

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

September 2000

THE HENRY J.
KAISER
FAMILY
FOUNDATION

SEX EDUCATION IN AMERICA

A SERIES OF
NATIONAL SURVEYS
OF STUDENTS,
PARENTS, TEACHERS,
AND PRINCIPALS

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NATIONAL SURVEYS
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A VIEW FROM INSIDE THE NATION'S CLASSROOMS...

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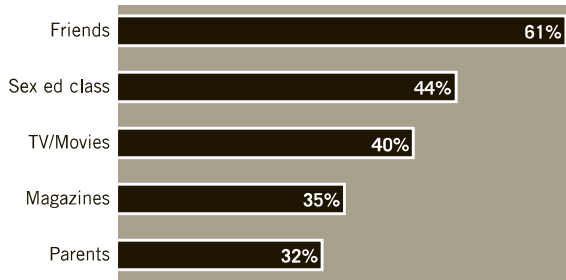
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**VIRTUALLY ALL PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS
WILL TAKE SEX EDUCATION IN
7TH–12TH GRADE.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, virtually all public schools provide some form of sex education. Sex education is in fact so prominent in the lives of young people that it is now a primary source of information on sexual health issues: according to a national survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 44 percent of 13 to 18 year-olds name sex education as one of their most important resources. (See Figure 1.) In spite of how common sex education has become—and the level of debate it has inspired—there has been relatively little information available about what actually happens in the classroom.

FIGURE 1. FINDING OUT ABOUT THE FACTS OF LIFE
Percent of teens, ages 13–18, who say they get information about how to talk about sexual health issues from...



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation/YM Magazine, National Survey of Teens: Teens Talk about Dating, Intimacy, and Their Sexual Experiences, Spring 1998

This report, prepared by the Kaiser Family Foundation, provides a snapshot of sex education in America today from the inside looking out. Through a series of national surveys conducted in 1999, it provides an in-depth look at what is actually happening in the classroom from the perspectives of those with the most direct experience: students, parents, teachers, and principals.

Overall, the importance of sex education is reinforced again and again: students who have sex education—regardless of the curriculum—know more and feel better prepared to handle different situations and decisions than those who have not. Still, not all students' information needs are being met by their sex education, which generally does a good job on the basics but less frequently covers more skill-based information such as where to get and how to use contraception or how to talk with a boy or girlfriend about safer sex. Parents, when asked specifically what they want sex education to look like, say courses need to cover more and last longer than most actually do today.

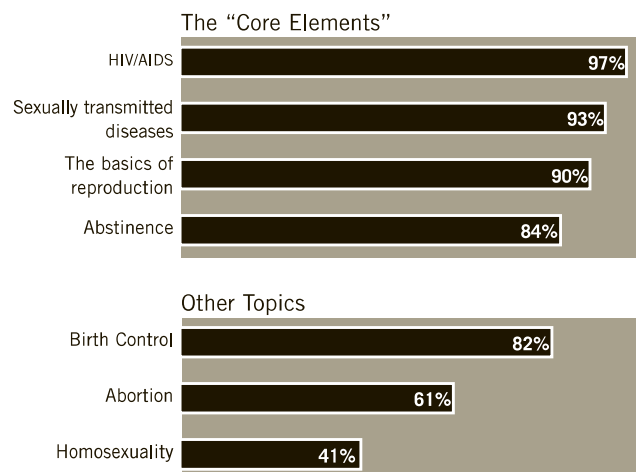
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN CLASSROOMS?

The large majority of public school students—89 percent—take sex education sometime between 7th and 12th grades though often only once or twice and usually over just a few class periods. While once boys and girls took sex education in separate classes, today's classes are typically co-ed and taught within another course such as health.

When it comes to the topics that are covered, abstinence, that is teaching young people to wait to have sex, figures prominently in most sex education. Also included among a core set of fundamentals are some mention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and the basics of reproduction. (See Figure 2) More skill-based instruction,

As part of a broader curriculum, abstinence is a standard message in most sex education today.

FIGURE 2. SEX ED 101
Percent of 7th–12th Grade Students Who Say Their Most Recent Sex Ed Class Covered...



such as how to deal with the pressures and emotional consequences of sexual activity, how to talk with parents or partners about sexual health issues, where to get tested for STDs, and how to obtain birth control, is covered less frequently and less consistently. (See Figure 3.)

The main message emphasized in most public secondary school sex education is described by both students and educators as a more comprehensive one that includes abstinence and provides at least some information about birth control; approximately one in three schools teach abstinence as the only option. (See Figure 4.)

Despite the apparent differences between the two approaches, the study finds that in reality the boundaries are often hazy in terms of what is actually covered in abstinence-only and more comprehensive sex education classes. At least some students and teachers in courses that they describe as having a main message of abstinence-only report that information was still included about how to use and where to get birth control or how to get tested for HIV/AIDS. Likewise, many sex education courses described as comprehensive appear to provide only surface-level information about birth control and HIV/AIDS and other STDs while not addressing more practical aspects of how to use birth control or talk with a partner about sexual health issues, or where to go to get tested for HIV or other STDs.

Overall there is little difference in the sense of preparedness of students who take courses with an abstinence-only versus a comprehensive approach to sex education. A large majority of students—regardless of the main message of their sex education—say they feel at least somewhat prepared to handle a range of sexual decisions and situations. Although students and parents said sex education—regardless of approach—could do a better job at teaching communication and negotiation skills.

FIGURE 4. THE “MAIN MESSAGE”
Percent of public secondary school principals reporting that the “main message” of sex education is...

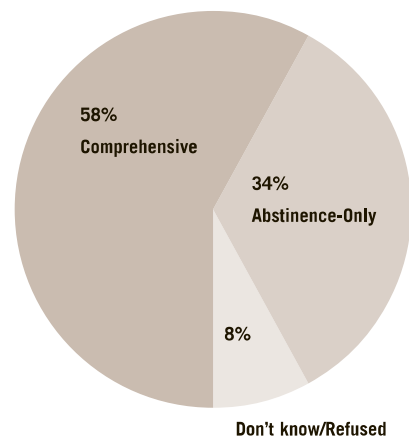
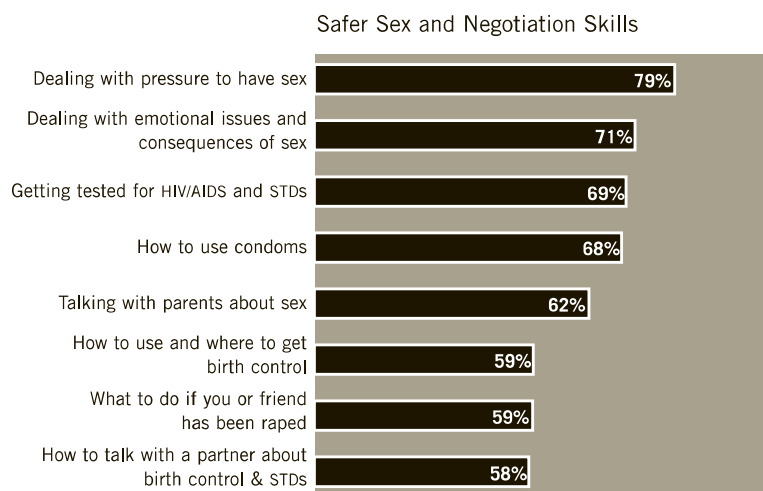


FIGURE 3. SEX ED 101—CONTINUED
Percent of 7th–12th Grade Students Who Say Their Most Recent Sex Ed Class Covered...



WHAT DO PARENTS WANT?

Some of the most surprising findings of the report involve what parents say they want schools to teach their children. In general, parents want a wider range of topics taught than is often included in sex education today. Not only do parents strongly support covering the “core elements” already taught in most sex education—HIV/AIDS and other STDs, the basics of reproduction, and abstinence—they often want sex education to cover topics that are not uniformly taught, such as safer sex and negotiation skills.

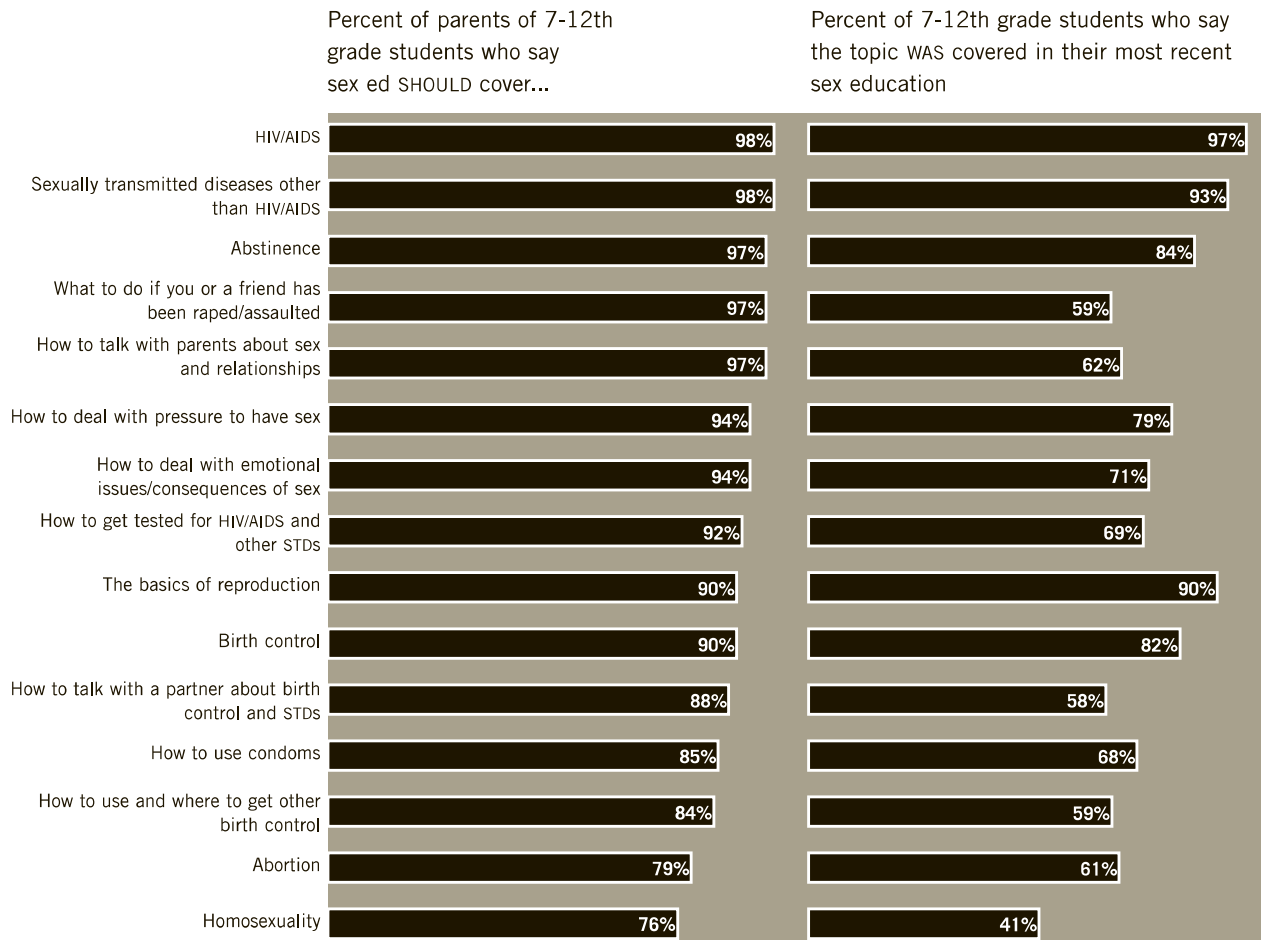
While nearly all parents report wanting sex education to teach students about safer sex and negotiation skills, far fewer students say these topics were covered in their most recent sex education course. In some cases the gap is as wide as 25 to 35 percentage points between the percent

of parents who say they want such topics included and the percent of students who report that they are covered. The topics for which this difference is greatest include what to do in cases of rape or sexual assault, talking to parents about sex, homosexuality, talking with partners about birth control and STDs, obtaining and using birth control, dealing with the emotional consequences of sex, and getting tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs. This suggests that many parents would like their children’s sex education courses to venture further beyond the basics than they currently do. (See Figure 5.)

Parents also say sex education should not shy away from more sensitive topics, and specify that issues such as these should be “discussed in a way that provides a fair and balanced presentation of the facts and different views in society.” Most (74%) say they trust that their children’s sex education is teaching attitudes and values that they support.

Parents generally want a wider range of topics covered than often is included in sex education today.

FIGURE 5. WHAT PARENTS WANT



...AND, WHAT DO STUDENTS NEED?

Most students say they need more information about sexual health issues than they are getting in school. In spite of their confidence in their abilities to handle a variety of situations and their general knowledge, even those students who have had sex education say they need more information about a number of sexual health issues, including those that are covered in their sex education courses. (See Figure 6.)

Students are most likely to say they need more information about negotiation and communication skills. In particular, students want to know more about how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active and how to talk to a partner about birth control and STDs. Students also want more information about what to do in cases of rape and sexual assault and about HIV/AIDS and other STDs.

Students say they need more information about sexual health issues than they are getting in school.

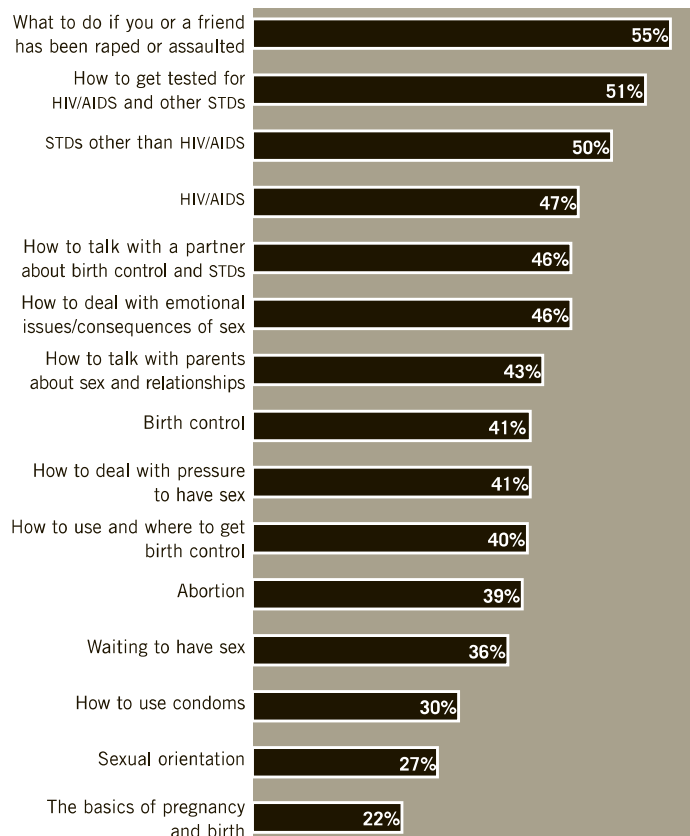
HOW GOOD A JOB IS SEX EDUCATION DOING?

Overall, students give mostly As and Bs in terms of how well their sex education is preparing them to understand the basics of reproduction, waiting to have sex, and dealing with pressure to have sex. Students rate the teaching of communication skills—such as how to talk with their parents or a boyfriend or girlfriend—somewhat lower. Instruction in how to use and where to get birth control—due in part to the fact that many courses do not teach this—also gets lower grades from students.

Students and educators give today's sex education generally high marks.

FIGURE 6. INFORMATION NEEDS

Percent of students who have had sex ed who say they need more information about...

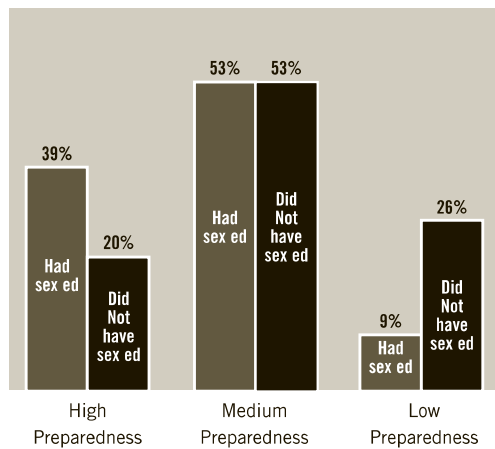


Students who have had sex education feel more prepared than those who have not.

Students who have not had sex education in secondary school overall are more prepared to handle a range of decisions and situations—and are more knowledgeable on sexual health issues—as compared with those who have not had sex education. (See Figure 7.) Specifically, students who have had some form of sex education during their secondary school years report feeling more equipped to deal with the pressures surrounding sex—including deciding to wait—as well as to communicate about sexual health issues and to know where to get and how to use birth control if they needed it.

FIGURE 7. PREPAREDNESS INDEX

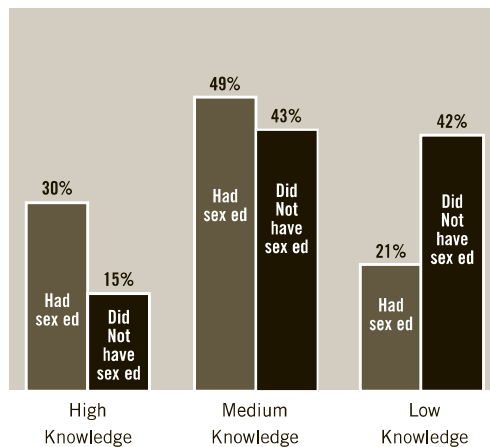
Overall sense of preparedness of students to handle sexual decisions and situations by whether or not they have had sex education



When it comes to basic knowledge about pregnancy and HIV and other STD prevention, students who have had sex education also know more. Students were asked a series of questions about reproduction, birth control, HIV/AIDS, and other sexual health issues. Students who have not had sex education scored lower as compared to those who have had sex education. (See Figure 8.)

FIGURE 8. KNOWLEDGE INDEX

Overall knowledge of pregnancy and HIV/STD prevention of students by whether or not they have had sex education



WHO INFLUENCES WHAT GETS TAUGHT?

Input on sex education comes from many different places. The large majority of principals report that the school district and/or local government has influence on sex education curriculum; close to three in four public secondary schools also get direction from state government. The large majority say their school is required to follow local or state guidelines for sex education (See Figure 9.) Most principals say teachers and parents are also at least somewhat involved in determining what is taught at their school. (See Figure 10.) When a specific topic is not taught in sex education, principals often cite a school or district policy.

FIGURE 9. GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE
Percent of Public Secondary School Principals Reporting “Influence” from each...

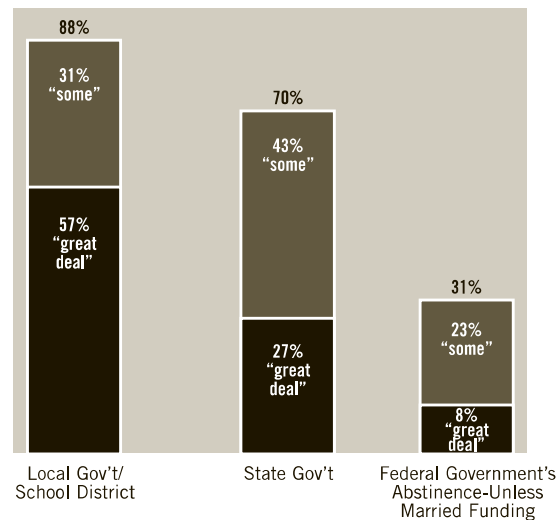
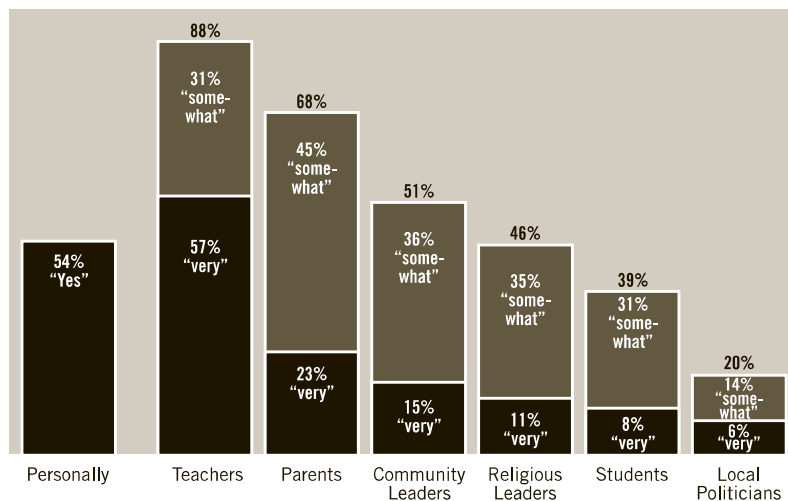


FIGURE 10. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Percent of Public Secondary School Principals Reporting “Involvement” from Each in Deciding What Topics are Taught...



METHODOLOGY

**INTERVIEWS WITH 313 PRINCIPALS,
1,001 TEACHERS OF SEX EDUCATION,
AND 1,501 PAIRS OF STUDENTS
AND PARENTS NATIONWIDE.**

METHODOLOGY

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation's 1999 Benchmark Survey on Sex Education in America surveyed principals, teachers, students and parents involved in sex education instruction at public middle, junior, and senior high schools across the country. Interviews with 313 principals, 1,001 teachers of sex education, and 1,501 pairs of students and parents were conducted by telephone from February through May, 1999. This document is a summary of the methods used in each component survey; further details are available in the relevant technical reports.

SAMPLE DESIGN AND SURVEY PROCEDURES

The samples for each survey were independent. The principal and teacher samples were designed to represent all public middle, junior, and senior high schools enrolling grades 7 through 12 in the continental United States. Schools were randomly and proportionally selected from a national database of public schools by type of school (middle, junior, and senior high). Schools that provided no sex education curriculum were ineligible, and those which declined to say whether they offered such instruction were also considered ineligible.

