

R277. Education, Administration.

R277-474. School Instruction and Sex Education.

R277-474-1. Authority, Purpose, and Oversight Category.

(1) This rule is authorized by:

(a) Utah Constitution, Article X, Section 3, which vests general control and supervision over public education in the Board;

(b) Subsections 53G-10-402(2), (4) and (5), which direct the Board to adopt rules to allow local boards to adopt sex education materials or programs as described in this Rule R277-474 and provide sex education instruction as provided in Sections 53G-10-402; 53G-10-403; and 53G-10-409.

(c) Subsection 53E-3-401(4), which allows the Board to make rules to execute the Board's duties and responsibilities under the Utah Constitution and state law.

(2) The purpose of this rule is to provide:

(a) requirements for LEAs and individual educators to select instructional materials about sex education and maturation;

(b) notice to parents of proposed sex education and maturation discussions and instruction; and

(c) direction to public education employees regarding instruction and discussion of maturation and sex education with students.

(3) This Rule R277-474 is categorized as Category 2 as described in Rule R277-111.

R277-474-2. Definitions.

(1) "Curriculum materials review committee" or "committee" means a curriculum materials review committee formed at the school district or charter school level as described in Section R277-474-5.

(2) "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1232g" or "FERPA" means a federal law designed to protect the privacy of students' education records.

(3) "Sex education instruction or instructional programs" means any course, unit, class, activity, or presentation that provides instruction or information to students as outlined under Subsection 53G-10-403(1)(a).

(4) "Instructional materials commission" means the advisory commission authorized under Section 53E-4-402.

(5) "LEA" for purposes of this rule, includes the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

(6) "Maturation education" means instruction and materials used to provide fifth or sixth grade students with age appropriate, medically accurate information regarding the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty, to assist in protecting students from abuse and to promote hygiene and good health practices.

(7) "Medically accurate" means verified or supported by a body of research conducted in compliance with scientific methods and published in journals that have received peer-review, and recognized as accurate and objective by professional organizations and agencies with expertise in the relevant field.

(8) "Parental notification form" means a form developed by the Superintendent and used exclusively by LEAs or public schools for parental notification of subject matter identified in this rule.

(9) "Professional development" means training in which Utah educators may participate to renew a license, receive information or training in a specific subject area, teach in another subject area or teach at another grade level.

(10) "Utah educator" means an individual such as an administrator, teacher, counselor, teacher's assistant, or coach, who is employed by a unit of the Utah public education system and who provides teaching or counseling to students.

(11) "Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission" or "UPPAC" means a Commission established under Section 53E-6-501 and designated to review allegations against educators and recommend action against educators' licenses to the Board.

R277-474-3. General Provisions.

(1) Pursuant to Section 53G-10-402 the following may not be taught in Utah public schools through the use of instructional materials, direct instruction, or online instruction:

- (a) the intricacies of intercourse, sexual stimulation or erotic behavior;
- (b) the advocacy of premarital or extramarital sexual activity;
- (c) the advocacy or encouragement of the use of contraceptive methods or devices; or
- (d) any means or methods that facilitate or encourage the violation of any state or federal criminal law by a minor or an adult, including as a response to a spontaneous question from a student.

(e) In accordance with Section 53G-10-409, An LEA may not allow an entity employee, representative, or affiliate that performs elective abortions or provides debranded maturation curriculum to:

- (i) deliver instruction or programs on all health or health related topics in a school that receives state funding; or
- (ii) provide materials or media on a health topic for distribution or display in a school that receives state funding, if the materials or media are created by, funded by, donated by, or bear the identifying mark of the entity or the entity's affiliate.

(2) Subject to Subsection (1)(c), an LEA may, but is not required to, provide instruction to include information about contraceptive methods or devices, not including abortion or any abortive methods, that stresses effectiveness, failure rates for youth, limitations, risks, and information on state law applicable to minors obtaining contraceptive methods or devices.

(3) A Utah educator may provide instruction consistent with Subsection 53G-10-402(2)(b)(iv);

(4) A Utah educator is responsible to teach the values and information identified under Subsections 53G-10-402(2)(a) and (b)(i) through (ii).

(5) A Utah educator shall follow all provisions of federal and state law including the parental notification and prior written parental consent requirements described in Sections 76-7-322 and 76-7-323 when teaching any aspect of sex education.

(6) While sex education instruction and related topics are most likely to take place in such courses as health education, health occupations, human biology, physiology, parenting, adult roles, psychology, sociology, child development, and biology, this Rule R277-474 applies to any course or class in which these topics are the focus of discussion.

R277-474-4. State Board of Education Responsibilities.

The Superintendent shall:

(1) develop and provide professional development and assistance with training for educators on law and rules specific to sex education instruction and related issues.

(2) develop, for Board approval, a parental notification form and timelines for use by LEAs.

(3) establish a review process for sex education instructional materials and programs using the instructional materials commission and requiring final Board approval of the instructional materials commission's recommendations.

(4) approve only medically accurate sex education instruction programs.

(5) receive and track parent and community complaints and comments received from LEAs related to sex education instructional materials and programs.

R277-474-5. LEA Responsibilities.

(1) An LEA shall require all newly hired or newly assigned Utah educators with responsibility for any aspect of sex education instruction to attend professional development outlining the sex education curriculum and the criteria for sex education instruction in any courses offered in the public education system.

