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RESEARCH SUPPLEMENT

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## Academic Statistics on Homeschooling

*Many studies over the last few years have established the academic excellence of homeschooled children.*

### I. Independent Evaluations of Homeschooling

1. In 1997, a study of 5,402 homeschool students from 1,657 families was released. It was entitled, *"Strengths of Their Own: Home Schoolers Across America."* The study demonstrated that homeschoolers, on the average, out-performed their counterparts in the public schools by 30 to 37 percentile points in all subjects. A significant finding when analyzing the data for 8th graders was the evidence that homeschoolers who are homeschooled two or more years score substantially higher than students who have been homeschooled one year or less. The new homeschoolers were scoring on the average in the 59th percentile compared to students homeschooled the last two or more years who scored between 86th and 92nd percentile.<sup>i</sup>

This was confirmed in another study by Dr. Lawrence Rudner of 20,760 homeschooled students which found the homeschoolers who have homeschooled all their school aged years had the highest academic achievement. This was especially apparent in the higher grades.<sup>ii</sup> This is a good encouragement to families catch the long-range vision and homeschool through high school.

Another important finding of *Strengths of Their Own* was that the race of the student does not make any difference. There was no significant difference between minority and white homeschooled students. For example, in grades K-12, both white and minority students scored, on the average, in the 87th percentile. In math, whites scored in the 82nd percentile while minorities scored in the 77th percentile. In the public schools, however, there is a sharp contrast. White public school eighth grade students, nationally scored the 58th percentile in math and the 57th percentile in reading. Black eighth grade students, on the other hand, scored on the average at the 24th percentile in math and the 28th percentile in reading. Hispanics scored at the 29th percentile in math and the 28th percentile in reading.<sup>iii</sup>

These findings show that when parents, regardless of race, commit themselves to make the necessary sacrifices and tutor their children at home, almost all obstacles present in other school systems disappear.

Another obstacle that seems to be overcome in homeschooling is the need to spend a great deal of money in order to have a good education. In *Strengths of Their Own*, Dr. Ray found the average cost per homeschool student is \$546 while the average cost per public school student is \$5,325. Yet the homeschool children in this study averaged in 85th percentile while the public school students averaged in the 50th percentile on nationally standardized achievement tests.<sup>iv</sup>

Similarly, the 1998 study by Dr. Rudner of 20,760 students, found that eighth grade students whose parents

spend \$199 or less on their home education score, on the average, in the 80th percentile. Eighth grade students whose parents spend \$400 to \$599 on their home education also score on the average, in the 80th percentile! Once the parents spend over \$600, the students do slightly better, scoring in the 83rd percentile

The message is loud and clear. More money does not mean a better education. There is no positive correlation between money spent on education and student performance. Public school advocates could refocus their emphasis if they learned this lesson. Loving and caring parents are what matters. Money can never replace simple, hard work.

The last significant statistic from the *Strengths of Their Own* study regards the affect of government regulation on homeschooling. Dr. Brian Ray compared the impact of government regulation on the academic performance of homeschool students and he found no positive correlation. In other words, whether a state had a high degree of regulation (i.e., curriculum approval, teacher qualifications, testing, home visits) or a state had no regulation of homeschoolers, the homeschooled students in both categories of states performed the same. The students all scored on the average in the 86th percentile regardless of state regulation. <sup>vi</sup>

Homeschool freedom works. Homeschoolers have earned the right to be left alone.

2. In a study released by the National Center for Home Education on November 10, 1994. According to these standardized test results provided by the Riverside Publishing Company of 16,311 homeschoolers from all 50 states K-12, the nationwide average for homeschool students is at the 77th percentile of the basic battery of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. In reading, the homeschoolers' nationwide grand mean is the 79th percentile. This means, of course, that the homeschool students perform better in reading than 79 percent of the same population on whom the test is normed. In the area of language arts and math, the typical homeschooler scored in the 73rd percentile.

