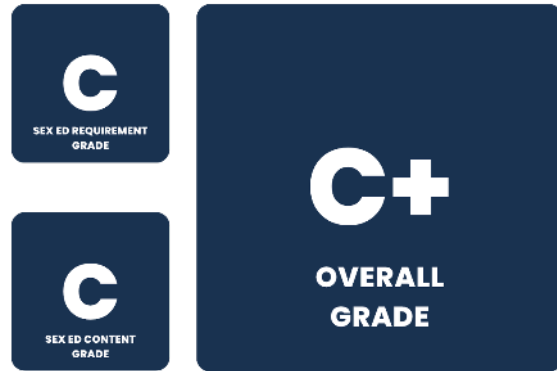




Missouri State of Sex Ed



Current Requirement: Sex education is not required; however, Missouri requires HIV/AIDS Prevention education.

- If sex education is offered, curricula must present abstinence as the preferred choice of behavior.
- If sex education is offered, curricula must teach about contraceptives within a curriculum that promotes abstinence.
- All course materials related to HIV/AIDS, along with sex education curriculum if offered, must be medically accurate.
- If sex education is offered, curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- If sex education is offered, curriculum must include instruction on consent.
- Schools are required to provide trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate sexual abuse training to students in 6th grade and up.
- Parents and guardians can remove their children from any part of their sex education instruction. [This is called an “opt-out” policy.](#)

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Recent Legislation Shaping the State Landscape

Advocates in Missouri have faced endless, unsuccessful attempts to restrict sex education over the past few years.

Most recently, in 2026, six bills ([HB 1701](#), [SB 978](#), [HB 2581](#), [HB 2744](#), [SB 1198](#), [HB 2909](#)) were introduced that would have negatively impacted sex education by requiring biased

instruction on human growth and development, including viewing an ultrasound video and animation on fetal development, typically referring to the [“Meet Baby Olivia” video](#) created by anti-abortion group Live Action. Similar bills were introduced in 2024 and 2025 ([HB 461](#), [HB 1576](#), [HB 2922](#)), but none have passed.

Advocates in Action

Advocates can take action to allow young people in Missouri to have access to quality sex education. Advocates can also contact their local school board to determine whether or not sex education beyond HIV/AIDS prevention is being taught. They can then voice the need to strengthen instruction requirements in their community.

Advocates can also contact their representatives to discuss the critical need to defend against harmful legislative attempts like “Baby Olivia” bills and push for a statewide sex education mandate. Advocates are encouraged to 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 Missouri...

State Law: A Closer Look

Missouri schools are required by [Missouri Revised Statute § 170.015](#) to teach health education, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention education, beginning in elementary school. If a school chooses to provide additional sex education, Missouri law mandates that all instruction must be medically and factually accurate and “present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice of behavior in relation to all sexual activity for unmarried pupils.” In addition, instruction must “advise students that teenage sexual activity places them at a higher risk of dropping out of school because of the consequences of sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] and unplanned pregnancy.”

Among other requirements, the instruction must also:

- Stress that [STDs] are serious, possible health hazards of sexual activity. Pupils shall be provided with the latest medical information regarding exposure to [HIV], [AIDS], human papillomavirus [HPV], hepatitis, and other [STDs];
- Present students with the latest medically factual information regarding both the possible side effects and health benefits of all forms of contraception, including the success and failure rates for the prevention of pregnancy and [STDs]; or shall present students with information on contraceptives and pregnancy in a manner consistent with the provisions of the federal abstinence education law, 42 U.S.C. Section 510;
- Include a discussion of the possible emotional and psychological consequences of preadolescent and adolescent sexual activity and the consequences of adolescent pregnancy[iv]

The statute was first amended in 2015 to include instruction on “the dangers of sexual predators, including online predators when using electronic communication methods” and “the consequences, both personal and legal, of inappropriate text messaging.” Later, in 2018, the statute was [amended again](#) to include instruction on sexual harassment, sexual violence, and consent.

Each school district or charter school board must determine the specific content of human sexuality instruction. School districts and charter schools are prohibited from providing referrals to abortion services and allowing a person and/or entity that provides abortion services to “offer, sponsor, or furnish” course materials related to human sexuality and STDs. Before instruction, school districts and charter schools must make all curriculum materials available for public inspection. Parents have the right to remove their child from any part of the district’s or school’s human sexuality instruction. [This is called an “opt-out” policy.](#)

Since Missouri 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 LGBTQAI+ youth, and presents further challenges in ensuring that low-income districts have access to the resources needed to implement sex education.

State Standard

While Missouri does not require state standards and leaves decision-making regarding human sexuality instruction to local school districts, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released the [Health and Family Education Academic Standards in 2024](#) for grades 9-12. These expectations outline the content Missouri students are expected to know at each grade level. Content standards outlined are: healthy relationships, consent, violence prevention, STI prevention (including HIV/AIDS), and contraception.

Youth Sexual Health Data

The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) tracks [adolescent health behaviors](#), including sexual health behaviors. **To learn more about Missouri's 2023 YRBS results, [click here](#).** The CDC's [School Health Profiles](#) measure school health policies, practices, and the sexual health topics taught in schools. **To view Missouri’s results from the 2024 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](#).