

FAMILY ISSUE FACT SHEET

NO. 2021-08 (JANUARY 2021)

SB 1456 SEX EDUCATION INSTRUCTION; PARENTAL RIGHTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SB 1456 is a common-sense approach to balancing concerns from parents about sex education in the public schools. First, it protects young children from sexual content they are not mature enough to handle. Sex education curriculum is becoming more graphic and explicit in schools, especially as so-called “comprehensive sex education” is being adopted by more school boards. Second, it provides transparency and accountability measures for schools offering sex education in grades 5-12. Although parents currently must opt-in their child for sex education, many parents are not given enough information to make an informed decision. Additionally, the bill requires parental opt-in consent for sexual orientation and gender identity instruction that is not always under the sex education banner. This provides for the many parents with religious or conscience objections to such instruction.

In order to protect the innocence of our youngest children, this bill prohibits sex education in grades K-4 and places other transparency measures to safeguard parental rights.

PROTECTING YOUNG CHILDREN

SB 1456 prohibits sex education from being taught in grades K-4 in Arizona’s district and charter schools. A recent poll in Arizona found nearly 60% of likely voters would support legislation to end the teaching of sex education through sixth grade.¹

Children are already bombarded with sexually charged messages through TV, movies, social media, music, advertisement, and more. They do not need the same distorted messages at school. So-called “comprehensive sex ed” curriculum expose impressionable young minds to graphic images and controversial topics related to human sexuality and gender, often without parental knowledge.

SB 1456 requires district and charter schools to provide the sex education curricula for parents’ review either online or in person. Parents would have to provide written consent for their child to receive instruction regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The teaching of HIV, AIDS is also included among the topics requiring parental approval.

The district or charter’s governing body must approve all sex education curricula, but the process of approval must include:

1. Any meetings on sex education curricula be posted at least two weeks prior to the meeting and available for public comment
2. Making any proposed sex education course of study available and accessible for review and public comment for at least 60 days prior to approval

3. Holding at least two public hearings, including the submission of written comments, within the 60 days prior to approval

TALKING POINTS

1. **By limiting sex education to grades 5-12, we protect younger children from material they are not ready for, and we protect parents' right to decide when and how to introduce sensitive material and teach their children about sex.**
2. **Children are already bombarded with sexually charged messages through TV, movies, social media, music, and advertisement. It should be left to parents to decide the best way and the right time to teach their children about sex.**
3. **Parents of young children should be confident their children will not be exposed to explicit content or controversial topics related to human sexuality and gender when they send them to school.**
4. **Government should not interfere in a parent's right to teach his or her child human sexuality from a long-held and widespread position, especially if those convictions are tied to a religious belief.**
5. **Parents should not have to worry about what schools are teaching their children about human sexuality and gender identity. They should have easy access to related curricula, the authority to opt-in to sex ed or any instruction related to sexual orientation and gender identity.**

CONCLUSION

SB 1456 protects young children from sexual content they are not ready for. Although parents have to opt their children into sex education, parents are often not given enough information to make an informed decision. This bill requires related curricula to be easily accessible to parents, it ensures them the opportunity to provide input, and it prohibits sex education in younger grades. This bill is a reasonable step towards protecting parental rights and the innocence of the youngest children in Arizona schools.

ⁱ [Data Orbital 12/16-19 2020 600N](#)