

HAFHE **HOMESCHOOLING** IN ARIZONA AND NATIONWIDE:

Research Facts and Other Important Concepts



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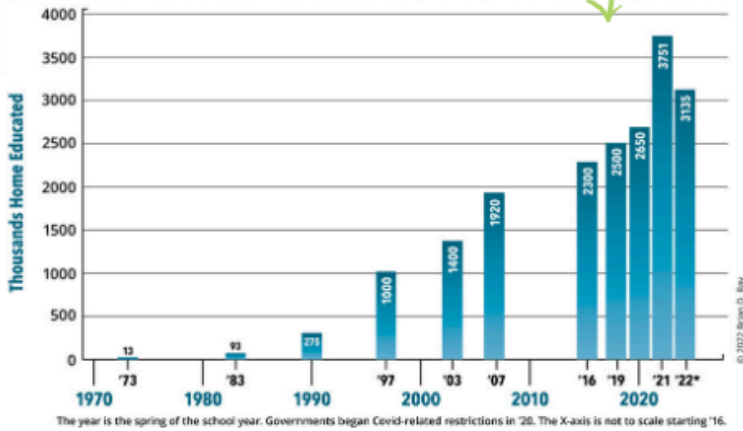
64,000 to 78,000
 AZ homeschooled
 students in K-12
(Ray, 2022)



PARENT-DIRECTED HOME EDUCATION

has been the principal model used to educate children for most of recorded history. Although cultural landscapes have changed over the course of time, the last several decades have seen a strong and steady resurgence of this solid approach. Today, home education is the fastest-growing form of education in the United States, with more than 3.1 million home-educated students across the country (Ray, 2022).

Growth of homeschooling in the United States



Numbers of Arizona Homeschoolers and Tax Savings

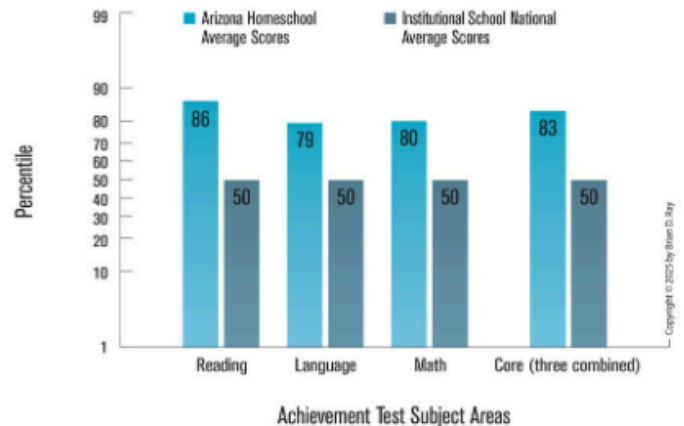
For the 2021-2022 school year, it is estimated that there were 64,000 to 78,000 homeschooled students in grades K to 12 in Arizona (Ray, 2022). This represents an estimated 18% increase over the 2019-2020 year.

The average public school per-pupil expenditure in Arizona was \$11,599 in 2021-2022 (National Education Association, 2022). Therefore, it is estimated that homeschool families saved Arizona taxpayers approximately \$742 million to \$904 million that year. In addition, taxpayers do not have to pay capital expenditures for home-educated students.

Arizona Homeschool Academic Achievement

A 2025 data analysis revealed that Arizona private homeschool students are scoring at the 79th to 86th percentile across the subjects of reading, language, math, and core total on standardized academic achievement tests. This is about 29 to 36 percentile points above the U.S. public school average, and the results are consistent with homeschool test scores in other states.

Academic achievement of Arizona homeschool students and U.S. Institutional School students



Arizona Homeschool Law and Core Values

In Arizona, compulsory education requirements are met by choosing either a public school, a private school, a charter school, homeschool, or the empowerment scholarship account (A.R.S. 15-802(A)) (see <https://afhe.org/az-law-and-affidavit> for more detail).

Arizona statute defines a homeschool as “a nonpublic school conducted primarily by the parent, guardian, or other person who has custody of the child, or nonpublic instruction provided in the child’s home.” (A.R.S. 15-802(G)(2))

A homeschool parent/guardian has the complete freedom to choose the course of study best suited for their child. Homeschooling is parent-directed, privately funded, and home-based education. It is not publicly funded instruction that may take place at home, such as an online or virtual public or charter school, and it is distinct from education at home under an empowerment scholarship account contract.

