



Kentucky State of Sex Ed



Current Requirement: Kentucky schools must teach sex education through their mandated health education standards.

- Human sexuality and STI instruction are banned in K-5.
- Curriculum must include instruction on abstinence as the “desirable goal” for school-age youth.
- By law, the curriculum must, at a minimum, meet the outcomes set by [the Kentucky Academic Standards](#).
- Standards require health instruction to be developmentally appropriate and evidence-based; no regulations regarding medically accurate sex education instruction.
- Standards require some instruction on healthy relationships, including instruction on consent.
- Curriculum is prohibited from including instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity K-12th.
- Kentucky requires written parental consent prior to students receiving sex education in sixth grade and up. [This is referred to as an “opt-in” policy.](#)

** In 2026, the overall grade of this state changed slightly from 2025 as a result of a change in our grading methodology. For more information on grading methodology, see the Executive Summary on the State Profiles webpage.*

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Recent Legislation Shaping the State Landscape

Although Kentucky has seen little legislative progress on sex education in the past two sessions, lawmakers have made repeated attempts to undo the restrictive changes to sex education enacted through [Senate Bill 150](#) in 2023. This enacted law bans instruction on human sexuality and STIs in grades 5 and below and requires written parental consent for instruction beginning in 6th grade- effectively making Kentucky sex education an opt-in [policy](#). SB 150 also expanded parental control over related health services and restricted pronoun and preferred name use in schools. Since then, lawmakers have introduced several bills ([HB 380](#), [SB 90](#), [HB 382](#), [HB 513](#), [HB 706](#), and [HB 809](#)) in attempts to roll back portions of SB 150. These bills sought to shift from opt-in to opt-out policies, restore age-appropriate instruction, or establish comprehensive, medically accurate, and inclusive health education; however, all efforts failed, leaving SB 150's restrictions largely intact.

Additionally, in 2024, [House Bill 346 \(Fetal Development Instruction\)](#) and in 2025, [House Bill 294 \("Success Sequence"\)](#) sought to embed fetal development instruction and "traditional" family-structure messaging, respectively, into public school curricula. Together, these bills reflect a growing national trend by the opposition to impose their religious beliefs and spread misinformation and disinformation instead of medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education.

Advocates in Action

Advocates are encouraged to monitor local sex education content to ensure standards are being met and engage with local superintendents and school boards to advocate for medically accurate, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive curricula. Additionally, at the state level, advocates must remain vigilant and defend against continuous attacks on sex education that seek to require stigmatizing and inappropriate "fetal development" instruction or other attempts to push ideology in sex education.

Advocates can also contact state legislators to support a statewide comprehensive sex education mandate and use the [Community Action Toolkit](#) to strengthen local organizing efforts. For additional guidance, advocates can contact the SIECUS Policy team by emailing info@siecus.org or join the Sexuality Education Policy Action Council (SEPAC) using our [interest form](#).

More on sex ed in Kentucky...

State Law: A Closer Look

[Kentucky Revised Statute 156:160](#) requires that the Kentucky Board of Education "promulgate administrative regulations establishing standards [that public] school districts shall meet." Under that authority, [704 KAR 3:305](#) was promulgated, requiring students to take 0.5 credits of health education to graduate. It also requires the health education course to include the

content standards delineated in the Kentucky Core Academic Standards. Furthermore, [704 KAR 3:303](#) adopted the *Kentucky Academic Standards* into law.

In 2018, Kentucky enacted [Chapter 156](#), stating that any human sexuality or STD curricula must include instruction on abstinence, state that “abstinence from sexual activity is the desirable goal for all school-age children,” and advocate for “permanent mutually faithful monogamous relationship[s].” In 2023, Kentucky enacted [Chapter 132](#), which states that any instruction in human sexuality cannot occur in grades five and below. The law also prohibits any instruction, regardless of grade level, that includes content on gender identity, expression, and/or sexual orientation. Additionally, [Kentucky Revised Statute 160.345](#), formerly [SB 1 \(2022\)](#), transferred the authority to determine school health curricula from School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils to district superintendents. While superintendents must consult with principals and school councils, they retain final authority over curriculum decisions.

Due to the enactment of [Senate Bill 150](#) in 2023, Kentucky statute requires written parental permission for students to participate in sexuality or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)-related instruction. [This constitutes an “opt-in” policy.](#)

State Standard

The Kentucky Academic Standards mention sex education in the “Practical Living (Health and Physical Education)” section, which schools must follow. These standards do not include or recommend a specific curriculum, but they set minimum requirements for health and physical education, which encompasses sex education in Kentucky. Students should learn “how decision-making relates to responsible sexual behavior (e.g., abstinence, preventing pregnancy, preventing HIV/[sexually transmitted diseases] (STDs), and impacts the physical, mental, and social well-being of an individual.” Students also learn about the basic reproductive system and functions. No specific curriculum is required.

Curriculum is not required to be medically accurate, culturally responsive to the needs of young people of color, or include instruction on topics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, consent, healthy relationships, or contraceptive options.

Youth Sexual Health Data

The CDC’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) [tracks six categories of health risk behaviors](#) including sexual health behaviors. **To learn more about Kentucky's 2023 YRBS results, [click here](#).** The CDC School Health Profiles [identifies 22 sexual health education topics](#) as critical for ensuring a young person’s sexual health. **Kentucky’s 2024 School Health Profiles response rate was not high enough to be representative and thus is excluded from the 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](#).