

As frequently occurs, the three top finalists in the June 2000 National Spelling Bee were homeschoolers

Facts about Home Schooling in America

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In 1996, the National Home Education Research Institute published the results of extensive research. The study, *Home Education Across the United States*, was based on collected data on 5,402 home school students obtained from 1,657 families for the 1994-1995 and 1995-1996 academic years. Nearly 6,000 surveys were sent to home school families. This, the largest, most comprehensive study of its kind ever completed, was compared with statistics obtained from the U.S. Department of Education and various State governments.

The full report can be obtained by contacting National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI), P.O. Box 13939, 925 Cottage Street, N.E., Salem, OR 97309 / 503-364-1490.

HOW MANY HOME SCHOOLERS ARE IN AMERICA?

There are approximately 1.23 million (1,226,000) American children being taught at home. This finding exceeds the total public school enrollment for the state of New Jersey, which has the tenth largest student population in the nation. This is an astoundingly large number.

There are more home school students nationwide than there are public school students in Delaware, Montana, Hawaii, Alaska, Vermont, Wyoming, North Dakota, Rhode island, and Montana. In fact, there are more home schoolers than in each of 41 U.S. States!

HOW WELL DO HOME SCHOOLERS SCORE ON NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT TESTS?

Why are an increasing number of parents choosing to home school their children? Because it works. Home school students excel on nationally normed standardized achievement exams in every field. **They consistently averaged 30 to 37 percentile points above public school pupils.**

Based on the average national percentile rank, here are the national average scores for both K-12 home schoolers and K-12 public school students:

TOTAL READING SCORE: Public School pupils averaged 50 percentile. Home School students averaged 87 percentile, or **37 points higher.**

TOTAL LISTENING SCORE: Public School pupils averaged 50 percentile. Home School students averaged 85 percentile, or **35 points higher.**

TOTAL LANGUAGE SCORE: Public School pupils averaged 50 percentile. Home School students averaged 80 percentile, or **30 points higher.**

TOTAL MATH SCORE: Public School pupils averaged 50 percentile. Home School students averaged 82 percentile, or **32 points higher.**

TOTAL SCIENCE SCORE: Public School pupils averaged 50 percentile. Home School students averaged 84 percentile, or **34 points higher.**

TOTAL SOCIAL STUDIES SCORE: Public School pupils averaged 50 percentile. Home School students averaged 85 percentile, or **35 points higher.**

TOTAL STUDY SKILLS SCORE: Public School pupils averaged 50 percentile. Home School students averaged 81 percentile, or **31 points higher.**

TOTAL BASIC BATTERY SCORE: Public School pupils averaged 50 percentile. Home School students averaged 85 percentile, or **35 points higher.**

TOTAL COMPLETE BATTERY SCORE: Public School pupils averaged 50 percentile. Home School students averaged 87 percentile, or **37 points higher.**

HOW DO LONG-TERM HOME SCHOOLERS COMPARE TO THOSE WHO ONLY HAD A FEW YEARS OF HOME SCHOOLING?

The longer a student is taught at home, the better his average scores become. For example, eighth-grade home schoolers, who have completed two or more years at home, score significantly higher than those who just complete one year of home school instruction.

As the following data reveals, a period of adaptation may occur when a student switches to homes schooling. Another factor is that home schooling increases the level of self-discipline and self-control—which are two very important learning factors and can help the student through-

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out his later life.

It is obvious, from the following statistics, that **students who spent the most years in home schooling gained the broadest knowledge base.**

1 YEAR: The achievement score for eighth graders who have only been one year in home school was 59 percentile points.

2 YEARS: The achievement score for eighth graders who have only been two years in home school was 86 percentile points.

3 YEARS: The achievement score for eighth graders who have only been three years in home school was 83 percentile points.

4 YEARS: The achievement score for eighth graders who have only been four years in home school was 87 percentile points.

5 YEARS: The achievement score for eighth graders who have only been five years in home school was 90 percentile points.

6 YEARS: The achievement score for eighth graders who have only been six years in home school was 90 percentile points.

7 YEARS: The achievement score for eighth graders who have only been seven years in home school was 92 percentile points.