In the principal survey, one full year of service as principal at the school sampled was required for eligibility.

In the teacher survey, one teacher was recruited from each school contacted from among:

"...any teacher in your school who teaches sex education to 7th through 12th graders ... this includes teachers of any classes or talks that discuss relationships, how babies are made, abstinence, pregnancy prevention, and the like. These topics may be taught as a separate sex-ed course, as part of another course like health or science, or as independent lessons."

Teachers must have taught sex education materials in some format within the preceding two years to be eligible for the survey.

The student-parent survey was conducted using list-assisted random digit dialing (RDD) to achieve a nationally representative sample of (continental) U.S. households with telephones, regardless of whether a phone number is listed, purposely unlisted, or too new to be listed. In each contacted household, interviewers spoke with an adult informant to determine the number of children living in the household between the ages of 11 and 19, their grade levels, and whether they were currently attending public school. Households with at least one public school 7th to 12th grader continued with the full interview. Demographic information was collected for households where only the age criteria was met in order to facilitate weighting, as described below.

Once an eligible student in grade 7 through 12 had been identified (randomly selected if more than one lived in the household), interviewers asked to speak to the father or male guardian of that child first. If the father or male guardian was not available at the time, the interviewer asked to speak to the mother or female guardian. (This procedure was designed to balance the number of men and women participating.) The parent/guardian was interviewed first and then the student was interviewed, if possible during the same contact but by a later call if necessary.

All schools in the principal sample were mailed an advance letter one week prior to interviewing. This letter identified Princeton Survey Research Associates and explained the purpose and nature of the study. The letter described the sponsor of the study as "non-profit, non-partisan health care philanthropy working in health policy and public education." Potential respondents in all three surveys received a similar introduction at telephone contact, and were promised that their participation and responses would be kept confidential.

Interviews for all surveys were conducted from February 2 through May 23, 1999. At least 15 attempts were made to complete an interview at every sampled school or household. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week (9 am until 8 pm EST, Monday through Friday for school-based surveys) to maximize the chances of making a contact with a potential respondent. Refusals were re-contacted at least once in order to attempt to convert them to completed interviews.

Sample Characteristics and Outcomes: Surveys of Principals, Teachers, and Students-Parents

	Student-Parent	Teachers	Principals
Completed interviews	1,501	1,001	313
95% Margin of Error	±3%	±3%	±6%
Design Effect	1.23	1.06	1.12
Response rate	54%	72%	41%
Total sample attempted	35,331	1,920	1,012
Units in sample that were contacted	73%	76%	56%
Cooperation among contacted units	83%	95%	74%

WEIGHTING AND STATISTICAL PRECISION

Weighting is used in all three surveys to adjust for minor differences between the set of complete interviews and the populations they represent due to survey nonresponse. Weighted statistics yield unbiased estimates of the nationwide attributes and experiences of schools (as experienced by principals and teachers) and 7th–12th grade public school students and their parents. (All surveys excluded Alaska and Hawaii).

The data for the school-based surveys were weighted to approximate the distribution of all middle, junior, and senior public schools by geographic region and type of residential area (urban, suburban, non-metropolitan) according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data for the 1997–1998 school year.

Weighting for the household-based student-parent survey was slightly more complicated. The most accurate and timely data on U.S. households are from the March 1998 Current Population Survey (CPS). These data may be analyzed only with respect to children of given ages, but not by grade level or attendance at public school. We therefore retained records from the screening interviews for all households with children 11 through 19, and matched them to corresponding CPS data. Complete interviews were weighted to approximate CPS distributions of gender, age, education, and race and Hispanic origin for the parents, plus the geographic region of the household.

The overall margins of error for the three surveys are: ±6% for principals and ±3% for teachers, students and parents. The margin of error indicates, for example, that the estimated sample percentage for a given variable in the principals survey will be no more than six percentage points away from its true value in 95 out of 100 samples drawn in the same way. This summary measure reflects a confidence interval around a true value of 50%, and precision may be greater at other values. The margin of error estimates also reflect a composite DESIGN EFFECT for each survey that accounts for the loss of precision that generally accompanies weighting. (See the technical documentation for each survey for more information about precision and statistical testing.)

RESPONSE RATES

A survey's response rate estimates the proportion of eligible respondents in the sample that were successfully interviewed. The response rate for the three surveys are: 41% for principals, 72% for teachers, 54% for students and parents. PSRA's sample disposition codes and rate formulas comply with standards set by the American Association for Public Opinion Research.

SECTION ONE

SEX ED 101:
WHAT HAPPENS IN
THE CLASSROOM?

THE MOST COMMONLY COVERED TOPICS IN SEX EDUCATION TODAY ARE: HIV/AIDS AND OTHER STDs, THE BASICS OF REPRODUCTION, AND ABSTINENCE.

SEX ED 101: WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CLASSROOM?

Once upon a time, sex education was taught in separate classes for boys and girls. Boys learned primarily about venereal disease from filmstrips that provided all the insight and information a soldier might receive in boot camp prior to his first leave. Girls learned primarily about the biology of the female reproductive system. When the filmstrips and lectures were over, students were still pretty much in the dark.

Today, sex education classes are largely coed and focus on biological, emotional, and practical issues that provide students with a broad range of knowledge crucial to their personal development and future sexual health. Most public schools teach some form of sex education, and virtually all students will have had sex education by the time they graduate. Fewer than 10 percent of students receive no sex education whatsoever.

For most students, sex education is taught over a few class periods as part of health education. Typically, a student will take sex education only once or twice during secondary school (7th through 12th grades). Many of these classes include opportunities for students to discuss what they learn as well as their concerns. High school sex education tends to cover a wider set of topics. Courses taught in the 7th and 8th grades more often stick to the “birds and bees” basics.

The core elements covered in public secondary school sex education include HIV/AIDS and other STDs, the basics of reproduction, and abstinence—these topics form the foundation of almost every sex education course. But while the basics receive a fair amount of attention in sex education courses, important negotiation and coping skills do not receive the same amount of classroom time. More practical skills such as where to get and how to use birth control, how to talk to a partner about an STD, or where to get tested are less frequently covered.

Most sex education taught in public secondary schools today is described by both students and educators as taking a more “comprehensive” approach—that is, teaching abstinence as well as providing some information about birth control and safer sex. Yet, one in three schools nationwide say the main message in their sex education is “abstinence-only,” defined as teaching abstinence, often until marriage, as the only option for young people. Despite the significant differences in the curriculum of these two approaches, in practice the study finds that there is often a blurring of boundaries. In the classroom, for example, at least some classes in which the main message is described as abstinence-only do offer practical information about birth control or safer sex. On the other hand, many comprehensive sex education classes do not actually provide information about how to use or where to get birth control.

The section that follows examines what sex education today looks like from the perspectives of the students taking the classes and the teachers teaching them, including main messages, how the typical class is structured, and what topics are taught.

WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SEX EDUCATION IS TAUGHT

Although the content and duration of sex education courses vary across the nation's schools, in 1999 an overwhelming majority of 7th through 12th graders (90%) in public schools took some form of sex education; only 10 percent had not taken any. The most common reason given by students for not taking sex education is either that their school does not offer it or that they expect to be taking it later. Less than one percent of students say they have not taken sex education because a parent or guardian did not give permission to take the course. Most of those who have not had sex education are in the younger grades (7th or 8th) and, based on the responses of older students, likely will have sex education before they graduate if they stay in a public school system.

While half of students (51%) report having had some form of sex education in elementary school, the large majority of students are taught sex education in 7th through 12th grades. Fully nine in ten (89%) will have taken a sex education course in secondary school by the time they are in the 11th or 12th grade; most (76%) will have one or two courses during that time. (See Tables 1 and 2.)

TABLE 1 STUDENTS: OVERVIEW OF SEX EDUCATION SINCE FIRST GRADE
Students in 7th–12th grade.

	Total	Current Grade		
		7–8	9–10	11–12
Ever had sex ed	90%	86%	89%	95%
Times had sex ed since first grade				
1	29	37	28	23
2	35	28	34	42
3	15	14	13	17
4	5	3	7	5
5 or more	5	2	6	5
Never had sex ed	10	14	11	5
n	1501	525	507	469

TABLE 2 STUDENTS: OVERVIEW OF SEX EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL
Students in 7th–12th grade.

	Total	Current Grade		
		7–8	9–10	11–12
Had sex ed in secondary school	75%	55%	81%	89%
Times had sex ed in secondary school				
1	44	46	45	40
2	23	10	25	36
3	7	0	10	12
4	1	0	1	2
5 or more	*	0	0	1
n	1501	525	507	469

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TYPICAL SEX EDUCATION CLASS

Most public secondary school sex education teachers (74%) say the most recent class they taught lasted only one or several class periods. One in five students (21%) get more exposure to sex education in classes lasting a half semester or more. A few courses (8%) last for an entire semester or more. (See Table 3.)

TABLE 3 TEACHERS: DURATION OF SEX EDUCATION CLASSES?
Teachers of 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	Most Recent Course		
		7–8	9–10	11–12
One or several class periods	74%	77%	70%	75%
Half a semester or quarter	13	13	16	9
Entire semester or quarter	6	4	7	8
A school year	2	1	2	2
n	1000	423	410	167

Most teachers (81%) also report that boys and girls are taught in the same classroom. Those who do teach gender-segregated classes are more likely to do so in younger grades: a quarter (24%) of 7th–8th grade teachers taught sex education to boys and girls separately, as compared with 17 percent of those teaching 9th–10th graders, and just one in 10 (11%) who teach 11th–12th graders. (See Table 4.)

TABLE 4 TEACHERS: COED OR SINGLE-SEX CLASSES?

Teachers of 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	Most Recent Course		
		7–8	9–10	11–12
Boys and Girls Together for All Sessions	81%	76%	83%	88%
Taught Separately for Some or All Sessions	19	24	17	11
n	1000	423	410	167

The vast majority of secondary school sex education is packaged as part of another course. More than eight in 10 (85%) teachers say the most recent 7th–12th grade sex education course they taught was part of some other course. A separate course is more common for younger students than older students. (See Table 5.)

TABLE 5 TEACHERS: INDEPENDENT OR PACKAGED WITH OTHER COURSE?

Teachers of 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	Most Recent Course		
		7–8	9–10	11–12
As part of another course	85%	79%	90%	88%
As a separate course	8	13	5	5
As specific lessons taught independent of any other course	6	8	5	7
n	1000	423	410	167

When it is combined with another course, sex education typically is taught with health (75%). Less frequent pairings are with home economics and family or consumer science (18%) and science or biology (17%).

Slightly more than half (55%) of teachers say their most recent course consisted primarily of activities that encouraged student participation. Another fifth (22%) say they used a combination of both lectures and student participation. Just a fifth (22%) relied heavily on lectures. (See Table 6.)

TABLE 6 TEACHERS: LECTURE OR CLASS DISCUSSION?

Teachers of 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	Most Recent Course		
		7–8	9–10	11–12
Primarily a lecture with some discussion	22%	22%	21%	24%
Primarily student participation	55	52	58	56
Combination of student participation and lectures	22	25	20	20
n	1000	423	410	167

THE MAIN MESSAGE OF SEX EDUCATION

What are the actual messages of sex education in public secondary schools today? Students, teachers, and principals nationwide report that the large majority of sex education courses stress a comprehensive message, teaching that “young people should wait to have sex, but if they don’t, they should use birth control and practice safer sex.” Most teachers (61%) and principals (58%) say that their school’s sex education provides a comprehensive message; about one in three (33% of teachers and 34% of principals) report an abstinence-only message. Students are more likely than teachers to say their most recent sex education stressed a comprehensive (80%) as opposed to abstinence-only message (18%). The differences in responses from teachers and principals as compared with students are greatest in the later grades; there is more consistency with what younger students in 7th and 8th grades report where both teachers and students are more likely to report an abstinence-only approach (See Table 7). (See Box 1 for possible explanations for differences in responses.)

BOX 1**Why Student and Teacher Descriptions of Sex Education May Differ**

The majority of teachers and students agree that the main message of sex education is a comprehensive one, stressing the importance of waiting to have sex but also discussing contraception and safer sex, yet teachers are almost twice as likely as students to report that abstinence-only was the main message emphasized (33% vs. 18%).

With regard to specific topics, students and teachers also report differences. Although their overall responses indicated a consistency with regard to how commonly specific topics are taught relative to other topics, with the exception of a few subjects teachers are more likely to say specific topics are taught than are students. However, three topics stand out as not falling into this pattern—abortion, birth control, and how to use condoms. For these three issues, students are significantly more likely than teachers to report these topics being included in some form in sex education.

While there are any number of possible reasons for these differences, some of the likely explanations include:

- Students may be more likely to report that topics were included in class simply because a fellow student asked a question and a discussion followed, while teachers may report covering only those topics that are a part of their lesson plans. Alternately, teachers may recall including certain topics while students recall only those topics that were discussed in-depth or those that seemed most relevant to them at the time.
- Teachers may feel constrained by personal or local pressure to report—or not to report—in a survey such as this one that their courses have a certain main message and include certain topics.
- It is also possible that students have picked up information from local media, friends, or health providers, and instead recalled learning about them as part of sex education.

TABLE 7 TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PRINCIPALS: MAIN MESSAGE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION

	STUDENTS by Grade of Most Recent Sex Ed Course				TEACHERS by Grade of Most Recent Sex Ed Course				PRINCIPALS by Main Grade of Sex Ed		
	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12	Total	7–8	9–12
Comprehensive: “Young people should wait to have sex, but if they don’t, they should use birth control and practice safer sex.”	80%	72%	85%	87%	61%	48%	69%	76%	58%	51%	63%
Abstinence-Only: “Young people should only have sex when they are married.”	18	26	13	10	33	46	27	17	34	40	29
n	1099	507	498	94	1000	423	410	167	298	122	176

WHAT IS TAUGHT IN SEX EDUCATION

The “Core Elements”

While classifying the main message emphasized in a sex education course as either “comprehensive” or “abstinence-only” provides a sense of what happens in the classroom, it does not always predict which specific topics are included or excluded. However, the study did find that across the nation, regardless of the main message of sex education, courses almost certainly will include certain fundamentals or “core elements.”

Students and teachers report that the most commonly covered topics in public secondary school sex education are: HIV/AIDS (97% and 98% respectively), other STDs (93% and 96% respectively), the basics of reproduction (90% and 88% respectively), and abstinence (84% and 97% respectively). Other subjects, such as birth control, (82% and 74% respectively) abortion (61% and 46% respectively), and homosexuality (41% and 44% respectively) are not mentioned as often as the four “core elements”. (See Table 8.)

TABLE 8 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS: OVERVIEW OF TOPICS TAUGHT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION

	STUDENTS by Grade of Most Recent Sex Ed Course				TEACHERS by Grade of Most Recent Sex Ed Course			
	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12
The “Core Elements”								
HIV/AIDS	97%	96%	97%	98%	98%	97%	99%	99%
Sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	93	87	97	96	96	92	99	98
The basics of reproduction	90	88	91	91	88	86	89	92
Abstinence	84	85	83	82	97	97	98	96
Other Topics								
Birth control	82	73	88	88	74	58	85	91
Abortion	61	51	68	74	46	31	53	64
Homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian, or bisexual	41	32	48	51	44	35	50	54
Safer Sex and Negotiation Skills								
How to deal with pressure to have sex	79	75	80	85	95	94	97	92
How to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	71	67	75	74	88	83	92	91
How to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs	69	61	74	84	86	78	91	93
How to use condoms	68	59	74	77	50	31	62	66
How to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	62	63	62	63	71	70	74	66
How to use and where to get other birth control	59	46	70	70	59	39	73	77
What to do if you or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	59	50	66	68	78	71	83	82
How to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs	58	49	63	76	71	58	80	79
n	1099	507	498	94	1000	423	410	167

Safer Sex and Negotiation Skills

While sex education courses do a good job teaching the basics or “core elements,” safer sex and negotiation skills are covered less consistently, even in the later grades. Students seem to gain fewer practical skills for actually handling issues regarding sex. For example, while most sex education classes make some reference to birth control, fewer include more detailed information such as where to get it and how to use it (59% of students and teachers say it is included). Similarly, while both students and teachers report that HIV/AIDS and other STDs are a mainstay of sex education today, where to go to get tested (69% and 86% respectively) or how to talk to a boyfriend or girlfriend about a STDs (58% and 71% respectively) are discussed less commonly across sex education courses.

Another important communication skill that is less frequently covered in sex education courses is how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues (62% of students and 71% of teachers say it is included). Similarly, key negotiation skills like how to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active (71% of students and 88% of teachers say it was included), are not likely to be as widely covered as the basics. In spite of an emphasis on abstinence in all types of sex education courses, at least one in five students (21%) say how to deal with pressure to have sex was not discussed in their most recent sex education course.

As with the main message of sex education, teachers’ and students’ responses also vary when it comes to whether specific topics are covered in sex education or not. Teachers are generally MORE LIKELY than students to report that a

subject was included. This is true for the topics of peer-pressure, the emotional consequences of sexuality, HIV and other STD testing, rape and sexual assault, and communication about sexual health issues. Although both students and teachers say all of these topics are more likely to be covered in later grades, the margin of difference remains relatively constant across grade levels. The notable exceptions to this trend are the subjects of condoms and other birth control, and abortion. Although both students and teachers say these topics are covered less frequently than many other topics, students are more likely than teachers to report that these subjects come up.

THE USE OF FEAR-BASED APPEALS

While the large majority of students (78%) say their sex education generally presents sex as a “normal, healthy part of life,” almost one in five (18%) say sex is presented as “something to fear and avoid.” Teachers are more likely than students to report that their courses teach that sex is normal and healthy (90% vs. 78% respectively), with only five percent reporting that sex is discussed in a negative manner. (See Table 9.)

Fear-based appeals are more common in the lower grades. Approximately one in five students say their 7th–8th (22%) and 9th–10th (17%) grade courses presented sex as something to avoid and fear, as compared to what half as many (9%) say about 11th–12th grade courses. Teachers are more likely to describe their sex education courses as presenting sex as a healthy and normal, regardless of grade. (See Table 9.)

TABLE 9 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS: “NORMAL AND HEALTHY” VS. FEAR-BASED MESSAGES?

	STUDENTS by Grade of Most Recent Sex Ed Course				TEACHERS by Grade of Most Recent Sex Ed Course			
	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12
Sex is a healthy and normal part of life	78%	73%	81%	87%	90%	88%	90%	94%
Sex is something to avoid and fear	18	22	17	9	5	4	7	5
No message	1	3	*	4	2	6	3	1
n	1099	507	498	94	1000	423	410	167

Issues that are often touchstones of negative or fear-based messages throughout society—such as abortion and homosexuality—are among the least covered in sex education. However, when students and teachers were asked how these topics, as well as masturbation, were handled when they did come up (whether as part of the curriculum or in response to a question), both groups agreed that they generally are discussed in a neutral manner, as “personal” or “normal” behavior. Nonetheless, a substantial minority say that these issues were presented as “immoral or wrong.” Teachers are more likely to say the topics did not come up at all. (See Table 10.)

DIFFERENCES IN TOPICS COVERED IN ABSTINENCE-ONLY AND COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION

As might be expected, the main difference between courses that emphasize a comprehensive or abstinence-only point of view is whether these include skills for those who are or might become sexually active. Courses that emphasize a comprehensive approach are more likely to—although not all do—cover safer sex and disease prevention skills such as how to get tested for HIV and other STDs, how to use condoms, and how to get and use birth control.

TABLE 10 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS: HOW SENSITIVE ISSUES ARE PRESENTED WHEN DISCUSSED

	STUDENTS by Grade of Most Recent Sex Ed Course				TEACHERS by Grade of Most Recent Sex Ed Course			
	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12
Abortion								
Abortion is immoral or wrong	20%	23%	18%	17%	9%	8%	9%	9%
Abortion is a personal matter	71	66	75	74	57	47	63	65
Subject mentioned, but no message	1	*	1	2	6	6	5	7
Not mentioned	6	7	4	6	26	36	20	17
Masturbation								
Masturbation is immoral or wrong	17	21	14	11	5	4	6	7
Masturbation is a normal behavior	66	61	69	71	56	51	61	57
Subject mentioned, but no message	1	1	1	*	5	5	5	3
Not mentioned	12	12	12	14	33	38	27	32
Homosexuality								
Homosexuality is immoral or wrong	18	19	18	16	5	4	6	3
Some people are homosexual and should not be discriminated against	69	66	71	71	59	49	65	69
Subject mentioned, but no message	1	1	1	1	5	7	4	3
Not mentioned	9	9	8	10	29	37	23	24
n	1099	507	498	94	1000	423	410	167

While students and teachers alike who term their sex education comprehensive do report more topics being included overall, it is less clear how “comprehensive” comprehensive sex education really is. For example, one third of students (37%) in courses with a comprehensive message say that how to use and where to get birth control was not included, and slightly more than one out of four students (28%) say that condom use was not discussed. Likewise, while sex educa-

tion courses that stress an abstinence-only message are less likely to include safer sex skills, some do. For example, almost half (48%) who describe the main message of their most recent sex education as abstinence-only report that information about “how to use and where to get birth control” other than condoms was included, and six in 10 (61%) say that condom use specifically was discussed. (See Table 11.)

