

## Current Status of Sex Education in Arizona:

1. 18 public school districts analyzed across Arizona
2. **8 districts** do not offer sex education
  - a. Districts: Duncan, Heber-Overgaard, Gila Bend, Ganado, Parker, Nogales, Kingman, Scottsdale
  - b. Represents **37,000+ school-aged children** in suburban and rural areas
- In an analysis by LOOKOUT, out of 18 public school districts across Arizona, eight districts currently do not provide any form of sex education. This lack of education affects over 37,000 school-aged children, particularly in suburban and rural areas. This gap is alarming, especially when we consider the crucial role that sex education plays in equipping students with knowledge about their bodies, health, and safe practices. We need to recognize the potential long-term impacts on these students' well-being.

## Health Risks for Students:

1. Rising rates of HIV, syphilis, and unintended pregnancies are above national averages.
2. Increased risks for LGBTQ+ students:
  - a. Unintended pregnancies
  - b. STI transmission
- The absence of sex education has significant consequences for students' health; the result is tens of thousands of students who aren't educated on preventative sexual health tools. We are witnessing rising rates of HIV, syphilis, and unintended pregnancies that are surpassing national averages. LGBTQ+ students, specifically, are also more at risk of [unintended pregnancy](#), [STI transmission](#), and [domestic abuse](#). By not providing education on preventive measures, we are failing to protect our students and ensure their safety. It is imperative that we address these issues head-on.

## Quality of Existing Sex Education:

1. Not all districts providing sex education offer comprehensive content.
  - a. Of the schools *LOOKOUT* found that teach sex education, not all of them offer inclusive or comprehensive sexual health studies.
2. Focus is often limited to puberty, body changes, and STIs without prevention/treatment emphasis.
- Even in districts where sex education is offered, the quality often leaves much to be desired. Many programs are limited in scope, focusing primarily on puberty and bodily changes, and only touch on STIs without providing comprehensive information on prevention and treatment. This lack of depth can leave students unprepared to make informed decisions about their sexual health. Comprehensive sex education must include discussions about consent, relationships, and safe practices to truly benefit students.

## Impact of Legislative Changes on LGBTQI+ Education:

1. Repeal of "No Promo Homo" law and its effects on education
  - a. Sparked backlash that limits how sexual health is taught in schools
2. Local conservative movements restricting sexual health education
  - a. These movements promote marginalization or omission of LGBTQ+ topics from schools

- Recent legislative changes have impacted sex education in Arizona. The repeal of the "No Promo Homo" law was initially seen as a positive step; however, it has sparked a conservative backlash that seeks to limit how sexual health is taught in schools. These local movements often promote an environment where LGBTQ+ topics are marginalized or omitted entirely. This creates a hostile learning environment for LGBTQ+ students and perpetuates stigma and misinformation.
- Educational and youth organizations that focus on LGBTQ+ students have pointed to the state's repeal of its "No Promo Homo" law, which catapulted a local conservative movement to restrict how students could learn about sexual health.

### **Gender and Sexuality Alliance or Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Clubs:**

1. Number of GSAs Nationwide:
    - a. At least 4,000 GSAs across the U.S.
  2. Regional Variations:
    - a. GSAs are most common in the Northeast and West.
    - b. Least common in the South and Midwest.
  3. Arizona Specifics:
    - a. Limited information on the number of GSAs in Arizona.
    - b. GLSEN's analysis shows that GSAs and similar clubs are less common in certain regions.
  4. Challenges and Resources:
    - a. Scarcity of GSAs often in schools with lower institutional support.
    - b. Difficulty in starting a GSA if staff and administration are not supportive.
  5. Resources Available:
    - a. GLSEN offers support for students wanting to create a GSA.
    - b. GSA Network provides tools and guidance for establishing GSAs.
      - i. (GLSEN, 2024), (GSA Network, 2024)
- Across the United States, there are at least 4,000 Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs, with a higher concentration in the Northeast and West. However, GSAs are less common in the South and Midwest. In Arizona, detailed data on the number of GSA clubs is limited, but GLSEN's analysis indicates that GSAs and similar clubs are less prevalent in some regions.
  - Starting a GSA can be challenging, especially in schools where there is limited institutional support. Students may encounter resistance from staff and administration. Fortunately, there are resources available to help. GLSEN and the GSA Network provide valuable support and tools for establishing these clubs.

### **Arizona GSA Encouragement Grant:**

1. The Arizona Education Association offers a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Encouragement Grant to provide opportunities for Arizona Gay-Straight Alliances to improve the school climate for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.
  - a. Individual grants are awarded for amounts between \$50 and \$250.
  - b. Aims to improve school climate for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.
    - i. (GLSEN, 2024), (GSA Network, 2024)

### **The Role of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in Schools:**

1. Involvement in schools includes fighting for fair treatment by the government:
  - a. Protecting LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination in schools
  - b. Taking legal action to protect access to gender-affirming care
  - c. Safeguarding against anti-trans legislation
2. For the 2024 legislative session, the ACLU was tracking **11** anti-LGBTQ+ bills in Arizona
  - a. Lawmakers pre-filled and proposed bills attacking gender-affirming care, targeting teachers that support trans youth, and denying transgender students a safe and inclusive education (ACLU, 2024).
3. The ACLU noted that public high schools sometimes try to prevent students from forming GSA clubs, in violation of current legislation and despite over a dozen federal court victories for GSAs over the past two decades (ACLU, 2024).