8 YEARS: The achievement score for eighth graders who have only been eight years in home school was 90 percentile points.

IS STATE TEACHER CERTIFICATION NECESSARY FOR HIGH ACHIEVEMENT?

Critics of home schooling complain that parents are too ignorant to be able to teach children, and only state-certified teachers have the proper competency. But data from the study reveals quite the opposite!

The differential is only 3 percentile points between home school parents who have never been state certified and those who at one time were.

NEVER CERTIFIED: The home schoolers of parents who have never been certified achieved an average national percentile score of 85.

EVER CERTIFIED: The home schoolers of parents who have, at one time or another, been certified achieved an average national percentile score of 88.

PUBLIC SCHOOL CERTIFIED TEACHER: The students of certified public school teachers achieved an average national percentile score of 50.

DOES THE PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AFFECT THE HOME SCHOOLERS' ACHIEVEMENT SCORES?

The research study found that there was no appreciable difference whether the parents had graduated from college or had received a lesser amount of formal education—and this applied to both the father and mother of the home schooler. **All the home schooler score totals remained between the 80th and 90th level, regardless of the amount of formal education obtained by the parents.**

FATHER IS A COLLEGE GRADUATE: In those homes where the father has graduated from college, the home

schoolers achieved a percentile score of 87.

FATHER WENT BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL: In those homes where the father has some education beyond high school, the home schoolers achieved a percentile score of 80.

FATHER, A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE: In those homes where the father has graduated from high school, the home schoolers achieved a percentile score of 81.

FATHER DID NOT COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL: In those homes where the father has less than a high school education, the home schoolers achieved a percentile score of 79.

MOTHER IS A COLLEGE GRADUATE: In those homes where the mother has graduated from college, the home schoolers achieved a percentile score of 88.

MOTHER WENT BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL: In those homes where the mother has some education beyond high school, the home schoolers achieved a percentile score of 84.

MOTHER, A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE: In those homes where the mother has graduated from high school, the home schoolers achieved a percentile score of 80.

MOTHER DID NOT COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL: In those homes where the mother has less than a high school education, the home schoolers achieved a percentile score of 83.

Compare that with the public school teacher who has graduated from college, generally with a degree in professional education and has state teacher certification:

PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER: The pupils of college-educated public school teachers, especially trained in instructing children, achieved a percentile score of 50.

DOES THE PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AFFECT THE PUBLIC SCHOOL PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENT SCORES?

In striking contrast with the above findings, the situation in the public schools is quite different. **The amount of education obtained by parents of public school students deeply affects how well the student will tend to do in public school.**

Whereas the above home school data is for K-12, there is no comparable complete battery score for public school pupils. The following public school data are for eight grade writing scores and thirteen-year-old's math scores, based on tables from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics (November 1996). Here are the scores for public school pupils:

WRITING SCORES WHEN PARENTS ARE COLLEGE GRADUATES: When both parents averaged completion of college, the public school pupils averaged 61 percentile—which is 26-27 points below that of comparable home school scores.

WRITING SCORES WHEN PARENTS ARE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL: When both parents obtained some education beyond high school, the public school pupils averaged 56 percentile—which is 24-28 points below that of comparable home school scores.

WRITING SCORES WHEN PARENTS HAVE COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL: When both parents graduated from high school, the public school pupils averaged 43

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percentile—which is 37-38 points below that of comparable home school scores.

WRITING SCORES WHEN PARENTS DID NOT COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL: When both parents received less than a high school diploma, the public school pupils averaged 34 percentile—which is 45-49 points below that of comparable home school scores.

MATH SCORES WHEN PARENTS ARE COLLEGE GRADUATES: When both parents averaged completion of college, the public school pupils averaged 63 percentile—which is 24-25 points below that of comparable home school scores.

MATH SCORES WHEN PARENTS ARE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL: When both parents obtained some education beyond high school, the public school pupils averaged 54 percentile—which is 22-26 points below that of comparable home school scores.

