

State Profiles

Michigan State Profile



Michigan's State of Sex Ed

Michigan schools are not required to teach sex education. However, HIV/AIDS education is required.

[Download Scorecard](#)



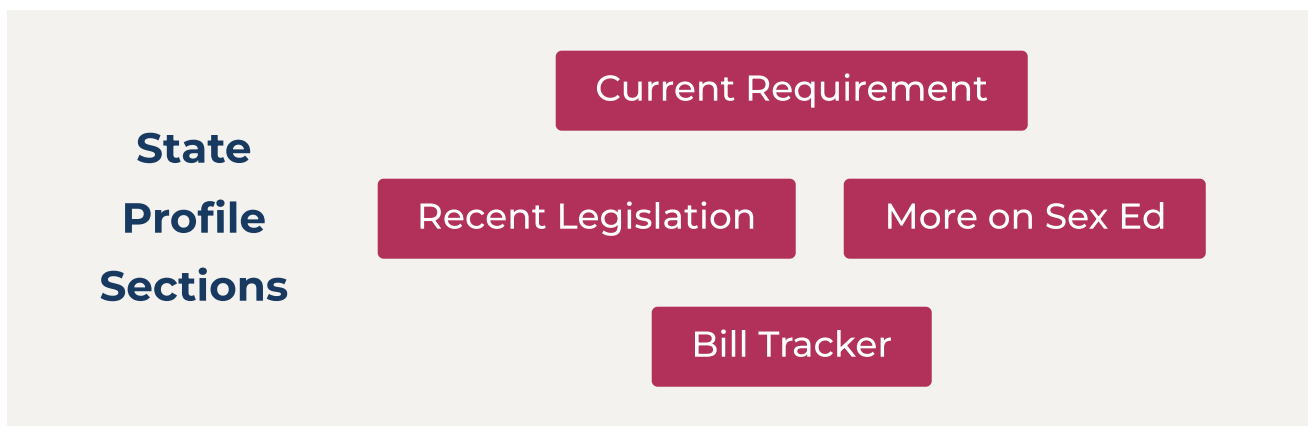
Sex Ed Requirements



Sex Ed Content



Overall State Policy Grade



Current Requirements At Glance

- Curriculum must stress abstinence as a positive lifestyle.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on consent. However, curriculum must include instruction on refusal skills, that it is “wrong to take advantage of, harass, or exploit another person sexually”, and that having sex or sexual contact with an individual under the age of 16 is a crime.
- Parents or guardians must receive written notice of any sex education class and can remove their children from any part of the instruction. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)
- HIV/AIDS education must be medically accurate. However, Michigan has no standard on medically accurate sex education

RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

Michigan advocates have worked tirelessly to advance sex education and uplift the voices of young people. Young people in the state have been leading calls for legislators to implement consent education and advance inclusive curriculum. Unfortunately, these calls for progress have been largely ignored. Instead, advocates have been forced to defend against attacks on the public education system. One such attack, [Senate Resolution 166/House Resolution 349](#), passed in 2022. This bill condemned the Michigan Department of Education’s teacher training videos on student’s gender identity and sexual orientation and reaffirmed parental rights. Other bills were also introduced (but did not succeed) that would restrict classroom discussion of sexual orientation and gender

identity in grades kindergarten through 4th grade. “Parental rights’ ‘ legislation are veiled attempts to villainize sex education and other inclusive forms of education while often specifically targeting LGBTQIA youth. .

Since Michigan schools are not required to provide sex education to students, 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 LGBTQ youth, and presents further challenges in ensuring that low income districts have access to the resources needed to implement sex education.

Students in Michigan report that sex education curriculum often lacks instruction on consent, information about sexual orientation and gender identity, and utilizes fear tactics to encourage young people to remain abstinent. Further, some parents report that their children have even brought home virginity pledge cards. Advocates from the Michigan Department of Education report that a majority of districts implement some or all of the Michigan Model for Health curriculum. There has been a continuous effort to secure state funding to update this curriculum, as the high school portion was last updated in 2007 and the middle school portion in 2010. As the state curriculum becomes increasingly outdated, districts have begun utilizing more advanced curriculum, including the **Rights, Respect, Responsibility** curriculum, created by Advocates for Youth.

Advocates note that the biggest barrier to sex education for young people in Michigan is the lack of a state-wide sex education requirement. Advocates note increased support is also needed from the Michigan Department of Education in addition to increased funding for advanced curriculum and teacher training. To address the current gaps in education, organizations such as the Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH) provide sex education programs and resources to young people and advocates across the state. Additionally, MOASH actively monitors legislation in Michigan that could either advance or restrict sex education and work with legislators on crafting language to include in positive sex education bills. In addition, the Michigan Radical Sex Ed Initiative **released a guide** on implementing queer and trans-inclusive sex education in 2019 with the support of SIECUS.