TABLE 11 STUDENTS AND TEACHERS: OVERVIEW OF TOPICS TAUGHT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SEX EDUCATION BY MAIN MESSAGE

	STUDENTS by Main Message of Most Recent Sex Ed Course		TEACHERS by Main Message of Most Recent Sex Ed Course	
	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
Total: Main Message of Sex Ed	18%	80%	33%	61%
“Core Elements”				
HIV/AIDS	95	97	98	99
STDs other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	89	94	94	98
The basics of reproduction	89	90	83	92
Abstinence	85	84	98	99
Other Topics				
Birth control	72	84	56	85
Abortion	53	64	35	51
Homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	40	42	35	51
Safer Sex and Negotiation Skills				
How to deal with pressure to have sex	75	81	94	97
How to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	67	74	86	92
How to get tested for HIV/AIDS and and STDs	58	73	80	90
How to use condoms	61	72	27	64
How to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	64	65	74	72
How to use and where to get other birth control	48	63	36	74
How to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs	54	61	56	81
What to do if you or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	51	61	75	80
n	209	872	337	609

Courses that emphasize an abstinence-only message also tend to be shorter in duration than those that emphasize a comprehensive message: Only 14 percent of teachers of an abstinence-only curriculum reported that their course lasted a quarter to half a semester, as compared to one in four (24%) teachers of courses with a comprehensive message. (See Table 12.) Gender segregation is also more common in courses emphasizing an abstinence-only message (25%) than in those with a comprehensive message (15%). (See Table 13.)

TABLE 12 TEACHERS: DURATION OF SEX EDUCATION CLASSES BY MAIN MESSAGE

Teachers of 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	Most Recent Course	
		Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
One or several class periods	74%	80%	70%
Half a semester or quarter	13	11	14
Entire semester or quarter	6	2	8
A school year	2	1	2
n	1000	337	609

TABLE 13 TEACHERS: COED OR SINGLE-SEX CLASSES BY MAIN MESSAGE?

Teachers of 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	Most Recent Course	
		Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
Boys and Girls Together for All Sessions	81%	74%	85%
Taught Separately for Some or all Sessions	19	25	15
n	1000	337	609

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Most parents receive some type of notification about their child's attendance in sex education. One in four principals (25%) say parents have to give permission for their child to take sex education, and half (53%) say parents are notified about sex education but do not have to sign a permission slip. In about a fifth of schools (22%) parents are not notified and are not required to indicate permission. (See Table 14.)

Policies differ by grade level. Parents of younger students are more likely than parents of older students to be both notified and asked to give permission for their child to take sex education.

Schools employ means other than notification to involve parents in their child's sex education. A majority of principals (58%) say their schools give students sex education materials to take home and share with their parents. A sizable minority of principals (39%) report that their schools hold parent orientation sessions to describe the curriculum and answer questions about it. Many principals (38%) also say their schools invite parents to attend classes to teach them about sexuality and sexual health issues. Most principals (78%) report that their school employs at least one of these methods to keep parents informed. For younger grades, principals may use all three of these methods. (See Table 15.)

TABLE 14 PRINCIPALS: PARENTAL NOTIFICATION POLICIES
Principals of schools with 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Main Grade of Sex Ed		
	Total	7–8	9–12
Parents have to give permission for their child to take sex ed	25%	31%	20%
Parents are notified of sex ed, but do not have to sign a permission slip	53	52	53
Parents are not notified and do not have to sign a permission slip	22	17	25
n	300	124	176

TABLE 15 PRINCIPALS: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SEX EDUCATION
Principals of schools with 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Main Grade of Sex Ed		
	Total	7–8	9–12
Invite parents to attend orientation sessions about sex education	39%	52%	30%
Invite parents to attend classes that teach them about sexuality and sexual health issues	38	41	37
Send materials home to parents about sex education or involve parents in parent/child homework	58	70	49
n	300	124	176

SECTION TWO

MAKING THE GRADE:
A REPORT CARD
FOR SEX EDUCATION

**PARENTS WANT SEX EDUCATION TO
COVER MORE THAN WHAT STUDENTS SAY
IS TAUGHT TODAY.**

MAKING THE GRADE: A REPORT CARD FOR SEX EDUCATION

One way to understand more about the quality and content of sex education programs is to ask students, parents, and educators their opinions of the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in school today. All three groups indicate overall satisfaction with the way sex education is taught, but raise important issues about what may be absent from the curriculum.

Overall, sex education gets high marks in schools today from students, teachers, and principals. Students say that their teachers are well prepared to instruct their courses and understand students and the issues they face. Students gave their teachers mostly As and Bs when asked how well their teachers taught them about the basics of pregnancy and birth, waiting to have sex, talking with their parents about sex, use of birth control, and other skills. Principals and teachers also give sex education high marks for how well it helps prepare young people to handle the sexual issues they may face.

How do parents rate sex education? Though they are supportive of sex education, many parents acknowledge that they know little about what their children are being taught. When asked what they would want taught, parents report wanting sex education to cover MORE than many classes currently do. While parents support covering HIV/AIDS, STDs other than HIV/AIDS, and the basics of reproduction and abstinence—the core of most sex education curricula, they particularly want students to learn more about safer sex and negotiation skills than classes currently address. The greatest gap between what parents want covered and what is being covered is in teaching students about what to do about rape or sexual assault, how to talk to parents or a partner about sex and birth control, how to use and where to get birth control, and how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active. Nearly 80 percent of parents say abortion and homosexuality—two of the least frequently covered topics—should be included in sex education courses. They also say these topics should be discussed in a balanced manner.

Parents also believe that sex education merits additional classroom time. Currently, sex education courses typically only last for one to three class sessions. Sixty-five percent of parents want sex education to last substantially longer—half of a semester or more. Nearly half of teachers and principals agree that too little time is spent on sex education.

This section assesses sex education by examining the grades students and educators give to their classes as well as parents' views about what they want schools to be teaching their children when it comes to sexual health issues.

STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND EDUCATORS GRADE SEX EDUCATION

A solid majority of students who have taken secondary school sex education say overall their most recent course deserves a “good” or “excellent” grade, and their parents concur. Seven in 10 students (70%), and 58 percent of their parents, give their sex education course a mark of B or higher, including a third of students (32%) and 23 percent of parents who give a grade of A. Seventh and eighth grade sex education generally gets lower grades from students than sex education that comes later in school. (See Table 16.)

Students give somewhat higher grades for courses that last a half a semester or longer rather than just a few class periods. Boys are also somewhat more satisfied with sex education than their female classmates. (See Table 17.)

Principals' grades of their school's sex education are very much on par with the reports of students and parents: half give a solid B, and 21 percent give an A grade. (See Table 18.)

Parents also say they have confidence (27% “very confident” and 44% “somewhat confident”) that their children's sex education is presenting attitudes and values similar to their own.

TABLE 16 STUDENTS AND PARENTS: A REPORT CARD ON SEX EDUCATION
Students and Parents of students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	STUDENTS Most Recent Course				PARENTS Most Recent Course			
	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12
A) Excellent	32%	29%	33%	40%	23%	21%	22%	30%
B) Good	38	37	40	37	35	33	35	36
C) Average	21	22	21	20	27	29	27	20
D) Poor	4	6	3	3	7	8	6	7
F) Very poor	4	6	3	0	5	6	5	5
Don't know enough to answer	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	2	3	1
n	1099	507	498	94	861	390	385	86

**TABLE 17 STUDENTS: A REPORT CARD ON SEX EDUCATION BY GENDER
AND COURSE LENGTH**
Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	Gender		Most Recent Course	
	Total	Boys	Girls	
A) Excellent	32%	36%	28%	A Few Class Periods
B) Good	38	36	40	Semester or One Year
C) Average	21	20	23	
D) Poor	4	5	4	
F) Very poor	4	3	5	
n	1099	526	573	

**TABLE 18 PRINCIPALS: A REPORT CARD ON
SEX EDUCATION**
Principals of schools with 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Main Grade of Sex Ed		
	Total	7–8	9–12
A) Excellent	21%	27%	16%
B) Good	50	50	51
C) Average	26	22	30
D) Poor	2	1	3
F) Very poor	–	–	–
n	300	124	176

Students Grade their Sex Education Teachers

One reason 7th–12th grade sex education gets high marks may be that students like their teachers. Four in 10 say their most recent 7th–12th grade sex education teacher deserves an A (43%), and another third give their teacher a B (32%). A few students are critical and give a C or lower (25%). Students are particularly pleased with sex education teachers in upper grades, as slightly more than half of 11th–12th grade teachers were rated an A (54%). (See Table 19.)

TABLE 19 STUDENTS: A REPORT CARD ON SEX EDUCATION TEACHERS
Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	Total	Most Recent Course		
		7–8	9–10	11–12
A) Excellent	43%	42%	42%	54%
B) Good	32	29	35	28
C) Average	15	17	15	12
D) Poor	5	6	4	2
F) Very poor	5	5	5	1
n	1099	507	498	94

Moreover, students say sex education teachers understand them personally. Eight in 10 say their most recent teacher understood them very well (43%) or somewhat well (40%). Eleventh and twelfth grade students say their teachers do a better job understanding students (53%) than teachers of 7th–8th grade sex education (40%). (See Table 20.)

TABLE 20 STUDENTS: HOW WELL SEX EDUCATION TEACHERS UNDERSTAND STUDENTS
Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	Total	Most Recent Course		
		7–8	9–10	11–12
Very well	43%	40%	43%	53%
Somewhat well	40	41	41	35
Not too well	10	12	9	6
Not well at all	6	6	6	4
n	1099	507	498	94

HOW WELL SEX EDUCATION HAS PREPARED STUDENTS

Students were asked to grade how well their most recent sex education course prepared them for dealing with specific sexual health issues or situations. Approximately two-thirds of students give their sex education an A or a B in terms of teaching them the basic facts of reproduction, the importance of waiting to have sex and dealing with pressure to have sex, and the emotional consequences of sex. Fewer give high grades—although overall the marks are still good—for preparing them to know how to use or where to get birth control or how to talk about sexual issues with their parents or a boyfriend or girlfriend. Since these topics were less frequently covered in sex education, many students gave a D or failing grade reflecting that the topic was not included. (See Table 22.)

BOX 2**Who Teaches Sex Education?**

The typical secondary school sex education teacher has taught sex education for several years and has been trained formally to teach sex education. The majority (68%) of sex education teachers have taught the subject for more than five years, with almost half (46%) teaching sex education for more than 10 years and one-third (30%) teaching for more than 15 years. One-third (32%) of sex education teachers have taught fewer than five years. (See Table 21.) Most teachers (82%) have been trained to teach sex education, and most of these teachers (86%) feel they received enough training to teach sex education well. Most principals (76%) agree that teachers have received enough training to teach sex education well.

Sex education teachers teach other subjects along with sex education. A large majority (71%) report spending less than a quarter of their time teaching sex education in the last two years, and just seven percent are assigned more than half of their teaching load to sex education. The main subject(s) of teachers who teach sex education are: health (56%), physical education (14%), biological and physical sciences (10%) and home economics and family or consumer science (11%).

TABLE 21 TEACHERS: YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TEACHING SEX EDUCATION

Teachers of 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	7–8	9–10	11–12
1-5 years	32%	36%	29%	28%
6-10 years	22	22	24	17
11-15 years	16	15	16	15
16 years or more	30	27	30	39
Don't know	*	0	*	0
Refused	*	*	0	0
n	1000	423	410	167

TABLE 22 STUDENTS: STUDENTS GRADE HOW WELL SEX EDUCATION HAS PREPARED THEM TO...
Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	Grade Given			
	A	B	C	D
Know the basics of pregnancy and birth	31%	38%	22%	8%
Wait to have sex	40	26	16	17
Deal with pressure to have sex	33	28	23	15
Deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	30	30	21	19
Talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	22	26	23	27
Talk with a partner about birth control and STDs	21	26	24	27
Know how to use and where to get other birth control	24	27	21	27
Know how to use condoms	33	24	16	26

n=1099

WHAT DO PARENTS WANT?

Parents report wanting sex education in secondary schools to cover as much as, and often much more than, what students say is actually taught today. Not only do parents strongly support covering the “core elements” already taught in most sex education—HIV/AIDS (98%), STDS other than HIV/AIDS (98%), the basics of reproduction (90%), and abstinence (97%)—they are as likely, or even more likely, to want sex education to cover topics that are not taught uniformly. Parents want students to be taught many of the safer sex and negotiation skills. These include how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues (97%), what to do if you or a friend has been raped or assaulted (97%), how to deal with pressure to have sex (94%), and how to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active (94%). (See Table 23.)

Parents also don’t want sex education to shy away from more sensitive topics—such as abortion (79% say should be discussed) and homosexuality (76%). They also specify overwhelmingly—74 percent—that when these topics do come up they should be “discussed in a way that provides a fair and balanced presentation of the facts and different views in society.”

Most parents (65%) say that if the topic of when young people should begin having sex is brought up, sex education should teach that “young people should wait to have sex, but if they don’t they should use birth control and practice safer sex;” one third (33%) say that if the topic comes up, abstinence as the only option until marriage should be presented.

TABLE 23 STUDENTS AND PARENTS: WHAT PARENTS WANT SEX EDUCATION TO TEACH

	What Students Say is Covered	What Parents Want Taught ¹
“Core Elements”		
HIV/AIDS	97	98
STDs other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	93	98
The basics of pregnancy and birth	90	90
Waiting to have sex	84	97
Other Topics		
Birth control	82	90
Abortion	61	79
Homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	41	76
Safer Sex and Negotiation Skills		
How to deal with pressure to have sex	79	94
How to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	71	94
How to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs	69	92
How to use condoms	68	85
How to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	62	97
How to use and where to get other birth control	59	84
What to do if you or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	59	97
How to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs	58	88
n	1099	1501

1 “Very” and “somewhat” responses are used here.

When do Parents Think Sex Education Should Start?

Virtually all parents, teachers, principals and students want some form of sex education taught in secondary school, and all overwhelmingly support teaching high school students a broad range of topics including birth control and safer sex. For middle and junior high school students, support is more divided; about half or more of students, parents, teachers, and principals favor teaching all aspects of sex education.

Between 30 and 40 percent say only reproductive “basics” should be taught in 7th and 8th grades. A majority of students, parents, teachers, and principals agree that some form of sex education—generally just the basics, like “how babies are made”—should start by 5th grade. However, more than half of teachers, nearly half of all principals, and a third of parents say it should start even earlier. (See Table 24.)

TABLE 24 STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS: WHAT SHOULD SEX EDUCATION TEACH?

	Students	Parents	Teachers	Principals
At Grades 9-12				
All aspects of sex ed including birth control and safer sex	88%	82	92	81
Only the basic information like how babies are made	9	12	6	12
Shouldn't be taught at all	2	5	*	1
At Grades 7-8				
All aspects of sex ed including birth control and safer sex	49	56	65	52
Only the basic information like how babies are made	45	34	32	40
Shouldn't be taught at all	5	9	1	1
At Grades 5-6				
All aspects of sex ed including birth control and safer sex	9	17	13	13
Only the basic information like how babies are made	58	51	77	68
Shouldn't be taught at all	32	31	7	10
At Grades 1-4				
All aspects of sex ed including birth control and safer sex	2	2	3	1
Only the basic information like how babies are made	19	29	57	42
Shouldn't be taught at all	78	68	36	46
n	1501	1501	1000	300

... And How do they Want the Classes to Look?

Two in three parents say that sex education should have more classroom time. While sex education courses last only one or several class periods according to most teachers (74%), only one in four (26%) parents say that this is how long classes should last. The majority (65%) of parents say that sex education should last at least a half of a semester or quarter or more. In fact, four in 10 (38%) parents say that sex education should last an entire semester or even a full year. (See Table 25.)

TABLE 25 PARENTS: HOW LONG SEX EDUCATION SHOULD LAST?

	Parents
One class period or several class periods or special sessions	26%
Half a semester or quarter	27
An entire semester or quarter	21
A school year	17
Other	6
n	1501

Many teachers and principals agree with parents. About half of teachers (47%) and four in 10 principals (42%) say that too little time is spent in sex education. The remaining teachers (50%) and principals (55%) say that enough time is spent on sex education. (See Table 26.)

TABLE 26 TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS: IS ENOUGH TIME DEVOTED TO SEX EDUCATION?

	Teachers	Principals
Too little time	47%	42%
Enough time	50	55
Too much time	1	3
n	1000	300

Contrary to current practice where most sex education courses are coed (81% according to teachers), many parents would prefer that sex education sessions be taught in gender-segregated classes. Just over half of parents (54%) say there is a benefit in having separate sex education courses for boys and girls, while four in 10 (40%) say it would be best if boys and girls were taught together. (See Table 27.)

TABLE 27 PARENTS: SHOULD SEX EDUCATION BE COED OR NOT?

	Parents
Best taught to boys and girls together	40%
Best to have separate classes for boys and girls	54
n	1501

SECTION THREE

THE REAL WORLD:
DOES SEX EDUCATION MATTER?

**STUDENTS WHO HAVE HAD SEX EDUCATION
KNOW MORE AND ARE BETTER PREPARED
THAN THOSE WHO HAVE NOT.**

THE REAL WORLD: DOES SEX EDUCATION MATTER?

Students say they need more information about sexual and reproductive health issues than they are getting in school. More or close to half of those who have had sex education say they need to know more about what to do if a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted (55%); testing for HIV/AIDS (51%); HIV/AIDS (47%) and other STDs (50%); the emotional pressures and consequences of sex (46%); and how to talk with a boyfriend or girlfriend about birth control and STDs (46%).

Even when a topic is discussed in sex education—including those most commonly covered such as HIV/AIDS—many students still say they need to know more, indicating that at least some classes may not be exploring issues as thoroughly as students would like. For example, almost half of students in a sex education course that included HIV/AIDS in the curriculum (46%) want still more information. Similarly, among students whose most recent sex education mentioned birth control, a full 40 percent say they still don't know enough.

Students are equally likely to report wanting information across all topics, regardless of the approach of their sex education. Students whose most recent class taught a more comprehensive message were as likely as those in abstinence-only classes to want more information about waiting to have sex (36% comprehensive vs. 37% abstinence-only). Similarly, about a third of students in both types of sex education report wanting more information about condoms and other methods of birth control, including how to use it and where to get it.

As part of the survey, students are questioned about their base knowledge about pregnancy and disease prevention. In spite of the limitations indicated by students' information needs, students who have had sex education are more knowledgeable than those who have not. Ten knowledge questions were compiled to form a summary index of how knowledgeable students are about a range of reproductive and sexual health issues from risk of pregnancy to how STDs are spread. Among those who have had sex education, one-third (30%) have a high level of reproductive health knowledge, answering nine or all 10 of the questions correctly; only half as many (15%) of those who have not had sex education have a high level of knowledge.

Students' sense of self-preparedness also provides insight into how well equipped they perceive themselves to be to handle various sexual health decisions and situations. Again, students who have had some form of sex education during their secondary school years do feel better able to deal with the pressures to have sex—including deciding to wait—as well as how to communicate about sexual issues and knowing where to get and how to use birth control. However, even among those who have taken sex education, most say they are not fully prepared for the various decisions or circumstances they may find themselves facing.

There were no differences in students' overall sense of preparedness by the approach of their most recent sex education; however, there were noteworthy differences in students' level of knowledge about select sexual and reproductive health issues. Students in comprehensive sex education overall knew more about pregnancy and disease prevention than those whose most recent sex education took an abstinence-only approach.

This section assesses how relevant sex education is in terms of what students themselves say they need to know. It also looks at how well prepared students themselves say they are to handle a range of sexual decisions and situations—from dealing with pressure to have sex to knowing where to get and how to use birth control if they needed to—and their base level of knowledge.

STUDENTS WANT MORE INFORMATION FROM SEX EDUCATION

Even students who have had sex education are hungry for more information about both the basics and more complex skills. Three subjects top students' most wanted list: what to do if they or a friend are raped or sexually assaulted (55%), how to get tested for STDs (51%), and information about STDs (50%). Roughly one in two American public school students who have had sex education seek more information on these three subjects. Nearly as many say they want more information on HIV/AIDS (47%), one of the most often covered topics in sex education today. (See Table 28.)

TABLE 28 STUDENTS: INFORMATION NEEDS BY WHETHER HAD SEX ED OR NOT
Students in 7th–12th grade.

	CURRENT GRADE					
	Total 7–12		7–8		9–12	
	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12
“Core Elements”						
HIV/AIDS	47%	58%	55%	53%	45%	65%
STDs other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	50	64	56	61	48	69
The basics of pregnancy and birth	22	32	25	31	22	34
Waiting to have sex	36	50	42	47	34	55
Other Topics						
Birth control	41	49	47	42	39	58
Abortion	39	43	47	39	37	49
Homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	27	24	32	23	26	26
Safer Sex and Negotiation Skills						
How to deal with pressure to have sex	41	52	49	53	39	51
How to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	46	56	53	51	44	64
How to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs	51	61	61	58	48	65
How to use condoms	30	40	37	38	28	43
How to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	43	54	47	52	41	59
How to use and where to get other birth control	40	46	47	43	38	52
What to do if you or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	55	62	62	61	52	64
How to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs	46	53	52	54	44	52
n	1099	372	280	230	819	142

While sex education may not always go into as much depth as students would like, having had sex education does make a difference. Students who have not had sex education during secondary school want to know more about all issues than those who have. (See Table 28.)

