

HOME SCHOOL VS. OTHER APPLICANTS TO POSTSECONDARY  
INSTITUTIONS: ADMISSION POLICIES AND IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

by

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, 94 colleges and universities in Florida were surveyed to determine what their admission policies were for home school applicants. Forty-six colleges responded to the survey. The results of the survey were analyzed to determine if there was a pattern of acceptance based on institution type—public, private, or proprietary. Further, the admission policies were analyzed to determine the extent to which they complied with the National Center for Home Education’s (NCHE) recommend college admission policies for home school applicants.

The researcher found that public colleges were more likely to accept home school students than were private colleges. Also, public colleges had less stringent admission requirements for home school students than did private colleges. Further, home school admission policies in place in Florida’s public colleges were more likely to comply with the NCHE’s recommended admission policies for home school applicants.

In addition to reviewing college admission policies for home school students, the standardized test scores and grade point averages of home school and public school students enrolled in a Florida, public community college were compared. The standardized test scores compared were the College Placement Test (CPT) and the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT).

The researcher found no difference in the mean grade point averages of home school and public school students enrolled in a Florida, public community college. Also, the researcher found no difference in the mean CPT algebra, CPT reading, or SAT mathematics scores of home school and public school students. There was, however, a

significant difference in the CPT writing and SAT verbal scores for these two groups of students. Home school students scored significantly higher than public school students on the CPT writing and the SAT verbal tests.

To Richard and Caroline.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	American College Testing
CPT	College Placement Test
FACRAO	Florida Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
FPEA	Florida Parent Educator's Association
FTIC	First Time in College
GED	General Equivalency Diploma
GPA	Grade Point Average
HSLDA	Home School Legal Defense Association
NCHE	National Center for Home Education
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test

## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS CLARIFYING COMPONENTS

#### Introduction

Home schooling is an increasingly common phenomenon in the United States. As parents become dissatisfied with the services provided by the public schools, many of them are choosing to educate their children at home. Exact figures regarding the number of home school students in the United States are difficult to obtain as many home school families avoid mechanisms that would allow them to be counted (Hill, 2000). However, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that in 1999, there were 850,000 home school students in the United States (Bielick, Chandler, & Broughman, 2001). Bauman (2001) estimated that the number of home school students is approximately two million. The number of home school students is increasing at a rate of 11% per year (Cloud & Morse, 2001). Lines (2000) reported that the number of home school students in Florida is increasing at approximately 15 to 20% per year. Between the 1998-1999 and the 1999-2000 school years, the number of public school students in Florida increased from 2,335,681 to 2,381,860. Between the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years, this same number increased to 2,485,889 (Florida Department of Education, 2005). These figures represented an increase in Florida public school students of approximately two percent and four percent, respectively.

As more and more families choose to educate their children at home, the number of home school graduates will increase. Therefore, there will be a need for colleges to develop policies, or refine those already in existence, to address home school applicants

(Jones & Gloeckner, 2004). In 2002, 74% of the colleges that responded to the National Association for College Admission Counseling's survey of college admission practices reported that they had policies related to home school students (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2003). The National Center for Home Education (NCHE) has developed a set of recommended home school admission policies for colleges to use with this unique group of applicants (Home School Legal Defense Association, 1996).

The NCHE's recommended admission policies for home school applicants are:

1. Colleges should not require home school applicants to score higher than public school applicants on standardized tests such as the SAT or ACT nor should they require any additional standardized testing for home school applicants.
2. Colleges should have flexible transcript requirements for home school applicants and should supply home school applicants with a credit evaluation that can be used in lieu of a transcript, if necessary.
3. Colleges should recognize the validity of home school diplomas and should not require home school students to obtain accredited diplomas or obtain a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.
4. Colleges may accept a bibliography of high school literature and a student essay as admission criteria.
5. Colleges may review extracurricular activities and conduct interviews as part of the admission process for home school applicants (Home School Legal Defense Association, 1996).

## Problem Statement

In 1996, the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) conducted a study of the home school admission policies in colleges and universities in all 50 states. In 2002, the United States Department of Education (US DOE) issued a letter which stated that colleges and universities receiving Title IV, Higher Education Act (HEA) federal financial aid could admit home school students without losing their eligibility for financial aid (J. R. Andrade, personal communication, November 27, 2002).

In this study, 94 public, private, and proprietary colleges and universities in Florida were surveyed to determine their admission policies for home school students. The responses were compared to those from the 1996 HSLDA survey to determine if any policies have changed since the 2002 US Department of Education letter which informed colleges they could admit home school students without losing their eligibility for federal financial aid. Also, the policies were compared to the National Center for Home Education's (NCHE) recommended admission policies for home school students.

In addition to studying the admissions policies for home school students at Florida colleges and universities, the academic performance of home school students were compared to that of traditional school students at Brevard Community College in Cocoa, Florida. The students' standardized test scores and grade point averages were compared.

## Definitions

1. Home school—Instruction and learning that takes place primarily in the home with the parent acting as the instructor (Lines, 1991).
2. Public college—A postsecondary institution funded through state revenue.

3. Private college—A postsecondary institution which does not operate on state revenue.
4. Proprietary college—A private institution operated by its owners as a profit-making enterprise.
4. ACT—American College Testing; an assessment test used for determining academic placement at Brevard Community College
5. SAT—Scholastic Aptitude Test; an aptitude test used for determining academic placement at Brevard Community college
6. CPT—College Placement Test; a test used to determine academic placement at Brevard Community College
7. Dual Enrollment—The enrollment of high school, traditional or home school, in secondary and postsecondary school at the same time. These students earn both high school and college credit through dual enrollment classes and must meet certain grade point average and test score requirements.
8. Home School Umbrella Organization—Private schools established to provide accountability mechanisms, privacy from school districts, resources and equipment, and extracurricular activities for home school students (“Private/Parochial School Options,” 2003).

#### Delimitations

1. The data will be limited to public, private, and proprietary postsecondary institutions in the state of Florida.

2. The test scores and grade point averages will be limited to students at Brevard Community College.

#### Limitations

1. As only Florida postsecondary institutions will be surveyed, the results cannot be extended to postsecondary institutions around the United States.
2. As the home school and traditional school students studied will be from a community college, and community colleges have open-door admissions policies, generalizations regarding academic performance should be extended to community college students only.

#### Assumptions

1. It is assumed that the institutions surveyed will have admissions policies for home school graduates.
2. It is assumed that the admissions officers at the institutions surveyed will have current information regarding their home school admissions policies.
3. It is assumed that the admissions officers at the institutions surveyed will respond honestly and accurately.
4. It is assumed that home school students at Brevard Community College will be so identified in the student database.



## Conceptual Framework

As the population of home school students continues to grow, educators, college administrators, and educational policy makers need to have a better understanding of the home school movement and its participants. Understanding who these students, and their families are, will help the educational establishment to work with home school families for the improvement of education for all students.

The primary reasons home school families choose to teach their children at home are religious and academic (Bielick, Chandler, & Broughman, 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 2004; Ray, 2004; Van Galen, 1991). Home school families often disagree with the secular nature of the curriculum being taught in the public schools, and they feel that it is God's will that they teach them at home (Van Galen). Many families feel that the public schools cannot provide them with the same quality of education that they can provide in the home and, therefore, they choose to educate them at home (Bielick, et al., National Center for Education Statistics, Van Galen).

Most home school families in the United State are white, two-parent families in which the mother stays home to educate the children (Bielick, et al, 2001; Mayberry, Knowles, & Marlow, 1995; Ray, 1997). The majority of home school families are religious and classify themselves as "born again" (Ray, 1997).

Critics of the home school movement often question the socialization of home school children and wonder if the home school environment will prepare students to interact in the "real world." Researchers have found that home school children function socially as well, if not better, than traditional school students (Chatham-Carpenter, 1992; Ray, 1997; Ray, 2004; Shyers, 1992).

The academic achievement of home school students is often brought into question. Again, researchers have shown that home school students perform as well academically, if not better, than traditional school students (Ray, 1997; Ray, 2000; Rudner, 1999).

Most studies of home school academic performance have focused on performance at the secondary level. Less research has been done regarding home school students at the postsecondary level. Galloway (1995) found there was no difference in the preparedness for college between traditional school graduates and home school graduates as evidenced by their ACT English and composite scores and by grades in freshman English classes.

Researchers have found that college admission personnel view home school applicants in a positive light (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004; Prue, 1997). Admissions personnel expect home school students to succeed in college, both academically and socially.

While college admissions officers in general had positive opinions of home school applicants, making admissions decisions for home school students can be problematic (Prue, 1997). While there are some organizations which provide transcript services for home school students, many home school students do not have transcripts. Home school students do not have standard high school diplomas, and colleges may require home school applicants to obtain a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

The National Center for Home Education (NCHE) has recommended admissions policies for home school graduates. However, the extent to which colleges comply with these standards is unknown. In 1996, the NCHE surveyed colleges and universities from

around the nation to determine their compliance with its recommended policies. The results of the survey are posted on the NCHE website. Since the time of the NCHE survey, the United States Department of Education (J. R. Andrade, personal communication, November 27, 2002) issued a statement that postsecondary institutions could accept home school students without fear of losing their eligibility for Title IV funds. Therefore, the colleges which responded to this initial survey may have changed their home school admissions policies.

### Significance of the Study

This study serves as an extension to the Home School Legal Defense Association's (HSLDA) 1996 survey of college admissions policies relative to home school students. Rather than surveying colleges throughout the United States, the current study focused on public, private, and proprietary colleges and universities in Florida. This study determined if the recent clarification regarding home school admission and federal financial aid published by the Office of Postsecondary Education had an effect on colleges' admissions policies relative to home school students in Florida. After determining the extent to which Florida colleges and universities comply with the National Center for Home Education's recommended home school admissions policies, colleges will be able to use the results to help clarify home school admissions policy standards and, as a result, refine their own policies.

By comparing the academic achievement at Brevard Community College of home school and traditional school students, the researcher will be able to help determine if

there is a difference in the academic performance in community college between these two groups.

### Research Questions

1. What is the pattern, if any, of acceptance of home school students to Florida colleges and universities?
2. To what extent do Florida colleges' and universities' home school admissions requirements comply with the NCHE's recommended policy?
3. Is there a relationship between the colleges' home school admission policies and college type (public, private, or proprietary)?
4. Of the colleges that responded to the HSLDA's 1996 survey, to what extent have the admissions policies for home school students changed?
5. Is there a difference in the mean grade point average of home school students and public school students?
6. Is there a difference in the mean standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, or CPT) for home school students and public school students?

### Methodology

#### *Population*

To answer the first four research questions, the researcher created a survey, and the population that was surveyed were 94 colleges and universities in Florida. A total of 39 were public, 38 were private, and 17 were proprietary. The colleges were 58 four-year colleges or universities, and 36 two-year colleges. Of the two-year colleges 24 were

public, one was private and 11 were proprietary. Of the four-year colleges, 15 were public, 37 were private, and six were proprietary.

To answer research questions five and six, a random sample of 50 home school students and 50 public school students were selected from Brevard Community College's student database. These students were enrolled at Brevard Community College either as dual enrolled students or as first time in college students starting in the Fall 2002 semester.

### *Instrument*

The instrument used in this project was a survey, developed by the researcher and modeled after the HSLDA's survey, which was emailed to the admissions officers at the respective colleges and universities. The survey was created using Zoomerang, an online survey creation and implementation service. The survey was piloted at Brevard Community College, where 20 Student Services staff members were asked to complete it and give the researcher their feedback. Any necessary changes were made to the survey based on the feedback from the participants in the pilot study.

### *Data Analysis*

The results of the survey instrument were input into SPSS Graduate Pack version 11.5. The following statistics were run for each of the research questions:

Research Question 1: What is the pattern of acceptance of home school students to Florida colleges and universities?

Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the pattern of acceptance of home school students to postsecondary institutions in Florida.

Research Question 2: To what extent do Florida colleges' and universities' home school admissions requirements comply with the National Center for Home Education's (NCHE) recommended policy?

Descriptive statistics were used to determine the extent to which the respondents' admissions policies comply with the NCHE's recommended policy.

Research Question 3: Is there a relationship based on the type of college (public, private, or proprietary)?

A Chi Square Test of Independence was used to determine the extent to which the admission policies differ based on the type of institution.

Research Question 4: Of the colleges that responded to the 1996 Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) survey, to what extent have the admissions policies for home school students changed by type of college (public, private, proprietary)?

A Repeated Measures with one between factor test was used to determine if the admissions policies of the colleges that responded to the HSLDA's survey have changed from 1996 to the time of the survey.

Research Question 5: Is there a difference in the mean grade point average of home school students and public school students?

An independent t-test was used to determine if there is a difference in the mean grade point average in home school and public school students.

Research Question 6: Is there a difference in the mean standardized test scores (SAT, ACT or CPT) for home school students and public school students?

An independent t-test was used to determine if there is a difference in the mean standardized test scores for home school and public school students.

### Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 defined the study's problem statement, provided necessary definitions, described the study's delimitations, outlined the assumptions, and described the significance of the study. Chapter 2 will review the literature related to the topic of home schooling. Chapter 3 will describe the procedure used for data collection and analysis. In Chapter 4, the data will be analyzed and presented. Finally, Chapter 5 will present a summary of the research, its implications, resulting recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### History of Public Education

The history of the home school movement is best understood in context of the history of American public education. In Colonial America, the responsibility of educating children was left up to families, rather than schools (Spring, 1990). The development of the public schools was a result of political, economic, and religious factors. After the American Revolution, political leaders feared that excessive individualism would divide the newly established republic. Political leaders felt that the state should supercede family and church as the primary source of social values and education. The establishment of common schools would serve as a stabilizing force in an increasingly fragmented society (Kirschner, 2001; Parkerson & Parkerson, 1998). With the establishment of common schools, education was standardized, and children from all social groups were educated by government-run schools that espoused a common political and social ideology (Spring).

Another factor that contributed to the development of the public schools was the change in the American family, which resulted from economic trends. As the United States became more and more industrialized, the American family adjusted accordingly. Whereas in the past men in the family worked in or near the home, they increasingly worked away from the home in factories, businesses, and mines (Kirschner, 2001). This shift left women in charge of the home and in charge of their children's education. Often,



women taught other neighborhood children. The focus of the curriculum was Bible reading, writing, arithmetic, and values (Kirschner).

Other economic issues contributed to the creation of the common schools. Laborers supported the idea of public education as a way of uplifting the members of their social class. Public education would help prevent the wealthy from monopolizing social, political, and economic aspects of American life (Parkerson & Parkerson, 1998). Further, business leaders supported common education for all as a way of creating a better workforce. Managers wanted workers who were disciplined in such areas as punctuality and hard work, qualities that were promoted in the common schools (Parkerson & Parkerson).

