LGBTQ Youth: LGBTQ Curricular Laws

No updates required since March 20, 2024

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Recommended citation:
Background
LGBTQ-related curricular laws are important for LGBTQ students’ health, wellbeing, and academic success. This document and related Equality Map show multiple distinct policies related to LGBTQ inclusion in—or exclusion from—school curricula or standards.

**LGBTQ-Inclusive Curricular Standards**: In most cases, these laws explicitly require the state’s curricular standards to include LGBTQ people and history, such as in subjects like history, civics, or social studies. Often these laws also require inclusive representation of other communities, such as specific communities of color, people with disabilities, or religious minorities. In some instances, these laws require the state’s department of education to create an LGBTQ-inclusive model curriculum, though do not require schools to adopt or use this curriculum. As GLSEN argues, this at least “encourage[s] and lower[s] the barrier for local education agencies to adopt inclusive curriculum.” Visit GLSEN to learn more about the importance of inclusive curricular standards, as well as the difference between curricular standards and curriculum.

**Negative Law: Restrictions on Discussions of Homosexuality in Specific Curricula/Subjects**: These laws, which first emerged during the HIV/AIDS crisis in the late 1980s, were sometimes referred to as “No Promo Homo” laws, because they generally banned states from “promoting” or discussing homosexuality in positive or even neutral terms—instead requiring schools to only refer to homosexuality as criminal, dangerous, not acceptable or moral, or other discriminatory and stigmatizing terms. These laws all applied to the specific context of sexual or health education programming, but they were often intentionally vague and can be misapplied by schools to limit discussion and inclusion of LGBTQ people and issues in other parts of the curriculum, school events and programs, and even extracurricular activities (e.g., incorrectly interpreted to prohibit Gay-Straight or Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs)). For more on the continuing harms of these laws today, see GLSEN’s research on the impacts on school environments, services, and student experiences.

**Negative Law: Parental Notification of LGBTQ-Related Curricula**: The laws require parents to be notified in advance of any LGBTQ-related curricula and allow parents to opt their children out of—or in some cases, require parents to opt their children in to—these classes. These laws build on existing state laws about parental notification and opt-out/opt-in for sex education, but the LGBTQ-specific laws are distinct because they require parental notification and opt-out/opt-in for any LGBTQ- or sexuality-related content, regardless of whether or not the content is in the context of sex education. For more about sex education policy, including parental notification laws, see SIECUS’s research.

**Negative Law: Censoring Discussions of LGBTQ People Throughout All School Curricula**: Often referred to as “Don’t Say Gay or Trans” or “Don’t Say LGBTQ” censorship laws, these policies ban or restrict schoolteachers and staff from discussing LGBTQ issues and people at all, often including in books, learning materials, outside presentations, and more. This style of anti-LGBTQ censorship laws date back to the late 1980s amid the HIV/AIDS crisis, but since 2020 have seen a resurgence—with a much broader and more explicit scope. These more recently enacted policies explicitly censor such discussions throughout all school curricula, not only in sex/health education.
Equality Map & Additional Resources

- See our **Equality Map: LGBTQ Curricular Laws**, which is updated and maintained in real time alongside this document.

- See MAP’s related research:
  - (Feb-Sept 2023) *Under Fire: The War on LGBTQ People in America* – a report series connecting the dots on the varied ways that LGBTQ people are under siege across virtually every aspect of life. Report #2 (*Under Fire: Erasing LGBTQ People From Schools and Public Life*) in particular focuses on attacks in school settings, including the resurgence of “Don’t Say LGBTQ” laws and similar censorship efforts.

  - (March 2022) *Policy Spotlight: Curriculum Censorship & Hostile School Climate Bills* – an in-depth report examining the wave of state legislation seeking to ban or censor discussions of race, ethnicity, religion, and LGBTQ people in schools, and to more broadly create a hostile school climate for students of many backgrounds.

- Visit **GLSEN** to learn more about:
  - (2022) *Inclusive Curricular Standards* – a resource detailing the importance and positive impacts of inclusive curricular standards for all students, and further explaining the difference between curriculum and curricular standards.