TABLE 29 STUDENTS: INFORMATION NEEDS BY WHETHER TOPIC COVERED IN SEX EDUCATION OR NOT
Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	Topic Covered		Want More Info	Topic Not Covered		Want More Info
	Total	(n)		Total	(n)	
“Core Elements”						
HIV/AIDS	97%	(1060)	46%	3%	(37)	61%
STDs other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	93	(1021)	49	7	(73)	61
The basics of pregnancy and birth	90	(988)	21	9	(96)	35
Waiting to have sex	84	(919)	35	15	(171)	40
Other Topics						
Birth control	82	(893)	40	16	(179)	50
Abortion	61	(674)	37	36	(396)	43
Homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	41	(456)	27	56	(619)	28
Safer Sex and Negotiation Skills						
How to deal with pressure to have sex	79	(867)	39	19	(207)	51
How to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	71	(794)	44	26	(278)	52
How to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs	69	(767)	48	29	(309)	60
How to use condoms	68	(756)	27	31	(334)	38
How to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	62	(703)	41	35	(372)	48
How to use and where to get other birth control	59	(656)	36	39	(426)	47
What to do if you or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	59	(645)	51	39	(430)	63
How to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs	58	(645)	43	40	(436)	50
n	1099			1099		

As might be expected, students in classes where a particular topic is not covered are generally more likely, as compared with those in classes that do, to want more information on that issue. However, just covering a topic is not enough. Many students say even if their most recent sex education included an issue that was not always enough: between one in four to as many as half still wanted to know more.

For example, 46 percent of those in classes that covered HIV/AIDS want more information, as do 40 percent of those in classes that covered birth control and 39 percent of those that discussed dealing with pressures to have sex. The implication is that sex education may not always cover issues as thoroughly as students want them to. (See Table 29.)

WHAT STUDENTS KNOW (AND DON'T) ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH

To gauge reproductive health knowledge, students were asked a series of questions about the basics of reproduction, birth control, emergency contraception, and HIV and other STDs. Students who had sex education in secondary school are more knowledgeable than those who did not. (See Table 30.)

There is a startling gap between those who have and have not had sex education in secondary school regarding student knowledge about the risk of pregnancy. A sizeable minority

who have not had sex education—a quarter of 7th–8th graders (25%) and 15 percent of 9th–12th graders—say they think that a teenage girl can not conceive the first time she has sex. Notably fewer students who have had sex education share this misperception (18% and 6% respectively)². Students who have had sex education are also better informed about free or low-cost birth control services for teens. Eight in 10 9th–12th graders who have had sex education (80%) know that teens qualify for free or low-cost birth control services, while fewer who have not had sex education (73%) know this. (See Table 30.)

TABLE 30 STUDENTS: PREGNANCY AND HIV/STD PREVENTION KNOWLEDGE BY WHETHER HAD SEX EDUCATION OR NOT
Students 7th–12th grade: correct answers given.

	CURRENT GRADE					
	Total 7–12		7–8		9–12	
	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12
Pregnancy Prevention						
A teenage girl can get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse	91%	79%	82%	75%	94%	85%
Young people can get birth control pills without parental permission	51	38	33	34	56	45
All teens qualify for free or low cost birth control services at their local family planning clinic	75	63	59	56	80	73
A doctor's prescription is needed to buy birth control pills	61	56	56	58	62	53
Emergency birth control pills are taken after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy	42	34	32	27	45	46
Disease Prevention						
Young people can get HIV by sharing needles when using drugs	98	97	97	95	99	99
Young people can get HIV by having sexual intercourse	98	94	94	92	99	99
Person with an STD can spread the STD to a sexual partner even if the person has no symptoms	86	71	75	69	89	75
Sexually active teens should get tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS every year, even if they don't have symptoms	87	79	84	77	88	83
Drug stores will sell condoms to young people under 18 years of age	73	58	50	48	80	74
n	1099	372	280	230	819	142

² Students giving incorrect responses as well as “don't know” responses are considered misinformed.

BOX 3**A Pregnancy and HIV/STD Prevention Knowledge Index**

The knowledge index is a sum scale ranging from 0 to 10 based on the number of correct answers given by students to 10 statements. Students who gave 9 or 10 correct answers are presented as rating “high” on the knowledge index, 7 to 8 correct answers were rated as “medium,” and 0 to 6 were rated as having low reproductive knowledge. The scale was based on the following 10 questions which ask students to choose the correct statement:

- Young people under 18 years of age need their parent’s permission to get birth control pills—or young people can get birth control pills without their parent’s permission
- A doctor’s prescriptions is needed to buy birth control pills—or birth control pills can be bought without a prescription at drug stores.
- Drug stores will sell condoms to young people under 18 years of age—or young people CANNOT buy condoms without their parent’s permission
- Emergency contraceptive pills are taken BEFORE unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy—or emergency contraceptive pills are taken AFTER unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy.
- A teenage girl can get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse—or a teenage girl cannot get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse.
- All teens qualify for FREE or low-cost birth control services at their local family planning clinic,—or only teens that are 18 years or older qualify for these FREE or low-cost services.
- Sexually active teens should not get tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS every year, unless they have symptoms—or sexually active teens should get tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS every year, even if they don’t have any symptoms.
- A person with an STD can spread the STD to a sexual partner EVEN if the person has no symptoms—or STDs can ONLY be spread to a sexual partner if the person has clear or visible symptoms.
- Yes or no: Do you think people can get HIV, the virus that causes AIDS by sharing needles when using drugs?
- Yes or no: Do you think people can get HIV, the virus that causes AIDS by having sexual intercourse?

A Pregnancy and HIV/STD Prevention Knowledge Index

Taken together, the ten knowledge questions form a summary measure of how knowledgeable students are about reproductive health (See Box 3). Among those who have had sex education in secondary school, one-third (30%) have a high level of reproductive health knowledge, answering nine or all

10 of the questions correctly; half as many (15%) of those who have not had sex education have a high level of knowledge. Conversely, 42 percent of students who have not had sex education have a low level of knowledge—more than double the one out of five who have had sex education (21%). (See Table 31.)

TABLE 31 STUDENTS: PREGNANCY AND HIV/STD PREVENTION KNOWLEDGE INDEX BY WHETHER HAD SEX EDUCATION OR NOT
Students in 7th–12th grade.

	CURRENT GRADE					
	Total 7–12		7–8		9–12	
	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12
High	30%	15%	11%	7%	35%	29%
Medium	49	43	47	42	50	44
Low	21	42	42	51	15	27
n	1099	372	280	230	819	142

HOW WELL PREPARED STUDENTS FEEL GENERALLY TO HANDLE SEXUAL DECISIONS AND SITUATIONS

Among students who have had sex ed, a majority consider themselves to be “very prepared” to wait to have sex until older or married (61%), and to understand the basics of reproduction (60%). Six in ten students who have had sex ed (59%) say they are “very prepared” to know how to use condoms if they decide to have sex. (See Table 32.)

While six in ten 7th–12th graders who have had sex education during secondary school (59%) say they are “very prepared” to deal with the pressure to have sex, just four in ten students who have not had sex education (42%) feel as capable. Students who have had sex education are also more likely than those who have not to say they feel “very prepared” to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of sexual activity (45% vs. 34%) and to talk more openly about sexual issues with their parents (42% vs. 36%) and boy or girlfriends (50% vs. 34%). (See Table 32.)

TABLE 32 STUDENTS: SENSE OF PREPAREDNESS BY WHETHER HAD SEX EDUCATION OR NOT
Students in 7th–12th grade.

SEX EDUCATION TOPICS	CURRENT GRADE					
	Total 7–12		7–8		9–12	
	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12
Understand the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth						
Feel very prepared	60%	39%	45%	32%	65%	50%
Feel somewhat prepared	34	42	46	47	31	36
Wait to have sex until older or married						
Feel very prepared	61	55	69	58	58	51
Feel somewhat prepared	28	26	22	28	29	24
Deal with pressure to have sex						
Feel very prepared	59	42	46	34	63	54
Feel somewhat prepared	32	38	36	40	30	35
Deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active						
Feel very prepared	45	34	37	29	47	42
Feel somewhat prepared	40	35	40	34	40	36
Talk with your parents about sex and relationship issues						
Feel very prepared	42	36	41	36	42	35
Feel somewhat prepared	35	33	35	35	35	30
Talk with a girlfriend/boyfriend or partner about birth control and STDs						
Feel very prepared	50	34	31	28	56	43
Feel somewhat prepared	35	32	42	29	33	36
Know how to use condoms, if you decided to have sex						
Feel very prepared	59	43	31	34	67	57
Feel somewhat prepared	28	28	42	29	24	25
Know how to use and where to get other birth control, if you decided to have sex						
Feel very prepared	47	27	28	18	52	40
Feel somewhat prepared	33	29	39	28	31	30
n	1099	372	280	230	819	142

BOX 4**A Preparedness Index**

The index of preparedness is an average sum scale ranging from 1 to 4 based on the four-point scale where “very prepared” is a “1” and “not at all prepared” (as well as “don’t know” or “refused”) a “4.” Students expressing the highest level of preparedness are assigned a “4” and those the lowest, a “1”. For descriptive purposes, the index will be presented with 3 levels—high preparedness (mean value 1 thru 1.49), medium preparedness (1.5 thru 2.49) and low preparedness (2.5 thru 4). The index is based on how prepared the student said they were to the following eight questions:

- Understand the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth
- Wait to have sex until older or married
- Deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active
- Deal with pressure to have sex
- Talk with a partner about birth control and STDs
- Talk with your parents about sex and relationship issues
- Know how to use condoms, if you decided to have sex
- Know how to use and where to get other birth control, if you decided to have sex

A Preparedness Index

Students were asked a series of questions to assess their sense of preparedness to handle a range of sexual decisions and situations (See Box 4). Whether or not a student had had sex education during secondary school made a notable difference: four in 10 students who have had sex education in secondary school report an overall high level of preparedness (39%), as compared to 20 percent of those who have not had sex education who fall into this category. Conversely, students who have not had sex education are more likely to rate low on a general preparedness scale (26%) than those who have had sex education (9%). (See Table 33.)

A majority of 7th–12th grade students who have taken sex education fall into a mid-range level of self-preparedness when all the measures are factored together in an overall “preparedness index.” Students report feeling more prepared as they get older—just 24 percent of those who have had sex education in 7th–8th grade are among the most prepared group. Even so, only four in 10 high school students (43%) who have had sex education in secondary school rate in the highest level of preparedness. (See Table 33.)

TABLE 33 STUDENTS: PREPAREDNESS INDEX BY WHETHER HAD SEX EDUCATION OR NOT
Students in 7th–12th grade.

	CURRENT GRADE					
	Total 7–12		7–8		9–12	
	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–8	Had Sex Ed in 7–12	Have Not Had Sex Ed in 7–12
High preparedness	39%	20%	24%	16%	43%	28%
Medium preparedness	53	53	58	51	51	57
Low preparedness	9	26	19	34	5	15
n	1099	372	280	230	819	142

DIFFERENCES IN INFORMATION NEEDS, LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE AND SENSE OF PREPAREDNESS AMONG STUDENTS BY MAIN MESSAGE OF SEX EDUCATION

INFORMATION NEEDS

While having sex education or not is a factor in students' information needs, the approach of sex education does not make much difference in this regard. That is, overall, students in abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education classes were equally likely to report wanting information across a range of topics. What matters more is whether

a particular issue was included or not in a class versus what the main message is. Students in both types of sex education say they need more information about waiting to have sex (37% of those in abstinence-only and 36% of those in comprehensive) and want to know more about how to use condoms (30% for each group). (See Table 34.)

TABLE 34 STUDENTS: INFORMATION NEEDS BY MAIN MESSAGE OF SEX ED
Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

“Core Elements”	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
HIV/AIDS	50%	46%
STDs other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	51	49
The basics of pregnancy and birth	23	22
Waiting to have sex	37	36
Other Topics		
Birth control	44	40
Abortion	38	40
Homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	30	27
Safer Sex and Negotiation Skills		
How to deal with pressure to have sex	40	42
How to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	44	46
How to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs	52	51
How to use condoms	30	30
How to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	40	43
How to use and where to get other birth control	39	41
What to do if you or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	52	56
How to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs	45	46
n	209	872

KNOWLEDGE

The approach to sex education does matter when it comes to students' knowledge about reproductive and sexual health. Students who most recently took a course with an abstinence-only approach are less knowledgeable than students whose last course was comprehensive across most topic areas: thirty-three percent of students in comprehensive sex education fall into the high knowledge category as compared to 19 percent of those in abstinence-only classes. The only exception came in students' knowledge about HIV—the large majority of students, regardless of the approach of their sex education course, correctly answered questions related to this issue. (See Tables 35 and 36.)

TABLE 35 STUDENTS: PREGNANCY AND HIV/STD PREVENTION KNOWLEDGE INDEX BY MAIN MESSAGE OF SEX EDUCATION
Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
High	19%	33%
Medium	44	51
Low	38	17
n	209	872

TABLE 36 STUDENTS: PREGNANCY AND HIV/STD PREVENTION KNOWLEDGE BY MAIN MESSAGE OF SEX EDUCATION
Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

Pregnancy Prevention

A teenage girl can get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse

Young people can get birth control pills without parental permission

All teens qualify for free or low-cost birth control services at their local family planning clinic

A doctor's prescription is needed to buy birth control pills

Emergency birth control pills are taken after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy

Disease Prevention

Young people can get HIV by sharing needles when using drugs

Young people can get HIV by having sexual intercourse

Person with an STD can spread the STD to a sexual partner even if the person has no symptoms

Sexually active teens should get tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS every year, even if they don't have symptoms

Drug stores will sell condoms to young people under 18 years of age

n

	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
A teenage girl can get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse	82%	94%
Young people can get birth control pills without parental permission	41	53
All teens qualify for free or low-cost birth control services at their local family planning clinic	67	77
A doctor's prescription is needed to buy birth control pills	58	62
Emergency birth control pills are taken after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy	38	43
Young people can get HIV by sharing needles when using drugs	95	99
Young people can get HIV by having sexual intercourse	96	98
Person with an STD can spread the STD to a sexual partner even if the person has no symptoms	75	88
Sexually active teens should get tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS every year, even if they don't have symptoms	85	88
Drug stores will sell condoms to young people under 18 years of age	57	77
n	209	872

PREPAREDNESS

Students whose most recent sex education courses emphasized an abstinence-only message were more likely than those who said their sex education was comprehensive to report feeling “very prepared” to wait to have sex until older or married (70% vs. 59%), the principal goal of abstinence-only programs. Students in comprehensive sex education, on the other hand, were more likely to report feeling “very prepared” to use condoms if they decided to have sex (61% vs. 52%). In most other areas, students in both types of courses say they feel similarly prepared. (See Tables 37 and 38.)

**TABLE 37 STUDENTS: PREPAREDNESS INDEX BY
MAIN MESSAGE OF SEX EDUCATION**
Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
High Preparedness	37%	40%
Medium Preparedness	49	54
Low Preparedness	13	7
n	209	872

TABLE 38 STUDENTS: SENSE OF PREPAREDNESS BY MAIN MESSAGE OF SEX EDUCATION

Students who had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

SEX EDUCATION TOPICS	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
Understand the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth		
Feel very prepared	58%	62%
Feel somewhat prepared	36	33
Wait to have sex until older or married		
Feel very prepared	70	59
Feel somewhat prepared	20	29
Deal with pressure to have sex		
Feel very prepared	60	59
Feel somewhat prepared	30	32
Deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active		
Feel very prepared	46	45
Feel somewhat prepared	35	42
Talk with your parents about sex and relationship issues		
Feel very prepared	44	41
Feel somewhat prepared	27	37
Talk with a girlfriend/boyfriend or partner about birth control and STDs		
Feel very prepared	48	51
Feel somewhat prepared	29	37
Know how to use condoms, if you decided to have sex		
Feel very prepared	52	61
Feel somewhat prepared	32	27
Know how to use and where to get other birth control, if you decided to have sex		
Feel very prepared	41	48
Feel somewhat prepared	35	33
n	209	872

SECTION FOUR

THE POLITICS OF
SEX EDUCATION:
WHO DECIDES WHAT
GETS TAUGHT?

**MOST SCHOOLS ARE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW
STATE OR LOCAL GUIDELINES FOR SEX
EDUCATION.**

THE POLITICS OF SEX EDUCATION: WHO DECIDES WHAT GETS TAUGHT?

Today most Americans agree that some form of sex education should be included in a student's academic career. Yet, which topics are taught—and what messages emphasized—continue to be debated in local communities and state legislatures across the country. According to this study, as many as one in two public secondary school principals (48%) report that their school considered some aspect of sex education during the last few years, including what topics are covered and whether to teach sex education at all. However, most (66%) say their school's curriculum remained unchanged in the end.

So, who ultimately decides what is taught in sex education today? Principals report that the most influential players in sex education are their local governments and school districts: nearly nine in ten say they have at least "some" influence. Fewer principals say state government plays a significant role in determining what is taught in their schools: twenty-seven percent cite a "great deal" and 43 percent cite "some" influence. However, most principals do acknowledge that their schools are required to follow local and/or state guidelines for sex education: forty-three percent report having "strict guidelines," while another 42 percent say they have "some guidelines." (Just 13 percent say the curriculum is set "pretty much" by the school.) In fact, as of July 2000, 18 states had legislation requiring that sex education be taught in school, and 34 states plus the District of Columbia mandate that schools provide STD/HIV education.³ State policies vary on what topics and messages—if any—are specified as needing to be taught.

For the most part, policies governing sex education in schools are made at the state and local level. Federal government involvement in sex education has been relatively limited. The Congress has provided funding for abstinence-only education since 1981 under the Adolescent and Family Life Act. More recently, through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Act (TANF) passed as part of welfare reform, more than \$250 million additional federal dollars were made to states over five years to promote abstinence-unless-married messages through community-based as well as in-school programs. At the time of the survey, which was conducted at the latter part of the first year the new funding was available for use, it appeared to have little impact on the sex education curriculum of most public secondary schools. Just 8 percent of principals reported a "great deal" of influence; 23 percent "some" as a result of the TANF funds.

Although many schools have guidelines they must follow, most principals report that teachers, along with school boards, superintendents, and other school administrators are also "very involved" in determining the sex education curriculum in many schools. Approximately one in four principals report that parents are "very involved" in setting the curriculum.

This section examines roles of different groups—including school boards and local, state, and federal government—in setting sex education curriculum in schools as well as the extent of discussion or debate in local communities in recent years over sex education.

WHO INFLUENCES WHAT IS TAUGHT?

A majority (57%) of public secondary school principals say their school district and/or local government has a "great deal of influence" in determining what topics are covered as part of their school's sex education; an additional 31 percent say these groups have "some influence." Fewer principals say state and federal government is influential in setting sex education curriculum (27% "great deal," 43% "some"). (See Table 38.)

The federal government's abstinence-only funds, provided under the 1996 welfare reform law, appear not to have had a large effect on curricula; half of principals (55%) say these funds have had little or no influence at all. At the time of the survey, which was conducted at the end of the first school year that funding was available, just eight percent of principals reported a "great deal" of influence, and 23 percent "some," as a result of the new abstinence funding. Principals of high schools were more likely to say the funds had little or no influence (61%) than those heading up middle and junior high schools (44%) were. Interestingly, 15 percent of principals say they do not know how much the federal government's abstinence-only funds had influenced their school's curriculum. (See Table 38.)

³ Kaiser Family Foundation Issue Update, Sex Education in the U.S.: Politics and Policy, August 2000.

TABLE 38 PRINCIPALS: GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT BY GRADE AND APPROACH OF SEX EDUCATION
Principals of schools with 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS Grades Taught ⁴		Main Message of Sex Ed	
		7–8	9–12	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
Amount of influence of local government or school district					
Great deal	57%	64%	54%	57%	55%
Some	31	29	32	37	30
Not too much	7	6	7	3	10
No influence at all	4	1	8	2	6
Don't know	—	—	—	—	—
Amount of influence of state government					
Great deal	27	25	33	26	27
Some	43	39	44	48	42
Not too much	17	23	10	14	19
No influence at all	8	7	11	10	9
Don't know	4	6	2	3	4
Amount of influence of federal government's abstinence-only funds					
Great deal	8	12	4	12	6
Some	23	23	22	25	24
Not too much	19	12	22	12	21
No influence at all	36	32	39	30	38
Don't know	15	21	12	21	10
n	300	111	138	107	165

Local and federal government influence is only slightly more likely in schools that teach sex education with an abstinence-only message than a comprehensive one: thirty percent of principals heading up schools in which comprehensive sex education is taught say the federal funds have had at least some influence on their curriculum, as do 37 percent of principals in schools that stress abstinence-only messages. Principals of schools that teach an abstinence-only message are also somewhat more likely to say local governments or school districts have a great deal or some influence (94%) on their sex education curriculum as compared with principals of schools teaching comprehensive sex education (85%). (See Table 38.)

⁴ In this section principals were classified as 7–8 if their school taught either 7th or 8th grade and no grades 9–12. Many principals of 7–8 grade also reported teaching 6th grade. Principals were classified as 9–12 if their school taught only grades nine or above.

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Most sex education teachers report that what they cover and how they teach it is due at least in part to curriculum guidelines. About three in 10 sex education teachers (29%) report having to follow “strict guidelines” about what they can teach, and another 48 report having “some guidelines.” One in four (23%) say what they teach is “pretty much” up to them to decide. (See Table 39.)

Principals are more likely than teachers to report that there are strict guidelines (43% compared to 29% of teachers), and that their teachers use materials provided by the school district (74% vs. 54%, respectively). Sex education in middle and junior high school appears to be subject to more controls than sex education in high school. A third of teachers (35%) say they must follow strict guidelines for teaching 7th–8th grade classes, compared with 24 percent of those teaching 9th–12th grade sex education. Teachers are also more likely to be required to use district-approved materials rather than their own materials in middle and junior high schools.

Teachers and principals whose sex education courses emphasize an abstinence-only message are more likely to report oversight than those who teach primarily a comprehensive message. Forty-one percent of abstinence-only teachers say they are required to follow “strict guidelines,” and two-thirds (65%) are required to use district-supplied materials. By contrast, 24 percent who teach a comprehensive message are required to follow “strict guidelines,” and half (50%) must use materials supplied by their school district. School principals say their teachers need to follow stricter guidelines for sex education that emphasizes an abstinence-only message (52%) than a comprehensive message (34%). (See Table 40.)

