

Sex Education in Public Schools: What Alabama Thinks

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Ask-Alabama Poll, Spring 2005

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Significant Findings

- 1. 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. However, 75% of Alabamians believe that parental permission should be required before students are presented with sex education material.**

	Total
Strongly Support Sex Ed	48%
Support Sex Ed	36%
Oppose Sex Ed	7%
Strongly Oppose Sex Ed	6%
Undecided	4%

Alabamians clearly support public high schools and middle schools offering sex education. However, despite the strong indication that parents would not oppose having their children participate in the presentation and discussion of sex education topics, they want Alabama's public schools to ask them first. It is possible that many Alabamians may worry that without a permission requirement, they may not even know when their children are being presented with sex education material, much less the content of that material.

- 2. A large majority of Alabamians support the inclusion of a wide range of topics in sex education courses. Virtually all support curriculum that covers information about STD's, rape prevention, rate reporting, and abstinence.**

	% Who Support¹
Information about STD's	98%
What they should do if raped	97%
Rape prevention	96%
Abstinence	95%
Information on contraceptives	86%
Neutral information about homosexuality	72%

¹ These percentages are consistent with recent national data on attitudes toward sex education.

Almost all Alabamians want children to be educated about aspects of sexual activity that can cause them physical and emotional harm, e.g. rape, HIV, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and teaching abstinence to prevent STD's and unwanted pregnancy. However, a high percentage also appears to want kids to be educated about contraceptives and homosexuality. Parents may feel that it is more comfortable to have the public school system provide their children with factual information on these topics, which may then lead to dialogue between parents and kids in which their personal views can be discussed.

Poll Facts

Dates of Survey: April 6 – April 18, 2005
Sample Size: 603
Estimated Margin of Error: +/- 4%
Type of Survey: Random telephone survey of Alabamians 19 or older