  - (2018) *Laws that Prohibit the ‘Promotion of Homosexuality’: Impacts and Implications* – a research brief examining the harms to students and school environments in states with the older style censorship laws. For example, students in states with these older laws were less likely to see LGBTQ people and topics throughout the school’s curriculum (not only in sex education), but were more likely to see negative representations of LGBTQ people. They were also less likely to have supportive resources such as GSAs, anti-bullying policies, and more.
### Summary Table

**Table 1: Current Laws, Sources, and Year Enacted**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>List</th>
<th>Source Link</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States that require the state department of education to create LGBTQ-inclusive model curriculum, but do not require schools to use it</td>
<td>1 state</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>HB 6619</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States with none of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws</td>
<td>28 states, D.C., and 5 territories</td>
<td>All others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States that restrict how schools can discuss homosexuality in specific curricula (e.g., sex education)</td>
<td>4 states</td>
<td>Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas</td>
<td>HB 484, HB 1304, HB 1476, HB 949</td>
<td>1987-1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States that require parental notification of LGBTQ-related curricula and allow parents to opt their children out (or require parental opt-in)</td>
<td>5 states</td>
<td>Arizona, Arkansas*, Florida*, Montana, Tennessee</td>
<td>HB 2035, SB 389, HB 241, SB 99, HB 727 (opt-in), HB 529 (opt-out)</td>
<td>2021-2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States that censor discussions of LGBTQ people or issues throughout school curricula (i.e., “Don’t Say LGBTQ” laws)</td>
<td>7 states</td>
<td>Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, North Carolina</td>
<td>HB 1557 (K-3), HB 1069 (preK-8), HB 1608, SB 496, SB 150</td>
<td>2022-2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Comparing Older and More Recent School Censorship Laws

This table shows the key text of older-style (1987-2001) laws restricting school discussions of “homosexuality” in specific contexts (sex/health education), compared to more recent (2021-today) laws explicitly banning or censoring discussion of LGBTQ people and issues throughout all curricula.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Excerpt</th>
<th>Year enacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older-style laws restricting discussions of “homosexuality” in specific school subjects (1987-2001)</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Any program or curriculum that includes sex education should include… “(8) An emphasis, in a factual manner and from a public health perspective, that homosexuality is not a lifestyle acceptable to the general public and that homosexual conduct is a criminal offense under the laws of the state.”</td>
<td>1992 (repealed 2021)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>In AIDS education, “C. No district shall include in its course of study instruction which: 1. Promotes a homosexual life-style. 2. Portrays homosexuality as a positive alternative life-style. 3. Suggests that some methods of sex are safe methods of homosexual sex.”</td>
<td>1991 (repealed 2019)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Sex education shall not include “practices in human sexuality,” and “No sex education course offered in the public schools of the state shall utilize any sexually explicit materials depicting male or female homosexual activity.”</td>
<td>1987 (still on books)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>“Abstinence-only education shall remain the state standard for any sex-related education taught in the public schools. For purposes of this section, abstinence-only education includes any type of instruction or program which, at an appropriate age …[t]eaches the current state law related to sexual conduct, including forcible rape, statutory rape, …and homosexual activity …and teaches that a mutually faithful, monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the only appropriate setting for sexual intercourse.”</td>
<td>1998 (still on books)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Health education shall teach that “a mutually faithful monogamous heterosexual relationship in the context of marriage is the best lifelong means of avoiding diseases transmitted by sexual contact, including Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)…” and “Any instruction concerning the causes of sexually transmitted diseases, including Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), in cases where homosexual acts are a significant means of transmission, shall include the current legal status of those acts.”</td>
<td>1995 (repealed 2006; language on legal status of homosexual acts was removed, but language about heterosexual relationships remains)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Law Description</td>
<td>Date of Implementation</td>
<td>Status</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>“AIDS prevention education shall specifically teach students that: 1. engaging in homosexual activity,</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>(still on books)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>promiscuous sexual activity, intravenous drug use or contact with contaminated blood products is now</td>
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<td>known to be primarily responsible for contact with the AIDS virus; 2. avoiding the activities specified</td>
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<td>of paragraph 1 of this subsection is the only method of preventing the spread of the virus.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>In health education, “The program of instruction provided for in this section may not include a discussion</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>(repealed 2020)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of alternative sexual lifestyles from heterosexual relationships including, but not limited to, homosexual</td>
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<td>relationships except in the context of instruction concerning sexually transmitted diseases.”</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>“Course materials and instruction relating to sexual education or sexually transmitted diseases should</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>(still on books)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>include: emphasis, provided in a factual manner and from a public health perspective, that homosexuality is</td>
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<td></td>
<td>not a lifestyle acceptable to the general public and that homosexual conduct is a criminal offense under Section</td>
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<td>21.06, Penal Code.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>In health instruction, materials adopted shall comply with state law and state board rules “prohibiting</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>(repealed 2017)</td>
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<td>instruction in... the advocacy of homosexuality”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>In K-5, “shall not engage in classroom discussion or provide classroom instruction regarding sexual</td>
<td>2022</td>
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<td>orientation or gender identity in a manner that is not age appropriate or developmentally appropriate</td>
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<td>for students in accordance with state standards”</td>
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<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>“(c) Before grade five (5), a public school teacher shall not provide classroom instruction on the following</td>
<td>2023</td>
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<td>topics: (1) Sexually explicit materials; (2) Sexual reproduction; (3) Sexual intercourse; (4) Gender</td>
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<td>identity; or (5) Sexual orientation.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>“Classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may</td>
<td>2022 law</td>
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<td>not occur in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age appropriate or developmentally</td>
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<td></td>
<td>appropriate for students in accordance with state standards.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may</td>
<td>2023 law</td>
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<td>not occur in prekindergarten kindergarten through grade 8, except when required by ss. 1003.42(2)(n)3.</td>
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<td>and 1003.46. If such instruction is provided in grades 9 through 12, the instruction must be age-appropriate or</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>Indiana</td>
<td>“Sec. 2. A school, an employee or staff member of a school, or a third party vendor used by a school to provide instruction may not provide any instruction to a student in prekindergarten through grade 3 on human sexuality.” (“human sexuality” not defined)</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>“A school district shall not provide any program, curriculum, test, survey, questionnaire, promotion, or instruction relating to gender identity or sexual orientation to students in kindergarten through grade six.”</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Kentucky      | “(d) A policy to respect parental rights by ensuring that: 
1. Children in grade five (5) and below do not receive any instruction through curriculum or programs on human sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases; or 
2. Any child, regardless of grade level, enrolled in the district does not receive any instruction or presentation that has a goal or purpose of students studying or exploring gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation;” | 2023 |
| North Carolina| "§ 115C-76.55. Age-appropriate instruction for grades kindergarten through fourth grade. Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality shall not be included in the curriculum provided in grades kindergarten through fourth grade, regardless of whether the information is provided by school personnel or third parties. For the purposes of this section, curriculum includes the standard course of study and support materials, locally developed curriculum, supplemental instruction, and textbooks and other supplementary materials, but does not include responses to student-initiated questions.” | 2023 |
State-by-State Sources & More Detail