Legislative Issues of Concern to Arizona’s Homeschoolers

Parental and Educational Rights: Parents have the right to educate their children in conformity with their moral and religious convictions and academic and philosophical goals.

According to A.R.S. 1-601(A), “The liberty of parents in Arizona to direct the upbringing, education, health care, and mental health of their children is a fundamental right.” It is further recognized in A.R.S. 1-602(A) that “All parental rights are exclusively reserved to a parent of a minor child without obstruction or interference from this state, any political subdivision of this state, any other governmental entity or any other institution.”

Conscience Rights: Every individual and each family has the unalienable right to act and order their life according to their conscience as affirmed by part of the First Amendment. “These 26 words protect the freedom of conscience—the freedom to believe without coercion and to speak and act consistently with those beliefs” (Neihart, 2023).

Reasons for Homeschooling

Most parents decide to homeschool for more than one reason (Ray, 2021a; United States Department of Education, 2021). The most common reasons given for choosing parent-directed home education are to:

- customize or individualize the curriculum and learning environment for each child;
- accomplish more academically in less time than in traditional schools;
- use teaching approaches other than those typical in traditional classroom settings;
- enhance family relationships to offer the greatest potential for directing the child’s future;

- provide a natural and guided social and community life with peers and adults;
- provide a safe environment void of physical violence, drugs and alcohol, psychological abuse, and improper and unhealthy sexuality;
- teach and impart values, beliefs, and a world-view to their children and young adults; and
- address special needs and individual learning challenges.

In light of families’ reasons for homeschooling, the following should be noted:

- In 2021, nearly 18% of high school students in Arizona reported being bullied on school property (United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).
- A 2022 study surveyed over 51,000 students at more than 300 Arizona schools. About 10% of students reported being threatened with a weapon on school property within the past 12 months, a 73% increase over 2018. Some 40% reported seeing someone being bullied at school, and only about 21% of students reported feeling safe at their school. Also, 25% of students reported not going to school because of feeling unsafe (Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, 2022).

Nationwide Academic Achievement

- Studies show that home-educated students average 15 to 25 percentile points above the national average on standardized academic achievement tests (Murphy, 2014; Ray, 2013, 2015; Ray & Hoelzle, 2024).
- Home-educated students typically score above average on the college admission SATs and ACTs (Murphy, 2014; Ray, 2017).
- Colleges actively recruit homeschool graduates. College and university personnel have a positive impression of homeschool graduates (Gloeckner & Jones, 2013).
- The parents’ level of education is not notably related to the academic achievement of the home-educated (Ray, 2013); however, the socioeconomic status (via parent educational attainment, parent occupation, and family income) is a strong predictor of institutional school children’s (non-homeschooled) academic success (Davis-Kean et al., 2021).
- The family’s household income is not notably related to the academic achievement of the home-educated (Ray, 2013); however, household income is a notable predictor for institutional school children’s (non-homeschooled) academic success (Davis-Kean et al., 2021).
- The degree of state control and regulation of homeschooling is not related to academic achievement (Ray, 2010). Achievement test scores of homeschool students in states with higher regulation are the same as states with lesser regulation.
- Whether homeschool parents have ever or never been government-certified teachers is not notably related to their children’s academic achievement (Ray, 2013).

Success in Adulthood

The research base of adults who were educated at home is growing; thus far, studies indicate they:

- participate in local community service more frequently than the general population;
- vote and attend public meetings more frequently than the general population;
- go to and succeed in college at an equal or higher rate than the general population;
- by adulthood, internalize the values and beliefs of their parents at a high rate; and
- are more politically tolerant than other adults (Cheng, 2014).

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Social, Emotional, and Psychological Development

- Research measuring peer interaction, self-concept, leadership skills, family cohesion, participation in community service, and self-esteem shows homeschoolers are doing very well. They are typically above average in social, emotional, and psychological development (Medlin, 2013; Ray, 2017).
- Homeschool students are regularly engaged in common social and educational activities including field trips, scouting, 4-H, political drives, church ministry, sports teams, debate teams, drama, music classes, art classes, apprenticeships, and community volunteer work (Hamlin, 2019).
- Public school and private school students experience abuse and neglect as much or more as do homeschool students (Ray, 2024; Ray & Shakeel, 2022). Demographics correlate with child abuse and neglect, while school type does not.

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NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOMESCHOOLING?

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