TABLE 39 TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS: GUIDELINES AND MATERIALS

	TEACHERS By Grade of Most Recent Sex Ed Course			PRINCIPALS By Grades Taught		
	Total	7–8	9–12	Total	7–8	9–12
Guidelines						
Few guidelines	23%	16%	28%	13%	6%	14%
Some guidelines	48	48	48	42	37	44
Strict guidelines	29	35	24	43	56	39
Materials						
Standard materials	54	61	50	74	86	70
Teacher’s materials	44	38	48	24	11	28
n	1000	423	577	300	111	138

TABLE 40 TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS: GUIDELINES AND MATERIALS

	TEACHERS		PRINCIPALS	
	By Main Message of Sex Ed		By Main Message of Sex Ed	
Guidelines	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive	Abstinence-Only	Comprehensive
Few guidelines	15%	26%	12%	13%
Some guidelines	41	52	35	48
Strict guidelines	41	24	52	37
Materials				
Standard materials	65	50	78	71
Teacher's materials	32	50	18	29
n	337	609	107	165

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A wide variety of community members are involved in sex education curriculum development. Principals say that teachers are by far the most involved; nine in 10 principals (88%) say that teachers are at least somewhat involved in determining what topics sex education will cover. The school board and administrators and parents do not fall far behind. Seven in 10 principals say that the school board and administrators (72%) and parents (68%) are involved in curriculum development. Several other community members are at least somewhat involved. Students (39%), religious leaders (46%) and local politicians (20%) all exercise some influence on what topics are discussed in sex education. (See Table 41.)

TABLE 41 PRINCIPALS: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
Principals of schools with 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	PRINCIPALS By Grades Taught	
		7–8	9–12
Teachers			
Very involved	57%	54%	57%
Somewhat involved	31	36	30
School Board, Administrators or Superintendent			
Very involved	39	47	34
Somewhat involved	33	29	36
Parents			
Very involved	23	31	18
Somewhat involved	45	42	47
Community leaders			
Very involved	15	19	12
Somewhat involved	36	38	36
Religious leaders			
Very involved	11	12	14
Somewhat involved	35	32	37
Students			
Very involved	8	6	8
Somewhat involved	31	25	31
Local politicians			
Very involved	6	9	5
Somewhat involved	14	13	15
n	300	111	138

EXTENT AND IMPACT OF PUBLIC DEBATE ON SEX EDUCATION

As many as half of principals (48%) report discussions or debates about some aspect of sex education over the past few years at local school boards, PTA meetings, or other public forums. These discussions or debates revolve more around how sex education should be approached rather than whether it should be taught at all.

The most commonly reported topic of discussion—by 31 percent of principals—is whether to teach abstinence-only sex education. This issue was just as likely to have been raised in schools where the current sex education is termed comprehensive as it was in those where it is abstinence-only. A quarter of principals (26%) say that whether or not to teach specific topics also has been the subject of debate. Only 17 percent of principals say discussions took place over whether to teach sex education at all in the past two years. (See Table 42.)

TABLE 42 PRINCIPALS: DISCUSSIONS OR DEBATES IN PAST TWO YEARS
Principals of schools with 7th–12th grade sex ed.

	Total	PRINCIPALS By Grades Taught	
		7–8	9–12
Teaching abstinence-only	31%	26%	34%
Topics to teach in sex ed, such as birth control or sexual orientation	26	27	26
How parents give permission for children to take or be taken out of sex ed	26	27	25
Whether or not to teach sex ed at all	17	17	22
Whether sex ed should be coed or not	16	20	14
n	300	111	138

The tenor of these public discussions is most often described by principals as “calm” with 39 percent saying they were in fact “very calm”; another 37 percent say “somewhat” so. Just 15 percent say the debates regarding sex education that occurred in their schools became at all heated. Principals in schools that teach primarily an abstinence-only message are as likely to describe the discussions as calm as principals from schools that teach a comprehensive message.

These discussions or debates do not often result in curriculum changes. When they do, there seems to be little net change in sex education from a national perspective. Over half of principals (58%) say changes were not made to their school's sex education curriculum due to public discussion, yet a significant minority of one-third (34%) do report changes. When the curriculum is altered, principals report that the most common changes are in the coverage of certain subjects. Two in ten principals say that the changes resulting from public debate were that subjects once covered are now not covered (19%) or that subjects once not covered are now included (17%). Fourteen percent say that the curriculum was changed to an abstinence-only format; while another 12 percent report the reverse, saying that the school's curriculum was modified from abstinence-only to more comprehensive.

While public debates are not causing an overwhelming change in sex education, principals report that when they do not teach certain topics, school policy and community pressure are among the top reasons. The most common topics NOT taught in sex education—those not taught in one out of two courses—are abortion, homosexuality, and how to use condoms. Principals report that these topics are not taught primarily because of school policy (14–18% of principals), followed by pressure from the community (10–11% of principals). For most other topics that principals report not teaching, the reasons are generally evenly divided among actual or perceived pressure from the community, school policy, not enough time, or that the topic will be covered later or has already been covered.

APPENDIX ONE

**58 KNOWLEDGE, PREPAREDNESS AND INFORMATION NEEDS:
7TH–12TH GRADE STUDENTS**

KNOWLEDGE, PREPAREDNESS AND INFORMATION NEEDS: 7TH–12TH GRADE STUDENTS

This appendix provides a snapshot of teen life today—outside of the context of whether or not they have had sex education, or the approach of that sex education—and looks at young people's overall knowledge, self-preparedness and information needs with regard to sexual and reproductive health. This analysis looks across all students in these areas by grade/age, gender and sexual experience. These additional dimensions enhance the picture of sex education in America today by shedding light on the population of young people it serves.

KNOWLEDGE

Students in 7–12th grade are very knowledgeable about basic information on HIV/AIDS, but they are misinformed in several other areas of sexual health. Almost all know that people can get HIV by sharing needles when using drugs (98%) or having sexual intercourse (97%). Many students know that a teenage girl can get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse (88%), and that sexually active teens should get tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS every year, even if they don't have symptoms (85%). In other areas, students do not fare as well. (See Table 43)

Half of all students (49%) do not know that they can get birth control pills without their parents' permission, and half (52%) do not know that emergency contraceptive pills are taken after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. More than one out of four incorrectly say that young people need parents' permission to buy condoms (27%), and more than one out of three (35%) incorrectly say that birth control pills can be bought without a prescription at drug stores.

Girls are more likely than boys to have greater knowledge about sexual health issues. Girls are more likely than boys to know that young people can get birth control pills without parental permission (53% vs. 42%), but that they do need a doctor's prescription (64% vs. 55%). And girls are more likely to know that young people can buy condoms without parental permission (72% vs. 67%), and that a person with an STD can spread it to a sexual partner even if they have no symptoms (85% vs. 79%). Girls are also more likely to know that emergency contraception is taken after and not before sex to prevent pregnancy (43% vs. 37%).

TABLE 43 STUDENTS: PREGNANCY AND HIV/STD PREVENTION KNOWLEDGE, BY GRADE, GENDER AND SEXUAL EXPERIENCE
Students in 7th-12th Grade: Percent Answering Correctly

	Total	Current Grade			Gender		Sexual Experience	
		7–8	9–10	11–12	Boys	Girls	Had Sex	Not Had Sex
Pregnancy Prevention								
A teenage girl can get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse	88%	79%	90%	95%	85%	91%	94%	86%
Youth under 18 can get birth control without parental permission	48	34	51	58	42	53	60	44
All teens qualify for free or low cost birth control services	72	57	78	80	71	73	84	68
A doctor's prescription is needed to buy birth control pills	60	57	56	65	55	64	62	59
Emergency contraceptive pills are taken after unprotected sex	40	29	42	48	37	43	51	36
HIV/STD Prevention								
A person can get HIV by sharing needles	98	96	98	100	98	98	99	98
A person can get HIV by having sexual intercourse	97	93	99	99	96	98	99	96
Person with an STD can spread it to a sexual partner even if the person has no symptoms	82	73	85	88	79	85	86	81
Sexually active teens should be tested every year, even if they don't have symptoms	85	80	85	90	84	86	89	84
Drug stores will sell condoms to young people	69	49	75	84	67	72	84	64
n	1501	525	507	469	727	774	365	1136

Sexually active students are generally more knowledgeable about these sexual health issues than those who are not sexually active. This could be because sexually active teens have had to confront these issues in their own lives and may have looked for the information, or found out, from friends, parents, school or other resources. While sexually active teens are more knowledgeable, it is concerning that a large percent of these teens still do not know basic facts. More than one-third of sexually active teens do not know that they can get birth control pills without their parents' permission (37%), and four in ten (44%) incorrectly say that emergency contraception is taken before sexual intercourse to prevent pregnancy. Also, more than one in ten sexually active teens incorrectly say that young people need parental permission before buying condoms (14%) or that STDs can only be spread to a sexual partner if the person has clear or visible symptoms (12%). Given that one in four sexually experienced teens gets an STD each year, it is a concern that as many as one in ten do not know that they can buy condoms on their own.

PREPAREDNESS

A majority of students rate themselves as very prepared to wait to have sex until older or married (60%), and about half say they are very prepared to understand the basics of reproduction (55%), and how to use condoms if they decided to have sex (55%). While younger students are more likely to say they feel prepared to wait to have sex than older students, they are also less likely than older students to say they feel prepared on other sexuality issues. Students in 7th–8th grade say that the area where they feel least prepared is how to use and where to get birth control, if they decide to have sex (44% said they felt not too prepared or not prepared at all in this area). (See Table 44)

As might be expected, older students are more likely to say they feel very prepared to confront sexual issues. This may be because older students are more likely to have peers who are having sex, are having sex themselves, or they may be developmentally more prepared to confront sexual situations. Older students are also more likely than younger students to have sex ed classes that cover a broader range of topics. The majority of students in 11th–12th grades (68%) say they feel very prepared to understand the basics of pregnancy and birth, compared to 38% of 7th–8th graders. Older students are also more likely to say they feel very prepared to deal with pressure to have sex (66% vs. 40%) and to know how to use condoms if they decided to have sex (71% vs. 33%).

Boys and girls generally rate themselves as similarly prepared except in three areas. Boys are more likely than girls to say they are very prepared to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active (45% vs. 39%), and how to use condoms if they decided to have sex (62% vs. 48%). Interestingly, girls are more likely than boys to know that young people can buy condoms without parental permission, yet boys are more likely to say they would feel prepared in how to use them. Girls are more likely to say they are very prepared to wait to have sex until older or married (68% vs. 52%).

Students who have had sexual intercourse are more likely than those who have not, to rate themselves as prepared to confront all of these sexual issues, other than waiting to have sex until older or married.

INFORMATION NEEDS

Students in 7–12th grade American public schools want more information about a wide variety of sexuality education topics. At the top of students' lists is wanting more information on what to do if they or a friend is raped or sexually assaulted (56%), followed closely by wanting more information on STDs other than HIV/AIDS (53%), and how to get tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS (53%). Regardless of gender or grade, these are the top three areas where students want more information. Overall, one out of four to more than half of students in every grade want more information on every topic. (See Table 45)

The issues that students are less likely to want more information on are homosexuality (26%) and how to use condoms (32%), yet still a significant proportion of students—more than one out of every four—does want more information on these areas.

For nearly every topic, younger students are more likely than older to say they want more information. One area where younger students are much more likely than older students to want more information is how to deal with the pressure to have sex (51% of 7th–8th grade students compared to 35% of 11th–12th grade students).

Boys and girls both want more information in every area, and girls are more likely to want more information than boys. In particular, girls are much more likely than boys to want more information on birth control (51% vs. 34%) what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted (65% vs. 48%), and how to deal with pressure to have sex (51% vs. 36%).

Students who have had sexual intercourse generally want as much information on sexuality education topics as those who have not. Since sexually active young people are at risk for contracting HIV/STDs or unintended pregnancy, this interest in more information may be a cause for concern—they are having sex but do not know the basics of safer sex; or a reason to applaud—they know that sexual situations can be confusing and want to find out more to stay safe. As many as one out of four students who have had sex want more information on the basics of reproduction (24%) and how to use condoms (28%), and almost half (46%) want more information on birth control and how to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs (46%).

TABLE 44 STUDENTS: SENSE OF PREPAREDNESS BY GRADE, GENDER AND SEXUAL EXPERIENCE
Students in 7th-12th Grade

	Total	Current Grade			Gender		Sexual Experience	
		7–8	9–10	11–12	Boys	Girls	Had Sex	Not Had Sex
The basics of pregnancy and birth								
Feel very prepared	55%	38%	57%	68%	54%	55%	61%	53%
Feel somewhat prepared	36	45	35	29	35	37	33	36
Waiting to have sex								
Feel very prepared	60	64	58	57	52	68	39	66
Feel somewhat prepared	27	24	28	29	33	22	31	26
How to deal with pressure to have sex								
Feel very prepared	54	40	56	66	53	56	66	51
Feel somewhat prepared	33	38	35	27	35	32	25	36
How to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active								
Feel very prepared	42	33	43	49	45	39	52	39
Feel somewhat prepared	39	37	40	39	38	40	36	40
How to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues								
Feel very prepared	40	38	37	45	39	41	44	39
Feel somewhat prepared	35	34	36	34	35	34	30	36
How to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs								
Feel very prepared	46	30	48	60	47	46	63	41
Feel somewhat prepared	34	35	37	31	34	34	28	37
How to use and where to get other birth control								
Feel very prepared	41	23	43	57	41	42	63	34
Feel somewhat prepared	32	33	33	30	33	31	23	35
How to use condoms								
Feel very prepared	55	33	60	71	62	48	80	47
Feel somewhat prepared	28	36	27	21	26	30	15	32
n	1501	525	507	469	727	774	365	1136

TABLE 45 STUDENTS: INFORMATION NEEDS BY GRADE AND GENDER
Students in 7th-12th Grade: Percent Who Want More Information

	Total	Current Grade			Gender		Sexual Experience	
		7-8	9-10	11-12	Boys	Girls	Had Sex	Not Had Sex
“Core elements”								
HIV/AIDS	49%	54%	50%	44%	45%	53%	49%	49%
STDs other than HIV/AIDS	53	59	54	47	50	56	54	53
The basics of reproduction	25	28	27	20	21	29	24	25
Abstinence	39	44	43	32	35	44	32	42
Other topics								
Birth control	43	45	46	38	34	51	46	42
Abortion	40	43	41	37	34	46	40	40
Homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	26	27	28	24	21	32	28	26
Safer Sex and Negotiation Skills								
How to deal with pressure to have sex	44	51	46	35	36	51	38	46
How to deal with emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	48	52	50	42	43	53	48	48
How to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	46	49	49	38	39	52	44	46
How to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs	48	53	50	40	44	51	46	48
“How to” skills								
How to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs	53	60	53	48	47	60	52	54
How to use and where to get other birth control	42	45	44	37	35	49	39	43
How to use condoms	32	37	34	26	29	36	28	34
What to do if you or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	56	62	58	50	48	65	54	57
n	1501	525	507	469	727	774	365	1136

APPENDIX TWO

**64 QUESTIONNAIRE:
STUDENTS**

**76 QUESTIONNAIRE:
PARENTS**

**88 QUESTIONNAIRE:
TEACHERS**

**102 QUESTIONNAIRE:
PRINCIPALS**

QUESTIONNAIRE: STUDENTS

STUDENTS

n=1,501 7th–12th grade students in public middle, junior and senior high schools

Margins of Error: plus or minus 3 percentage points

Dates of Interviewing: February 2 through May 23, 1999

Conducted by: Princeton Survey Research Associates

METHODOLOGY

The Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of Parents of Secondary School Students is a nationally-representative telephone survey of 1,501 7th–12th grade public school students. The questionnaire was designed by staff at the Kaiser Family Foundation and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA). The interviews were conducted by telephone by PSRA between March 15 and May 13, 1999. The final response rate was 54 percent.

1. First, what grade are you in?

17% 7th
16% 8th
16% 9th
18% 10th
18% 11th
15% 12th
0% Don't know
0% Refused
n=1501

2. We are interested in knowing whether you have ever had sex education or family life classes or sessions in school. These are any classes or talks in school that discuss relationships, how babies are made, abstinence, AIDS, pregnancy prevention, and the like. These topics may have been taught in a separate sex education course, as part of another course, like health or science, or as independent lessons in the school auditorium or gym.

90% Yes
10% No
0% Don't know
0% Refused
n=1501

3. Will you be taking sex ed or family life later in this school year or not, or aren't you sure?

Based on those who have not had sex ed.

13% Yes
46% No
41% Don't know
0% Refused
n=168

4. There are many reasons why some students have not had sex ed in school. Have you not had sex ed because sex ed wasn't offered in your school, because your parents did not give permission for you to take sex ed, because sex ed is offered but not for (INSERT CURRENT GRADE FROM QUESTION 1) graders, or is there some other reason?

Based on those who have not had sex ed and will not have sex ed this school year.

- 53% No sex ed offered in school
- 3% Parents didn't give permission
- 15% Sex ed is offered, but not for current grade level of student
- 1% Needed to choose between sex ed and another class
- 10% Other
- 18% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=148

5. For the next few questions, I'd like you to think only about the last time you had sex ed in school. What grade were you in the last time you had sex ed in school?

Based on those who have had sex ed.

- 0% Kindergarten or younger
 - * 1st
 - * 2nd
 - * 3rd
 - * 4th
- 4% 5th
- 10% 6th
- 17% 7th
- 19% 8th
- 24% 9th
- 15% 10th
- 5% 11th
- 3% 12th
- 2% Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=1333

6. Are you still taking sex ed right now?

Based on those whose most recent sex ed is the same as their current grade.

- 25% Yes
- 75% No
 - * Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=411

7. Would you say you are near the beginning, middle or end of sex ed?

Based on those who are currently taking sex ed.

- 20% Beginning
- 24% Middle
- 53% End
- 3% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=106

8. Before (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade, in which other grades, if any, did you have sex ed in school?

Based on those who are currently at the beginning of sex ed. Multiple Responses Accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

- 0% Kindergarten or younger
- 0% 1st
- 0% 2nd
- 0% 3rd
- 8% 4th
- 30% 5th
- 43% 6th
- 17% 7th
- 27% 8th
- 13% 9th
- 14% 10th
- 0% 11th
- 21% None
- 0% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=26

9. How long was your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed? Did it last for...?

Based on those who have had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.¹ Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

FIRST MENTION ONLY.

- 45% One class period or several class periods or special sessions
- 29% Half a semester or quarter
- 20% An entire semester or quarter
- 3% A school year
- 2% Other
- 1% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=1099

10. Were boys and girls together in all sessions, or were there any sessions in which boys and girls were taught (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed separately?

Based on those who have had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

- 80% Boys and girls together for all sessions
- 20% Taught separately for some sessions (or all sessions)
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1099

¹ Based on those who have had sex ed includes those who can remember the grade of their most recent sex ed and those who are currently taking sex ed and are at the middle or end of the class/course.

11. Did your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed include information about (INSERT STATEMENT)?**... What about (INSERT ITEM)?**

Based on those who have had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	90%	9%	1%	0%
b. birth control, that is methods of preventing pregnancy	82	16	2	0
c. HIV/AIDS	97	3	1	0
d. sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	93	7	1	0
e. how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	71	26	2	*
f. waiting to have sex until you are older or married	84	15	1	0
g. how to deal with pressure to have sex	79	19	2	*
h. how to talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and sexually transmitted diseases, that is STDs	58	40	2	0
i. how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	62	35	2	0
j. how to use condoms	68	31	1	0
k. how to use and where to get other birth control	60	39	2	0
l. how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, that is STDs	70	29	2	0
m. abortion	61	36	3	0
n. homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	41	56	2	0
o. what to do if you or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	59	39	2	*

n=1099

12. Thinking about the topics you covered in (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed, do you think you discussed these topics at the right time for you, or do you think you should have discussed these topics in an earlier or later grade?

Based on those who have had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

65% Right time

25% Should have discussed in earlier grade

8% Should have discussed in later grade

* Shouldn't have learned about at all (VOLUNTEERED)

2% Don't know

* Refused

n=1099

13. You just said that your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) sex ed didn't cover some topics.

Were all of these topics, most of these topics, some of these topics, or none of these topics covered in an EARLIER grade?

Or didn't you have sex ed in an earlier grade?

Based on those who have had sex ed in 7th–12th grade and said one or more topics was not included in question 11.

7% All

19% Most

38% Some

16% None

18% Didn't have sex ed in earlier grade

3% Don't know

0% Refused

n=905

14. For each of the following, please tell me if you would like to have more information about this or not. (First/Next)...

(INSERT STATEMENT)? RESPONSES WERE COMBINED WITH ANSWERS GIVEN BY THOSE WHO HAVE HAD SEX ED AND PRESENTED AT QUESTION 23

15. With A meaning excellent and F meaning very poor, what grade would you give your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed in terms of how well it prepared you to (INSERT STATEMENT)?...How about (INSERT STATEMENT)?

Based on those who have had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	A Exc.	B Good	C Avg.	D Poor	F Very Poor	Don't Know	Ref.
a. understand the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	31%	38%	22%	5%	3%	1%	0%
b. wait to have sex until older or married	40	26	16	9	8	1	0
c. deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	30	29	21	10	8	1	0
d. deal with the pressure to have sex	33	28	23	7	8	1	*
e. talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs	21	26	24	14	13	2	*
f. talk with your parents about sex and relationship issues	22	26	23	13	15	1	*
g. know how to use condoms, if you decided to have sex	33	24	16	10	16	1	0
h. know how to use and where to get other birth control, if you decided to have sex	24	22	21	12	15	1	0
n=1099							

16. Now thinking about your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed teacher, how well would you say your teacher understood what students were thinking and feeling about sex? Very well, somewhat well, not too well or not well at all?

