



## NORTH CAROLINA

*North Carolina received \$1,573,126 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2004.<sup>1</sup>*

### North Carolina Sexuality Education Law

North Carolina schools are required to teach sexuality, HIV, and STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease) education. They must stress the importance of abstinence and students must be 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.”<sup>2</sup>

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 board’s policy on 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

SIECUS is not aware of any recent legislation related to sexuality education in North Carolina.

### Events of Note

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

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, STDs, and tolerance for people of all sexual orientations.<sup>3</sup>

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 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.”<sup>4</sup> However, a portion of the proposed policy that would have required school employees to teach about abstinence whenever sexual subjects were discussed was removed and the policy as adopted only applies to health classes.

The adopted policy requires that all sex education classes in grades K-twelve 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. Under this policy, discussions on contraception must focus on failure rates, and teachers will not be allowed to answer students’ 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 went on, “having sex out of wedlock, the emotional consequences of that decision are huge.”<sup>5</sup>

Many people at the meeting, however, 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.”<sup>6</sup> 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.”<sup>7</sup> 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.”<sup>8</sup>

The abstinence curriculum is now taught in the schools and the Wake County school board has postponed further debate. In addition, Bill Fletcher, a member of the Wake County School board and a driving force behind the change to an abstinence-only curriculum, attempted to take his actions to the state level when he ran as the Republican candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. There is currently a debate over the vote count, and at press time a final decision in the race had not been made.

*Children’s Book About Two Gay Princes Causes Parents’ Uproar  
March 2004; Wilmington, NC*

The parents of a first-grader at Freeman Elementary School in Wilmington, NC, filed a complaint with the school after reading a book their 7-year-old daughter had brought home from

the school library. The book, entitled *King and King*, tells the story of a character named Prince Bertie who falls in love with a character named Prince Lee. The book is written by two Dutch authors and the publisher says it is intended for ages 6 and up. It ends with the two princes falling in love and kissing, their lips obscured by a picture of a heart.

The father said his daughter was “not old enough to understand something like that, especially when it is not in our beliefs.”<sup>9</sup> The father also said he felt that “if this book is going to be allowed, I believe it ought to be allowed on more of a high school level.”<sup>10</sup> The school principal countered by saying “we have a lot of diversity in our schools... What might be inappropriate for one family, in another family is a totally acceptable thing.”<sup>11</sup>

Due to the family’s complaint and an additional complaint filed by another family, a school committee, made up of parents, teachers, and community members, held a meeting in late March about the book. The school committee voted 8-3 to put the book under lock and key so that only adults, including parents and teachers, are allowed to check it out.

The parents who filed the original complaint said they were happy with the decision, but not everyone agreed with the ruling. One committee member said, “I feel like it’s my responsibility to make it clear that these things exist. It doesn’t mean we have to agree with it. It’s not about right or wrong... It’s just different.”<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the widespread media attention this controversy received, people from around the country donated additional copies of the book to the school. In fact, the attention has prompted a second printing of the book and a sequel is expected later this Spring.

*Study in North Carolina Examines Beliefs of African-American Churches*  
April 2000

The *Journal of Adolescent Health* published a study conducted in North Carolina to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of clergy from 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 adolescents in their churches; however, some clergy (30%) excluded some sexual topics such as anal sex, bisexuality, homosexuality, masturbation, and oral sex. Only 6% 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.”<sup>13</sup>

**North Carolina’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note<sup>14</sup>**

- 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.

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- 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 HIV/AIDS in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- 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.<sup>15</sup>
- In 2002, North Carolina's birth rate was 52 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>16</sup>

**Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding**

North Carolina received \$1,151,876 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2004. 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. In Fiscal Year 2004, 152 schools were eligible and 21 declined. The majority of the schools that rejected the money did so because they felt there was not enough funding to justify the reporting requirements.

Funding is distributed based on the number of grades and 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 education.

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, 10% of the federal funding was reserved to begin a baseline assessment of how schools are using the money, which 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 other schools have rejected the funding.

**Special Projects of Regional and National Significance–Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS–CBAE)<sup>17</sup> and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees**

There is one SPRANS–CBAE grantee in North Carolina: Rockingham Pregnancy Care Center. There are two AFLA grantees in North Carolina: Public Health Authority of Cabarrus County and Roanoke Chapel Baptist Church.

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.”

**Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2004**

<b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantee</b>  <b>Length of Grant</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, AFLA, and Title V)</b>
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction  <a href="http://www.dpi.state.nc.us">www.dpi.state.nc.us</a>	\$1,151,876 federal	Title V

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<b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantee</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, AFLA, and Title V)</b>
<b>Length of Grant</b>		
Rockingham Pregnancy Care Center  2003-2006	\$46,250	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Roanoke Chapel Baptist Church  2004-2005	\$225,000	AFLA
Public Health Authority of Cabarrus County  2004-2005	\$150,000	AFLA

**Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator**

Sara Langer  
 Department of Public Instruction  
 301 North Wilmington St.  
 Raleigh, NC 27601  
 Phone: (919) 807-3867

**North Carolina Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Equality NC  
 PO Box 28768  
 Raleigh, NC 27611  
 Phone: (919) 829-0343  
[www.equalitync.org](http://www.equalitync.org)

NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina  
 514 Daniels St., #142  
 Raleigh, NC 27605  
 Phone: (919) 829-9779  
[www.naralnc.org](http://www.naralnc.org)

NC Lambda Youth Network  
 343 W. Main St., Suite 201  
 Durham, NC 27701  
 Phone: (919) 683-3037  
[www.nclyn.org](http://www.nclyn.org)

Planned Parenthood of Central North Carolina  
 1765 Dobbins Dr.  
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
 Phone: (919) 942-7762  
[www.plannedparenthood.org/pp2/cnc/](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/pp2/cnc/)

**North Carolina Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Christian Action League of NC  
809 Spring Forest Rd., Suite 1000  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
Phone: (919) 787-0606  
[christianactionleague.net](http://christianactionleague.net)

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

North Carolina Family Policy Council  
PO Box 20607  
Raleigh, NC 27619  
Phone: (919) 807-0800  
[www.ncfamily.org](http://www.ncfamily.org)

NC Right to Life  
PO BOX 9282  
Greensboro, NC 27429  
Phone: (336) 274-LIFE (5433)  
[www.ncrtl.org](http://www.ncrtl.org)

**Newspapers in North Carolina**

*The Charlotte Observer*  
Karen Garloch  
Health & Medicine Editor  
PO Box 30308  
Charlotte, NC 28230  
Phone: (704) 358-5078

*The Fayetteville Observer*  
Kristin Askelson  
Health & Medicine Editor  
PO Box 849  
Fayetteville, NC 28302  
Phone: (910) 486-3527

*The Independent*  
Richard Hart  
Editor  
PO Box 2690  
Durham, NC 27715  
Phone: (919) 286-1972

*The News & Observer*  
T. Keung Hui  
Education Reporter  
PO Box 191  
Raleigh, NC 27602  
Phone: (919) 829-4534

*News & Record*  
Sally Buffalo  
Health & Medicine Editor  
PO Box 20848  
Greensboro, NC 27420  
Phone: (336) 691-5091

*Winston-Salem Journal*  
Health & Medicine Editor  
PO Box 3159  
Winston-Salem, NC 27102  
Phone: (336) 727-7211

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<sup>1</sup> 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 2004 begins on October 1, 2003 and ends on September 30, 2004.

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

<sup>3</sup> *February 2003 Controversy Report* (Washington, DC: SIECUS), accessed 28 January 2005, <<http://www.siecus.org/controversy/cont0018.html>>.

<sup>4</sup> Wake County Public School System, "Healthful Living Education Policy Updated," accessed 15 March 2004, <<http://www.wcpss.net/news/health-ed-update/>>.

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- <sup>5</sup> “Wake School Board Approves Abstinence-Based Sex Education Policy at All Grades,” WRAL.com, 6 January 2004.
- <sup>6</sup> Vanessa Welch, “Wake School Board Removes Contraceptives, Tolerance from Sex-Ed Curriculum,” Eyewitness News 11.com, 6 January 2004.
- <sup>7</sup> T. Keung Hui, “Sex Ed May Be Revised Today,” *News and Observer* (NC), 6 January 2004.
- <sup>8</sup> M. Futch, “Is Abstinence Enough?,” *Fayetteville Online*, 21 January 2004
- <sup>9</sup> S. Scott, “Book from School Jolts Parents,” *The Star News* (Wilmington, NC), 18 March 2004.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>12</sup> S. Jones, “King Dethroned, Pulled From Shelf,” *Star News* (Wilmington, NC), 27 March 2004.
- <sup>13</sup> Tamera Coyne-Beasley and Victor Schoenbach. “The African-American Church: A Potential Forum for Adolescent Comprehensive Sexuality Education,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 26.4 (April 2000): 289-294.
- <sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Jo Anne Grunbaum, et. al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2003,” *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 53.SS-2 (21 May 2004): 1-95, accessed 28 January 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbis/>>.
- <sup>15</sup> *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004), accessed 28 January 2005, <[www.guttmacher.org](http://www.guttmacher.org)>.
- <sup>16</sup> *National Vital Statistics Reports 52.10* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2003), 48, accessed 4 February 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm#stat%20tables>>.
- <sup>17</sup> In FY 2004 SPRANS–CBAE was administered within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In FY 2005 this funding stream was moved to HHS’ Administration for Children and Families and is now referred to simply as Community Based Abstinence Education (CBAE).