The need for religious stability was another driving force behind the establishment of public schools. By the early nineteenth century, the United States had become increasingly religiously diverse. Religious and political leaders felt a need for a common civic morality. The Methodists, Evangelical Christians, and the Unitarians played key roles in the establishment of common schools to teach a common morality (Kirschner, 2001). A number of religious groups created schools in the United States during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Calvinists, Methodists, and Protestants were particularly influential in laying the foundation for the American common schools (Parkerson & Parkerson, 1998). As many religions were involved, Protestantism became the centralizing ideology and focus for the public schools (Kirschner).

As the public schools were established and more and more children were educated in the public schools, some parents became concerned that they were not in control of

their children's education (Kirschner, 2001). As school administration became more professional and the population of students grew, schools and school districts became more hierarchical. Teachers had to become certified in order to remain in their profession. As schools became more bureaucratic and organized, parents were no longer able to select the textbooks that their children would use in school. Rather, texts were systematically chosen for efficiency of instruction (Kirschner). All of these changes meant a loss of control over education from the family and the community.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of the progressive movement in education. Leaders of this movement felt that public education was doing a disservice to students and society by using meaningless learning methods, such as rote memorization. They strove for better teaching methods that would close the gap between societal needs and education. Some felt this movement would strengthen communities; others felt that it would make education more relevant to the world of work. "Although it was meant as a solution to the alienating aspects of modernization, the progressive legacy contributed to the problem. The family/school gap widened" (Kirschner, 2001, p. 153).

In the twentieth century, as the United State entered World War II, education came under attack. Critics argued that while public schools had taken over many domestic functions, they had left out religion. Others argued that education had become too bureaucratic (Kirschner, 2001). When historic events took place, however, the public turned to the public schools. After the onset of the Cold War and the launching of the Russian satellite, Sputnik, the public school curriculum shifted focus to math and science in order to ensure that the United States would technologically lead the Soviet Union (Spring, 1990). In the 1950s and 1960s, the public schools were instruments of racial

desegregation. By the 1970s, however, after the assassinations of President Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy, and the Watergate scandal, public confidence in governmental organizations and the public schools waned (Kirschner).

During this time period, the free school movement began to grow. John Holt, one of this movement's leaders, later became a leader in the home school movement in the United States. Kirschner (2001) described the free school movement:

It was a movement for a more holistic education. At its best, free schooling meant practicing such ideals as parental control, students and teacher involvement in actually running schools, personal engagement, a reaching out beyond school walls, and a linking of young and old. It was a counterculture challenge to the traditional, hierarchical model of school control that had emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and been institutionalized in the 20<sup>th</sup> by the conservative progressives.  
(p. 155)

Indeed, the free school movement, with its focus on parental control and challenge to bureaucracy, was a springboard from which the home school movement of the 1980s developed.

### History of Home Schools

Klicka (2002) wrote that home education is not a new phenomenon, but one that was the cornerstone of education in the early years of the United States. As indicated in the preceding section, early American parents taught their children at home either by themselves or with the help of a pastor. There were two primary purposes for home

education. The first was to teach literacy so that children could read the Bible. The second was to teach children vocational skills so they could be self-supporting (Klicka).

As grammar schools began to develop, they were privately run and were extensions of the home and church (Klicka, 2002). Public education did not develop until the 1840s in Massachusetts. The development of public education marked the shift in responsibility of educating children from parents to the state. “This shift...was the beginning of the decaying process of American education” (Klicka, 2002, p. 153). The recent return to home schooling began in the 1970s and gained momentum in the 1980s (Klicka).

The recent home school movement has its roots in the 1960s with the work of left-wing thinkers like Ivan Illich, Paul Goodman, A.S. Neill, and John Holt (Talbot, 2001). Jonathan Kozol and Allen Graubard suggested that parents frustrated with the public schools should create their own independent schools (Stevens, 2001). School reformers Herbert Kohl and James Herndon felt that schools were rigid, factory-like institutions whose bureaucratic tendencies deprived children of choices in education (Stevens).

One of the earliest advocates for home schooling was John Holt (Stevens, 2001). In his 1964 book, *How Children Fail*, Holt wrote that people are born with a natural desire to learn. He stated that this desire to learn can be observed in infants. However, as children grow up their desire to learn vanishes as adults teach them to fear being wrong. Further, the bureaucratic nature of schools and their focus on competition decreased children’s ability to learn (Stevens, 2001).

Holt urged parents to “un-school” their children by allowing them to learn only what came naturally to them through their day-to-day activities like home maintenance, car repair, and grocery shopping (Stevens, 2001; Talbot, 2001; Wise & Bauer, 1999). Holt promoted self-directed learning for children with the child determining what he or she was going to study (Stevens).

In the 1970s, Holt founded a magazine titled *Growing Without Schools* which served as a guide to parents in taking their children’s education into their own hands (Stevens, 2001; Talbot, 2001). Holt’s followers were the first of the recent home school families.

While Holt was leading the left-wing version of the home school movement, Raymond and Dorothy Moore were leading the cause on the right (Talbot, 2001). The Moores opposed the rigid nature of schools and felt children were developmentally unable to conform to the routines and formal instruction characteristic of school. For the Moores, it was not until a child’s vision, hearing, motor skills, and ability to reason were better developed could a child function in a classroom (Stevens, 2001). They called this level of development the integrated maturity level (IML). The Moores cautioned that there could be physical ramifications, such as vision impairments, to putting children in a classroom setting before they reached their individual IML (Stevens).

While Holt felt that schools deprived children of their ability to choose their own path of education, the Moores felt that schools undermined the authority of parents (Stevens, 2001). School authorities gained control of a child’s education, and parents lost control of their child’s education. At the same time, children who were enrolled in school became too easily influenced by their peers. Therefore, a child’s value system is

controlled by their peers rather than by their parents (Stevens). In the 1980s the Moores gained a following when they spoke on Dr. James Dobson's radio program *Focus on the Family*. For their followers, home schooling offered parents a way to control the curriculum their children were taught and to strengthen the influence of families (Talbot, 2001).

What started as a liberal response to formal education became a religious conservative way to preserve family values and control curriculum. By the 1990s, the home school movement was characterized by white, religious conservatives (Talbot, 2001).

In 1980, home schooling was legal in only three states, Utah, Ohio and Nevada (Klicka, 2002). With the inception of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) in 1983, home schooling became a legally viable alternative to public education. Since that time, the HSLDA has aided over twenty-five thousand home school families who have been questioned or prosecuted by authorities for educating their children at home (Klicka). As a result, by 1993 home schooling was made legal in all fifty states (Basham, 2001). However, each state has varying degrees of regulation imposed on home school families (Talbot, 2001).

Mayberry, Knowles, Ray, and Marlow (1995) wrote that there were five phases of the home school movement. These overlapping phases were contention, confrontation, cooperation, consolidation, and compartmentalization. The first phase, contention, was characterized by criticism of the public schools. This phase can be traced back to the 1930s when John Dewey's progressive education came under attack. It continued into the 1950s and 1960s when the public schools were criticized for their lack of attention to

rigor, particularly after the launching of the Russian satellite, Sputnik. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, this criticism continued with the work of public school critics, John Holt and Ivan Illich. In 1983, this criticism continued with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. During the 1980s, the public schools were blamed for the United States' economic decline in international markets (Mayberry, et al.). In the context of the criticism of public schools, the home schooling movement gained momentum.

The second phase was confrontation. This phase was characterized by judicial activity related to home schooling. "The courts' decisions dealt implicitly and explicitly with the rights of parents, the rights of states, and educational choice" (Mayberry, et al., 1995, p. 13). In 1972, in *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, the Supreme Court gave Amish parents the right to home school their children after the eighth grade. In *Perchemlides v. Frizzle* in 1978, the Massachusetts courts allowed parents to choose alternatives to the public schools that need not be equivalent to the public schools. The court also held that Ninth Amendment privacy rights protected parents' rights to choose educational alternatives. In other cases, *Scoma v. Chicago Board of Education* (1974) and *Delconte v. State* (1985), the courts ruled that home education must be equivalent to public schools. However, most courts have ruled in favor of home schools (Mayberry, et al.).

The third phase in the home school movement was cooperation. As the courts have typically ruled in favor of the home school families and litigation was expensive for the school districts, cooperation between home school families and school districts was much more common (Mayberry, et al., 1995). The cooperative relationship between the schools and home school families is characterized by more and more school districts allowing home school students to participate in public school activities and take

advantage of the services provided by the public schools. The school district in Salt Lake City, Utah, for example, allows home school students to enroll in special classes, like art and music, and use public school services, like the library (Mayberry, et al.).

The fourth stage of the home school movement, consolidation, was characterized by the large networks of home school families that exist in the United States.

“Networking...is probably the single most important factor in the continued consolidation of the home education movement” (Mayberry, et al., 1995, p. 19). Home school networks existed at the state, national, and international level. These networks provided support, instructional resources, political influence, and legal services to home school families. Another characteristic of the consolidation stage was the change in media coverage of home school families and their issues. Whereas media coverage between 1970 and 1979 portrayed home school families as extreme and irresponsible, more recent coverage portrayed them in a more positive light (Mayberry, et al.).

The fifth, and last stage, of the home school movement was compartmentalization. This stage was characterized by the fractionalization of home school families. Home school families were drawn to networks that reflect their own ideologies rather than those that reflect divergent views. Some networks served conservative, Christian parents, while others served more liberal, secular families (Mayberry, et al, 1995). While this compartmentalization seemed to have weakened the home school movement’s momentum and the families’ political clout, home school families continued to band together to defend and protect their rights to educate their children at home (Mayberry, et al.).



## Reasons for Home Schooling

There are many reasons that families chose to home school their children. Holt (1981) wrote that there were three reasons that parents chose home schooling. First, home school parents felt it is their responsibility to raise and educate their children, not the government's. Second, they did not want to give up their right to teach their children and watch them learn. Finally, they wanted to protect their children from the mental and physical harm that would come to them by enrolling them in the public schools.

Klicka (2002) wrote that God has given parents the responsibility and authority to educate their children. Children belong to God, and he has entrusted parents to teach them. As children belonged to God, parents cannot choose how they are raised; they must raise and educate them as God desired. The public schools' dearth of values and humanistic curriculum, therefore, made them a place where parents cannot choose to educate their children.

Klicka (2002) further wrote that by sending children to public schools, parents were "provoking" their children to "wrath." Further, when they sent their children to public schools, parents were not teaching their children "diligently" as is commanded in the Bible. Klicka wrote that the Bible indicated when children were taught by God, they would have great peace. He went on to state that parents whose children were enrolled in the public schools had chaotic homes in which children fought with one another and challenged their parents' authority.

According to Klicka (2002), public education is a waste of a child's mind as the child was taught to think secular, or man's, thoughts. Home schooling, on the other hand, afforded children the opportunity to think God's thoughts. Another negative

consequence of public education, and therefore, reason to home school, was the negative socialization found in the public schools. That negative socialization was manifested in gangs, drugs, immorality and crime (Klicka).

In summary, Klicka (2002) found that home schooling was the best way for parents to fulfill God's intent that they provided their children with an education. Sending children to the public school was fulfilling Satan's wishes. Klicka wrote, "No doubt that if Satan had his choice as to which school system he would want us to send our children to, he would choose the public school system" (2002, p. 117).

Stevens (2001) found that some families chose to home school their children in order to avoid negative influences found in the public schools. These negative influences included sexual activity, teenage pregnancy, violence, crime, drugs, and exposure to questionable ways of thinking like New Age philosophies. Further, some families chose to home school their children in order to avoid negative peer influence that tended to undermine parental influence (Stevens).

Wise and Bauer (1999) listed many reasons that families have chosen to home school their children. These reasons included: boredom in school; inflexible school schedules; long bus rides; academic failure; need for academic challenge; parent's work requires frequent travel; family schedule conflicts; health problems; pressure to conform to school norms; need for individual attention; desire to avoid peer pressure; too many distractions and too much noise at school; learning issues that are not addressed; intimidation by teachers or peers; rate of instruction is too fast or too slow; too much focus on extracurricular activities; better use of a gifted child's time; gifted and/or

different student feels alienated; overemphasis on popularity; loss of confidence academically.

Van Galen (1991) stated that there are two types of home school parents: ideologues and pedagogues. These groups home school their children for differing reasons. The ideologues were Christian fundamentalists who had specific values, skills, and beliefs they wanted their children to learn. These parents chose to home school their children for two reasons: “They object to what they believe is being taught in public and private schools and they seek to strengthen their relationship with their children” (p. 66-67). The ideologues believed that it is God’s will that they home school their children and that God intervenes in the teaching of their children. These parents felt that their qualifications to teach should not be questioned as God appointed them to teach their children (Van Galen).

The pedagogues were those who teach their children at home because they felt that they could do a better job than the public schools could (Van Galen, 1991). They were not opposed to the curriculum taught in the public schools, they simply did not think the curriculum is taught well. These parents typically were educated and had professional training in education. One important characteristic of this group was that they valued personal independence. They “actively question the professionalization and bureaucratization of modern society, and particularly of modern education” (Van Galen, p. 72-73). These parents saw home schooling as a political act (Van Galen).

Bielick, Chandler, and Broughman’s (2001) national study of home schooling found that, in 1999, 48.9% of those who home school their children did so because they felt that they could provide a better education at home. This same study found that

38.4% of home school families chose to home school for religious reasons. Other reasons included a poor learning environment at school (25.6%), family reasons (16.8%), to develop character/morality (15.1%), objection to what school teaches (12.1%), school does not challenge child (11.6%), other problems with available schools (11.5%), student behavior problems at school (9.0%), and the child has special need/disability (8.2%) (Bielick, et al).

In 2003, the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES) surveyed home school parents to determine their reason for choosing this educational alternative. The reasons these parents cited were concern over the environment in schools (31%), the desire to provide religious and moral education (30%), and dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction at other schools (16%) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).

Ray (2004) surveyed 7,306 adults who had been home educated for 7 or more years during elementary and secondary school years. One of the items on the survey instrument asked the respondents to indicate why their families chose to educate them at home. (The respondents were able to select more than one reason for home schooling; therefore, the totals exceeded 100.) “Can give child better education at home” was the most frequently cited reason for home schooling (79.5%). This reason was followed by “religious reasons” (76.7%), “teach child particular values, beliefs, worldview” (73.5%), “to develop character/morality” (69.2%), “object to what school teaches” (61.7%), “poor learning environment at school” (56.1%), “desire more parent-child contact” (56%), “individualize curriculum” (48.6%), “individualize learning environment” (46.7%), “believe parents should educate children” (41.8%), “desire more sibling-sibling contact”

(37.9%), “school does not challenge child” (33.6%), “closely guide their social interactions” (31.8%), and “safety of child” (31.3%).

