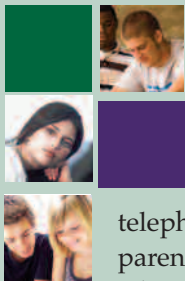


What do parents think?

about sex education



In 2007, the University of Minnesota's Prevention Research Center conducted a telephone survey to record parental attitudes about sex education in schools. This survey included 1,605 Minnesota parents, with careful sampling to ensure equal numbers from every congressional district in the state.

A short summary of these survey findings is presented here. To learn more, visit www.prc.umn.edu



Minnesota parents agree

A substantial majority of parents surveyed believe that young people should be taught in school how to prevent pregnancy and disease while also being encouraged not to have sex.

What should young people be taught?

Information about abstinence only

10%

Sex education that includes information about abstinence and prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

89%

At present, the wishes of Minnesota parents are not reflected in the actual use of state resources. To date, sex education programs for our young people receive no state funding and are not required for graduation. So there is no guarantee our children will receive effective sex education.

81%
of parents think that sex ed classes **DO NOT** cause more students to have sex

Which Minnesota parents support sex ed?

No matter how you group them, Minnesota parents show strong support for sex education.

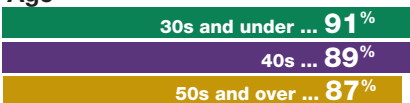
The following charts show demographic and geographic groupings of Minnesota parents who believed:

Young people should receive sex education in school that includes information about abstinence and prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Gender



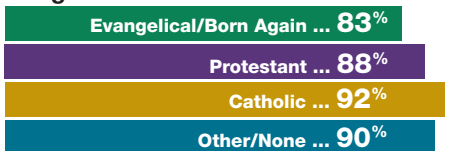
Age



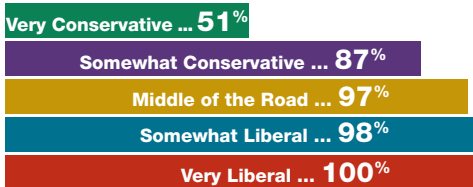
Race



Religion



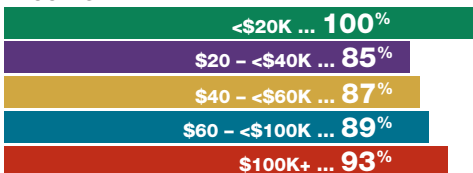
Political Orientation



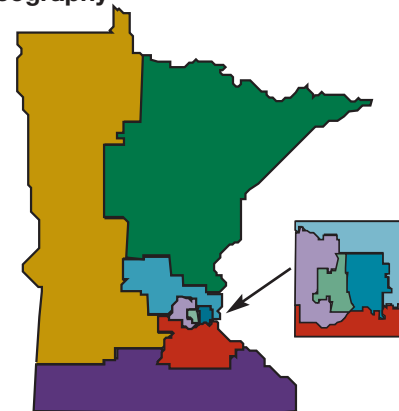
Education



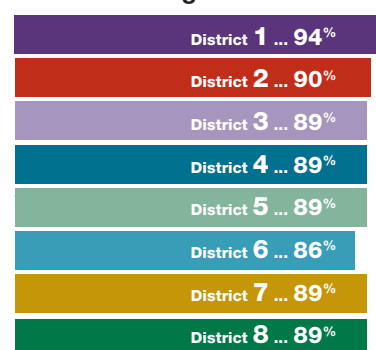
Income



Geography



Minnesota Congressional Districts



What is sex ed? Does it work?

Large percentages of parents agreed that young people should receive broad and medically accurate sex education in school.

The opinions of Minnesota parents mirror scientific evidence demonstrating that accurate, developmentally appropriate sex education paired with instruction on how and when to say no to sex can help delay a young person's first sexual experience and help prevent unwanted pregnancies and STDs by improving condom and contraceptive use.¹

In contrast to effective sex education are abstinence-only programs that offer no information about how to prevent disease and pregnancy except to avoid having sex. Rigorous research on abstinence-only programs has shown that they do not delay the initiation of sex, do not increase the return to abstinence or decrease the number of sexual partners.²

The state of sex education

The sex education that our young people receive varies dramatically from school district to school district and school to school.

