



North Carolina

North Carolina received \$1,898,723 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

North Carolina Sexuality Education Law

North Carolina schools are required to teach sexuality, HIV, and STD education. They must stress the importance of abstinence. Students are taught refusal skills and strategies to handle peer pressure. Curricula must teach that a “mutually faithful monogamous heterosexual relationship in the context of marriage is the best lifelong means of avoiding diseases transmitted by sexual contact,” including HIV/AIDS.

The education requirements also state that “any instruction concerning the causes of sexually transmitted diseases, including Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), in cases where homosexual acts are a significant means of transmission, shall include the legal status of those acts.”²

Information on contraceptives must be statistically accurate and discuss efficacy and failure rates. Further, information regarding contraceptives and abortion may be taught in accordance with the local school boards policy with parental consent. Condoms may not be distributed in schools.

If a public hearing is held, school districts can provide a more comprehensive program.

Parents have the option to exempt their children from this education. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See North Carolina General Statute 115C-81.

Recent Legislation

The North Carolina legislature carries bills over from one legislative session to the next only if they have passed their chamber of origin. Related 2003 and 2004 bills are listed. North Carolina’s legislative session is scheduled to end in July 2004.

Medical Accuracy Bills Die at End of Session in House and Senate, 2003 Session

House Bill 873, introduced on April 7, 2003, and Senate Bill 618, introduced on March 31, 2003, would have required that health education courses offered in public schools with public funds, including abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, provide medically and factually accurate information that is age-appropriate. The bills would have required that abstinence be taught and that

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.

² In 2003, the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* which declared all state laws criminalizing homosexual behavior to be unconstitutional.

the latest available statistics on the success and failure rates of contraceptive methods, including condoms, be taught.

Bills only carry over to the next session if they have passed their House of origin. Neither of these bills passed a chamber and, therefore, both died at the end of the 2003 session.

Bills to Restore Funding for Pregnancy Prevention Initiatives Die, 2003 Session

Senate Bill 778 and House Bill 1226, both introduced in April 2003, would have restored some funding for local teen pregnancy prevention initiatives, local health department initiatives for prevention of out-of-wedlock births, and grant-in-aid.

Bills only carry over to the next session if they have passed their House of origin. Neither of these bills passed a chamber and, therefore, both died at the end of the 2003 session.

Events of Note

*Wake County, North Carolina Flip-Flops on Sexuality Education
2002–2004*

Parents, educators, advocates, and students have been debating sexuality education in Wake County, North Carolina for many years. Wake County changed the focus of its curriculum from comprehensive sexuality education to abstinence-only-until-marriage in 1995. In the spring of 2002, however, the Wake County School Health Advisory Council recommended re-instituting a comprehensive sexuality education program.

After months of debate, the Wake County School Board voted 5-4 in November 2002 to adopt a more comprehensive curriculum. Over the months that followed, educators and advocates worked to create a new curriculum that included information about contraceptives, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and tolerance for people of all sexual orientations.³

The debate did not end there, however. Critics of the curriculum who felt that the school should have maintained an abstinence-only-until-marriage focus continued to approach the school board and demand changes.

In the January 2004, the Wake County School Board voted 5-3 in favor of a new restrictive abstinence-only policy that negates much of the recently implemented comprehensive sexuality education curriculum.

The new policy requires all school employees to promote the message that “abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage is the expected standard for all school-age children.”⁴ However, a portion of the proposed policy that would have required school employees to teach about abstinence whenever sexual subjects are discussed has been revised and the policy now only applies to health classes.

The adopted policy requires that all sex education classes in grades K-12 teach that abstinence-until-marriage is the expected standard and that a “mutually faithful monogamous heterosexual relationship in the context of marriage” is the best way to prevent STDs, including HIV/AIDS. The adoption of this policy eliminates many of the comprehensive components that had been recently added to the school’s curriculum including information on using contraceptives and the importance of tolerance for all sexual orientations. Now, discussions on contraception must focus on failure rates, and teachers will not be allowed to answer students’

³ *February 2003 Controversy Report* (Washington, DC., SIECUS). Available online at <http://www.siecus.org/controversy/cont0018.html>.

⁴ Wake County Public School System, “Healthful Living Education Policy Updated.” Accessed online on March 15, 2004, <http://www.wcpss.net/news/health-ed-update/>.

questions about where and how they can obtain contraception or seek abortions. In addition, all discussions of sexual orientation and tolerance will now be made part of character education classes.

A board member who supported the restrictions explained, “This is simply saying that when we teach kids about sex, we are going to send a clear message that abstinence is their best choice for success.” He said that, “Having sex out of wedlock, the emotional consequences of that decision are huge.”⁵

Many people at the meeting spoke out against the new policy. A college student whose teenage friend recently had a baby said that abstinence is not enough, “Thousands of parents talk to their students about sex, thousands don’t, and those girls will be left crying not knowing what to do.”⁶ Another student said, “We’re being swept back into the shadows. Students will have to go to unreliable sources for their information.”⁷ The executive director of Equality NC, a critic of the new policy, said, “We’ve got a conservative majority on the board who doesn’t want anything other than abstinence taught.”⁸

Even some school employees criticized the new policy. One teacher in the area said, “I hope at one point we can expand what we teach. We have ninth graders who come in pregnant. We have ninth-grade fathers.”⁹

Recent Study in North Carolina

The *Journal of Adolescent Health* published a study conducted in North Carolina to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of clergy from North Carolina African-American churches towards sexuality education and the provision of sexuality education in their churches. The study asked clergy leaders to comment about priority health topics related to their young adolescent church members, including prevalence of sexual and drug-risk behavior and the clergy’s desire for health education programs.

