



MARYLAND

Maryland received \$970,653 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2005.¹

Maryland Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Maryland education code requires each local school board to work with the county health department in establishing a school health education program with a number of specified goals. Sexuality education falls under Goal F, which is designed to help students “recognize the family as a basic unit of society that perpetuates life and promotes healthy growth and development.” Under Goal F, schools must help students “develop and use skills for making responsible decisions about sexual behavior based on its consequences for the individual and others” and “develop and use skills for making responsible decisions about family planning and preventing pregnancy.” Goal F also includes teaching students about “[a] variety of family structures and roles of family members,” “male and female roles in American society,” “sexual variations,” “contraception,” and “family planning.”

Maryland education code requires that health education classes be taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade, in mixed gender groups. It also directs when certain topics may and may not be addressed. For example, the code says, “direct teaching of human reproduction may not begin earlier than age 10 or later than age 12.” Regulations also state that an elective sexuality education course must be offered in middle and high schools. This course must be designed with an appointed citizen advisory committee that broadly represents the views of the community and cover a number of topics including contraception, family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The code states that teachers of sexuality education classes may have additional preparation for this class and that if a teacher feels “inadequate or uncomfortable” with the class, he/she does not have to teach it. Maryland State Regulations also mandate that “local school systems shall provide annual instruction in AIDS to all students at least once in grades three to six, six to nine, and nine to twelve.” Each local school board determines the actual grade.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any or all sexuality education classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy. The elective courses offered in middle and high schools require parental permission in order for a student to participate, this is known as an “opt-in” policy.

See Maryland Regulations 13A.04.18.02, 13A.04.18.03, and 13A.04.18.04.

Recent Legislation

SIECUS is not aware of any proposed legislation regarding sexuality education in Maryland.

Events of Note

Montgomery County, MD Cancels Controversial Sexuality Education Program

May 2005; Montgomery Co, MD

Conservatives both locally and nationally staged an all-out campaign against the Montgomery County, MD school system's revised sexuality education program and pilot program. The revised program, adopted in 2004, included a condom demonstration video for tenth graders and a pilot program for eighth and ninth grade students that included a discussion on sexual orientation. The curriculum has been the subject of much debate since it was passed by the school board and in May 2005 a federal judge blocked the program from being implemented. Largely as a result of the controversy, the Montgomery County school board decided to cancel the program in late May and instead create an entirely new program.

The debate gained national attention when a group of parents calling themselves Citizens for Responsible Curriculum, together with the Virginia-based group Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays, brought a federal lawsuit against the school system. The Liberty Counsel, a conservative Florida-based Christian legal group, filed the lawsuit on behalf of the two groups on May 3, 2005.² The lawsuit claimed that allowing discussions over homosexuality to take place in the schools and distributing resource materials that included information on gay-positive churches and religious groups gave preference to religions that are tolerant of homosexuality and ignored those churches that teach that homosexuality is wrong.

U.S. District Judge Alexander Williams sided with these groups and issued a ten-day restraining order to prevent the school system from implementing its pilot health program in the six schools where it was scheduled to begin. During the court case, the school system's attorney defended the new program and pointed out that parents can choose to remove their children from the program by signing a form. Nonetheless, in late May the Montgomery County Board of Education took a surprising step and voted 7-1 to create a new sexuality education program, rather than continue the fight over the controversial program. The new curriculum will be written by Montgomery County Public School educators and a new board-appointed citizens advisory committee.

Both sides claimed victory in the board's decision. Supporters of the sexuality education curriculum see the board's decision as a strategic move to retain local control over the schools. Opponents of the new curriculum were also pleased with the board's decision. Michelle Turner from Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum explained, "something can be developed that is suitable for all students in Montgomery County."³

The lawsuit that the group filed is still in negotiations despite the school's recent cancellation of the program.

Maryland School Board Updates Sexuality Education Curricula

May 2004; Harford County, MD

For the first time in two decades, the Harford County Board of Education updated the middle school sexuality education curriculum. The curriculum had previously not been updated since 1983 and the district's Family Life Committee found that the school district lagged behind others in the area.

The Family Life Committee was commissioned to research what other counties were teaching in their middle schools and to compare it to its own school district. One Committee member said that in their interviews with 22 of the state's 24 jurisdictions, members discovered that, "Harford County is the only county...that has not included information about STDs (except for HIV/AIDS) or teen pregnancy in the middle school curriculum."

