

# WHAT WE WANT



Minnesotans | Sexuality Education | Schools



# About the Survey

APCO Worldwide Public Affairs and Strategic Communications, based in Washington, D.C., conducted the Minnesota Sexuality Education Survey in April of 2000. The survey, polled 612 randomly selected Minnesota adults about their attitudes and opinions towards sexuality education. The survey included an oversample of 105 non-Caucasian residents. Funded by the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation, the statewide survey was the first comprehensive poll of its kind in the state of Minnesota.

Of those surveyed, 39% described themselves as conservative, 32.5% as moderate, and 22% as liberal in their political views. An overwhelming majority cited a specific religious preference (92.5%), with over half indicating that they attend a religious service at least twice a month.

Income levels also largely fell in the moderate range with almost 52% claiming annual household income between \$20,000 and \$60,000. Ten percent of respondents had incomes of under \$20,000 with 7% reporting incomes of over \$100,000 annually.

Of parents with children under 18 years of age, 27% had children between the ages of 6 and 8; 34% between the ages of 9 and 11; 35% between 12 and 14, and 36% between 15 and 18 years of age.

The ages of those surveyed ranged from 18 years old to over age 70 with 48% falling between the ages of 30 and 49 years of age. Sixty-five percent identified themselves as residing in the non-metropolitan areas of Minnesota, and 35% percent resided in the metropolitan areas.



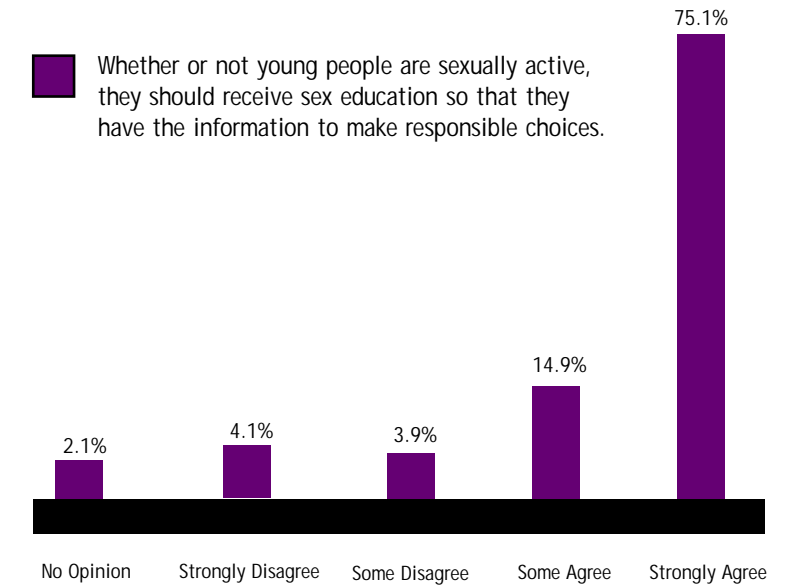
## KEY FINDINGS

The key findings of the survey addressed what topics should be taught, when youth should be taught, and whether public schools should take a leadership role in providing comprehensive sexuality education. Several key findings are below:

- 7 out of 10 Minnesotans believe that sexuality education should include information on both abstinence and contraception;
- Support for comprehensive sexuality education extends to all groups, including individuals that identify themselves as religious;
- More than 8 in 10 reject the idea that teaching both abstinence and contraception encourages young people to have sex;
- 9 out of 10 Minnesotans support sexuality education in high schools;
- 8 in 10 support sexuality education in junior high;
- More than half support sexuality education for children ages 9 to 11;
- Three-quarters of all Minnesotans want schools to be involved in referring sexually active teens to clinics that treat and prevent sexually transmitted diseases;
- Nearly 7 out of 10 want sexually active young people referred to family planning clinics;
- More than half want school personnel to make condoms and other forms of birth control accessible to sexually active students

