

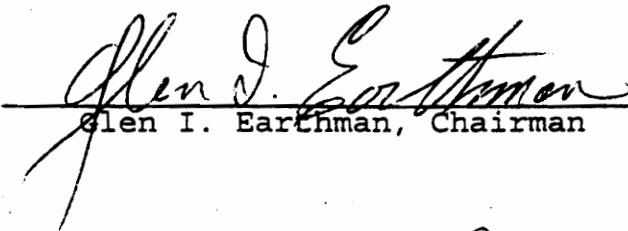
A STUDY OF WAYS HOME SCHOOLING FAMILIES  
IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA BELIEVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
CAN BETTER INTERFACE AND ASSIST FAMILIES  
WHO CHOOSE TO HOME SCHOOL THEIR CHILDREN

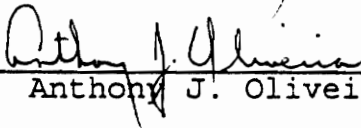
by

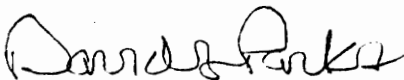
Patricia Surratt Golding

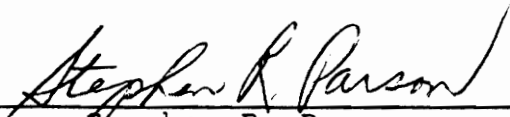
Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
in  
Educational Administration

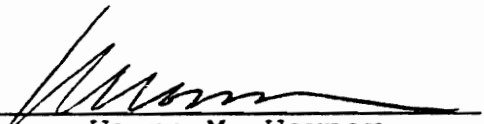
APPROVED:

  
Glen I. Earthman, Chairman

  
Anthony J. Oliveira

  
David J. Parks

  
Stephen R. Parson

  
Wayne M. Worner

April, 1995

Blacksburg, Virginia

c.2

LD  
5655  
V856  
1995  
6653  
c.2

A STUDY OF WAYS HOME SCHOOLING FAMILIES  
IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA BELIEVE PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS CAN INTERFACE AND ASSIST  
FAMILIES WHO CHOOSE TO HOME SCHOOL  
THEIR CHILDREN

By

Patricia Surratt Golding

Committee Chairman:

Glen I. Earthman, Educational Administration

(ABSTRACT)

As more and more families opt to home school their children, public schools are being faced with the need to know more about the families that home school their children within their division because many of these children will later enroll in public school.

The purpose of this study was to determine ways that home schooling parents believe public schools can better interface and assist families who choose to home school their children.

In light of the information gained from this study, public school officials may gain insight into: 1) how to effectively communicate with parents of home schooled pupils; 2) what services are needed to support the children in the home school settings in their division; and 3) what strategies need to be implemented to provide a positive

transition from the home school setting to the public school setting in those circumstances where home schoolers return to public schools.

A questionnaire was used to gather demographic information and to identify families to participate in a formal interview. An interview protocol was developed to obtain information. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

The major findings revealed that most home schooling parents would welcome a collaborative relationship with the public schools if they could see benefits for their children. Parents were open to receiving assistance from public schools in providing opportunities for their children to attend classes, providing inservice for parents to become more effective teachers, sharing facilities and materials, sharing information regarding curriculum improvement, and sharing ideas and mutual concerns for enhancing learning for all children.

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the one person in my life who has literally "lived through it all" and has provided a well-spring of patience, understanding, encouragement, support, and love--my husband, Roger. Without him, my doctoral program would never have been successfully completed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have given invaluable assistance throughout the development of this study. I wish to make them aware of my appreciation.

For his initial encouragement and direction, and then for his continuing confidence, trust, guidance, and counsel as Committee Chairman, I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Glen Earthman.

Thanks and grateful appreciation is extended to the members of the committee: Drs. Anthony Oliveira, David Parks, Stephen Parson, and Wayne Worner.

Special thanks to Steve Sage, Virginia Childress, and William Gardner for their help in contacting home schooling families in their divisions.

Dr. Oliver A. McBride, superintendent and respected educator, is particularly remembered for his support and encouragement throughout this journey.

Much appreciation goes to Julie H. Combs whose computer skills allowed this study to be completed within the given time constraints. Also my sincere thanks goes to Paulette Gardner who always was there when I needed her assistance.

I express my love and appreciation to my parents, Cleophus and Mary Frances Surratt, who have always encouraged me to continue and supported me at all times.

I'm deeply indebted to my husband, Roger, and my children, Chad, Seth, and Arynn for their understanding of my countless hours of absence from them, for their willingness to help, and for their tolerance of the kaleidoscopic nature of the family schedule throughout this entire doctoral program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract . . . . .	ii
Dedication . . . . .	iv
Acknowledgments . . . . .	v
Table of Contents . . . . .	vii
List of Tables . . . . .	xi
List of Illustrations. . . . .	xiv
 Chapter I . . . . .	 1
The Problem . . . . .	1
Introduction . . . . .	1
Statement of Problem . . . . .	3
Research Question . . . . .	4
Purpose . . . . .	5
Significance of the Study . . . . .	6
Definitions . . . . .	7
Limitations . . . . .	9
Organization of the Study . . . . .	9
 Chapter II . . . . .	 11
Literature Review . . . . .	11
Introduction . . . . .	11
Home Schooling Overview . . . . .	11
Demographic Characteristics of Families Who Home School Their Children . . . . .	13
Reasons for Home Schooling . . . . .	16



Overview of Home Schooling in Virginia . . .	18
Past Cooperative Efforts Between Public Schools and Home Schooling Families . .	24
Chapter III . . . . .	29
Methodology . . . . .	29
Introduction . . . . .	29
Research Design . . . . .	29
Population and Sample Selection . . . . .	30
Data Collection . . . . .	32
Data Analysis . . . . .	37
Chapter IV . . . . .	41
Findings of the Study . . . . .	41
Introduction . . . . .	41
The Questionnaire . . . . .	42
The Interview . . . . .	49y
Protocol Question #1: What resources would help you to do a better job educating your children? . . . . .	51
Protocol Question #2: What ways can public schools effectively communicate with home schooling families in their division? . . . . .	54
Protocol Question #3: What types of information would you like the public schools to provide for you? . . . . .	56
Protocol Question #4: How can public schools assist you in the education of your children? . . . . .	59

Protocol Question #5: Will you enroll your children in the public schools in the future? If so, what factors would influence you to make this decision? . . .	62
Protocol Question #6: What could the public schools do to make the transition to public school more positive for the home schooled student? . . . . .	64
Protocol Question #7: What are the important features you look for in choosing a curriculum? . . . . .	67
Protocol Question #8: Describe the setting where you conduct the schooling activities. . . . .	69
Protocol Question #9: Describe the teaching methods or strategies that you use. . . .	71
Protocol Question #10: Describe the instructional materials that you use. . . .	74
Protocol Question #11: Describe the evaluation procedures that you use to assess your children's progress. These can be both formal and informal. . . .	76
Protocol Question #12: What resources have you found to be helpful in educating your children? . . . . .	78
Protocol Question #13: Are you encountering any problems as you teach your children at home? If so, please explain. . . .	79
Chapter V . . . . .	84
Summary of Findings, Conclusions, Implications for Practice, Recommendations for Future Research . . . . .	84
Introduction . . . . .	84
The Study Sample . . . . .	84
Data Collection and Analysis . . . . .	85

Summary of Findings . . . . .	85
Resources Needed to do a Better Job . . .	85
Communication with Public Schools . . .	86
Information Needed from Public Schools.	87
Public School Assistance to Home Schooling Families . . . . .	87
Factors That Would Influence Public School Enrollment . . . . .	88
Instructional Strategies for a Positive Transition from Home School to a Public School . . . . .	89
Important Features in Choice of a Curriculum . . . . .	90
Setting For Home Instruction . . . . .	90
Teaching Methods and Strategies Used by Home Schoolers . . . . .	91
Instructional Materials Used by Home Schoolers. . . . .	91
Evaluation Procedures Used by Home Schoolers. . . . .	92
Resources Helpful to Home Schoolers . .	92
Problems Encountered By Home Schoolers.	93
Conclusions. . . . .	93
Discussion . . . . .	94
Implications for Practice . . . . .	97
Ways Public Schools Can Assist the Home Schoolers In Their Division .	97
Ways Public Schools Can Promote Communication With Parents Who Home School Their Children . . . . .	98

Intervention Strategies That Public Schools Can Implement to Promote a Positive Transition From Home School to Public School . . . . .	100
Recommendations for Future Research . . . . .	101
References . . . . .	102
Appendix A. Approved Correspondence Schools in Virginia . . . . .	107
Appendix B. Notice of Intent Form . . . . .	111
Appendix C. Approved Evaluation Procedures in Virginia . . . . .	114
Appendix D. Letter to Superintendents . . . . .	118
Appendix E. Cover Letter to Parents . . . . .	120
Appendix F. Home Schooling Survey Instrument . . . . .	122
Appendix G. Follow-Up Letter to Superintendents . . . . .	125
Appendix H. Follow-Up Letter to Parents . . . . .	127
Appendix I. Protocol Questions . . . . .	129
Appendix J. Validation Form . . . . .	132
Appendix K. Contact Summary Form . . . . .	135
Appendix L. Comments from Respondents . . . . .	137
VITA . . . . .	144

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Counties and Number of Families Used to Draw Sample in this Study . . . . .	43
Table 2. Reasons Families Gave for Decision to Home School . . . . .	45
Table 3. Number of Children in Families . . . . .	46
Table 4. Approximate Grade Levels of Children . . . . .	47
Table 5. Number of Years School Age Children Attended Public School . . . . .	48
Table 6. Plans of Families to Enroll Children in Public School . . . . .	50
Table 7. Protocol Question #1: What Resources Would Help You to do a Better Job in Educating Your Children? . . . . .	52
Table 8. Protocol Question #2: What Ways Can Public Schools Effectively Communicate With Home Schooling Families? . . . . .	55
Table 9. Protocol Question #3: What Information Would You Like the Public Schools to Provide for You? . . . . .	57
Table 10. Protocol Question #4: How Can Public Schools Assist You in the Education of Your Child? . . . . .	60
Table 11. Protocol Question #5: Will You Enroll Your Children in the Public Schools in the Future? If so, What Factors Would Influence You to Make This Decision? . . . . .	63
Table 12. Protocol Question #6: What Could the Public Schools do to Make the Transition to Public Schools More Positive for Home Schooled Students? . . . . .	65
Table 13. Protocol Question #7: What Are the Important Features You Look For in Choosing a Curriculum? . . . . .	68

Table 14.	Protocol Question #8: Describe the Setting Where You Conduct the Schooling Activities. . .	70
Table 15.	Protocol Question #9: Describe the Teaching Methods or Strategies That You Use. . . . .	72
Table 16.	Protocol Question #10: Describe the Instructional Materials That You Use. . . . .	75
Table 17:	Protocol Question #11: Describe the Evaluation Procedures That You Use to Assess Your Children's Progress. These Could be Both Formal and Informal. . . . .	77
Table 18:	Protocol Question #12: What Resources Have You Found to be Helpful in Educating Your Children? . . . . .	80
Table 19:	Protocol Question #13: Are You Encountering Any Problems as You Teach Your Children at Home? If So, Please Explain. . . . .	82

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Start List of Codes . . . . .	39

## Chapter I

### The Problem

#### Introduction

As the twentieth century draws to an end, more parents are increasingly opting to home school their children. The actual number of children being home schooled is unknown. Roach (1988) stated that the reason for the uncertainty is that many parents do not register their children with local public schools because they either cannot comply with the standards for home instruction or they do not recognize the state as having authority over the education of their children. The U.S. Department of Education, however, estimates that there are approximately 350,000 (Jueb, 1994). Advocates of home schools estimate that the range is from 500,000 to over one million (Ramsey, 1992). In Virginia, according to state officials, there are approximately 8500 home schooled pupils who are registered with a school division (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 1993).

The term home schooling, often used interchangeably with the term home education, is used to mean "instruction by a parent or guardian of children in their own family" (Roach, 1988, p. 11). When parents make a decision to educate their children at home, many questions arise as to the rights and duties of parents, as well as, that of the state in providing education for children. The regulation



of home schooling in the twentieth century has been determined by the states' assumption of control over education through the establishment of public schools and compulsory attendance laws.

The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) released a resource document on home schooling in order to assist state boards in establishing standards for home instruction. In this document NASBE identified five basic elements of a comprehensive approach to home instruction which included the following:

1. Parents should register their children with the public schools;
  2. State boards should establish criteria for home instruction that emphasize minimal "input criteria" such as teacher certification and the approval of curriculum materials;
  3. State boards should establish the accountability procedures and methods for evaluating a student's progress;
  4. State boards should impose sanctions on home schools that fail to comply with home school laws.
- (Roach 1988, p. 11)

While laws vary across the nation, the trend in most

states has been a relaxation of home schooling regulations (Klicka, 1990). In Virginia, the State Code outlines provisions for home schooling in section 22.1-254.1 (Virginia Department of Education, VDOE, 1992).