In their decision to update the curriculum, school administrators also considered a long list of questions that middle school students had asked in class about sexual situations, STDs, and teen pregnancy. One of the Committee members noted that instruction at the school had suffered because of a school policy, which limits discussions on topics such as STDs and teen pregnancy. Teachers had to answer students' questions in an "around-the-barn kind of manner," she said, because of the limitations.

In February 2003, the school board voted to bring the middle school curriculum in line with other schools and approved a revised sexuality education curriculum that was originally intended to be taught in eighth grade physical education classes. In April 2004, on the advice of the school committee, the Board of Education voted to update the school's sexuality education curriculum and to start the curriculum in the seventh grade rather than in eighth grade, as originally intended. Parents may remove their children from the class if they prefer.

Maryland's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2005, 90% of high school students in Maryland reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.⁴
- In 2000, Maryland's abortion rate was 38 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁵
- In 2002, Maryland's birth rate was 35 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 nationwide.⁶

*Baltimore, Maryland*⁷

- In 2005, 63% of female high school students and 77% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 9% of female high school students and 31% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 18% of female high school students and 43% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 48% of female high school students and 55% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.

- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 64% of females and 77% of males in Baltimore, Maryland reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 10% of females and 7% of males in Baltimore, Maryland reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 9% of females and 21% of males in Baltimore, Maryland reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, 86% of high school students in Baltimore, Maryland reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Maryland received \$569,675 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2005. 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. In Maryland, the federal funding is matched with \$401,784 from state and private funds.

The funding is used to run the Maryland Abstinence Education and Coordination Program (MAECP), which is administered by the Center for Maternal and Child Health. MAECP is co-sponsored by the Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy and the Office for Children, Youth, and Families. The program focuses on young people ages 9–18 living in areas of Maryland with adolescent pregnancy rates higher than the statewide average and consists of structured after school programs, a media campaign, and an annual conference.

Title V Evaluation

The Maryland Center for Maternal and Child Health evaluated its Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program in 2002. This evaluation process was reviewed by Advocates for Youth in its 2004 report, *Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact*.⁸ Advocates for Youth was forced to cite only an abstract of the full evaluation because the Center for Maternal and Child Health chose not to release the final report. From the information available, however, Advocates for Youth determined that participants' pre- and post-test scores showed no significant change in attitudes or practices regarding abstinence.⁹ In addition, the proportion of youth who reported that they would remain abstinent until the completion of high school and the proportion of youth who reported abstinent behavior in the year prior to the survey both declined between pre- and post-test.¹⁰

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE)¹¹ and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are no CBAE grantees in Maryland. There are two AFLA grantees: University of Maryland, Baltimore and the YMCA of Cumberland County.

Although there are no CBAE grantees in the state, the Educational Guidance Institute, based in Virginia, received funding to do work in Prince George's County, MD. The Education Guidance Institute was founded and is directed by Onalee McGraw who serves on the board of the Abstinence Clearinghouse and is a contributing editor to the newsletter, *Women for Faith and Family*.¹²

The University of Maryland, Baltimore runs two abstinence-only-until-marriage programs: Realizing Excellence through Abstinence Education Career Exploration and Healthy Lifestyle Choices (REACH) and Achieving Balance, Self-Esteem, Training, and Insight to Say No (Project ABSTAIN). The programs are provided through the College of Medicine's Department of Community Affairs, which partners with community organizations.

REACH aims to give pre-adolescent and adolescent students the skills to "practice abstinence as a peer-accepted alternative to early sexual activity." The program is comprised of 24 two-hour sessions on peer pressure, self-esteem, decision-making, abstinence, and the consequences of early sexual activity. Students also may receive a college-age or professional mentor to help them through the program. REACH uses an expanded version of the *Sex Can Wait* curriculum as well as *Baby Think it Over*, a program that uses computerized dolls to simulate teen parenthood. There is also a 12-week class for parents of children in the program in which they discuss communication, parenting styles, and physical and mental changes of adolescents.

Project ABSTAIN has the same mission as REACH; however, Project ABSTAIN focuses on youth ages 9–14 and their parents. Participants learn about peer pressure and self-esteem, and are given a mentor to help them through the program. Parents must also attend classes on parenting and communication.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2005

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
Maryland Abstinence Education and Coordination Program www.fha.state.md.us/och/html/abstnc.html	\$569,675 federal \$401,784 state	Title V
YMCA of Cumberland County 2005–2006 www.cumberlandymca.org	\$172,054	AFLA

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
University of Maryland, Baltimore 2005–2006 http://medschool.umaryland.edu/community/reach.asp	\$228,924	AFLA

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

Christine Evans
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Office of Children's Health
Community and Public Health Administration
201 W. Preston St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410) 767-6042