# MINNESOTANS ATTITUDES on sexuality education

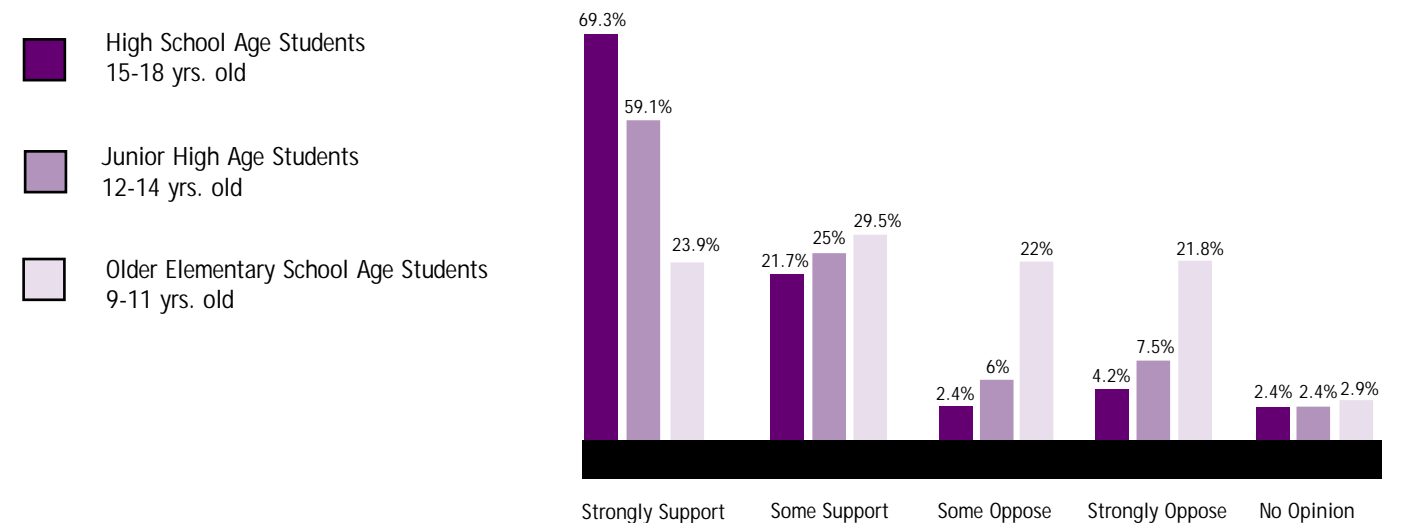
WHILE MINNESOTANS FELT STRONGLY THAT SEXUAL INTERCOURSE SHOULD OCCUR WITHIN A COMMITTED, MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP (54%) OR ONLY BETWEEN MARRIED PERSONS (41%), 3 OUT OF 4 OF THOSE SURVEYED BELIEVE THAT SCHOOLS SHOULD PROMOTE ABSTINENCE AND TEACH YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT CONTRACEPTION AND SAFE SEX PRACTICES. MORE THAN 8 IN 10 REJECT THE IDEA THAT TEACHING SEX EDUCATION ENCOURAGES YOUNG PEOPLE TO HAVE SEX.



Do young people receive information about sex, birth control and protection from sexually transmitted diseases at the appropriate time in their education? Survey respondents were divided:

- About the right time 36.2%
- Too soon 13.1%
- Too late 34.9%
- Unsure 15.9%
- Refused .2%

However, when asked whether they supported or opposed sex education being taught to elementary age students aged 9 to 11, junior high students aged 12 to 14, and high school students aged 15 to 18, survey respondents' opinions strongly indicated support for education at these grade levels:



Finally, young people's access to family planning clinics and forms of birth control garnered overwhelming support:

- 75.1% supported referral of sexually active young people to clinics that treat and prevent sexually transmitted diseases
- 67.8% believed sexually active young people should be referred to family planning clinics; and
- 54.1% supported making condoms and other forms of birth control accessible to sexually active young people



## SURVEY RESULTS COINCIDE WITH NATIONAL RESEARCH

In May 2001, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy released a new study, **“Emerging Answers.”** The study indicated that messages of abstinence from sexual activity coupled with medically accurate information about contraception reduced the teen pregnancy rate. The study demonstrated that sex and HIV education programs do not increase sexual activity or hasten the onset of sex. Rather, such programs often delay first intercourse, reduce the frequency of sex, and reduce the number of sexual partners.

Of the three rigorous studies of abstinence-only curricula, none “showed an overall positive effect on sexual behavior, nor did they affect contraceptive use among sexually active participants.” Indeed, sex education programs covering both pregnancy and STDs/HIV resulted in safer choices among teens, including the use of contraception or abstinence.



Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy,  
Prevention and Parenting  
1619 Dayton Ave. Suite 111  
St. Paul, MN 55104-8392

Phone: 651-644-1447

Toll Free: 800-657-3697

Email: [moappp@moappp.org](mailto:moappp@moappp.org)

Internet: [www.moappp.org](http://www.moappp.org)