### Statement of the Problem

Families who decide to home school their children in Virginia are responsible for registering with their local school division. School divisions in Virginia are responsible for sanctioning individual home schooling programs. Because there is no legislation outlining what constitutes a valid home schooling program, decisions are left to individual school divisions. In most cases the home schools are able to function independently. This leads to many inconsistencies in how home schooling programs operate throughout Virginia. This fact concerns public school officials in regard to the quality of education being provided for home schooled children. This fact also concerns public school officials when facing issues that arise when a home schooled student (re)enters the public school.

In Virginia, home schooling parents are required to notify the local division of their decision to teach their children at home on a year-to-year basis. Quite often, some parents decide to (re)enroll their children in public

school. This presents the public schools with decisions of determining correct placement for the incoming student. Ramsey (1992) stated that "we must have a way to measure their learning. School is like building blocks--you can't just lift a child from one learning environment and expect him to do well in another" (p. 22). Many times home schoolers are reluctant to register with public school divisions or to interact with public schools due to fear of criticism; consequently, school officials do not know how to communicate with them. In order for public schools to better communicate with the parents of home school pupils and to assist them in the education of their children, a better understanding of the home schoolers is needed.

#### Research Question

The primary question of this study was: In what ways do home schooling families believe public schools can better interface and assist families who choose to home school their children?

Sub-questions answered included:

1. What do home schooling families believe public schools can do to support the children in their division who are home schooled?

2. What do home schooling families believe public school officials can do to promote communication between public schools and parents who home school their children?
  
3. What strategies do home schooling families believe public schools can implement to provide a positive transition from the home school setting to the public school setting in those circumstances where home schooled students enter public schools?

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine ways home schooling families believe public schools can better interface and assist families who choose to home school their children. In light of the information gained from this study, public school officials may gain insight into 1) how to effectively communicate with parents of home school pupils; 2) what services are needed to support the children in the home school settings in their division, and 3) what strategies need to be implemented to provide a positive transition from the home school setting to the public school setting in those circumstances where home schoolers return to public schools.

## Significance of the Problem

The number of families who choose to home school their children is increasing; however, the manner in which this phenomenon will impact educational policy and the public good in the future has not been determined. If this impact on public schools is significant, education officials will have to respond by initiating policies that facilitate more intensive cooperation between home school families and public schools.

In light of the growing number of families who choose to home school their children, some of whom will later enter public schools, school officials should seek ways to interface and assist home schoolers. By gaining an understanding of how children learn in regard to curriculum, instructional materials, scheduling, and student evaluation procedures in a home school environment, public school officials may gain insight into ways to support home schooled children in their division. As school officials face the (re)enrollment of home schoolers into public schools, an examination of the effects this will have on the current organization of local schools and policies needed to be undertaken.

This study attempted to provide an understanding of the ways home schoolers in Southwest Virginia believe that

public schools can assist and facilitate their efforts in the education of their children.

### Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were assigned to aid in clarity of understanding.

Home Schooling: Instruction in the home of a child or children by the parent, guardian, or other person having control of such child or children that are not classified or defined private, denominational, or parochial school according to the code of Virginia 22.1-254, 22.1-256, and 22.1-257 (VDOE, 1992).

Religious Families: Families who instruct their children at home and who are strongly committed to religious principles and believe that they are responsible to cultivate their religious values in their children. They believe that home schooling is both a means to protect their children from unwanted secular ideologies and a means to insure that their children are raised with a belief in the authority of the scriptures (Mayberry, 1989).

Socio-relational Families: Families who instruct their children at home because they are concerned with the pedagogical environment in public schools. They believe that home schooling promotes family unity, allows the parent-child relationship to be extended as long as possible, and protects children from possible negative peer influences and damaging socialization experiences (Mayberry, 1989).

Self-sufficient (New Age) Families: Families who instruct their children at home because they believe that home schooling provides them the opportunity to give their children an educational experience which reflects the philosophy of their lifestyle. They also believe that home schooling allows for personally motivated values and ethics and for full potentialities to be actualized (Mayberry, 1989).

Academic Families: Families who instruct their children at home because of their concern with the academic standards and educational programs of public schools (or the lack of), rather than the educational environment. Their commitment to home schooling stems from their belief that one-on-one instruction allows children to learn at their own

pace and develop their own styles of learning (Mayberry, 1989).

### Limitations

The following limitations were observed in this study.

The study was limited to responses of families in only four Southwest Virginia counties. The conclusions drawn, therefore, may not be generalized to other settings.

Families represented only four descriptive categories of reasons parents choose to home school their children. Families who choose to home school their children may represent other categories not included in this sample.

The case studies were not in-depth case studies in that the study was not extended over a long period of time.

### Organization of the Study

Chapter one includes the statement of the problem, the purpose, the significance of the study, definitions, limitations, and organization of the study. Chapter two presents a review the literature and research related to this study. Chapter three outlines the methodology utilized in the study. The results of the study are presented in



chapter four. Chapter five consists the of a summary of findings, conclusions, discussion, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

Chapter II contains a review of the literature and research related to home schooling. Specific topics reviewed include: 1) an overview of the history of home schooling; 2) demographic characteristics of home schoolers; 3) reasons families choose to home school their children; 4) overview of home schooling in Virginia; and 5) cooperative efforts between public schools and home schooling families.

#### Home Schooling Overview

Home schooling in America began during colonial times. Parents made the decision to educate or not educate their children as well as what the curriculum would be (Tobak and Zirkle, 1982). Although some churches offered private education, home schooling was the most common form of education. Many of America's leaders were wholly or substantially home schooled. They include: George Washington, James Madison, John Quincy Adams, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, Daniel Webster, and Ben Franklin. Others who were home schooled in more recent years include: Franklin D. Roosevelt, General George Patton, Douglas

McArthur, Agatha Christie, and Pearl S. Buck  
(Whitehead, 1984).

During the nineteenth century, parents relied more on schools, the majority of which were public by 1870, to teach their children. At the beginning of the twentieth century, home schooling had all but disappeared due to universal institutional education at the elementary level (Carper, 1992). Pitman (1987) stated that prior to World War II, Americans viewed schooling as an opportunity to which they were entitled, assuming that they could afford to keep their children out of the labor force.

Three decades ago, home schooling was limited to those families who were isolated, traveling or stationed abroad, and those who chose home schooling because of religious tradition. Religious traditions included Mormons who operated "kitchen schools" for a few neighborhood children ages 5 to 7; Seventh-Day Adventists, who believed that younger children should remain at home; and the Amish who often removed their children from school after eighth grade (Lines, 1986). Also programs were implemented to serve individuals who were geographically isolated. The most notable of these was the program operated by the State of Alaska which was established in 1939 as a distance education project. This centralized correspondence study program was so successful that in 1976 it was opened to any family in

the state who wanted to use its services. Correspondence schools such as Home Study International and International Institute which served children of missionaries were also implemented (Lines, 1986).

During the late 1970's and early 1980's home education began to increase in the United States. The works of John Holt indicated that there was a direct link between public issues of alternative schools and community control that were raised in the 1960's and the emergence of modern home education (Ray, 1988).

Now, in the 1990's, as the twentieth century draws to a close, parents are home schooling their children because of concern of the quality and content of public education. Parents are no longer accepting excuses for falling test scores, unsafe facilities, and schools' neutral curricula. More parents have taken educational responsibility into their own hands because of their concern for their children's welfare (Sullivan, 1993).

#### Demographic Characteristics of Families Who Home School Their Children

Gustavsen (1981) conducted one of the earliest surveys of home schooling families. He sampled 150 families from the Hewitt-Moore Foundation, which is a religiously-oriented population of home school families, through its quarterly

newspaper. Although the results could not be generalized to larger home school populations, the results of Gustavsen's study described the sample as primarily college-educated with 75% of the families having at least one parent who had attended college and 23% having attended graduate school. The median family income was reported to be \$15,000 to \$20,000 with the male parent typically employed in a professional or skilled occupation, while the female was most likely to be a homemaker. Fifty-three percent of the families lived in small or rural communities, with only 15% of the families living in urban areas. Sixty percent of the families were regular church goers and primarily members of small Protestant denominations.

Legislators in Washington State in 1984 requested information on home schooling families prior to the drafting of a new compulsory attendance law. Wartes (1984), in a statewide pilot study, found that home school fathers were typically employed as professional and skilled workers, while mothers were typically homemakers. Nearly 80% of the parents surveyed had some college education, half of the parents had graduated from college and 17% had completed requirements for a master's degree. Thirty percent of the families had an income between \$20,000 and \$30,000, with 36% of the families having incomes above \$30,000. The Washington State study also indicated that 27% of the

families lived in small rural communities of 5,000 inhabitants or less, while 31% lived in communities of 10,000 to 50,000 inhabitants.

In 1988, Mayberry conducted a statewide survey of home school families in Oregon. The results of the study indicated that the home schooled parents, when compared to parents in the general Oregon population, were typically more educated, more economically secure, and more likely to live in small rural communities. Home school families in this study tended to be more religious and attend church more regularly when compared to the national population. (Mayberry, 1988).

The nationwide study conducted by the National Home Educational Research Institute of Seattle Washington in 1990 indicated that the average educational level of the fathers studied was three years of college and the average educational level of the mothers was two years of college. Eighty-eight percent of the instruction was provided by the mothers, with fathers providing 10%, and other persons providing 2% of the instruction. Fifty-five percent of the home school families had an income between \$25,000 and \$49,999. The average father earned 96% of the income for the family. Eleven percent of the mothers worked outside the home. The religious preferences of the fathers and mothers were Christian with 93.8% of fathers and 96.4% of

mothers describing themselves as "born again". Very few families described themselves as Muslim, New Age, Jewish, or Mormon. The average age of the 3,096 children studied was 8.25 or about third grade level. Twenty-five percent of the children had attended public school and 24% had attended private school prior to being home schooled. About 6% of the children had re-enrolled into public or private school. Parents reported in 2,434 cases out of 4,620 that they intend to home educate their children up to the eleventh grade.

Sixty four percent of parents indicated that they hand picked the major curriculum components used in the education of their children. A satellite school curriculum, a mail order school program complete with lessons and tests that are sent back to the school and graded, was used 5.1% of the time. A home education program provided by a local private school was used 1.3% of the time. Complete curriculum packages were used by 31.4% of the families (Home School Legal Defense Association, [HSLD], 1990).

### Reasons for Home Schooling

The reasons today's parents choose home schooling as an educational alternative for their children are numerous and varied. However, Lines (1987) indicated that home schoolers share the belief that parents should be deeply involved in

their children's education and development. Mahan (1987) indicated there are at least four other major reasons for home schooling: dissatisfaction with traditional schools; desire to maintain control of family unit; religious reasons; and child development concerns.

Kutter (1987) stated that researchers have come to multiple conclusions to answer the question of why parents home school their children. However, she indicated that the reasons seem to fall into the following categories: 1) dissatisfaction with academic standards; 2) dissatisfaction with standards of morals and discipline perceived in many public schools; 3) opposition to school socialization; 4) the desire for family unity; 5) desire to provide for spiritual needs of children; 6) desire for an holistic approach to education that emphasizes direct and experiential learning.

Mayberry (1989) stated that the largest group of home school parents are motivated by religious reasons. Other parents choose to home school because of their concern about their child(ren)'s academic progress or the socio-relational environment of public schools (Van Galen, 1986; Mayberry, 1988; Wartes, 1988). Pitman (1987) and Mayberry (1989b) identify other parents as New Age, those that have an alternative world view and lifestyle, who desire to teach



their children a set of values and beliefs in line with New Age philosophy.

Studies by these researchers identify four general categories of home school parents, based on their reasons for starting home schools: religious, academic, socio-relational, and self-sufficient New Age lifestyle. These reasons suggest that families who home school have a dissatisfaction with the values reflected in public schools and the loss of control they feel over their child's educational experiences. Although families begin home schooling for different reasons, the four general categories share common themes which unify their action: "their desire for family unity, their desire to protect or isolate their children from unwanted ideologies or influences, and their desire to either reclaim or not relinquish control of their children's education to public institutions" (Mayberry, 1989a, p. 177).

#### Overview of home schooling in Virginia

In 1984, the General Assembly of Virginia amended Title 22.1, Chapter 14, 22.1-254 of the code of Virginia to allow parents to educate their children at home as an alternative to attendance in a public, private, or parochial school to satisfy compulsory attendance requirements. Instruction by parents in their home is an acceptable alternative form of

education when the requirements of this section are satisfied (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 1993b).