MATH SCORES WHEN PARENTS HAVE COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL: When both parents graduated from high school, the public school pupils averaged 40 percentile—which is 40-41 points below that of comparable home school scores.

MATH SCORES WHEN PARENTS DID NOT COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL: When both parents received less than a high school diploma, the public school pupils averaged 28 percentile—which is 51-55 points below that of comparable home school scores.

WHICH DID BETTER: BOYS OR GIRLS?

Which did better in home schools: boys or girls? And how about public schools? The study consistently showed that **both boys and girls did far better if they received their education at home.**

HOME SCHOOL MATH SCORES FOR BOYS: Boys scored an average of 84 percentile in math.

HOME SCHOOL MATH SCORES FOR GIRLS: Girls scored an average of 79 percentile in math.

HOME SCHOOL READING SCORES FOR BOYS: Boys scored an average of 87 percentile in reading.

HOME SCHOOL READING SCORES FOR GIRLS: Girls scored an average of 88 percentile in reading.

PUBLIC SCHOOL MATH SCORES FOR BOYS: Boys scored an average of 52 percentile in math.

PUBLIC SCHOOL MATH SCORES FOR GIRLS: Girls scored an average of 48 percentile in math.

PUBLIC SCHOOL READING SCORES FOR BOYS: Boys scored an average of 43 percentile in reading.

PUBLIC SCHOOL READING SCORES FOR GIRLS: Girls scored an average of 58 percentile in reading.

DO MINORITY GROUPS DO AS WELL IN HOME SCHOOL?

The education of minorities is an ongoing problem in the public schools, but not in home schools. **Minority races learn very well in home schools.** The following statistics compare home schoolers to Virginia public schools—since that state keeps the records needed for this category. (Virginia State Department of Education.)

HOME SCHOOL READING SCORES: Home schoolers score high, regardless of race: White is 87% and minority

is 87%.

PUBLIC SCHOOL READING SCORES: Home schoolers score high, regardless of race: White is 61% and minority is 49%.

HOME SCHOOL MATH SCORES: Home schoolers score high, regardless of race: White is 82% and minority is 77%.

PUBLIC SCHOOL MATH SCORES: Home schoolers score high, regardless of race: White is 60% and minority is 50%.

DOES FAMILY INCOME DETERMINE THE HOME SCHOOLERS' SCORES?

Do home school children of wealthy parents score higher than those of smaller incomes? The study revealed that **family income had almost no effect on the achievement level of home schoolers.** Socioeconomic status is not a determinant of academic performance for home schoolers. **Regardless of the income level of the parents, home schoolers consistently score very high.**

\$14,999 or less: 87 percentile score.

\$15,000 - \$24,000: 83 percentile score.

\$25,000 - \$34,999: 82 percentile score.

\$35,000 - \$49,999: 83 percentile score.

\$50,000 - \$74,999: 87 percentile score.

\$75,000 - \$99,999: 85 percentile score.

\$100,000 - or more: 92 percentile score.

The above figures do not include capital expenditures, like buildings and land.

DO HOME SCHOOLERS DO BETTER BECAUSE THEIR PARENTS SPEND MORE MONEY ON THEIR SCHOOLING?

A resounding No. **Parents of home schoolers spend relatively little each year on their children's education; whereas, on average, nearly 10 times more is spent on each public school pupil. However, the home schoolers consistently averaged 35 percentile points above public school pupils.**

\$546 SPENT: Each school year, an average of only \$546 is spent on a home schooler's education; yet he is averaging 85 percentile achievement on the basic K-12 battery of standardized tests.

\$5,325 SPENT: Each school year, an average of \$5,325 is spent on the education of each public schooler in America; yet he is averaging only 50 percentile achievement on the basic K-12 battery of standardized tests. (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, for 1996).

DOES GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF SCHOOLS TAUGHT AT HOME IMPROVE THEIR SCORES?

