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Virginia Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Virginia law states that all curriculum decisions are to be left to local school boards; however, programs of instruction must meet or exceed the “requirements of the [State] Board of Education.”¹ Virginia gives permission for local school boards to develop family life education programs with the “goals of reducing the incidence of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] and substance abuse among teenagers.”² The state Board of Education’s family life education standards and curriculum guidelines for grades kindergarten through 12 suggest programs be age-appropriate and address:

[T]he benefits, challenges, responsibilities, and value of marriage for men, women, children, and communities; abstinence education; the value of postponing sexual activity; the benefits of adoption as a positive choice in the event of an unwanted pregnancy; human sexuality; human reproduction; dating violence, the characteristics of abusive relationships, steps to take to avoid sexual assault, and the availability of counseling and legal resources, and, in the event of such sexual assault, the importance of immediate medical attention and advice, as well as the requirements of the law; the etiology, prevention and effects of sexually transmitted diseases; and mental health education and awareness.³

Virginia Administrative Code also requires each local school board to place “special emphasis on the thorough evaluation of materials related to controversial or sensitive topics such as sex education, moral education, and religion.”⁴

Virginia Board of Education guidelines mandate that any school district that develops a family life education program must consult a “community involvement team, or school health advisory board” that should include:

individuals such as a person from the central office, an elementary school principal, a middle school principal, a high school principal, teachers, a school board member, parents, one or more members of the clergy, a member of the medical profession, a mental health practitioner, and others in the community.⁵

Each school board must create a summary of the family life education program available for distribution to parents and guardians for review. The law states that parents or guardians may remove their students from any class.⁶ This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy. Virginia Administrative Code also directs that parents “should be required to justify their requests.”⁷

See Virginia Code Annotated §§ 22.1-200; 22.1-207.1, 22.1-207.2, and 22.2-253.13.1; Title 8 Virginia Administrative Code §§ 202-131-50, 202-131-80, 202-131-90, 202-131-100, 20-131-170, and 20-320-10; and *Family Life Education Board of Education Guidelines and Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools*.

Recent Legislation

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

Virginia's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

Virginia did not participate in the 2009 Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance Survey.

Virginia Youth Sexual Health Statistics

Teen Pregnancy, Birth, and Abortion

- Virginia's teen pregnancy rate ranks 31st in the U.S., with a rate of 61 pregnancies per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 70 pregnancies per 1,000.⁸ There were a total of 15,560 pregnancies among young women ages 15–19 reported in 2005, the most recent year for which data are available, in Virginia.⁹
- Virginia's teen birth rate ranked 32nd in the U.S. in 2005, with a rate of 34.4 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 35.2 births per 1,000.¹⁰ In 2005, there were a total of 8,118 live births reported to young women ages 15–19 in Virginia.¹¹
- In 2006, the U.S. teen birth rate increased for the first time in 15 years by 3% from 40.5 to 41.9 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19, after having steadily declined between 1991 and 2005.¹² Virginia's teen birth rate also increased between 2005 and 2006, from 34.4 to 35.2 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19.¹³
- Virginia's teen abortion rate ranks 13th in the U.S., with a rate of 17 abortions per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 19 abortions per 1,000. In 2005, there were a total of 3,857 abortions reported among young women ages 15–19 in Virginia.¹⁴

HIV and AIDS

- Virginia ranks 13th in cases of HIV infection diagnosed in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 560 new cases of HIV infection diagnosed in Virginia.¹⁵
- Virginia ranks 9th in cases of HIV/AIDS diagnosed among young people ages 13–19 out of the 34 states with confidential, name-based HIV infection reporting. In 2007, there were a total of 65 young people ages 13–19 diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Virginia.¹⁶
- Virginia's AIDS rate ranks 23rd in the U.S., with a rate of 8.2 cases per 100,000 population compared to the national rate of 12.5 cases per 100,000.¹⁷
- Virginia ranks 16th in number of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 634 new AIDS cases reported in Virginia.¹⁸
- Virginia ranks 16th in number of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. among young people ages 13–19. In 2007, there were a total of 10 AIDS cases reported among young people ages 13–19 in Virginia.¹⁹