Alabama
- State has “Don’t Say LGBTQ” law. Applies to grades K-5. See HB 322 (2022).
- Previously, state had law restricting discussions of homosexuality in sex/health education (SB 72, 1992), repealed by HB 385 (2021).

Alaska
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Arizona
- State law requires parental notification of LGBTQ-related curricula and allows parents to opt children out. See HB 2035 (see Sec 15-102(A)(5)) (July 2021).
  - Bill changed existing parental opt-out for any instruction “regarding sexuality” outside of sex education classes to requiring parental opt-in – further limiting access to inclusive curricula.
- Previously, state had state had law restricting discussions of homosexuality in sex/health education (SB 1396, 1991), repealed by SB 1346 (2019).

Arkansas
- State law requires parental notification of LGBTQ-related curricula and allows parents to opt children out. See SB389 / Act 552 (April 2021).

California

Colorado
- State law requires LGBTQ-inclusive curricular standards. See HB1192 (2019).

Connecticut
- State law requires state department of education to develop an LGBTQ-inclusive model curriculum but does not require schools to adopt/use it. See HB6619, included in budget bills SB1202/HB6689 (see Sec 29(b)item 25, p44 of HB6689) (2021).

Delaware
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws
- Note: In 2022, the state passed a resolution, but not legislation, encouraging the state department of education to develop LGBTQ-inclusive model curriculum for grades 7-12. The resolution specifically uses the word “encourages” rather than “requires,” so is not included on this map.

