

State Profiles

Alaska State Profile



Alaska's State of Sex Ed

Sex education is not currently mandated in Alaska. As Alaska schools are not required to provide sex education to students, school districts are left to decide what, if any, type of sex education they provide to youth.

[Download Scorecard](#)



Sex Ed Requirement



Sex Ed Content



Overall State Policy Grade

**State
Profile
Sections**

Current Requirement

Recent Legislation

More on Sex Ed

Bill Tracker

Current Requirement

- Alaska schools are **not** required to teach sex education.
 - Alaska has no standard regarding abstinence instruction in sex education.
 - Alaska has no regulation regarding medically accurate sex education instruction.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity. However, the *Content and Performance Standards for Alaska Students* suggests that students should be able to comprehend major developments related to class, ethnicity, race, and gender.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on consent.
- Sex education curriculum must be available for review by parents or guardians and they are allowed to remove their children from any activity, class, or program. Parents or guardians may submit a written request to remove their children from instruction on teen dating violence and abuse. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

Advocates regularly face uphill battles in advancing sex education in Alaska, routinely working to advance sex education that is age-appropriate and medically accurate. However, in 2022, Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson (D-I) introduced *Senate Bill 157*, which would require sexual health education to be a component of health and personal safety curriculum for K-12 schools. This is the first time in years that advocates have had a positive bill to advocate for. Although ultimately

unsuccessful in previous sessions, it continues to be re-introduced in subsequent legislative sessions. Various regressive pieces of legislation were introduced in 2022, including [Senate Bill 196](#) and [House Bill 342](#), which both aimed to increase the accessibility of curriculum to the public. While appearing to increase “parental rights,” bills like Senate Bill 196 and House Bill 342, stigmatize the vital and important information provided under sex education and infringe upon young people’s right to access this education to help them make healthy, informed decisions for themselves. These bills also represent the opposition’s attempt to create additional, unnecessary procedures for consent, review of instructional materials, and advanced notification. These bills represent one of the many challenges faced by advocates in Alaska’s legislative landscape.

Since Alaska schools are not required to provide sex education, school districts are left to decide what type of sex education—if any at all—they provide to youth. 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 LGBTQAI+ youth, and presents further challenges in ensuring that low income districts have access to the resources needed to implement sex education. Students who live in rural communities are more likely to feel the impact of inadequate sex education.

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 instruction, such as consent, sexual orientation and gender identity, and contraceptives. Advocates can also address misconceptions concerning sex education to increase community support. Advocates are encouraged to take action on pending legislation that seeks to advance or restrict the principles of sex education. For a current overview of pending legislation, see table below. Further, advocates can contact their representatives to discuss the critical need for advancing sex education requirements and increase funding to support districts in implementing curriculum. Advocates are encouraged to use the [SIECUS Community Action Toolkit](#) to guide local efforts to advance sex education and to reach out to [EducateUs](#) to get connected to local advocacy groups.

More on sex ed in Alaska...

State Law: A Closer Look...

Alaska does not have a statute that requires sexuality or STI education. However, [AS 14.30.360](#) states that “each district in the state public school system shall be encouraged to initiate and conduct a program in health education for kindergarten through grade 12” and “should include instruction in physical health and personal safety including ... the identification and prevention of child abuse, ... sexual abuse, and domestic violence, and appropriate use of health services.” Alaska state law does not specify any parental permission for students to participate in sex education or education of HIV/AIDS.

Since 2016, [AS 14.30.361](#) has required that “a person may only teach a class or program in sex education, human reproduction education, or human sexuality education if the person possesses a valid teacher certificate ... and is employed under contract with the school or is supervised [by such person].” Additionally, “before curriculum, literature, or materials related to sex education, human reproduction education, or human sexuality education may be used in a class or program or distributed in a school, the curriculum, literature, or material must be approved by the school board and [be] available for parents to review.”

[AS.14.30.355](#) requires each school district to establish a training program for employees and students, and provide parent notices related to sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention for students enrolled in grades K-12. Similarly, [AS. 14.30.356](#) requires each school district to develop and approve a program relating to teen dating violence and abuse awareness and prevention for grades 7-12. This program must:

1. Include training for employees and students;
2. Provide parent notices, and
 1. Be reviewed by a qualified individual or committee for consistency with generally accepted standards for a teen dating violence and abuse awareness and prevention program.
3. The training, notices, and instruction adopted must include:
 1. Age appropriate information;
 2. The warning signs of dating violence and abusive behavior;
 3. Characteristics of healthy relationships;

4. Measures to prevent and stop dating violence and abuse;
5. Community resources available to victims of dating violence and abuse; and
6. A procedure allowing a student to be excused from participating in training at the written request of a parent or guardian. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

State Standards

Alaska provides curriculum standards for schools to follow if they choose to provide sex education. The “Skills for a Healthy Life” section of the *Content and Performance Standards for Alaska Students*, provided by the Department of Education and Early Development, recommends that students should “understand the physical and behavioral characteristics of human sexual development and maturity...develop an awareness of how personal life roles are affected by and contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and cultures... understand how respect for the rights of self and others contributes to relationships...” and take responsible actions to create safe and healthy environments.”

State Legislation

State legislative activity related to sex education does not take place in isolation from the broader embroiled political and policy climate. In 2022, a national wave of attacks on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQAI+) individuals, attempts to restrict or prohibit instruction on “divisive concepts” such as “Critical Race Theory” (which is not taught in public schools), and efforts to limit access to abortion care and other reproductive healthcare services swept the country in an effort to prevent students from receiving sex education and accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare services. Below are highlights of current legislative activity related to these topics. **Alaska’s 2024 legislative session convenes January 16, 2024, operating as a full-time legislature.**

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 Alaska's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results, [click here](#). At the time of publication, the 2021 YRBS data was not made available yet.

Alaska School Health Profiles Data

In 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the 2020 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 22 sexual health education topics](#) as critical for ensuring a young person's sexual health. Below are key instruction highlights for secondary schools in Alaska as [reported](#) for the 2019–2020 school year.

Reported teaching all 22 critical sexual health education topics

- 18.8% of Alaska secondary schools taught students all 22 critical sexual health education topics in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 22.2% of Alaska secondary schools taught students all 22 critical sexual health education topics in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about the benefits of being sexually abstinent

- 47.3% of Alaska secondary schools taught students about the benefits of being sexually abstinent in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 54.1% of Alaska 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

- 45.1% of Alaska 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.
- 50.3% of Alaska 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

- 48.6% of Alaska 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.
- 56.8% of Alaska 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

- 41.4 % of Alaska 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.
- 48.9% of Alaska 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

- 6.9% of Alaska secondary schools taught students how to correctly use a condom in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 33.1% of Alaska 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

- 25.9% of Alaska secondary schools taught students about methods of contraception other than condoms in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.

- 71.1% of Alaska 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 diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities

- 36.3% of Alaska secondary schools taught students about diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 38.5% of Alaska secondary schools taught students about diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about how gender roles and stereotypes affect goals, decision-making, and relationships

- 36.2% of Alaska secondary schools taught students about gender roles and stereotypes in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 46.2% of Alaska secondary schools taught students about gender roles and stereotypes 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

- 36.9% of Alaska 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](#).

