Overview
State laws and regulations in health education serve as a foundation to drive school-based programs and instruction. Well-designed and well-implemented sexual health education programs have been shown to reduce student risky sexual behaviors and improve health-related behaviors and outcomes. The following report provides a snapshot of Washington laws and regulations and school health policies and practices related to sexual health education, HIV prevention education, STD prevention education, and sexual health risk behaviors among high school students nationwide.

Washington health education laws and regulations were analyzed across three topics of instruction (sexual health education, HIV Prevention, and STD Prevention) and a variety of characteristics related to curriculum and instruction. These characteristics were identified by researchers as potential facilitators for successful programs. The law and regulation data presented only indicate the presence or absence of a particular component related to health education and may not accurately reflect practice within the state.

Washington Law Facts
- Local Education Agencies have the authority to choose or approve curriculum for sexual health education and HIV Prevention instruction and Schools have the authority to create and approve curriculum for sexual health education instruction.
- Parents/Guardians must be provided the opportunity to Opt-out students from sexual health education and HIV Prevention instruction.
- Instruction regarding contraception is required for sexual health education.
- Abstinence is a required topic of instruction for sexual health education and HIV Prevention.

Core Topics Addressed in Washington Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Instruction</th>
<th>Level of Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Health Education</td>
<td>Permitted*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV Prevention</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STD Prevention</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Certain curriculum elements are required if instruction provided.

Presence of Evidence Based Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Attributes of Effective School-Based Sexual Health Education</th>
<th>Included in Law(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic of Instruction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum is delivered by trained instructors</td>
<td>Required HIV Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental/Stakeholder Involvement</td>
<td>Required Sexual Health Education and HIV Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum follows Federal or National Standards, Guidelines, and/or Recommendations</td>
<td>Required Sexual Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum is appropriate for age or developmental stage</td>
<td>Required Sexual Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum is medically accurate</td>
<td>Required Sexual Health Education and HIV Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction is sequential across grade levels</td>
<td>Not included in laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum includes instruction on strategies or skills</td>
<td>Required Sexual Health Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention
Analysis of State Health Education Laws

School Health Policies and Practices in Washington

**STRATEGIES**
80% of secondary schools provided those who teach sexual health education with strategies that are age-appropriate, relevant, and actively engage students in learning.

**STD PREVENTION**
97% of secondary schools taught how HIV and other STDs are transmitted in a required course during grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

Percent of secondary schools in Washington in which teachers tried to increase student knowledge on...

- Human Sexuality: 82%
- HIV Prevention: 95%
- STD Prevention: 91%

Risk Behaviors Among High School Students Nationwide

- Have had sexual intercourse with ≥4 partners: 12%
- Drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse*: 21%
- Used a condom during last sexual intercourse*: 57%

In a classroom of 30 high school students nationwide,

- 9 are currently sexually active,
- 3 ever had sex, but are not currently sexually active,
- 18 never had sex.

*Among the students nationally who were currently sexually active (had sexual intercourse during the 3 months before the survey).

Note: Washington did not participate in the 2015 YRBS.


Know Your State Laws and Policies

For more information on: State laws and practices; Attributes of an effective sexual health education program; and State specific health data, visit [www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/about/policy.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/about/policy.htm)