



Iowa

Iowa received \$1,163,920 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

Iowa Sexuality Education Law

Iowa mandates that health education be taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Iowa law prescribes what must be included in health education by grade. In first through sixth grade, “the health curriculum shall include the characteristics of communicable diseases including acquired immune deficiency syndrome.” In grades seven and eight, health education must “include the characteristics of sexually transmitted disease and acquired immune deficiency syndrome.” In grades nine through twelve (students must take health education at least once during these four grades), health education must include information on “the prevention and control of disease, including sexually transmitted diseases and acquired immune deficiency syndrome.”

The state board of education sets curriculum and accreditation standards for all aspects of the health education program.

Parents or guardians can remove their children from any part of health education courses if the course conflicts with the student’s religious beliefs. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

Iowa’s educational mandate also states that: “the rules of the state board shall require that a multicultural, nonsexist approach is used by schools and school districts. The educational program shall be taught from a multicultural, nonsexist approach. Global perspectives shall be incorporated into all levels of the educational program.”

See Iowa Code 279.50, 256.11, and Iowa Administrative Code 281-12.5.

Recent Legislation

The Iowa legislature only carries bills over if they have passed both the House and the Senate. Related 2003 and 2004 bills are listed. Iowa’s legislative session ended on April 20, 2004.

Bill Requiring that Sexuality Education be Medically Accurate, Age Appropriate Died, 2003 Session

House Bill 465, introduced in March 2003, would have required that all family life courses be medically accurate and age appropriate. Further, the Department of Education would have had to make such courses available for schools and develop a procedure for evaluating all such courses. All courses would have been required to teach several topics, among them

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 2003 begins on October 1, 2002 and ends on September 30, 2003.

communication skills and presentations of the side effects, benefits, success, and failure rates of all forms of contraception.

The bill died in April 2003 at the end of the legislative session.

Events of Note

Play Discussing Homosexuality Sparks Concerns

March 2003, Dubuque, IA

On the Down Low, a play that depicts true stories of “the crisis of bullying and anti-gay harassment in schools,” received criticism when it was performed at a Dubuque, IA, school in late March 2003.

Thirty-five members of a local church presented the Dubuque Community School Board with a petition asking that the play not be performed during school hours. In addition, many members sent letters of complaint arguing that the play teaches acceptance of a homosexual lifestyle. The visiting pastor at the church said, “The feeling behind the petition is that it’s wrong for our schools to promote a program that would undermine what is taught in many homes and churches.”²

School officials disagreed, however. The Superintendent said that they responded to the people who sent letters and complained, but that the play was in line with the district’s nondiscrimination and harassment policy, which includes sexual orientation. He went on to say, “We believe that understanding discrimination as it applies to the experience of someone who is homosexual is fully within the intent of the Board’s policy. As a School District, we teach about many things but do not endorse them.”³

“Sari Says: The Real Dirt on Everything from Sex to School” Banned

September 2002; Dyersville, IA

Sari Says: The Real Dirt on Everything from Sex to School, a book written by the advice columnist for the online edition of *Teen People* magazine, was banned from the James Kennedy Public Library in Dyersville, IA.

Board members made the decision due to “inappropriate” content.⁴ In her book, Sari Locker answers questions on everything from interracial dating to sexual health to alternatives to intercourse.

When the book was first received in the library, a trustee looked through it and asked that it not be placed on the shelf. After the librarian refused, the trustee brought the issue to the June library board meeting where the board voted seven to zero to ban the book from the shelves, with two abstentions. Two more votes were held and both times the trustees voted to ban the book as they felt it was “inappropriate” and too sexually explicit.

Locker, on the other hand, states, “As a teen educator, I know that when a teen asks me a question about sex, they need an honest, accurate answer because otherwise they’re going to be getting information from sources that are not positive-value based or encouraging sexual health.”

² D. Heldt, “Church Expresses Concerns Over Scheduled Play Performances; Homosexuality: Dubuque School Officials Say the Focus Is on Preventing Discrimination,” *Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)*, March 23, 2003.

³ Ibid.

⁴ M. Leitsinger, “Banned in Iowa,” CBSNews.com, July 23, 2002.

Iowa's Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁵

- In 2001, 42% of female high school students and 44% of male high school students in Iowa reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 43% of female high school students and 49% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2001, 3% of female high school students and 5% of male high school students in Iowa 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 2001, 11% of female high school students and 14% of male high school students in Iowa reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 11% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2001, 34% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students in Iowa reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 33% of females and 33% of males nationwide.
- In 2001, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 21% of females and 29% of males in Iowa reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 31% of males nationwide.
- In 2001, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 52% of females and 66% of males in Iowa reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 51% of females and 65% of males nationwide.
- In 2001, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 30% of females and 20% of males in Iowa reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2001, 3% of female high school students and 1% of male high school students in Iowa reported ever having been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant compared to 5% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2001, 90% of high school students in Iowa reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 89% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Iowa's abortion rate was 12 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁶

⁵ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: J. Grunbaum, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 2001," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 51, no.SS-4, June 28, 2002, pp. 1-64. Available online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbbs/>. Iowa did not participate in the 2003 YRBS.