Effective July 1, 1992, the responsibility of approving correspondence courses for home instruction was transferred from the Board of Education to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Approval of these correspondence courses continue to be based on Regulations Governing the Approval of Correspondence Courses for Home Instruction adopted by the Board in July, 1985. In agreeing to the proposal to transfer this authority, the Board requested an annual report on home instruction.

Currently, fifteen schools have had their academic courses approved in accordance with the Board of Education regulations (Appendix A). Although not mandatory for approval, six of the schools are accredited by a regional accrediting association comparable to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and four are accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council, a national agency accrediting only home study programs (VDOE, 1993b).

In Virginia, the State Code outlines provisions for home schooling in Section 22.1-254.1. Parents may home school their children if they meet the requirements of one of the following options: 1) parents or instructor must have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution

of higher education; 2) parents meet the qualifications for teacher prescribed by the Board of Education; 3) parents enroll the child or children in a correspondence course approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; or 4) parents provide a program of study or curriculum which, in the judgment of the division superintendent, includes the Standards of Learning (SOL) objectives adopted by the Board of Education for language arts and mathematics. They must also provide evidence that the parent is able to provide an adequate education for the child. With the exception of the third option, the local superintendent makes all decisions relative to parents' compliance with the requirements of the statute. Also, with the exception of the fourth option, the approval is automatic as long as parents provide appropriate documentation showing compliance with the option chosen.

By the end of every August, parents must notify their local superintendent of their intention to home school and submit a description of the curriculum which they will be using (Appendix B). After each completed school year, parents must provide the results of an annual standardized test or other evaluation by August 1. The achievement test must show that the child has attained a composite score at or above the fourth stanine or 23rd percentile. If evidence of adequate progress is not provided, parents must file a remediation plan for a probationary year along with evidence

of their ability to provide an adequate education. Both are subject to the division superintendent's approval (VDOE, 1992).

The Virginia Department of Education collects data on the number of home schooled students as part of the Fall Membership Report filed by local school divisions by grade groupings (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12). As of September 30, 1992, a total of 5,842 students were reported as being home schooled in local school divisions. Of those, 3,725 were in grades K-5, 1,281 were in grades 6-8, and 836 were in grades 9-12. In addition, another 1500 students were reported to be religiously exempted from school. The divisions with the largest number of students reported were: Fairfax County/City (576); Virginia Beach (403); Prince William (312); Chesterfield County (253); Norfolk City (208); Fauquier County (183); Henrico County (181); Loudoun County (180); Chesapeake City (171); and Newport News (163). Nine school divisions reported no home schooled students (VDOE, 1993a).

Enrollment in home instruction in Virginia has steadily increased (with the exception of the 1987-88 school year) over the years since the 1984-85 school year. During 1992-93, the enrollment increased a total of 1,282 students which represented a 28.1% increase over 1991-92. Fifteen school divisions with at least 5,000 students showed increases of

30% or above: Petersburg (250%), Mecklenburg County (240%), Roanoke City (126.7%), Stafford County (95.1%), York County (63%), Suffolk (57.1%), Norfolk (52.9%), Danville (50%), Alexandria City (46.1%), Pittsylvania County (43.2%), Campbell County (43.5%), Culpepper County (39.62%), Manassas City (39.1%), Prince George County (36.4%), and Prince William County (34.5%). There were some smaller school divisions that showed larger increases although the number of home schooled students was small (VDOE, 1993a).

The Virginia Department of Education does not compile data on the achievement of children who are taught at home due to the variety of methods available to parents to report such achievement to the local superintendent (Appendix C). In September 1992, The National Center for Home Education located in Paeonian Springs, Virginia, an arm of the Home School Legal Defense Association, released statistics on home schooling which includes student achievement. The target population for the study was all home schooling families who were members of the Home School Legal Defense Association. A linear sampling was conducted which included 2163 families. The research, which does not specifically identify information on Virginia students, indicated that students who are home schooled score 30 points higher than the national averages on standardized tests in all subjects. A news release issued by the same organization indicated

that Virginia home schooled students scored in the top 30% of the nation on the Stanford Achievement Test, 8th Edition, Form J, administered under the auspices of the Home Legal Defense Association. The scores were reported to be 20 to 40 percentile points above the national average (HSLD, 1990).

Based on a review of data available at the Virginia Department of Education, the number of parents electing to have their children tested by local school divisions using tests approved for the current statewide assessment program, Iowa Test of Basic Skills or The Tests of Achievement and Proficiency, is small and has been decreasing over the past four years due to the many options available to parents to assess their children's academic progress:

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Students</u>	<u>% of Home Schoolers</u>
1991 - 1992	575	12
1990 - 1991	614	16
1989 - 1990	499	17
1988 - 1989	318	14

On March 17, 1989, the Virginia Senate Committee on Education and Health requested that the Board of Education ". . . evaluate home instruction of children and any problems which have developed related to such instruction" (VDOE, 1989, p.1).

In order to comply with this request the Virginia Department of Education developed a survey which was sent to the ten school divisions with the largest number of students being taught at home during the 1988-89 school year and to forty randomly selected families who taught their children at home during the same school year.

Superintendents identified problems with home instruction as: 1) effectively evaluating the educational program submitted by parents; 2) parents providing appropriate or adequate information relative to the instructional program or evaluation requirements; and 3) awarding high school credit for students who return to public schools from home instruction.

Parents cited the most common problems as: 1) lack of resources or support from local school divisions; 2) requirements for annual testing/evaluation of student achievement; and 3) family-related constraints such as time and cost of educating their children (VDOE, 1989).

#### Past Cooperative Efforts Between Public Schools and Home Schooling Families

Research on the relationship between home schools and public schools in the United States indicates that cooperative efforts have not come easily. School administrators tend to be suspicious of home schooling

families although the courts have urged a more cooperative relationship between the home schools and the public schools. Some home schoolers wish to be left alone to educate their children without the interference of the public schools. Other home schoolers want to take part in some activities offered by public schools such as extracurricular activities (Mayberry, 1989b). Home school advocate John Holt (1983) stated that there should be policies which encourage parental participation in the educational process and permit part-time school attendance for home schoolers. Lines (1986) stated that cooperative ties between public schools and home schoolers would enrich the database for research on child development and learning, since some home schools provide a substantially different environment. This would enable comparisons of one-to-one and larger teaching ratios; effect of peer pressure; differences in contacts with adults and the effects of such contacts; the efficacy of relatively untrained parents/tutors and trained certified teachers; and child-directed and teacher-directed programs.

The results of the National Home School Legal Defense Research indicated that the majority of parents plan to home school their children until grade eleven. This indicates that there will be home schoolers entering public schools (HSLD, 1990).



According to Mayberry (1989b) there are questions which arise when previously home schooled students enter public schools. Some of these questions are: 1) What role will parents play in the educational progress after their children have been enrolled in public schools?; 2) How will schools evaluate and place previously home schooled children?; 3) Will existing programs be able to meet the needs of these children?; and 4) How will credit for home school work be distributed so that the children will meet graduation requirements? Mayberry (1989b) stated these questions will have to be addressed if public schools are going to effectively integrate previously home schooled children.

Research indicates that there are cooperative partnerships between public schools and home schoolers in some areas. There are some states exploring novel ways to approach collaboration between home schoolers and public schools.

In the State of Washington, home schooled students are eligible to receive part-time instruction in public schools. The state reimburses the school district for providing these part-time services. Part-time students are allowed to use the school district's transportation system at normally scheduled times and stops. Local school districts have the

option of providing professional supervision of parents and students in the home (Roach,1988).

The City of Des Moines, Iowa requires all students of compulsory attendance age to receive instruction by a certified teacher. To help parents meet this requirement, the Des Moines Independent School District provides itinerant teachers to advise the parents who home school on developing curriculum, delivering instruction, and monitoring student progress. The district provides the district curriculum and materials to the students, if they are requested. The home schooling families have access to school libraries, field trips, parent inservice on teaching techniques, and special services such as speech therapy, special education, and health screening (Roach, 1988).

In the Cupertino School District in California, all home schooled children are enrolled in one of their alternative schools. The district receives its allotted state revenue limit of \$2,961 per student, of which \$1,000 may be used by parents to purchase books, computer software, materials, services, or field trips. The remainder covers the district program, staff, and administrative support costs (Lamson, 1992).

In Hiram, Maine, one home school parent served on the school board. This was an example of home schoolers and a public school board working in a cooperative and productive

manner towards the common goal of educating children (Marshall, 1992).

Shepherd (1994) reported that in Dallas, Texas, older home schooled students spend time in the area elementary schools serving as tutors.

In Ames, Iowa, home schoolers and the public school system have joined together to help children reach their educational goals. In 1991, the Iowa Legislature enacted a bill that gave dual enrollment as an option for home schoolers. Dual enrollment offers, but does not require home schoolers, the opportunity to enroll in the public schools for academic or instructional programs, to participate in any extracurricular activities offered in the schools, and to use the services and assistance of the educational system. The home educators attend school functions and in some cases volunteer in classrooms. The public school educators in this district have found that home schoolers are more supportive of the public schools and have become more comfortable with choosing public schools as their educational choice (Terpstra, 1994).

Since the research is limited in this area, cooperative efforts between public schools and home schoolers need to be pursued to find ways that public schools can interface and assist home schoolers in providing quality education for all students.

## Chapter III

### Methodology

#### Introduction

This study was designed to determine ways home schooling families believe public schools can better interface and assist families who choose to home school their children. This chapter describes the research design, population, sample selection, data collection procedures, and the method of data analysis used in this study.

#### Research Design

Multiple case studies were used for this study. Interviews of families who choose to home school their children were conducted in the homes of the families to provide data for specific research questions regarding ways public schools could better interface and assist them in the education of their children. While the information obtained may not be generalized to other settings, this design resulted in descriptions of more depth and detail than could be obtained by other methods.

According to McCracken (1988):

The long interview is one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory. For certain descriptive and analytic purposes, no instrument of inquiry is more revealing. The method can take

us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse at the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world. It can also take us into the lifeworld of the individual, to see the content and pattern of daily experience. The long interview gives us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves. (p. 9)

### Population and Sample Selection

As mentioned in the first chapter, the U.S. Department of Education in 1994 estimated that there were approximately 350,000 children who were home schooled (Jueb, 1994). In Virginia in 1993, according to state department officials, there were approximately 8500 children who were home schooled (VDOE,1993). Although the State Department of Education has data regarding the number of children being taught at home, it does not have a listing by name of individual students or parents who teach their children at home. Local school divisions, however, maintain a list of parents who are approved to teach their children at home. The population selected for this study came from those listed with school divisions which were further limited by geographical proximity.

Because of the nature of this study and the kinds of data required to satisfy the research questions, the population was limited to families who were willing to be identified and interviewed. This effectively limited the

population to those parents who home school their children in counties where they could be identified.

Family selection for this study was based on the reasons and grade levels that they chose to home school their children. Although families vary in their reasons for choosing to home school, four categories of families were selected for this study. This number was based on the research of Mayberry (1988) who found that there were primarily four general categories of reasons that parents choose to home school their children. These reasons were identified as academic, socio-relational, religious, and self-sufficient (New Age) lifestyle. Within each of these categories two families were selected depending on the grade levels that their children were in during home schooling. One family was selected that home schooled their child(ren) for the early elementary grades(k-5). Another family was selected that chose to home school their child(ren) during the later school grades (6-12). It should be noted, however, that the reasons a family gave for home schooling may be representative of more than one category. The assignment of a family to a category for this study was based upon the primary reason and the grade level time spent home schooling which were expressed by the family on the survey.

## Categories of Families Selected For Sample

1. Family that has chosen home schooling primarily for religious reasons.
  - a. Early school grades
  - b. Later school grades
2. Family that has chosen home schooling primarily for socio-relational reasons.
  - a. Early school grades
  - b. Later school grades
3. Family that has chosen home schooling primarily for academic reasons.
  - a. Early school grades
  - b. Later school grades
4. Family that has chosen home schooling primarily for the belief in a self-sufficient life style.
  - a. Early school grades
  - b. Later school grades

### Data Collection

A letter of introduction was sent to four Southwest Virginia superintendents in the counties of Carroll, Grayson, Wythe, and Floyd outlining the purpose of the study (Appendix D). The superintendents were asked to adhere addresses and mail the postage paid self-addressed envelope

containing questionnaires to every home schooling family listed in their division. A total of 73 families received the questionnaire. Prior to the mailing, each return envelop was stamped with a letter and a number. The letter was coded to represent the school division; the number was coded to represent individual families receiving the questionnaire. However, only the superintendents within each division knew the number that a family received. This number provided information for follow-up letters. Blumburg, Fuller, and Hare (1974) explained that "response rates do not appear to be much affected by the presence or absence of any identifying code on a survey instrument" (p. 112). However, the cover letter accompanying the survey forms assured the subjects that strict confidentiality would be observed at all times (Appendix E).

