



Georgia State of Sex Ed

Georgia law requires schools to provide sex education and AIDS prevention education; however, the curriculum is not required to align with the National Sex Education Standards or be medically accurate. Instruction must emphasize abstinence until marriage as an important personal goal. There is no requirement to include content on consent, sexual orientation, or gender identity. While age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault prevention education is mandated in grades K–9, broader topics such as healthy relationships and comprehensive sexual health are not guaranteed. Parents have the right to opt their children out of part or all of sex education instruction with written notice.



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Current Requirement

- Georgia schools are required to provide sex education and AIDS prevention education.
 - Curriculum is not required to align with the [National Sex Education Standards](#).
 - Instruction must emphasize abstinence from sexual activity until marriage as an important personal goal.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Georgia has no regulation regarding medically accurate sex education instruction.

- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on consent.
 - Age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education is required in K-9th grade.
- Parents may remove their children from all or part of sex education instruction with written notification. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

In recent years, Georgia lawmakers have advanced a series of education policies that, while not always explicitly aimed at sex education, create a restrictive environment that threatens the inclusion of topics related to gender, identity, and sexuality in classrooms. Beginning with the 2022 passage of House Bill 1084, referred to as the “Protect Students First Act” which prohibited classroom instruction on nine specific “divisive concepts.” These concepts include: (1) one race is inherently superior to another; (2) the United States is fundamentally racist; (3) individuals are inherently racist or oppressive due to their race; (4) individuals should be discriminated against based on race; (5) an individual’s moral character is determined by race; (6) individuals bear responsibility for past actions by others of the same race; (7) individuals should feel guilt, anguish, or psychological distress due to race; (8) valuing traits like hard work is inherently racist or used to oppress; and (9) any other form of race scapegoating or stereotyping.

The law also mandates that local school boards establish complaint resolution processes for parents, students, and staff who believe these rules have been violated and directs the State Board of Education to develop a model policy for districts to adopt. The vague and subjective language of HB 1084 enables the censorship of honest and accurate instruction about the country’s- and specifically Georgia’s- long history of racial injustice. In practice, this can suppress meaningful education and classroom discussion on systemic racism, civil rights history, and the lived experiences of marginalized communities, all of which are essential for fostering informed, critically engaged students. In Georgia, a state with a deep and complex legacy of slavery, segregation, and civil rights struggle, efforts to limit such instruction not only erase crucial parts of the historical record but also undermine students' ability to understand current social dynamics. While race is the focus, the broad and subjective language of this bill can spill over to topics that intersect with race, gender, or identity, core components of inclusive sex education.

Further scrutiny on instructional materials and opportunities to challenge curricula some parents may view as “objectionable” was affirmed through the passage of a “Parental Bill of Rights” that same session through [HB 1178](#). While HB 1084 does not mention sex education directly, its prohibition of vaguely defined "divisive concepts"- combined with HB 1178's expanded parental rights over curriculum- creates an educational climate where topics related to gender, identity, and sexuality may become especially vulnerable to censorship, deterring schools from offering comprehensive, inclusive sex education. School climate in Georgia public schools was only worsened by the passage of [Senate Bill 226](#) (2022) which mandates that each local board of education in Georgia adopt a complaint resolution policy to address concerns about materials deemed "harmful to minors" in school libraries and classrooms. The law vaguely defines “harmful to minors” as material that appeals to minors' prurient or morbid interests, is clearly offensive according to adult community standards, and lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors. The lack of clear guidelines from the Georgia Department of Education on implementing SB 226 could result in inconsistent enforcement across districts, allowing its broad and subjective criteria to disproportionately target materials representing marginalized and LGBTQIA+ experiences, limiting access to diverse perspectives and undermining the inclusivity and support that all students deserve at school.

Advocates in Georgia have had little success in passing legislation that would require sex ed in Georgia to be age-appropriate, medically accurate, and include vital topics such as consent, intimate partner violence, sexual abuse prevention, and human trafficking prevention. Bills attempting to simply require sex education to be both age-appropriate and include instruction on consent like [HB 857](#) in 2022 and [HB 177](#) in 2023, failed to pass. Our partners at the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential (GCAPP) and advocates on the ground worked to introduce [HB 822](#) in 2023, which had it passed, would have required sex ed to not only be age-appropriate and include consent education, add a medical accuracy requirement, and revise current statute language about K - 9th assault and abuse awareness to be broader. This failed attempt led lawmakers and advocates to pursue legislation, such as [HB 1290](#) in 2024, which focused more squarely on violence prevention but ultimately failed to pass. Had it passed, it would have required: human trafficking education 3rd - 12th grade, intimate partner violence

education 6th - 12th, and add annual consent instruction K-12th,. However, these setbacks have not deterred brave advocates and lawmakers from attempting progressive legislation that would support youth in Georgia. In fact, despite repeated dismissals, advocates continue to push for bold, youth-centered reforms- including the introduction of the Reproductive Freedom Act in 2025 ([HB 598](#) / [SB 246](#)), which sought to expand abortion access for minors and affirm their right to make informed decisions about their reproductive health.

Right now, advocates can take action to ensure young people in their community have access to quality sex education. Particularly, advocates can invest in local school board races to elect strong advocates who support sex education. Advocates can also contact their local school board to determine what topics are missing from sex education instruction, such as instruction on consent, sexual orientation, gender identity, and contraceptives. They can then vocalize the important need for advancing instruction requirements in their community. Advocates are encouraged to take action on pending legislation that seeks to advance or restrict the principles of sex education.

Georgia's 2025 legislative session convened January 13th, 2025, and adjourned April 4th, 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)

More on sex ed in Georgia...

State Law: A Closer Look

Schools in Georgia are required by [Georgia Code Annotated §§ 20-2-143](#) to teach sex education and AIDS prevention education. Georgia law mandates that the state board of education determine minimum guidelines that sex education programs must satisfy. The [guidelines](#) created by the board require instruction to “emphasize abstinence from sexual activity until marriage and fidelity in marriage as important personal goals.” In addition, [Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.12](#) states that sex education instruction should

address peer pressure and promote “high self-esteem, local community values, and abstinence from sexual activity as an effective method of prevention of pregnancy, STIs, and AIDS.” Local school boards are largely responsible for deciding specific subjects that education must cover, age-appropriate messages, and the grade level in which topics are introduced.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from all or part of sex and/or STI/HIV education by sending written notice to the school. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)

State Standards

The Georgia Department of Education has also established the [Georgia Performance Standards for Health Education](#) for grades K–12. These standards were most recently revised in 2021. The health education standards act as a “framework for local schools to use in order to create an instructional program that will enable their students to become healthy and capable of academic success.” Beginning in grade 8, health education standards require discussion on abstinence as the “most effective and healthy means for preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs).” Sexual violence prevention instruction is included in grades K–12 standards.

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. **To learn more about Georgia's 2023 YRBS results, [click here.](#)**

Georgia 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 Georgia'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](#).