



## Michigan State of Sex Ed

Sex education is not required, but instruction on HIV/AIDS must be provided at least once a year at every school level- required to be age appropriate and medically accurate. Each school district that offers sex education must establish a Sex Education Advisory Board (SEAB). Parental notification and opt-out rights are mandated for all instruction. Abstinence is emphasized. Instruction on consent and healthy dating relationships is required.



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### Current Requirement

- Michigan schools are not required to teach sex education but are required to teach age-appropriate and medically accurate HIV/AIDS education.
  - Curriculum must stress abstinence as a positive lifestyle.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on consent. However, the curriculum must include instruction on refusal skills, that it is “wrong to take advantage of, harass, or exploit another person sexually”, and that having sex or sexual contact with an individual under the age of 16 is a crime.

- Parents or guardians must receive written notice of any sex education class and can remove their children from any part of the instruction. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)
- Instruction on HIV/AIDS must be medically accurate. However, Michigan has no standard on medical accuracy for sex education.

## RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

Michigan advocates have worked tirelessly to advance sex education and uplift the voices of young people. Young people in the state have been leading calls for legislators to require consent education and advance a more inclusive curriculum. Instead, advocates have been forced to defend against attacks on the public education system. [Senate Resolution 166/House Resolution 349](#), which passed in 2022, condemns the Michigan Department of Education’s teacher training videos on student’s gender identity and sexual orientation and reaffirmed “parental rights.”

In 2024 several additional “parental rights” bills were introduced. The proposed legislation would [allow parents to observe classrooms during school hours](#), or [inform parents of any ‘long term impact decision’ made by students](#), and [restrict minor access to ‘obscene’ materials in libraries](#). While framed as empowering parents, these bills often overburden teachers and administrators with vague mandates and additional reporting requirements. In practice, they tend to target discussions about sexual orientation and gender identity, relationships, and inclusive sex education. For example, “long-term impact decisions” often refers to a student’s choice to use a different name or pronouns, effectively pressuring school staff to out students to their families

Since Michigan schools are not required to provide sex education to students, school districts are left to decide what type of sex education—if any at all—they provide to youth. Local control over sex education presents unique challenges that have resulted in a glaring disparity regarding the quality of sex education that students receive. Such discretion allows for the implementation of policies and curriculum that stigmatize marginalized youth, such as students of color and LGBTQIA+ youth, and presents further challenges in ensuring that low income districts have access to the resources needed to implement sex education.

Advocates note that the biggest barrier to sex education for young people in Michigan is the lack of a state-wide sex education requirement, coupled with the need for increased support from the Michigan Department of Education, including increased funding for curriculum materials and teacher training. Following the passage of [Senate Bill 66](#) in 2023, the Department of Education was required to work with experts to develop age appropriate informational material relating to sexual assault and sexual harassment and make that material available to all school districts, intermediate school districts, and public school academies that operate any of grades 6 to 12. In June 2024, the Michigan Department of Education released a [memorandum](#) to inform school districts about this legislation as well as a [sexual harassment and sexual assault information guide](#). While this bill missed the opportunity to mandate consent and sexual assault education, it was a step in the right direction.

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 and gender identity, and contraceptives. They can then vocalize the important need for advancing instruction requirements in their community. If an advocate's school district does not require sex education, they can form their own sex education advisory board with the support of community members to directly influence what curriculum recommendations are made to the school board. Advocates are also encouraged to take action on pending legislation that seeks to advance or restrict the principles of sex education. **Michigan's 2025-2026 legislative session convened January 8th, 2025 and adjourns December 31st, 2026.**

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 Michigan...**

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

Michigan law does not require schools to teach sex education. However, HIV/AIDS education is required. As outlined in [Michigan Compiled Laws §§ 380.1169–.1170, 380.1506–.1507, and 388.1766–.1766a](#), schools may also offer sex education instruction, which can include information on family planning, family life education, and sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention. HIV and sex education must present abstinence as “a responsible method of preventing unwanted or out-of-wedlock pregnancy and [STDs]” and as “a positive lifestyle for unmarried young people.” If offered, sex education classes must be offered as an elective and not as a graduation requirement like health and physical education. To access an unabridged version of sex education laws in Michigan public schools, [click here](#).

HIV/AIDS classes may be taught by health care professionals or teachers specifically trained in HIV/AIDS education, and sex education instruction must be provided by teachers qualified to teach health education. All instruction in reproductive health must be taught by qualified instructors and “supervised by a registered physician, a registered nurse, or other person certified by the state board as qualified.” In 2016, the [2016 School Aid Act](#) went into effect and included a provision to financially penalize any public school district if employees assist students in accessing abortion care. This provision created another obstacle for teachers seeking to discuss abortion as a valid outcome of pregnancy. Affirming abortion as a valid outcome of pregnancy is a critical topic for inclusion within sex education programs. As a result, abortion “shall not be considered a method of family planning, nor shall abortion be taught as a method of reproductive health.” Further, no school official or school board member may dispense any family planning drug or device in school, nor may they make abortion referrals.

School boards must establish a [Sex Education Advisory Board \(SEAB\)](#) to review all educational materials and curricula. This advisory board must include parents, students, educators, clergy, and health professionals. Each school district must also appoint a state-approved sex education program supervisor. All curricula must be approved by the local school board and, if any changes are made, the local school board must hold at least two public

hearings on the revisions. Parents must receive notification of any sex education class and be allowed to review its content, and they may remove their children from any part of the sex education instruction. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)

## State Standards

State standards are not required to be followed, but most Michigan public schools follow guidelines from the [Michigan Model for Health](#). Formerly the Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education, these guidelines promote nationally recognized and research-based curricula, including curricula on HIV/AIDS prevention. Michigan also provides a set of [standards for grades K–8](#) that guide health education curricula development to ensure that there are a uniform set of content expectations. Additionally, the Michigan Board of Education adopted the [Policy to Promote Health and Prevent Disease and Pregnancy](#), which states that sex education programs must be age-appropriate, developmentally and culturally appropriate, medically accurate, and based on effective programming.

## 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 Michigan’s 2023 YRBS results, [click here](#).**

## Michigan 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 Michigan'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](#).**