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Section C

Sex Education in U.S. Public Schools
Discussions of Sex Education Topics with Parents among Females and Males Aged 15–17, 2002

Females

- Discussed how to say no to sex AND discussed birth control, condoms, or STDs: 53%
- Did not discuss any topics: 25%
- Only discussed how to say no to sex: 9%

Males

- Discussed birth control, condoms or STDs, BUT NOT how to say no to sex: 41%
- Only discussed how to say no to sex: 28%
- Did not discuss any topics: 23%
School District Sex Ed Policies Vary Widely by Region

Diagram showing the percentage of districts with policies across different regions.

- **North**: Abstinence as only option (20%), Abstinence as preferred option/contraceptives effective (70%), Abstinence as one option in broader sex education (10%)
- **South**: Abstinence as only option (30%), Abstinence as preferred option/contraceptives effective (60%), Abstinence as one option in broader sex education (10%)
- **Midwest**: Abstinence as only option (10%), Abstinence as preferred option/contraceptives effective (80%), Abstinence as one option in broader sex education (10%)
- **West**: Abstinence as only option (20%), Abstinence as preferred option/contraceptives effective (70%), Abstinence as one option in broader sex education (10%)
What Is Actually Taught in Sex Education

- There is a large gap between what teachers believe should be covered in sex education and what they actually teach.

Bar chart showing:
- HIV: Opinion 98%, Instruction 90%
- STDs: Opinion 99%, Instruction 90%
- Abstinence: Opinion 99%, Instruction 90%
- Birth Control: Opinion 88%, Instruction 70%
- Facts on Abortion: Opinion 99%, Instruction 70%
- Condom Use: Opinion 80%, Instruction 50%
- Sexual Orientation: Opinion 80%, Instruction 50%
Teaching about Contraception

- Many sex education teachers do not teach about contraception
  - One in four sex education teachers is prohibited from teaching about contraception
  - Four in 10 either do not teach about contraceptive methods (including condoms) or teach that they are ineffective
Teachers who teach the effectiveness of contraception are more likely to cover key prevention topics.
Most School District Policies Promote Abstinence

Districts with a Sex Education Policy

- 35% Abstinence as only option
- 51% Abstinence as preferred option/contraceptives effective
- 14% Abstinence as one option in broader sex education
The Effectiveness of Sex Education

- What do evaluations say about the effectiveness of sex education?
  - No evidence that abstinence without contraceptive education effectively protects teenagers
  - Contraceptive education does not encourage sexual activity

Addendum: The report was released in 2008 and showed no evidence of impact of abstinence education programs.
The Effectiveness of Sex Education

- What do evaluations say about the effectiveness of sex education?
  - No evidence that abstinence without contraceptive education effectively protects teenagers
  - Contraceptive education does not encourage sexual activity
  - There is considerable evidence that certain programs that include abstinence and contraceptive education help teenagers:
    - Delay sexual activity
    - Increase contraceptive use
    - Reduce number of partners