



Maryland

Maryland received \$1,111,167 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

Maryland Sexuality Education Law

Maryland education code requires each county 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 “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 mandates when some 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.”

Maryland State Regulation also mandates that “local school systems shall provide annual instruction in AIDS to all students at least once in grades 3 to 6, 6 to 9, and 9 to 12.”

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

Recent Legislation

The Maryland legislature does not carry bills over from one session to the next. Related 2003 and 2004 bills are listed. Maryland’s legislative session ended on April 12, 2004.

Bill Limiting Sexuality Education, Requiring Parental Consent Died, 2003 Session

House Bill 1169 died in the Maryland House of Delegates Committee on Ways and Means on March 21, 2003. HB 1169 would have prohibited any County Board of Education from adopting curriculum that “promotes the distribution of contraceptives.” It would also have required parental consent for sexuality education courses (a parental “opt-in” requirement) and prohibited school health services without parental consent.

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.

Events of Note

Maryland School Board Updates Sexuality Education Curricula February 2003; Harford County, MD

The Harford County Board of Education approved a number of changes to the middle school sexuality education curriculum which had not been updated since 1983. This decision was based on the Family Life Committee's findings in the fall that the school district lagged behind others in the area.

The Committee was commissioned to research what other counties were teaching in their middle schools and to compare it to their own school district. One Committee member said that in their interviews with 22 of the state's 24 jurisdictions they 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."² In addition, a Committee member pointed out that the HIV/AIDS curriculum had not been updated in 20 years.³

In their decision to update the curriculum, school administrators also considered a long list of questions that middle school students have asked in class about sexual situations, STDs, and teen pregnancy. One of the Committee members noted that instruction at the school has suffered because of the school policy which limits discussions on topics such as STDs and teen pregnancy. She suggested that this policy has meant that teachers have had to answer students' questions in an "around-the-barn kind of manner."⁴

The Board voted to update the curriculum to include information on HIV/AIDS, STDs, teen pregnancy, and sexuality. They also voted to start the curriculum in the eighth grade rather than in high school.

Montgomery County Schools to Allow Condom Demonstrations November 2002; Montgomery County, Maryland

School board members in Montgomery County, MD, voted 5-1 in November 2002 to allow condom demonstrations and discussions of homosexuality and nontraditional lifestyles in certain high school classes as part of a pilot program. The high school curriculum has provided general information about condoms for 30 years according to the Superintendent's memo. School nurses were also allowed to provide condom demonstrations to individual students. Montgomery County is now one of four counties in Maryland to provide condom demonstrations to their students in the classroom.

Students were divided on the issue of condom demonstrations. One sophomore responded to the program by saying, "They already know how to use a condom —[teachers] are just giving them a reason to go do it." Many students, however, support the program. For example, one senior said, "It's not like if you don't talk about it, it will go away. The more [kids] know about sex is to their advantage and to the community's advantage."⁵

In addition to condom demonstrations, the new pilot program also allows more open discussions about homosexuality and nontraditional families. The school system's coordinator of health education said this is a daily issue in the schools as teasing and harassment related to students' sexual orientation often occur in school hallways and classrooms. "We're finding from our counselors and school nurses that students come to them with questions, with concerns," he

² L. Brown, "Harford School Board Eyes Sex Ed Change," *Sunspot* (MD), January 14, 2003.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ C. Purtill, "Most Say Sex Ed Changes Overdue," *The Gazette*, Gaithersburg, MD, November 20, 2002.

said. “And sometimes they’re very bold: ‘Why don’t we talk about this in school? Why don’t we have instruction that covers this?’”⁶

Before this ruling, discussion of sexual orientation was allowed in the classroom only if brought up specifically by a student. Lengthy discussions were discouraged. The new curriculum will remove that restriction and replace it with specific instruction to reduce verbal and physical attacks against gay or bisexual teens. Students will need their parents’ or guardian’s permission to participate in the classroom discussions.