### Home School Family Demographics

Between 1990 and 1991, 98% of the parents who home school their children were white (Mayberry, et al., 1995). During this same time, 60% of home school parents were between the ages 30 and 39. The majority of home school parents, 97%, were married. In this same study, 43% of home school parents had attended college or trade school and 33% had bachelors’ degrees. The parents were more likely than their traditional school counterparts to work in professional or technical jobs. Most of the mothers, however, were full-time homemakers/home educators. In this study, 57% of home school parents earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year (Mayberry, et al.).

Ray (1997) conducted a study of 1,657 home school families which included 5, 402 children. In this study, 96% of the parents were white; 1.5% were Hispanic and 1% were Asian Pacific Islander, or Oriental. Of the children who were home schooled, 94.9% were white, 1.2% were Hispanic, 0.9% were Asian, Pacific Islander, or Oriental, 0.4% percent were black, 0.4% were American Indian or Alaskan, and 2% were in the “other” category.

Ray (1997) found that 31% of home school fathers had bachelor’s degrees; 23% were high school graduates, 16% had some college; 15% had master’s degrees; and 7% had doctorate degrees. He found that 34% of home school mothers had bachelor’s degrees; 26% had some college; 26% were high school graduates; and 8% had master’s degrees.

Seventeen percent of the fathers in Ray's (1997) study were in professions such as accounting, nursing, engineering or banking. Another 17% of the fathers were in professions such as medicine, the clergy, or higher education. Eleven percent of the fathers were small business owners. Eighty-eight percent of the mothers in Ray's (1997) study classified themselves as homemakers/home educators. Only 16% of the mothers worked outside the home. The average number of hours these women worked outside the home was 14 hours per week. Twenty-seven percent of the families earned \$50,000 to \$74,999 per year. Another 25% earned between \$35,000 and \$49,999 per year, and 20% earned between \$25,000 and \$34,999 per year (Ray, 1997).

The majority of the families that participated in Ray's (1997) study were headed by married couples. Ninety-eight percent of the families fell into this category. Only 26 of 1,286 families were headed by single parents. Of these, 17 were headed by single mothers (Ray, 1997). Twenty-eight percent of the families had 2 children, 28% had three, and 19% had 4 children. The average number of children per family was 3.3 (Ray, 1997).

Ray (1997) surveyed home school families to determine their religious affiliation. He found that 83% of fathers and 86% of mothers characterized themselves as "born again." Twenty-three percent of the fathers and the same percentage of mothers were fundamental/evangelical. Nineteen percent of both fathers and mothers were Baptist, 9% were independent charismatic, 5% were Roman Catholic, and 0.3% were Jewish. One percent of the fathers and 0.5% of the mothers were atheist.

In a study conducted in 1999, Bielick, et al. (2001) found that approximately 75% of home school students were white. The majority of the students, 80%, lived in a two-

parent household. In approximately 52% of the households, only one parent worked. Many of the students, approximately 33%, lived in households with incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000, with approximately 31% of households with incomes at \$25,000 or less. In this study, approximately 34% of the home school students' parents had a vocational/technical degree or some college, while 25% had bachelors' degrees, and 22% had graduate or professional degrees (Bielick, et al.).

The demographics for home school students in the state of Florida were similar to those around the United States in that the majority of the home school students were white. Of the 47,151 home school students in the 2003-2004 school year, 55 % (25,797) were white. Three percent (1,616) were black. Five percent (2,515) were reported as "multi/other." Ethnic information was not reported for 37% (17,223) of Florida's home school students (Florida Department of Education, 2004).

### Size and Growth of the Movement

The number of home school students in the United States is increasing at about 11% per year (Cloud & Morse, 2001). In the 1970s, approximately 10,000-15,000 students were being taught at home. By 1983, this number grew to somewhere between 60,000 and 125,000 students. By 1988, there were between 150,000 and 300,000 students being home schooled in the United States (Lines, 1991). Bauman (2001) reported that the number of home school students was approximately two million. According to a study published by the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of home school students in the United States in 1999 was approximately 850,000 students (Bielick, et al; 2001). The National Center for Education Statistics later found

that in 2003, 1,096,000 students were being home schooled in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).

The number of home school students in Florida was on the rise as well. Lines (2000) estimated that the home school population in Florida was rising at about 15 to 20% each year. In the 1996-1997 school year, Florida had approximately 26,000 students enrolled in home schools. In the 2000-2001 school year, that number had risen to 41,128 students (Florida Department of Education, 2001). In the 2003-2004 school year, there were 47,151 home school students in Florida (Florida Department of Education, 2004).

While the number of home schooled students in the United States represents only 4% of the total K-12 population, the loss of students from the public schools to home schools translates to a loss of funding and a loss of public confidence. In Maricopa County, Arizona, 1.4% of school-aged kids, or 7,000 students, were home schooled. This translated to a \$35 million loss of funding for the county. In Florida, the 1.7% of the schooled-aged population who were home schooled represented a \$130 million loss of funding (Cloud & Morse, 2001).

Perhaps more significant than the loss of funding that the rise of the home school population represented was the loss of confidence in public education evident by the growth of home schooling. Often the parents who took their children out of public schools to teach them at home were the most articulate and affluent parents in the system. These are the parents who knew how to work with the schools to make positive changes. “But as the most committed parents leave, the schools may falter more, giving the larger community yet another reason to fret over their condition” (Cloud & Morse, 2001, p. 48). Community support of schools was critical to their success as much of the funding



for the schools came from property taxes. Without community confidence in the schools, it became difficult to raise property taxes to increase school funding (Cloud & Morse).

### Politics and Home Schooling

As the numbers of home school families in the United States has increased, so has their political influence. Home school families throughout the United States have banded together in a grass-roots movement to bring about legislative changes that are friendly to their cause. In the early 1980s, few states recognized parents' rights to educate their children at home (Farris, 1997). While only three states—Ohio, Nevada, and Utah—recognized this right, parents in other states home schooled their children at the risk of being prosecuted as criminals. In 1983, in an effort to provide affordable legal assistance to home school families and to lobby state and federal lawmakers, a group of home school families established the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). At the same time, many state home school organizations were being formed (Farris, 1997). The HSLDA has worked in concert with the state-level home school organizations to affect legislative change. As a result, by 1985, thirteen additional states passed home school bills (Farris). As of 1993, home schooling was legal in all 50 states (Basham, 2001).

In an effort to better influence politicians to their cause, the HSLDA has taken on multiple political issues. As a result, Michael Farris, founder of the HSLDA, was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1992. At that convention, there were only four or five home school delegates. When he attended the 1996 Republican

National Convention, he was one of approximately 70 home school delegates (Farris, 1997).

Leaders of the home school movement were not the only ones involved in politics. Home school students themselves have become increasingly politically active (Farris, 1997). Many home school students were involved in political campaigns by stuffing envelopes, going door-to-door, making phone calls, raising money, serving as precinct captains, and managing the polls for other candidates. One home school student in Virginia was elected the Republican Party chairman in Campbell County, Maryland at the age of 19. Other home school graduates ran for and won political offices and/or home schooled their own children (Farris).

Stevens (2001) found that the home school movement is divided into two major groups: the believers and the inclusives. The believers developed from the work of Raymond and Dorothy Moore and gained momentum and influence through the creation of the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). The believers were more politically conservative, usually affiliated with the Republican Party, and preferred a hierarchical organizational structure within family and the home school movement itself. The inclusives began with the work of John Holt and focused less on the will of parents and more on the individual needs of the child. The inclusives were politically more liberal than the believers and preferred a home school movement that is not structured or hierarchical in nature (Stevens).

While the believers and inclusives shared the same desire to teach their children as they chose, they differed in their social, political, and cultural views. Due to their more organized structure and united front, the believers have become the more visible of

the two home schooling groups. The unification of the believers has been manifested under the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), a prominent home school organization which provides legal services for home school families and lobbies on their behalf. Due to the prominence of the HSLDA, many people have categorized all home school families as religious conservatives (Stevens, 2001).

The inclusives, however, resented being categorized as religious conservatives because they home school their children. They were a more politically liberal group who felt that families, better yet children, should choose their own curriculum, and who did not wish to organize under a formal structure. Therefore, their identities have become overshadowed by the visibility of the believers (Stevens, 2001).

The division between the believers and the inclusives was evident in their 1994 opposition to H.R. 6, a reappropriation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). H.R. 6 would have allocated federal education dollars to school districts based on poverty levels. What home school families opposed was an amendment to H.R. 6 that would have required all states to ensure that their teachers were certified. Home schoolers, namely, the believers, feared that the teacher certification requirement would extend to home school families and, therefore, make home schooling illegal (Stevens, 2001).

After an unsuccessful effort by Republican Richard Armev to exclude home schoolers from the amendment, the HSLDA, led by Michael Farris, began a campaign to oppose H.R. 6. In one day, a warning message had been faxed to the organization's 38,000 members and to members of other home school organizations. The message urged members to immediately contact their member of Congress and voice their

opposition to the legislation. In addition to the faxed message, 60 HSLDA lobbyists made visits to every representative's office in the nation's capitol (Stevens, 2001).

While the believers frantically opposed H.R. 6, the inclusives were not panicked. After contacting the bill's sponsor, leaders on the inclusive side of the movement stated that the definition of "school" in the bill meant non-profit schools, not for-profit schools. Also, the legislation would apply only to schools applying for funds under the ESEA. In addition, the bill still had to pass the House and Senate before it would go into effect (Stevens, 2001). The inclusives were fearful that the HSLDA's lobbying efforts would do more harm than good, as it showed home schoolers as reactionary (Stevens).

The HSLDA worked with Armev to draft an amendment to H.R. 6. Their amendment stated the bill would not authorize any federal control of home schooling. The inclusives, however, opposed mentioning home schooling in the legislation as doing so might lead to further federal regulation. Therefore, the inclusives, through a coalition of home schooling groups, proposed to change one word in the bill, by adding the word "public" before school (Stevens, 2001). Ultimately, it was the HSLDA that was successful. With its well organized system, political connections, and substantial budget, the group was successful in spreading alarm about H.R. 6, mobilizing its members, and lobbying congress to support its cause (Stevens).

Many inclusives have a cautious approach to the HSLDA. In their book *The Well Trained Mind*, Wise and Bauer (1999) warned that the HSLDA may be offensive to some home school families as it was very Christian and Republican in nature and often promoted political candidates in its mailings. In a November, 2004 online discussion board regarding home schooling, the Akron Beacon Journal asked readers how they felt

about the HSLDA. While some home school readers responded they appreciated the HSLDA for the legal services they provided, other respondents were not as supportive. Some respondents stated that the HSLDA erroneously represented all home school families as Christian and Republican. They further went on to say that the HSLDA got involved in too many political issues that did not affect home schooling, like gay marriages. Also, some respondents stated that the HSLDA tended to make home school families paranoid about the state taking their children away from them because of their educational choice ([http://forums.prospero.com/kr-ohio\\_school/messages/?msg=33](http://forums.prospero.com/kr-ohio_school/messages/?msg=33)).

### The Academic Performance of Home School Students

Critics of the home school movement have questioned the academic performance of home school students. Studies have been conducted to assess the academic achievement of home school students based on their scores on standardized tests. These data were sometimes hard to gather as many home school families reject this method of assessment (Lines, 2000). Nonetheless, data were available. Lines (2000) wrote that home school students performed above and sometime well above average on standardized tests. Ray (2000) found that home school students often placed in the 65<sup>th</sup> to 80<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardized tests.

Ray (2000) wrote that many researchers have found no difference in the academic performance of home school students and public school students. Whether conducted on the local, state, national, or international level, studies have shown that home school students outperform publicly educated students (Ray, 2000).

Ray (1997) conducted a nationwide study of home school students to determine their academic achievement as measured by standardized tests. He found that 53.7% of 3,466 students had taken a standardized test in the last 24 months. The students in his study had taken the following tests in the following frequencies: Iowa Test of Basic Skills (728) , Stanford Achievement Test (581), California Achievement Test (304), Comprehensive test of Basic Skills (130), Metropolitan Achievement Test (52), Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (3), and other (154).

The average tests scores achieved by the home school students in Ray (1997) were in the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile for total reading, in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile for total language, in the 82<sup>nd</sup> percentile for total math, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile for total listening, the 84<sup>th</sup> percentile for science, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile for social studies, the 81<sup>st</sup> percentile for study skills, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile for basic skills (reading, language, and mathematics), and the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile for the complete battery. Ray (1997) pointed out that these percentile scores were compared to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, the average percentile for the norm group made up conventionally educated students (Ray, 1997).

A study was conducted by Rudner (1999) of over 20,000 home school students to determine their level of academic achievement as measured by The Iowa Basic Skills Test (ITBS) and the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP). The ITBS was taken by students in grades K-8, and the TAP was taken by students in grades 9-12. Rudner aligned the home school students' median scaled scores to the corresponding national percentile. Rudner found that the median test scores for home school students were well above the national norms in every subject and in every grade. The lowest percentile score for home school students was the 62<sup>nd</sup> percentile while the highest was the 91<sup>st</sup>

percentile. However, most percentiles were between the 75<sup>th</sup> and the 85<sup>th</sup>. Of course, the national median test scores fell into the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (Rudner).

Rudner (1999) also aligned the home schooled students' median scaled scores to the corresponding Catholic/private school percentile. In this comparison, the lowest percentile score for home school students was the 53<sup>rd</sup> percentile while the highest was the 89<sup>th</sup> percentile. Most percentiles in this comparison fell between the 65<sup>th</sup> and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. Rudner found that the performance of Catholic/private school students is above the national performance at every grade level. However, the performance of home school students is above that of Catholic/private school students at every grade level (Rudner).

In addition, Rudner (1999) found that home school students' test scores placed them in grade levels above their national counterparts. In the first through fourth grades, median test scores placed home school student in one grade level above their public and private school counterparts. This gap tended to widen as the students progressed through grade levels. In the eighth grade, home school students' median test scores were four grade levels higher than public and private school students' test scores (Rudner).

In addition to comparing the academic performance of home school students to public and private school student norms, Rudner (1999) compared home school academic performance among home school students based on the following variables: years of home schooling, type of curriculum, student gender, money spent on educational materials, family income, parent teacher certification, parent educational levels, and television watching.

