

The SIECUS State Profiles



ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS'S SEX ED SNAPSHOT

THE STATE OF SEX EDUCATION

Advocates have taken significant action over the past seven years to advance sex education in Illinois, most recently culminating in the passage of two proactive bills. [House Bill 3299](#), introduced by Representative William Davis, requires developmental disability facilities to provide developmentally appropriate sex education and related resources to anyone admitted. [House Bill 3550](#), introduced by Representative Ann Williams, requires sex education curriculum to include instruction on consent. In addition, [House Bill 246](#), sponsored by Representative Anna Moeller, requires public schools to include the contributions of LGBT people in history courses, further demonstrating legislators' increasing recognition of the importance of inclusive curriculum. [House Bill 4007](#) is currently making its way through the Illinois General Assembly and if successful would require sex education curriculum to include age-appropriate discussion on sexting.

In 2013, legislators advanced sex education requirements through the passage of [House Bill 2675](#), which requires sex education curriculum to include instruction on both abstinence as a responsible and positive decision and contraception. The amendment also requires curriculum to be medically accurate and developmentally/age appropriate.

While these legislative actions all mark significant advancements for sex education in Illinois, opponents, including the Illinois Family Institute, have routinely advocated to limit sex education. Such opposition enable the current patchwork landscape. Since Illinois schools are only required to provide limited instruction on abstinence and HIV/AIDS prevention, school districts are left to decide what type of sex education – if any at all — they provide to youth. If a school chooses to teach sex education, curriculum is required to be medically accurate and include instruction on both abstinence and contraception, consent, sexual abuse, assault awareness, and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention, and teach “honor and respect” for heterosexual marriage. Curriculum is not required to be comprehensive, culturally responsive to the needs of young people of color, or include instruction on sexual orientation or consent. Further, family life education courses are required to teach the alternatives to abortion. However, sex education curriculum must cover all potential pregnancy outcomes and include stigma-free information about abortion.

Mandating local control over sex education presents unique challenges that have resulted in a glaring disparity regarding the quality of sex education that students receive. Such discretion allows for the implementation of policies and curriculum that stigmatize marginalized youth, such as students of color and LGBTQ youth, and presents further challenges in ensuring that low income districts have access to the resources needed to implement comprehensive sex education.

Even among districts that mandate sex education, curriculum continues to vary. Although the Chicago Public Schools system mandates sex education, a [recent report](#) found that only 28 percent of Chicago schools taught all required sex education topics in all grade levels. Community members are [currently working](#) to further understand which schools fail to meet the city's requirements.

To address the current gaps in education, organizations, such as the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, offer youth workshops that meet the [National Sexuality Education Standards](#). These workshops are facilitated by youth educators, adult educators, and theater artists. Right now, advocates can take action to ensure young people in their community have access to quality sex education. After contacting their local school board, advocates can determine what topics are missing from sex education, such as instruction that is culturally responsive to the needs of young people of color or instruction on topics including sexual orientation and gender identity. They can then vocalize the important need for advancing sex education requirements in their community. Further, advocates can contact their representatives to discuss the critical need for advancing comprehensive sex education requirements statewide. Advocates are encouraged to use the SIECUS [Community Action Toolkit](#) to guide local efforts to advance sex education.

STATE SEX EDUCATION POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS AT A GLANCE

- Illinois schools are **not** required to teach sex education. However, they are [required](#) to provide instruction on human ecology and health, human growth and development, and the “psychological, physiological, hygienic, and social responsibilities of family life,” including discussion of abstinence and AIDS prevention.
 - Curriculum is not required to be comprehensive.
 - Curriculum must emphasize abstinence until marriage. However, curriculum must also place substantial emphasis on contraception if a school chooses to teach sex education.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity. However, curriculum [must teach](#) “honor and respect” for monogamous heterosexual marriage.
- Curriculum must include instruction on consent.
- Parents or guardians may remove their children from any or all sex education, family life programs, and/or STD/human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention programs. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)
- Curriculum must be medically accurate.

STATE HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS

This section highlights sex education bills that were introduced during the 2019 state legislative session as well as bills that have been introduced thus far in 2020. These proposed bills provide a brief overview of both recent and current legislative action taken to advance or restrict sex education. For a more comprehensive look at relevant legislation concerning sex education and related topics such as reproductive health care, LGBTQ rights, and HIV/AIDS, continue reading on to the “State Legislative Activity” section of Illinois’s profile.

2020 Legislative Session

[House Resolution 660](#) (pending):

- If successful, would recognize that every student has the right to comprehensive sex education.

Last updated on April 7, 2020

House Bill 4007 (pending):

- If successful, would require sex education, if offered, to include age-appropriate discussion about the consequences of sexting.

Senate Bill 3788 (pending):

- If successful, will require sex education to be comprehensive. Curriculum must include instruction on healthy relationships, understanding consent, scientifically accepted methods of pregnancy prevention and STI prevention, outcomes of pregnancy including parenting, adoption, and abortion, and effectiveness of prevention methods. This bill would also require curriculum to be responsive to the needs of students regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, parenting status, STI status, or if they are sexually active.

