



Louisiana State of Sex Ed

Louisiana schools are required to teach some sex education by proxy via mandated health education standards. This includes instruction on sexual risk behaviors, HIV/AIDS, and other STIs. Instruction and discussion on SOGI is banned in K-12th. Sex education is opt-out.



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Current Requirement

- If sex education is offered, the curriculum must emphasize abstinence as the expected social standard.
- If sex education is offered, curriculum must not include any sexually explicit materials depicting homosexual activity.
- Instruction and discussion on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) is prohibited in grades K-12th.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on consent.
- There is no regulation regarding medically accurate sex education instruction. However, if a school chooses to teach sex education, instruction must be “based on factual biological or pathological information.”
- Parents or guardians may remove their children from sex education classes. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)

RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

In recent years, Louisiana has enacted legislation aimed at improving youth mental health outcomes. In 2022, [House Bill 495](#) and [Senate Bill 358](#) focused on enhancing mental health services in schools, while [House Bill 981](#) aimed to provide age-appropriate instruction on mental health in grades K-12th.

Similarly, [House Bill 440](#) requires schools to incorporate age and grade appropriate instruction relative to eating disorder awareness and prevention. In 2023, [HB 353](#) was enacted and allowed students to be excused from school for up to three mental health days and allowed school screening programs for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) scores.

However, these efforts to support young peoples' well-being have been consistently undermined by a surge of laws that target LGBTQIA+ students and educators, exacerbating the very mental health challenges the state purports to want to address. According to the [Louisiana Department of Health](#), suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for Louisiana youth between the ages of 10 to 24 years old. [Research from the Trevor Project](#) has found that LGBTQIA+ young people who found their school and home to be affirming reported lower rates of attempting suicide. Yet in 2022, a bill and resolution were introduced, [HB 837](#) and [HR 169](#), which sought to prohibit discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity in the classroom. While not explicitly targeting sex education, sexual orientation and gender identity is an integral part of inclusive and affirming sex education and prohibiting its discussion has harmful implications for the implementation of quality sex education. Additionally, [SB 7](#) was enacted in 2023 and targeted young people's access to information by mandating that all public libraries in Louisiana adopt and implement policies to restrict minors' access to materials deemed "sexually explicit." Advocates argue that the bill's broad definitions could lead to the censorship of materials that include LGBTQIA+ themes or discussions of sexual health, potentially infringing on the rights of minors to access diverse information. This contradiction highlights the urgent need for comprehensive, inclusive, and affirming sex education policies that incorporate mental health and well-being of all students in Louisiana.

Many of these harmful bills also come masked under the guise of "parental rights" but are actually divisive, exclusionary, and anti-LGBTQIA+. In 2024, [House Bill 121](#), or "The Given Name Act" was enacted and required schools to obtain written parental consent before addressing students by names or pronouns that differ from those assigned at birth. This law also permits educators to refuse such requests based on religious beliefs, potentially forcing transgender and nonbinary students into classrooms where their identities are not respected. Shortly thereafter, [House Bill 122](#) was enacted, prohibiting public school teachers, employees, and other presenters from

discussing sexual orientation or gender identity with students in grades K-12. The bill bans any discussion or instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity that deviates from approved curricula, prohibits such topics in extracurricular activities, and forbids school staff from sharing their own sexual orientation or gender identity with students. This legislation effectively bans LGBTQIA+ topics from classroom instruction and mandates the removal of supportive student organizations, further marginalizing LGBTQIA+ youth. Preceded by the 2022 passage of [House Resolution 145](#) which requests that the state Department of Education study and submit a report relative to transparency in education with respect to parental access to instructional materials- Louisiana teachers are under immense scrutiny. Both [HB 121](#) and [HB 122](#) reflect a legislative trend in Louisiana toward increased regulation of discussions and acknowledgments of LGBTQIA+ identities in public schools.

Creating further division, [SB 262](#), enacted in 2024, added a provision to the [2014 Parents' Bill of Rights](#) that restricts public schools from teaching concepts that suggest “inherent oppression or oppressor status based on race or national origin.” Advocates warn that this measure not only limits educators’ ability to provide comprehensive and accurate accounts of American history, including systemic racism, but also undermines efforts to create inclusive, affirming school environments. These environments are essential for delivering effective, equitable sex education, which often requires open discussion of identity, power, and marginalization. Similarly, the passage of Louisiana's [House Bill 71](#), mandating the display of the Ten Commandments in all public school classrooms, imposes a singular religious viewpoint in secular educational spaces. This can marginalize students of different faiths or no faith, compounding a school climate of exclusion and discomfort. When paired with restrictions on discussing race and national origin, these policies collectively foster a hostile learning environment that impedes both culturally responsive teaching and the intersectional delivery of sex education - leaving students without the critical tools they need to navigate their identities, relationships, and civic engagement.

