

Your Question:

You asked for information on state policies related to opioid and drug-prevention curriculum.

Our Response:

[Recent data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that, in 2017 alone, there were over 70,000 drug overdose deaths in the United States—which is the [highest number of drug overdose deaths](#) for any single year in US history. According to the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), 11.4 million people misused prescription opioids in 2016 and about 130 people die every day from opioid-related drug overdoses. States are enacting policies aimed at supporting students through this crisis—most often by requiring drug prevention education in health curricula, allowing the use of opioid overdose prevention medication in schools, and providing wraparound services to affected students. Below are examples of state legislation related to opioid prevention education in health curriculum as well as further resources for your review.

State Policy Examples

While ECS has not conducted a 50-state scan of state policies on drug prevention curriculum, we do track and summarize education-related legislation in all 50 states, plus D.C. in our [state policy database](#). In response to the opioid epidemic, several states have enacted legislation to require or allow the inclusion of opioid misuse and abuse instruction in health curriculum.

- [Virginia HB 1532](#) (2018) Permits the health education program required for each public elementary and secondary school student to include an age-appropriate program of instruction on the safe use of and risks of abuse of prescription drugs that is consistent with curriculum guidelines developed by the Board of Education and approved by the State Board of Health. Permits the Board of Education to consider the curriculum adopted by the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach regarding drugs and the opioid crisis in developing such curriculum guidelines.
- [Maryland HB 1082](#) (2017) requires the State Board of Education to include heroin and opioid addiction and prevention education in public school health instruction programs in certain grades. This bill also includes provisions for requiring each public school to store naloxone (an opioid antagonist—for overdose prevention).
- [Michigan HB 4407](#) (2017) requires the Michigan Department of Education to make available a model program of instruction on opioid abuse, based on recommendations of the Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Commission, to school districts. The model program must be included in the state's Model Core Curriculum content standards and the health education component of the merit curriculum graduation requirements.
- [Illinois HB 0001](#) (2015) established a 3-year heroin and opioid prevention pilot program to offer educational materials and instruction on heroin and opioid abuse to all school districts in the state for use at their schools. The pilot program must use effective, research-proven, interactive teaching methods and technologies, and must provide students, parents, and school staff with scientific, social and emotional learning content to help them understand the risks of drug use. This content was required to specifically target the dangers of prescription pain medication and heroin abuse.
- [Ohio HB 367](#) (2014) requires each school district to include instruction in prescription opioid abuse prevention in the district's health curriculum. This [website](#) provides further details on implementation of the bill.

Further Resources

- The [National Association of State Boards of Education](#) maintains a [State School Health Policy Database](#), which includes detailed information on [alcohol, tobacco and drug use education](#).
- [State-level education standards for substance use prevention programs in schools: a systematic content analysis](#) (Journal of Adolescent Health, 2013) indicates that three-fourths of public schools in the U.S. maintain instructional programs to discourage alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. This paper systematically codes these standards across all grades and states.
- [How is the Opioid Epidemic Affecting Schools and Students?](#) (ECS blog, 2018) provides a brief overview of how states and schools are addressing opioid misuse and abuse—including examples of legislation related to opioid antagonist administration and drug prevention education.
- According to the [School Health Policies and Practices Survey](#), in 2016, the percentage of districts that had adopted a policy stating that schools will teach alcohol or other drug use prevention topics was approximately 80% of districts with middle schools and 86% of districts with high schools. This [fact sheet](#) provides more detailed information on this topic.