



Wisconsin State of Sex Ed

Sex education is not required, but HIV and STI education is via health education. If sex ed is taught, it must be age appropriate, evidence based, culturally responsive, and medically accurate. Instruction is not required to include contraception, consent, and must stress abstinence and adoption education when sex ed is offered. If healthy relationships education is offered, it must address self-esteem, personal responsibility and positive interpersonal skills.



[View Bill Tracker](#)

Current Requirement

- Wisconsin schools are required to provide instruction on STIs and HIV.
- If a school chooses to provide human growth and development instruction, curriculum is required to stress abstinence and must be medically accurate, evidence-based, and age appropriate.
- By law, curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- By law, curriculum is not required to provide instruction on consent.
- Parents or guardians may remove their children from the human growth and development instruction with a written request to the teacher or principal. **This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.**

RECENT LEGISLATION SHAPING THE STATE LANDSCAPE

Advocates have faced a continuous uphill battle in advancing Wisconsin sex education requirements since the state's statute was revised in 2012 to no longer mandating instruction on human growth and development. A lack of existing sex ed policy 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. In 2024, [Assembly Bill 1107](#) died in committee, but would have updated human development instruction to align better with the National Sex Education Standards, including the use of age-appropriate, medically-accurate, healthy relationships, evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention, as well as regular review of curriculum. [Senate Bill 986](#), introduced in 2022, aimed to require school boards to provide age-appropriate instruction to pupils regarding teen dating violence and sexual violence and establish certain criteria governing the instruction provided. [Senate Bill 746](#), introduced in 2021 and carried over into 2022, sought to require the Department of Public Instruction to develop a child sexual abuse prevention policy and instructional program for students in grades K-6. A companion bill, [Assembly Bill 764](#), was introduced in 2021 and also carried over into 2022. [Senate Bill 796](#), introduced in 2021 and carried over into 2022, sought to require a video depicting an abortion procedure be shown during sex education instruction. An identical bill, [Assembly Bill 823](#), was introduced in 2022. All of these bills were unsuccessful and died in committee.

Over the last several years, Wisconsin has seen attempts to implement barriers for LGBTQIA+ students around an affirming school environment, as well as increased parental oversight to restrict student decision-making and access to resources. During the 2023 to 2024 session, Governor Evers also vetoed several bills that sought to add restrictions to student and parental policies. [Assembly Bill 377](#) was a proposed sports ban, which would have barred high school trans athletes from competing on the team aligned with their gender. Evers also vetoed [Assembly Bill 510](#), which would have established a legal standard for state infringement on parental rights, explicitly regarding a child's religion, medical care and records, and education, and create a cause of action for the violation of these rights. It also stated that parents have the right to determine names and pronouns used for the child while at school. During this current legislative session, [Assembly Bill 103](#) has passed both chambers. The bill would only allow for students to use a chosen

name if a legal name change has occurred, or if a student has parental approval. It also prohibits teachers or staff from referring to a student by non-legal name or pronouns without parental permission, however, as a targeted policy to LGBTQIA+ students, this does not apply to nicknames derived from legal names. As of May 2025, the bill has been sent to the governor but has not been signed.

Right now, advocates can take action in their communities to address inequality regarding Wisconsin's sex education requirements. They can contact their local board of education and determine what topics are missing from existing sex education curricula. Advocates can then vocalize the importance of implementing specific elements of sex education, such as trauma-informed, culturally responsive curriculum that addresses the needs of youth of color and LGBTQIA+ youth, or instruction on contraceptives and consent. Advocates are encouraged to take action on pending legislation that seeks to advance or restrict the principles of sex education. **Wisconsin's 2025-2026 legislative session convened January 6th, 2025 and is expected to adjourn on 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 [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 Wisconsin...

State Law: A Closer Look

Wisconsin law § 115.35 establishes a "Health Problems Education Program," which includes instruction on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and human growth and development. While teaching about STIs is a required component, schools are no longer obligated to teach the human growth and development section due to a revision of Wisconsin law § 118.019 in 2012. To see a comprehensive list of changes to the law, please visit the [Department of Public Instruction \(DPI\) website](#). If it is offered, the "Health Problems

Education Program” must “Present medically accurate information to pupils and, when age-appropriate, address the following topics:”

1. The importance of communication between the pupil and the pupil’s parents or guardians;
2. Reproductive and sexual anatomy and physiology, including biological, psychosocial, emotional, and intellectual changes that accompany maturation; ...
5. The benefits of and reasons for abstaining from sexual activity ... stress[ing] the value of abstinence as the only reliable way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and identify[ing] the skills necessary to remain abstinent; ...
10. Adoption resources, prenatal care, and postnatal supports; and
11. The nature and treatment of STIs.

An educational program in human growth and development must also “use instructional methods and materials that do not discriminate against a pupil based upon the pupil’s race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic or cultural background or against sexually active pupils or children with disabilities.”

School boards that choose to provide instruction must provide annual notification to parents outlining the curriculum used for their child’s particular grade level. Parents and guardians must be given the opportunity to review all materials related to sex education classes. Parents or guardians may remove their children from the human growth and development instruction with a written request to the teacher or principal. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

State Standards

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has produced *Human Growth and Development: A Resource Guide to Assist School Districts in Policy and Program Development and Implementation*, which provides assistance on implementing the optional human growth and development curriculum. Furthermore, the DPI offers *Wisconsin Standards for Health Education*, which provide guidance for the general health education curriculum. “Risky sexual behaviors” are mentioned as a component of the 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 Wisconsin’s 2023 YRBS results, [click here](#).**

Wisconsin 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 Wisconsin’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](#).