These 16,311 homeschool students' scores were not self-selected by parents or anyone else. They represent all the homeschoolers whose tests were scored through the Riverside Publishing Company. It is important to note that this summary of homeschool achievement test scores demonstrates that 54.7% of the students in grades K-12 are achieving individual scores in the top quarter of the population of students in the United States. This figure is more than double the number of conventional school students who score in the top quarter. <sup>vii</sup>

3. In 1991, a survey of standardized test scores was performed by the Home School Legal Defense Association in cooperation with the Psychological Corporation, which publishes the Stanford Achievement Test. The study involved the administering of the Stanford Achievement Test (8th Edition, Form J) to 5,124 homeschooled students. These students represented all 50 states and their grades ranged from K-12. This testing was administered in Spring 1991 under controlled test conditions in accordance with the test publisher's standards. All test administrators were screened, trained, and approved pursuant to the publisher's requirements. All tests were machine-scored by the Psychological Corporation.

These 5,124 homeschoolers' composite scores on the basic battery of tests in reading, math, and language arts ranked 18 to 28 percentile points above public school averages. For instance, 692 homeschooled 4th graders averaged in the 77th percentile in reading, the 63rd percentile in math, and the 70th percentile in language arts. Sixth-grade homeschoolers, of 505 tested, scored in the 76th percentile in reading, the 65th percentile in math, and the 72nd percentile in language arts.

The homeschooled high schoolers did even better, which goes against the trend in public schools where studies show the longer a child is in the public schools, the lower he scores on standardized tests. One hundred and eighteen tenth-grade homeschool students, as a group, made an average score of the 82nd percentile in reading, the 70th percentile in math, and the 81st percentile in language arts.

4. The Bob Jones University Testing Service of South Carolina provided test results of Montana homeschoolers. Also a survey of homeschoolers in Montana was conducted by the National Home Education Research Institute. Dr. Brian Ray evaluated the survey and test results and found:

On average, the home education students in this study scored above the national norm in all subject areas on standardized achievement tests. These students scored, on average, at the 72nd percentile in terms of a combination of their reading, language, and math performance. This is well above the national average. <sup>viii</sup>

5. In North Dakota, Dr. Brian Ray conducted a survey of 205 homeschoolers throughout the state. The middle reading score was the 84th percentile, language was the 81st percentile, science was the 87th percentile, social studies was the 86th percentile, and math was the 81st percentile.

Further, Dr. Ray found no significant statistical differences in academic achievement between those students taught by parents with less formal education and those students taught by parents with higher formal education.

6. In South Carolina, the National Center for Home Education did a survey of 65 homeschool students and found that the average scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills were 30 percentile points higher than national public school averages. In math, 92 percent of the homeschool students scored above grade level, and 93 percent of the homeschool students were at or above grade level in reading. These scores are "being achieved in a state where public school SAT scores are next-to-last in national rankings." <sup>ix</sup>

7. In 1990, the National Home Education Research Institute issued a report entitled "A Nationwide Study of Home Education: Family Characteristics, Legal Matters, and Student Achievement." This was a study of over 2,163 homeschooling families.

The study found that the average scores of the homeschool students were at or above the 80th percentile in all categories. The homeschoolers' national percentile mean was 84th for reading, 80th for language, 81st for math, 84th for science and 83rd for social studies.

The research revealed that there was no positive correlation between state regulation of homeschools and the home-schooled students' performance. The study compared homeschoolers in three groups of states representing various levels of regulation. Group 1 represented the most restrictive states such as Michigan; Group 2 represented slightly less restrictive states including North Dakota; and Group 3 represented unregulated states such as Texas and California. The Institute concluded:

...no difference was found in the achievement scores of students between the three groups which represent various degrees of state regulation of home education.... It was found that students in all three regulation groups scored on the average at or above the 76th percentile in the three areas examined: total reading, total math, and total language. These findings in conjunction with others described in this section, do not support the idea that state regulation and compliance on the part of home education families assures successful student achievement. <sup>x</sup>

Furthermore, this same study demonstrated that only 13.9 percent of the mothers (who are the primary teachers) had ever been certified teachers. The study found that there was no difference in the students' total reading, total math and total language scores based on the teacher certification status of their parents:

The findings of this study do not support the idea that parents need to be trained and certified teachers to assure successful academic achievement of their children. <sup>xi</sup>

8. In Pennsylvania, 171 homeschooled students took the CTBS standardized achievement test. The tests were all administered in group settings by Pennsylvania certified teachers. The middle reading score was the 89th percentile and the middle math score was the 72nd percentile. The middle science score was the

