

State Profiles

New Hampshire State Profile



New Hampshire's State of Sex Ed

New Hampshire schools **are** required to teach sex education.

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Sex Ed Requirement



Sex Ed Content



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Current Requirement

- New Hampshire has no statute regarding instruction on abstinence. However, the *Health Education Curriculum Guidelines* emphasizes abstinence as the most effective prevention method.
- 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 dating violence and date rape.
- Parents or Guardians may remove their children from sex education instruction based on religious objections. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.
- New Hampshire has no regulation regarding medically accurate sex education instruction.

RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

Advocates have worked diligently to try to advance sex education in New Hampshire but have faced significant challenges in passing statewide measures to advance sex education. The latest attempt, [House Bill 1533](#), was introduced in 2022 by Representative Amanda Toll and would have required sex education to include information about the meaning of consent, respect for personal boundaries, and sexual violence prevention. Unfortunately, this effort was ultimately unsuccessful. New Hampshire enacted [HB 1263](#), legislation that ensures the Department of Education will conduct surveys regarding the compliance of sexual health education.

Since New Hampshire schools are only required to provide instruction on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS, healthy relationships, growth and development, and pregnancy prevention, school districts are left to decide what, if any, further sex education they provide to youth. Therefore, the

quality of instruction in New Hampshire schools varies greatly depending on each district.

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.

Right now, advocates can take action to ensure young people in their community have access to quality sex education. After contacting the local school board of education, advocates can determine what topics are missing from current lesson plans, such as a culturally responsive curriculum that addresses the unique needs of youth of color and LGBTQAI+ young people, instruction on the full range of contraceptive options, or ensuring instruction is medically accurate. 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 improving statewide sex education requirements. 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 New Hampshire...](#)

State Law: A Closer Look

In New Hampshire, according to [Revised Statutes §§ 186:11](#) and [189:10](#), local school boards must “ensure that health education [is] taught to pupils as part of the basic curriculum” and “that all studies prescribed by the state board of education are thoroughly taught, especially physiology, hygiene, and health and physical education as they relate to the effects of ... human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and sexually transmitted

diseases [STDs] on the human system.” The Department of Education is required to develop curriculum frameworks that address those subjects and provide information on HIV/AIDS to all public and private schools to assist them in developing courses and programs.

Additionally, [Revised Statutes § 193-E:2-a](#) specifies that “public schools and public academies shall adhere to the standards identified” for health education. The standards, which were defined and identified as the school approval standards beginning in the school year 2008-2009, cover “kindergarten through twelfth grade and shall clearly set forth the opportunities to acquire the communication, analytical and research skills and competencies, as well as the substantive knowledge expected to be possessed by students at the various grade levels.”

State law requires “school districts to adopt a policy allowing an exception to a particular unit of health or sex education instruction based on religious objections.” [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#) As of 2017, New Hampshire law requires school districts or classroom teachers to provide a minimum of two weeks advance notice to parents prior to instruction of human sexuality or human sexual education

State Standards

New Hampshire produced the [Health Education Curriculum Guidelines](#) in 2003. The guidelines specify that in elementary school, instruction on family life and sexuality should cover: families and relationships, growth and development, and HIV/AIDS (including explaining that HIV is not transmitted through casual contact and discussing the importance of having compassion for people with HIV/AIDS). In middle school, this instruction should cover: families and relationships, growth and development, sexual behavior, HIV and other STD prevention, and pregnancy prevention. In high school, this instruction should cover: families and relationships (including violence and date rape), sexual behavior, HIV and other STD prevention, and pregnancy prevention. The guidelines state that abstinence is the most effective means of preventing pregnancy, HIV, and other STDs.

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. **New Hampshire’s 2023 annual session convenes on January 04, 2023.**

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

New Hampshire 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 New Hampshire as reported for the 2019–2020 school year.

Reported teaching all 22 critical sexual health education topics

- 15.7% of New Hampshire secondary schools taught students all 22 critical sexual health education topics in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 63.2 % of New Hampshire 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

- 75.1% of New Hampshire secondary schools taught students about the benefits of being sexually abstinent in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 98.2% of New Hampshire 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

- 72.4% of New Hampshire 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.
- 94.6% of New Hampshire 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

- 62.4% of New Hampshire 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.
- 100% of New Hampshire 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

- 70.5% of New Hampshire 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.

- 97.4% of New Hampshire 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

- 56.1% of New Hampshire secondary schools taught students how to correctly use a condom in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 96.4% of New Hampshire 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

- 49.7% of New Hampshire secondary schools taught students about methods of contraception other than condoms in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 92.7% of New Hampshire 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

- 54.2% of New Hampshire secondary schools taught students about sexual orientation and gender identity in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 84.0 % of New Hampshire 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 how gender roles and stereotypes affect goals, decision-making, and relationships

- 59.2% of New Hampshire secondary schools taught students about gender roles and stereotypes in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 79.4% of New Hampshire 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

- 59.3% of New Hampshire 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](#).

