp	\$228,924	AFLA
YMCA of Cumberland County 2002–2007 www.cumberlandymca.org	\$172,054	AFLA

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Maryland Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Equality Maryland
1319 Apple Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: (301) 587-7500
www.equalitymaryland.org

Maryland National Organization for Women
P.O. Box 7216
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: (301) 984-5831
www.marylandnow.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland
8121 Georgia Ave., Suite 501
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: (301) 565-4154
www.prochoicemaryland.org

Planned Parenthood of Maryland Inc.
330 North Howard St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410) 576-1400
www.plannedparenthoodmd.org

Maryland Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Christian Coalition of Maryland
P.O. Box 106
Annapolis, MD 21404
Phone: (443) 417-0823
www.ccmmaryland.org

Maryland Right to Life
P.O. Box 2994
Annapolis, MD 21404
Phone: (410) 269-6397
www.mdrtl.org

Newspapers in Maryland

The Baltimore Sun
Jonathan Bor
Health & Medicine Reporter
501 N. Calvert St.
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 332-6100

The Baltimore Sun
Greg Garland
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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 2006 begins on October 1, 2005 and ends on September 30, 2006.

² "Montgomery County, MD Cancels Controversial Sex Ed Program," *SIECUS Policy Update*, May 2005, <<http://www.siecus.org/policy/PUupdates/pdate0178.html#MON>>.

³ Daniel de Vise, "Board of Education Approves New Sex-Ed Curriculum," *Washington Post*, 10 January 2007, accessed 15 January 2007, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/09/AR2007010901707.html>>.

⁴ Joshua Lynsen, "Montgomery Co. approves Gay Friendly Sex-Ed Curriculum," *Washington Blade*, 10 January 2007, accessed 15 January 2007, <http://www.washblade.com/thelatest/thelatest.cfm?blog_id=10830>.

⁵ de Vise.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Kelsey Volkmann, "Early Teens Engage in Group Sex, Infection Rising," *The Examiner*, 15 November 2006, accessed 5 December 2006, <http://www.examiner.com/a-399623~Early_teens_engage_in_group_sex_infection_rising.html>.

⁸ Kelsey Volkmann, "School Board Asked to Review Sex Education Curriculum," *The Examiner*, 27 July 2006, accessed 1 August 2006, <http://www.examiner.com/a-196344~School_Board_asked_to_review_sex_education_curriculum.html>.

⁹ Volkmann, "Early Teens Engage in Group Sex."

¹⁰ Megan McIlroy, "School Board Asks for Proof of Activity Before Topics Added," *The Examiner*, 22 November 2006, accessed 30 November 2006, <http://www.examiner.com/a-413876~School_Board_asks_for_proof_of_activity_before_topics_added.html>.

¹¹ McIlroy.

¹² "Flier about 'Ex-Gays' Ignites Firestorm at School," *NBC News*, 11 November 2006, accessed 13 November 2006, <<http://www.nbc4.com/news/10296097/detail.html>>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Lou Chibbaro, Jr., "Md. Students Face Suspension over Gay 'Day of Silence,'" *Washington Blade*, 4 May 2006, accessed 11 May 2006, <http://www.washblade.com/thelatest/thelatest.cfm?blog_id=6558>.

¹⁵ Karen Hanna, "New Sex Education Program Being Designed for Freshmen," *The Herald-Mail*, 23 March 2006, accessed 23 March 2006, <http://www.herald-mail.com/?module=displaystory&story_id=134067&format=html>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

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¹⁷ Guy Leonard, "School System Slowly Revising Health and Sex Education Curriculum," *The Gazette*, 9 March 2006, accessed 9 March 2006, <http://www.gazette.net/stories/030906/princou180657_31974.shtml>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ 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 26 January 2007,

<<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>. Maryland did not participate in the complete 2005 YRBS but Baltimore did. Information about Baltimore is listed separately.

²⁰ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: The Guttmacher Institute, February 2004), accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/2006/09/12/USTPstats.pdf>>.

²¹ *National Vital Statistics Reports 55.01* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2006), 10, accessed 26 January 2006, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr55_01.pdf>.

²² Eaton, et al.,

²³ Debra Hauser, *Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact* (Washington, D.: Advocates for Youth, 2004), 11.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ L.K. Olsen and D. Agley, "Analysis of Four Years of Abstinence-Only Human Sexuality Programs in Maryland," abstract of paper presented at 130 the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association, 13 November 2002.

²⁶ "Community Outreach: Realizing Excellence Through Abstinence Education Career Exploration and Healthy Lifestyle Choices (REACH)," University of Maryland School of Medicine, accessed 12 February 2007, <<http://medschool.umaryland.edu/community/reach.asp>>.

²⁷ Ibid.