Based on those who have had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

- 43% Very well
- 40% Somewhat well
- 10% Not too well
- 6% Not well at all
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1099

17. Which of these best describes what you were mainly taught in your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed? You can answer just by saying A or B. Would you say you were mainly taught that...

Based on those who have had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

- 18% A) Young people should ONLY have sex when they are married, OR
- 80% B) Young people should wait to have sex, but if they DON'T they should use birth control and practice safer sex
- * Topic covered, but no message about when to have sex (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- * Other
- * Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=1099

18. A. Which one of these statements best describes what you were mainly taught in (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed?

Based on those who have had sex ed.

- 20% A) Abortion is immoral or wrong, OR
- 71% B) Abortion is a personal matter
- 1% Topic discussed, but no message about abortion (VOLUNTEERED)
- 6% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Other
- 1% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=1099

B. Which one of these statements best describes what you were mainly taught in your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed?

Based on those who have had sex ed.

- 17% A) Masturbation is immoral or wrong, OR
- 66% B) Masturbation is a normal behavior
- 1% Topic discussed, but no message about masturbation (VOLUNTEERED)
- 12% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- * Other
- 4% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1099

C. Which one of these statements best describes what you were mainly taught in your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed?

Based on those who have had sex ed.

- 18% A) Homosexuality is immoral or wrong, OR
- 69% B) Some people are homosexual and should not be discriminated against
- 1% Topic discussed, but no message about homosexuality (VOLUNTEERED)
- 9% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- * Other
- 3% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1099

19. I have one last question about what was mainly taught in your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed? Was it mainly taught that...

Based on those who have had sex ed.

- 18% A) Sex is something to avoid and fear, OR
- 78% B) Sex is a healthy and normal part of life
- 1% Topic discussed, but no message about sex (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Other
- 2% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=1099

20. I'd like you to grade your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed. With A meaning excellent and F meaning very poor, how would you grade your (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed overall?

Based on those who have had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

- 32% A) Excellent
- 38% B) Good
- 21% C) Average
- 4% D) Poor
- 4% F) Very Poor
- * Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=1099

21. Again, with A meaning excellent and F meaning very poor, how would you grade your

(INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade sex ed teacher?

Based on those who have had sex ed.

43% A) Excellent

32% B) Good

15% C) Average

5% D) Poor

5% F) Very Poor

* Don't know

* Refused

n=1099

22. Before (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 5 OR 8) grade, in which other grades, if any, did you have sex ed in school?

Based on those who have had sex ed and did not already say that they didn't have sex ed in a previous grade (in question 13 or 8). Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

* Kindergarten or younger

1% 1st

1% 2nd

2% 3rd

10% 4th

31% 5th

35% 6th

26% 7th

22% 8th

7% 9th

2% 10th

1% 11th

* 12th

16% None

2% Don't know

* Refused

n=1047

(First/Next)...(INSERT STATEMENT)

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	25%	74%	1%	*
b. birth control	43	57	*	*
c. HIV/AIDS	49	50	1	*
d. sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS	53	47	*	*
e. how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	48	52	*	*
f. waiting to have sex until you are older or married	39	60	*	*
g. how to deal with pressure to have sex	44	56	1	*
h. how to talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs	48	52	1	*
i. how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	46	54	*	*
j. how to use condoms	32	67	1	*
k. how to use and where to get other birth control	42	58	*	*
l. how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs	54	46	1	*
m. abortion	40	59	1	*
n. homosexuality and sexual orientation	26	73	1	*
o. what to do if you or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	56	43	*	*

	Very	Some What	Not Very	Not At All	Don't Know	Ref.
a. understand the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	55%	36%	5%	3%	1%	*
b. wait to have sex until older or married	60	27	6	6	1	*
c. deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	42	39	12	5	2	*
d. deal with pressure to have sex	54	33	7	4	1	*
e. talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs	46	34	11	7	1	*
f. talk with your parents about sex and relationship issues	40	35	15	9	1	*
g. know how to use condoms, if you decided to have sex	55	28	9	7	1	*
h. know how to use and where to get other birth control, if you decided to have sex	41	32	15	10	2	*

n=1501

25. Thinking about sex ed in school, which of the following best describes what you think should be taught to (INSERT STATEMENT).

A, ALL aspects of sex ed including information about birth control and safer sex; B, ONLY the basic information like how babies are made; or C, do you think sex ed shouldn't be taught at all to (INSERT STATEMENT)? And what do you think should be taught to (INSERT STATEMENT)?

Student in grades				
9-12	7-8	5-6	1-4	
88%	49%	9%	2%	A) All aspects of sex ed including birth control and safer sex
9%	45%	58%	19%	B) Only the basic information like how babies are made
2%	5%	32%	78%	C) Shouldn't be taught at all
1%	1%	1%	1%	Don't know
*	*	*	*	Refused
n=1501				

26. Some people believe that whether or not young people are sexually active, they should be given information about birth control and safer sex. Others believe that giving young people this information only encourages them to have sex. Do you think that they should be given information in school, or do you think that information only encourages them to have sex?

85% They should be given information in school
 13% Information only encourages them to have sex
 2% Don't know
 * Refused
 n=1501

27. Have you ever talked with your parents because of something you learned in sex ed at school?

Based on those who have had sex ed.

54% Yes
 45% No
 1% Don't know
 * Refused
 n=1303

28. Who started the conversation? Did you or one of your parents bring up the subject?

Based on those who spoke with parent about something learned in sex ed.

68% Student brought it up
 25% Parent(s) brought it up
 3% Someone else/Other (VOLUNTEERED)
 4% Don't know
 * Refused
 n=702

29. I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. For each pair, please tell me whether statement A or statement B is more accurate. Here's the (FIRST/NEXT) pair (INSERT STATEMENT).

A. A) Young people under 18 years of age need their parent's permission to get birth control pills, or
 B) Young people can get birth control pills without their parent's permission.

49% Statement A
 48% Statement B
 4% Don't know
 * Refused
 n=1501

B. A) A doctor's prescription is needed to buy birth control pills, or
 B) Birth control pills can be bought without a prescription at drug stores.

60% Statement A
 35% Statement B
 5% Don't know
 * Refused
 n=1501

- C.** A) Drug stores will sell condoms to young people under 18 years of age, OR
B) Young people CANNOT buy condoms without their parent's permission.

69% Statement A
27% Statement B
4% Don't know
* Refused
n=1501

- D.** A) Emergency contraceptive pills are taken BEFORE unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy, OR
B) Emergency contraceptive pills are taken AFTER unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy.

52% Statement A
40% Statement B
8% Don't know
* Refused
n=1501

**30. Again, for each pair of statements, please tell me whether statement A or B is more accurate.
The (FIRST/NEXT) pair is (INSERT STATEMENT).**

- A.** A) A teenage girl can get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse, OR
B) A teenage girl can not get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse.

88% Statement A
10% Statement B
2% Don't know
* Refused
n=1501

- B.** A) All teens qualify for FREE or low-cost birth control services at their local family planning clinic, OR
B) Only teens that are 18 years or older qualify for these FREE or low-cost services.

72% Statement A
22% Statement B
6% Don't know
* Refused
n=1501

- C.** A) Sexually active teens should not get tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS every year, unless they have symptoms, OR
B) Sexually active teens should get tested for STDs and HIV/AIDS every year, even if they don't have any symptoms.

14% Statement A
85% Statement B
2% Don't know
* Refused
n=1501

- D.** A) A person with an STD can spread the STD to a sexual partner EVEN if the person has no symptoms, OR
B) STDs can ONLY be spread to a sexual partner if the person has clear or visible symptoms.

82% Statement A
15% Statement B
3% Don't know
* Refused
n=1501

31. Do you think people can get HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, by (INSERT STATEMENT), or not?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. sharing needles when using drugs	98%	1%	1%	*
b. having sexual intercourse	97%	2%	1%	*
n=1501				

32. Please tell me whether the following statement is true or false. Having a sexually transmitted disease like Gonorrhea or Herpes makes it easier for a person to become infected with HIV/AIDS.

58% True
 37% False
 5% Don't know
 * Refused
 n=1501

33. Have you ever been ALONE with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner in an intimate situation? This is a situation where there was the POSSIBILITY of kissing or something more, even if nothing ACTUALLY happened?

67% Yes
 32% No
 * Don't know
 1% Refused
 n=1501

34. Have you ever (INSERT STATEMENT)?

A. Kissed a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner?

65% Yes
 35% No
 0% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=1501

B. Been with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner when you were touching or fondling each other in a sexual way?

45% Yes
 53% No
 * Don't know
 2% Refused
 n=1501

C. Had oral sex? (READ IF NECESSARY: that is when a person puts their mouth on another person's genitals)

23% Yes
 77% No
 * Don't know
 * Refused
 n=1501

D. Had sexual intercourse?

24% Yes
 75% No
 * Don't know
 1% Refused
 n=1501

35. When you have sexual intercourse, how often do you use birth control to try to prevent pregnancy?**Do you use birth control all of the time, most of the time, only sometimes or not at all?**

Based on those who have had sexual intercourse.

- 60% All of the time
- 11% Most of the time
- 8% Only sometimes
- 19% Not at all
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=365

36. How often do you use condoms? Do you use condoms all of the time, most of the time, only sometimes or not at all?

Based on those who have had sexual intercourse or oral sex.

- 57% All of the time
- 14% Most of the time
- 10% Only sometimes
- 19% Not at all
- 1% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=444

37. Have you ever been tested for HIV/AIDS?

- 12% Yes
- 86% No
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1501

38. Have you ever been tested for other sexually transmitted diseases besides HIV/AIDS, such as Gonorrhea?

- 12% Yes
- 86% No
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1501

39. Have you made a conscious decision not to have sex until some later time, like when you are older or married?

- 72% Yes
- 26% No
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1501

DEMOGRAPHICS**D1. Student's Sex:**

- 50% Male
- 50% Female
- n=1501

D1a. What is your age?

- 21% 11–13
- 49% 14–16
- 30% 17–19
- 0% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1501

QUESTIONNAIRE: PARENTS

PARENTS

n=1,501 parents of middle, junior, or senior public high school students

Margins of Error: plus or minus 3 percentage points

Dates of Interviewing: February 2 through May 23, 1999

Conducted by: Princeton Survey Research Associates

METHODOLOGY

The Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of Parents of Secondary School Students is a nationally-representative telephone survey of 1,501 parents of 7th–12th grade public school students. The questionnaire was designed by staff at the Kaiser Family Foundation and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA). The interviews were conducted by telephone by PSRA between March 15 and May 13, 1999. The final response rate was 54 percent.

- 1. First, how satisfied are you with the education your (INSERT CURRENT GRADE LEVEL) grade child is getting in school this year?**
Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with your child's education?

39% Very satisfied
 46% Somewhat satisfied
 10% Somewhat dissatisfied
 4% Very dissatisfied
 2% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=1501

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE REGARDING YOUR [INSERT AGE] YEAR OLD [MALE/FEMALE] CHILD.

- 2. We are interested in knowing whether your child has ever had sex education or family life classes or sessions in school. These are any classes or talks in school that discuss relationships, how babies are made, abstinence, AIDS, pregnancy prevention, and the like. These topics may have been taught in a separate sex education course, as part of another course, like health or science, or as independent lessons in the school auditorium or gym.**

79% Yes
 8% No
 13% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=1501

- 3. Will your child be taking sex education or family life later in this school year or not, or aren't you sure?**

Based on those whose child has not had sex ed.

12% Yes
 49% No
 39% Not sure
 0% Refused
 n=133

4. There are many reasons why some children have not had sex education in school. Has your child not had sex education in school because it isn't offered by the school, because you didn't give your child permission to participate, because sex education is offered but not for (INSERT CURRENT GRADE OF CHILD) graders, or is there some other reason?

Based on those whose child has not had and will not have sex ed this school year.

- 44% No sex education offered by school
- 8% Parents didn't give permission
- 21% Sex education is offered but not at child's grade level
- 2% Need to choose between sex education and another class (VOLUNTEERED)
- 2% Other
- 23% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=117

5. What was the main reason you decided not to have your child participate in sex education? Was it because you don't think schools should teach sex education, because you don't agree with the content of the material being taught, because you thought your child was too young to be taught the material, or is there some other reason?

Based on those who did not give permission for their child to take sex ed.

- 15% Don't think schools should teach
- 43% Didn't agree with the content
- 21% Thought child was too young
- 21% Other
- 0% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=10

6. For the next few questions, I'd like for you to think only about the MOST RECENT sex education your child had in school. What grade was your child in for (his/her) most recent sex education?

Based on those whose child has had sex ed.

- 0% Kindergarten or younger
 - * 1st
- 0% 2nd
 - * 3rd
 - * 4th
- 3% 5th
- 6% 6th
- 14% 7th
- 18% 8th
- 18% 9th
- 16% 10th
- 6% 11th
- 2% 12th
- 16% Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=1180

7. Is your (INSERT CURRENT GRADE OF CHILD) child still taking sex education right now?

Based on those whose child's most recent sex ed is the same as their current grade.

- 30% Yes
- 57% No
- 13% Not sure/Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=400

8. Would you say (he/she) is near the beginning, middle or end of sex education?

Based on those whose child is currently taking sex ed.

- 16% Beginning
- 25% Middle
- 51% End
- 8% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=115

9. Before (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX) grade sex education, in which other grades, if any, did your child have sex education in school?

Based on those whose child is currently at the beginning of sex ed. Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

- 0% Kindergarten or younger
- 0% 1st
- 0% 2nd
- 0% 3rd
- 0% 4th
- 5% 5th
- 24% 6th
- 17% 7th
- 19% 8th
- 0% 9th
- 0% 10th
- 0% 11th
- 32% None
- 20% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=27

10. Did the school send you a description of the (INSERT MOST RECENT GRADE OF SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9) grade sex education curriculum telling you what topics would be covered?

Based on those whose child has had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.²

- 49% Yes
- 45% No
- 7% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=861

11. Some schools offer a session for parents in which they describe the sex education curriculum and answer parents' questions. Did your child's school offer such a session?

Based on those whose child has had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

- 29% Yes
- 61% No
- 10% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=861

12. Did you or another adult family member attend the session, or not?

Based on those who said the school offered a session for parents.

- 27% Yes
- 73% No
- * Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=247

² Based on those whose child has had sex ed includes parents who can remember the grade of their child's most recent sex ed and those whose child is taking sex ed and at the middle or end of the class/course.

13. I'd like to ask you about some of the topics that may have been covered in your child's (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9) grade sex education. For each topic please tell me whether or not it was covered. Just let me know if you aren't sure or can't remember. Did your child's (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9) grade sex education include information about (INSERT STATEMENT)? How about...(INSERT STATEMENT)?

Based on those whose child has had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	Yes	No	Aren't Sure/ Don't Know	Ref.
a. the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	78%	3%	18%	*
b. birth control, that is methods of preventing pregnancy	66	7	27	*
c. HIV/AIDS	83	3	14	*
d. sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	73	4	24	*
e. how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	43	14	43	*
f. waiting to have sex until older or married	60	9	31	*
g. how to deal with pressure to have sex	57	9	34	*
h. how to talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs	28	19	54	*
i. how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	46	12	42	*
j. how to use condoms	47	16	37	*
k. how to use and where to get other birth control	39	15	46	*
l. how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs	42	15	43	*
m. abortion	35	19	46	*
n. homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	26	21	53	*
o. what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	30	18	52	*
	n=861			

14. With A meaning excellent and F meaning very poor, what grade would you give your child's (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9) grade sex education in terms of how well it prepared (him/her) to (INSERT STATEMENT)? What about preparing (him/her) to...(INSERT STATEMENT)?

Based on those whose child has had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

	A Exc.	B Good	C Avg.	D Poor	F Very Poor	Don't Know	Ref.
a. understand the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	29%	36%	21%	4%	3%	8%	*
b. wait to have sex until older or married	27	23	18	9	6	18	*
c. deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	18	25	20	10	6	21	*
d. deal with pressure to have sex	22	24	19	8	6	21	*
e. talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs	15	19	17	9	7	33	1
f. talk with (his/her) parents about sex and relationship issues	25	23	17	7	9	19	*
g. know how to use condoms, if (he/she) decided to have sex	22	17	14	7	7	33	*
h. know how to use and where to get other birth control, if (he/she) decided to have sex	18	20	16	8	6	31	1
	n=817						

- 15. How much confidence do you have that your child's (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9) grade sex education taught attitudes and values similar to those you teach at home? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident or not confident at all?**

Based on those whose child has had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

- 27% Very confident
- 44% Somewhat confident
- 12% Not too confident
- 11% Not confident at all
- 1% Sex ed didn't teach attitudes and values at all (VOLUNTEERED)
- 2% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=817

- 16. I'd like you to grade your child's (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9) grade sex education. With A meaning excellent and F meaning very poor, how would you grade your child's (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9) grade sex education overall?**

Based on those whose child has had sex ed in 7th–12th grade.

- 23% A) Excellent
- 35% B) Good
- 27% C) Average
- 7% D) Poor
- 5% F) Very Poor
- 2% Don't know enough about class to say (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=817

READ ONLY FOR PARENTS WHOSE CHILD HAS NOT HAD SEX ED: Suppose for a minute that your child did have (INSERT CURRENT GRADE OF CHILD) grade sex education or that you gave permission for your child to take sex education...

- 17. In your opinion, how much classroom time should be given to (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9/OR CURRENT GRADE N6B IF QUESTION 2=2) grade sex education? Should it last for...(READ RESPONSES 1–5)?**

- 26% One class period or several class periods or sessions
- 27% Half a semester or quarter
- 21% An entire semester or quarter
- 17% A school year
- 6% Other
- 4% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1501

- 18. Some parents think (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9/OR CURRENT GRADE N6B IF QUESTION 2=2) grade sex education is best taught to both girls and boys together. Others think it is best to have separate classes for boys and girls. Which view is closest to your own?**

- 40% Best taught to boys and girls together
- 54% Best to have separate classes for boys and girls
- 5% Either way is okay (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1501

NOTE: QUESTION 19A and QUESTION 19B are asked in a series and the wording varies depending on whether the child had sex ed (QUESTION 2).

19. A. (FOR THOSE PARENTS WHOSE CHILD HASN'T HAD SEX ED QUESTION 2=2) If your child were to have (INSERT CURRENT GRADE OF CHILD), how important would it be to you that your child learns about (INSERT)? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?

(FOR THOSE PARENTS WHOSE CHILD HAS HAD SEX ED QUESTION 2=1) How important is it to you that your child learns about (INSERT) in (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED FROM QUESTION 6 OR 9) grade sex education? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?

	Very Imp.	Some What Imp.	Not Too Imp.	Not At All Imp.	Don't Know	Ref.
a. the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	75%	15%	4%	4%	1%	*
b. birth control	75	15	4	5	1	1
c. HIV/AIDS	90	8	1	1	*	*
d. sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS	90	8	1	1	*	*
e. how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	84	10	2	3	*	*
f. waiting to have sex until older or married	88	9	1	2	*	*
g. how to deal with pressure to have sex	86	8	2	3	1	*
h. how to talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs	74	14	4	6	1	1
i. how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	89	8	1	2	*	*
j. how to use condoms	68	17	6	8	1	*
k. how to use and where to get other birth control	61	23	6	9	1	1
l. how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs	76	15	4	3	*	*
m. abortion	59	20	6	11	2	1
n. homosexuality and sexual orientation	50	26	8	13	2	*
o. what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	91	6	1	1	1	*
n=1501						

NOTE: QUESTION 19B is asked only for each item in QUESTION 19A that parent says is not too important or not important at all to learn about in sex ed.

B. Do you think (INSERT STATEMENT) is not important to learn because it should have been learned about in an earlier grade, because it should be learned about in a later grade, or because you don't think it is right to learn about this topic at all in school? Or is there some other reason?

a. the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth

35% Should learn it in an earlier grade
 16% Should learn it in a later grade
 41% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
 8% Other
 0% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=124

b. birth control

5% Should learn it in an earlier grade
 35% Should learn it in a later grade
 53% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
 3% Other
 3% Don't know
 1% Refused
 n=135

c. HIV/AIDS

- 5% Should learn it in an earlier grade
 - 36% Should learn it in a later grade
 - 38% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
 - 15% Other
 - 2% Don't know
 - 5% Refused
- n=30

d. sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS

- 6% Should learn it in an earlier grade
 - 39% Should learn it in a later grade
 - 55% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
 - 0% Other
 - 0% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=33

e. how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active

- 1% Should learn it in an earlier grade
 - 25% Should learn it in a later grade
 - 68% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
 - 2% Other
 - 2% Don't know
 - 2% Refused
- n=76

f. waiting to have sex until older or married

- 8% Should learn it in an earlier grade
 - 25% Should learn it in a later grade
 - 53% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
 - 11% Other
 - 0% Don't know
 - 4% Refused
- n=37

g. how to deal with pressure to have sex

- 19% Should learn it in an earlier grade
 - 22% Should learn it in a later grade
 - 51% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
 - 4% Other
 - 4% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=59

h. how to talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STIs

- 5% Should learn it in an earlier grade
 - 29% Should learn it in a later grade
 - 59% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
 - 6% Other
 - * Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=148

i. how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues

- 16% Should learn it in an earlier grade
- 6% Should learn it in a later grade
- 68% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
- 6% Other
- 0% Don't know
- 4% Refused
- n=32

j. how to use condoms

- 4% Should learn it in an earlier grade
- 27% Should learn it in a later grade
- 63% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
- 4% Other
- 2% Don't know
- 1% Refused
- n=199

k. how to use and where to get other birth control

- 4% Should learn it in an earlier grade
- 32% Should learn it in a later grade
- 59% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
- 2% Other
- 1% Don't know
- 2% Refused
- n=208

l. testing for HIV/AIDS and other STDs

- 7% Should learn it in an earlier grade
- 42% Should learn it in a later grade
- 40% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
- 8% Other
- 3% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=103

m. abortion

- 2% Should learn it in an earlier grade
- 20% Should learn it in a later grade
- 67% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
- 8% Other
- 2% Don't know
- 1% Refused
- n=259

n. homosexuality and sexual orientation

- 3% Should learn it in an earlier grade
- 14% Should learn it in a later grade
- 73% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
- 5% Other
- 4% Don't know
- 1% Refused
- n=308

o. what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted

- 4% Should learn it in an earlier grade
- 30% Should learn it in a later grade
- 58% Because you think it is inappropriate to learn this topic at all in school
- 7% Other
- 2% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=30

DIFFERENT SCHOOLS DISCUSS DIFFERENT THINGS IN SEX EDUCATION. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING COMES CLOSER TO WHAT YOU THINK SHOULD BE DISCUSSED?

