

**SEX-ED IS
FAILING
LGBTQ+
YOUTH**

**HERE'S HOW WE
CAN DO BETTER**



INCLUSIVITY

Most sex-ed programs are centered around heterosexual, cisgender relationships. Maryland does not require schools to adopt a sex-ed curriculum inclusive of LGBTQ+ relationships.

Many LGBTQ+ youth already feel discriminated against in school. Not only would inclusive sex-ed help LGBTQ+ youth practice safe sex and have healthy relationships, but it would also help normalize their identities and relationships.

IN MARYLAND

- 69% of schools* taught students about sexual orientation

- 67% of schools taught students about gender roles, gender identity, or gender expression

- only 21% of schools provided students with instruction on HIV, STI, or pregnancy prevention that was relevant to LGBTQ+ youth

**grades 9-12 in a required course*

TOPICS TO COVER*

- **Terminology**

- students should learn all the identities that make up the LGBTQ+ acronym
- the difference between gender (a social construct) and sex (a biological assignment)

- **Puberty blockers and hormone replacement therapy**

- what they are, what they do, and how students can access them

- **STI and HIV prevention**

- lessons on barrier protection (condoms, dental dams, etc)
- instruction on HIV prevention pills

**non-exhaustive list*

TOPICS TO COVER*

- **Consent and healthy relationships**
 - according to the CDC, 23% of LGBTQ+ youth have experienced dating violence and 18% have been forced into intercourse during their life
 - inclusive sex-ed could help students understand their bodily autonomy and identify signs of abuse
- **Sex toys and safety**
 - teaching the importance of cleaning and proper usage will help keep students safe
 - Emphasizing the importance of having a safe word

**non-exhaustive list*

OTHER COURSES

Earlier this year, **Montgomery County (MD)** became the first school district in the nation to offer an **LGBTQ+ Studies course**.

On top of having inclusive sex-ed, schools should also teach students about LGBTQ+ history and literature so that youth feel seen and represented.

Every course is often centered around heterosexual, cisgender, white folks and that needs to change.

CONCLUSIONS

All states must implement legislation requiring that sex-ed is inclusive of LGBTQ+ identifying youth.

Teachers must be prepared to support LGBTQ+ students by being educated on their needs and the issues they face.

We shouldn't stop at sex-ed. All courses in school must be designed so that LGBTQ+ students will be represented.

SOURCES

- **SIECUS:** MD State Profile
- **CDC:** <https://rb.gy/qqchw3>
- **Them Magazine:** <https://rb.gy/m2pjb1>
- **Child Trends:** <https://rb.gy/yywllo>
- **HRC:** <https://rb.gy/ab0diy>

