



**THE FLOW INITIATIVE
NEW JERSEY BILL A1349 TOOLKIT**

**FREE MENSTRUAL HEALTH PRODUCTS
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



ABOUT THE FLOW INITIATIVE

The Flow Initiative is a national organization committed to eradicating period poverty and achieving menstrual equity for all. Based in Jersey City, the organization advocates for menstrual health legislation, facilitates educational workshops, and distributes free menstrual health products. To date, The Flow Initiative has advanced seven bills focused on menstrual health legislation, educated 40,000 students on period poverty, and distributed 1.5 million menstrual health products worldwide.

OVERVIEW

Founded by Eiko La Boria in 2019, The Flow Initiative has emerged as an influential and innovative voice in menstrual health. Today, Eiko works in partnership with Sabrina Browne, a global menstrual health advocate and corporate public relations executive. Their combined expertise has elevated The Flow Initiative to new heights, attracting national partners and legislators to support the organization's mission.

STRATEGY AND IMPACT

The Flow Initiative is a women-led and minority-owned, for-profit organization that is fueled by Eiko and Sabrina's leadership plus a dedicated team of grassroots volunteers. The Flow Initiative works tirelessly to eradicate period poverty and achieve menstrual equity for all through programs, partnerships, and policy.

Beyond the distribution of free menstrual health products and resources, The Flow Initiative collaborates with government leaders and grassroots organizations to usher in menstrual health legislation. In New Jersey, The Flow Initiative has helped usher in seven bills to help advance access to menstrual health products, provide reproductive health resources, and improve well-being in local communities.

Bill A1349 TOOLKIT

Today, The Flow Initiative introduces a toolkit on Bill A1349: Free Menstrual Health Products in New Jersey Public Schools. The bill mandates that public schools provide students in grades six through 12 with free menstrual health products, and the state will incur the cost. The following pages provide an overview of Bill A1349, stakeholder resources, and additional information to address period poverty in schools.

After years of stagnation in the New Jersey Statehouse, The Flow Initiative collaborated with grassroots organizations to help reignite momentum for Bill A1349. This renewed effort was driven by The Flow Initiative hosting the inaugural New Jersey Menstrual Health Equity Summit, launching a statewide letter-writing campaign, and securing bipartisan support through effective lobbying.

The Flow Initiative extends its gratitude to New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and the various legislators, Thrive New Jersey Coalition, grassroots organizations, community and youth leaders, who made Bill A1349 a reality. The Flow Initiative looks forward to the New Jersey Department of Education implementing Bill A1349 and providing free menstrual health products to public school students this September.

CONTACT

To learn more and get involved with The Flow Initiative, contact Eiko La Boria at eiko@theflowinitiativefoundation.org.

To become an organizational partner or sponsor, contact Sabrina Browne at sbrownep@gmail.com.

Together, we can eradicate period poverty and achieve menstrual equity for all.

Eiko La Boria

Eiko La Boria
Founder & CEO, The Flow Initiative

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The Flow Initiative

OVERVIEW

NEW JERSEY BILL A1349

FREE MENSTRUAL HEALTH PRODUCTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In September 2024, New Jersey public schools will begin providing free menstrual health products to students in grades six through 12 as a result of Bill A1349.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed the legislation to help combat period poverty - a lack of access to menstrual health products - from increasing in local communities. Period poverty impacts women, girls, and the menstruating community by impacting their ability to contribute at school, work, community, and society at large.

Bill A1349 will ensure public school students have direct access to free menstrual products in at least 50 percent of female and gender-neutral school bathrooms, if applicable. Additionally, the costs incurred by a district in providing an adequate supply of menstrual health products to ensure the needs of students are met will be fulfilled by the state.

If you're a school administrator, school nurse, parent, or guardian who would like to learn more about free menstrual products in New Jersey public schools, you can:

ENGAGE



Take action and contact the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) at staid@doe.nj.gov for additional information about Bill A1349's implementation in the 2024-2025 school year.

EMPOWER



Contact your district to confirm they are aware of Bill A1349 and its mandate to provide free menstrual health products to public schools. Continuous outreach will help empower your district to work with the NJDOE to support students in your community.

EDUCATE



Continue educating your students on menstrual health and period poverty to help build awareness in public schools. Partner with The Flow Initiative to host a menstrual health workshop in the 2024-2025 school year.



