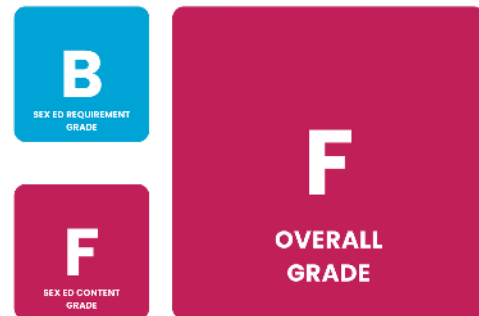




## Florida State of Sex Ed

Health Education is required with some sexual health concepts required to be taught but any reproductive health education material must be approved by the Department of Education and must center on abstinence. Schools MAY instruct on HIV/AIDS. The law also contains stigmatizing language on SOGI and LGBTQIA+ topics.



[View Bill Tracker](#)

### Current Requirement

- Florida schools are not required to teach sex education. However, they **are** required to teach health education that includes instruction on “the consequences of teenage pregnancy” and some aspects of sex education.
  - The curriculum must include the benefits of abstinence as the “expected standard.”
  - The curriculum must teach prevention of child sexual abuse, exploitation, and trafficking but is not required to include instruction on consent.
  - Florida has no regulation regarding medically accurate sex education instruction.
- Schools in Florida may also choose to provide instruction on HIV/AIDS.
- If a school chooses to teach further instruction on HIV/AIDS, instruction must emphasize the benefits of heterosexual marriage and must be age and developmentally appropriate.
- Parents or guardians may submit a written request to remove their children from instruction on reproductive health or any disease. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

## RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

In recent years, Florida lawmakers have passed a wave of regressive legislation that has had significant impacts on the availability and quality of sex education in the state, often under the guise of “parental rights” or shielding students from so-called “divisive concepts.” Bills like [House Bill 1557](#) (2022), infamously dubbed the “Don’t Say Gay” law, banned instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in grades K–3 and imposed vague “age-appropriate” limits thereafter, effectively silencing LGBTQIA+ topics in classrooms. This was followed by [HB 1069](#) (2023), which further restricted instruction on reproductive health, required parental consent for sex ed, and gave broad power to individuals to challenge school materials, leading to widespread censorship. Coupled with [HB 1521](#) (2023), which targets trans individuals by criminalizing restroom access based on sex assigned at birth, these laws collectively erode inclusive, medically accurate, and affirming education.

For advocates on the ground in Florida, [House Bill 1069](#) caused significant problems by requiring all sex education and reproductive health materials to be approved by the Florida Department of Education before use in classrooms. While the law was framed as increasing transparency and parental rights, in practice, it created bureaucratic bottlenecks that led many school districts to suspend sex ed instruction altogether due to delayed approvals and fear of noncompliance. The law also reinforces abstinence-focused instruction and restricts discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity, compounding the chilling effect already seen with [HB 1557](#). Critics, including educators and health advocates, have warned that the law deprives students of vital, age-appropriate health information and risks long-term harm to student well-being. As PEN America put it, HB 1069’s sweeping censorship is [“dangerous and Orwellian,”](#) leaving thousands of Florida students without access to comprehensive, medically accurate education.

The chilling effect on educators has only intensified with laws like [HB 7](#) (2022), also known as the “Stop WOKE Act,” which limits discussions of systemic racism and sexism, framing them as “discrimination” against white students. Alongside the sweeping [HB 3](#) and companion [Senate Bill 1792](#) (2024), which restricts minors’ access to social media and online material deemed “harmful,” these measures risk cutting students off from vital sexual health

resources, especially LGBTQIA+ youth and those in unsupportive households. Together, these laws promote a narrow and sanitized curriculum that omits essential discussions on identity, consent, relationships, and health, leaving Florida students vulnerable to misinformation and erasure.