This survey included basic demographic information such as sex, age, and grade of children, type of school that the children currently attended, the number of years the children attended public school, the grade level at which they planned to (re)enter their child(ren) in public school, if applicable, and the reasons for home schooling. Each survey also included a question addressing their willingness to be interviewed as well as the assurance of confidentiality (Appendix F). A due date was included which gave a response time of approximately two weeks. Three days



after the questionnaires were mailed, the first returns began arriving. After two weeks, forty-one percent of the questionnaires had been returned. A letter was sent to the participating superintendents to notify them that a follow-up letter to the parents who had not responded was needed (Appendix G). A follow-up letter to the parents was sent three weeks after the initial letter (Appendix H). This letter included a second copy of the survey and a self-addressed postage-paid envelop. By the end of six weeks, fifty-four of the seventy-three questionnaires had been returned for a response rate of seventy-four percent. Once the surveys were returned, the families were randomly selected according to the pre-determined criteria and their willingness to be interviewed. As mentioned earlier, two families from each category were selected. A phone call was then made to those families selected to set up a time for the interview. The interviews were scheduled during the months of January and February and held in the homes of the families. This location gave the researcher an opportunity to observe the educational setting of the students.

To increase the reliability of the study a protocol sheet of the questions to be asked of each family was developed. The focus of the protocol questions came from the review of literature. McCracken (1988) stated:

One purpose of the literature review is to aid in the construction of the interview questionnaire....It

begins to establish the domain the interview will explore. It specifies categories and relationships that may organize data....By the end of the review the researcher should have a list of topics for which questions must be prepared. (p. 31)

Each item in the instrument was related to one of the three research questions. A list of questions pertinent to the study was then developed to gather information relevant to the reasons parents decide to (re)enroll their children in public schools; curricula, materials, and methods used in home instruction; classroom environment; student evaluation procedures; perceptions of how the public schools can increase and improve communication with home schoolers, how public schools can facilitate and assist in the education of home schooled children, and how the schools can assist in providing a positive transition from the home school setting to the public school setting for those students who return to public schools (Appendix I). Primarily, questions 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 were designed to answer research question number one (What can public schools do to support the children in their division who are home schooled?). Questions 2, and 3 were designed to answer research question number two (What can public school officials do to promote communication between public schools and parents who home school their children?). Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 were designed to answer research question number three (What strategies can public schools

implement to provide a positive transition from the home school setting to the public school setting in those circumstances where home schooled students enter public schools?).

A pilot interview session was conducted with two families that were not included in the study in order to validate the protocol instrument.

These two families reviewed each item included on the protocol sheet in relation to (1) the importance of each item, (2) changes in wording that would improve clarity, (3) appropriate additions or deletions of items, and (4) overall design of the instrument.

These interviews supported the content of the protocol as representing valid questions that would provide a range of responses offered to answer the three research questions. They also suggested modifications that could improve the clarity of the questions. These suggestions were incorporated into the protocol questions (Appendix J).

A tape recorder was used to record each interview. The tapes were transcribed onto a computer disc and analyzed by the researcher.

## Data Analysis

"Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 112). The analysis of data obtained in this study was patterned after the methods used by Shifflette (1993) which consisted of three activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984).

Information gathered from each interview was immediately transcribed, analyzed, and coded. The initial data reduction began by ensuring that the questions to be asked were developed and the procedures for gathering the information were determined for the sole purpose of answering the three research questions. The data reduction activity was facilitated by using a contact summary sheet used to reflect upon each family interview (Appendix K). The contact summary sheet was completed after each interview was transcribed and reviewed. This involved the codification of data into categories by analyzing each family's responses.

As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 52), the contact summary sheet facilitates (1) planning for the next contact, (2) suggesting new or revised codes, and (3)

reorienting the researcher to the contact when returning to the write-up, and (4) coding and analyzing of the raw data.

The development of the coding system is vitally important in the data analysis of a qualitative study. As Miles and Huberman (1994) stated, "Words are fatter than numbers and usually have multiple meanings. This makes them harder to move around and work with. Worse still, most words are meaningless unless you look backward and forward to other words" (p.56). A coding system helps the researcher make sense of the meaning of words. In this study, the researcher marked the codes within the body of the text in order to verify a conclusion.

A "start list" of codes proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was developed using the protocol questions . (See Start List of Codes, Figure 1.) The first column of the Start List of Codes gives a short descriptive label, the second shows the code, and the third relates the code to the research question to be answered (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The guidelines for defining a unit of analysis were those proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994):

1. The unit of analysis was a word, phrase, sentence or whole paragraph.
2. Three types of codes were utilized. These were descriptive codes which entail little interpretation; interpretive codes which require some interpretation; and pattern codes which are more inferential and explanatory. (pp. 56-57)

START LIST OF CODES

Public School Assistance	Code	Research Question
PSA: General Resources	PSA:GENRES	1.0
PSA: Information	PSA:INF	1.0
PSA: Public School Assistance	PSA:PSA	1.0
PSA: Curriculum	PSA:CUR	1.0
PSA: Setting	PSA:SET	1.0
PSA: Methods	PSA:METH	1.0
PSA: Materials	PSA:MAT	1.0
PSA: Evaluation Procedures	PSA:EVAL	1.0
PSA: Public School Resources	PSA:PSRES	1.0
PSA: Problems Encountered	PSA:PROBEN	1.0

Public School Communication	Code	Research Question
PSC: Communication	PSC:COM	2.0
PSC: Information	PSC:INF	2.0

Intervention Strategies	Code	Research Question
IS: Factors for Entrance in Public Schools	IS:FPSENT	3.0
IS: Public School Strategies	IS:PSIS	3.0
IS: Curriculum	IS:CUR	3.0
IS: Setting	IS:SET	3.0
IS: Methods	IS:METH	3.0
IS: Instructional Materials	IS:INSTMAT	3.0
IS: Evaluation Procedures	IS:EVAL	3.0

Causal Links	Code	Research Question
CL: Theme	CL:TH	NA

Figure 1. Start List of Codes

Transcripts of the coded interviews were entered into a data base and analyzed with a boolean search question and key word frequency counting software program (AskSam, Ver. 4.2, 1987). The number of codes embedded in the text were counted.

The next step in the process involved an ongoing comparison of the data in order to refine each category. Similarities as well as any contradictions were identified and the data were arranged into a continuum of specific responses related to each category.

The data display technique used in this study was narrative text. Where appropriate, tables were designed to graphically represent the collapse of information into categories.

All recorded data were dated, coded, and filed by topical categories. From these categories observations were made, which led the researcher to form conclusions. Narrative data from the coded transcripts were used to report the results.

## Chapter IV

### Findings of the Study

#### Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to provide answers to the research questions presented earlier in Chapter I:

1. What do home schooling families believe public schools can do to support the children in their division who are home schooled?
2. What do home schooling families believe public school officials can do to promote communication between public schools and parents who home school their children?
3. What strategies do home schooling families believe public schools can implement to provide a positive transition from the home school setting to the public school setting in those circumstances where home schooled students enter public schools?

The results of the information gathered from the questionnaire and the family interviews utilized in this study are presented in this chapter.



## The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed to seventy-three families within four Southwest Virginia counties (Appendix F). This distribution is shown in Table 1. Of these seventy-three questionnaires, fifty-four were returned by the respondents. Twenty-six of the respondents identified themselves and indicated a willingness to be interviewed. Several of the respondents shared comments on the questionnaire even though they did not indicate a willingness to be interviewed. One respondent gave permission for the researcher to include his reflections on "What I Didn't Learn in School". These comments are shown in Appendix L.

Results of the questionnaire indicated that the families chose to home school for a variety of reasons. Thirty-one families indicated one specific reason for home schooling, while twenty-three families indicated a combination of reasons why they chose to home school. Contrary to the research of Mayberry (1989) which stated that most families home schooled primarily for religious reasons, this study indicated that most families were home schooling for academic reasons. Thirteen of the fifty-four respondents indicated academic reasons for choosing home schooling, while only eight families indicated religious

Table 1

Counties and Number of Families Used to Draw Sample  
in this Study

County	# of Families Receiving Survey	# of Families Returning Survey	# of Families Willing To Be Interviewed*
Carroll	22	20	13
Grayson	11	7	1
Floyd	20	15	7
Wythe	20	12	5
Total	<u>73</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>26</u>

\* A total of eight families were interviewed with the following distribution:

Carroll	2
Grayson	1
Floyd	3
Wythe	2

---

Total            8

reasons only. A summary of the reasons families in this study chose to home school is shown in Table 2.

The families who responded to the questionnaire ranged from having one child to having five children in the household. See Table 3 for a summary of the distributions of the number of children in a family. The total number of children in the fifty-four families who responded was one hundred thirty-seven. Of this number, ninety-one children of school age were being home schooled. Ten families had at least one of their children attending public school as well as some of their children being home schooled. Sixteen children in all were attending public school. Twenty-two of the children were under school age and eight of the children had finished high school. See Table 4 for a summary of the distribution of the approximate grade levels of the children in this study.

The number of years that a child had attended public school prior to home schooling varied from those children who had never attended public school to those who had attended for more than seven years. Thirty-three of the ninety-one children who were being home schooled had never attended public school. The other fifty-eight had attended public school for a length of time that ranged from one to two years to over seven years. Table 5 shows the distribution of the number of years the children who were

Table 2

Reasons Families Gave for Decision to Home School

Single Responses	Number of Families
Religious	8
Academic	13
Self-Sufficient Lifestyle	6
Socio-Relational	4
Combination Responses	Number of Families
Religious/Academic	5
Religious/Self-Sufficient Lifestyle	0
Religious/Socio-Relational	1
Academic/Self-Sufficient Lifestyle	0
Academic/Socio-Relational	3
Self-Sufficient/Socio-Relational	1
Religious/Academic/Socio-Relational	5
Academic/Self-Sufficient/Socio-Relational	3
Religious/Academic/Self-Suff/Socio-Relational	5
Total	54

Table 3

Number of Children in Families

---

Number of Children in Family	Number of Families
1 Child	9
2 Children	22
3 Children	11
4 Children	9
5 Children	3
Total Children = 137	Total Families = 54

---

Table 4

Approximate Grade Levels of Children

Grade Level	Number of Children Home Schooled	Number of Children in Public School
Pre-school	22	0
Kindergarten	5	0
First Grade	9	0
Second Grade	11	1
Third Grade	9	2
Fourth Grade	4	1
Fifth Grade	15	1
Sixth Grade	6	0
Seventh Grade	8	0
Eight Grade	6	2
Ninth Grade	3	4
Tenth Grade	7	2
Eleventh Grade	6	1
Twelfth Grade	2	2
Completed High School	8	-
Total	121	16

Table 5

Number of Years School Age Children Attended Public School

---

Years Attended	Number of Children
0	33
1-2	15
3-4	9
5-6	10
7 or more	25

---

school age had attended public school prior to home schooling.

Twelve of the families who responded indicated that they did plan to enroll their children in public school in the future. Of these twelve families, four stated that they would enter their child at grade eleven; three would enroll at grade eight; one would enroll at grade nine; one would enroll at grade seven; one would enroll at grade three; and the other two were undecided as to which grade they would enroll their child. The total number of families undecided as to whether they would enroll their children in public school was nineteen. A total of twenty-three families had no plans to enroll their children in public school at this time. (See Table 6 for a summary of this distribution.)

### The Interview

A total of eight families, two from each pre-determined category of reasons for home schooling, were chosen at random to be interviewed. The interview followed the outline of prepared protocol questions. These interviews lasted from between forty minutes to one hour in length. The families were once again informed of the purpose of the study. Permission to tape the interview was obtained. The researcher took the opportunity to seek clarification of the responses when necessary; however, caution was taken not to



Table 6

Plans of Families to Enroll Children in Public School

---

Responses	Number of Families
No	23
Yes	12
Undecided	19
Total	<hr/> 54

---

probe for answers or to indicate a probable answer to a question.

The data which follow represent responses to questions from the protocol sheet which were used to draw conclusions to the three research questions listed in Chapter I.

**Protocol Question #1: What resources would help you to do a better job educating your children?**

This question was designed to answer research question number one. A summary of the responses is shown in Table 7.