2019 Legislative Session

House Bill 2820 (tabled):

- Sought to require sex education curriculum to include age-appropriate instruction on consent.

House Bill 3071 (failed):

- Sought to require developmental disability facilities to provide developmentally appropriate sex education and related resources to anyone admitted.

House Bill 3299 (passed):

- Requires developmental disability facilities to provide developmentally appropriate sex education and related resources to anyone admitted.

House Bill 3550 (passed):

- Requires sex education curriculum to include age-appropriate instruction on consent.

MORE ON SEX ED IN ILLINOIS

STATE LAW

The [Illinois Critical Health Problems and Comprehensive Health Education Act](#) states that the following topics must be addressed in all elementary and secondary schools:

[H]uman ecology and health, human growth and development; the emotional, psychological, physiological, hygienic, and social responsibilities of family life, including sexual abstinence until marriage; [and the] prevention and control of disease, including instruction in grades 6 through 12 on the prevention, transmission, and spread of [acquired immunodeficiency syndrome] AIDS.

As of 2013, schools that teach sex education are no longer required to emphasize that “abstinence is the expected norm” and are instead expected to teach both abstinence and contraception. All courses that discuss sexual intercourse are to address “the hazards of sexual intercourse . . . [and] the latest medical information citing the failure and success rates of condoms,” and include explanations of when it is “unlawful for males to have sexual relations with females under the age of 18.” Course material must also include information regarding responsible parenting.

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In 2014, the Illinois State Board of Education [published Public Act 98-0441](#) to provide further details on state sex education requirements.

In 2018, Illinois enrolled [Public Act 100-0684](#), requiring sex education instruction to include discussion on consent, sexual harassment, and sexual assault; and [Public Act 100-1043](#), requiring the State Board of Education to implement a pilot program including instruction on parenting education for grades 9-12, which may be included in sex education classes.

Illinois law also [provides guidelines](#) for family life education courses. These courses are “designed to promote wholesome and comprehensive understanding of the emotional, psychological, physiological, hygienic, and social responsibility aspects of family life,” and therefore must “include the teaching of the alternatives to abortion, appropriate to the various grade levels.”

The Illinois Superintendent of Education must prepare the course of instruction for family life education, make it available to school districts, and “develop a procedure for evaluating and measuring the effectiveness of the family life courses of instruction in each local school district, including the setting of reasonable goals for reduced sexual activity, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and premarital pregnancy.”

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any or all sex education, family life programs, and/or STD/human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention programs. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)

STATE STANDARDS

The [Illinois Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health](#) was updated in 2014 but does not provide curriculum guidance for sex education and only briefly mentions that students should be able to “explain the basic functions of the reproductive system” by grade eight and “demonstrate basic knowledge of HIV and AIDS.” The Standards also address effective communication and decision-making skills.

STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

State legislative activity related to sex education does not take place in isolation from the broader embroiled political and policy climate. Attacks on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ) individuals, and efforts to limit access to abortion care and other reproductive health care services prevent students from receiving comprehensive sex education and accessing sexual and reproductive health care services. Below are highlights of current legislative activity related to these topics. The Illinois General Assembly is organized in a two year cycle called a biennium.

2019-2020 SESSION

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
HOUSE BILL 246	REQUIRES THAT TEXTBOOKS PURCHASED THROUGH THE TEXTBOOK BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM MUST BE NON-DISCRIMINATORY AND INCLUDE THE ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF LGBT PEOPLE IN HISTORY.	ENACTED
HOUSE RESOLUTION 660	RECOGNIZES THAT EVERY STUDENT HAS THE RIGHT TO COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION.	REFERRED TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE BILL 2058	ESTABLISHES A 20 WEEK ABORTION BAN.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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HOUSE BILL 2281	PROHIBITS ABORTION BASED ON THE FETUS'S RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, ANCESTRY, SEX, OR DIAGNOSIS OR POTENTIAL DIAGNOSIS OF THE FETUS HAVING DOWN SYNDROME OR ANY OTHER DISABILITY.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE BILL 2384	PROHIBITS ABORTION AFTER THE FETUS IS DETERMINED TO BE VIABLE.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE BILL 2467	PERMITS MINORS TO OBTAIN AN ABORTION WITHOUT THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF A PARENT OR GUARDIAN.	REFERRED TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE BILL 2495	ESTABLISHES THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO USE OR REFUSE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE BILL 2820	REQUIRES SEX EDUCATION CURRICULUM TO INCLUDE AGE-APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTION ON CONSENT.	TABLED IN THE HOUSE
HOUSE BILL 3071	REQUIRES DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY FACILITIES TO PROVIDE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE SEX EDUCATION AND RELATED RESOURCES TO ANYONE ADMITTED.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE BILL 3158	ESTABLISHES A 20 WEEK ABORTION BAN.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE BILL 3299	REQUIRES DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY FACILITIES TO PROVIDE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE SEX EDUCATION AND RELATED RESOURCES TO ANYONE ADMITTED.	ENACTED
HOUSE BILL 3515	PROHIBITS PHYSICIANS FROM PRESCRIBING HORMONES FOR THE PURPOSE OF HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY, PUBERTY SUPPRESSANTS, OR PERFORMING GENDER AFFIRMATION SURGERY.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE BILL 3550	REQUIRES SEX EDUCATION CURRICULUM TO INCLUDE AGE-APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTION ON CONSENT.	ENACTED
HOUSE BILL 3850	REPEALS THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ACT AND PROHIBITS ABORTION AFTER THE FETUS IS DETERMINED TO BE VIABLE.	REFERRED TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES
HOUSE BILL 4007	REQUIRES SEX EDUCATION CURRICULUM TO INCLUDE AGE-APPROPRIATE DISCUSSION OF SEXTING.	REFERRED TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION: SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND POLICIES.
SENATE BILL 25	ESTABLISHES THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO USE OR REFUSE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE.	ENACTED
SENATE BILL 78	REQUIRES THAT TEXTBOOKS PURCHASED THROUGH THE TEXTBOOK BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM MUST BE NON-DISCRIMINATORY AND INCLUDE THE ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF LGBT PEOPLE IN HISTORY.	DIED IN THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ASSIGNMENTS