Despite these setbacks, there have been some legislative wins supporting youth health and education, like [HB 379](#) and [HB 389](#), which successfully passed in 2023. HB 379 sought to address challenges posed by digital distractions and the potential negative impacts of social media on students' mental health. By incorporating education on digital literacy and responsible online behavior, the bill supports the development of informed and resilient students. HB 389 expands access to free menstrual hygiene products in schools, helping to address a critical but often overlooked aspect of student health and dignity. Although companion bills [SB 1414](#) and [HB 1355](#)- the "Freedom to Learn Act"- did not advance in 2024, they represented a vital push toward repealing restrictive laws and restoring inclusive, comprehensive curricula that include LGBTQIA+ history and affirm diverse identities. These mixed outcomes highlight the ongoing struggle in Florida's legislature over the scope and quality of sex education, with advocates continuing to fight for equitable, medically accurate, and inclusive learning environments for all students.

Right now, advocates are urgently needed to take action to ensure young people in their community have access to quality sex education. After identifying what topics are missing from local sex education requirements, advocates can 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 includes instruction on topics such as sexual orientation and gender identity, consent, healthy relationships, and contraceptive options. Advocates are encouraged to take action on pending legislation that seeks to advance or restrict the principles of sex education.

**Florida's 2025 legislative session convened March 4, 2025 and adjourns June 6, 2025.**

Further, advocates can contact their representatives to discuss the critical need for a statewide sex education mandate. 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 Florida...**

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

Florida has more laws **prohibiting** topics from being taught in sex education than laws **requiring** topics to be taught. [Florida Statute 48-1003.42](#) states that public schools must teach “comprehensive health education” that includes prevention of child sexual abuse, exploitation, and human trafficking. Public schools must teach students in grades 7 through 12 instruction on teen dating violence and abuse while students in grades 6 through 12 must be instructed on “the benefits of sexual abstinence as the expected standard and the consequences of teenage pregnancy.” State policy reads that “course descriptions for comprehensive health education shall not interfere with the local determination of appropriate curriculum, which reflects local values and concerns.” In 2023, [HB 1069](#) was enacted into law and is part of [Florida Statutes 1003.42](#) and states that reproductive health education instructional material must be department-approved, leaving it to the jurisdiction of the current administration.

[Florida Statute 48-1003.46](#) states that each district school board may provide instruction in acquired immune deficiency syndrome education as a specific area of health education. Such instruction may include, but is not limited to, the known modes of transmission, signs and symptoms, risk factors associated with acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and means used to control the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Such instruction shall:

1. Teach abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage as the expected standard for all school-age students, while teaching the benefits of monogamous, heterosexual marriage;

2. Emphasize that abstinence from sexual activity is a certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, STIs, including AIDS and other associated health problems;
3. Teach that each student has the power to control personal behavior and encourage students to base actions on reasoning, self-esteem, and respect for others; and
4. Provide instruction and material that is appropriate for the grade and age of the student.

Parents may submit a written request to the school principal to exempt their child from “the teaching of reproductive health or any disease, including HIV/AIDS, its symptoms, development, and treatment.” [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)

## State Standards

Florida standards, titled [Sunshine State Standards for Health Education](#), were revised in 2021. The benchmarks include examples that can be taught to achieve competency, but the examples are neither prescriptive nor limiting. Examples of what can be taught include, “HIV by sexual transmission,” and “contracting [STDs] through sexual relationships.” Florida provides example curricula that schools can adopt to fulfill their comprehensive health education requirement. One of these programs, Health Opportunities through Physical Education (HOPE), includes instruction on “human sexuality, including abstinence and HIV.” Florida also maintains a detailed database of health education standards [online](#) and provides [further guidance](#) on curricula and instruction.

## 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. Florida has participated in the YRBS Survey for 31 years, but in April 2022, the Department of Education withdrew the state from the survey. **To learn more about Florida’s last YRBS results from 2021, [click here](#).** Florida’s Education Commissioner Manny Diaz

described the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey as “inflammatory” and “sexualized.” In communication to school districts, he advised them to discontinue participating in the federal survey and instead use the [Florida-Specific Youth Survey](#) which he stated is “aligned to state standards to safely collect information and better serve students.” Some advocates have expressed concern about this decision, raising questions about the [validity](#) of the state survey and the potential impact on the availability of long-term data used to inform youth health and education policies..

## **Florida 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. **Florida as a whole did not participate in the 2022 School Health Profiles Survey, but Duval County, Orange County, Palm Beach County, Broward County, Hillsborough County, and Pasco County did - to review, use the 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](#).**