



SIECUS

State Profile

MONTANA

***Montana received no federal funding for
abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.¹***

Montana Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Montana's public education system is supervised by the Montana Board of Public Education, which sets standards for curricula in public schools. According to the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the Board of Public Education requires a "health enhancement" program. According to the health enhancement program's content standards, "a student must have basic knowledge and understanding of concepts that promote comprehensive health." Specifically, by the end of fourth grade, students should be able to "identify personal health-enhancing strategies...that encompass injury/disease prevention, including HIV/AIDS prevention." By the end of eighth grade, students should be able to understand the reproductive system as well as personal health-enhancing strategies about sexual activity and HIV/AIDS prevention. By graduation, students should be able to understand the impact of personal behaviors on the body, including the reproductive system, and have personal health-enhancing strategies about sexual activity and HIV/AIDS prevention. The Montana Board of Public Education released a *Position Statement on HIV/AIDS* that states, "All Montana school districts are strongly encouraged to develop appropriate communicable disease policies that specifically include HIV and AIDS, and which address age-appropriate education, rights and accommodations of students and staff who are infected, and safety procedures."

Due to the autonomous nature of Montana school districts, standards for the sexuality education portion of the health enhancement program are not defined. Furthermore, there is no oversight of what is being taught or who is teaching these classes.

Montana neither requires parental permission for students to participate in sexuality or HIV/AIDS education nor does it say whether parents or guardians may remove their children from such classes.

See Montana Administrative Rules 10.54.7011, 7012, and 7013, 10.54.2501, and 10.55.905 and *Montana Board of Public Education Position Statement on HIV/AIDS*.

Recent Legislation

Healthy Youth Program Act Introduced

House Bill 612, introduced in February 2007, would have established a grant program within the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to fund cities, counties, or tribal health councils to carry out age-appropriate sexuality education that follows a specific curriculum. Components included that the instruction "must be age-appropriate and medically accurate; may not teach or promote religion; must stress the benefits of sexual abstinence while addressing the health needs of adolescents who have had or who are engaged in a sexual relationship; must provide information about the health benefits and side effects of all contraceptives and barrier methods as a means to reduce the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, HIV, AIDS, and other diseases and preventing unintended

pregnancy; and must encourage family communication about sexuality among parents, other adult household members, and children.” Programs may not be out of compliance with any of the components. The bill addressed eligibility for Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funds, stating that “because the requirements set forth in each program are in direct conflict, an eligible entity may not accept contracts from both programs.” DPHHS would have been responsible for overseeing all procedures, contracts, and awards related to the “Healthy Youth Program.” The bill died after it was tabled in the House Committee on Human Services on a party-line vote and missed the deadline for general bill transmittal.

Events of Note

School Board Defends Contentious High School Reading Selection

May 2007; Billings, MT

A school board panel in Billings School District Two refused a request by a group of parents to pull Richard Bradford’s *Red Sky At Morning* from the reading list for freshman English classes.

In February, one parent filed a complaint against the book, which details a young boy’s transition from life in Alabama to New Mexico during World War II, for “excessive profanity and...sexually suggestive passages.”² When the parent contacted the teacher about the book her daughter was given an alternative book to read, but she pursued the complaint anyway, arguing that the book is inappropriate for all 14-year-olds.³

The parent and other supporters voiced their complaints to a review panel set up by the board of directors, but panel stood behind the novel, which has been used by the school district for over twenty years. The committee, composed of a principal, librarian, teacher, and parent, voted to keep the book. One member, an English teacher suggested that most high school reading selections include contentious themes and potentially offensive language. If they didn’t, she continued, “I can think of very few that would be left ...No Nobel Prize books would be left or any of the books used in the AP classes.”⁴

Montana’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁵

- In 2007, 46% of female high school students and 45% of male high school students in Montana reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 3% of female high school students and 7% of male high school students in Montana reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 13% of female high school students and 15% of male high school students in Montana reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 35% of female high school students and 28% of male high school students in Montana reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students nationwide.

- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 56% of females and 73% of males in Montana reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 30% of females and 15% of males in Montana reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 21% of females and 32% of males in Montana reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 18% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, 90% of high school students in Montana reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services would have been eligible for \$161,398 in Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2007. The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant requires states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The state match may be provided in part or in full by local groups. The state does not apply for these funds due to the extraordinary restrictions upon how the money must be spent. Therefore, the state does not match funds nor does it have organizations supported by this type of federal money.

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are no CBAE or AFLA grantees in Montana.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2007

Montana did not receive abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2007.

Adolescent Health Contact⁶

Jo Ann Dotson
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Director's Office
P.O. Box 4210
111 N. Sanders
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: (406) 444-4743

Montana Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Montana
P.O. Box 1317
Helena, MT 59624
Phone: (406) 443-8590
www.aclumontana.org

Blue Mountain Clinic
610 North California St.
Missoula, MT 59802
Phone: (406) 721-1646
www.bluemountainclinic.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Montana
P.O. Box 279
Helena, MT 59624
Phone: (406) 443-0276
www.prochoicemontana.org

Montana Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Montana Family Foundation
P.O. Box 485
Laurel, MT 59044
Phone: (406) 628-1141
www.montanafamily.org

Right to Life of Montana
1900 Last Chance Gulch
P.O. Box 6787
Helena, MT 59601
Phone: (406) 443-0827
www.rtlmt.org

Newspapers in Montana⁷

Billings Gazette
Newsroom
P.O. Box 36300
Billings, MT 59107
Phone: (406) 657-1200
www.billingsgazette.net

Bozeman Daily Chronicle
Newsroom
P.O. Box 1190
Bozeman, MT 59771
Phone: (406) 587-4491
www.bozemandailychronicle.com

The Livingston Enterprise
Newsroom
P.O. Box 2000
Livingston, MT 59047
Phone: (406) 222-2000
www.livingstonenterprise.com

Independent Record
Newsroom
P.O. Box 4249
Helena, MT 59604
Phone: (406) 447-4000
www.helenair.com

Miles City Star
Newsroom
P.O. Box 1216
Miles City, MT 59301
Phone: (406) 234-0450
www.milescitystar.com

Missoulian
Newsroom
P.O. Box 8029
Missoula, MT 59807
Phone: (406) 523-5200
www.missoulian.com

MONTANA

Montana Standard
Newsroom
25 W. Granite St.
Butte, MT 59701
Phone: (406) 496-5500
www.mtstandard.com

¹ This refers to the fiscal year for the Federal Government which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2007 begins on October 1, 2006 and ends on September 30, 2007.

² Laura. Tode, "Panel Refuses Request To Remove Book From School Curriculum," *Helena Independent Record*, 11 May 2007, accessed 16 May 2007, <www.helenair.com/articles/2007/05/11/montana/a07051107_04.txt>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007," Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 57.SS-4 (6 June 2008), accessed 4 June 2008, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

⁶ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

⁷ This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means inclusive and does not contain the local level newspapers which are integral to getting your message out to your community. SIECUS strongly urges you to follow stories about the issues that concern you on the national, state, and local level by using an internet news alert service such as [Google alerts](#), becoming an avid reader of your local papers, and establishing relationships with reporters who cover your issues. For more information on how to achieve your media goals visit the SIECUS [Community Action Kit](#).