



New Hampshire State of Sex Ed

Sex education is required and state health standards are also required. Sex education is opt out. There is no requirement that the curriculum must be evidence-based, medically accurate, age appropriate or culturally responsive. Curriculum must discuss HIV, STIs, and some healthy relationships, while stressing abstinence.



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Current Requirement

- New Hampshire schools provide sex education via required health education and mandated state health education standards.
 - New Hampshire has no statute regarding instruction on abstinence. However, the *Health Education Curriculum Guidelines* emphasize abstinence as the most effective prevention method.
- HIV/AIDS and STI instruction is required.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on consent. However, curriculum must include instruction on dating violence and date rape.
- Parents or guardians may remove their children from sex education instruction based on religious objections. *This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.*
- *New Hampshire has no regulation regarding medically accurate, age-appropriate, evidence-based, or inclusive sex education*

instruction. However, HB 667, a bill pending the Governor's signature, would require medically accurate and age-appropriate sexuality education.

- Similarly, HB 667 would require gestational development to be taught as part of sex education, including a fetal development video, typically referring to “Meet Baby Olivia”, an anti-abortion propaganda film.

RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

Advocates have worked diligently to try to advance sex education in New Hampshire but have faced significant challenges in passing statewide measures to advance sex and health education. This year, [House Bill 662](#) died in committee, but sought to require public schools to show abortion procedure videos as part of health education in grades 9-12, with enforcement mechanisms from the Attorney General's office. The proposed videos would have been developed by Live Action, the same group behind the “Meet Baby Olivia” fetal development videos which have been introduced into health education this session. Live Action is an extremist anti-abortion group known for their deceptive and manipulative tactics. These efforts will only increase misinformation about abortion and perpetuate abortion stigma in a state that is already a restrictive state for abortion access. *New Hampshire has seen the passage of one such bill, [House Bill 667](#), which has passed both chambers as of May 2025. This would require gestational development videos and abstinence as part of health education. However, the bill also contains positive elements of sex education, as it would require health education to include medically accurate and age-appropriate sexuality education.* [House Bill 1533](#) was introduced in 2022 and would have required sex education to include information about the meaning of consent, respect for personal boundaries, and sexual violence prevention. Unfortunately, this effort was ultimately unsuccessful. In 2022, New Hampshire enacted [HB 1263](#), legislation that ensures the Department of Education conducts surveys regarding the compliance of sexual health education.

In 2024, lawmakers passed [House Bill 1312](#), which adds on to 2017 law that mandates two weeks advance notice to parents prior to instruction of human sexuality or human sexual education. This advanced notification also applies to gender identity and sexuality with the passage of HB 1321. The 2024 legislative session also included the passage of a trans sports ban ([House Bill](#)

[1205](#)), specifically banning trans girls from participating on school sports teams. A ban on gender affirming care for minors was also enacted via [House Bill 619](#).

In addition to struggles over sex education policy, lawmakers have taken steps to enshrine parental rights while weaponizing the concept to add bureaucratic barriers for educators this year. [House Bill 10](#), also known as the "Parental Bill of Rights" would be a comprehensive statutes regarding parental rights in New Hampshire, establishing a fundamental right of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their minor children. The bill states that no information regarding the health, wellbeing, and education of students can be withheld from parents, and reaffirms that parents can object and remove children from sex education. This could potentially create a forced outing policy for LGBTQIA+ students who disclose their identity at school but not at home, and any school employee who "encourages or coerces, or attempts to encourage or coerce, a minor child to withhold information from his or her parent" would face disciplinary action. As of May 2025, the bill has passed the first chamber. [House Bill 273](#) has passed both chambers and would require schools to provide parents the full list of books and digital media that students check out from the school library. These bills force advocates to continuously push back against legislation that, under the misleading banner of 'parental rights,' undermines inclusive education, stigmatizes LGBTQIA+ students, and creates hostile environments for teachers and schools striving to serve all students equitably.

Since New Hampshire schools are only required to provide instruction on sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, healthy relationships, growth and development, and pregnancy prevention, school districts are left to decide what, if any, further sex education they provide to youth. Therefore, the quality of instruction in New Hampshire schools varies greatly depending on each district. 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.

Right now, advocates can take action in their communities to address unequal access to sex education for New Hampshire students. They can contact their local board of education and determine what topics are missing from existing sex education curricula, as well as advocate for evidence based, medically accurate, age-appropriate, and culturally responsive curriculum. Advocates can then vocalize the importance of implementing specific elements of sex education, such as trauma-informed curriculum that addresses the needs of youth of color and LGBTQIA+ youth, or instruction on contraceptives, detailed healthy relationships, and consent. Advocates are encouraged to take action on pending legislation that seeks to advance or restrict the principles of sex education. **New Hampshire's 2025-2026 legislative session convened January 8th, 2025 and is expected to adjourn on June 30th, 2025.**

Further, advocates can contact their representatives to discuss the critical need for a statewide sex education mandate. Advocates are encouraged to use the [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 New Hampshire...

State Law: A Closer Look

In New Hampshire, according to [Revised Statutes §§ 186:11](#) and [189:10](#), local school boards must “ensure that health education [is] taught to pupils as part of the basic curriculum” and “that all studies prescribed by the state board of education are thoroughly taught, especially physiology, hygiene, and health and physical education as they relate to the effects of ... human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] on the human system.” The Department of Education is required to develop curriculum frameworks that address those subjects and provide information on HIV/AIDS to all public and private schools to assist them in developing courses and programs.

Additionally, [Revised Statutes § 193-E:2-a](#) specifies that “public schools and public academies shall adhere to the standards identified” for health

education. The standards, which were defined and identified as the school approval standards beginning in the school year 2008-2009, cover “kindergarten through twelfth grade and shall clearly set forth the opportunities to acquire the communication, analytical and research skills and competencies, as well as the substantive knowledge expected to be possessed by students at the various grade levels.”

State law requires “school districts to adopt a policy allowing an exception to a particular unit of health or sex education instruction based on religious objections.” **This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.** As of 2017, New Hampshire law requires school districts or classroom teachers to provide a minimum of two weeks advance notice to parents prior to instruction of human sexuality or human sexual education. As of 2024, this policy also applies to instruction on “sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression” with the passage of [House Bill 1312](#).

State Standards

New Hampshire produced the [Health Education Curriculum Guidelines](#) in 2003. The guidelines specify that in elementary school, instruction on family life and sexuality should cover: families and relationships, growth and development, and HIV/AIDS (including explaining that HIV is not transmitted through casual contact and discussing the importance of having compassion for people with HIV/AIDS). In middle school, this instruction should cover: families and relationships, growth and development, sexual behavior, HIV and other STI prevention, and pregnancy prevention. In high school, this instruction should cover: families and relationships (including violence and date rape), sexual behavior, HIV and other STI prevention, and pregnancy prevention. The guidelines state that abstinence is the most effective means of preventing pregnancy, HIV, and other STIs.

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

New Hampshire 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 New Hampshire'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](#).