Another finding of Rudner's (1999) study was that students who were home schooled their entire lives performed better academically than those who had been home schooled for only a few years. However, their academic performance did not differ based on the type of curriculum the family used or based on student gender. The amount of money spent on educational materials did make a significant impact on the students' academic performance. Students whose families spent \$600 or more outperformed students whose families spent less than \$200 per year. Family income was another variable that made a significant impact on student performance. Students in families with higher incomes outperformed students in families with lower incomes. Home school parents holding a teacher certification had no significant impact on the academic performance of home school students. However, parental educational levels did have an impact on student performance. Students whose parents had a college degree outperformed students whose parents did not. Like students nationwide, the less television home school students watched, the better they performed. Home school students, however, watched less television than students nationwide (Rudner).

### Socialization and Home School Students

One of the most common criticisms of home schooling was that this method of education did not provide students with the social skills needed to be successful in life. Research, however, has shown that home school students were as socially developed, if not more so, than traditionally educated students (Chatham-Carpenter, 1992; Ray, 1997; Ray, 2004; Shyers, 1992).



Shyers (1992) compared the social adjustment of 70 home school students with 70 traditionally educated students between the ages of 8 and 10 years old. Shyers compared the groups using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, the Children's Assertive Behavior Scale, and the Direct Observation Form of the Child Behavior Checklist. These instruments measured self-concept, assertiveness, and social behavior, respectively. Shyers found that there was no significant difference in the self-concept and assertiveness among the students based on the type of schooling they had received. However, home school students had significantly lower behavior problem scores on the Direct Observation Form.

Further, in watching the student play together, Shyers (1992) observed that the home schooled students were better at introducing themselves to other children than were traditionally schooled students. The home schooled students played well together, were cooperative, and quiet. At the end of the observed play period, the home schooled children exchanged addresses and phone numbers. The traditionally schooled children, on the other hand, did not introduce themselves to one another during the introductory period, but stayed to themselves. The traditionally schooled children did not play cooperatively in groups as the home school children did. The traditionally educated students became loud and agitated during the play session. At the end of the play session, the traditionally schooled children did not exchange contact information (Shyers).

Chatham-Carpenter (1992) studied 21 home school students and 20 public school students to compare their social networks, or all the people with whom the students interacted. While the students in both groups had statistically similar numbers of

contacts, the public school students had more contacts with their peers, and home school students had more contact with people who were older and younger than they were. The public school students had a greater frequency of interaction with a larger number of contacts than did the home school participants.

Chatham-Carpenter (1992) also studied the types of relationships that home school and public school students had. Public school students had more contacts labeled “friend” or “classmate,” while home school students had more contacts labeled “family members.” Interestingly, both the public and home school students in Chatham-Carpenter’s study ranked parents more highly than peers in terms of closeness and supportiveness. Public school students ranked peers more highly than parents on the following items: how often they go to this person for advice, overall supportiveness, this person comforts me in times of trouble, this person encourages me to try new things, and this person lets me make my own plan, even if I might make mistakes.

Based on the results of her research, Chatham-Carpenter (1992) concluded that while public school students did rely on their peers more than home school students did, public school students also relied upon their parents for support.

Ray (1997) surveyed 1,657 home school families and 5,402 home school children to determine home school students’ academic achievement and social activities. Eighty-seven percent of the students in his study played with people outside the family; 84% took field trips; 77% attended Sunday school; 48% participated in group sports; 47% took music lessons; 42% took classes with student outside the home; 35% were in Bible clubs; 34% were in a ministry; 33% volunteered with people.

In the same study, Ray (1997) asked the participants how much time they spent playing video or computer games and watching television. Forty-six percent of the participants played no video or computer games on the weekdays, and 41% played none on the weekends. Forty-two percent played video or computer games for less than one hour per day on the weekdays, and 38% played them for less than one hour per day on the weekends.

Eighteen percent of the home schooled students in Ray's (1997) study watched no television on the weekdays, and 10% watched none on the weekends. Thirty-five percent watched less than one hour per day on the weekdays, and 23% watched less than one hour on the weekends. Twenty-seven percent watched one to less than two hours of television per day during the week, and 27% watched the same amount on the weekends. Fifteen percent watched two to less than three hours of television during the week, while 25% watched the same amount on the weekends. Five percent watched three to less than five hours per day during the week, and 13% watched three hours to less than five on the weekends. Finally, one percent of the students watched five or more hours of television per day during the week, and three percent watched more than five hours per day on the weekends (Ray, 1997).

Compared to the home school students in Ray (1997), students around the country were watching more television. Shann (2001) surveyed 1,583 middle school students from traditional schools and found that 30% of the participants watched four or more hours of television after school each day. Eighteen percent watched three hours, 22% watched two hours, 19.5% watched one hour, and 10% watched none. On average,

children in the United States watch four hours of television each day (“What Are Your Kids Watching?” 2002).

Ray (2004) surveyed over 7,000 adults who had been home schooled for at least seven years during elementary and secondary school to determine their level of community and civic involvement. The average age of the respondents was 21. Ray (2004) found that 71% of the home schooled adults in his survey participated in ongoing community service. Only 39% of the general population participated in ongoing community service (Nolin, Chapman, & Chandler, 1997). Further, Ray (2004) found that 88% of home schooled adults were members of an organization, whether it was a professional, religious, community, or home school group. Comparatively, 59% of adults in the United States were members of an organization (Nolin, Chapman, & Chandler).

#### Partnerships with School Districts

In order to enhance the educational experiences of their children, many home school families have taken advantages of partnerships with school districts. Home school children have taken specialized classes like music, art, and drama through their local school districts. Some home school students have participated in extracurricular activities like sports (Kantrowitz, Wingert, Springen, Foote & Gwartney, 1998; Pawlas, 2001; Terpstra, 1994).

Terpstra (1994) found that legislation enacted in 1991 in Iowa allowed home school students in that state to enroll in their school district in order to take academic classes, participate in extracurricular activities, and to use services offered by the school district. Home school students in Iowa have enrolled in special classes like art, chorus,

band, and PE. The partnership programs in one Iowa school district allowed home school students to participate in extracurricular activities, to access textbooks, to participate in standardized testing, and to participate in enrichment programs. Also, the same school district offered seminars on how to more effectively educate students at home and hosted mentoring programs for home school families (Terpstra).

According to the Home School Legal Defense Association (2004), fourteen states have passed laws enabling home school students to participate in public school classes or sports. These states included Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Washington. In many cases, the home school students had to meet certain criteria in order to participate in these activities. The home school students had to be in compliance with state law. The students had to meet the same eligibility criteria as public school students. Finally, the students had to prove they were passing their core subjects in order to participate. Many home school advocates found these requirements to be too intrusive and felt that complying with the requirements would jeopardize their home school freedoms (Home School Legal Defense Association, 2004).

Home school student participation in public school activities has presented complications for public school advocates as well. Public school issues included the lack of state funding to cover school district expenses for home school students. Home school student participation meant that teachers had more students in their classes, so there was a burden for teachers and the school schedule. Others public school advocates felt that home school students had no place in the public schools (Terpstra, 1994).

When Idaho passed legislation allowing home school students to participate in public school activities, the Idaho High School Activities Association, made up of school principals, threatened to lower eligibility standards for public school students. A few months before the legislation was passed, the same group voted to keep home school students from participating in public school activities as there was no mechanism in place to ensure they were meeting the same academic and attendance standards to which public school students were held (Brockett, 1995). When the initial legislation was enacted, home school students had to demonstrate academic proficiency by obtaining a high score on a certain form of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. The legislation was amended in 2002 to expand the ways in which home schooled students could prove their academic progress. In order to participate in extracurricular activities, home schoolers could submit a portfolio or use any nationally normed test or a state proficiency test to prove they were working at grade level (Home School Legal Defense Association, 2002).

### Home Schooling and the Use of Technology

The Internet has enhanced the home school experience and made more educational resources readily available to home school students (Farris & Woodruff, 2000; Pawlas, 2001; Pearson, 2002). Pearson wrote that technology, particularly the Internet, has made home school families in rural areas less dependent on community services and better able to access learning materials. However, home school families without a computer with Internet access could use community resources like libraries, schools, and community centers to gain Internet access (Pearson). Ray (1997) found that

86% of home school families have a computer in their home, and 84% use the computer to aid in the education of their children.

Not only did the Internet provide instant access to information, it provided access to distance learning instruction offered through educational services and schools.

Michael Farris, Chairman of the Home School Legal Defense Association, offered an online constitutional law class to home school students at the high school level (Farris & Woodruff, 2000).

Escondido Tutorial Services offered a classical curriculum online through which students participated in live audio discussions. Instructors taught classes on location in Europe and students were able to view pictures of relevant material taken by a digital camera (Farris & Woodruff, 2000). Some universities offered online independent study courses for high school credit (Pearson, 2002).

In 1997, the Internet Home School was founded. Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, this online educational service provided elementary and secondary home schooled students with access to online courses in math, science, foreign language, science, social science, English, health, computer science and art history. Fees for this service ranged from \$150 to \$215 per month (Cook, 1999; <http://www.internethomeschool.com/>).

Allison (1997) conducted a study of 103 home school families, representing 137 students, to determine how they used the computer and online technologies. She found that 70% of the home school families surveyed owned computers while only 16.5% of the families had internet access. All of the families with internet access used the computer for e-mail purposes while 92% used it for information purposes. Sixty-eight

percent of the families used the internet for recreational purposes. Only 6.5% of the home school families used the internet for educational classes. Interestingly, families who chose to home school their children for religious reasons were more likely to own a computer than those who chose home schooling for other reasons, but they were less likely to have access to the Internet (Allison).

### College Admission and Home Schooling

#### *Factors in College Admission*

Prior to 1900, colleges and universities throughout the United States had unique admissions requirements. In colonial America, Harvard required knowledge of classical languages and culture. As time passed, Harvard required additional subjects like geography, algebra, geometry, and ancient history (Boyer, 1987). Other colleges, like Princeton University, University of Michigan, University of California, and Antioch College, all required different educational backgrounds for their applicants. These differences made preparing high school graduates for college quite difficult. In 1900, however, the College Entrance Examination Board was established with the intent of standardizing a college-preparatory curriculum for all colleges in the United States. As a result, colleges required a core of nine subjects. This standardization, however, did not last, and colleges varied from the standardized core or eliminated a college-preparatory curriculum entirely (Boyer).

In 1985, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching conducted a study of both public and private American colleges and determined the percentage of colleges that required particular courses as part of a college-preparatory curriculum. For



the public colleges, 71% required English, 61% required mathematics, 39% required biological sciences, 52% required social studies, 43% required physical sciences, and 15% required foreign languages. For the private colleges, 72% required English, 68% required mathematics, 53% required biological sciences, 64% required social studies, 52% required physical science, and 33% required foreign language (Boyer, 1987).

In this same study, the Carnegie Foundation found that most colleges and universities required standardized testing for admission to their institutions. This testing requirement could either be met with the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Testing Program (ACT). While colleges may have required this testing, however, the Foundation found that most colleges did not place much emphasis on these tests, despite the public's perception of their importance. At all but one of the colleges surveyed, grade point average or class rank was more important than standardized test scores in the admission decision (Boyer, 1987).

A third criterion for college admission, as determined by the Carnegie Foundation's study, was the applicant's personal characteristics as evidenced by extracurricular activities. While colleges might have considered these characteristics, however, they were the least important factors in admission decisions (Boyer, 1987).

In 2002, the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) conducted a study of American colleges regarding their admission policies. In this study, 76% of colleges ranked "grades in college prep courses" as a considerably important factor in college admission. "Standardized admissions tests" came in second with 57% of colleges ranking this as a considerably important factor. These factors were followed by "grades in all courses" and "class rank," which were ranked by 50% and 35% of colleges,

respectively, as considerably important factors in college admission (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2003). This study mirrored what the Carnegie Foundation found in 1985 regarding the importance of high school grades in college admission decisions.

Respondents to the NACAC survey indicated that student essays, letters of recommendation, and extracurricular activities were less important in admission decisions. Of the colleges surveyed, 19% ranked “essay or writing sample” as considerably important; 16% ranked “counselor recommendation” as considerably important; 14% ranked “teacher recommendation” as considerably important; and only 7% ranked “work/extracurricular activities” as considerably important (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2003). Again, this study was consistent with the 1985 Carnegie Foundation’s study, which found that a student’s personal characteristics were the least important factor in admission decisions.

#### Home School Students and College Admission

The 1985 Carnegie Foundation’s study and the 2002 study conducted by the National Association for College Admission Counseling highlighted the importance of high school grades for admission to college. This trend can be problematic for home school students, as most do not have standardized transcripts as are generated by public and private schools. Cohen (2000) recommended that home school families create master transcripts, which could aid college admissions officers when making admission decisions.

In the same 2002 National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) survey referenced above, 39% of the respondents indicated an increase in the number of home school students applying to their colleges. As a result of this increase in home school applicants, an increased number of the institutions have home school admission policies. In 2000, 52% of the colleges surveyed had home school admissions policies. By 2002, that percentage increased to 74% (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2003).

Jones and Gloeckner (2004) surveyed 159 admissions officers at four-year colleges and universities from 12 states to determine if their institutions had admissions policies for home school students, what those policies were, and what were the admissions officers' perceptions of home school students. Fifty-five of the admissions officers responded to the survey. The researchers found that 74.5 percent (41 respondents) of the colleges surveyed had admissions policies for home school students.

Jones and Gloeckner (2004) asked the respondents to rank the level of importance in the admission of home school students of certain admission criteria. These criteria included standardized test scores (ACT or SAT), essay, GED, letters of recommendation, personal interviews, and portfolios. Forty-three of the respondents indicated that ACT or SAT scores were the most important factor in the admission of home school students. The essay was required by 39 of the colleges and universities and ranked second in importance. The GED was required by 37 of the college and universities and was ranked as third important. Letters of recommendation were required by 40 of the schools and ranked fourth in importance. The personal interview was required by 37 of the schools

and ranked second to last in importance. Finally, the portfolio was required by 33 of the schools and ranked last in importance (Jones & Gloeckner).

The National Center for Home Education (NCHE), a division of the Home School Legal Defense Association, has issued recommended college admissions policies relative to home school students. These policies included: Not requiring higher test scores on the ACT, SAT, or other standardized tests; supplying home school graduates with a home school credit evaluation in lieu of a transcript; recognizing the validity of home school diplomas; not requiring home school applicants to obtain a GED; accepting a bibliography of high school literature and a student essay as a reflection of the student's skills; and evaluating extracurricular activities and interviews as a way of measuring student proficiency (Home School Legal Defense Association, 1996).

