

# Inclusive Curriculum

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1. What exactly does this new legislation change?

Public Act 101-0227 amends the existing School Code by prescribing public schools to study the roles and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in the history of Illinois and the United States.

The legislation also makes changes to the textbook block grant program. Authorized by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), textbooks and any other instructional materials must not discriminate against any of the protected classes found under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

### 2. When does the law take effect?

The law goes into effect July 2020 for its implementation in the 2020 - 2021 school year.

### 3. Does the law require the purchase of new textbooks?

The law does not require the purchase of new textbooks. The law does include a broad definition of “textbook” to include teaching supplements such as workbooks in bound or loose-leaf form or electronic educational content intended as a principal source of study material for a given class or group.

When school districts receive funding through the state’s textbook block grant program to purchase new textbooks, the State of Illinois requires that only textbooks which are non-discriminatory and include the roles and contributions of individuals and communities protected under the Illinois Human Rights Act be purchased.

### 4. What new instruction is required to be taught by this law?

At which grade levels does this content have to be taught?

The law applies to grades kindergarten through 12 and as with the history of all communities enumerated in Section 27-21 of the School Code, school districts will determine when students learn the role and contributions of LGBT individuals in the history of this country and Illinois. Per Section 27-21, instruction must be included by grade 8.

### 5. How should the content be taught?

How the content is taught is up to the discretion of school districts. Using resources that already exist and/or developing their own, local school districts will have the flexibility of selecting those elements which both fulfill the requirements of the mandate and meet the age-appropriate needs of students.

### 6. How might the contributions of LGBT people be included in existing curricula?

Content will focus on LGBT contributions toward existing school subjects including, but not limited to: social studies, literature, science, mathematics, humanities, etc. insofar as these capture the historical development of Illinois and the United States.

### 7. What are age-appropriate examples for different grade levels?

Age-appropriate content for younger students can include learning about diverse family structures, gender stereotypes, and anti-bullying.

### Additional examples of themes that can be embedded into existing curriculum by grade level include:

**Grade 2:** LGBT families in the context of understanding family diversity as a contemporary and historical reality.

**Grade 4:** Central roles played by gender and sexuality in Illinois' history as a site of rich, contested, and changing diversity.

**Grade 5:** Variation over time, region, and culture in colonial American practices and laws with regard to gender and sexuality.

**Grade 8:** Fundamental transformations in gender and sexuality in conjunction with nineteenth-century urbanization and industrialization.

**Grade 11:** The evolution of modern LGBT communities and identities; twentieth-century persecution of sexual and gender minorities and the growth of the LGBT civil rights movement.

### 8. Does this law change the Illinois State Board of Education learning standards?

The law does not change the standards, nor does it include any authority for ISBE to change the standards to reflect the law's provisions. The Illinois content standards provide a description of what students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level, but they are not intended to be a restrictive or exhaustive list of topics.

### 9. What should I expect the impact to be on students?

According to GLSEN, a New York-based nonprofit that supports research and policies designed to protect LGBTQ+ students, an inclusive curriculum contributes to lower rates of bullying, harassment, and intimidation<sup>1</sup>. Students are also less likely to skip school. As with any other group, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth deserve to see themselves reflected in the classroom; the desired impact on a classroom as a whole is that young people understand the diversity of others around them. An inclusive curriculum encourages students to understand the inherent worth of all individuals and honor their differences.

### 10. How should educators address questions and concerns from parents about this legislation?

As with any other policy, educators should be open, transparent, and proactive in addressing questions and concerns from parents. It is important to note that all curriculum content must include the roles and contributions of all people protected under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

### 11. Where can I find additional LGBTQ+ resources?

Trusted resources include: [ACLU](#), [The Trevor Project](#), [GLSEN](#), [Gender Spectrum](#), [Family Acceptance Project](#), [Lambda Legal](#), [PFLAG](#), [National Center for Transgender Equality](#), [360 Youth Services](#), [Equality Illinois](#), [Legacy Project](#), and [Illinois Safe Schools Alliance](#).

#### For further questions, please contact:

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<sup>1</sup> [GLSEN 2017 National School Climate Survey](#).