Additionally, in 2024, [House Bill 320](#) passed and repealed a plethora of instructional and training requirements for school districts by transferring the authority to determine educational content from the state legislature to the [Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education \(BESE\)](#). This law repealed the mandate for training and instruction on topics such as dating violence, bullying, communicable diseases, trauma-informed education,

adverse childhood experiences and suicide prevention. This shift allows BESE to implement policies without direct legislative oversight, potentially leading to the adoption of restrictive measures without public input or accountability. While this change was presented as a means to streamline educational decision-making, advocates argue that it undermines democratic processes and could result in the erosion of inclusive and comprehensive education standards.

The recent legislative actions in Louisiana underscore the critical need for advocacy to promote inclusive and affirming education policies. Stakeholders, including educators, parents, and community members, are encouraged to engage with local school boards and policymakers to advocate for comprehensive sex education and the protection of LGBTQIA+ students' rights. Advocates are encouraged to take action on pending legislation that seeks to advance or restrict the principles of sex education. **Louisiana's 2025 legislative session convened April 14th, 2025, and adjourns June 12th, 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 Louisiana...

State Law: A Closer Look

Louisiana statute does not require schools to offer sex education, but [Louisiana Revised Statute §17:24.4\(E\)](#) states that “the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education ... shall develop and establish statewide curriculum standards for required subjects to be taught in the public elementary and secondary schools of [the] state.” Starting in the 2014-2015 school year, all incoming 9th graders are required to take 1/2 credit of health education. Under this authority, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education promulgated [Part LIX. Bulletin 103](#) to describe the state's health education content standards. From grades 7–12, students learn about sexual abstinence and sexual risk behaviors; in grades 4 and 7–12, students receive

human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and other sexually transmitted disease (STD) education.

[Louisiana Revised Statute §§17:281](#) mandates that sex education cannot be offered in grades K–6, except in Orleans Parish, which may offer sex education in grade 3 and above. If a student is parenting or pregnant, schools must provide this education “regardless of the student’s grade level.” The education must be integrated into “an existing course of study such as biology, science, physical hygiene, or physical education.” It cannot include “religious beliefs, practices in human sexuality, nor the subjective moral and ethical judgments of the instructor or other persons. Students shall not be tested, quizzed, or surveyed about their personal or family beliefs or practices in sex, morality, or religion.”

Classes may not include “any sexually explicit materials depicting male or female homosexual activity.” They also may not in “any way counsel or advocate abortion.” In addition, this education must emphasize that:

- Abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage is the expected standard for all school-age children;
- Abstinence from sexual activity is a way to avoid unwanted pregnancy, STDs, including AIDS, and other associated health problems;
- Each student has the power to control personal behavior and to encourage students to base action on reasoning, self-esteem, and respect for others.

[Louisiana Revised Statute §§17:279](#) requires that all public high schools offering home economics classes must also provide “parenthood education” and include the following topics about family living and community relationships: the consequences of the lack of adequate prenatal care, home management, and the responsibilities of parenthood. In addition, [Louisiana Revised Statutes Annotated §§ 17:263](#) requires that adoption awareness be included in any health education or appropriate class. This includes instruction on “the benefits of adoption for families wishing to add a child, for potential adoptees, and for persons who are pregnant or who have a child for whom they are unable to care.”

In 2018, Louisiana enacted [Act 369](#), requiring schools to provide parents with information regarding “the public health risks and harms associated with

pornography,” including “the dangers of sexually charged cyberbullying,” as well as “the addictive and destructive nature of pornographic and illicit materials.”

In 2024, through the passage of [House Bill 122](#) Louisiana law was revised ([LA Rev Stat § 17:412](#)) to prohibit instruction and discussion on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). Stating:

A. No teacher, school employee, or other presenter at a school shall engage in the following discussions with students in grades kindergarten through twelve:

(1) Covering the topics of sexual orientation or gender identity in any classroom discussion or instruction in a manner that deviates from state content standards or curricula developed or approved by public school governing authorities.

(2) Covering the topics of sexual orientation or gender identity during any extracurricular academic, athletic, or social activity under the jurisdiction of the school or public school governing authority.

(3) Discussing his own sexual orientation or gender identity.

B. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to mean that a student may not seek out guidance from a teacher or licensed mental health professional outside classroom hours with prior parental consent.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from sex education classes. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)

State Standards

Louisiana’s [Health Education Handbook](#) outlines expectations that should be mastered by the end of each grade level and defines sexual health as:

“[T]he area of health education encompassing a broad scope of concepts and skills, including acquiring information about sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, body image, and gender roles; recognizing habits that protect female and male reproductive health; and learning about pregnancy, childbirth, and the development of infants

and children. It also includes skill development in areas such as communication, decision-making, refusal techniques, and goal-setting. Sexual health topics are grounded in the premise that sexuality is a natural, ongoing process that begins in infancy and continues through life.”

The handbook also delineates abstinence as the “safest, most effective risk avoidance method of protection from HIV, STDs, and pregnancy.

Furthermore, according to the [*Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators- Bulletin 741*](#), students must be taught “the principal modes by which communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, HIV infection, are spread and the best methods for the restriction and prevention of these diseases.” Schools are prohibited from distributing any “contraceptive or abortifacient drug, device, or other similar product.”

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 Louisiana's 2023 YRBS results, [click here](#).**

Louisiana 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.

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](#).