Until 2002, some colleges and universities were hesitant to admit home school students to their institutions, as they feared that doing so would jeopardize their eligibility for federal financial aid. The Higher Education Act (HEA) required that colleges and universities admit only students who had obtained an equivalent to a high-school diploma (Morgan, 2003). After lobbying the Bush administration, however, the HSLDA's Chris Klicka and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Postsecondary Education, Jeffery Andrade, wrote a clarifying letter to postsecondary institutions receiving federal aid. In this letter, Andrade stated that colleges and universities could accept home school students without fear of losing their eligibility for Title IV, HEA federal financial aid (J. R. Andrade, personal communication, November 27, 2002).

### Performance in College by Home School Students

Ray (2004) found that 75% of adults who had been home schooled had completed some college courses or higher. At the same time, only 51% of adults in the general population had completed some college courses. In this study, approximately 46% of home schooled adults had some college but no degree compared to 19% in the general

population. Almost nine percent of home schooled adults had associates degrees compared to approximately eight percent of the general population. Approximately 15% of home schooled adults had bachelor's degrees, and just over 16% of the general population had bachelor's degrees. Three percent of home school graduates had graduate or professional coursework with no degree compared to zero percent in the general population. Almost two percent of home schooled adults had master's degrees compared to approximately 6 percent in the general population. Less than one percent of home school adults had doctorate or professional degrees compared to just over one percent in both areas in the general population. It is important to note that the average age of the home schooled adults in this study was 21 while the adults in the general population is higher at about 35 years of age (Ray, 2004).

Galloway (1995) conducted a study of 180 freshmen at a large Christian university in the Southeast to determine if there was a difference in the academic performance of home school graduates and graduates of public and private school graduates. The participants' ACT English sub-scores and ACT composite scores were compared as was their performance in their college English course. While there was no significant difference among the three groups in their performance in their English course and ACT composite scores, the home school graduates performed significantly higher on the ACT English sub-test than the other two groups. Galloway concluded that home school graduates and traditional high school graduates demonstrated similar preparedness for and achievement in college.

### Perceptions of Home School Students by College Officials

In their 2004 study of 55 college and university admissions officers, Jones and Gloeckner (2004) sought to determine what college admissions officers' perceptions were of home school applicants. The participants were asked how successful they expected home school students to be in their first year of college compared to traditional high school graduates. Twenty-two percent of the respondents expected the home school students to be more successful than traditional high school students. Fifty-six percent expected them to be as successful as traditional high school graduates. Two percent expected the home school graduates to be less successful than traditional high school graduates (Jones & Gloeckner).

Another question Jones and Gloeckner (2004) asked the admissions officers was how they expected home school graduates' first-year grade point averages to compare to their traditional high school graduate counterparts'. Twenty-six percent expected the home school graduates to have higher grade point averages after the first year of college. Fifty-two percent expected the home school graduates and traditional high school graduates to have roughly the same first-year grade point averages. Interestingly, all the admissions officers from institutions affiliated with a religious group expected the first-year grade point averages of home school and traditional high school students to be about the same. Only about half of the respondents from public and private institutions expected the two groups to have similar first-year grade point averages (Jones & Gloeckner).

Jones and Gloeckner (2004) asked the participants to rank their expectations for the comparative first-year retention rates of the home school graduates and traditional

high school graduates. Twenty-two percent expected the home school graduates to have higher first-year retention rates than the traditional high school graduates, and 45% expected the two groups to be the approximately the same.

When asked to compare the number of credit hours they expected the home school and traditional high school graduates to have earned after their first year in college, 65% of the respondents expected the two groups to have earned about the same number of credit hours. Twenty percent of the respondents expected the home school graduates to have earned more credit hours in the first year. One respondent expected the home school graduates to have earned fewer credit hours (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004).

Jones and Gloeckner (2004) asked the college admissions officers if they would encourage home school graduates to attend a community college prior to enrolling in a four-year college or university. Seventy-two percent of the participants responded that they would not encourage home school graduates to attend a community college prior to a four year college or university. Sixteen percent stated that they would prefer the home school students to attend a community college first.

Finally, Jones and Gloeckner (2004) addressed the perceived social skills of home school graduates. The researchers asked how the college admissions officers expected home school graduates to cope socially in their first year of college. While 43% expected the home school graduates to cope as well as the traditional high school graduates, 35% did not expect home school graduates to cope as well as their traditional high school counterparts.

Prue (1997) surveyed 210 admissions officers from colleges around the United States regarding their knowledge of home schooling, their attitudes regarding home

schooling, their experiences with home schooled applicants, and, if established, what were their institutions' home school admissions policies. The participants in the survey were not familiar with the number of students being home schooled across the county nor were they familiar with the legality of home schooling. They were, however, familiar with the primary reasons that parents chose to home school their children.

Another area that Prue (1997) addressed was the college admissions officers' attitudes towards home schooling, specifically parental responsibility and societal impact. In general, the participants felt that parents had the right to educate their children as they chose. They felt parents had the right to decide which values should be taught and that the teaching of values is the parents' responsibility only. They felt that parents should remove their children from undesirable peer groups. While they felt that secondary grade children can be instructed adequately at home, they felt that parents were not their children's best motivators or evaluators. Finally, the admissions officers felt that the home school movement would have a significant impact on higher education, and as they interacted with more home school students, their perceptions of the movement would become more positive.

Prue (1997) also sought to determine the college admissions officers' prior experience with home school students. The admissions officers reported they believed that home school students were prepared to succeed in college on academic, emotional, and social levels. They felt that parental involvement helped home school students. Further, they felt that while evaluating home school students' preparedness for college was problematic, this task was not impossible.



Finally, Prue (1997) determined which of the participating institutions had admissions policies for home school students and asked these respondents to describe their policies. While 67 institutions had home school admissions policies, 21 of the participants provided copies of their policies. Most of the respondent's institutions required standardized test scores, a diploma, transcripts, and proof of high school graduation. Some institutions required the students to obtain a GED or have their high school course work evaluated. Many of the schools required home school students to provide documentation that they completed a certain number of hours of instruction in specific subject areas like math, English, or science with labs. Some of the schools required home school students to take additional standardized testing, like the SAT II.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the admissions policies for home school students who apply to Florida's colleges and universities. These policies were compared to the National Center for Home Education's (NCHE) recommended college admissions policies for home school students to determine the extent to which Florida institutions comply with the NCHE's recommendations. A further purpose of this study was to compare the academic performance of home school and traditional school students in a Florida, public community college.

#### Population

The population that was sent the home school admissions policy survey were 94 colleges and universities from Florida. Thirty-six of these colleges were two-year institutions, and 58 were four-year institutions. Twenty-four of the two-year institutions were public, one was private, and 11 were proprietary. Fifteen of the four-year institutions were public, 37 were private, and six were proprietary. The institutions to which the survey was sent were selected from the College Handbook, 2002, 39<sup>th</sup> edition. This handbook of colleges was published by the College Board.

A second purpose of this study was to compare the academic performance in college of home school and public school students. To that end, 50 home school students and 50 public school students were identified. Forty-eight of the home school students

were high school dual enrolled students, and two were first time in college (FTIC) students. Twenty-three of the public school students were high school dual enrolled students, and 27 were FTIC students.

### Setting

The home school and traditional school students whose grade point averages and tests scores were examined in this study attended Brevard Community College. Brevard Community College was a comprehensive, public community college located in Brevard County which spans 72 miles along the east coast of central Florida. In 2005, Brevard Community College had approximately 14,000 college credit students. There were campuses in Titusville, Cocoa, Melbourne, and Palm Bay as well as a Virtual Campus which provided online and televised courses.

Brevard Community College had a large dual enrollment population of approximately 2,000 students. This number represented the largest dual enrollment population among the 28 Florida community colleges.

### Research Instrument

In order to determine the home school admissions policies among the Florida colleges and universities, a 25-item survey was created using Zoomerang.com, an online survey service. The items on this survey were based on the NCHE's recommend college admissions policies for home school students. An electronic survey was selected for this study as college admissions officers use e-mail as their primary method of communication, and the survey could be easily completed online.

There were three major sections of this survey. In the first section, the participants had to indicate whether or not they were at least 18 years old. Also, they indicated if their institutions accepted home school applicants. If they indicated they were at least 18 years old and that their institutions accepted home school students, they went on to the second section. In the second section, there were 19 questions relating to the institutions' home school admissions policies. The items in this section corresponded to the NCHE's recommended home school admissions policies. The third, and final, section of the survey was the college demographic information—institution name, highest degree offered, and religious affiliation.

### Methodology

To determine the home school admissions policies in place at Florida's college and universities, an electronic survey was sent via email to admissions officers at 94 institutions. Institution names and the admissions officers' names and email addresses were retrieved in a number of ways. First, the researcher consulted the College Handbook, 2002, 39<sup>th</sup> edition. This source listed colleges and universities in Florida by two-year and four-year. In some cases, this document also listed admissions officer names and email addresses. Second, for contact information not found in the College Handbook, the researcher consulted a contact list published by the Florida Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (FACRAO), a professional organization of registrars and admissions officers. Member institutions listed their admissions officers' names and e-mail addresses in this document. Finally, for contact information not available in the College Handbook or the FACRAO contact list, the researcher searched

respective college websites to obtain the names and contact information for the college admissions officers. The researcher did not send the survey to institutions for which contact information could not be identified. The total number of colleges to which the researcher sent a survey was 94.

Before sending the survey instrument to the 94 Florida colleges and universities, the researcher sent a preletter informing the admissions officers that the survey would be forthcoming. This preletter was sent December 6, 2004. This letter indicated that the survey would arrive electronically in the next few days. After the preletter was sent, the researcher received many returned messages indicating invalid email addresses. As a result of these error messages, the researcher updated email addresses by searching respective college websites. Also, in the FACRAO directory, some institutions had listed several individuals as contacts. The researcher selected other names than those originally chosen to represent the respective institution. As a result of the changes, 17 preletters were resent. Some of these messages were also returned. Again, the researcher corrected contact names and email addresses and resent the cover letter to five institutions.

The survey was sent as a link in an email cover letter on December 8, 2004. Thirty recipients responded to the survey as a result of the December 8 email. A follow-up email with a link to the survey was sent February 14, 2005 to the admissions officers who had not yet taken the survey. Seventeen colleges responded to the follow-up survey sent on February 14. Forty-seven college admissions officers responded to the survey. Therefore, the response rate was 50%. However, one of the responses was incomplete and, therefore, unusable, which made the response rate 49%. The responses to the survey were entered into SPSS Graduate Pack version 11.5.

In order to address the second purpose of this study, 50 home school students and 50 public school students attending Brevard Community College were identified. In order to identify these students, the researcher requested test scores and grade point averages for all students who began as either a first time in college (FTIC) or a dual enrolled student in the Fall of 2002. The students were sorted by the high school they attended. Brevard Community College's Data Systems department provided this information to the researcher in an Excel spreadsheet.

Forty students on the spreadsheet were identified as home school students. However, many of the home school students who attended Brevard Community College were classified as Florida private school students as they attended an umbrella school for home schoolers. Therefore, the researcher requested the student identification numbers that corresponded with the Florida private school students. Using the student identification numbers, the researcher was able to access the individual files for these students and determine which of these was under an umbrella school and was indeed a home schooler. Ten additional home school students were identified this way for a total of 50 home school students.

Using the same Excel spreadsheet, the researcher randomly selected 50 public school students. In order to find a random sample, the researcher numbered all of the students' records within each of the respective 12 public feeder high schools for Brevard Community College. Then, using a random numbers table, the researcher took a random sample of students from each high school. As the researcher needed to identify 50 public school students and there were 12 public high schools, four students' records were randomly selected from 10 of the high schools, and five students' records were randomly

selected from two of the high schools. The two high schools with five students selected were the two high schools with the largest number of FTIC and dual enrolled students entering Brevard Community College in the Fall 2002 semester.

Once the home school and public school students were selected, the researcher found that only one home school student had ACT scores. Six of the public school students had ACT scores. As this was a low number of students who had taken this test, the researcher selected one other home school student and six other public school students who had taken either the CPT or the SAT. Therefore, the researcher compared the two groups' test scores on only CPT and SAT. The public school students were randomly selected within the respective high school that the students with ACT scores had attended. The one replacement home school student was selected from the list of Florida private school graduates. The student was under a home school umbrella organization.

The students' test scores and grade point averages were entered into SPSS Graduate Pack version 11.5.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

The first purpose of this study was to determine if there was a pattern in the admission policies for home school applicants in Florida's colleges and universities. To that end, an electronic survey was sent via email to 94 postsecondary institutions in Florida.

The second purpose of this research was to compare the academic performance of home school and public school students in a Florida public community college. In order to achieve this purpose, the academic records of 50 home school students and 50 public school students at Brevard Community College were compared. The students' standardized test scores on the College Placement Test (CPT) and the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) were reviewed as well as the college grade point averages for these two groups of students.

The results of the home school admission policy survey will be presented in Chapter 4. The survey results were analyzed using descriptive statistics in order to determine a pattern of acceptance for home school students in Florida's colleges and universities. Descriptive statistics also were used to determine to what extent these admission policies complied with the National Center for Home Education's (NCHE) recommended policies for home school applicants. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was used to determine if there was a relationship between the type of college (public, private, or proprietary) and the admission policies for home school applicants. A



Repeated Measures with one between factor was used to determine if the home school admission policies for colleges that responded to Home School Legal Defense Association's (HSLDA) home school admission policy survey have changed since the time of that survey.

The home school and public school students' academic performance in a Florida public community college as measured by scores on the CPT or the SAT and by grade point average are presented in this chapter. An independent t-test was used to determine if there was a difference in the mean CPT and SAT scores. A Chi-Square Test of Independence was used to determine if there was a relationship between student type (home school vs. public school) and needing a college preparatory class based on CPT or SAT scores. Finally, an independent t-test was used to determine if there was a difference in the mean grade point average for home school and public school students.

## Results

Research Question 1: What is the pattern, if any, of acceptance of home school students to Florida colleges and universities?

The results of the home school admissions policy survey were entered into SPSS and analyzed using descriptive statistics in order to determine the pattern of acceptance of home school applicants among the participating institutions. The survey was sent to 94 public, private, and proprietary colleges and universities in Florida. Forty-seven institutions responded to the survey. This number represents a 50% response rate. However, one of the surveys was incomplete and unusable. Therefore, the adjusted response rate was 49%.

Of the institutions that responded to the survey, 45.7% (n=21) were two-year colleges, and 54.3% (n=25) were four-year colleges. Of the four-year colleges, 30.4% (n=14) offered bachelor's degrees as the highest degree; 10.9% (n=5) offered master's degrees; and 13% (n=6) offered doctoral degrees as the highest degree.

