

The SIECUS State Profiles



Missouri

MISSOURI'S SEX ED SNAPSHOT

THE STATE OF SEX EDUCATION

Advocates in Missouri have successfully made incremental advancements to Missouri's sex education requirements and are now considering further efforts to revise the state's current mandate. In 2015, Representative Genise Montecillo successfully championed [House Bill 501](#), which requires sex education instruction to include information on the dangers of sexual predators and how to remain safe on the internet. In 2018, the legislature passed [House Bill 1601](#), sponsored by Representative Holly Rehder and written collaboratively with University of Missouri students, requiring sex education curriculum to include instruction on consent and sexual violence. Such efforts demonstrate consistent support to make sex education more comprehensive in Missouri and provide a framework that advocates may reference to make further advancements.

In addition to these statewide efforts, grassroots advocacy efforts have also focused on advancing local sex education requirements. Missouri advocates report that there are only a few schools that are providing comprehensive sex education, while the majority of districts provide abstinence-only or abstinence-plus instruction. Parkway School District and Lindbergh School District successfully amended their requirements to ensure students receive more comprehensive and inclusive instruction in 2016 and 2017 respectively, and two additional districts are currently in the process of updating their curriculum. Still, the patchwork nature of Missouri's sex education curriculum requirements fail to ensure that all students receive the same quality of sex education. Students [report](#) that their sex education curriculum continues to lack vital information related to reproductive health, including topics such as endometriosis and other uterine disorders. Further, an abysmal three percent of Missouri students [reported](#) receiving LGBTQ-inclusive sex education, according to GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey.

Since Missouri 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. 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.

To bridge the gaps in education, advocates recommend legislation that requires Missouri schools to include instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in their sex education curriculum. To ensure more youth have access to comprehensive instruction, they also recommend that the Missouri legislature amend current provisions that prohibit Planned Parenthood educators from teaching sex education. Further, passing legislation that requires all schools to provide comprehensive sex education would ensure that every student in the state receives quality instruction.

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 instruction on consent, 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

- Missouri schools are **not** required to teach sex education. However, they are required to teach health education, including HIV/AIDS prevention education.
 - Curriculum is not required to be comprehensive.
 - Curriculum must present abstinence as the preferred choice of behavior.
- If sex education is offered, curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- If sex education is offered, curriculum must include instruction on consent.
- Parents and guardians can remove their children from any part of their sex education instruction. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)
- All course materials related to HIV/AIDS, along with sex education curriculum if offered, must be medically accurate.

STATE HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS

This section highlights sex education bills that were introduced during the 2020 state legislative session as well as bills that have been introduced thus far in 2021. These proposed bills provide a brief overview of both recent and current legislative action taken to advance or restrict sex education. 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 Missouri’s profile.

2021 Legislative Session

[House Bill 786](#) (pending): Aims to require parental notification if any curriculum, including sex education, includes instruction related to sexual orientation or gender identity and to make curriculum available for review.

2020 Legislative Session

[House Bill 2200](#) (failed): Sought to require parents and guardians to provide their written consent for their children to participate in sex education.

[Senate Bill 786](#) (failed): Sought to require any course materials related to sexual orientation or gender identity to be subject to the notice of parents and guardians and allow for their refusal, and removal of their children from such instruction.

[House Bill 1565](#) (failed): Sought to clarify the ability of parents and guardians to remove their children from all or part of the district’s or school’s instruction relating to human sexuality or STDs.

MORE ON SEX ED IN MISSOURI

State Law

Missouri schools are required by [Missouri Revised Statute § 170.015](#) to teach health education, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevention education, beginning in elementary school. If a school chooses to provide additional sex education, Missouri law mandates that all instruction must be medically and factually accurate and “present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice of behavior in relation to all sexual activity for unmarried pupils.” In addition, instruction must “advise students that teenage sexual activity places them at a higher risk of dropping out of school because of the consequences of sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] and unplanned pregnancy.”