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- Virginia ranks 23rd in reported cases of Chlamydia among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 19.51 cases per 1,000 which is equal to the national rate of 19.51 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 10,395 cases of Chlamydia reported among young people ages 15–19 in Virginia.²⁰

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- Virginia ranks 17th in reported cases of gonorrhea among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 5.42 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 4.52 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 2,890 cases of gonorrhea reported among young people ages 15–19 in Virginia.²¹
- Virginia ranks 8th in reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 0.07 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 0.04 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 35 cases of syphilis reported among young people ages 15–19 in Virginia.²²

Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Education

SIECUS is not aware of any examples of model programs, policies, or best practices being implemented in Virginia public schools that provide a more comprehensive approach to sex education for young people.

We encourage you to submit any updated or additional information on comprehensive approaches to sex education being implemented in Virginia public schools for inclusion in future publications of the SIECUS State Profiles. Please visit SIECUS' "Contact Us" webpage at www.siecus.org to share information. Select "state policy" as the subject heading.

Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs

Community-based organizations in Virginia received \$1,679,098 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2009.²³

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until Marriage Funding

- Virginia chose not to participate in the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program in Fiscal Year 2009. The state was eligible for approximately \$841,329 in funding. Due to the expiration of the grant program on June 30, 2009, three months prior to the end of the federal fiscal year, the state would have received three quarters of the total funding allocated for the full fiscal year.

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) Funding

- Organizations in Virginia received \$1,410,067 in CBAE funding for Fiscal Year 2009.
- There are three CBAE grantees in Virginia, including two community-based organizations and one crisis pregnancy center.

Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Funding

- There is one AFLA grantee in Virginia, James Madison University, which received \$269,031 in AFLA funding for Fiscal Year 2009.

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Curricula Used by Grantees

Some abstinence-only-until-marriage grantees in Virginia use commercially available curricula. These include, but are not limited to

- *ASPIRE: Live your life. Be free*
- *Choosing the Best*
- *WAIT Training*
- *Why kNOW*

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- *Worth the Wait*

To read reviews of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula commonly used by federal grantees please visit the “Curricula and Speaker Reviews” webpage of SIECUS’ Community Action Kit at www.communityactionkit.org.

Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2009²⁴

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Title V	CBAE (Length of Grant)	AFLA (Length of Grant)
Lighthouse Outreach, Inc. www.lighthouse-outreach.org		\$600,000 (2007–2012)	
James Madison University www.jmu.edu			\$269,031 (2004–2009)
The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia www.virginiapregnancy.org		\$548,843 (2008–2013)	
Rappahannock Teen Awareness Program www.imworththewait.com		\$261,224 (2007–2012)	

Adolescent Health Contact²⁵

Anne Rollins
Virginia Department of Health
Office of Family Health Services
1500 East Main Street, Suite 104
P.O. Box 2448
Richmond, VA 23218
Phone: (804) 864-7685

Virginia Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Arlington Gay and Lesbian Alliance
PO Box 100324
Arlington, VA 22210
www.agla.org

Equality Virginia
403 North Robinson Street
Richmond, VA 23220
Phone: (804) 643-4816
www.equalityvirginia.org

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Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia
201 North Hamilton Street
Richmond, VA 23221
Phone: (804) 482-6134
www.ppav.org

Virginia HIV/AIDS Resource and
Consultation Center
P.O. Box 1980
Norfolk, VA 23501
Phone: (757) 446-6170
www.evms.edu/evms-aids-research-center/virginia-hiv-aids-resource-and-consultation-center.html

Virginia Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

American Life League
P.O. Box 1350
Stafford, VA 22555
Phone: (540) 659-4171
www.all.org

The Family Foundation
One Capital Square
830 East Main Street, Suite 1201
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: (804) 343-0010
www.familyfoundation.org

Newspapers in Virginia²⁶

Daily Press
Newsroom
P.O. Box 746
Newport News, VA 23607
Phone: (757) 247-4600
www.dailypress.com

The Free Lance-Star
Newsroom
616 Amelia Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
Phone: (540) 368-5055
www.fredericksburg.com