Of the eight families, three specifically stated that time was the main resource they needed. Family # 7, when asked this question, responded:

Time is very, very difficult, and I understand totally even people who want to home school their children that just cannot come up with that kind of time. They are single parents a lot of them. They've got to make a living. They don't have a way to put four kids around a table for lessons. It is hard. I mean part of our lifestyle is trying to recreate a family, to reintegrate the family structure here, so we do a lot of things on our own. So if I need a new receptacle in a room, I don't hire an electrician to do that. Or if I need an addition built, I build it myself. We grow our own food, most of our own food.... So its always challenging to carve out the time. One of the things that we try is the density. For instance, I may be out in the garden, and my daughter will be out there reading to me out of books, and I'd be helping her by doing a letter. This way I can work and at the same time interact with her.

Table 7

Protocol Question #1: What Resources Would Help You to do a Better Job in Educating Your Children?

---

Responses	Mentioned by Family #		
Longer Days/Time	#2	#5	#7
Activities With Other Children	#1	#3	
Reference Materials	#3	#8	
Recreation Programs	#4	#6	
Home Schoolers	#4		
Increased Awareness	#7		

---

Two of the families indicated a need for their children to have more opportunities to interact in activities with other children. Mother # 1 stated, "I think if I exposed him to activities with other children, that would help him some. If I could get him into activities with boys his own age, that would be even better. He has some friends at church, but not many".

Two families (#3 and #8) also mentioned reference materials as a resource that would be helpful. Although all the families interviewed had access to libraries, these two families indicated a need to have more audio visual reference materials on hand at home. As one family (#3) indicated, "There are filmstrips and videos which would be helpful in teaching health and history so the children could understand the concepts better".

One family (#4) mentioned the need to interact more with other home schoolers. She indicated that since it was expensive to buy materials, home schoolers could share the materials. One family (#7) stated that they needed an "increased awareness of their child's interests and a need to be more responsive to those interests".

Family #6 indicated they liked the way their home schooling program was going and that they did not know what would help them to do a better job educating their children.

**Protocol Question #2: What ways can public schools effectively communicate with home schooling families in their division?**

This question was designed to help answer research question number two. A summary of the responses is shown in Table 8.

Five of the families indicated that there was virtually no communication between the public schools and them except for the correspondence regarding the notification of testing to meet the State's requirement of submitting achievement reports on their children by August 1 of each year.

Family #2 responded, "Essentially now there is no communication other than the request for us to comply with the state regulations....Actually it's better to have them ignore us than to have them down our throats". The mother of family #4 stated, "Communication is terrible between the school board office and home schoolers. There is none-- communication is non-existent except contacting us for testing. School personnel do not want to talk to us either. I am very open to talk about it if anyone wanted to ask me a question or something".

When family #6 was asked this question they replied, "We've never had any problems with the county, but we've

Table 8

Protocol Question #2: What Ways Can Public Schools Effectively Communicate With Home Schooling Families?

Responses	Mentioned by Family #	
Public School Willingness to Listen to Home Schoolers	#3	#5
Periodic Meetings With Public Schools to Share Information	#3	#5
Notification of What's Available for Home Schooling Families	#2	
Communicate Objectives on Assessments	#1	
Allow Families to Work on Their Own Within Guidelines	#1	

never been involved. We've never asked anything of them and they've never offered". Families #7 and #8, likewise, indicated that they virtually had no communication except to notify them of when testing was needed.

The mother of family #1 indicated that she liked the manner in which the county allowed home school families to work on their own as long as they complied with the guidelines. She added that she would also like to have more communication regarding what objectives would be included on examinations. Family #2 stated that they would like communication with the public schools in the form of notification of "what was available for home schoolers". Families #3 and #5 indicated a need to have dialogue between public schools and home schoolers periodically to discuss information.

**Protocol Question #3: What types of information would you like the public schools to provide for you?**

This question was also designed to help answer research question number two. Table 9 shows a summary of the responses to this question.

The dominant response for this question was the need for information on curriculum objectives used in the school. Basically, this was a request of five of the eight families

Table 9

Protocol Question #3: What Information Would You Like the Public Schools to Provide for You?

Responses	Mentioned by Family #				
Curriculum Objectives	#1	#3	#4	#5	#8
Activities Available to Home Schoolers	#1	#2	#3	#8	
Validation of Parents Teaching	#7	#8			
Educational Literature	#2	#8			
Periodic Meetings With Public Schools	#4				
Objectives Assessed	#1				



who referred specifically to the Standards of Learning objectives.

Four of the eight families wanted to know of available activities that their children could participate in which included sports, girl scouts, boy scouts, and plays.

Families #7 and #8 indicated a desire to know what was actually going on in the schools. As the mother of family #7 stated:

I would like to sit in a classroom for a few days. I would like to see the classroom of my child's general area age-wise to see where other children are in their progress. I would love some way to peek over their shoulders and peek in the window in order to assess what's going on in that system.

Educational literature was mentioned by two families as information that would be helpful from the public schools. Family #1 indicated a desire to know on what objectives her child would be tested.

One mother (#4) wanted to have the opportunity to meet with school teachers to discuss strategies they both could use to enhance the learning of their children. As she stated, "I'm only responsible for two children, but its wonderful to get together with other home schoolers. I don't know if I could help public schools at all, but they sure could help me because teachers have a lot more experience than me".

Family #6 indicated they did not think that they needed any information from the public schools.

**Protocol Question #4: How can public schools assist you in the education of your children?**

This question was designed to primarily answer research question number one. Table 10 shows the summary of the responses to this question.

Five of the eight families indicated they would like to have the public schools provide books, materials, and equipment to be used by home schools. Four of the eight families indicated that they would like access to school facilities such as the gym, library, and labs. Three families stated a desire for their children to participate in public school classes.

Mother #4 stated:

I think that home schooled children should be allowed to take part in dramas that are given by public schools, maybe in the choral groups and the band. Things you can't do with only two children in the home would be nice to have. I think that with my taxes, my money, that my child should be able to go over and have a music class once a week or a lab or something like that.

The mother in family #5 also stated that they would like to take part in the music and band programs of the public schools. In addition, they responded, "We should have the same use of the books as the students in school

Table 10

Protocol Question #4: How Can Public Schools Assist You in the Education of Your Children?

Responses	Mentioned by Family #				
Provide Books, Materials, and Equipment	#2	#5	#7	#3	#4
Share Facilities (i.e. Gym, Labs, Library)	#2	#4	#3	#5	
Participation of Home Schoolers in Classes	#4	#6	#1		
Assistance With Advanced Classes	#1	#5	#8		
Inservice for Home Schoolers	#4	#5	#6		
Discussions With Teachers	#2	#4	#5		

because we pay the same taxes". Likewise family #6 stated "...because we are paying taxes and supporting the schools...we should have access to textbooks, drivers education classes, etc. without any strings attached. Other kinds of social things like dances and sports would be nice so our children could be on a team. They tend to be on the outside edge of all of that".

Three families (#1, #5, and #8) responded that the public schools could provide assistance to home schoolers in advanced classes that the families did not have expertise in teaching such as calculus and foreign language.

Three families (#4, #5, and #6) indicated a desire to take part in any inservice activities that the public schools offered in order to help them be more effective teachers. Three families (#2, #4, and #5) indicated a willingness to spend time with other teachers exchanging ideas. Mother #4 said, "I would like to be treated like a teacher. I would like to share ideas with others and, in turn, get ideas from others".

Family #7, although hesitant about relations with public schools said, "If there were no risks, I'd dance in a little bit and get to know the schools".

**Protocol Question #5: Will you enroll your children in the public schools in the future? If so, what factors would influence you to make this decision?**

This question was designed to answer research question number three. A summary of the responses is shown in Table 11.

Three of the eight families stated that they did plan to enroll their children in the public schools in the future. Four of the eight families stated that, at this time, they did not plan to enroll their children in public schools. Family #7 gave the following reason for their decision not to enroll their child in public schools:

Schools take up so much of a child's time. Plus they give a couple hours of homework on top of that. How can the schools think that they deserve that much of someone's time?...Schools are in a trap. They have these standards of what the state or their county or the federal government thinks a child has to learn, and that becomes, "Oh, my God, we're not learning that. We're gonna have to have more hours a day and more days in a school year. We're going to have to start schooling the kids when they are three years old instead of five years old". Schools are going in the wrong direction. Let the kids discover things on their own and give them ways that will increase their motivation. If kids are motivated, they will learn.

One family was undecided as to whether they would enroll their children in public schools. When asked what factors would influence them to make a decision to enroll their children in public schools, seven out of eight

Table 11

Protocol Question #5: Will You Enroll Your Children in the Public Schools in the Future? If So, What Factors Would Influence You to Make This Decision?

Responses	Mentioned by Family #								
Yes	#1	#4	#8						
No	#2	#3	#6	#7					
Undecided	#5								
Responses	Mentioned by Family #								
Child Decides He/She Wants to Attend	#1	#2	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8		
Child Misses Peer Interaction	#1	#2	#8						
Public School Provide Important Experiences	#1	#8							
Major Health Disaster	#2	#3							
Finances	#4	#8							

families stated that if their children wanted to go they would allow it.

Three of the families (#1, #2, and #8) stated that the factor of lack of peer interaction would influence them to enter their children into public schools. Families #1 and #8 stated that they would consider entering their children in public schools if they thought that their children were missing important experiences that only public schools could provide. Families #2 and #3 stated that a major health disaster may cause them to have to enroll their children in public school. Finances were mentioned by families #4 and #8 as a possible reason that they would enroll their children in public school.

**Protocol Question #6: What could the public schools do to make the transition to public school more positive for the home schooled student?**

This question was designed to answer research question number three. Table 12 shows the summary of the responses that the families gave to this question.

Orientation for all home schooled students who enrolled in public schools was mentioned by four (#1, #4, #5, and #7) of the eight families as very important. Mother #1 stated. "Maybe they could provide some sort of orientation before

Table 12

Protocol Question #6: What Could the Public Schools do to Make the Transition to Public Schools More Positive for Home Schooled Students?

Responses	Mentioned by Family #			
Orientation for Home Schooled Students	#1	#4	#5	#7
Adapt Instruction to Learning Styles	#4	#5	#7	#8
Visitations to Classrooms	#1	#5	#7	
Tour the School	#1	#4	#5	
Conference With Teachers	#2	#4	#7	
Adapt Instruction to Pace of the Student	#6	#7		
Smaller Classes	#3			
Bible Instruction	#3			
Stricter Discipline	#3			
Shorter Bus Rides	#5			
Information Sessions for Public School Students Regarding Home Schooled Students	#5			



school started to let him know how things are handled during the school day, and where the lunchroom and bathroom are".

Four of the families (#4, #5, #7, and #8) stated that it would be important for the schools to adapt their instruction to the learning styles of their children. As family #5 responded, "Our oldest child learns better in a quiet area working on independent work, whereas our second child needs a lot of instruction and attention in order for him to do well".

Three of the families (#2, #4, and #7) indicated a need for the home schooling families to meet with teachers to discuss the routines of the school, expectations of the students in school, and to share learning styles and personalities of the home schooled students.

Three families (#1, #5, and #7) mentioned that allowing children to visit the classroom and get used to the routines of the public schools would be helpful. Two of the families (#6 and #7) mentioned that the pacing of the students was an important factor in entering school. "The child should determine the pace of how fast or how slow he/she needs to go, not a textbook", stated family #7.

Other suggestions mentioned only once by one family each were smaller classes, Bible instruction, stricter discipline, shorter bus rides, and information to regular education students regarding home schoolers.

**Protocol Question #7: What are the important features you look for in choosing a curriculum?**

This question was designed to answer both research questions number one and three. Knowing the type of curriculum that a student has been taught would give insight into how public schools could assist home schoolers. Also the student's experience in a particular curriculum impacts his/her transfer into the public school as to the credits given to the student. (See Table 13 for a summary of the responses to this question.)

The main feature that a family looked for in a curriculum was that it included the Standards of Learning objectives. Six of the eight families made this response. Even though two of these six families used an approved correspondence program for the core of their instruction, they stated that they used the SOL's as a guide.

Four families (#1, #2, #6, and #7) indicated that it was important for the curriculum to be appropriate for their child's developmental level. Family #2 explained it this way:

We tend to follow more of John Holt's ideas that we want our children to be in pursuit of knowledge instead of knowledge going after the children....A set curriculum has a set of stuff that the children need to learn by this time, and if your are behind it creates a lot of anxiety....We develop our own goals

Table 13

Protocol Question #7: What are the Important Features You Look for in Choosing a Curriculum?

Responses	Mentioned by Family #					
Standards Of Learning	#1	#2	#4	#5	#7	#8
Child Development/ Child Directed	#1	#2	#6	#7		
Basic Subjects	#3	#6	#8			
Less Structured	#2	#4				
Challenging	#1					
Moral Issues	#1					
Values	#1					
Unit/Theme Based	#4					

and objectives; however, we do use the SOL's as a guide. We base it on knowing our children and how they develop.