(2) An LEA governing board shall provide training consistent with Subsection R277-474-5(1) at least once during every three years of employment for Utah educators.

(3) An LEA governing board shall form a curriculum materials review committee at the school district or charter school level as described in Subsection (4).

(4)(a) An LEA governing board shall annually appoint and review members of the LEA's curriculum materials review committee on or before August 1.

(b) An LEA's curriculum materials review committee shall include parents, health professionals, school health educators, and administrators, with at least as many parents as school employees.

(c) The members of an LEA's committee shall:

- (i) meet on a regular basis, as determined by the membership;
- (ii) select officers; and
- (iii) comply with Title 52, Chapter 4, Open and Public Meetings Act.

(5) An LEA's curriculum materials review committee shall:

- (a) be organized consistent with Subsection R277-474-2(1);
- (b) designate a chair and procedures; and
- (c) review and approve all guest speakers and guest presenters and their respective materials relating to sex education instruction in any course and maturation education before their presentation.

(6) The committee may not authorize the use of any sex education instructional program or maturation education program not previously:

- (a) approved by the local governing board;
- (b) approved consistent with Section R277-474-6; or
- (c) approved under Subsections 53G-10-402(2)(f) and (g).

(7) The district superintendent or charter school administrator shall report educators who willfully violate the provisions of this rule to the Utah Professional Practices Advisory Commission (UPPAC) for investigation and possible discipline.

(8) In accordance with Sections 53E-3-401 and 53G-10-409, the state board may:

- (a) impose a monetary penalty on an LEA that violates this section; and
- (b) withhold funds allocated under Title 53F, Chapter 2, State Funding -- Minimum School Program, for continued noncompliance in accordance with Rule R277-114.

(9)(a) A student may not participate in sex education instruction, maturation education, or other instructional programs without prior affirmative parent consent, as evidenced by a completed parental notification form, on file.

(b) An LEA shall obtain parental consent from a student's parent using the common parental notification form or a form that satisfies all criteria of the law and Board rules and comply with timelines approved by the Board.

(10) The parental notification form shall:

(a) explain a parent's right to review proposed curriculum materials in a timely manner;

(b) request the parent's permission to instruct the parent's student in identified course material related to sex education or maturation education;

(c) allow the parent to exempt the parent's student from attendance for a class period where identified course material related to sex education instruction or maturation education is presented and discussed;

(d) be specific enough to give parents fair notice of topics to be covered;

(e) include a brief explanation of the topics and materials to be presented and provide a time, place and contact person for review of the identified curricular materials;

(f) be retained on file with affirmative parental consent for each student before the student's participation in discussion of issues protected under Section 53G-10-402; and

(g) be maintained at the student's school for a reasonable period.

(10) An LEA shall develop a logging and tracking system of parental and community complaints and comments resulting from student participation in sex education instruction, to include the disposition of the complaints, and provide that information to the Superintendent upon request.

(11) A student may refrain from participation in course material consistent with Section 53G-10-205.

R277-474-6. Local School Board or Charter School Governing Board Adoption of Sex Education and Maturation Education Instructional Materials.

(1) An LEA governing board may adopt the LEA's instructional materials if the instructional materials meet the requirements of Subsection 53G-10-402(2).

(2) Instructional materials adopted as described in Subsection (1) shall:

(a) comply with the criteria of Subsection 53G-10-402(2)(h) and:

- (b) be medically accurate;
 - (c) be approved by a majority vote of the LEA governing board present at a public meeting of the LEA governing board;
 - (d) be available for reasonable review opportunities to residents of the school district or parents of charter school students before consideration for adoption; and
 - (e) comply with the county data review requirements as outlined in Subsection 53G-10-402(8).
- (3) An LEA shall comply with the reporting requirements of Section 53G-10-402.
- (4) A report to the Board shall include:
- (a) a copy of sex education instructional materials or maturation education materials not approved by the Instructional Materials Commission that the local board or local charter board seeks to adopt;
 - (b) documentation of the materials' adoption in a public board meeting;
 - (c) documentation that the materials or program meets the medically accurate criteria as defined in Subsection R277-474-2(7);
 - (d) documentation of the recommendation of the materials by the committee;
- and
- (e) a statement of the local board's or local charter board's rationale for selecting materials not approved by the instructional materials commission.
- (5) An LEA governing board's adoption process for sex education instructional materials and maturation education materials shall include:
- (a) an appeals process for the adopted materials; and
 - (b) a process for annual review of the LEA governing board's decision.

R277-474-7. Utah Educator Responsibilities.

- (1) A Utah educator shall participate in training provided under Subsections R277-474-5(1) and (2).
- (2) A Utah educator shall use the common parental notification form or a form approved by the Utah educator's LEA, and follow timelines approved by the Board.

(3) A Utah educator shall individually record parent and community complaints, comments, and the Utah educators' responses regarding sex education instructional programs.

(4)(a) A Utah educator may correct inaccurate or misleading information or answer questions asked by students in accordance with the approved instructional materials and the provisions in Section 53G-10-402.

(b) Educators may also direct students to parents in these circumstances.

KEY: health education, sex education, schools

Date of Last Change: July 8, 2025

Notice of Continuation: September 15, 2022

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53G-10-402(1) and (3); 53E-3-401(4)