



Hawaii State of Sex Ed

Sex education is required due to Hawaii's Board of Education policy that has the force of law. This includes both HIV/AIDS and healthy relationships instruction. It must be age-appropriate and medically accurate. Instruction must emphasize the importance of abstinence while instructing on contraception, STI prevention, and more.



[View Bill Tracker](#)

Current Requirement

- Hawaii schools are **required** to teach sex education due to Board of Education policy which has the force of law.
 - Curriculum must emphasize abstinence.
 - Curriculum must instruct on HIV/STIs
 - Curriculum must instruct on contraception
- Curriculum is **not** required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on consent. However, instruction must help students develop relationships and communication skills to form healthy relationships that are based on mutual respect and affection and are free from violence, coercion and intimidation.
- Parents and guardians can remove their children from sex education.
This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.
- Curriculum must be medically accurate and age appropriate.

RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

Advocates continue to work to ensure the provision of mandated sex education in Hawaii schools by working on the implementation of the 2015 Board of Education Policy. According to the policy, sex education must include instruction on abstinence, contraception, and methods to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Since then, advocates and pro-sex ed lawmakers in Hawaii continue to introduce progressive sex education legislation that would improve implementation of sex education and make it more inclusive.

Since 2022, advocates have introduced many bills to advance sex education in two major categories: sexual abuse and trafficking prevention, and mandating that curriculum address the needs of LGBTQIA+ students within sexual health education. Legislators succeeded in enacting [Senate Concurrent Resolution 216](#), in 2022 which requests the Department of Education to ensure that existing child sexual abuse curriculum and training is in alignment with [Erin's Law](#).

In 2023, [House Bill 1195](#) was introduced to advance sex education by requiring the Department of Education to make available a list of compliant sexual health education curricula to support implementation in schools and to develop teacher training requirements. While this bill was unsuccessful, it is an example of much-needed policy to support the existing sex education mandate.

In 2024, four bills ([HCR 222](#), [HR 202](#), [SCR 189](#), [SR 38](#)) were introduced (and ultimately failed) that would have requested a study into the implementation and standards of the Department of Education's sexual health education policy. This legislation could have been useful as data and insight into how sex education is actually being taught in Hawaii schools. Advocates continue to push for similar legislation to be introduced in upcoming sessions.

Unfortunately, Hawaii has not been immune to attacks on sex education. Most recently, this session saw the introduction of [a bill requiring instruction on fetal growth and development](#), also known as "Baby Olivia" bills, for the [second year in a row](#) in Hawaii Legislature. While the bill has not yet made any progress, advocates must remain vigilant for legislative attacks like this that seek to undo the progress made on sex education in Hawaii.

Right now, advocates can take action to ensure young people in their community have access to quality sex education. After contacting their local schools, advocates can determine what topics are currently missing from the sex education curriculum, such as legally mandated medically accurate curriculum in addition to instruction on topics such as consent and sexual orientation and gender identity. Advocates are encouraged to take action on pending legislation that seeks to advance or restrict the principles of sex education. **Hawaii's 2025-2026 legislative session convenes January 15th, 2025 and adjourns May 1st, 2026.**

Further, advocates can contact their representatives to discuss the need for strengthening the quality of sex education by making it LGBTQIA+ inclusive and evidence-based in Hawaii. Advocates can also discuss the critical need for the Department of Education to support schools in implementing the current sex education requirements. 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 Hawaii...

State Law: A Closer Look

Sexual health education is mandated in Hawaii as of 2015. The Hawaii State Board of Education was **established by the Hawaii State Constitution**, which grants the board power to formulate and establish statewide educational policy. On June 16, 2015, Hawaii's **Board of Education policy (103.5)** was updated to read, "the Department of Education shall provide sexual health education to include age appropriate, medically accurate health education (further substantiated by **HRS §321-11.1**) that includes education on abstinence, contraception, and methods of infection prevention to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection (STI), including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)." It further encourages students to communicate with their parents and/or guardians about sexuality and stresses that abstinence "from sexual intercourse is the surest way to prevent unintended pregnancies, [STIs] such as HIV/[acquired immunodeficiency

syndrome] (AIDS), and consequent emotional distress.” Additionally, it requires instructions on healthy relationships “that are based on mutual respect and affection and are free from violence, coercion, and intimidation”. Hawaii’s education policy [103-8](#) further states that birth control devices may be discussed during human reproduction studies. However, “the distribution of condoms and other prophylactic devices to students shall be prohibited in the classroom, on the school campus, or at any school-related activities.”

Hawaii does **not require** parental permission for students to participate in sexuality or HIV/AIDS education, but they may remove their children from the course. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)

State Standards

Hawaii’s [Content and Performance Standards](#) for health education [incorporate required sexual health education](#), and the standards inform schools about which content areas **must be covered**. However, the standards are generally related to health and do not go into detail regarding what sexual health topics must be discussed in addition to existing policy. Examples provided in the document of healthy behavior outcomes (**which should be used as guidance for curriculum**) include that the student should be able to “engage in behaviors that prevent or reduce unintended pregnancy” or “use appropriate health services to promote sexual and reproductive health”.

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 Hawaii’s 2023 YRBS results, [click here](#).** In 2023, Hawaii participated in high school and middle school YRBS data collection.

Hawaii 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 Hawaii'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](#).