Likewise, family #7 responded:

That's a living question for us and part of our philosophy of having it (knowledge) come from within our child. If we fully trusted that, I think we would follow that completely, but we also want to be sure she gets the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Three of the families (#3, #6, and #8) stated a need for the curriculum to cover the basic subjects of language arts, math, science, and social studies. Factors that were mentioned only once were challenging, moral issues, values, and a unit/theme format.

**Protocol Question #8: Describe the setting where you conduct the schooling activities.**

This question also was designed to answer research question number one and three. A summary of the responses is shown in Table 14.

Five of the eight families held the schooling sessions of their children in the kitchen/dining room area of the home. Four of the eight families stated that schooling occurred year-round and even on Saturday and Sunday when the children were involved in projects or activities where they were applying their knowledge. Family #5 stated, "The

Table 14

Protocol Question #8: Describe the Setting Where You  
Conduct the Schooling Activities.

Responses	Mentioned by Family #				
Kitchen/Dining Room	#2	#4	#5	#6	#8
Various Places to Apply Knowledge (i.e. Building a House)	#2	#5	#6	#7	
Bedroom	#5	#6	#7		
School/Classroom	#1	#3			

children learned a great many skills in math while helping us build our house".

Two of the families (#1 and #3) had built or organized a school/classroom complete with student and teacher desks.

**Protocol Question #9: Describe the teaching methods or strategies that you use.**

This question was designed to answer research questions number one and three. Public schools could gain insight into how they might help home schoolers by learning more about the teaching strategies that they are currently using. In order to plan for a more positive transition into public schools, schools should know the type of teaching methods the home schooled students have experienced. A summary of the responses is shown in Table 15.

Four of the families (#1, #3, #5, and #8) interviewed used a structured curriculum approach, while the other four families (#2, #4, #6, and #7) preferred an unstructured curriculum. Four of the families (#1, #2, #5, and #7) mentioned that the methods they used were determined by the learning styles of their children. Four of the families (#2, #5, #7, and #8) mentioned that much of the learning was accomplished by hands-on activities. Three of the families

Table 15

Protocol Question #9: Describe the Teaching Methods or Strategies That You Use.

Responses	Mentioned by Family #			
Structured Curriculum	#1	#3	#5	#8
Unstructured Curriculum	#2	#4	#6	#7
Learning Styles of Child	#1	#2	#5	#7
Hands-on Activities	#2	#5	#7	#8
Learning From Being With Parent	#2	#5	#7	
Independent Study	#1	#5	#8	
Thematic Approach	#4			

(#1, #5, and #8) indicated that they used independent study as a method for the students to learn self-discipline.

One mother #4 stated that she preferred the unit base approach to learning over the use of textbooks for each subject. This is shown in her response:

I hate to sit and read a textbook and then answer questions. I'm not sure that I remember any of my schooling where I had to use that method. By integrating the subjects, learning becomes real meaning".

Family #1 stated:

If we don't get started by 9:00 a.m. each morning, we get side-tracked. We need to keep to a schedule and finish what we planned for the day.

In contrast, family #6 stated:

We've never been formal. Some days you do something; some days you don't. But you know, really you have a whole year. It's kind of more or less, the way I would do it, is whatever you feel like doing that day is what you do.

Father #7 described the method they used to teach their child to read:

As we said before, we believe learning should come from within. My wife had to wrestle with this and it was a test for her because our child didn't read until she was eight years old. Every night for twenty-five years my wife and I have read to each other before going to bed. So really our child was exposed to reading in the womb. She listened to stories every night. It was a test to trust her and not have anxiety when she wasn't reading. However, when she did learn she went like gangbusters. She's now ten years old. She has only been reading for two years, but she just finished reading Shogun. We keep a record of all the books she reads on a computer.



**Protocol Question #10: Describe the instructional materials that you use.**

This question was designed to answer research question number one and three. Having the knowledge of what instructional materials are used in teaching home schooled students would help in the decision of what credits to be given when a student enters public school. Table 16 shows a summary of the responses.

As mentioned earlier, the SOL's were used by six of the eight families interviewed. Novels were used extensively by families #2, #4, #6, and #7. Textbooks were used by two of the families. Family #4 used MacMillian, while family #6 used Harcourt Brace. Three of the families (#1, #3, and #8) used a prepackaged correspondence program approved by the state. Families #1 and #3 used the A-Beka program, while family #8 used the Christian Liberty Academy program.

Reference materials were mentioned by three families (#2, #4, and #5) and audio visuals were mentioned by two families (#2 and #3) as instructional materials. Family #2 stated that they used many manipulatives such as counting rods and games such as brainteasers.

One family #7 used the GED program even though their child was only ten years old.

Table 16

Protocol Question #10: Describe the Instructional Materials That You Use.

Responses	Mentioned by Family #					
PrePackaged Curriculum						
A-Beka	#1	#3				
Christian Liberty Academy	#8					
Standards Of Learning						
Novels	#2	#4	#6	#7		
Textbooks	#3	#5	#6			
Reference Books	#2	#4	#5			
Audio Visuals	#2	#3				
GED Materials	#7					
Manipulatives/Games	#2					

**Protocol Question #11: Describe the evaluation procedures that you use to assess your children's progress. These can be both formal and informal.**

This question was designed to answer research questions number one and three. Public schools' knowledge of the evaluation methods use by home schooling families would help in placement and credit decisions when a home school student enters public school. Table 17 gives a summary of the responses to this question.

The most common form of assessment used by the families in this study was the portfolio assessment. Five of the eight families (#2, #4, #5, #6, and #7) used this method. Four of the eight families (#1, #2, #4, and #5) used observations and four families (#2, #5, #6, and #7) used checklists as informal assessments. The three families who chose to use prepackaged curricula used the unit tests that were a part of the program to assess their children. These were administered by the parents, but graded and returned to the parents by the company. This service was an additional charge to the parents.

Four of the families (#1, #3, #4, and #8) utilized the Virginia State Assessment Program, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), provided by the state. These children went into the public schools to take the test.

Table 17

Protocol Question #11: Describe the Evaluation Procedures That you Use to Assess Your Children's Progress. These Could be Both Informal and Formal.

Responses	Mentioned by Family #				
Portfolio	#2	#4	#5	#6	#7
Standardized Tests	#1	#3	#4	#8	
Observations	#1	#2	#4	#5	
Checklists	#2	#5	#6	#7	
Curriculum Package Tests	#1	#3	#8		
Outside Person	#5	#6			

Family #2 gave the following reasons for their family's decision to not take part in standardized testing:

We disagree with standardized testing because it arbitrarily puts them in third grade and tests them at their grade. That's not right. It's scary sometimes because our child over there was starting third grade and she didn't read. She loved books and we read to her every night. But once she did learn, it was literally over night. It was at third grade level, not first grade. Now she reads non-stop. If we had done standardized testing, the schools would have prevented us from home schooling.

Family # 6 agreed as shown with this response:

We disagree with standardized testing. It groups people. People don't progress at the same rate. Some of those children will be ready, willing, and able to learn to read at the same rate at that age, but some won't read until nine or ten years old. You know, people go through those stages, and it's a natural process for them to vary from person to person. You can't group people and get identical results. Somebody's going to win; somebody's going to lose. It's just the nature of it (standardized testing).

Family #7 described their feelings about standardized testing this way:

There is a standard you judge things by. That's difficult for us. It's like, what's standard? Is it a standard that we establish for ourselves. If so, where do we get that from? Is it a standard the school system adopts or the state government? Is it core knowledge? What's really important to me in the education of my child is the inner things. They're intangible things involved with attitudes and awareness. Things a school system can't give or test.

**Protocol Question #12: What resources have you found to be helpful in educating your children?**

This question was designed to answer research question number one and three. Responses to this question are shown in Table 18.

The library was mentioned as the number one outside resource used by the home schooling families. All but two of the families stated that they used the public library extensively.

The second most common response was the use of other home schooling families. Family #4 stated that by getting together with other home schoolers they could pool their resources as well as plan field trips to provide opportunities for the children to get together. Field trips were mentioned by five of the families as a major resource to provide learning experiences for their children.

Church and family activities were mentioned by two families as important in the learning process of their children. Periodicals, newspapers, and vacation brochures were identified by two families. Nature, school sales events, and a copy machine were also mentioned.

**Protocol Question #13: Are you encountering any problems as you teach you children at home? If so, please explain.**

Table 18

Protocol Question #12: What Resources Have You Found to be Helpful in Educating Your Children?

Responses	Mentioned by Family #					
Public Library	#2	#3	#4	#5	#7	#8
Home Schoolers	#1	#3	#4	#5	#8	
Field Trips	#1	#2	#4	#7	#8	
Children's Involvement in Parent's Work	#2	#5				
Church	#1	#5				
<u>Teach At Home</u> Magazine, Newspapers, and Brochures	#1	#2				
Nature	#7					
School Sales	#3					
Copy Machine	#6					

This question was designed to help answer research question number one. A summary of responses is shown in Table 19.

Although all families interviewed stated that they had encountered some type of problem while home schooling, family #7 responded:

It has not been so long ago that people had to fight to be able to school their children at home. So we think that we are in a life of luxury to be allowed to home school our child. When we first came here twenty years ago, families who wanted to home school their children hid them in the back seat of the car if they went out during the day so that they would not get arrested for truancy....The whole religious thing has made it easier for us.

The most common problems for these home schoolers were the finances and the limited resources. Four of the eight families (#4, #5, #6, and #8) mentioned finances. Four families (#3, #4, #5, and #6) mentioned limited resources. Time was mentioned by three families (#5, #4, and #7) as being a very difficult problem. Mother #4 stated, "When our business is busy, I get stressed out because I'm trying to get through school and get done so that I can get downstairs to work".

The dynamics of the parent/child relationship vs. the teacher/child relationship was mentioned by three families (#1, #4, and #7). Mother #4 explained, "We're with each other twenty-four hours a day. We get tired of each other". Mother #1 stated it this way, "Sometimes I have to make him



Table 19

Protocol Question #13: Are You Encountering Any Problems as You Teach Your Children at Home? If So, Please Explain.

Responses	Mentioned by Family #							
Yes	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
No								

Responses	Mentioned by Family #							
Finances			#4	#5	#6	#8		
Limited Resources			#3	#4	#5	#6		
Time			#4	#5	#7			
Dynamics of Parent/Child vs. Teacher/Child			#1	#4	#7			
Schedules			#1	#4				
Interruptions			#1	#4				
Tailoring Instruction to Individual Child			#2	#7				

realize that we are in school and that I'm not only his mother, but I am his teacher as well".

Frustration over the lack of progress from the children was also mentioned by three families (#2, #5, and #6). The problem of keeping to a schedule and dealing with interruptions was identified by two of the families. Mother #1 stated:

We have a problem if we don't start school right off. We try to start at 7:30 a.m. I get up, get my bathing done, while my husband does breakfast which really helps a lot. My daughter goes to public school and we go to school at 7:30. If we are really disciplined and start early we do well. If we don't, if something interrupts that schedule, like if I have to go help with the cows, we get off task. It's hard for me when I get interrupted because, unlike public school, we don't absolutely have to go back to work.

Two families responded that tailoring the instruction to their children and being responsive to the needs and interests of their children were problems.

Chapter V  
Summary of Findings, Conclusions  
Implications for Practice, and Recommendations  
For Future Research

Introduction

As more and more families opt to home school their children, public schools are being faced with the need to know more about the families that home school their children within their division because many of these children will enroll in public school.

Presented in this chapter are a summary of the findings, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

The Study Sample

Fifty-four respondents completed the questionnaire that was mailed to seventy-three families within four Southwest Virginia counties. The sample of this study consisted of eight families chosen by stratified random sample from a total of twenty-six families who identified themselves on the questionnaire as being receptive to an interview.

## Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire instrument was used to gather demographic information and to identify families to participate in the formal interview process. The interview protocol sheet was developed to obtain information from the families as to ways public schools could assist home schooling families, ways public schools could promote communication with home schooling families, and ways public schools could provide a more positive transition from home school to public school for those students who (re)enroll in public school. The protocol consisted of thirteen questions designed to answer these three research questions. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Dominant themes and subthemes were identified from the data. Narrative and quantitative data were used to support the dominant themes and subthemes.

## Summary of Findings

### *Resources Needed to do a Better Job*

When the families were asked what resources they needed to do a better job, three families specifically stated that time was the main resource they needed. Two of the families indicated a need for their children to have more opportunities to interact in activities with other children. Two families also mentioned more reference materials as a

resource that would be helpful. One family mentioned the need to interact more with other home schoolers, One family stated that they needed to have an "increased awareness" of their child's interests. One family indicated that they did not need any additional resources.