Maryland’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- 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.⁷
- In 2001, Maryland’s birth rate was 38 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 nationwide.⁸

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Maryland received \$535,712 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. In Maryland, the federal funding is matched with a total of \$401,784. Of this, \$320,000 is state money and the remainder is from the Abell Foundation. The Abell Foundation, according to their website, works to effect positive changes on societal issues in the Baltimore area focusing on educational issues and funding only organizations based in Maryland.⁹

The state and federal funding is used to run the Maryland Education Abstinence and Coordination Program (MAECP), which is administered by the Center for Maternal and Child Health. MAECP is co-sponsored by the Governor’s Council on Adolescent Pregnancy and the Office for Children, Youth, and Families. The program is focused on youth between the ages of nine and 18 living in areas of Maryland with adolescent pregnancy rates higher than the statewide average. It consists of structured after school programs, a media campaign, and an annual conference.

The money from the Abell Foundation is used to support the Best Friends program, which currently provides the curriculum in Baltimore city schools.

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

There are two SPRANS–CBAE grantees in Maryland; the YMCA of Cumberland and the University of Maryland, Baltimore. The YMCA of Cumberland County is also an AFLA grantee.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore runs two abstinence-only-until-marriage programs: REACH and Project ABSTAIN. These programs are provided through the College of Medicine’s Department of Community Affairs, which partners with community organizations.

⁶ S. Sedam, “Sex Education Talks Expand for Students,” *The Gazette*, Gaithersburg, MD, November 20, 2002.

⁷ *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.

⁸ A. Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

⁹ Abell Foundation, <http://abell.org>

M A R Y L A N D

Realizing Excellence through Abstinence Education Career Exploration and Healthy Lifestyle Choices (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 comprised of 24 two-hour sessions on 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. In addition, REACH uses *Baby Think it Over*, a program that uses computerized dolls to simulate teen parenthood. There is also a 12-week class for parents of children in the program in which they discuss communication, parenting styles, and physical and mental changes of adolescents.

Achieving Balance, Self-Esteem, Training, and Insight to Say No (Project ABSTAIN) has the same mission as REACH. Project Abstain focuses on youth ages nine-14 and their parents. The participants learn about peer pressure and self-esteem. They are also given a mentor to help them through the program. Parents must also attend classes on parenting and communication.

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

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Maryland Education Abstinence and Coordination Program www.fha.state.md.us/och/html/abstnc.html	\$535,712 federal/ \$320,000 state	Title V
YMCA of Cumberland 2001-2004	\$251,228	SPRANS–CBAE (Implementation Grant)
DUAL GRANTEE 2002-2003	\$99,227	AFLA
University of Maryland, Baltimore 2002-2003	\$225,000	AFLA

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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Maryland Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Free State Justice
P.O. Box 13221
Baltimore, MD 21203
Phone: (410) 685-6567
www.freestatejustice.org

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

MD NOW
P.O. Box 7216
Silver Spring, MD 20907-7216
Phone: (410) 269-0542
www.marylandnow.org

Maryland Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice
7 Slade Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21208
Phone: (410) 747-3811

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

Maryland Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

MD Christian Coalition
18911 Brick Store Rd.
Hampstead, MD 21074
www.ccmaryland.org

Maryland Family Values Alliance
www.mdfva.org

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

TakeBackMaryland.org
P.O. Box 4
Pasadena, MD 21123
www.takebackmaryland.org

M A R Y L A N D

Newspapers in Maryland

The Baltimore Sun

Jamie Stiehm
Community News Reporter
501 N. Calvert St.
Baltimore, MD 21278
Phone: (410) 332-6655

The Capital

Mary Felter
Community News Editor
2000 Capital Dr.
Annapolis, MD 21401
Phone: (410) 280-5919

Carroll County Times

Patti Ritter
Community News Editor
201 Railroad Ave.
Westminster, MD 21157
Phone: (410) 751-7861

Cumberland Times-News

Deborah Haan
Community News Editor
19 Baltimore St.
Cumberland, MD 21502
Phone: (301) 722-4600

The Daily Mail

Harry Nogle
Community News Correspondent
100 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown, MD 21740
Phone: (301) 733-5131

The Daily Times

Bruce Bennett
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115 E. Carroll St.
Salisbury, MD 21801
Phone: (410) 749-7171

The Frederick News-Post

Linda Gregory
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200 E. Patrick St.
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The Morning Herald

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The Star-Democrat

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