Among other requirements, the instruction must also:

- 2) Stress that [STDs] are serious, possible, health hazards of sexual activity. Pupils shall be provided with the latest medical information regarding exposure to [HIV], [AIDS], human papillomavirus [HPV], hepatitis, and other [STDs];
- 3) Present students with the latest medically factual information regarding both the possible side effects and health benefits of all forms of contraception, including the success and failure rates for the prevention of pregnancy and [STDs]; or shall present students with information on contraceptives and pregnancy in a manner consistent with the provisions of the federal abstinence education law, 42 U.S.C. Section 510;
- 4) Include a discussion of the possible emotional and psychological consequences of preadolescent and adolescent sexual activity and the consequences of adolescent pregnancy[iv]

The statute was first amended in 2015 to include instruction on “the dangers of sexual predators, including online predators when using electronic communication methods” and “the consequences, both personal and legal, of inappropriate text messaging.” Later, in 2018, the statute was [amended again](#) to include instruction on sexual harassment, sexual violence, and consent.

The specific content of human sexuality instruction must be determined by the school board of each school district or charter school. School districts and charter schools are prohibited from providing abortion services and allowing a person and/or entity that provides abortion services to “offer, sponsor, or furnish” course materials related to human sexuality and STDs.

Prior to instruction, school districts and charter schools must make all curriculum materials available for public inspection. Parents have the right to remove their child from any part of the district’s or school’s human sexuality instruction. [This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.](#)

STATE STANDARDS

Missouri provides the [Health Education Grade-Level Expectations](#) to guide schools in developing a health education curriculum. Teen pregnancy, contraception, and the transmission, treatment, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are mentioned, as are “behaviors that could enhance HIV transmission.”

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 healthcare services. Below are

highlights of current legislative activity related to these topics. **Missouri's 2021 session convened on January 6, 2021.**

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
<u>HOUSE BILL 33</u>	PROHIBITS MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS FROM PROVIDING GENDER AFFIRMING CARE TO MINORS.	READ SECOND TIME (H) (2021)
<u>HOUSE BILL 225</u>	REQUIRES SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE PERIOD PRODUCTS IN THE RESTROOMS OF EACH SCHOOL AT NO CHARGE TO STUDENTS.	READ SECOND TIME (H) (2021)
<u>HOUSE BILL 468</u>	PROHIBITS "DISMEMBERMENT" ABORTION.	READ SECOND TIME (H) (2021)
<u>HOUSE BILL 831</u>	REQUIRES THE STATE TO PROTECT A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO TERMINATE A PREGNANCY PRIOR TO VIABILITY OF THE FETUS OR IF NECESSARY TO PROTECT A WOMAN'S LIFE OR HEALTH.	READ SECOND TIME (H) (2021)
<u>SENATE BILL 207</u>	PROHIBITS MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS FROM ENGAGING IN CONVERSION THERAPY WITH MINORS.	REFERRED TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION (2021)
<u>SENATE BILL 391</u>	PROHIBITS ABORTION, DEFINING HUMAN LIFE AS BEGINNING AT CONCEPTION AND CLASSIFYING THE PROCEDURE AS MURDER.	SENATE FIRST READ (2021)
<u>SENATE BILL 442</u>	PROHIBITS MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS FROM PROVIDING GENDER AFFIRMING CARE TO MINORS.	SENATE FIRST READ (2021)
<u>HOUSE BILL 1070</u>	PROHIBITS ABORTION EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.	DIED IN THE HOUSE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE (2020)
<u>HOUSE BILL 964</u>	PROHIBITS ABORTION IF A FETAL HEARTBEAT IS DETECTED EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.	DIED IN THE HOUSE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE (2020)
<u>HOUSE BILL 1565</u>	CLARIFIES THE ABILITY OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS TO REMOVE THEIR CHILDREN FROM ALL OR PART OF THE DISTRICT'S OR SCHOOL'S INSTRUCTION RELATING TO HUMAN SEXUALITY OR STDs.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION (2020)
<u>HOUSE BILL 1574</u>	PROHIBITS MISSOURI FROM DENYING THE RIGHT TO OBTAIN AN ABORTION AND PROTECTS THE RIGHT TO TERMINATE A PREGNANCY PRIOR TO VIABILITY OR IF NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE LIFE OR HEALTH OF THE PREGNANT PERSON.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (2020)
<u>HOUSE BILL 1721</u>	PROHIBITS PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS FROM PROVIDING GENDER AFFIRMING SURGERY OR HORMONE THERAPY FOR A MINOR.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY (2020)
<u>HOUSE BILL 2200</u>	REQUIRES PARENTS AND GUARDIANS TO PROVIDE THEIR WRITTEN CONSENT FOR THEIR CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE IN SEX EDUCATION.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION (2020)