### Communication With Public Schools

When asked how the public schools could promote communication between the home schoolers and public schools, five of the eight families indicated that there was virtually no communication between them and the public schools.

One mother stated she liked the relationship between the public schools and the home schoolers that allowed the home schooling families to work on their own as long as they followed the guidelines. One family stated they would like to have communication from the public schools as to the objectives on which her child would be tested. One family stated that they would like to be notified of what was available for home schoolers in the public schools. Two families indicated a need for the public schools and home schoolers to meet periodically to discuss information.

### Information Needed From Public Schools

Five of the eight families, when asked what information could be helpful from the public schools, indicated the need for information on curriculum objectives used in schools. Four of the eight families wanted information related to the available activities that their children could participate in at school. These included both school and non-school sponsored activities. Two of the families wanted information regarding general activities that went on during the school day. Educational literature from the public schools was mentioned by two families as being helpful.

One mother wanted to have the opportunity to meet with public school teachers to discuss strategies to enhance children's learning. One family stated that they didn't think they needed any information from the public schools.

### Public School Assistance to Home Schooling Families

When families were asked to describe ways that public schools could assist them in the education of their children, five of the eight families indicated that they would like to have the public schools provide books, materials, and equipment for use by home schooling families. Four of the families indicated that they would like access to school facilities such as the gym, library, and labs. Three families stated a desire for their children to

participate in public school classes such as drama, chorus, band, foreign language, driver's education, and advanced classes such as calculus.

One family, although hesitant to receive assistance from public schools stated that, if she knew there would be no risks involved, she would "dance in a little bit and get to know the schools".

#### Factors That Would Influence Public School Enrollment

Four of the eight families stated they did not plan to enroll their children in public schools in the future. Three of the families indicated they would enroll their children in public school in the future. One of the families was undecided at this time. When asked what factors would influence them in deciding to enroll their children in public school, seven out of the eight families said if their children wanted to go to public school they would allow them to attend. Three of the families stated a lack of peer interaction would influence them to enter their children in public school. If their children showed evidence of missing important experiences the public school could offer, two of the families stated they would enroll their children. Two families mentioned that a major health disaster could cause them to have to enroll their children in public school. Finances were mentioned by two families

as a possible reason to enroll their children in public school.

*Instructional Strategies For a Positive Transition From Home School to Public School*

When asked about strategies that the public schools could implement to make the transition from home school to public school more positive, orientation for the home schooled students was mentioned by half (4) of the families. This included a review of the rules and regulations, tours of the school, and visitations to classes. Four of the families also stated that it would be important for the schools to adapt instruction to the learning styles of their children. Three families indicated that having the opportunity to meet with teachers to discuss routines of the school, expectations of the students in school, and the learning styles and personalities of the children before they entered would be beneficial. Smaller classes, shorter bus rides, stricter discipline, Bible instruction, and information on home schoolers given to public school students ahead of time were other suggestions.



### Important Features in Choice of a Curriculum

The main feature a family looked for in choosing a curriculum was that it included the Standards of Learning objectives. Six of the eight families indicated this as important. Four families indicated it was important for the curriculum to be appropriate for the development of their children. Three of the families stated a need for the curriculum to cover the basic subject areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies. Other features mentioned included challenging, reflections of moral issues, reflection of values, and unit/theme format.

### Setting for Home Instruction

Five of the eight families held schooling sessions in the kitchen/dining room area of the home. Four of the families stated that schooling took place year-round, even on Saturday and Sunday, when the children were involved in activities that involved applying their knowledge, such as helping build a house. Two of the families had formal school rooms complete with teacher and students' desks.

### Teaching Methods and Strategies Used by Home Schoolers

A structured curriculum was used by four of the families, while an unstructured curriculum was favored by the other four. Four of the families mentioned they used hands-on, active participation activities. Three families responded they used independent study at times to teach self-discipline to their children. Four of the families emphasized the learning styles of the children determined what methods they used.

### Instructional Materials Used by Home Schoolers

As mentioned earlier, six of the families used the SOL's as guidelines for their instruction. Novels were used extensively by four families. Textbooks were used by two families. Three of the families used a prepackaged correspondence program approved by the State. These included the A-Beka program used by two families and the Christian Liberty Academy used by one family. Reference materials were mentioned by three families. Audio visuals were used by two families. The GED program was used by one family.

### Evaluation Procedures Used by Home Schoolers

The most common form of assessment used by the families in this study was the portfolio. Five of the eight families used this method. Five families used both observations and checklists as informal assessments. The three families who chose a prepackaged curriculum used the unit tests that were a part of the program to assess their children. Four of the families also utilized the Virginia School Assessment Program (Iowa Tests of Basic Skills) provided by the State. An outside person was used in two cases to assess their children.

### Resources Helpful to Home Schoolers

The library was mentioned as the number one outside resource used by the home schooling families. Six of the eight families stated that they used the public library extensively. The second most common response was other home schooling families which was mentioned by five families. Five families also mentioned field trips as a major resource. Church and family activities were mentioned by two families as important to the learning process of their children. Periodicals, newspapers, and vacation brochures were identified by two families. Nature, school sales events, and the copy machine were named as other resources used by home schooling families.

### Problems Encountered by Home Schoolers

All eight families interviewed mentioned at least one problem they had encountered while home schooling their children. The most common problems mentioned were finances and limited resources. Four families identified each of these as problems. Time was mentioned by three of the families. The problem of the dynamics of the parent/child relationship vs. the teacher/child relationship was mentioned by three families. Frustration over the lack of progress from their children was also identified as a problem by three families. Schedules and interruptions were mentioned by two families. Two families also mentioned tailoring the instruction to their children's needs was a problem.

### Conclusions

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were derived. Because of the limited sample of eight families in four Southwest Virginia counties, these conclusions may not be generalized to other settings without further investigation.

This study indicated there is little or no communication between public school systems and home schoolers. Most home schooling parents, however, would welcome a collaborative relationship with the public schools

if they could see benefits for their children. As communication increases, mutual respect could develop which would enhance cooperation between the home schoolers and the public schools. A more positive transition to public school for the home schooled students would be possible as the understanding and cooperation between the home school families and the public schools increased.

### Discussion

As indicated from the interviews of these families, the home schooling programs vary from one family to another. In seven of the families, the mother was the primary teacher.

The families in this study were implementing their educational goals by using a wide variety of methods, materials, schedules, and settings. Most parents used a very traditional approach to teaching which included schedules and lesson plans. In a few cases, some families felt strongly that the children needed to set the pace and direction of the learning. The parents interviewed often used active learning activities along with books and other passive materials. Most of the parents indicated the importance of the Standards of Learning objectives as part of their programs. This indicated a desire of the parents to have their children taught the skills that most children their age would be learning.

Parents frequently used community resources since they did not have access to public school resources. Libraries, museums, historical sites were some of the resources used. Many of the families frequently used field trips to enhance the learning of their children. Informal and formal settings were used by the home schooling families. The choice depended at times on the subject or activity being taught. The majority of the families indicated that they adhered to a regular schedule which was routine but not rigid. Depending on the maturity level and self-control of the parent/teacher, this freedom could easily turn into inconsistency. For this reason, home educators should have some directions and accountability set by the State Department.

There was an indication the families had a high level of interaction among family members and among outsiders. Many of the families expressed a desire for their children to have more interaction with children of their own age. The parents interviewed recognized this as important for developing socialization skills in their children.

Home educators solicited help from other home educators, magazines, books, and experienced teachers. This indicated a concern on the part of the home schooling parent to accomplish the teaching task with educational resources.

Home schooling parents expressed interest in the kinds of activities public school students engaged in as part of their education. This indicated a desire of the parents to seek validation of the activities and experiences that they were providing for their children.

Families were open to receiving assistance from public schools in the areas of providing opportunities for their children to attend classes, providing inservice for parents to become more effective teachers, sharing facilities and materials, sharing information regarding curriculum improvement, sharing ideas and mutual concerns to enhance learning for all children.

One mother expressed her ideas on collaborative efforts between the public schools and home schoolers in this way:

If the public schools want to sit down with us and see if and how they can further enhance the education of our children, and if both sides can sincerely respect and honor the intentions and efforts of the other, then something very exciting could happen; something of enormous benefit to all of the children. But we seem to be a long way from that, both sides stuck in arrogance. Communication and cooperation can lead to mutual respect, but without that respect in place, offers of "assistance" will most likely prove relatively fruitless.

### Implications for Practice

In this section, specific suggestions which may be considered for implementation into practice by the public schools are presented. Suggestions are made in three areas (1) ways public schools can assist families who home school their children, (2) ways public schools can promote communication with home schoolers, and (3) intervention strategies that public schools can implement to provide a positive transition from home school to public school.

### Ways Public Schools Can Assist the Home Schoolers in Their Division

1. The State should consider allocating money to local districts for part-time participation of home school students.
2. School divisions should consider providing the opportunity for home schooled students to participate in the schools on a part-time basis.
3. School systems should change their way of looking at these children from a governing agency perspective to a more service oriented agency perspective.



4. Courses and facilities do not need to be altered to accommodate home schoolers, but school programs and facilities could be more fully utilized by making them available to home schooling families.
5. Public schools should provide opportunities for parents to take part in inservice activities which would improve their teaching skills. This would make it easier for districts to absorb the home schooled students if the students (re)enter public schools. It will also help ensure that those students who remain at home will be better educated to meet the State standards.

#### **Ways Public Schools Can Promote Communication With Parents**

##### **Who Home School Their Children**

1. School divisions should explain in a simplified fashion the way schools are funded. Home schooling parents need to understand the cost of providing services.
2. There is virtually no research on programs used by families who home school their children, but do not register with a school division. To ensure that all of these children are being educated, the state needs to implement monitoring procedures to address this concern.

3. States and local agencies should write policies for home schooling that are clear and concise so that both parties have a clear understanding of the guidelines for compliance.
4. Policies of the state should be written in such a manner that there is little, if any, diversity between counties as to the way they monitor and evaluate the home schooling programs. This diversity leads to fear and distrust on the part of home schoolers when they move from one county or another.
5. School systems should strive to establish a climate of mutual respect, mutual benefit, and mutual cooperation between the home schoolers and the public schools. This will provide the opportunity for more home schoolers to register with the local division. This will help divisions monitor and evaluate the programs of their home schoolers.
6. Public schools should provide periodic meetings to share information on curriculum and other issues with home schooling parents. Since both groups are aiming at the same goal, effectively educating the next generation, they could share problems and solutions.

**Intervention Strategies Public Schools Can Implement**  
**to Promote a Positive Transition From Home School to Public**  
**School**

1. School boards need to develop policies regarding the awarding of credits and the determination of placement for transfer students.
2. School division officials should become knowledgeable about the programs that are used by home schooling families. This would make the decision regarding placement and credits easier.
3. School districts should have orientation days for students who are transferring into public school. This will help students understand the rules and regulations ahead of time. The orientation should include tours of the school and classroom visitation opportunities. This should be done during the school day so that the home schooling student can identify with the public school student.
4. School officials should make arrangements with the home schooling family to have the opportunity to meet with the teachers of the student prior to enrollment. This can provide the opportunity for both the student and the teacher to get to know each other.

### Recommendations for Future Research

Most research on home schoolers has focused on the reasons families choose to home school their children and the demographic characteristics of the families. There has been very little research conducted on the collaboration efforts between public schools and the home schooler. More qualitative studies need to be conducted with public school officials and home schoolers to reveal the advantages and disadvantages of collaborative efforts. For instance, research could be conducted to see if there is a correlation between the number of home schooled students who return to public school full-time and the number of those home schooled students who attend public school on a part-time basis. Research is needed in the area of analysis of the programs used by home schoolers. The State has approved fifteen programs for the home schoolers to use; however, there have not been any studies conducted to compare the content of these programs to the State's Standards of Learning objectives. This information is needed by public schools in order to make an accurate assessment as to awarding credits and determining placement when students transfer into public school.

## References

- AskSam Systems, Inc. (1987). AskSam: The Information Manager for the PC, Version 4.2. Perry, FL: Seaside Software, Inc.
- Blumberg, H., Fuller, C., Hare, A. (1974). Response rate in postal surveys. Public Opinion Quarterly, 38, pp. 113-123.
- Carper, J. C. (1992). Home schooling, history, and historians: The past as present. The High School Journal. pp. 252-57.
- Gustavsen, G. A. (1991). Selected characteristics of home schools and parents who operate them. (Doctoral Dissertation, Andrews University). Dissertation Abstracts International. 42(10), pp.4381-4382A.
- Holt, J. (1983). Schools and home schoolers: A fruitful partnership. Phi Delta Kappan. 64, pp.391-94.
- Home School Legal Defense Association. (1990). A nationwide study of home education. (Home school court report, December, 1990).
- Jueb, C. (1994, September). Why parents choose home schooling. Educational Leadership. pp. 50-52.
- Klicka, C. J. (1990). Home schooling in the United States: A statutory analysis. Paeonian Springs: Home School Legal Defense Association.