- In 2001, Iowa's birth rate was 34 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 per 1,000 nationwide.⁷

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Iowa received \$424,908 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2003. 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 can be provided in part or in full by local groups. In previous years, the state provided the full four-to-three match, however, due to recent budget cuts, Iowa no longer provides the match and instead the Title V sub-grantees go beyond the federal requirement by providing a one-to-one match.

Sub-grantees use a variety of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula. Three of the organizations use Mike Long's *Everyone is Not Doing It* video. The Crittenton Center has also employed Mike Long, a nationally known abstinence-only-until-marriage speaker, as a presenter. Three of the organizations utilize the abstinence-only-until-marriage program *Girl Talk, Guy Talk* for their training. The Marshalltown Medical and Surgical Center uses the *STARS* curriculum and a video produced by Focus on the Family entitled *Sex, Lies, and Truth*. The Finley Tri-State Health Group uses the *Choosing the Best* series, which includes *Choosing the Best LIFE*, *Choosing the Best PATH*, and *Choosing the Best WAY* for high school, upper middle school, and lower middle school students respectively. SIECUS' review of *Choosing the Best* curricula found that they rely on fear and shame to influence young people's behavior, suggest that premarital sexual activity is inevitably harmful, and discourage the use of condoms and other contraceptives by providing misleading information about their failure rates. The curricula are written exclusively for heterosexual students, rely on gender stereotypes, and include biased information about abortion.

Several organizations also use a media campaign to stress the abstinence message. The media campaign consists of radio and television ads and usually involves the input of the Mike Long program participants. The media campaign is often combined with outreach through health fairs or with the formation of resource rooms. For example, the Hillcrest Family Services has established a Teen/Family Information Center on the Finley Hospital Campus. The American Home Finding Association created a Teen Leader group to work with younger students on subjects related to abstinence. The Hawkeye Area Community Action Program implemented a mentoring program.

Special Projects of Regional and National Significance—Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS—CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are two SPRANS grantees in Iowa: Sexual Health Education Inc. and the Iowa Department of Health. There are no AFLA grantees in Iowa.

⁶ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information*, (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004). Available online at www.guttmacher.org.

⁷ A. Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2003⁸

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
Iowa Department of Public Health	\$424,908	Title V
DUAL GRANTEE www.idph.state.ia.us/ch/abstinence_education.asp	\$317,512	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Allen Memorial Hospital		Title V sub-grantee
American Home Finding Association		Title V sub-grantee
Bethany Christian Services		Title V sub-grantee
Community Opportunities Inc.		Title V sub-grantee
The Crittenton Center		Title V sub-grantee
Empower Through Crossroads of Pella DUAL GRANTEE		Title V sub-grantee (received 2 Title V sub-grants)
Finley Tri-State Health Group		Title V sub-grantee
Hawkeye Area Community Action Program		Title V sub-grantee
Hillcrest Family Services		Title V sub-grantee
Interstate 35 Community School District		Title V sub-grantee
Marshalltown Medical and Surgical Center		Title V sub-grantee
Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc.		Title V sub-grantee
North Iowa Community Action Organization		Title V sub-grantee

⁸ SIECUS was not able to obtain exact funding information for all grantees.

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS- CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
Scott County Health Department		Title V sub-grantee
Sexual Health Education, Inc.		Title V sub-grantee (received 2 Title V sub- grants)
Triple Grantee	\$421,500	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
2002-2005		
www.equippingyouth.org		
Unity Public Health		Title V sub-grantee
Upper Des Moines Opportunity		Title V sub-grantee
Women's Health Services		Title V sub-grantee

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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Iowa Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

IA NOW
P.O. Box 41114
Des Moines, IA 50311
www.geocities.com/iowa_now

IA Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice
P.O. Box 41307
Des Moines, IA 50311
Phone: (515) 279-2936

Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa
851 19th St.
Des Moines, IA 50311
Phone: (515) 280-7000
www.ppgi.org

Iowa Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Christian Coalition of Iowa
P.O. Box 65066
West Des Moines, IA 50265
Phone: (866) 557-9266
www.iowachristian.com

Iowa Family Policy Council (IFPC)
1100 N Hickory Blvd., Suite 105
Pleasant Hill, IA 50327
www.iowaprofamily.org

IA Right to Life Committee
1500 Illinois St.
Des Moines, IA 50314
Phone: (515) 244-1012
www.irlc.org

Newspapers in Iowa

Courier
Catherine Kittrell
Community News Editor
501 Commercial St.
Waterloo, IA 50701
Phone: (319) 291-1462

The Daily Nonpareil
Tim Johnson
Medical/Health Reporter
535 W. Broadway
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
Phone: (712) 328-1811

Des Moines Register
Melissa Myers
Community News Assistant Editor
715 Locust St.
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 284-8395

The Gazette
Frank Gluck
Community News Staff Writer
500 3rd Ave., SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Phone: (319) 398-8310

Globe-Gazette
Peggy Senzarino
Community News Reporter
300 N. Washington Ave.
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The Hawk Eye
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The Messenger

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713 Central Ave.
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
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The Sioux City Journal

Julie Weeder
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515 Pavonia St.
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