PARENTS

The implementation of Bill A1349 is important to many stakeholders including parents and guardians of public school students in grades six through 12.

BILL A1349 OVERVIEW

Bill A1349 will ensure public school students have direct access to free menstrual products in at least 50 percent of female and gender-neutral school bathrooms, if applicable. Additionally, the costs incurred by a district in providing an adequate supply of menstrual health products to ensure the needs of students are met will be fulfilled by the state.

The Flow Initiative recommends parents and guardians proactively contact the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) at staid@doe.nj.gov for additional information about the bill's implementation in the 2024-2025 school year. Additionally, parents should continue to engage their public school district to ensure their school is working with the NJDOE to provide free products to students.

PERIOD POVERTY AND YOUR CHILD

Period poverty is a lack of access to menstrual health products that impact women, girls, and the menstruating community. It is a global health issue that affects millions of people regardless of race, religion, gender, or socioeconomic status.

The Flow Initiative is committed to eradicating period poverty, and the organization is sharing additional information below for parents and guardians to help students in the 2024-2024 school year.

IDENTIFYING PERIOD POVERTY AT HOME

Below are important signs to look for to determine if your child is experiencing period poverty. Remember, there is no shame or stigma in addressing period poverty.

- **Absenteeism:** Regularly missing school, especially around the same time each month, may be aligned with your child's menstrual cycle. Your child may not have access to menstrual health products at home or at school, resulting in them choosing to stay home for the duration of their cycles.
- **Emotional and Behavioral Changes:** Noticeable changes in your child's mood or behavior could be due to period poverty. They may display increased irritability, anger, or withdrawal. This may be due to the lack of access to menstrual health products and the emotional toll this has during their menstrual cycles.
- **Hygiene Concerns:** Be mindful of your child's complaints about hygiene discomfort and body odor. Due to the lack of access to menstrual health products, they may display a reluctance to attend family events, engage in physical activities, or leave the home during their menstrual cycle.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD

Below is The Flow Initiative's three-pronged approach to help your child during their menstrual cycle:

- **Engage:** The first step is to engage your child during their menstrual cycles to help normalize and destigmatize menstruation. Do not ignore or ostracize your child, as this time of the month is when they are most vulnerable. Practice honest and open conversations to allow your child to feel seen and safe during their cycles.
- **Educate:** Education is one of the most powerful tools available to promote healthy menstruation, and this starts with you and your child. You can contact your child's school to secure menstrual health resources and start having these conversations 1:1. Alternatively, schedule an appointment with your school's nurse, child's pediatrician, or trusted health professional to discuss menstrual health.
- **Empower:** Identify positive and uplifting resources about menstruation to empower your child. From movies like Disney's "Turning Red" to books like American Girl's "The Care and Keeping of You," to normalize menstruation at home. In turn, your child will likely start to feel more comfortable and empowered when on their periods at school.



TEACHERS

The implementation of Bill A1349 is important to many stakeholders including teachers of public school students in grades six through 12.

BILL A1349 OVERVIEW

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PERIOD POVERTY AND YOUR STUDENTS

Period poverty is a lack of access to menstrual health products that impact women, girls, and the menstruating community. Nationwide, 23% of teenagers struggle to afford period products according to Statista.

The Flow Initiative is committed to eradicating period poverty, and the organization is sharing additional information below for teachers to help students in the 2024-2024 school year.

IDENTIFYING PERIOD POVERTY AT SCHOOL

Below are important signs to look for to determine if your students are experiencing period poverty.

- **Absenteeism:** Your students may miss school regularly, especially around the same time each month aligned with their menstrual cycles. They may not have access to menstrual health products at home or at school, resulting in them choosing to stay home for the duration of their cycles.
- **Decreased Participation:** Noticeable changes in your student's participation in class could be due to period poverty. They may participate less or appear withdrawn during classroom activities.
- **Emotional Duress:** Your students may appear hyper-emotional during this time, which may be due to the lack of access to menstrual health products and the toll this has on their menstrual cycles.

HOW TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS

Below are The Flow Initiative's recommendations for teachers to help students during their menstrual cycles at school.

- **Practice Sensitivity:** If you believe a student is impacted by period poverty, approach them privately and sensitively to offer support.
- **Educate and Empower:** Share all available resources about menstrual health with your students for students to become empowered about their bodies. If none are available to you directly, point them to the school nurse for support.
- **Cultivate Community:** Leverage moments like Menstrual Health Awareness Month and Period Poverty Awareness Week in May to bring your students together to discuss menstrual health. Contact organizations like The Flow Initiative to facilitate a discussion or host a workshop.