Local decision making has an important function. We can better equip and inform young people about what it takes to be healthy by ensuring that resources, support and guidance from our state public health and education systems contribute to the efforts of communities, parents and schools.

Sex Education in Minnesota

- No dedicated state funding source
- No state-wide health instruction standards
- No state graduation health requirement
- No consistent monitoring
- No state required health teacher training

Learn more

Read more about sex ed programs that have been rigorously evaluated and shown to work.

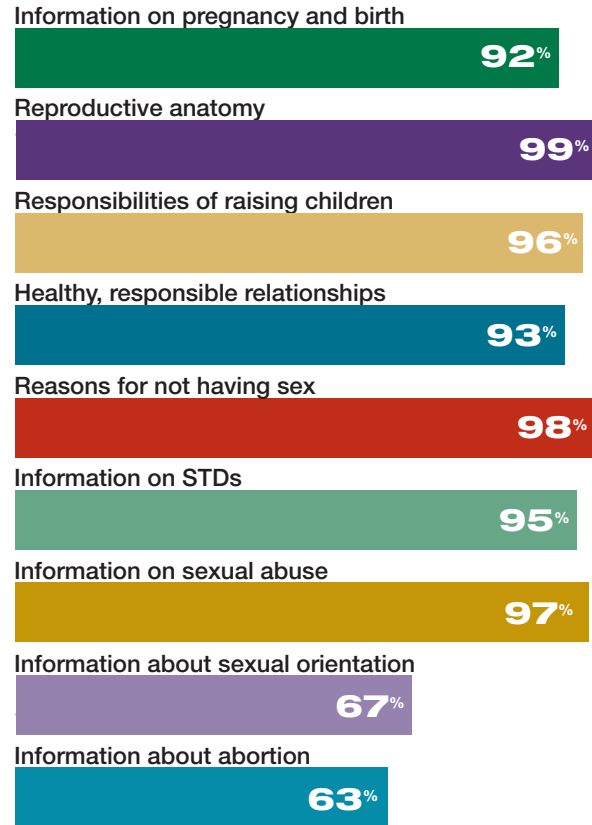
National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
www.teenpregnancy.org/works/default.asp

The Guttmacher Institute
www.guttmacher.org

What parents want taught

When asked what topics should be taught in sex education during school, parents supported a comprehensive list.

What should sex education in schools include?



Who was surveyed?

This phone survey was conducted from September, 2006 through March, 2007. The characteristics of this sample (1,605 parents) are similar to, although not entirely representative of, the Minnesota population of parents.

Gender		Income*	
Female	73%	<\$20,000	1%
Male	27%	\$20,000-<\$40,000	8%
		\$40,000-<\$60,000	22%
Race		\$60,000-<\$100,000	38%
White	96%	\$100,000 or more	32%
People of color	4%		

*Rounded figures = 101%

Religion	
Protestant	55%
Catholic	32%
Other/no religion	13%

Education	
HS or less	14%
Vocational/tech/business	12%
Some college or AA degree	24%
Bachelor's degree	34%
Graduate school	16%

Political orientation	
Very conservative	10%
Somewhat conservative	29%
Middle-of-the-road	33%
Somewhat liberal	20%
Very liberal	8%

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Healthy Youth Development
Prevention Research Center

DIVISION OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH & MEDICINE
 DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

¹ Bearinger LH, Sieving RE, Ferguson BJ, Sharma V (2007). *Global perspectives on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents: Patterns, prevention, and potential*. *Lancet*. 369(9568), 1220-1231.

² *Emerging Answers, 2007: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. Douglas Kirby, Ph.D and the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. November, 2007, p. 15