<u>HOUSE BILL 2051</u>	PROHIBITS ASSISTING, COERCING, OR PROVIDING A MINOR WITH GENDER AFFIRMING MEDICAL PROCEDURES OR HORMONAL TREATMENT.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY (2020)
<u>HOUSE BILL 2448</u>	PROHIBITS INDIVIDUALS FROM TRANSPORTING A MINOR ACROSS STATE LINES TO OBTAIN AN ABORTION WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE MINOR AND A PARENT OR GUARDIAN UNLESS THE MINOR IS EMANCIPATED.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (2020)
<u>HOUSE BILL 2718</u>	REQUIRES STUDENTS WHO ATTEND PUBLIC FUNDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETIC CONTESTS ORGANIZED FOR PERSONS OF THE SAME "BIOLOGICAL SEX" INCLUDED ON THE STUDENT'S ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATE. PERMITS TRANSGENDER STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS ALIGNED WITH THEIR GENDER IDENTITY.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL LAWS (2020)
<u>HOUSE BILL 2283</u>	PROHIBITS HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS FROM PERFORMING CONVERSION THERAPY ON MINORS.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (2020)
<u>HOUSE BILL 2285</u>	PROHIBITS ABORTION IN ALL CASES WITH NO EXCEPTIONS.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (2020)
<u>HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 82</u>	PROHIBITS TRANSGENDER ATHLETES FROM COMPETING IN SCHOOL ATHLETICS UNLESS THEY JOIN THE TEAM WHICH CORRELATES WITH THEIR SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH.	DIED IN THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL LAWS (2020)
<u>SENATE BILL 658</u>	PROHIBITS ANY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL FROM ENGAGING IN CONVERSION THERAPY WITH A MINOR.	DIED IN SENATE PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION COMMITTEE (2020)
<u>SENATE BILL 786</u>	REQUIRES ANY COURSE MATERIALS RELATED TO SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY TO BE SUBJECT TO THE NOTICE OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS AND ALLOW FOR THEIR REFUSAL, AND REMOVAL OF THEIR CHILDREN FROM SUCH INSTRUCTION.	DIED IN THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (2020)
<u>SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 50</u>	PROHIBITS TRANSGENDER ATHLETES FROM COMPETING IN SCHOOL ATHLETICS UNLESS THEY JOIN THE TEAM WHICH CORRELATES WITH THEIR SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH.	DIED IN THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (2020)

LEGISLATIVE KEY

<p>SEX EDUCATION</p> <p>REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE</p> <p>SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY</p> <p>HIV/AIDS (THAT IMPACTS YOUTH)</p>

YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH DATA

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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 Missouri'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. Below are key instruction highlights for secondary schools in Missouri as [reported](#) for the 2017–2018 school year.

Reported teaching all 20 critical sexual health education topics

- 17.6% of Missouri secondary schools taught students all 20 critical sexual health education topics in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 26.1% of Missouri secondary schools taught students all 20 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

- 76.7% of Missouri secondary schools taught students about the benefits of being sexually abstinent in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 94.7% of Missouri 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

- 66.9% of Missouri 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.
- 91.6% of Missouri 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.

Reported teaching how to create and sustain healthy and respectful relationships

- 76.7% of Missouri 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.
- 92.9% of Missouri 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

- 64.9% of Missouri 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.
- 89.0% of Missouri 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

- 24.5% of Missouri secondary schools taught students how to correctly use a condom in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 37.4% of Missouri 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

- 44.9% of Missouri secondary schools taught students about methods of contraception other than condoms in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 69.9% of Missouri 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

- 35.7% of Missouri secondary schools taught students about sexual orientation in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 46.7% of Missouri 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

- 34.5% of Missouri secondary schools taught students about gender roles, gender identity, or gender expression in a required course in any of grades 6, 7, or 8.
- 49.3% of Missouri 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

- 44.3% of Missouri 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.

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

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