Increased support from communities and district boards of education, in addition to an increased number of coalition partners, is needed to advance sex

education across the state. Further, advocates report that increased public knowledge and an increased ability to dispel common myths and concerns based on fear tactics and organized through cultural conservatives is needed. Right now, advocates can take action to ensure young people in their community receive quality sex education. After contacting their school board of education and [sex education advisory board](#), advocates can raise awareness on important topics missing from local sex education instruction. This can include topics such as medically accurate instruction on contraceptives or curriculum that is culturally responsive to the needs of youth of color and [LGBTQ youth](#). If an advocate's school district does not require sex education, they can form their own sex education advisory board with the support of community members to directly influence what curriculum recommendations are made to the school board. 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. In addition, advocates can contact their representatives to discuss the critical need for further inclusive sex education policies and a comprehensive sex education requirement for Michigan schools. 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, such as [Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health \(MOASH\)](#) to get involved.

[More on sex ed in Michigan...](#)

State Law: A Closer Look

Michigan state law does not require schools to teach sex education. However, HIV/AIDS education is required. As outlined in [Michigan Compiled Laws §§ 380.1169–.1170, 380.1506–.1507, and 388.1766–.1766a](#), schools may also offer sex education instruction, which can include information on family planning, family life education, and sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention. HIV and sex education must present abstinence as “a responsible method of preventing unwanted or out-of-wedlock pregnancy and [STDs]” and as “a positive lifestyle for unmarried young people.” If offered, sex education classes must be offered as an elective and not as a graduation requirement like health and physical education.

HIV/AIDS classes may be taught by health care professionals or teachers specifically trained in HIV/AIDS education, and sex education instruction must be provided by teachers qualified to teach health education. All instruction in reproductive health must be taught by qualified instructors and “supervised by a registered physician, a registered nurse, or other person certified by the state board as qualified.” In 2016, the 2016 School Aid Act went into effect and included a provision that introduced penalties for any public school employees that assist students in accessing abortion care. This provision created another obstacle for teachers seeking to discuss abortion as a valid outcome of pregnancy. Affirming abortion as a valid outcome of pregnancy is a critical topic for inclusion within sex education programs. As a result, abortion “shall not be considered a method of family planning, nor shall abortion be taught as a method of reproductive health.” Further, no school official or school board member may dispense any family planning drug or device in school, nor may they make abortion referrals. Districts found in violation of this may face corrective actions, such as being forced to forfeit aid.

School boards must establish an advisory board to review all sex education materials and curricula. This advisory board must include parents, students, educators, clergy, and health professionals. Each school district must also appoint a state-approved sex education program supervisor. All curricula must be approved by the local school board and, if any changes are made, the local school board must hold at least two public hearings on the revisions. Parents must receive notification of any sex education class and be allowed to review its content, and they may remove their children from any part of the sex education instruction. **This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.**

To access a summary of HIV/STD and sex education requirements and best practices for Michigan public schools, [click here](#).

State Standards

Most Michigan public schools also follow guidelines from the [Michigan Model for Health](#), formerly the Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education, which promotes nationally recognized and research-based curricula, including curricula on HIV/AIDS prevention. Michigan also provides a set of [standards for grades K–8](#) that guide health education curricula development to ensure that there are a uniform set of content expectations.

In addition, the Michigan Board of Education adopted the *Policy to Promote Health and Prevent Disease and Pregnancy*, which states that sex education programs must be age-appropriate, developmentally and culturally appropriate, medically accurate, and based on effective programming.

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. **Michigan’s full-time, two-year legislative session convenes on January 10, 2024.**

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

Michigan School Health Profiles Data

In 2022, 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 22 sexual health education topics](#) as critical for ensuring a young person's sexual health. Below are key instruction highlights for secondary schools in Michigan as reported for the 2019–2020 school year.

Reported teaching all 22 critical sexual health education topics

- 10.2% of Michigan secondary schools taught students all 22 critical sexual health education topics in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 23.8% of Michigan 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

- 73.9 % of Michigan secondary schools taught students about the benefits of being sexually abstinent in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 97.4% of Michigan 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

- 72.9% of Michigan 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.
- 97.4% of Michigan 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

- 68.5% of Michigan 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.
- 97.6% of Michigan 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

- 57.2% of Michigan 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.
- 91.4% of Michigan 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

- 18.5% of Michigan secondary schools taught students how to correctly use a condom in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 51.3% of Michigan 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

- 26.9% of Michigan secondary schools taught students about methods of contraception other than condoms in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 74.0% of Michigan 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 and gender identity

- 36.8% of Michigan secondary schools taught students about sexual orientation and gender identity in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 59.6 % of Michigan secondary schools taught students about sexual orientation and gender identity in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

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

- 42.2% of Michigan secondary schools taught students about gender roles and stereotypes in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.

- 69.1% of Michigan 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

- 47.6% of Michigan 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](#).

