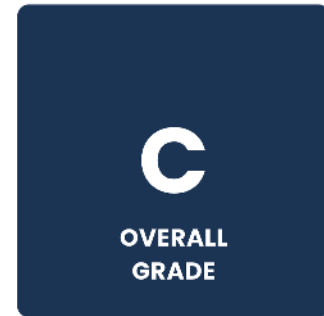




## Delaware State of Sex Ed

Sex education is required, including instruction on HIV Prevention outlined in law. Sex education is opt-out, and "comprehensive sexuality education" and an evidence-based HIV prevention program must stress the benefits of abstinence. Curriculum does not include required instruction on SOGI or contraception, but must teach consent.



[View Bill Tracker](#)

### Current Requirement

- Delaware schools are required to teach sex education as part of the [Comprehensive Health Education Program](#) required in grades K-12.
  - Delaware statute states that curriculum must be comprehensive. However, the state's standards do not meet the [National Sexuality Education Standards](#).
  - Curriculum must stress abstinence.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Curriculum is required to include instruction on consent.
- Delaware statute has no standard regarding the ability of parents and guardians to enroll or remove their children from sex education instruction.
- Delaware has no standard regarding medically accurate sex education instruction. However, curriculum on consent must be evidence informed.
- In order to graduate high school, students must receive 0.5 credits of comprehensive health education.

## RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

Advocates have worked tirelessly over the past decades to advance sex education in Delaware, culminating in the passage of [Senate Bill 78](#) in 2019. Sponsored by Senator Nicole Poore (D-12), the bill requires schools to include age-appropriate and evidence-informed instruction on consent and personal boundaries for students in grades 7-12, marking a significant advancement to sex education requirements statewide. Since 2019, SIECUS has not tracked any sex education-specific bills introduced in Delaware.

However, given the intersection of youth access to affirming spaces and comprehensive education, SIECUS has tracked legislation that would impact transgender youth in schools. Both 2022 and 2024 saw the introduction and failure of various proposed sports bans; Senate [Bill 227](#) would have classified sports teams based upon biological sex, and two years later [Senate Bill 191](#) attempted the same. While Delaware's Comprehensive Health Education Program does not currently include any instruction on menstrual health education for students, during the 2022 legislative session, [Senate Bill 205](#) was passed and expanded access to free menstrual hygiene products in all public schools.

Right now, advocates can take action to ensure young people in their community have access to quality sex education. They can contact their local board of education and determine what topics are missing from existing comprehensive health education. Advocates can then vocalize the importance of implementing specific elements of sex education, such as trauma informed, culturally responsive curriculum that addresses the needs of youth of color and LGBTQIA+ youth, or medically accurate instruction on contraceptives, healthy relationships, and STI prevention. Advocates are encouraged to take action on pending legislation that seeks to advance or restrict the principles of sex education. **Delaware's 2025-2026 legislative session convened January 14th, 2025 and adjourned June 30th, 2026.**

Further, advocates can contact their representatives to discuss the critical need for state standards to meet the [National Sexuality Education Standards](#). Advocates are encouraged to use the [SIECUS Community Action Toolkit](#) to guide local efforts to advance sex education. For more information on getting

involved in local and state advocacy for sex education, reach out to our State Policy Action Manager, Miranda Estes ([mestes@siecus.org](mailto:mestes@siecus.org))

## **More on sex ed in Delaware...**

### **State Law: A Closer Look**

Delaware Administrative Code title 14, § 851 requires sex education as part of K-12 health education. This education must be coordinated by an employee in each school district and overseen by a District Consolidated Application Planning Committee. The committee must consist of teachers, parents, school nurses, community leaders, law enforcement, and other community members “with expertise in the areas of health; family life; and safe and drug-free schools and communities.” Sex education must include a HIV prevention program “that stresses the benefits of abstinence from high-risk behaviors.” Additionally, students in grades 7 through 12 must receive “evidence-based, if available, or evidence-informed, age- and developmentally-appropriate instruction on the meaning of Consent and respecting others’ personal boundaries.”

Delaware administrative code also sets a minimum number of hours for “comprehensive health education and family life education.” For students in grades K-4, the minimum is set at 30 hours per grade, 10 of which must be dedicated to drug and alcohol education. In grades five and six, the minimum is set at 35 hours per grade, 15 of which must be dedicated to drug and alcohol education. In grades seven and eight, the minimum is set at 60 hours per grade, 15 of which must be dedicated to drug and alcohol education. In order to graduate high school, students must receive 0.5 credits of comprehensive health education. Delaware statute does not require parental permission for students to participate in sexuality or HIV education.

### **State Standards**

Sex education courses must also follow the [Delaware Health Education Standards](#), and the courses must include instruction on decision-making skills and the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors.

## 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. In recent years, there has been an increase in legislative attacks on the implementation of CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) which [tracks six categories of health risk behaviors](#) including sexual health behaviors. In 2023, Delaware participated only in highschool YRBS data collection, not middle school. **To learn more about Delaware's 2023 YRBS results, [click here](#).**

## Delaware School Health Profiles Data

In 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the 2022 [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. **To view Delaware's results from the 2022 School Health Profiles Survey, visit CDC's [School Health Profiles Explorer tool](#).**

Visit the CDC's [School Health Profiles](#) 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](#).**