District of Columbia
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws
Florida

- State has “Don't Say LGBTQ” law. See HB1557 (2022; K-3), HB1069 (2023; preK-8) and State Board of Education rules GA-10.081 (2023; preK-12*).
  - *Note, the Board rule bans all instruction for grades preK-3, and also bans for grades 4-12 unless such instruction is “expressly required by state academic standards” or as part of a reproductive health course/lesson that parents can opt their children out of.
  - In March 2024, the state settled a lawsuit regarding this law. The lawsuit clarifies and limits the scope of the law to classroom instruction only, and not “the mere discussion” of sexual orientation or gender identity. As described by the law firm involved in the suit, the settlement restores the ability of students to ask questions about LGBTQ people or issues and of teachers to answer those questions; it “also restores safeguards against bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and reinstates Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs),” sometimes referred to as Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs). However, the ban on classroom instruction remains in place, and this is the focus of this factsheet and corresponding map.

- State law requires parental notification of LGBTQ-related curricula and allows parents to opt children out. See HB241 (see Sec 1014.05(d), p8) (June 2021).

Georgia

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Hawai`i

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Idaho

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Illinois

- State law requires LGBTQ-inclusive curricular standards. See HB246 (2019).

Indiana

- State has “Don't Say LGBTQ” law, for grades preK-3. See HB1608 (2023).
- In June 2023, a lawsuit was filed against this censorship law. See Smiley v. Jenner.

Iowa

- State has “Don't Say LGBTQ” law, for grades K-6. See SF496 (2023), Section 16.
- In December 2023, a federal judge temporarily blocked parts of the state’s law censoring school curricula, though it left. See Iowa Safe Schools et al v. Reynolds (filed November 2023).

Kansas

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Kentucky

- State has “Don't Say LGBTQ” law, for all grades K-12. See SB150 (2023), Section 2(1)(d).2.
Louisiana

Maine
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Maryland
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Massachusetts
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Michigan
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Minnesota
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Mississippi

Missouri
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Montana
- State law requires parental notification of LGBTQ-related curricula and allows parents to opt children out. See SB99 (April 2021).
  - SB99 (2021) is written as requiring parental notification of sex education, but defines sex education to include any information about sexual orientation or gender identity.
  - See also SB518 (May 2023), which does not require notification but allows parents to withdraw child from any instruction or presentations, assemblies, guest lectures, or other educational events facilitated by a school's faculty or staff, including those conducted by outside individuals or organizations, that “offend the parent's beliefs or practices.”

Nebraska
- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Nevada
New Hampshire
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

New Jersey
  • State law requires **LGBTQ-inclusive curricular standards**. See [S1569/A1335](#) (2019).

New Mexico
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

New York
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

North Carolina
  • State has **“Don’t Say Gay or Trans”** law, applies to grades K-4. See [S49](#), §115C-76.55 (2023).
  • Formerly had law restricting discussions of homosexuality in sex/health education ([H834/S788](#), 1995), repealed by [SB602](#) (2006).

North Dakota
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Ohio
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Oklahoma
  • State has law **restricting discussions of homosexuality in sex/health education**. See [HB1476](#) (April 1987) and [Okla. Stat. tit. 70, § 11-103.3(D)](#).

Oregon
  • State law requires **LGBTQ-inclusive curricular standards**. See [HB2023](#) (2019).

Pennsylvania
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Rhode Island
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

South Carolina
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws
  • Formerly had “Don’t Say Gay” law ([Act No. 437](#), 1988), repealed by [court settlement](#) (2020).

South Dakota
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws
Tennessee

- State law requires **parental notification of LGBTQ-related curricula and requires parents to opt children in to this instruction.** See HB727/SB1443 (2023). See HB529/SB1229 (May 2021) for an earlier opt-out law.

Texas

- State has law **restricting discussions of homosexuality in sex/health education** law (HB949/SB404, 1991; see relevant sections beginning page 49, especially Sec. 85.007). See also Texas Health & Safety Code § 85.007 and Texas Health & Safety Code § 163.002.

Utah

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws
- Formerly had law restricting discussions of homosexuality in sex/health education (SB75, 2001; see former Utah Code § 53A-13-101), repealed by SB196 (2017).

Vermont

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Virginia

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Washington

- State law requires **LGBTQ-inclusive curricular standards.** See SB5462 (2024).

West Virginia

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Wisconsin

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Wyoming

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

**U.S. Territories**

American Samoa

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Guam

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

Northern Mariana Islands

- None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws
Puerto Rico
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws

U.S. Virgin Islands
  • None of these LGBTQ-specific curricular laws