Sixty-three percent (n=29) of the participating institutions were public colleges, and 34.8% (n=16) were private. Only 2.2% (n=1) of the colleges were proprietary. Approximately 11% (n=5) of the institutions were affiliated with a religious organization, while 89% (n=41) were not. Data regarding colleges that responded to the survey instrument used in this research study are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1  
Colleges that Responded to the Home School Admission Policy Survey

College Type	Two-Year	Four-Year	Religious	Secular	Total
Public	19	10	00	29	29
Private	02	14	05	11	16
Proprietary	01	00	00	01	01
Totals	22	24	05	41	46

Forty-four (96%) of the participating colleges accepted home school students to their institutions. Two (4%) of the colleges did not accept home school students. These two colleges were private, four-year colleges. One was affiliated with a religious organization, one was not. Many of the percentages presented below did not add up to 100% as they excluded the two colleges that did not accept home school students.

Almost 59% (n=27) required home school students to provide a transcript. Thirty-seven percent (n=17) did not require home school students to submit a transcript.

Approximately 94% (n=43) of the colleges required all other students to submit a transcript for admission purposes, and 2.2% (n=1) did not. The college that did not require all other students to submit a transcript also did not require home school students to submit a transcript. This was a proprietary, two-year, secular college. These data, in addition to all other data regarding how the types of colleges responded to the survey items, were displayed in Table 2.

Thirteen colleges (28%) required home school students to submit an essay as part of their admission requirement, while 31 colleges (67.4%) did not require an essay from home schoolers. Twelve of the colleges (26%) required essays from all other applicants, while 31 colleges (67.4%) did not. Only one college required an essay from home schoolers and not of all other students. This college was a private, four-year, secular college. One of the colleges that accepted home school students did not answer this question.

Almost 11% (n=5) of the respondents evaluated participation in extracurricular activities when considering home school applicants. Approximately 80% (n=37) did not consider extracurricular activities as part of home school students' applications. Thirteen percent (n=6) evaluated participation in extracurricular activities when considering all other students' applications. Almost 83% (n=38) did not consider extracurricular activities of all other students. The difference in the number of colleges that evaluated participation in extracurricular activities for home school and all other applicants is that one of the colleges that used this admission criterion did not address whether or not it was evaluated for home school applicants. All the colleges that evaluated extracurricular

activities for applicants were four-year colleges. Two were public, and four were private. One of the private colleges was affiliated with a religious organization.

Table 2  
Responses to Survey Items by College Type

Survey Item	Public		Private		Proprietary	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Accept home school students	29	00	14	02	01	00
Require home school applicants to provide a transcript	13	16	14	00	00	01
Require all other applicants to provide a transcript	29	00	14	02	00	01
Require home school applicants to submit an essay	02	27	10	04	01	00
Require all other applicants to submit an essay	02	26	09	05	01	00
Evaluate participation in extracurricular activities for home school applicants	02	26	03	10	00	01
Evaluate participation in extracurricular activities for all other applicants	02	27	04	10	00	01
Interview home school applicants	01	28	09	04	01	00
Interview all other applicants	01	28	08	05	01	00
Provide home school evaluation	01	28	00	14	00	01
Require higher standardized test scores for home school applicants	00	28	00	14	01	00
Recognize the validity of home school diplomas	23	05	12	02	01	00
Require home school applicants to obtain a GED	01	28	03	11	01	00
Require all applicants to submit standardized test scores	19	10	11	03	01	00
Accept the SAT for admission purposes	28	00	13	01	01	00
Accept the ACT for admission purposes	28	00	13	01	01	00
Accept the CPT for admission purposes	25	04	00	14	00	01
Accept the TABE for admission purposes	16	13	02	12	00	01
Require additional standardized test scores for home school applicants	00	29	00	14	01	00
Required higher standardized test scores for home school applicants	00	28	00	14	01	00

Eleven colleges (24%) conducted interviews of home school applicants to help determine their admission status. Thirty-two colleges (70%) did not conduct interviews of home school applicants. One college (2%) did not respond to this item. Ten colleges (22%) conducted interviews of all other applicants when determining their admission status. Thirty-three (72%) of the colleges did not interview all other applicants. One college (2%) did not respond to this item. This institution was the same one that did not respond to the item related to interviews for home school applicants. The college that required interviews for home school applicants but not all other applicants was a private, four-year, secular college.

One of the responding colleges (2%) supplied home school applicants with a home school evaluation in lieu of requiring a transcript. A home school evaluation is an evaluation of the credits a home school student has completed through his or her home school program and is based on the curriculum used for home schooling. Forty-three colleges (94%) did not supply a home school evaluation. The college that supplied home school applicants with an evaluation was a public, two-year, secular college.

Thirty-six of the participating colleges (78%) recognized the validity of home school diplomas, while seven (15.2%) did not. Of the seven colleges that did not recognize the validity of home school diplomas, two were private, and five were public. The two private institutions were both four-year colleges. Of the five public colleges, two were two-year institutions, and three were four-year colleges. All seven of the colleges were secular.

Eleven percent (n=5) of the responding colleges required home school applicants to obtain a general equivalency diploma (GED) prior to admission. Almost 85% (n=39)

colleges did not require home school applicants to obtain a GED. Three of the five colleges that required home school applicants to obtain a GED were private, one was public, and one was proprietary. The three private colleges were all four-year colleges. The public college was a two-year institution. The proprietary college was a two-year institution. All these colleges were secular.

Approximately 67% (n=31) of the colleges required all applicants to submit standardized test scores for admission purposes. Twenty-eight percent (n=13) of the colleges did not require all applicants to submit standardized test scores for admission purposes. Ten of the colleges that did not require all applicants to submit standardized test scores were public, and three were private. Seven of the public colleges were two-year, and three of the public colleges were four-year institutions. Two of the private colleges were four-year, and one was a two-year institution. All the thirteen colleges that did not require standardized test scores of all applicants were secular.

Forty-two of the colleges (91%) accepted the SAT and the ACT for admission purposes. One colleges (2%) did not accept either the SAT or the ACT for admission purposes. The college that did not accept these two standardized tests was a private, four-year, secular institution.

Twenty-five of the colleges (54%) accepted the CPT for admission purposes, while 19 (41.3%) did not accept the CPT for admission purposes. All the colleges that accepted the CPT were public colleges. Nineteen of them were two-year, and six were four-year institutions. None of these twenty-five colleges was affiliated with a religious organization.

Thirty-nine percent (n=18) of the colleges accepted the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for admission purposes. Approximately 57% (n=26) did not accept the TABE for admission purposes. Sixteen of the colleges that accepted the TABE were public, and two were private. Twelve of the public colleges that accepted the TABE were two-year institutions, and four were four-year institutions. One of the two private colleges was two-year institution and one was four-year institution. All the institutions that accepted the TABE were secular.

One of the responding colleges (2%) required additional standardized test scores for home school students. Forty-three of the colleges (95%) did not require additional standardized test scores for home schoolers. The college that required additional standardized test scores was a two-year, proprietary, secular college.

One of the colleges (2%) required higher standardized test scores for home school students than for all other students. Forty-two of the colleges (91%) did not require higher standardized test scores for home school applicants. One college did not respond to this question. The college that required higher standardized tests scores was a two-year, proprietary, secular college. This was the same college that required additional standardized test scores for home school applicants.

One of the survey questions (item 21) was an open-response question that asked respondents to share any further information regarding their admission policies for home school students. Sixty-five percent (n=30) of the responding colleges answered this question. Fourteen of these colleges stated that they required home school applicants' parents to sign an affidavit stating that their child had completed the Florida requirements for high school graduation. Eleven of these fourteen colleges were public, two-year,

secular institutions. Three were public, four-year, secular institutions. These three colleges, however, were formerly two-year institutions that recently began to offer baccalaureate degrees.

Seven of the thirty colleges that responded to question number 21 addressed the issue of requiring a GED for home school applicants. Two were public, two-year, secular institutions. One of these institutions stated that it required a GED of all home school applicants. The other responded that the institution required a GED or an affidavit of completion of high school requirements.

Two of the colleges that addressed the issue of a GED in question 21 were private, four-year, secular institutions. One of these institutions stated that it would accept a home school student without a GED provided the applicant's math and English skills had met the requirements for their selected major. The other institution stated that it attempted to get a GED from the home school applicant, or it would accept a community college's statement that the student was a high school graduate. This institution would also accept a home school applicant whose home school program was certified by the state with documentation of progress.

One of the colleges that addressed the GED issue in item 21 was a private, four-year, secular institution. This college required home school applicants to obtain a GED or high school diploma recognized by the home district. One of the colleges that addressed the GED issue in item 21 was a private, four-year, religious institution. This college required an academic portfolio or GED in addition to a copy of any state rules related to home schooling from the applicant's home state.



Two of the thirty colleges that responded to item 21 addressed the issue of standardized testing. One of these colleges was a public, four-year, secular institution. This institution required higher SAT or ACT scores for home school applicants if the home school curriculum was based on non-traditional instructional units. The other of these colleges was a public, two-year, secular institution. This college stated that required standardized testing was dependent upon the program in which the applicant was planning to enroll.

Two of the thirty colleges that responded to item 21 addressed the issue of requiring interviews for home school applicants. One of these institutions was a public, four-year, secular institution. This institution stated that while it did not require home school applicants to interview, it encouraged all applicants to interview. The other of the colleges that addressed standardized testing in item 21 was a private, four-year, religious institution. This institution stated that interviews were preferred for all applicants but not required of any one group of applicants.

Six of the 30 colleges that responded to item number 21 addressed items not specifically addressed by other colleges. One stated that it recognized home school diplomas if the respective applicant was registered with the county and had met all legal home school requirements. This college was a private, four-year, secular institution.

The second of these six colleges addressed the issue of dual enrollment and home school students. This respondent stated that home school students often delayed their graduation from high school in order to remain eligible for dual enrollment. This respondent stated that this is made legal by a “loophole” in the dual enrollment program. The respondent stated that it was “an abuse of the system and a fraudulent use of tax

dollars.” This college was a public, four-year, secular institution. This institution was formerly a two-year institution that recently began to award baccalaureate degrees.

The third of these six colleges was a private, four-year, secular institution. This college stated that home school applicants were required to submit two writing samples, a curriculum description, a reading list, two letters of recommendations, SAT or ACT scores, and a transcript. Also, this college responded that home school applicants could be interviewed on the phone or in person. However, this college did not state if interviews were required of home school applicants.

A private, four-year, secular institution was the fourth of the six respondents that addressed issues in item 21 not addressed by other respondents. This college required home school applicants to provide a list of texts used in each subject area.

The fifth of these colleges was a public, four-year, secular institution. This institution stated that while an essay was not required of all applicants, it was strongly encouraged. Further, this institution stated that while extracurricular activities were not the primary focus when considering an applicant, they were evaluated.

The sixth, and final, college in this category was a private, four-year, religious institution. This college stated that home school applicants “must meet graduation requirements for their home state in order to be considered for acceptance.”

Research Question 2: To what extent do Florida colleges’ and universities’ home school admissions requirements comply with the NCHE recommended policy?

Descriptive statistics were used in order to determine the extent to which the responding colleges’ home school admission policies complied with the National Center

for Home Education’s (NCHE) recommended policies. Eight of the survey items were related to this research question. The number of colleges that, based on their type, complied or did not comply with the NCHE’s recommended home school admission policies are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3  
Home School Admission Policies by College Type

Policy	Public		Private		Proprietary	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Accept home school students	29	00	14	02	01	00
Require higher standardized test scores for home school applicants	00	28	00	14	01	00
Require additional standardized test scores for home school applicants	00	29	00	14	01	00
Provide home school evaluation	01	28	00	14	00	01
Recognize the validity of home school diplomas	23	05	12	02	01	00
Require home school applicants to obtain a GED	01	28	03	11	01	00
Require essay from home school applicants	02	27	10	04	01	00
Evaluate participation in extracurricular activities for home school applicant	02	26	03	10	00	01
Interview home school applicants	01	28	09	04	01	00

The first of the NCHE’s recommended policies was broken into two parts. The first part was that colleges should not require home school applicants to score higher than public school applicants on standardized tests. The second was that colleges should not require home school applicants to provide additional standardized test scores. The survey questions that addressed this recommended policy were items 19 and 20 (“Does your institution require additional standardized test scores for home school applicants?” and

“Does your institution require higher standardized test scores for home school applicants than for other applicants?”) Florida’s colleges complied with this part of NCHE’s recommended policy as 95% (n=43) colleges did not require additional standardized tests for home schoolers and only 2% (n=1) did. Similarly, 91% (n=42) of colleges did not require higher standardized test scores and only 2% (n=1) did require higher scores. Therefore, Florida’s colleges were compliant with this area of the NCHE’s recommended policies.

The second of the NCHE’s recommended policies for home school applicants was that colleges should supply a home school credit evaluation in lieu of requiring a transcript. Survey item 11 addressed this issue (“Does your institution supply home school applicants with a home school evaluation in lieu of a transcript?”). Ninety-four percent (n=43) of colleges did not supply a home school evaluation and only two percent (n=1) did. As such a low number of colleges supplied a home school evaluation, Florida’s colleges were not compliant with this area of the NCHE’s recommended admission policies for home school applicants.

The third NCHE recommended home school admission policy was split into two parts. Colleges should recognize the validity of home school diplomas and should not require home school students to obtain a GED. This recommended policy was addressed in survey items 12 and 13 (“Does your institution recognize the validity of home school diplomas?” and “Does your institution require home school applicants to obtain a GED for admission purposes?”). Seventy-eight percent (n=36) of colleges recognized home school diplomas while 15% (n=7) did not. Therefore, Florida’s colleges complied with the NCHE’s recommended policy related to recognizing home school diplomas as valid.

Eighty-five percent (n=39) of colleges did not require home school students to obtain a GED and 11% (n=5) did. Therefore, Florida's colleges complied with the NCHE's recommendation that colleges should not require home school applicants to obtain a GED for admission purposes.

The fourth NCHE recommend policy was that colleges may accept a student essay as part of the home school admission criteria. This recommendation was addressed by survey item 5 ("Does your institution require home school applicants to submit an essay for admission purposes?") Approximately 67% (n=31) of colleges did not require an essay and 28% (n=13) did. Therefore, Florida's colleges were not in compliance with this NCHE recommended policy.

The fifth, and final, NCHE recommended home school admission policy is in two parts. First, colleges may review extracurricular activities when considering home school applicants. Second, colleges may conduct interviews as part of the admission process for home school applicants. These issues were addressed in survey items seven and nine ("Does your institution evaluate participation in extracurricular activities in determining the admission status of home school applicants?" and "Does your institution conduct interviews of its home school applicants?").

