

## Sex Education in Public Schools: What Alabama Thinks

- **More than 4 out of 5 Alabamians support the practice of public schools offering some form of sex education to students in middle school and high school.**
- **Most Alabamians (75%) believe that parental permission should be required before students are presented with sex education material.**
- **A large majority of Alabamians support the inclusion of a wide range of topics in sex education courses. Virtually all support curriculum that covers STD's, rape prevention, rape reporting, and abstinence.**

(Auburn, June 27) The *Ask-Alabama* statewide public opinion survey<sup>1</sup> on the perceptions of Alabamians regarding sex education in the public schools reveals that there is a high level of support for teaching sex education to middle school and high school students. However, Alabamians clearly prefer that parents be asked for permission before their public school students are exposed to sex education in the classroom (75%).

Almost nine out of 10 Alabamians indicate that it is acceptable for sex education curriculum to cover information about STD's, rape prevention, reporting rape, and abstinence. There is also a high level of support for the inclusion of information about contraceptives (86%), and providing neutral information about homosexuality (72%). Overall, support for public school sex education and the wide range of topic material did not differ much among parents and non-parents of kids in K-12. In addition, the opinions of respondents who described themselves as very religious did not differ much from those who describe themselves as less religious.

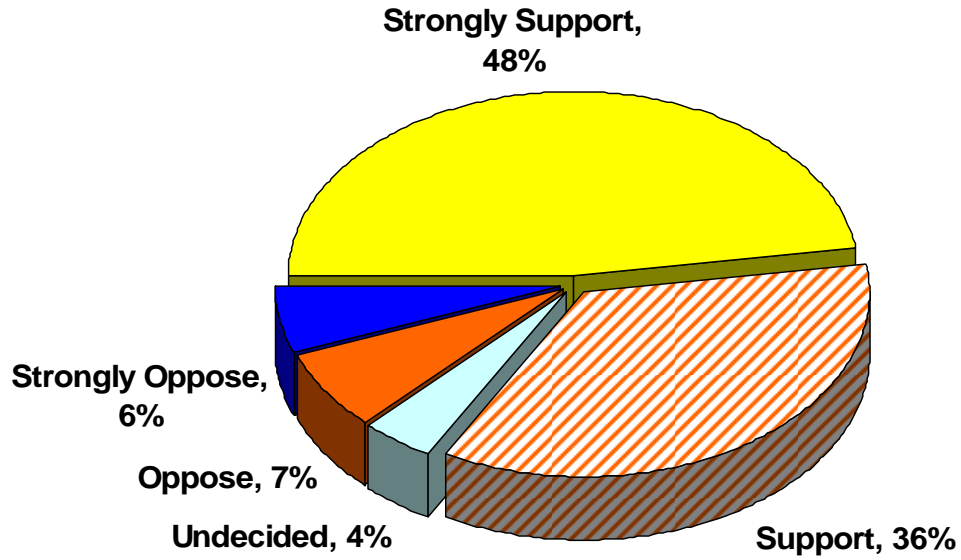
## Strong Support for Sex Education in the Public School Curriculum, but with Parental Permission

The vast majority of Alabamians (84%) support the practice of public schools offering some form of sex education to students in middle school and high school. However, three out of four (75%) believe that public schools should be required to obtain parental permission before their children are presented with sex education material.

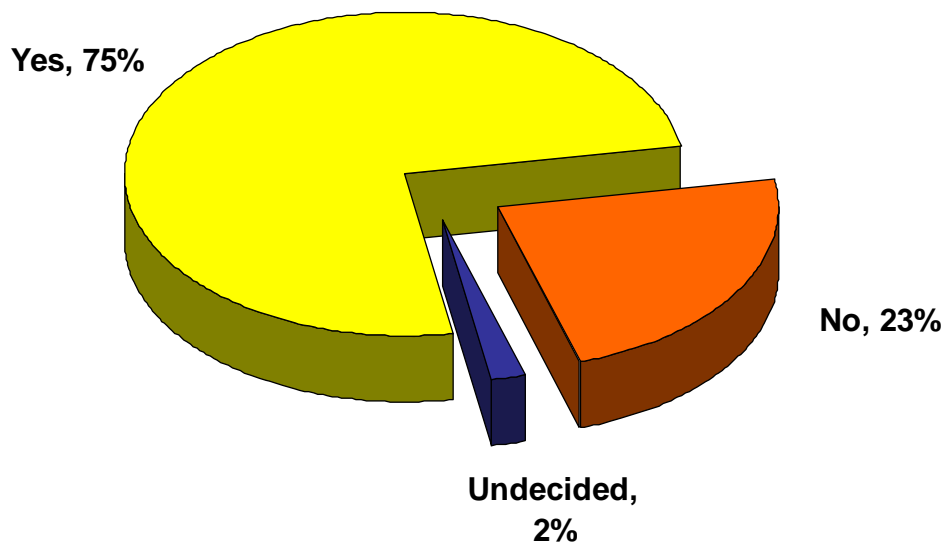
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<sup>1</sup> The survey of a random sample of 603 Alabamians was conducted from April 6 – 18, 2005. The average estimated margin of error is +/- 4%.

## Alabamians Report a High Level of Support for Sex Education in the Public School Curriculum



## Alabamians Want Parental Permission Requirement for Sex Education



## Alabamians Support a Wide Range of Topics in Sex Education Curriculum

Respondents were presented with a list of six topic areas that might be presented in sex education curriculum and were asked whether or not public schools should cover each topic. Almost all Alabamians expressed support for teaching public school students about *HIV, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases* (98%), *what students should do if they are raped* (97%), *how to prevent rape* (96%), and *abstinence to prevent unwanted pregnancy and STD's* (95%). A large majority also support *providing information about contraceptives* (86%) and presenting *information about homosexuality in a neutral manner* (72%).

There was a high level of support for the inclusion of these topics among the very religious and not so religious Alabamians alike, although very religious respondents were somewhat less supportive of presenting information about contraceptives and homosexuality. On average, respondents endorsed five out of the six sex education topics presented to them in the survey.

### Alabamians Support a Broad Sex Education Curriculum

Sex Education Topic	Total
Providing information about HIV, AIDS, and other STD's	98%
Informing students about what they should do if they are raped	97%
Informing students about how to prevent rape	96%
Teaching abstinence	95%
Providing information about contraceptives	86%
Providing information about issues associated with homosexuality in a neutral manner that neither promotes nor condemns	72%
<b>Average Number of Topics Endorsed</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>603</b>