Maryland Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Equality Maryland
8121 Georgia Ave., Suite 501
Silver Spring, MD 20901
Phone: (301) 587-7500
www.equalitymaryland.org

MD NOW
PO Box 7216
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: (410) 269-0542
www.marylandnow.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland
8121 Georgia Ave., Suite 501
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: (301) 565-4154
www.mdnaral.org

Planned Parenthood of Maryland Inc.
330 N. Howard St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410) 576-1400
www.plannedparenthoodmd.org

Maryland Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

MD Christian Coalition
PO Box 53
Churchville, MD 21028
Phone: (443) 417-0823
www.ccmaryland.org

Maryland Family Values Alliance
www.mdfva.org

M A R Y L A N D

MD Right to Life
PO Box 2994
Annapolis, MD 21404
Phone: (410) 269-6397
www.mdrttl.org

TakeBackMaryland.org
PO Box 4
Pasadena, MD 21123
Phone: (410) 647-8644
www.takebackmaryland.org

Newspapers in Maryland

The Baltimore Sun
Jonathan Bor
Health & Medicine Reporter
501 N. Calvert St.
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 332-6191

The Baltimore Sun
Greg Garland
Politics Reporter
501 N. Calvert St.
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 332-6501

The Baltimore Sun
David Greene
White House Correspondent
1627 K St. NW
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 416-0260

The Baltimore Sun
David Kohn
Science Reporter
501 N. Calvert St.
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 332-6538

The Baltimore Sun
Diana Sugg
Health & Medicine Reporter
501 N. Calvert St.
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 332-6601

The Baltimore Sun
Jules Witcover
Politics Columnist
1627 K St. NW
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 416-0274

The Capital
Mary Felter
Community News Editor
2000 Capital Dr.
Annapolis, MD 21401
Phone: (410) 280-5919

Carroll County Times
Patti Ritter
Community News Editor
201 Railroad Ave.
Westminster, MD 21157
Phone: (410) 751-7861

Cumberland Times-News
Deborah Haan
Community News Editor
19 Baltimore St.
Cumberland, MD 21502
Phone: (301) 722-4600

The Daily Mail
Harry Nogle
Community News Correspondent
100 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown, MD 21740
Phone: (301) 733-5131

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The Daily Times

Bruce Bennett
Medical/Health Editor
115 E. Carroll St.
Salisbury, MD 21801
Phone: (410) 749-7171

The Frederick News-Post

Linda Gregory
Medical/Health Editor
200 E. Patrick St.
Frederick, MD 21701
Phone: (301) 662-1177

The Morning Herald

Jake Womer
Medical/Health Editor
100 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown, MD 21740
Phone: (301) 733-5131

The Star-Democrat

Laura Wilson
Medical/Health Editor
9088 Airpark Dr.
Easton, MD 21601
Phone: (410) 770-4107

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 2005 begins on October 1, 2004 and ends on September 30, 2005.

² Jon Ward, "Schools Expected to Defer on Sex-Ed," *Washington Times* (DC), 10 May 2005, accessed 25 May 2005, <<http://washingtontimes.com/metro/20050510-101925-2342r.htm>>.

³ Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg, "MD. School Board to Rewrite Sex Ed Curriculum," *Washington Blade*, 27 May 2005, accessed 28 May 2005, <<http://www.washblade.com/2005/5-27/news/localnews/md-school.cfm>>.

⁴ Danice K. Eaton, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 8 June 2006, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>. Maryland did not participate in the complete 2005 YRBS but Baltimore did. Information about Baltimore is listed separately.

⁵ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: Guttmacher Institute, February 2004), accessed 28 January 2005, <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/state_pregnancy_trends.pdf>.

⁶ *National Vital Statistics Reports 52.10* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2003), 48, accessed 4 February 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm#stat%20tables>>.

⁷ Danice K. Eaton, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 8 June 2006, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>.

⁸ Debra Hauser, *Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact* (Washington, D.C.: Advocates for Youth, 2004), 11.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ L.K. Olsen and D. Agley, *Analysis of Four Years of Abstinence-Only Human Sexuality Programs in Maryland*, Abstract of paper presented at 130th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association, 13 November 2002.

¹¹ In Fiscal Year 2004 SPRANS—CBAE was administered within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In Fiscal Year 2005 this funding stream was moved to HHS' Administration for Children and Families and is now referred to simply as Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE).

¹² Onalee McGraw, Women for Faith and Family, Accessed 12 January 2006, <<http://www.wf-f.org/bd-omcgraw.html>>.