Eighty percent (n=37) of colleges did not review participation in extracurricular activities while 11% (n=5) did. Therefore, Florida's colleges did not comply with this area of the NCHE's recommended policy. Seventy percent (n=32) of colleges did not conduct interviews for home schoolers while 24% (n=11) did. As a greater number of colleges did not conduct interviews for home schoolers, Florida's colleges were not in

compliance with this area of the NCHE's recommend admission policy for home school students.

Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between the colleges' home school admission policies and college type (public, private, or proprietary)?

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was used to determine if there was a relationship between the institutions' home school admission policies and the type of college (public, private, or proprietary).

There was no significant relationship between type of college and whether or not an institution accepted home school students ( $\chi^2=1.42$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.23$ ). There was a significant relationship in college type and whether a home school student was required to submit transcripts for admission purposes ( $\chi^2=10.05$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.002$ ,  $SR=2.3$ ). All private schools that responded to the survey required home school students to submit a transcript for admission purposes.

There was a significant relationship between college type and whether or not home school students were required to submit essays for admission purposes ( $\chi^2=16.47$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $SR=2.1, 3.1$ ). More private colleges ( $n=10$ ) required an essay than did not ( $n=4$ ). Fewer public colleges ( $n=2$ ) required an essay than did not ( $n=27$ ).

Also, there was a significant relationship between college type and requiring home school applicants to interview as part of their admission criteria ( $\chi^2=17.94$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $SR=2.2, 3.4$ ). More private colleges ( $n=9$ ) required an interview than did not ( $n=4$ ). Fewer public colleges ( $n=1$ ) required an interview than those that did not ( $n=28$ ).

However, there was no significant relationship between type of college and whether participation in extracurricular activities was an admission requirement for home school students ( $\chi^2=.88$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.35$ ).

There was no significant relationship between college type and whether an institution provided home school students with a home school evaluation in lieu of requiring a transcript ( $\chi^2=.000$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=1.00$ ). Further, there was no significant relationship between the type of college and whether the institution recognized the validity of home school diplomas ( $\chi^2=.000$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=1.00$ ). Further, there was no significant relationship between college type and requiring a home school applicant to obtain a GED in order to be considered for admission ( $\chi^2=1.80$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.18$ ).

There was a statistically significant relationship between college type and requiring a home school applicant to provide additional standardized test scores for admission purposes ( $\chi^2=44$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $SR=6.5$ ). Further, there was a statistically significant relationship between college type and requiring home school applicants to provide higher standardized test scores than all other applicants ( $\chi^2=43$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $SR=6.4$ ). The proprietary college that participated in the survey used in this research project required additional and higher standardized test scores.

When totaling the NCHE recommended home school admission policies for home school applicants, public schools were found to have complied with more of the recommended policies than did private schools. Therefore, there was a relationship between college type and complying with the NCHE's recommended policies ( $\chi^2=21.49$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $SR=2.2, 2.6, 3.2$ ). These data were outlined in Table 4.

Table 4  
Relationship Between Home School Admission Policies and College Type

Policy	$\chi^2$	df	SR
Accept home school applicants	1.42	1	--
Require transcripts from home school applicants	10.05**	1	2.3
Require essay from home school applicants	16.47**	1	2.1, 3.1
Require interview from home school applicants	17.94**	1	2.2, 3.4
Evaluate participation in extracurricular activities	.88	1	--
Provide home school credit evaluation	.00	1	--
Require home school students to obtain a GED	1.80	1	--
Require additional standardized test scores from home schoolers	44**	2	6.5
Require higher standardized test scores from home schoolers	43**	2	6.4
Total of all policies	21.49**	1	2.2, 2.6, 3.2

Note: \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

Research Question 4: Of the colleges that responded to the 1996 HSLDA survey, to what extent have the admissions policies for home school students changed by type of college (public, private, or proprietary)?

In 1996, the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) conducted a survey of postsecondary institutions in the United States regarding their admission policies for home school students. The HSLDA ranked these institutions based on their home school admission policies. The ranking were in three categories, or tiers. Tier I included colleges with admission policies similar to the National Center for Home Education's (NCHE) recommended policies. These colleges accepted home school transcripts, did not require additional standardized testing or higher standardized test scores for home school students, nor did they require a regular high school diploma or GED.



Tier II colleges were those that required home school students to obtain a GED. Tier III colleges required home school students to take additional standardized tests or obtain higher standardized test scores than all other applicants.

Nine colleges that responded to the HSLDA's survey also responded to the survey used in this research study. Four of these colleges were public, four-year, secular institutions. Three were private, four-year, religious institutions. Two were private, four-year, secular institutions.

Eight of the nine colleges that responded to both the HSLDA's survey and the survey used in this research study were classified by the HSLDA as Tier I colleges. One college was classified by the HSLDA as a Tier II college. This institution was a public, four-year, secular institution.

The only area in which change was evident from the time of the HSLDA survey to the current survey was related to the GED. One college that responded to the HSLDA's survey required the home school students to obtain a GED. When this same college responded to the survey used in this research study, it reported that it did not require home school students to obtain a GED. This college was a public, four-year, secular institution.

As stated previously, the GED was the only area in which there was change from one survey to the next for any of the colleges. In addition, the researcher was unable to determine with certainty when the participating colleges responded to the HSLDA's survey. Therefore, this research question could not be fully answered.

### *Comparison of Home School and Public School Students' Academic Performance*

The test scores and grade point average for the home school and public school students were entered into SPSS Graduate Pack, Version 11.5. An independent samples t-test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean CPT scores and mean SAT scores for home school and public school students. A chi-square test of independence was performed to determine if there was a relationship between the type of student (home school vs. public school) and whether or not a student was required to take college preparatory classes based on results of the CPT or the SAT. An independent samples t-test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean grade point averages for home school and public school students.

Research Question 5: Is there a difference in the mean grade point average of home school students and public school students?

The mean grade point average for the 50 home school students was 2.61, while the mean grade point average for the 50 public school students was 2.75. There was no significant difference in the mean college grade point averages of home school and public school students ( $t=-.60$ ,  $df=98$ ,  $p=.55$ ,  $\eta^2=.0036$ ). Table 5 depicted the statistics relative to grade point averages for home school and public school students.

Research Question 6: Is there a difference in the mean standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, or CPT) for home school students and public school students?

Forty-five home school students and 30 public school students had CPT scores. The mean CPT algebra score for home school students was 60.13. The mean CPT algebra score for public school students was 56.03. There was no significant difference

in the mean CPT algebra score for home school and public school students ( $t=.63$ ,  $df=73$ ,  $p=.53$ ,  $\eta^2=.0049$ ).

The mean CPT sentence skills score for home school students was 93.06. The public school students' mean CPT sentence skills score was 83.33. There was a significant difference in the mean CPT sentence skills ( $t=2.23$ ,  $df=73$ ,  $p=.029$ ,  $\eta^2=.06$ ).

The mean CPT reading score for home school students was 83.17. The mean CPT reading score for public school students was 77.53. There was no significant difference in the mean CPT reading scores for these two groups ( $t=1.35$ ,  $df=73$ ,  $p=.18$ ,  $\eta^2=.02$ ).

Five home school students and 20 public school students took the SAT. The home schoolers' mean SAT mathematics score was 486, and the mean SAT mathematics score for public school students was 512. There was no significant difference in the mean SAT mathematics scores of the home school and public school students ( $t=-.80$ ,  $df=23$ ,  $p=.43$ ,  $\eta^2=.03$ ).

The mean SAT verbal score for home school students was 562. The mean SAT verbal score for public school students was 493. There was a significant difference in the mean SAT verbal scores for the home school and public school students ( $t=2.59$ ,  $df=23$ ,  $p=.016$ ,  $\eta^2=.23$ ). Table 5 depicted the statistics for home school and public school students' standardized test scores.

Table 5  
Comparison of Home School and Public School Students' Academic Performance

Measure	Home School		Public School		t	df	$\eta^2$
	$\bar{x}$	s	$\bar{x}$	s			
CPT Algebra	60.13	27.20	56.03	28.25	.63	73	.0049
CPT Sentence	93.06	17.81	83.33	19.58	2.23*	73	.06
CPT Reading	83.17	16.44	77.53	19.62	1.35	73	.02
SAT Mathematics	486	25.10	512	71.66	-.80	23	.03
SAT Verbal	562	44.38	493	54.51	2.59*	23	.23
GPA	2.61	1.38	2.75	.84	-.60	98	.0036

Note: \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

### Summary

#### *Home School Admission Policy Survey*

Ninety-six percent (n=44) of the 46 colleges that responded to the home school admission policy survey accepted home school students. Almost 59% (n=27) of the colleges that accepted home school students required them to submit a transcript. At the same time, 93.5% (n=43) of the colleges required transcripts from all other applicants.

Approximately 67% (n=31) of the participating colleges did not require an essay for admission purposes from home school students. The same number did not require an essay from all other applicants. Approximately 80% (n=37) did not evaluate participation in extracurricular activities for home school applicants. Almost 83% (n=38) of colleges did not evaluate participation in extracurricular activities for all other applicants.

Almost 70% (n=32) of the colleges did not require interviews for home school applicants. Similarly, approximately 72% of colleges (n=33) did not require interviews for all other applicants.

Almost 94% (n=43) of the responding colleges did not supply home school applicants with a home school evaluation. Eighty-five percent (n=39) did not require home school applicants to obtain a GED prior to admission.

In relation to standardized testing, approximately 95% (n=43) of the responding colleges did not require additional standardized testing for home school applicants. Similarly, 91% (n=42) did not require higher standardized test scores for home school students than for all other students.

When asked to further describe their home school admission policies in an open response format, 30 colleges did so. Almost half of these respondents stated that their institutions required home school students to sign an affidavit stating that they had completed high school graduation requirements. One of the responding institutions stated that it required a list of texts used for home schooling. Another college addressed home school students and dual enrollment and indicated that home school students take advantage of dual enrollment by postponing their high school graduation. The other responses related to issues addressed in other items in the survey.

When compared to the NCHE's recommended college admission policies for home school students, the colleges that responded to the survey complied with approximately half of the recommended policies. Most of the participating institutions did not require additional standardized tests or higher test scores for home school applicants as was recommended by the NCHE. Most of the participating colleges

recognized the validity of home school diplomas, and most did not require home school applicants to obtain a GED prior to admission.

There were several areas, however, in which the responding colleges did not comply with the NCHE recommended policies. Most of the responding colleges did not supply a home school evaluation as was recommend by the NCHE. Also, most colleges did not require an essay, evaluate participation in extracurricular activities, or conduct interviews for home school applicants. For these final three items, however, the NCHE stated that colleges *could* consider these items from home school students as part of the application process; it did not state that they *should* require these items from home school applicants.

The researcher sought to determine if there was a relationship between the type of college and its admission policies for home school applicants. A statistically significant relationship was evident between college type and whether a college required a transcript from home school students, whether a college was required to submit an essay, whether a college required an interview for home school applicants, whether an institution required the GED for home school applicants, whether a college required additional standardized test scores for home school applicants, and whether a college required higher standardized test scores for home school applicants. However, there was no statistically significant relationship between college type and whether or not an institution accepted home school students, whether it considered participation in extracurricular activities, whether it provided a home school evaluation, whether it recognized home school diplomas, and whether a college required home school students to obtain a GED.

Another goal of this research study was to determine to what extent the home school admission policies for the Florida colleges that responded to the HSLDA's 1996 college admission policy survey had changed, based on the type of college, since the time of that survey to the survey used in the current research. Nine colleges responded to both the HSLDA's survey and to the survey used in this research study. Only one change took place for one college. This college, a public, four-year, secular institution, formerly required home school students to obtain a GED. More recently, this college did not require home school students to obtain a GED. However, this question could not be fully answered as the researcher could not determine with certainty when the colleges responded to the HSLDA's survey.

#### *Comparison Home School and Public School Students' Academic Performance*

In order to determine if there was a difference in the academic performance of home school and public school students at a Florida, public community college, the standardized test scores and grade point averages of 50 students from each group were compared. The researcher compared the college grade point averages of home school and public school students. There was no significant difference in the grade point averages of the two groups.

A comparison of standardized test scores for home school and public school students showed statistically significant differences in two areas. The mean CPT sentence skills scores were significantly different, with the home school students scoring higher. The mean SAT verbal scores were significantly different, with the home school

students scoring higher. There was no significant difference in the mean CPT reading scores, CPT algebra scores, or the SAT mathematics scores.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the pattern of acceptance of home school students to Florida's colleges and institutions and to determine the extent to which these policies complied with the National Center for Home Education's recommended college admission policies for home school students. A second purpose of this study was to compare the academic performance of home school and public school students at a Florida public community college. The basis of this comparison were scores on the CPT and SAT and college grade point averages for each group of students.

In this chapter, a summary of the research findings as related to each of this study's six research questions will be presented. Conclusions will be drawn based on the summary of research findings. Then, recommendations based on the results of the research will be offered. Finally, recommendations for future research will be offered.

#### Summary

Research Question One: What is the pattern, if any, of acceptance of home school students to Florida colleges and universities?

Ninety-six percent (n=44) of the colleges that responded to the home school admission policy survey accepted home school students to their institutions. Four percent (n=2) of the colleges did not accept home school students. Both colleges that did not accept home school students were private, four-year, bachelor's degree granting institutions. One was affiliated with a religious organization, one was not.

Most colleges required both home school and all other applicants to provide a transcript for admission purposes. Fifty-nine percent (n=27) required a home school applicants to provide a transcript, and 94% (n=43) required all other applicants to provide a transcript.

Approximately the same percentage of colleges required home school and all other applicants to submit an essay as part of the admission process. Twenty-eight percent (n=13) required home school applicants to provide an essay, and 26% (n=12) required all other applicants to provide an essay. It was a private, four-year, secular college that required home school students to provide an essay but did not require all other applicants to do the same.

Similar percentages of colleges evaluated participation in extracurricular activities for home school and all other applicants. Eleven percent (n=5) evaluated participation in extracurricular activities for home school applicants, and 13% (n=6) evaluated participation in extracurricular activities for all other applicants. The difference in these responses was a result of one of the colleges that evaluated extracurricular activities for all other applicants did not answer the survey item related to extracurricular activities and home school applicants. More often, private colleges evaluated participation in extracurricular activities for any applicant than did public or proprietary colleges.