87th percentile and the middle social studies score was the 81st percentile. A survey conducted of all these homeschool families who participated in this testing found that the average student spent only 16 hours per week in formal schooling (i.e., structured lessons that were preplanned by either the parent or a provider of educational materials).<sup>xii</sup>

9. In West Virginia, over 400 hundred homeschool students, grades K-12, were tested with the Stanford Achievement test at the end of the 1989-90 school year. The Psychological Corporation scored the children together as one school. The results found that the typical homeschooled students in eight of these grade levels scored in the "somewhat above average" range (61st to 73rd average percentile), compared to the performance of students in the same grade from across the country. Two grade levels scored in the "above average" range (80th to 85th average percentile) and three grade levels scored in the "about average range" (54th to 59th average percentile).<sup>xiii</sup>

10. In Washington state, a survey of the standardized test results of 2,018 homeschooled students over a period of three years found that the median cell each year varied from the 65th percentile to the 68th percentile on national norms. The Washington Home School Research Project concluded that "as a group, these homeschoolers are doing well."<sup>xiv</sup>

11. Dr. Brian Ray, president of the Home Education Research Institute, reviewed over 65 studies concerning home education. He found that homeschoolers were performing at average or above average on test levels.<sup>xv</sup>

12. In 1986, researcher Lauri Scogin surveyed 591 homeschooled children and discovered that 72.61% of the homeschooled children scored one year or more above their grade level in reading. 49.79% scored one year or more above their grade level in math.<sup>xvi</sup>

1. In 1982, Dr. Raymond Moore studied several thousand homeschooled children throughout the United States. His research found that these children have been performing, on the average, in the 75th to the 95th percentile on Stanford and Iowa Achievement Tests. Additionally, Dr. Moore did a study of homeschooled children whose parents were being criminally charged for exercising their right to teach their own children. He found that the children scored on the average in the 80th percentile.<sup>xvii</sup>

13. Statistics also demonstrate that homeschoolers tend to score above the national average on both their SAT and ACT scores.

For example, the 2,219 students reporting their homeschool status on the SAT in 1999 scored an average of 1083 (verbal 548, math 535), 67 points above the national average of 1016. In 2004 the 7,858 homeschool students taking the ACT scored an average of 22.6, compared to the national average of 20.9.

According to the 1998 ACT High School Profile Report, 2,610 graduating homeschoolers took the ACT and scored an average of 22.8 out of a possible 36 points. This score is slightly higher than the 1997 report released on the results of 1,926 homeschool graduates and founding homeschoolers maintained the average of 22.5. This is higher than the national average, which was 21.0 in both 1997 and 1998.<sup>xviii</sup>

## II. State Department of Education Statistics on Homeschoolers

Several state departments of education or local school districts have also gathered statistics on the academic progress of homeschooled children.

### Tennessee

In the spring of 1987, the Tennessee Department of Education found that homeschooled children in 2nd grade, on the average, scored in the 93rd percentile while their public school counterparts, on the average,

scored in the 62nd percentile on the Stanford Achievement Test. Homeschool children in third grade scored, on the average, in the 90th percentile in reading on another standardized test, and the public school students scored in the 78 percentile. In math, the third grade homeschooled children scored, on the average, in the 87th percentile, while their public school counterparts scored in the 80th percentile. In eighth grade, the homeschooled students scored, on the average, in the 87th percentile in reading and in 71st percentile in math while their public school counterparts scored in the 75th percentile in reading and the 69th percentile in math.<sup>xix</sup>

### **Alaska and Oregon**

Similarly, in 1986, the State Department of Education in Alaska which had surveyed homeschooled children's test results every other year since 1981, found homeschooled children to be scoring approximately 16 percentage points higher, on the average, than the children of the same grades in conventional schools. In Oregon, the State Department of Education compiled test score statistics for 1,658 homeschooled children in 1988 and found that 51 percent of the children scored above the 71st percentile and 73 percent scored above the 51st percentile.

### **North Carolina**

In North Carolina, the Division of Non-Public Education compiled test results of 2,144 homeschool students in grades K-12. Of the 1,061 homeschool students taking the California Achievement Test, they scored, on the average, at the 73rd percentile on the total battery of tests: 80th percentile in reading, 72nd percentile in language, and the 71st percentile in math.