NURSES

The implementation of Bill A1349 is important to many stakeholders including school nurses of public school students in grades six through 12.

BILL A1349 OVERVIEW

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The Flow Initiative recommends school nurses proactively contact the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) at staid@doe.nj.gov for additional information about the bill's implementation in the 2024-2025 school year. Additionally, school nurses should continue to engage their public school district to ensure their school is working with the NJDOE to provide free products to students.

PERIOD POVERTY AND YOUR STUDENTS

Period poverty is a lack of access to menstrual health products that impact women, girls, and the menstruating community. As a school nurse, you need to know that 40% of teenagers have worn period products longer than recommended in the United States. Furthermore, 60% of teenagers are unable to do schoolwork because of period symptoms according to Statista.

The Flow Initiative is committed to eradicating period poverty, and the organization is sharing additional information below for school nurses to help students in the 2024-2024 school year.

IDENTIFYING PERIOD POVERTY AT SCHOOL

Below are important signs to look for to determine if your students are experiencing period poverty.

- **Frequent Office Visits:** Students visiting the nurse's office frequently during the same time of the month, or students with ongoing complaints about menstruation, abdominal pain, and fatigue.
- **Lack of Access to Products:** Students asking for menstrual products often means they cannot access these products at home. Additionally, students who show signs of using makeshift products such as toilet tissue, paper towels, or rags to manage their cycles.
- **Poor Menstrual Hygiene:** Reoccurring health issues such as infections and rashes could be due to poor menstrual hygiene.

HOW TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS

Below are The Flow Initiative's recommendations for nurses to guide their students during their menstrual cycles.

- **Create a Menstrual Product Pantry:** Leverage the free menstrual health products provided through Bill A1349 to create a pantry in your nurse's office. Regularly stock the pantry throughout the year to help your students in need.
- **Educate and Inform:** Conduct informational sessions on menstrual health and hygiene regularly with your students who visit the nurse's office.
- **Be a Safe Space:** Build trust with your students to foster honest, open, and two-way conversations around menstrual health. Students will view the nurse's office as a safe space to share their needs and concerns.



GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

The implementation of Bill A1349 is important to many stakeholders including guidance counselors of public school students in grades six through 12.

BILL A1349 OVERVIEW

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PERIOD POVERTY AND YOUR STUDENTS

Period poverty is a lack of access to menstrual health products that impact women, girls, and the menstruating community. As a guidance counselor, 63% of teenagers are especially self-conscious of periods in the school environment. Additionally, 35% of health teachers appear uncomfortable discussing menstruation according to Statista.

Guidance counselors play a pivotal role in bridging the communication gaps between students and teachers at school, as well as students and parents in general.

The Flow Initiative is committed to eradicating period poverty, and the organization is sharing additional information below for guidance counselors to help students in the 2024-2024 school year.

IDENTIFYING PERIOD POVERTY AT SCHOOL

Below are important signs to look for to determine if your students are experiencing period poverty.

- **Absenteeism:** Regularly missing school, especially around the same time each month, may be aligned with your student's menstrual cycle. Students may not have access to menstrual health products at home or at school, resulting in them choosing to stay home for the duration of their cycles.
- **Emotional Duress:** Your students may appear hyper-emotional during this time, which may be due to the lack of access to menstrual health products and the toll this has on their menstrual cycles.
- **Social Withdrawal:** Noticeable changes in a student's participation in class, school sports, or extracurriculars could be due to period poverty.

HOW TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS

Below are The Flow Initiative's recommendations for guidance counselors to support their students during their menstrual cycles.

- **Provide Resources:** Guide students to available resources, including the free menstrual health products provided by Bill A1349 to your school.
- **Offer One-to-One Support:** Menstrual health challenges and concerns are often best discussed 1:1 with students. Students may feel comfortable coming to their guidance counselors and/or school nurse.
- **Ally and Advocate:** Support the needs of your students by serving as an ally who listens and learns from your one-to-one discussions. In turn, advocate for your students during school board meetings and policy discussions to help continue access to free products.

CONTACT THE FLOW INITIATIVE



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ERADICATING PERIOD POVERTY 365 DAYS A YEAR



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