Almost the same percentage of colleges conducted interviews of home school and all other applicants. Twenty-four percent (n=11) conducted interviews of home school applicants and 22% (n=10) conducted interviews of all other applicants. The college that required home school but not all other applicants to interview was a private, four-year, secular institution.

Most colleges did not supply a home school evaluation in lieu of a transcript. Ninety-four percent (n=43) did not provide a home school evaluation while two percent (n=1) did. Only a public, two-year, secular college did so.

Seventy-eight percent (n=36) of colleges recognized home school diplomas as valid, and 15% (n=7) did not. Two of the seven colleges were private, and five were public.

Only 11% (n=5) of colleges required home school applicants to obtain a GED. The majority of these colleges (3) were private.

The majority of the colleges did not require additional standardized test scores for home school applicants. Ninety-five percent (n=43) did not require additional scores. Similarly, 91% (n=42) did not require higher standardized test scores for home school applicants. The college that required additional and higher standardized test scores was a proprietary, two-year, secular college.

When asked to share more information regarding their home school admission policies in an open response format, many of the colleges that responded to this item stated that their institutions required home school applicants' parents to submit a signed affidavit stating that their child had met all high school graduation requirements. All these colleges were public, 11 of them were two-year institutions, and three were four-year institutions. The three four-year institutions were formerly two-year colleges that more recently began to offer bachelor's degrees.

Research Question 2: To what extent do Florida colleges' and universities' home school admission policies comply with the NCHE's recommended policy?

The National Center for Home Education (NCHE) established recommended admission policies for home school applicants. The NCHE recommended that colleges should not require additional standardized test scores, nor should they require higher standardized test scores for home school applicants than for all other applicants. Most of the colleges that responded to this survey complied with these two elements of the NCHE's recommendation. Ninety-five percent (n=43) did not require additional standardized test scores, and 91% (n=42) did not require higher standardized test scores for home school applicants.

The only responding college that required additional standardized test scores was a proprietary, two-year college, secular college. This same college required higher standardized test scores for home school applicants. Public and private colleges were in compliance with this element of the NCHE's recommended policy.

The NCHE recommended that colleges supply home school applicants with a home school credit evaluation rather than requiring a transcript. Ninety-four percent (n=43) of the responding colleges did not supply an evaluation. Therefore, the majority of responding colleges did not comply with this policy.

The NCHE further recommended that colleges should recognize the validity of home school diplomas and they should not require a GED. Seventy-eight percent (n=36) of the participating colleges recognized the validity of home school diplomas, and 85% did not require home school applicants to obtain a GED. Therefore, the responding

colleges complied with these components of the NCHE's recommended admission policy.

The next three parts of the NCHE's recommended admission policy were admission criteria that *may* be required. These are an essay, evaluation of participation in extracurricular activities, and an interview. Most colleges did not require any of these three elements. Approximately 67% (n=31) did not require an essay. Approximately 80% did not evaluate participation in extracurricular activities. Nearly 70% did not conduct interviews.

While the participating colleges did not comply with these final elements of the NCHE's recommended admission policy for home school applicants, the NCHE was not as firm regarding these three elements. Again, the NCHE stated that colleges *may* require an essay, conduct interviews, and evaluate participation in extracurricular activities. Clearly, these recommendations were not as firm as the others provided by the NCHE.

Most colleges complied with most of the NCHE's recommended policies. The colleges in general did not require additional standardized test scores nor did they require higher standardized test scores for home school applicants than for all other applicants. Most colleges recognized the validity of home school diplomas, and most did not require home school applicants to obtain the GED. Most of the colleges, however, did not supply home school applicants with a home school evaluation in lieu of a transcript. Further, the colleges did not require an essay, evaluate participation in extracurricular activity, or conduct interviews. As these last three items were not strongly recommended by the NCHE, the colleges were more compliant than not with the NCHE's recommendations.

Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between the colleges' home school admission policies and college type (public, private, or proprietary)?

The researcher determined if the responding colleges' home school admission policies differed by type of institution (public, private, or proprietary). In most cases there was no relationship between home school admission policies and college type.

Institution type was not related to whether an institution accepted home school students, whether an essay was required, or whether an institution evaluated participation in extracurricular activities. Further, there was no relationship between college type and supplying a home school evaluation or recognizing the home school diplomas as valid.

There was, however, a relationship between college type and requiring a home school student to submit a transcript. All private colleges required home school applicants to submit a transcript. There was a significant relationship between requiring home school applicants to interview as part of the admission criteria. More private colleges required an interview. Also, there was a relationship between requiring a home school applicant to obtain a GED and college type. Three private colleges required home school applicants to obtain a GED. There was also a relationship between college type and requiring a home school applicant to provide additional standardized test scores and requiring a home school applicant to provide higher standardized test scores. The only proprietary institution that responded to the survey had these two requirements for home school applicants.

Research Question 4: Of the colleges that responded to the HSLDA's 1996 survey, to what extent have the admission policies for home school students changed?

Only nine colleges that responded to the HSLDA's survey also responded to the home school admission policy survey used in this research study. Only one college changed any part of its home school admission policy. A public, four-year, secular university formerly required home school applicants to obtain a GED. When completing the survey used in this research study, this college responded that it did not require home school applicants to obtain a GED.

From the time of the HSLDA's survey to the time of the current research, the United States Department of Education issued a statement that colleges could admit home school students without losing their eligibility to grant federal financial aid. Therefore, some colleges may have changed their admission policies for home school students as a result of the Department of Education's stand on the issue of home school students and financial aid.

However, when comparing the colleges' responses to the HSLDA's survey and their responses to the current survey, a substantial amount of change was not evident. Had more colleges responded to both surveys, the results might have been different. Further, the researcher could not determine with certainty if the colleges that responded to the HSLDA's survey did so before the US Department of Education's statement regarding home school admission and financial aid. Therefore, this research question could not be fully answered.

Research Question 5: Is there a difference in the mean grade point averages of home school students and public school students?

To answer the last two research questions, the researcher reviewed the academic records of 50 home school students and 50 public school students enrolled at Brevard Community College. For research question five, the grade point averages of the two groups of students were compared. There was no significant difference in the grade point averages of the two groups.

Research Question 6: Is there a difference in the mean standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, or CPT) for home school students and public school students?

The researcher compared home school and public school students' standardized test scores on the ACT, SAT, and CPT. However, there were too few home school students with ACT scores. Therefore, the researcher compared scores on the SAT and the CPT for 50 home school students and 50 public school students.

The CPT was divided into three sections, algebra, sentence skills, and reading. There was no statistically significant difference in the mean CPT algebra or reading scores of home school and public school students. However, there was a statistically significant difference in the mean CPT sentence skills scores for the two groups. The home school students' CPT sentence skills scores were significantly higher than the public school students' scores.

The SAT was divided into two sections, mathematics and verbal. There was no statistically significant difference in the mean SAT mathematics scores for home school and public school students. There was a statistically significant difference in the mean SAT verbal scores for the home school and public school students. The home school



students' SAT verbal scores were significantly higher than the public school students' scores.

### Conclusions

As a result of the findings of the present study, the following conclusions were made:

1. As a large majority of colleges accepted home school students, it was apparent that home school students were admitted to Florida's postsecondary institutions.
2. As the two responding colleges that did not accept home school student were private institutions, it indicated that private institutions were less likely to admit home school students than were public or proprietary institutions.
3. As one of the colleges that did not admit home school students was affiliated with a religious organization, one cannot assume that religious colleges were sympathetic to home schooling, even though this movement was often associated with the religious right.
4. In most cases, the private colleges had more stringent admission requirements for home school applicants than public colleges. A private college required an essay for home school applicants but not all other applicants. A private college required interviews for home school applicants but not all others. Two private colleges did not recognize the validity of home school diplomas. In addition, three private colleges required home school applicants obtain a GED.
5. Only one proprietary college responded to the survey used in this research study. This college required home school students to provide additional standardized test

scores and higher standardized test scores. Also, the proprietary college required home school applicants to obtain a GED. Therefore, proprietary colleges may have more stringent admission requirements for home school students than other types of colleges.

6. The public colleges had the least stringent admission requirements for home school applicants. Only five of 29 public colleges did not recognize home school diplomas as valid. Two of these colleges were two-year and three were four-year colleges, all were secular. Further, only one public college required home school applicants to obtain a GED. This college was a two-year, secular college.
7. In reviewing the open response answers to research item 21 (“In the space below, please tell us anything else regarding your home school admission policy that you would like to share.”), the researcher found that the community colleges followed a state statute related to home school students entering community colleges. Florida Statute 1007.263 (a) stated that community colleges will admit students who are home educated with an affidavit signed by the student’s parents or guardians verifying the students have completed high school degree requirements (Community Colleges; Admissions of Students, 2004). However, each community college board of trustees could adopt additional admission criteria, as long as the requirement above was followed.

This statute indicated that public colleges had more lenient home school admission policies as these institutions were more heavily regulated by the government. This phenomenon may have been indicative of the political influence of members of the home school movement. As Farris (1997) and

Stevens (2001) asserted, home school families have been quite effective in influencing politicians to be sympathetic to their cause.

8. The results of the grade point average comparison indicated that home school and public school graduates perform equally as well in the classes taken in a community college environment. This research supported what Ray (2000) found; home school student perform as well as, if not better than, public school graduates. Further, this comparison of grade point averages supported Galloway's (1995) research which showed that home school and public school students performed similarly in their college English courses.
9. Home school students scored significantly higher than public school students on the CPT sentence skills subtest and on the SAT verbal subtest. The results of the CPT sentence skills and SAT verbal score comparisons supported what Galloway (1995) found regarding home school students' and public and private school students' scores on the ACT English sub-test. Galloway found that home school student scored significantly higher than public and private school students on the ACT English sub-test.

Home school students scored higher than public school students on the CPT algebra and reading subtests, while public school students scored higher than home school students on the SAT mathematics subtest. However, the differences in these areas were not significant.

### Implications

The comparison of home school students' and public school students' academic performance has implications not only for the issue of academic achievement, but also for

admission policies for home schools students. This research study showed that there was no difference in the performance of home school and public school students enrolled in a Florida public community college. There was not a significant difference in their community college grade point averages. In terms of academic preparedness as measured by standardized test scores, the home school students scored significantly higher on the sentence skills subtest of the CPT and on the verbal subtest of the SAT. Based on these findings, there are implications for colleges and universities and for proponents of the home school movement. These are:

1. The results of this comparison of home school and public school students' academic performance indicate that colleges should readily accept home school students to their institutions. These colleges should not require additional or higher standardized test scores for these students than they require for all other students, as was recommended by the NCHE.
2. Colleges should not require home school students to obtain a GED for admission purposes, as was recommended by the NCHE. The home school students in this study attended a college that did not require the GED, yet performed equally as well as the public school students at the same institution.
3. All the colleges that did not accept home school students, that required additional and higher standardized test scores, and that required home school students to obtain a GED were members of the Florida Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (FACRAO). Therefore, if leaders of the home school movement, such as the NCHE and its parent organization, the HSLDA, want all colleges to have home school-friendly admission policies, then perhaps a place to

start would be to address the members of FACRAO to push for uniform and NCHE compliant admission policies for home school students among the members of FACRAO. Of course, these policies would need to comply with any applicable state statutes related to home education admission policies, such as Florida Statute 1007.263 (a).

4. Another implication of the comparison of the academic performance of home school and public school students relates to recruiting new students. As the home school students performed as well as the public school students in this study, community colleges should actively recruit home school students to enroll in their institutions. However, recruiting home school students may be difficult, as home school students are not usually in one location where they are easily reached. However, community colleges could reach out to home school umbrella organizations for recruiting purposes. Further, community colleges could recruit home schoolers by targeting members of home school organizations, like the Florida Parent-Educators Association (FPEA).

#### Recommendations for Future Research

The research study presented here leads to further research opportunities related to the home school movement and postsecondary education. Some of these include:

1. Conduct the same home school admission policy survey in other states to determine what home school admission policies are around the nation.

2. Perform a comparison of the academic performance in college of students from a traditional home school setting and those from a home school umbrella organization.
3. Conduct an investigation into the number of home school students who participate in the dual enrollment program offered at Brevard Community College or any other Florida public community college.
4. Survey community college faculty to determine their perceptions of the academic preparedness and academic achievement of home school students.
5. Survey Florida college admission officers regarding their perceptions of home school students and their preparedness for college.
6. Conduct a study to determine if there is a difference in the academic achievement in college of home school students based on the number of years they were home schooled.
7. Conduct a study to determine if there is a difference in the social development of home school and public school students enrolled at a community college.
8. Conduct an investigation into the number and percentage of home school students enrolled in a community college who must take developmental education courses.
9. Conduct a study to determine if there is a trend in the types of college majors that home school students select.
10. Conduct a study to determine what home school students are doing after completing high school graduation requirements if they do not go on to postsecondary education.

APPENDIX A: HOME SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY SURVEY

## Home School Admissions Policies

1

I am at least 18 years old and agree to participate in this survey.



## Home School Admissions Policies

2

Does your institution accept home school students?



## Home School Admissions Policies

3

Does your institution require home school applicants to submit transcripts for admission purposes?

4

Does your institution require all other applicants to submit transcripts for admission purposes?

5



Does your institution require home school applicants to submit an essay for admission purposes?

**6**

Does your institution require all other students to submit an essay for admission purposes?

**7**

Does your institution evaluate participation in extracurricular activities in determining the admission status of home school applicants?

**8**

Does your institution evaluate participation in extracurricular activities in determining the admission status of all other applicants?

**9**

Does your institution conduct interviews of its home school applicants?

**10**

Does your institution conduct interviews of all other applicants?

**11**

Does your institution supply home school applicants with a home school evaluation in lieu of requiring a transcript?

**12**

Does your institution recognize the validity of home school diplomas?

YES

NO

**13**

Does your institution require home school applicants to obtain a GED for admission purposes?

YES

NO

**14**

Does your institution require that all students provide standardized test scores for admission purposes?

YES

NO

**15**

Does your institution accept the SAT?

YES

NO

**16**

Does your institution accept the ACT?

YES

NO

**17**

Does your institution accept the CPT?

YES

NO

**18**

Does your institution accept the TABE?

YES

NO

19

Does your institution require additional standardized test scores for home school applicants?

YES

NO

20

Does your institution require higher standardized test scores for home school applicants than for other applicants?

YES

NO

21

In the space below, please tell us anything else regarding your home school admission policy that you would like to share.



## Home School Admissions Policies

22

What is the name of your institution?

23

What type of college is your institution?

- Public
- Private
- Proprietary

**24**

What is the highest level of degree that your institution offers?

- Vocational Certificate
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

**25**

Is your institution affiliated with a religious organization?



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