The 755 homeschool students who took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills scored at the 80th percentile in the total battery of tests: 81st percentile in reading, 77th percentile in language, and 77th percentile in math. The remaining students who took the Stanford scored, on the average, in the 73rd percentile in the whole battery.<sup>xx</sup>

### **Arkansas**

In Arkansas, for the 1987-88 school term, homeschool children, on the average, scored in 75% on the Metropolitan Achievement Test 6. They out-scored public school children in every subject (Reading, Math, Language, Science, and Social Studies) and at every grade level. For example, at the 10th grade level public school children scored an average of 53rd percentile in social studies, while homeschool children scored at the 73rd percentile. In science, an area in which homeschoolers are often criticized for lack of facilities, the homeschoolers scored, on the average, 85th percentile in fourth grade, 73rd percentile in seventh grade, and 65th percentile in tenth grade. The public school students, on the other hand, scored much lower in science: 66th percentile in fourth grade, 62nd percentile in seventh, and 53rd percentile in tenth.<sup>xxi</sup>

### **Arizona**

According to the Arizona State Department of Education, 1,123 homeschooled children in grades 1-9, on the average, scored above grade level in reading, language arts, and math on standardized tests for the 1988-89 school year. Four grades tested were a full grade level ahead.<sup>xxii</sup>

### **Nebraska**

In Nebraska, out of 259 homeschooled children who returned to public or non-public schools, 134 of them were automatically placed in their grade level according to their age without testing. Of the remaining who were given entrance tests, 33 were above grade level, 43 were at grade level, and 29 were below grade level. Approximately 88 percent of the returning students were at or above grade level after being homeschooled for a period of time. This survey was the result of the responses of 429 accredited schools.<sup>xxiii</sup>

### III. Local School District Statistics on Homeschooling

1. In 1988, 30 homeschooled children in Albuquerque, New Mexico, participated in the state-mandated testing program (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills) and scored on the average in the 83rd percentile for 3rd grade, the 85th percentile for 5th grade, and the 89th percentile for 8th grade. This group of homeschoolers scored 20 to 25 percentile points higher than the local public school students taking the CTBS in 1987. <sup>xxiv</sup>

2. In a 1980 study in Los Angeles, homeschooled students scored higher on standardized tests than children in the Los Angeles public schools. <sup>xxv</sup>

3. In South Carolina, the Greenville County School District stated, "Kids taught at home last year outscored those in public schools on basic skills tests." In that county, 57 out of 61 homeschooled students "met or exceeded the state's minimum performance standard on the reading test" of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. The homeschool students' passing rate was 93.4 while the public school counterparts passing rate was 83.9 percent. Furthermore, in math, the homeschooled students passing rate was 87.9 percent compared to the public school students' passing rate of 82.1 percent. <sup>xxvi</sup>

4. In Nevada, according to Washoe County School District's data, homeschooled students scored higher than their public school counterparts in first through seventh grade. All children were tested with the Stanford Achievement Test, and homeschoolers consistently scored higher in reading, vocabulary, reading comprehension, math concepts, math comprehension, math and math concepts and application.

The most extreme gap between the public school children and the homeschooled children was in the area of vocabulary. For example, fourth graders in public school scored in the 49th percentile while the homeschooled fourth graders scored in the 80th percentile.

#### Conclusion

These statistics point to one conclusion: homeschooling works. Even many of the State Departments of Education, which are generally biased toward the public school system, cannot argue with these facts. Not only does homeschooling work, but it works without the myriad of state controls and accreditation standards imposed on the public schools.

*This memorandum is an excerpt from Appendix 1 of Home Schooling in the United States: A Legal Analysis, by Christopher J. Klicka, Esq., a volume covering the laws for homeschooling in all U.S. states and territories.*

*These and many other statistics on homeschooling are also covered in Home Schooling: The Right Choice, also by Christopher Klicka. This book is a comprehensive home schooling handbook. It covers the biblical basis for home schooling and the constitutional right to home school, as well as home schooling's history and benefits, academic success through college, how-to tips, teaching children with special needs, handling social workers, rights in the military, and much, much more!*

*Both of these books can be ordered by contacting Home School Legal Defense Association - <http://www.hslda.org>, 540-338-5600, [info@hslda.org](mailto:info@hslda.org).*

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## Endnotes

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