20. A. If the topic of when young people should begin having sex is brought up as part of sex education, which of the following comes closer to how you think it should be discussed? You can answer just by saying A or B.

- 33% A) Young people should ONLY have sex when they are married, OR
- 65% B) Young people should wait to have sex, but if they DON'T they should use birth control and practice safer sex.
- 1% Other (VOLUNTEERED)
 - * Depends on age/grade level (VOLUNTEERED)
 - * Shouldn't be discussed at all (VOLUNTEERED)
 - * Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=1501

B. If the topic of sex and sexuality is brought up as part of sex education, which of the following comes closer to how you think it should be discussed?

- 11% A) Sex is something to avoid and fear, OR
- 86% B) Sex is a healthy and normal part of life.
- 1% Other (VOLUNTEERED)
 - * Depends on age/grade level (VOLUNTEERED)
 - * Shouldn't be discussed at all (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=1501

C. Which of the following best describes how you think sensitive topics, like abortion and homosexuality, should be handled in sex education?

- 11% A) Sensitive topics like abortion and homosexuality, should not be discussed at all.
- 12% B) These topics should be discussed in a way that represents only your point of view.
- 74% C) These topics should be discussed in a way that provides a fair and balanced presentation of the facts and different views in society.
- 1% Other (VOLUNTEERED)
 - * Depends on age/grade level (VOLUNTEERED)
- 2% Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=1501

- 21. Thinking about sex education in school, which of the following best describes what you think should be taught to (INSERT STATEMENT). A, ALL aspects of sex education including information about birth control and safer sex; B, ONLY the basic information like how babies are made; or C, do you think sex education shouldn't be taught at all to (INSERT STATEMENT)?**
... And what do you think should be taught to (INSERT STATEMENT)?

Student in grades

9–12	7–8	5–6	1–4	
82%	56%	17%	2%	A) All aspects of sex ed including birth control and safer sex
12%	34%	51%	29%	B) Only the basic information like how babies are made
5%	9%	31%	68%	C) Shouldn't be taught at all
1%	*	1%	1%	Don't know
*	*	*	*	Refused
n=1501				

- 22. Some people believe that whether or not young people are sexually active, they should be given information about birth control and safer sex. Others believe that giving young people this information only encourages them to have sex. Do you think that they should be given information in school, or do you think that information only encourages them to have sex?**

78% They should be given information in school
 16% Information only encourages them to have sex
 5% Don't know
 1% Refused
 n=1501

DEMOGRAPHICS

D1. Sex of parent:

45% Male
 55% Female
 n=1501

D2. What is your age?

33% 18–39
 63% 40–54
 3% 55+
 0% Don't know
 * Refused
 n=1501

D3. What is the last grade or class you completed in school?

5% Grade 8 or less
 2% One year of high school
 2% Two years of high school
 5% Three or more years of high school, no diploma
 35% High school diploma or equivalent
 1% One year of technical or vocational school after high school
 2% Two or more years of technical or vocational school after high school
 6% One year of college
 13% Two years of college
 5% Three or more years of college, no four-year degree
 15% Four-year college degree
 9% Some graduate or professional school after college
 * Refused
 n=1501

D4. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat or an independent?

25% Republican
33% Democrat
34% Independent
2% Other
4% Don't know
2% Refused
n=1501

D5. Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal or very liberal?

5% Very conservative
29% Conservative
43% Moderate
15% Liberal
3% Very liberal
4% Don't know
1% Refused
n=1501

D6. Are you currently employed for pay full time, part time, or are you not employed for pay?

74% Full time
10% Part time
15% Not employed
* Don't know
* Refused
n=1501

D7. Are you married, living as married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?

85% Married
1% Living as married
1% Widowed
8% Divorced
2% Separated
2% Never married
* Refused
n=1501

D8. How many children under age 18 now live in your household?

37% 1
52% 2-3
8% 4 or more
2% None
0% Refused
n=1501

D9. What is your religious affiliation? Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, an Orthodox Church, Muslim, some other religion, or don't you have a religious preference?

52% Protestant
 24% Roman Catholic
 1% Jewish
 2% Mormon
 * Orthodox Church
 * Islam/Muslim
 10% Other religion
 4% Non-denominational
 5% No religion/Atheist
 1% Refused
 n=1501

D10. Do you consider yourself very religious, somewhat religious, not too religious or not religious at all?

29% Very religious
 53% Somewhat religious
 12% Not too religious
 4% Not religious at all
 1% Don't know
 1% Refused
 n=1501

D11. Are you of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Latin American background?

15% Yes
 85% No
 0% Don't know
 1% Refused
 n=1501

D12. What is your race?

(IF HISPANIC) Are you white Hispanic, black Hispanic or some other race?

(ELSE:) Are you white, black, Asian/Pacific Islander or some other race?

83% White
 11% Black
 * Asian/Pacific Islander
 4% Other
 * Don't know
 1% Refused
 n=1501

D13. Last year, that is in 1998, what was your total household income before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

3% Less than \$10,000
 5% \$10,000 to less than \$15,000
 10% \$15,000 to less than \$25,000
 11% \$25,000 to less than \$35,000
 19% \$35,000 to less than \$50,000
 22% \$50,000 to less than \$75,000
 11% \$75,000 to less than \$100,000
 7% \$100,000 to less than \$150,000
 3% \$150,000 or more
 3% Don't know
 5% Refused
 n=1501

QUESTIONNAIRE: TEACHERS

TEACHERS

n=1,001 teachers of middle, junior, or senior public high schools

Margins of Error: plus or minus 3 percentage points

Dates of Interviewing: March 15 through May 13, 1999

Conducted by: Princeton Survey Research Associates

METHODOLOGY

The Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of Public Secondary School Teachers of Sex Education is a nationally-representative telephone survey of 1,001 teachers of sex education in public middle, junior, and senior high schools. The questionnaire was designed by staff at the Kaiser Family Foundation and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA). The interviews were conducted by telephone by PSRA between March 15 and May 13, 1999. The final response rate was 72 percent.

1. Which of the following best describes the MAIN subject you teach?

- 56% Health
 - 14% Physical education
 - 10% Biological and/or physical sciences
 - 11% Home economics and/or family and consumer science
 - 5% Sex education
 - 2% Social studies
 - * History
 - * Math
 - * English
 - * Driver's education
 - 1% Other
 - 0% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=1000

2. In the last 2 school years, what subjects have you taught?

Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

- 76% Health
 - 39% Physical education
 - 15% Biological and/or physical sciences
 - 14% Home economics and/or family and consumer science
 - 12% Sex education
 - 4% Social studies
 - 2% Math
 - 2% Driver's education
 - 2% English
 - 1% History
 - 10% Other
 - 1% Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=1000

- 3. Have you taught sex education or family life at least once in the last 2 school years? These are any classes or talks in school that discuss relationships, how babies are made, abstinence, AIDS, pregnancy prevention, and the like. These topics may have been taught in a separate sex education course, as part of another course, like health or science, or as independent lessons in the school auditorium or gym.**

Based on those who do not mention teaching sex ed in last 2 years.

100% Yes
 0% No (TERMINATED)
 0% Don't know (TERMINATED)
 0% Refused (TERMINATED)
 n=877

- 4. What grade or grades did you teach the last time you taught sex ed?**

Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

* Kindergarten or younger
 1% 1st
 * 2nd
 0% 3rd
 * 4th
 1% 5th
 7% 6th
 28% 7th
 33% 8th
 38% 9th
 35% 10th
 27% 11th
 26% 12th
 0% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=1000

- 5. Thinking about just the last 2 school years, approximately what percentage of your classroom teaching time was spent teaching sex ed? Did you spend 100% of your classroom time teaching sex ed, more than 50%, between 50% and 25%, between 24% and 10% or less than 10% of your classroom time teaching sex ed?**

3% 100%
 4% More than 50%
 22% Between 50% and 25%
 41% Between 24% and 10%
 30% Less than 10%
 1% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=1000

- 6. For how many school years have you taught sex ed?**

32% 1-5
 22% 6-10
 16% 11-15
 30% 16 or more
 * Don't know
 * Refused
 n=1000

7. Did you cover sex ed (INSERT STATEMENT)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. this school year	90%	10%	0%	0%
b. last school year	92%	8%	0%	0%
n=1000				

8. Will you be teaching sex ed later in this school year, or not?

Based on those who have not taught sex ed this year.

69% Yes
 29% No
 1% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=101

9. Did you teach (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) grade sex ed as a separate sex ed course, as part of another course, or as specific lessons taught independent of any other course?

8% As a separate sex ed course
 85% As part of another course
 6% As specific lessons taught independent of any other course
 * Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=1000

10. What other class is sex ed typically combined with? Science or biology, health, gym, home economics or family and consumer science, driver's education, social studies or some other subject?

Based on those who said sex ed was taught as part of another course. Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

75% Health
 18% Home economics/Family and Consumer Science
 17% Science/Biology
 4% Gym
 1% Social Studies
 * Driver's education
 2% Other
 * Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=859

11. Were boys and girls together in all sessions, or were there any sessions in which boys and girls were taught (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) grade sex ed separately?

81% Boys and girls together for all sessions
 19% Taught separately for some sessions
 * Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=1000

12. How long was the sex ed you taught to (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) graders? Did it last for...?

FIRST MENTION ONLY.

74% One class period or several class periods or special sessions
 13% Half a semester or quarter
 6% An entire semester or quarter
 2% A school year
 5% Other
 * Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=1000

13. A. When you taught (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) grade sex ed did you teach students about (INSERT STATEMENT)? What about...(INSERT STATEMENT)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	88%	12%	*	*
b. birth control, that is methods of preventing pregnancy	74	26	0	0
c. HIV/AIDS	98	2	0	0
d. sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	96	4	0	0
e. how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	88	12	*	0
f. waiting to have sex until are older or married	97	3	0	0
g. how to deal with pressure to have sex	95	5	0	0
h. how to talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and sexually transmitted diseases, that is STDs	71	29	*	0
i. how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	71	29	*	0
j. how to use condoms	50	40	*	0
k. how to use and where to get other birth control	59	41	*	*
l. how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, that is STDs	86	14	*	0
m. abortion	46	54	*	0
n. homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	44	55	*	0
o. what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	78	22	*	0
n=1000				

B. There are many reasons for not covering a particular topic. What is the MAIN reason you didn't teach (INSERT STATEMENTS FROM QUESTION 13A THAT WERE NOT TAUGHT)? (READ STATEMENTS IN SAME ORDER AS QUESTION 13A) (READ RESPONSES 1-6)

a. the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth

Based on those who said pregnancy and birth were not covered.

- 8% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 19% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 4% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 14% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 25% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 15% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 11% Some other reason
 - 2% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 1% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=116

b. birth control

Based on those who said birth control was not covered.

- 13% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 51% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 5% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 4% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 2% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 13% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 5% Some other reason
 - 2% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 3% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 1% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=258

c. HIV/AIDS

Based on those who said HIV/AIDS was not covered.

- 10% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 27% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 0% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 8% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 5% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 25% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 19% Some other reason
 - 0% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 5% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=19

d. sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes

Based on those who said STDs were not covered.

- 4% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 23% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 0% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 18% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 10% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 32% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 6% Some other reason
 - 0% Not part of the curriculum
 - 2% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 2% Don't know
 - 2% Refused
- n=43

e. how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active

Based on those who said the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active were not covered.

- 9% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 18% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 7% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 21% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 2% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 15% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 11% Some other reason
 - 5% Not part of the curriculum
 - 1% Never came up
 - 2% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 8% Don't know
 - 1% Refused
- n=119

f. waiting to have sex until older or married

Based on those who said waiting to have sex until older or married was not covered.

- 10% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 17% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 11% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 8% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 9% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 15% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 6% Some other reason
 - 11% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 14% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=27

g. how to deal with pressure to have sex

Based on those who said how to deal with pressure to have sex was not covered.

- 9% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 10% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 9% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 25% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 9% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 12% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 13% Some other reason
 - 10% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 5% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=50

h. how to talk with a boyfriend, girlfriend or partner about birth control and STDS

Based on those who said how to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs was not covered.

- 9% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 27% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 4% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 18% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 5% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 16% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 10% Some other reason
 - 5% Not part of the curriculum
 - 1% Never came up
 - 2% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 2% Don't know
 - 1% Refused
- n=291

i. how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues

Based on those who said how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues was not covered.

- 7% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 11% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 6% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 36% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 4% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 6% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 17% Some other reason
 - 5% Not part of the curriculum
 - 3% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 4% Don't know
 - 1% Refused
- n=284

j. how to use condoms

Based on those who said how to use condoms was not covered.

- 16% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 47% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 9% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 5% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 2% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 9% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 7% Some other reason
 - 3% Not part of the curriculum
 - * Never came up
 - * Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 2% Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=510

k. how to use and where to get other birth control

Based on those who said how to use and where to get other birth control was not covered.

- 13% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 47% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 8% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 7% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 1% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 12% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 7% Some other reason
 - 4% Not part of the curriculum
 - * Never came up
 - 1% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 2% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=411

l. how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs

Based on those who said how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs was not covered.

- 6% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 23% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 4% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 22% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 2% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 20% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 11% Some other reason
 - 5% Not part of the curriculum
 - 1% Never came up
 - 1% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 7% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=142

m. abortion

Based on those who said abortion was not covered.

- 20% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 40% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 12% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 9% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - * Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 6% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 7% Some other reason
 - 4% Not part of the curriculum
 - * Never came up
 - * Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 2% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=545

n. homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual

Based on those who said homosexuality and sexual orientation was not covered.

- 20% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 37% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 11% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 13% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - * Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 4% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 6% Some other reason
 - 4% Not part of the curriculum
 - 1% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 3% Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=557

o. what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted

Based on those who said what to do if a student or friend had been raped or sexually assaulted was not covered.

- 3% Because you felt pressured by the community and parents not to teach it
 - 12% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 5% Because you personally felt this shouldn't be taught
 - 39% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 3% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 12% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 17% Some other reason
 - 4% Not part of the curriculum
 - 2% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 4% Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=223

14. Overall, do you think enough classroom time is spent in your school to properly cover sex ed, too much time, or too little time?

- 50% Enough time
 - 1% Too much time
 - 47% Too little time
 - 1% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=1000

15. Do you think some of the sex ed topics you taught to (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) graders should have been covered in an earlier or later grade, or do you think all the topics were taught at the right time?

- 51% Earlier grade
 - 2% Later grade
 - 40% All taught at right time
 - 0% Shouldn't be taught at all (VOLUNTEERED)
 - 5% Some earlier and some later (VOLUNTEERED)
 - 2% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=1000

16. What topics should have been covered earlier?

Based on those who think some topics should have been covered in an earlier grade.

Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

- 34% the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth
 - 27% birth control
 - 28% sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS
 - 25% how to deal with pressure to have sex
 - 23% how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active
 - 22% HIV/AIDS
 - 20% waiting to have sex until they are older or married
 - 14% how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues
 - 13% how to talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs
 - 8% how to use condoms
 - 6% what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted
 - 3% abstinence
 - 3% how to use and where to get other birth control
 - 3% how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs
 - 3% anatomy
 - 3% homosexuality and sexual orientation
 - 1% abortion
 - 13% All topics
 - 9% Other
 - 2% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=556

17. What topics should have been covered later?

Based on those who think some topics should have been covered in a later grade.

Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

- 30% birth control
 - 18% the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth
 - 18% how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active
 - 16% sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS
 - 13% HIV/AIDS
 - 0% how to use condoms
 - 0% how to talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs
 - 9% how to use and where to get other birth control
 - 7% abortion
 - 7% how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs
 - 7% waiting to have sex until they are older or married
 - 7% how to deal with pressure to have sex
 - 5% how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues
 - 4% homosexuality and sexual orientation
 - 1% what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted
 - 3% All topics
 - 20% Other
 - 16% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=67

THE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS HAVE TO DO WITH WHAT WAS MAINLY TAUGHT IN THE CURRICULUM YOU PRESENTED TO (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED) GRADERS. I'M INTERESTED IN WHAT WAS MAINLY TAUGHT, RATHER THAN YOUR OWN FEELINGS OR OPINIONS ABOUT THESE ISSUES.

18. Which of these best describes what you mainly taught to (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) graders?

You can answer just by saying A or B.

- 33% A) Young people should ONLY have sex when they are married
- 61% B) Young people should wait to have sex, but if they DON'T they should use birth control and practice safer sex
- 1% Topic covered, but no message about when to have sex (VOLUNTEERED)
- 2% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- 2% Other
 - * Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=1000

19. A. Which one of these statements best describes what you mainly taught to

(INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) graders...that...

- 9% A) Abortion is immoral or wrong
- 57% B) Abortion is a personal matter
- 6% Topic discussed, but no message about abortion (VOLUNTEERED)
- 26% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Other
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1000

B. (Which one of these statements best describes what you mainly taught to

(INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) graders?)...How about...

- 5% A) Masturbation is immoral or wrong
- 56% B) Masturbation is a normal behavior
- 5% Topic discussed, but no message about masturbation (VOLUNTEERED)
- 33% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- * Other
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1000

C. (Which one of these statements best describes what you mainly taught to

(INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) graders?)...How about...

- 5% A) Homosexuality is immoral or wrong
- 59% B) Some people are homosexual and should not be discriminated against
- 5% Topic discussed, but no message about homosexuality (VOLUNTEERED)
- 29% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Other
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=1000

20. I have one last question about what you mainly taught to (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT FROM QUESTION 4) graders.

Did you mainly teach that...?

- 5% A) Sex is something to avoid and fear, OR
- 90% B) Sex is a healthy and normal part of life
- 1% Topic discussed, but no message about sex (VOLUNTEERED)
- 3% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Other
 - * Don't know
 - * Refused
- n=1000

	A Exc.	B Good	C Avg.	D Poor	F Very Poor	Didn't Teach (VOL.)	Don't Know	Ref.
a. understand the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	39%	38%	15%	3%	1%	4%	1%	*
b. wait to have sex until older or married	52	29	11	2	1	2	1	0
c. deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	37	34	17	5	1	4	1	0
d. deal with the pressure to have sex	42	35	15	3	1	3	1	0
e. talk with a (girlfriend /boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs	29	33	17	7	4	9	1	*
f. talk with their parents about sex and relationship issues	23	33	23	8	5	7	1	0
g. know how to use condoms, if they decided to have sex	22	19	14	9	14	21	1	*
h. know how to use and where to get other birth control, if they decided to have sex	29	20	16	8	9	17	1	*
	n=1000							

25. Over the last couple of years, have there been discussions or debate in the PTA, school board, or at any public meetings about (INSERT STATEMENT)?...How about (INSERT STATEMENT)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. whether or not to teach sex ed at all	19%	73%	8%	0%
b. what topics to teach in sex ed, such as birth control or sexual orientation	29	63	8	0
c. teaching abstinence-only	33	60	8	0
d. whether sex ed classes should be single-sex or coed	15	77	8	0
e. how parents give permission for their children to take or be taken out of sex ed	33	61	6	0
	n=1000			

26. Would you describe these discussions as very calm, somewhat calm, somewhat heated or very heated?

Based on those who said any of the topics in QUESTION 25 have been a topic of discussion/debate.

- 34% Very calm
- 37% Somewhat calm
- 14% Somewhat heated
- 3% Very heated
- 12% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=493

27. Did these discussions result in any changes in the sex ed curriculum?

- 28% Yes
- 67% No
- 4% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=493

28. What were the changes?

Based on those who said discussions resulted in change. Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

- 21% Other information was taught before and now only abstinence is taught
- 16% Topics once taught are now not taught
- 13% Topics once not taught are now being taught
- 9% Abstinence-only was taught before, but now other information is taught as well
- 6% Send letter to parent for participation
- 6% More time is devoted to sex ed than before
- 4% Sex ed is now being taught in the schools
- 4% Exploring single gender versus co-ed classes
- 3% Sex ed is no longer taught in the schools
- 3% Students get sex ed in a later grade level than before
- 3% Students get sex ed in an earlier grade level than before
- 2% Curriculum was revised/modified
- 2% Less time is devoted to sex ed than before
- 22% Other
- 4% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=140

29. Were you trained to teach sex ed?

82% Yes
 18% No
 * Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=1000

30. Do you feel you have received enough training to teach sex ed well?

Based on those who have received training.

86% Yes
 14% No
 * Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=821

31. Would you like to receive training to teach sex ed?

Based on those who did not receive training.

47% Yes
 49% No
 3% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=175

32. Thinking about sex ed in school, which of the following best describes what you think should be taught to (INSERT STATEMENT).

A, ALL aspects of sex ed including information about birth control and safer sex; B, ONLY the basic information like how babies are made; or, C, do you think sex ed shouldn't be taught at all to (INSERT STATEMENT)?