The study found that the clergy leaders’ highest priority issues were drugs, violence, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, and alcohol. Many (76%) had discussed one or more of these issues in church. All respondents wanted additional health seminars for their adolescents, though some clergy (30%) excluded some sexual topics (i.e., anal sex, bisexuality, homosexuality, masturbation, and oral sex). Only six percent would make condoms available in their churches, but all would allow contraceptive education.

The authors of the study concluded that many North Carolina African-American churches are open to including sexuality education among their offerings for young adolescents. They state that “the church should be considered as a potential forum for providing comprehensive sexuality education for African-American adolescents.”¹⁰

⁵ “Wake School Board Approves Abstinence-Based Sex Education Policy at All Grades,” *WRAL.com*, January 6, 2004.

⁶ V. Welch, “Wake School Board Removes Contraceptives, Tolerance from Sex-Ed Curriculum,” *Eyewitness News 11.com*, January 6, 2004.

⁷ “Wake Co. School Board Approves Strict Sex Ed Policy,” *NBC17.com*, January 7, 2004.

⁸ T. Keung Hui, “Sex Ed May Be Revised Today,” *News and Observer (NC)*, January 6, 2004.

⁹ M. Futch, “Is Abstinence Enough?” *Fayetteville Online*, January 21, 2004.

¹⁰ B.T. Coyne. and V. J. Schoenbach. “The African-American Church: A Potential Forum for Adolescent Comprehensive Sexuality Education,” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 26, 2000, pp. 289-294.

North Carolina's Youth: Statistical Information of Note¹¹

- In 2003, 51% of female high school students and 54% of male high school students in North Carolina reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 7% of female high school students and 13% of male high school students in North Carolina 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, 15% of female high school students and 20% of male high school students in North Carolina 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, 39% of female high school students and 37% of male high school students in North Carolina 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, 15% of females and 22% of males in North Carolina 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, 56% of females and 69% of males in North Carolina reported having used condoms the last 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, 21% of females and 14% of males in North Carolina 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, 7% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students in North Carolina 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, 92% of high school students in North Carolina reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

¹¹ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: 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/>.

- In 2000, North Carolina's abortion rate was 22 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.¹²
- In 2001, North Carolina's birth rate was 55 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 per 1,000 nationwide.¹³

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

North Carolina received \$1,151,876 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. North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction receives the funds and uses teachers' salaries as in-kind to meet the required match. The funds are given to 130 school districts throughout the state. In order to be eligible, schools must have at least one class of seventh through twelfth graders. One hundred fifty-two schools were eligible and 20 declined. North Carolina does not track why these schools declined.

Funding is distributed based on how many grades and how many students each school has. Schools receive \$333 per grade and between \$1 and \$1.30 per student. Schools are free to use the money at their discretion as long as they do not violate the federal government's eight-point definition of abstinence-only-until-marriage.

In the past, North Carolina did not track how schools spent this money nor did they evaluate the effectiveness of the programs. In 2003, for the first time, ten percent of the federal funding was reserved to begin a baseline assessment of how schools are using the money. This assessment will include determining the curricula schools are using, barriers schools experience in implementing their program, and the level of training that teachers receive. Staff at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction are also looking to begin a process of visiting grantees as well as determining why some schools have rejected the funding.

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 North Carolina: Rockingham Pregnancy Care Center. There are four AFLA grantees in North Carolina: Roanoke Chapel Baptist Church, Public Health Authority of Cabarrus County, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Wake County, and Sisterhood Agenda, Inc.

The Rockingham Pregnancy Center is a crisis pregnancy center. Its purpose is to “befriend, comfort, educate, and support individuals and their families facing an unplanned pregnancy in a confidential and supportive Christian environment.” The center also purports to provide “accurate information about pregnancy options” and a “post-abortion support ministry.”

¹² *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.

¹³ A. Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

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

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, AFLA, and Title V)
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction www.dpi.state.nc.us	\$1,151,876 federal	Title V
Rockingham Pregnancy Care Center 2003 – 2006	\$46,250	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Roanoke Chapel Baptist Church 2002-2003	\$225,000	AFLA
Public Health Authority of Cabarrus County 2002-2003	\$150,000	AFLA
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Wake County 2002-2003 www.hmhbnc.org	\$175,597	AFLA
Sisterhood Agenda, Inc. 2002-2003 www.sisterhoodagenda.com	\$150,000	AFLA

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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North Carolina Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Equality NC
P.O. Box 28768
Raleigh, NC 27611
Phone: (919) 829-0343
www.equalitync.org

NC Lambda Youth Network
409 E. Chapel Hill St.
Durham, NC 27701
Phone: (919) 683-3037
www.nclambdayouth.org

NC NARAL
Phone: (919) 829-9779
www.naralnc.org

NC NOW
P.O. Box 24955
Raleigh, NC 27611
Phone: (919) 834-4073
rtpnet.org/~ncnow/

Planned Parenthood of Central North
Carolina
1765 Dobbins Dr.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Phone: (919) 929-5402

North Carolina Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Christian Action League of NC
6339 Glenwood Ave.
Suite 442
Raleigh, NC 27612
Phone: (919) 787-0606
<http://christianactionleague.net/>

NC Right to Life
P.O. BOX 9282
Greensboro, NC 27429
Phone: (336) 274-LIFE (5433)
www.ncrtl.org

North Carolina Family Policy Council
P.O. Box 20607
Raleigh, NC 27619
www.ncfamily.org

John Locke Foundation
200 West Morgan St., Suite 200
Raleigh, NC 27601
Phone: (919) 828-3876
www.johnlocke.org

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