



Mississippi

Mississippi received \$1,647,038 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

Mississippi Sexuality Education Law

Schools are not required to teach sexuality education or sexually transmitted disease (STD)/HIV education. If schools choose to teach either or both forms of education, they must stress abstinence-until-marriage. In addition, monogamous heterosexual relationships must be presented as the only appropriate place for sexual intercourse.

Local school boards must authorize sexuality education instruction and each school must be in compliance with local regulations. If the school board authorizes the teaching of contraception, state law dictates that the failure rates and risks of each contraceptive method must be included.

Mississippi sexuality education law also dictates that if homosexuality is taught, it must be presented as “unnatural and dangerous” and be discussed within the context of Mississippi’s law outlawing sodomy.²

Parents or guardians must be notified of any sexuality education instruction and have the ability to remove their children from any or all sexuality education classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Mississippi Education Code 37-13-171.

Recent Legislation

The Mississippi legislature does not carry bills over from one session to the next. Related 2003 and 2004 bills are listed. Mississippi’s legislative session ended on May 9, 2004.

Governor Approves Bill Without Provision Requiring Creation of Advisory Councils to Make Recommendations on Sexuality Education, 2003 Session

After a January 17, 2003 introduction, House Bill 920, which would have required local school districts to create health/physical education advisory councils to make recommendations on various topics, including age-appropriate sexuality education, died in committee on February 4. A similar bill, Senate Bill 2339, was introduced in the Senate on January 15 and passed on February 6. It was then sent to the House where it was amended on February 21 to omit any

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.

reference to human sexuality and passed on February 26. Governor Ronnie Musgrove (D) approved the bill on March 18, 2003.

Bill Requiring Informed Consent for Sex Education Died, 2004 Session

The Student and Family Privacy Protection Act, introduced in January 2004, died in committee in March 2004. Among other provisions, Senate Bill 2111, would have required informed written consent from parents before a child could participate in classes on “health, sex education or similar subjects.” Informed consent for student health care services also would have been required as would, upon request, availability of all instruction materials for inspection by a parent. The law would also have prohibited any survey that asked a student about their sexual attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors.

Events of Note

SIECUS is not aware of any recent events of note regarding sexuality education in Mississippi.

Mississippi’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note³

- In 2003, 58% of female high school students and 64% of male high school students in Mississippi reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 5% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students in Mississippi 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 2003, 15% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students in Mississippi 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, 47% of female high school students and 46% of male high school students in Mississippi 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, 12% of females and 26% of males in Mississippi 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, 60% of females and 72% of males in Mississippi reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 57% of females and 69% of males nationwide.

³ 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 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 20% of females and 9% of males in Mississippi 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, 8% of female high school students and 7% of male high school students in Mississippi 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, 87% of high school students in Mississippi reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Mississippi's abortion rate was 16 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁴
- In 2001, Mississippi's birth rate was 67 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 per 1,000 nationwide.⁵

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Mississippi received \$1,062,752 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 Mississippi, Title V sub-grantees contribute 44% of the state's required match and the state contributes the rest of this match through the state budget and in-kind services. The money is controlled by the Mississippi Department of Health, Office of Personal Health Services, Bureau of Child Health.

The funding is given to 13 groups with grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000. Mississippi chooses which groups to grant money based on certain criteria. Funded programs must target youth ages ten to 19, place a special emphasis on youth at high-risk for pregnancy, and follow all eight points of the federal definition of abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. Sub-grantees must also demonstrate that parents and communities are involved with their abstinence-only-until-marriage program.

There is no long-term evaluation of these programs. Rather, Department of Health staff members make unannounced site visits to each of the sub-grantees. During these visits, staff members check to make sure that the sub-grantees are following each of the eight points of the abstinence-only-until-marriage program definition as defined in Section 510 of the Social Security Act.

The state's initial Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding was used to create the *Just Wait* campaign. The Mississippi Department of Health also provides technical assistance for these groups.

⁴ 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.

⁵ A. Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

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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 Mississippi: Community Matters Inc. There are two AFLA grantees in Mississippi: Jackson State University and West Jackson Community Development.

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, Title V, and AFLA)
Mississippi Department of Health www.msdh.state.ms.us/msdhsite/index.cfm/32,0,170,103,html	\$1,062,752 federal	Title V
Community Matters, Inc. 2002-2003	\$100,000	SPRANS–CBAE (Planning Grant)
Jackson State University 2002-2003	\$250,000	AFLA
West Jackson Community Development 2002-2003	\$234,286	AFLA

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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Mississippi Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Mississippi
P.O. Box 2242
Jackson, MS 39225
Phone: (601) 355-6464
www.msaclu.org

Equality Mississippi
P.O. Box 6021
Jackson, MS 39288
Phone: (877) 258-0077
www.equalityms.org

Mississippi Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Mississippi Family Council
P.O. Box 13514
Jackson, MS 39236
Phone: (888) MS-FAMILY
www.msfamily.org

American Family Association
107 Parkgate Dr.
Tupelo, MS 38803
Phone: (662) 844-5036
www.afa.net

Newspapers in Mississippi

The Clarion-Ledger
Annie Oeth
Medical/Health Editor
201 S. Congress St.
Jackson, MS 39201
Phone: (601) 961-7237

Mississippi Press
Beverly Tuskan
Medical/Health Editor
1225 Jackson Ave.
Pascagoula, MS 39567
Phone: (228) 934-1442

The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal
Michaela Gibson Morris
Medical/Health Reporter
1655 S. Green St.
Tupelo, MS 38804
Phone: (662) 678-1599