



COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL STUDENTS IN MICHIGAN

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Comprehensive school-based sex education provides vital lessons for young people about their health and safety. It allows young people an inclusive, informative, and supportive space to learn how to communicate boundaries, establish and maintain positive relationships, and protect their health. When instruction begins early and goes beyond anatomy and development to also teach skills that support healthy relationships and decision making, young people benefit most.

Comprehensive sex education provides young people with information to protect their health

Michigan does not require public school districts to teach sex education. Districts are, however, required to teach at least one lesson per year for every building level (i.e., elementary, middle and high school) about communicable diseases such as HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). Michigan joins 38 states and the District of Columbia in mandating that students receive instruction about HIV.



In Michigan, state law requires HIV education. Sex education is optional.

Although not required, most of Michigan's public school districts offer some form of sex education. When a district chooses to go beyond HIV and offer sex education, it must meet specific state criteria.

Michigan law specifies that sex education curriculum offered in public schools must be age-appropriate, not medically inaccurate, and meet the "A-K" content standards. Districts are not prevented from offering instruction about condoms and contraception, but condoms or other contraceptives are not allowed to be made available to students on public school grounds. Instruction cannot include discussions about pregnancy termination as a method of family planning. Parents may review curriculum materials in advance, observe instruction and opt out without penalty.

Michigan's "A-K" Content Standards for Sex Education

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Discuss the benefits of abstaining from sex until marriage and the benefits of ceasing sex if a student is sexually active.B. Include a discussion of the possible emotional, economic and legal consequences of sex.C. Stress that unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are serious possibilities of sex that are not fully preventable except by abstinence.D. Advise students of the laws pertaining to their responsibility as parents to children born in and out of wedlock.E. Ensure that students are not taught in a way that condones the violation of state laws pertaining to sexual activity.F. Teach students how to say "no" to sexual advances and that it is wrong to take advantage of, harass or exploit another person sexually. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">G. Teach refusal skills and encourage students to resist pressure to engage in risky behavior.H. Teach that the student has the power to control personal behavior. Students must be taught to base their actions on reasoning, self-discipline, a sense of responsibility, self-control, and ethical considerations such as respect for self and others.I. Provide instruction on healthy dating relationships and how to set limits and recognize a dangerous environment.J. Provide information about how young parents can learn more about adoption services and the safe delivery of newborns law.K. Include information informing students that it is unlawful to have sex or sexual contact with an individual under the age of 16. |
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A school district offering sex education must establish a local sex education advisory board (SEAB). A SEAB must include: parents, teachers, students, clergy and health professionals. A sex education advisory board provides recommendations to the school board about the topics and quantity of lessons to be included in the curriculum offered. School boards and SEABs must hold at least two public meetings to ensure there is broad input on the content of the sex education to be provided.

While there are benefits to locally determined curriculum, the lack of uniformity across the state is unfortunate. Comprehensive sex education that is taught by trained and trusted educators, inclusive of the health needs of all students, and designed to empower young people to make informed decisions about sex and relationships should be available to all Michigan students.

The Michigan Model for Health is the state's optional health education curriculum

The Michigan Model for Health (MMH) is a kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) health education curriculum developed through the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. MMH includes age-appropriate lessons on sexual health and responsible relationships. The majority of Michigan's public school districts use the Michigan Model of Health for some or all of the sex ed lessons provided to middle and high school students. Regional school health coordinators work with schools across the state to provide training on how to implement and teach the Michigan Model of Health.

Rights, Respect, Responsibility (3Rs) is an inclusive and comprehensive K-12 sex education curriculum and is used by some Michigan districts as a supplement to Michigan Model of Health lessons.

Adequate funding for comprehensive school-based sex education is essential

Funding is administered by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). In fiscal year 2020, Michigan appropriated \$320,000 of the state's general fund to support public school districts with staffing and other needs related to the implementation of sex education. The state also appropriated \$3.8 million in general funds for several family, maternal, and child health programs, including the Michigan Model of Health. The Healthy Michigan Fund, supported by the state's tobacco tax revenue, has also provided some funding for various teen pregnancy prevention programs across the state.

Michigan's 2020 State Legislation Related to School-based Sex Education

- Michigan House Bill 5499: Adds to A-K content standards to specify that the instruction must include comprehensive sexuality education that is medically accurate and age appropriate.
- Michigan House Bill 5500 (companion bill Senate Bill 270): Adds affirmative consent, dating violence to A-K content standards.
- Michigan House Bill 5501: Adds that information about post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) or pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medications must be included in required HIV instruction.

For more information:

- <https://www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/explore/sex-and-hiv-education>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/whatworks/what-works-sexual-health-education.htm>
- <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/>
- <https://www.moash.org/resources-sex-education.html>
- <https://www.michiganmodelforhealth.org/>
- <https://mishca.org/how/mmh/>
- <https://3rs.org/3rs-curriculum/3rs-curric-search/>
- https://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/PDF/LinelItemSummaries/MDE_lineFY20.pdf
- https://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/PDF/LinelItemSummaries/DHHS_lineFY20.pdf
- https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/Section_227_686916_7.pdf