

The SIECUS State Profiles



WYOMING

WYOMING'S SEX ED SNAPSHOT

THE STATE OF SEX EDUCATION

Because Wyoming 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. While some districts such as Sheridan County District provide abstinence-based instruction, little is known about sex education requirements in other districts across the state.

Mandating 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 LGBTQ youth, and presents further challenges in ensuring that low income districts have access to the resources needed to implement comprehensive sex education. As of 2015, health educators [report](#) that they do not go in depth on topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity, despite knowing that there are LGBTQ students in their classrooms.

Right now, advocates can take action to ensure young people in their community have access to quality sex education. After contacting their local school board, advocates can determine what topics are missing from sex education instruction, such as consent, healthy relationships, sexual orientation and gender identity, and contraceptives. They can then vocalize the important need for advancing sex education requirements in their community. Further, advocates can contact their representatives to discuss the critical need for advancing comprehensive sex education requirements. Advocates are encouraged to use the SIECUS [Community Action Toolkit](#) to guide local efforts to advance sex education.

STATE SEX EDUCATION POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS AT A GLANCE

- Wyoming schools are not required to teach sex education. However, sexuality is an included topic in the state's mandated Health Education Content and Performance Standards.
 - Curriculum is not required to be comprehensive.
 - Wyoming has no standard regarding instruction on abstinence.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Curriculum is not required to include instruction on consent.
- Wyoming has no standard regarding the ability of parents and guardians to remove their children from sex education instruction.
- Wyoming has no standard on medically accurate sex education instruction.

STATE HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS

This section highlights sex education bills that were introduced during the 2019 state legislative session as well as bills that have been introduced thus far in 2020. These proposed bills provide a brief overview of both recent and current legislative action taken to advance or restrict sex education.

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For a more comprehensive look at relevant legislation concerning sex education and related topics such as reproductive health care, LGBTQ rights, and HIV/AIDS, continue reading on to the “State Legislative Activity” section of Wyoming’s profile.

No bill have been introduced concerning sex educations to date.

MORE ON SEX ED IN WYOMING

STATE LAW

[Wyoming statute § 21-9-101](#) requires each school district within the state to provide education in accordance with uniform standards and rules and regulations promulgated by the state board. On November 14, 2016, through authority granted in [Wyoming Statute §21-2-304](#), the [Wyoming Content and Performance Standards](#) became an effective rule, which includes the health standards required for graduation.

STATE STANDARDS

In the [Wyoming Health Education Content and Performance Standards](#), “sexuality” is defined as “the sum of the physical, functional, and psychological attributes that are expressed by one's gender identity and sexual behavior; [and] includes accurate, factual, and developmentally appropriate information on sexuality, pregnancy prevention, and sexually transmitted infections [STIs] such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).” References to sex education exist throughout benchmark standards, but there is no specific curricula indicated.

The state does not recommend a specific curriculum. School districts are encouraged to “organize a health advisory council” composed of educators, administrators, parents, students, medical professionals, representatives from minority groups, and other community members to “develop policies and approve curriculum and other materials for school health education, including K–12 HIV prevention education.” Educators are encouraged to have their students participate in extracurricular HIV/AIDS awareness activities and are cautioned that “[a] single film, lecture, or school assembly is *not sufficient* to assure that students develop the complex understanding and skills needed to avoid HIV infection.” In addition, schools should provide counseling and information about HIV-related community services.

STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

State legislative activity related to sex education does not take place in isolation from the broader embroiled political and policy climate. Attacks on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ) individuals, and efforts to limit access to abortion care and other reproductive health care services prevent students from receiving comprehensive sex education and accessing sexual and reproductive health care services. Below are highlights of current legislative activity related to these topics.

No relevant legislation was introduced during Wyoming’s 2019 legislative session. Wyoming’s 2020 session convened February 10th, 2020. No relevant legislation have been introduced concerning sex educations to date.

YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH DATA

Young people are more than their health behaviors and outcomes. While data can be a powerful tool to demonstrate the sex education and sexual health care needs of young people, it is important to be mindful that these behaviors and outcomes are impacted by systemic inequities present in our society that affect an individual's sexual health and well-being. To learn more about Wyoming's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results, [click here](#).

STATE SCHOOL HEALTH PROFILES DATA

In 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the School Health Profiles, which measure school health policies and practices and highlight which health topics were taught in schools across the country. Since the data were collected from self-administered questionnaires completed by schools' principals and lead health education teachers, the CDC notes that one limitation of the School Health Profiles is bias toward the reporting of more positive policies and practices. In the School Health Profiles, the [CDC identifies 20 sexual health education topics](#) as critical for ensuring a young person's sexual health.

Wyoming did not participate in the 2018 School Health Profiles.

Below are key instruction highlights for secondary schools in Wyoming as [reported](#) for the 2015–2016 school year. In this edition of the School Health Profiles, the CDC identified 19 sexual health education topics and has since updated the number of topics to 20.

Reported teaching all 19 critical sexual health education topics

- 15.3% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students all 19 critical sexual health education topics in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 28.1% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students all 19 critical sexual health education topics in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about the benefits of being sexually abstinent

- 76.6% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about the benefits of being sexually abstinent in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 93.5% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about the benefits of being sexually abstinent in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching how to access valid and reliable information, products, and services related to HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy

- 71.9% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students how to access valid and reliable information, products, and services related to HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 87% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students how to access valid and reliable information, products, and services related to HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

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Reported teaching how to create and sustain healthy and respectful relationships

- 73.5% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students how to create and sustain healthy and respectful relationships in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 86.5% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students how to create and sustain healthy and respectful relationships in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about preventive care that is necessary to maintain reproductive and sexual health

- 54.2% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about preventive care that is necessary to maintain reproductive and sexual health in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 76.7% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about preventive care that is necessary to maintain reproductive and sexual health in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching how to correctly use a condom

- 28.4% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students how to correctly use a condom in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 48.9% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students how to correctly use a condom in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about methods of contraception other than condoms

- 48.7% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about methods of contraception other than condoms in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 72.2% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about methods of contraception other than condoms in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about sexual orientation

- 27.8% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about sexual orientation in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 49.8% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about sexual orientation in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported teaching about gender roles, gender identity, or gender expression

- 30.3% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about gender roles, gender identity, or gender expression in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 46.7% of Wyoming secondary schools taught students about gender roles, gender identity, or gender expression in a required course in any of grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Reported providing curricula or supplementary materials relevant to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) youth

- 45.6% of Wyoming secondary schools provided students with curricula or supplementary materials that included HIV, STD, or pregnancy prevention information relevant to LGBTQ youth.

Visit the CDC's [School Health Profiles](#) report for additional information on school health policies and practices.

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The quality of sex education taught often reflects funding available for sex education programs.

To learn more about federal funding streams, [click here](#).