Once again, No. **Home schoolers test scores were extremely high, regardless of the number of state regulations which were imposed.** Legitimate questions may therefore be asked concerning the purpose of strict state regulations on home schools, since there is no apparent effect on student learning.

HIGH REGULATION: In those states which apply a lot of regulations to home schools, home schoolers score 86 percentile on the standardized tests.

MEDIUM REGULATION: In those states which apply a medium amount of regulations to home schools, home schoolers score 85 percentile on the standardized tests.

LOW REGULATION: In those states which apply a low amount of regulations to home schools, home schoolers score 86 percentile on the standardized tests. According to the definitions used, "low regulation" states do not require parents to initiate any contact with the state.

HOW DO HOME SCHOOLING PARENTS SELECT THE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR THEIR CHILDREN?

This is an interesting question.

Most of home school parents (71.1%) handpick the instructional materials they will use and custom design the curriculum to best fit the needs of their children, their family lifestyle, and applicable government regulations.

Nearly 24% use a complete curriculum package, purchased from one of numerous providers.

Other options include enrolling their children in local private satellite schools or special programs. Some parents use more than one educational approach.

ARE COMPUTERS A PART OF HOME SCHOOLS?

Families which have home schools are far more likely to have a computer, and the students use it more often. Here are the findings:

HOME SCHOOLER HOMES WITH COMPUTERS: The percentage of these homes owning computers is 85.6%.

PUBLIC SCHOOLER HOMES WITH COMPUTERS: The percentage of these homes owning computers is 34.0%.

HOME SCHOOLERS USING COMPUTERS: The percentage of these homes in which the students use computers is 83.7%.

PUBLIC SCHOOLERS USING COMPUTERS: The percentage of these homes in which the students use computers is 26.0%.

DO HOME SCHOOLERS REALLY SOCIALIZE ENOUGH?

This is a special accusation which is frequently raised: Home schooled children are said to be treated like hermits, and surely must have unbalanced personalities. The truth is far different. In reality, **home schoolers generally are involved in a wide variety of outside activities with others, activities which are very worthwhile.**

- 8% of Home Schoolers belong to Scouts.
- 14% belong to 4-H clubs.
- 33% do volunteer work.
- 35% belong to Bible clubs.
- 42% attend classes outside of home.

47% take music lessons.

48% are involved in group sports.

77% attend Sunday or Sabbath School.

84% go on field trips.

87% play with people outside the home.

98% are involved in two or more activities.

DO HOME SCHOOLERS SPEND A LOT OF TIME WATCHING TELEVISION?

A home surely is a wonderful place to get a good education. **The self-control which home schoolers have developed from the classwork regime provides them with a strong learning incentive and work ethic. They are less interested in wasting time on television.**

94% of Home Schoolers spend under 3 hours a day looking at television; 6% spend more than 3 hours a day.

62% of Public Schoolers spend under 3 hours a day looking at television; 38% spend more than 3 hours a day.

DO HOME SCHOOLERS EVER GO TO THE LIBRARY?

Yes; for they have been trained to like study, learning, and self-improvement.

53% visit the library once or twice a month.

38% visit the library three to five times a month.

9% visit it six or more times a month.

We have no comparable statistics on public school students, but you can guess what they might be.

HOW LONG DO PARENTS PLAN TO KEEP THEIR CHILDREN IN HOME SCHOOL?

This is a measure of success. If the parents see that they are succeeding in helping their children morally, educationally, and socially because of home school, they are more likely to plan to continue it. **The following data reveals that home school parents are outstandingly successful, and they plan to continue it.**

89% of home schooling parents are planning to continue home schooling their children on through 12th grade.

6% of home schooling parents are planning to continue home schooling their children on through 6th through 8th grade.

3% of home schooling parents are planning to continue home schooling their children less than 6th grade.

2% of home schooling parents are planning to continue home schooling their children on through 9th to 11th grade.

The question is not whether home schooling works; the question is how much do you value your children? While you have them with you, give them the best!

Atheism, evolution, and homosexual methods are being taught in the public school. Do not throw your children to the wolves. Prepare them for heaven and for a worthwhile adulthood.

— vf