Student in grades

9-12	7-8	5-6	1-4	
92%	65%	13%	3%	A) All aspects of sex ed including birth control and safer sex
6%	32%	77%	57%	B) Only the basic information like how babies are made
*	1%	7%	36%	C) Shouldn't be taught at all
1%	1%	2%	4%	Don't know
*	*	*	*	Refused

n=1000

33. Some people believe that whether or not young people are sexually active, they should be given information about birth control and safer sex. Others believe that giving young people this information only encourages them to have sex. Do you think that they should be given information in school, or do you think that information only encourages them to have sex?

90% They should be given information in school
 6% Information only encourages them to have sex
 3% Don't know
 1% Refused
 n=1000

QUESTIONNAIRE: PRINCIPALS

PRINCIPALS

n=313 principals of middle, junior, or senior public high schools

Margins of Error: Plus or minus 6 percentage points

Dates of interviewing: March 15–May 13, 1999

Conducted by: Princeton Survey Research Associates

METHODOLOGY

The Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of Public Secondary School Principals is a nationally-representative telephone survey of 313 principals of middle, junior, and senior public high schools. The questionnaire was designed by staff at the Kaiser Family Foundation and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA). The interviews were conducted by telephone by PSRA between March 15 and May 13, 1999. The final response rate was 41 percent.

1. How many years have you been a principal?

- 37% 1–5 years
- 42% 6–15 years
- 11% 16–20 years
- 10% more than 20 years
- * Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=313

2. And, for how many years have you been a principal at your current school?

- 61% 1–5 years
- 33% 6–15 years
- 6% 16 or more
- 0% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=313

3. What grades does your school teach?

Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

- 1% Kindergarten or younger
- 3% 1st
- 2% 2nd
- 2% 3rd
- 2% 4th
- 5% 5th
- 35% 6th
- 52% 7th
- 52% 8th
- 56% 9th
- 56% 10th
- 55% 11th
- 54% 12th
- 0% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=313

- 4. Has sex education or family life been taught in your school during the last two school years? These are any classes or talks in school that discuss relationships, how babies are made, abstinence, AIDS, pregnancy prevention, and the like. These topics may have been taught in a separate sex education course, as part of another course, like health or science, or as independent lessons in the school auditorium or gym.**

95% Yes
 5% No
 0% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=313

- 5. Which of the following best describes why your school has not taught sex ed in the last two years?**

Based on those who said sex ed had not been taught in the last two school years.

30% Sex ed is taught in grade levels covered by another school in our district
 10% Teaching sex ed creates too much controversy in our community
 10% There just isn't enough time or resources to teach sex ed
 6% Teaching sex ed is prohibited by local government officials or school administrators
 45% Some other reason
 0% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=13

- 6. Was sex ed taught in your school (INSERT STATEMENT)?**

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. this school year	97%	3%	1%	0%
b. last school year	97%	2%	1%	0%
	n=300 ³			

- 7. Will your school teach sex ed later in this school year, or not?**

Based on those who said sex ed was not taught this year.

80% Yes
 20% No
 0% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=10

- 8. Thinking about the last 2 school years, what grade levels were taught sex ed in your school?**

Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

* Kindergarten or younger
 2% 1st
 0% 2nd
 0% 3rd
 1% 4th
 2% 5th
 21% 6th
 40% 7th
 42% 8th
 42% 9th
 40% 10th
 25% 11th
 23% 12th
 3% All grades (VOLUNTEERED)
 0% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=300

³ From question 6 on, only principals of schools that taught sex ed in the last 2 years are included. Principals of schools that did not teach sex ed skipped to questions D2 and D3.

9. In what grade level is the MAIN sex ed instruction taught in your school?

- 0% Kindergarten or younger
- 0% 1st
- 0% 2nd
- 0% 3rd
- 0% 4th
- 0% 5th
- 2% 6th
- 9% 7th
- 22% 8th
- 21% 9th
- 19% 10th
- 3% 11th
- 4% 12th
- 18% No MAIN grade level/all grades taught equally
- * Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=300

10. Thinking only about the sex ed your school taught to (INSERT ALL GRADES 7–12 FROM QUESTION 8) graders, which grade was taught most recently?

Based on those who said the main grade of instruction is 0–6 or that there is no main grade and sex ed is taught in more than one grade 7–12.

- 5% 7th
- 34% 8th
- 6% 9th
- 10% 10th
- 4% 11th
- 8% 12th
- 28% Don't know
- 4% Refused
- n=50

11. Are students required to take sex ed or is sex ed optional?

- 52% Required
- 47% Optional
- 1% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=300

12. In your school, how is sex ed usually taught? As a separate sex ed course, as part of another course, or as specific lessons taught independent of any other course.

- 2% As a separate sex ed course
- 91% As part of another course
- 6% As specific lessons taught independent of any other course
- * Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=300

13. In your school, are boys and girls together in all sessions or are there any sessions in which boys and girls are taught separately?

- 65% Boys and girls taught together for all sessions
 - 21% Boys and girls taught separately for some sessions
 - 13% Both ways (VOLUNTEERED)
 - 1% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=300

14. How long does (INSERT MAIN INSTRUCTION GRADE/RANDOM GRADE) grade sex ed typically last in your school? Does it last for...?

FIRST RESPONSE ONLY.

- 70% One class period or several class periods or special sessions
 - 14% Half a semester or quarter
 - 11% An entire semester or quarter
 - 2% A school year
 - 3% Other
 - 1% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=300

15. Which of the following best describes your school's policy about sex ed?

- 25% Parents have to give permission for their child to take sex ed
 - 53% Parents are notified of sex ed, but don't have to sign a permission slip
 - 22% Parents are NOT notified and do NOT have to sign a permission slip
 - 1% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=300

16. Last year, roughly what percentage of parents, if any, did not allow their children to take sex ed either by not giving permission or taking them out of sex ed?

- 67% 0
 - 13% 1
 - 7% 2
 - 7% 3–5
 - 3% more than 5
 - 3% Don't know
 - 1% Refused
- n=300

17. In which of the following ways does your school try to involve parents in their children's sex ed experience? Does your school (INSERT STATEMENT)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. invite parents to attend orientation sessions about sex ed	39%	59%	1%	0%
b. invite parents to attend classes that teach them about sexuality and sexual health issues	38	61	1	0
c. send materials home to parents about sex ed or involve parents in parent/child homework	58	38	4	0
	n=300			

18. Now I'd like to ask you about the sex ed curriculum taught to (INSERT MAIN INSTRUCTION GRADE/RANDOM GRADE) graders in your school. Is (INSERT STATEMENT) included in your school's sex ed curriculum for (INSERT MAIN INSTRUCTION GRADE/RANDOM GRADE) graders? What about...(INSERT STATEMENT)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth	90%	6%	4%	0%
b. birth control, that is methods of preventing pregnancy	73	20	6	*
c. HIV/AIDS	97	2	1	0
d. sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS, such as herpes	96	2	2	0
e. how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	80	14	6	0
f. waiting to have sex until are older or married	94	3	3	0
g. how to deal with pressure to have sex	94	3	2	0
h. how to talk with a girlfriend/ boyfriend or partner about birth control and sexually transmitted diseases, that is STDs	54	32	14	0
i. how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues	70	18	12	0
j. how to use condoms	39	51	10	*
k. how to use and where to get other birth control	45	44	11	0
l. how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, that is STDs	73	14	14	0
m. abortion	37	48	15	0
n. homosexuality and sexual orientation, that is being gay, lesbian or bisexual	36	50	14	0
o. what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted	73	16	10	0

n=300

19. There are many reasons for not covering a particular topic. What is the MAIN reason your school didn't teach (INSERT STATEMENT) in (INSERT MAIN INSTRUCTION GRADE/RANDOM GRADE) sex ed?

a. the basics of how babies are made, pregnancy and birth

Based on those who said pregnancy and birth were not included in curriculum.

- 14% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
- 23% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
- 4% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
- 6% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
- 14% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
- 0% Not part of the curriculum
- 0% Never came up
- 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
- 14% Some other reason
- 17% Don't know
- 6% Refused

n=18

b. birth control

Based on those who said birth control was not included in the curriculum.

- 10% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
- 55% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
- 7% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
- 0% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
- 15% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
- 6% Not part of the curriculum
- 0% Never came up
- 2% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
- 3% Some other reason
- 2% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=61

c. HIV/AIDS

Based on those who said HIV/AIDS was not included in the curriculum.

- 0% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
- 49% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
- 0% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
- 14% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
- 0% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
- 18% Not part of the curriculum
- 0% Never came up
- 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
- 0% Some other reason
- 20% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=7

d. sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV/AIDS

Based on those who said STDs were not included in the curriculum.

- 0% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
- 65% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
- 0% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
- 12% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
- 15% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
- 0% Not part of the curriculum
- 0% Never came up
- 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
- 0% Some other reason
- 9% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=7

e. how to deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active

Based on those who said the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active were not included in the curriculum.

- 13% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
 - 27% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 15% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 2% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 6% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 11% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 16% Some other reason
 - 10% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=41

f. waiting to have sex until older or married

Based on those who said waiting to have sex until older or married was not included in the curriculum.

- 0% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
 - 60% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 7% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 0% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 7% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 19% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 0% Some other reason
 - 7% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=10

g. how to deal with pressure to have sex

Based on those who said how to deal with pressure to have sex was not included in the curriculum.

- 10% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
 - 37% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 22% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 0% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 0% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 30% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 0% Some other reason
 - 0% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=9

h. how to talk with a boyfriend, girlfriend or partner about birth control and STDs

Based on those who said how to talk with a partner about birth control and STDs was not included in the curriculum.

- 11% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
- 28% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
- 17% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
- 2% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
- 15% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
- 8% Not part of the curriculum
- 0% Never came up
- 1% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
- 10% Some other reason
- 8% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=96

i. how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues

Based on those who said how to talk with parents about sex and relationship issues was not included in the curriculum.

- 11% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
- 12% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
- 21% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
- 2% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
- 4% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
- 6% Not part of the curriculum
- 0% Never came up
- 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
- 22% Some other reason
- 20% Don't know
- 2% Refused
- n=59

j. how to use condoms

Based on those who said how to use condoms was not included in the curriculum.

- 22% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
- 34% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
- 6% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
- 1% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
- 11% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
- 7% Not part of the curriculum
- 0% Never came up
- * Abstinence class/abstinence based only
- 9% Some other reason
- 11% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=157

k. how to use and where to get other birth control

Based on those who said how to use and where to get other birth control was not included in the curriculum.

- 17% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
 - 38% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 6% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 1% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 12% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 7% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 1% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 9% Some other reason
 - 10% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=132

l. testing for HIV/AIDS and other STDs

Based on those who said how to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STDs was not included in the curriculum.

- 11% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
 - 24% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 11% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 0% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 18% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 9% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 16% Some other reason
 - 11% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=43

m. abortion

Based on those who said abortion was not included in the curriculum.

- 22% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
 - 38% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 6% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 0% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 10% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 6% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 12% Some other reason
 - 7% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=144

n. homosexuality and sexual orientation

Based on those who said homosexuality and sexual orientation was not included in the curriculum.

- 21% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
 - 28% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 11% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 1% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 10% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 10% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 9% Some other reason
 - 10% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=159

o. what to do if they or a friend has been raped or sexually assaulted

Based on those who said what to do if a student or friend had been raped or sexually assaulted was not included in the curriculum.

- 6% Because your sex ed teachers felt pressured not to teach it by the community and parents
 - 14% Because it is school or district policy not to teach it
 - 16% Because there wasn't enough time in the curriculum
 - 7% Because the topic was covered in an earlier grade
 - 7% Because the topic will be covered in a later grade
 - 8% Not part of the curriculum
 - 0% Never came up
 - 0% Abstinence class/abstinence based only
 - 24% Some other reason
 - 13% Don't know
 - 4% Refused
- n=47

20. With A meaning excellent and F meaning very poor, what grade would you give the sex ed curriculum your school teaches to (INSERT MAIN INSTRUCTION GRADE/RANDOM GRADE) graders in terms of how well it prepares students to (INSERT STATEMENT)?

	A Exc.	B Good	C Avg.	D Poor	F Very Poor	Don't Know	Ref.
a. understand the basics of how babies are made, and birth	32%	43%	20%	1%	1%	2%	0
b. wait to have sex until older or married	38	32	17	3	2	7	0
c. deal with the emotional issues and consequences of being sexually active	22	37	24	8	2	7	0
d. deal with the pressure to have sex	33	36	21	3	2	5	0
e. talk with a (girlfriend/boyfriend) or partner about birth control and STDs	11	33	24	12	4	15	1
f. talk with their parents about sex and relationship issues	15	33	32	9	3	8	*
g. know how to use condoms, if they decided to have sex	11	23	17	11	17	17	3
h. know how to use and where to get other birth control, if they decided to have sex	12	23	20	13	13	15	3
	n=298 ⁴						

⁴ PR20A–PR23 excludes 2 principals who did not know whether or not sex ed included the basics of pregnancy and birth, birth control, or HIV/AIDS.

21. Which of these best describes what is mainly taught in your school's (INSERT MAIN INSTRUCTION GRADE/RANDOM GRADE) grade sex ed curriculum? You can answer just by saying A or B.

- 34% A) Young people should ONLY have sex when they are married
- 58% B) Young people should wait to have sex, but if they DON'T they should use birth control and practice safer sex
- 1% Topic covered, but no message about when to have sex (VOLUNTEERED)
- 2% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% Other
- 4% Don't know
- 1% Refused
- n=298

22. A. Which one of these statements best describes what is mainly taught in your school's (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT) grade sex ed curriculum...that...

- 10% A) Abortion is immoral or wrong
- 51% B) Abortion is a personal matter
- 9% Topic discussed, but no message about abortion (VOLUNTEERED)
- 22% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- * Other
- 8% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=298

B. Which one of these statements best describes what is mainly taught in your school's (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT) grade sex ed curriculum?...How about...

- 9% A) Masturbation is immoral or wrong
- 44% B) Masturbation is a normal behavior
- 4% Topic discussed, but no message about masturbation (VOLUNTEERED)
- 25% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- 0% Other
- 18% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=298

C. Which one of these statements best describes what is mainly taught in your school's (INSERT GRADE OF MOST RECENT SEX ED TAUGHT) grade sex ed curriculum?...How about...

- 8% A) Homosexuality is immoral or wrong
- 53% B) Some people are homosexual and should not be discriminated against
- 7% Topic discussed, but no message about homosexuality (VOLUNTEERED)
- 25% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- * Other
- 6% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=298

23. I have one last question about what is mainly taught in your school's (INSERT MAIN INSTRUCTION GRADE/RANDOM GRADE) grade sex ed curriculum. Did it suggest that...

- 5% A) Sex is something to avoid and fear, OR
- 86% B) Sex is a healthy and normal part of life
- 2% Topic discussed, but no message about sex (VOLUNTEERED)
- 2% Topic not discussed at all in sex ed (VOLUNTEERED)
- 2% Other
- 3% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=298

24. Overall, do you think enough classroom time is spent in your school to properly cover sex ed, too much time, or too little time?

- 55% Enough time
- 3% Too much time
- 42% Too little time
- 1% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=300

25. How strictly does your school need to follow local or state guidelines about the content of what is taught in sex ed?

Can your school teach pretty much what it wants, does it have to follow some guidelines, or does it have to follow strict guidelines about what is taught?

- 13% Teach pretty much what wants
- 42% Some guidelines
- 43% Strict guidelines
- 2% Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=300

26. How much influence has (INSERT STATEMENT) had in deciding what topics your school's sex ed curriculum covers?

A great deal, some, not too much, or no influence at all?

	A Great Deal	Some	Not Too Much	Not At All	Don't Know	Ref.
a. the federal government's abstinence-only funds	8%	23%	19%	36%	15%	0%
b. your state government	27	43	17	8	4	0
c. your local government or school district	57	31	7	4	0	0
	n=300					

27. Compared to other subjects like English and math, how much control do your sex ed teachers have over the content of what they teach in sex ed? Can they teach pretty much what they want, do they have to follow some guidelines, or do they have to follow strict guidelines about what they can teach?

- 8% Teach pretty much what they want
- 50% Some guidelines
- 42% Strict guidelines
- * Don't know
- 0% Refused
- n=300

28. How confident are you that your sex ed teachers adhere to the guidelines? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident or not at all confident?

Based on those who said teachers need to follow guidelines.

- 79% Very confident
- 19% Somewhat confident
- * Not too confident
- 0% Not at all confident
- * Don't know
- 1% Refused
- n=273

29. Do you feel your teachers have received enough training to teach sex ed well?

- 76% Yes
- 22% No
- 1% Don't know
- * Refused
- n=300

30. Do most sex ed teachers primarily use a standard set of materials provided by your school district or do they primarily choose their own materials?

74% Standard/provided by school district
 24% Choose own materials
 2% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=300

31. Are you required to share your teachers' sex ed lesson plans with the superintendent of schools or other school administrators?

29% Yes
 70% No
 * Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=300

32. With A meaning excellent and F meaning very poor, how would you grade your school's sex ed instruction overall?

21% A) Excellent
 50% B) Good
 26% C) Average
 2% D) Poor
 * F) Very poor
 0% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=300

33. With A meaning excellent and F meaning very poor, how would you grade your school's sex ed instruction in comparison to other subjects taught in your school?

17% A, Excellent
 41% B, Good
 32% C, Average
 7% D, Poor
 1% F, Very poor
 1% Don't know
 1% Refused
 n=300

34. In your opinion, does the sex ed curriculum at your school reflect what most of the parents in your school district think should be taught to students, many of the parents, some of the parents, only a few of the parents, or aren't you sure?

48% Most
 30% Many
 6% Some
 2% A few
 14% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=300

35. In your role as principal, have you participated in deciding what topics your school's sex ed curriculum covers?

54% Yes
 46% No
 1% Don't know
 0% Refused
 n=300

36. And how involved (INSERT STATEMENT) in deciding what topics your school's sex ed curriculum covers?

Very involved, only somewhat involved, not too involved or not at all involved?

	Very	Some- what	Not Too	Not At All	Don't Know	Ref.
a. were parents	23%	45%	15%	14%	3%	0%
b. was the school board or school administrators, such as the superintendent	39	33	15	11	2	0
c. were teachers	57	31	5	6	1	0
d. were students	8	31	19	38	4	0
e. were religious leaders	11	35	18	29	8	0
f. were politicians, such as the governor or your local city council	6	14	19	55	5	0
g. were other community members	15	36	16	30	3	*
n=300						

37. Over the last couple of years, have there been discussions or debate in the PTA, school board, or at any public meetings about (INSERT STATEMENT)?...How about (INSERT STATEMENT)?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Ref.
a. whether or not to teach sex ed at all	17%	80%	2%	0%
b. what topics to teach in sex ed, such as birth control or sexual orientation	26	73	2	0
c. teaching abstinence-only	31	66	4	0
d. whether sex ed classes should be single-sex or coed	16	80	4	0
e. how parents give permission for their children to take or be taken out of sex ed	26	70	4	1
n=300				

38. Would you describe these discussions as very calm, somewhat calm, somewhat heated or very heated?

Based on those who said any of the topics in QUESTION 37 have been a topic of discussion/debate.

39% Very calm
 37% Somewhat calm
 13% Somewhat heated
 2% Very heated
 7% Don't know
 2% Refused
 n=139

39. Did these discussions result in any changes in the sex ed curriculum?

34% Yes
 58% No
 6% Don't know
 2% Refused
 n=139

40. What were the changes?

Based on those who said discussions resulted in change. Multiple responses accepted, percentages may total more than 100%.

- 19% Topics once taught are now not taught
 - 17% Topics once not taught are now being taught
 - 14% Other information was taught before and now only abstinence is taught
 - 12% Abstinence-only was taught before, but now other information is taught as well
 - 8% Exploring single-gender versus co-ed classes
 - 7% Curriculum was revised/modified
 - 6% More time is devoted to sex ed than before
 - 4% Sex ed is now being taught in the schools
 - 1% Students get sex ed in an earlier grade level than before
 - 1% Students get sex ed in a later grade level than before
 - 0% Sex ed is no longer taught in the schools
 - 0% Less time is devoted to sex ed than before
 - 12% Other
 - 14% Don't know
 - 0% Refused
- n=48

41. Generally, how supportive are (INSERT STATEMENT) of your school's sex ed program? Would you say they are very supportive, somewhat supportive, not too supportive or not supportive at all.

	Very	Some- what	Not Too	Not At All	Don't Know	Ref.
a. parents	58%	36%	1%	*	5%	0%
b. the school board or school administrators	72	23	1	0	4	0
c. teachers	69	28	0	0	2	0
d. students	55	37	1	*	6	0
e. religious leaders	32	38	3	3	23	0
f. politicians	21	29	2	9	39	*
g. other community members	33	41	2	5	19	*

n=300

42. Thinking about sex ed in school, which of the following best describes what you think should be taught to (INSERT STATEMENT). A, ALL aspects of sex ed including information about birth control and safer sex; B, ONLY the basic information like how babies are made; or, C, do you think sex ed shouldn't be taught at all to (INSERT STATEMENT)? (DO NOT ROTATE)

Student in grades				
9-12	7-8	5-6	1-4	
81%	52%	13%	1%	A) All aspects of sex ed including birth control and safer sex
12%	40%	68%	42%	B) Only the basic information like how babies are made
1%	1%	10%	46%	C) Shouldn't be taught at all
4%	6%	7%	8%	Don't know
3%	1%	2%	2%	Refused

n=300

43. Some people believe that whether or not young people are sexually active, they should be given information about birth control and safer sex. Others believe that giving young people this information only encourages them to have sex. Do you think that they should be given information in school, or do you think that information only encourages them to have sex?

- 81% They should be given information in school
 - 8% Information only encourages them to have sex
 - 8% Don't know
 - 2% Refused
- n=300



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