Last updated on April 7, 2020

SENATE BILL 1942	ESTABLISHES THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO USE OR REFUSE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE.	DIED IN THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ASSIGNMENTS
SENATE BILL 3788	REQUIRES SEX EDUCATION TO INCLUDE INSTRUCTION ON HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS, UNDERSTANDING CONSENT, SCIENTIFICALLY ACCEPTED METHODS OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION AND STI PREVENTION, OUTCOMES OF PREGNANCY INCLUDING PARENTING, ADOPTION, AND ABORTION, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PREVENTION METHODS. ALSO REQUIRES CURRICULUM TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF THEIR GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, PARENTING STATUS, STI STATUS, OR IF THEY ARE SEXUALLY ACTIVE	REFERRED TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ASSIGNMENTS

LEGISLATIVE KEY

<p>SEX EDUCATION REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY HIV/AIDS (THAT IMPACTS YOUTH)</p>

YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH DATA

Young people are more than their health behaviors and outcomes. While data can be a powerful tool to demonstrate the sex education and sexual health care needs of young people, it is important to be mindful that these behaviors and outcomes are impacted by systemic inequities present in our society that affect an individual’s sexual health and well-being. To learn more about Illinois’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results, [click here](#).

STATE SCHOOL HEALTH PROFILES DATA

In 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the School Health Profiles, which measure school health policies and practices and highlight which health topics were taught in schools across the country. Since the data were collected from self-administered questionnaires completed by schools’ principals and lead health education teachers, the CDC notes that one limitation of the School Health Profiles is bias toward the reporting of more positive policies and practices. In the School Health Profiles, the [CDC identifies 20 sexual health education topics](#) as critical for ensuring a young person’s sexual health. Below are key instruction highlights for secondary schools in Illinois as reported for the 2017–2018 school year.

Reported teaching all 20 critical sexual health education topics

- 17.0% of Illinois secondary schools taught students all 20 critical sexual health education topics in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 44.8% of Illinois secondary schools taught students all 20 critical sexual health education topics in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

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Reported teaching about the benefits of being sexually abstinent

- 87.3% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about the benefits of being sexually abstinent in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 99.2% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about the benefits of being sexually abstinent in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching how to access valid and reliable information, products, and services related to HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy

- 74.7% of Illinois secondary schools taught students how to access valid and reliable information, products, and services related to HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 95.8% of Illinois secondary schools taught students how to access valid and reliable information, products, and services related to HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching how to create and sustain healthy and respectful relationships

- 88.4% of Illinois secondary schools taught students how to create and sustain healthy and respectful relationships in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 99.1% of Illinois secondary schools taught students how to create and sustain healthy and respectful relationships in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about preventive care that is necessary to maintain reproductive and sexual health

- 66.6% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about preventive care that is necessary to maintain reproductive and sexual health in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 94.9% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about preventive care that is necessary to maintain reproductive and sexual health in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching how to correctly use a condom

- 27.5% of Illinois secondary schools taught students how to correctly use a condom in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 73.3% of Illinois secondary schools taught students how to correctly use a condom in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about methods of contraception other than condoms

- 52.1% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about methods of contraception other than condoms in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 92.4% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about methods of contraception other than condoms in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about sexual orientation

- 34.4% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about sexual orientation in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 61.0% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about sexual orientation in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about gender roles, gender identity, or gender expression

- 33.5% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about gender roles, gender identity, or gender expression in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 64.9% of Illinois secondary schools taught students about gender roles, gender identity, or gender expression in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported providing curricula or supplementary materials relevant to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) youth

- 46.6% of Illinois secondary schools provided students with curricula or supplementary materials that included HIV, STD, or pregnancy prevention information relevant to LGBTQ youth.

Visit the CDC's [School Health Profiles](#) report for additional information on school health policies and practices.

The quality of sex education taught often reflects funding available for sex education programs.

To learn more about federal funding streams, [click here](#).