Richmond Times-Dispatch
Newsroom
P.O. Box 85333
Richmond, VA 23293
Phone: (804) 649-6990
www.timesdispatch.com

The News & Advance
Newsroom
101 Wyndale Drive
Lynchburg, VA 24501
Phone: (434) 385-5440
www.newsadvance.com

The Roanoke Time & World News
Newsroom
P.O. Box 2491
Roanoke, VA 24010
Phone: (540) 981-3340
www.roanoke.com

The Virginian-Pilot
Newsroom
150 West Brambleton Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23510
Phone: (757) 446-2319
www.hamptonroads.com

Political Blogs in Virginia

Blue Virginia
www.bluevirginia.us

Leaving my Mark
www.leavingmymarc.com

Left of the Hill
www.leftofthehill.blogspot.com

Not Larry Sabato
www.notlarrysabato.typepad.com

The Richmonder
www.the-richmonder.blogspot.com

¹ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-253.13:1(c).

² 8 Va. Admin. Code § 20-131-170.

³ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-207.1

⁴ 8 Va. Admin. Code § 20-170-10(8).

⁵ *Family Life Education Board of Education Guidelines and Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* (Richmond, VA: Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education, 2009), accessed 15 April 2010, <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/family_life/familylife_guidelines_standards.pdf>, 9.

⁶ Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-207.2.

⁷ 8 Va. Admin. Code § 20-170-10(9).

⁸ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, (Washington, DC: Guttmacher Institute, January 2010), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPTrends.pdf>>, Table 3.1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Table 3.2.

¹⁰ Joyce A. Martin, et. al, “Births: Final Data for 2006,” *National Vital Statistics Reports*, vol. 57, number 7 (Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 7 January 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_07.pdf>, Table B.

¹¹ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, Table 3.2.

¹² Martin, et. al, “Births: Final Data for 2006.”

¹³ *Ibid.*, Table B.

¹⁴ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*.

¹⁵ “Cases of HIV Infection and AIDS in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2007,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*, vol. 19, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/2007report/pdf/2007SurveillanceReport.pdf>>, Table 18.

¹⁶ Slide 6: “Estimated Numbers of HIV/AIDS Cases among Adolescents 13 to 19 Years of Age, 2007—34 States,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents and Young Adults (through 2007)*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2009), accessed 25 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/adolescents/index.htm>>.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; “AIDS Case Rate per 100,000 Population, All Ages, 2007,” (Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparable.jsp?ind=513&cat=11&sub=120&yr=62&typ=1&sort=a>>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Table 16.

¹⁹ Slide 15: “Reported AIDS Cases among Adolescents 13 to 19 Years of Age, 2007—United States and Dependent Areas,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents and Young Adults (through 2007)*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2009), accessed 25 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/adolescents/index.htm>>.

²⁰ “Wonder Database: Selected STDs by Age, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender, 1996-2008 Results,” (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), 30 June 2009, accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://wonder.cdc.gov>>; see also Table 10: “Chlamydia: Reported Cases and Rates Per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of STD Prevention, November 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats08/surv2008-Complete.pdf>>, 95.

²¹ *Ibid.*; see also Table 20: “Gonorrhea—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 106.

²² *Ibid.*; see also Table 33: “Primary and Secondary Syphilis—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 121.

²³ This refers to the federal government’s fiscal year, which begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2009 began on October 1, 2008 and ended on September 30, 2009.

²⁴ Through the Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations process, Congress eliminated all discretionary funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, including the entire CBAE program and the abstinence-only-until-marriage portion of AFLA. The grant

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years listed in the chart reflect the years for which funding was originally approved; however, the grants effectively ended in Fiscal Year 2009.

²⁵ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

²⁶ This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means exhaustive and does not contain the local level newspapers which are integral to getting your message out to your community. SIECUS strongly urges you to follow stories about the issues that concern you on the national, state, and local level by using an internet news alert service such as [Google alerts](#), becoming an avid reader of your local papers, and establishing relationships with reporters who cover your issues. For more information on how to achieve your media goals visit the [SIECUS Community Action Kit](#).