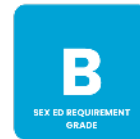




West Virginia State of Sex Ed

Health education, also known as wellness education, is required to be taught in West Virginia schools. Schools in West Virginia must also follow the wellness education content standards developed by the Board of Education which incorporate sexual health topics including HIV/STI prevention, family planning/contraception, healthy relationships, reproductive anatomy and more. Instruction is not required on consent nor SOGI and there is no requirement to be medically accurate, inclusive, nor evidence-based.



[View Bill Tracker](#)

Current Requirement

- West Virginia schools are required to teach sex education by proxy via mandated state standards for “wellness education”
 - Curriculum must include instruction on HIV/STI prevention and contraception
 - Curriculum must include instruction on abstinence.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on consent.
- Parents or guardians may remove their children from any part of this instruction by written notification to the principal. **This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.**
- West Virginia has no regulation on medically accurate sex education.

RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

West Virginia advocates have worked hard to defend against attacks on sex education in recent years. In the recent legislative session, there were three unsuccessful bills that attempted to reframe sex education: [House Bill 2150](#), [Senate Bill 94](#), and [House Bill 2810](#). These first two are companion bills that built upon the 2024 legislative session's attempts to require fetal development instruction in wellness education, also [known as "Baby Olivia" bills](#). Specifically, they would have required viewing of a high-definition fetal development video, produced by an extremist anti-abortion group LiveAction, called "Meet Baby Olivia". Bills like this aim to spread misinformation and perpetuate abortion stigma starting in early childhood.

House Bill 2810, introduced in 2025, is another so-called "parental rights" bill aimed at restricting sex education. It requires that adoption be discussed whenever contraception is mentioned and requires local determination of sex education. While these types of legislation sound harmless on the surface, it means each school district can decide whether or not to teach sex education at all. In practice, this often leads to outdated and harmful approaches, like abstinence-only or "sexual risk avoidance" programs, instead of comprehensive sex ed.

West Virginia, like many other states, has seen a wave of these "parental rights" bills that, under the guise of protecting families, actually undermine public education and harm vulnerable students—especially LGBTQIA+ youth. One of these bills, Senate Bill 154, passed this session. It now requires schools to notify parents about any lessons involving gender or sexuality and forces staff to tell parents if a student asks to use a different name or pronouns—essentially forcing schools to out transgender students.

Another bill that passed, House Bill 2129, lets parents sue if they believe their rights have been violated. Together, these laws create an atmosphere of fear and surveillance in schools, hurting students who already face the most barriers.

Regarding LGBTQIA+ youth rights, former West Virginia Governor Jim Justice [signed a medical care ban](#), House Bill 2007, into law in 2023. [House Bill 2007](#) had, however, carved out an exception for minors diagnosed with gender dysphoria and at risk of self-harm or suicide to receive hormone therapy. In

2025, [Senate Bill 299](#) was signed into law by Governor Morrissey and now fully outlaws gender affirming care for minors in West Virginia, removing that exception. Students should be able to feel safe and affirmed both in the classroom and within the healthcare system. The fight to advance sex education [intersects with the fight for LGBTQIA+ rights](#), and these hostile legislative attacks underscore the need for advocates from all movements to push back against them.

West Virginia schools teach sex education via required “wellness education” that aligns with the [West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Wellness Education](#). Schools must select a curriculum that aligns with these minimum standards. The lack of comprehensive standards can result in glaring disparities regarding the quality of sex education that students receive across the state. Such discretion allows for the implementation of curriculum that stigmatizes 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 to ensure that young people in West Virginia have access to quality sex education. After identifying what topics are missing from the local curriculum, advocates can vocalize the importance of implementing specific elements of sex education, such as the inclusion of consent and discussion on 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. **West Virginia’s 2025 legislative session convened February 12th, 2025, and adjourned April 12th, 2025.**

Further, advocates can contact their representatives to discuss improving the quality of sex education in West Virginia schools and the alignment of existing state standards with the [National Sex Education Standards](#). 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 West Virginia...](#)

State Law: A Closer Look

West Virginia law ([West Virginia Code §18-2-9](#)) requires “course curriculum requirements and materials [to] be adopted by the state board by rule in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Resources.” This means all school districts must adhere to the *West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Wellness Education* which cover several sexual health concepts addressed below.

[West Virginia Code §18-2-9](#) also requires human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention education within the general health education curriculum in grades 6–12. According to the West Virginia Board of Education’s AIDS Education Policy [2422.4](#), “[t]he goal of this policy is to assist in the protection of students by providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to avoid behaviors that will put them at the risk of infection with [HIV].” Each county board must integrate HIV prevention education into health courses and may also include it in “science, social studies, and developmental guidance” courses in order to “assure total understanding of the disease and its consequences.” Educators conducting classroom instruction about HIV/AIDS must be qualified professionals who participate in staff development to ensure they teach current health information.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any part of this instruction by written notification to the principal. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)

State Standards

West Virginia’s Board of Education’s [West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Wellness Education](#) curriculum framework includes sexual health. The standards include discussion on communicable disease prevention and transmission, including HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), the functions of the reproductive system, and “factors that lead to teen pregnancy” as well as methods to prevent pregnancy. School districts **must** adhere to these standards when deciding on curriculum.

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 West Virginia's 2023 YRBS results, [click here](#).** In 2023, West Virginia only participated in high school YRBS data collection, not middle school.

West Virginia 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 West Virginia'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](#).