

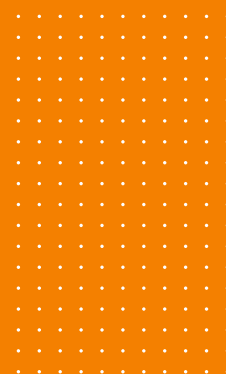
# 2023 State of Sex Education Legislative Look-Ahead

Updated January 2023



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PART ONE

# Executive Summary



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SAM BURRISS

## 2022 was a year of countless attacks on the social fabric of our country, particularly at the state and local level.

Sex education, LGBTQIA+ rights, transgender rights, and racial justice advocates saw a sudden flurry of hate-based bills filed that attacked vulnerable students, public school curriculum, and libraries. In fact, SIECUS observed a **438% increase** in so-called “divisive concept” curriculum censorship legislation in 2022 as compared to 2021. Additionally, over **140** so-called “parental rights” bills were introduced in 2022 seeking to weaponize conservative litigation against public schools using fear-based tactics to misguide parents.

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The spotlight on state politics was further maximized with the [Dobbs v. Jackson decision](#) of the Supreme Court which undermined the Constitutional right to abortion care and relegating the question of abortion access back to state courts and legislatures. Not surprisingly, many of the states working to limit access to abortion care are also the same ones that have the worst policies on sex education in public schools, making it more imperative than ever to work to advance pro-active reproductive health and education policies.

The 2022 midterm elections yielded many surprises by bucking historical trends nationally and creating both new opportunities and challenges at the federal, state, and local levels of governance. Unfortunately, there were races at the state and local levels where anti-public education candidates emerged victorious. These races showcase that the divide continues to widen between parts of the country embroiled with anti-Democratic misinformation campaigns attacking sex education and public education and parts of the country with pro-sex education and pro-Democracy political leadership. With the influx of hostile legislation pre-filed in several states, SIECUS anticipates the anti-sex education legislative trends from 2022 to carry over and become even more aggressive in 2023. Already, a number of states are introducing bills that seek to combine the worst of the “divisive concept” and “parental rights” bills from 2022 into even more insidious omnibus bills attacking vulnerable LGBTQIA+ youth and public school systems.