- Kutter, P. O. (1987). The home schooling movement in central Kentucky. Home School Researcher. 3(4), pp.1-3.
- Lamson, P. (1992, January). Home schooling: A choice the Cupertino District Supports. The School Administrator. pp. 26-27.
- Lines, P. (1986). Home instruction: An overview. (Policy Issues Paper). Appalachian Educational Laboratory. Charleston, W. Va.
- Lines, P. (1987). An overview of home instruction. Phi Delta Kappan. 68, pp. 510-17.
- Lines, P. (1991, October). Estimating the home schooled population. A working paper for the Office of Research, U.S. Department of Education).
- Mahan, B. (1987). Home schooling: Reasons some parents choose this alterative form of education and a study of the attitudes of home schooling parents and public school superintendents toward the benefits of home schooling. (Masters Project, University of Dayton) Dayton, Ohio.
- Marshall, J. C. (1992). Home schooler on board---school board, that is. American School Board Journal. p. 28.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (1989). Designing qualitative research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Mayberry, M. (1988). Doing it their way: A study of Oregon's home schoolers. (Doctoral Dissertation,

University of Oregon). Dissertation Abstracts International.

Mayberry, M. (1989a). Why home schooling? A profile of four categories of home schoolers. (Research project, Department of Sociology, University of Nevada). Las Vegas, Nevada.

Mayberry, M. (1989b). Home based education in the United States: Demographics, motivations, and implications. Educational Review. 41, 171-180.

McCracken, G. (1988). The long interview: Qualitative research methods. London: Sage.

Miles, M. & Huberman, A. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Miles, M. & Huberman, A. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pitman, M.A. (1987). Compulsory education and home schooling: Truancy or prophecy? Education and Urban Society. 19, pp.280-89.

Ramsey, K. (1992). Home is where the school is. School Administrator. 49(1), 20-25.

Ray, Brian. (1988). Home schools: A synthesis of research on characteristics and learner outcomes. Education and Urban Society. 21(1), pp. 16-31.

- Roach, V. (1988). Home schooling in an era of educational reform. School Business Affairs. 54(11), 10-14.
- Shifflette, L. M. (1993). Factors influencing positive change in the secondary teacher's classroom. (Doctoral Dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University) Blacksburg, Virginia.
- Shepherd, M. (1994, September). Home schoolers as public tutors. Educational Leadership. pp.55-56.
- Sullivan, D. (1993, September). Going to school by staying at home. The American Legion. pp. 26-27.
- Terpstra, M. (1994, September). A home school/school district partnership. Educational Leadership. pp.57-58.
- Tobak, J. W. and Zirkle, P. (1983). The law of home instruction. The School Administrator. 40(2), pp. 22-24.
- Van Galen, J. (1986). Schooling in private: A study of home education. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). Dissertation Abstracts International. 41(5), p. 1683-A.
- Virginia Department of Education. (1989). Report on instruction issues in Virginia. Office of Assessment and Compliance.
- Virginia Department of Education. (1992). Virginia School Laws. The Miche Company. Charlottesville, Virginia.



- Virginia Department of Education. (1993a). Statistical report on home instruction and religious exemptions. September, 1993. Richmond, Virginia.
- Virginia Department of Education. (1993b). Annual report on the status of home instruction in Virginia. Richmond, Virginia.
- Wartes, J. (1984). Survey of home schooling families relative to proposed changes in legislation in Washington State. (Woodinville, Washington. Teaching Parents Association.)
- Wartes, J. (1988). The Washington home school project: quantitative measures for informing policy decisions. Education and Urban Society. 21(1), pp. 42-51.
- Whitehead, J. W., & Bird, W. R. (1984). Home education and constitutional liberties. Westchester, Illinois: Crossway.

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES APPROVED FOR HOME INSTRUCTION

A BEKA Correspondence School

P. O. Box 18000

Pensacola, FL 32503

1-800-874-3592

Grade Levels: K-12

(Parents using the Video Program must choose Option 1-Credit.)

American School (The)<sup>1, 2</sup>

850 East 58th Street

Chicago, IL 60637

(312) 947-3300

Grade Levels: 9-12

Brigham Young University<sup>3</sup>

Department of Independent Study

206 Harman Building

Provo, UT 84602

(801) 378-3868

Grade Levels: 9-12

Calvert School

105 Tuscany Road

Baltimore, MD 21210

(301) 243-6054/6030

Grade Levels: K-8

(Parents must subscribe to the Advisory Teaching Service)

Cambridge Academy

8340 N.W. 47th Street

Ocala, FL 326755

1-800-252-3777

(904) 620-2717

Grade Levels: 9-12

Citizen's High School<sup>1</sup>

188 College Drive

P. O. Box 1929

Orange Park, FL 32067

(904) 276-1700

Grade Levels: High School

Home Study International<sup>1</sup>

12501 Old Columbia Pike  
P. O. Box 4437  
Silver Spring, MD 20914  
1-800-394-4769  
(202) 680-6570

Grade Levels: K-12

(Parents must subscribe to the Partnership Program)

ICS Newport/Pacific High School<sup>1</sup>

Oak and Pawnee Streets  
Scranton, PA 18515  
(717) 342-7701

Grade Levels: 9-12

Indiana University<sup>2</sup>

Independent Study Program  
Owen Hall  
Bloomington, IN 47405  
(812) 855-3693

Grade Levels: 9-12

International Institute, Inc.

P. O. Box 99  
Park Ridge, IL 60068  
(312) 823-7416

Grade Levels: K-8

(Parents must subscribe to the Advisory Service)

McGuffey Academy International

2213 Spur Trail  
Grapevine, TX 76051  
(817) 481-7008

Grade Levels: K-12

Phoenix Special Programs<sup>2</sup>

3132 West Clarendon Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85017-4589  
(602) 263-5601  
1-800-426-4952

Grade Levels: High School

Southeast Academy

P. O. Box MM  
Ball Park Avenue  
Saltville, VA 24370  
(703) 496-7777

Grade Levels: 1-12

University of Arkansas<sup>2</sup>  
Division of Continuing Education  
#2 University Center  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
(501) 575-3647  
Grade Levels: 9-12

University of Nebraska-Lincoln<sup>2</sup>  
Independent Study High School  
269 Nebraska Center for Continuing Education  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0900  
(402) 472-1926  
Grade Levels: High School  
(Student must be enrolled for credit toward a UN-L diploma.)

University of Oklahoma<sup>2</sup>  
Independent Study Department  
1700 Asp Avenue, Room B-1  
Norman, OK 73037  
(405) 325-1921  
Grade Levels: High School

- <sup>1</sup> Accredited Member, National Home Study Council
- <sup>2</sup> Accredited Member, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- <sup>3</sup> Accredited Member, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges

APPENDIX B

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PROVIDE HOME INSTRUCTION

I am requesting authorization to provide home instruction for the children listed below as provided for by §22.1-254.1 of the Code of Virginia (1950) as amended, in lieu of having them attend school.

School Year: 19\_\_\_\_-19\_\_\_\_

<u>NAME(S) OF CHILD(REN)</u>	<u>DATE OF BIRTH</u>	<u>GRADE LEVEL</u>
------------------------------	----------------------	--------------------

I wish to be recognized as eligible to provide home instruction by selecting the option indicated below. (Check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a baccalaureate degree. (Attach copy of diploma or certificate from college.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I have the qualifications prescribed by the Board of Education for a teacher. (Attach copy of teaching certificate or statement to this effect from the Virginia Department of Education.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I have enrolled the child(ren) in a correspondence course approved by the Board of Education. (Attach notice of acceptance or other evidence of enrollment showing name and address of school and the courses in which each child is enrolled.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I have attached to this notice a program of study for the coming year which includes the state Standards of Learning objectives for language arts and mathematics for each child. Also, I have attached a statement which states why I am able to provide an adequate education for my child or children.

I understand that by August 1 of next year, I must provide evidence of educational achievement as prescribed in Section 22.1-254.1 of the Code of Virginia which defines the requirements for home instruction.

Check if desired:

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like a copy of Section 22.1-254.1 of the Code.

I hereby certify that I am the parent or guardian of the child or children listed above and agree to comply with applicable policies and procedures.

---

Signature

---

Date

---

Social Security Number

Print or type name and address:

---

---

---



APPENDIX C

THREE OPTIONS FOR PROVIDING DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS WITH EVIDENCE OF THE ACHIEVEMENT OF HOME-INSTRUCTED STUDENTS

Parents may choose from three options for providing division superintendents with evidence of achievement of home-instructed students. By August 1, following the school year in which a child has received instruction at home, evidence of the student's achievement must be submitted in one of the following ways.

1. Results of a battery of achievement tests from the same form and series from which tests are administered for the Virginia State Assessment Program.

The Department of Education will supply and score form G of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) or form G of the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) for the appropriate grade level at no cost to the school division on request. The school division should notify the parent of the time and place that the ITBS or TAP is to be administered in the schools and invite the parent to have his/her child tested at the same time. These tests must be administered by school personnel on school property.

Only the complete composite score from the currently adopted ITBS or the basic composite score from the currently adopted TAP is needed for this purpose, but the information would be helpful to the parent if the entire battery is administered. If the composite score is at the fortieth percentile or less, the parent may not continue home instruction and must be notified to make other arrangements which comply with Section 22.1-254 of the Code of Virginia (compulsory school attendance act) or pursue option 3 below.

2. Results of a battery of achievement tests from the alternate form of the currently adopted series from which tests are administered for the Virginia State Assessment Program.

The appropriate level of the alternate form of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) or the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) may be used for this purpose; that is, form H of the ITBS or form H of the TAP. These tests are not available from the Department of Education. The parent may have the test administered and scored at his/her cost by an agency or

person acceptable to the division superintendent. This may be done at any time before August 1.

The complete composite score from the alternate form of the currently adopted ITBS or the basic composite score from the alternate form of the currently adopted TAP is needed for this purpose. The monthly norms used for the scores must be commensurate with the date of administration. If the composite score is at the fortieth percentile or less, the parent may not continue home instruction and must be notified to make other arrangements which comply with Section 22.1-254 of the Code of Virginia (compulsory school attendance act) or pursue option 3 below.

3. Results from an evaluation or assessment which, in the judgment of the division superintendent, indicate that the child is achieving an adequate level of educational growth and progress. The parent is encouraged to obtain advance approval of the plan for evaluation or assessment to ensure that it will provide sufficient evidence on which to make a judgment.

This evaluation or assessment may be performed by school division personnel or by any person or agency acceptable to the division superintendent. It should provide sufficient information, whether in the form of test results or other measures or observations to enable the division superintendent to make a reasonable judgment. It should be limited to educational growth and progress and should be related to the curriculum submitted by the parent. The parents must assume all costs for the evaluation or assessment.

One alternative under this option is to use the appropriate level of a standardized achievement test other than the one approved for use in the Virginia State Assessment Program; that is, a test other than the ITBS or TAP, but one that is suitable for use in the public schools. The test used must have a norming date of less than eleven years from date of administration, and the scores reported must be in monthly norms commensurate with the date of administration. Achievement above the fortieth percentile in reading/language arts and mathematics would provide an acceptable measure. These tests cannot be obtained from the Department of Education.

Other sources of evidence of achievement under this option may include a report by an evaluator which describes the child's level of achievement and progress, results of criterion-referenced assessments such as the Standards of Learning Assessment Program, a portfolio of the child's work, or results of tests from Department of Education approved correspondence schools or other publishers.

APPENDIX D

Introduction Letter to Superintendents

November 15, 1994

Superintendent  
Street Number  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Superintendent:

I am a doctoral student at Virginia Tech working on research to determine ways that public schools can interface and assist families who choose to home school their children. In light of the information gained from this study, public school officials may gain insight into: 1) how to effectively communicate with parents of home school pupils; 2) what services are needed to support the children in the home school settings in their division; and 3) what strategies need to be implemented to provide a positive transition from the home school setting to the public school setting in those cases where home schoolers return to public schools.

I will be conducting case studies of families who home school their children. I am sending self-addressed, postage paid envelopes that contain an introduction letter and a questionnaire to you to be distributed to families that home school their children. Please adhere an address label to the envelopes and mail them to every home schooling family in your division by November 22, 1994.

I will send you the results of this study when it is completed in hopes that it will aid you in your work with the home schooling families in your district.

Thank you for your time and cooperation in helping me reach these families for this study.

Sincerely,

Patricia S. Golding

APPENDIX E

Introduction Letter to Parents

November 15, 1994

Parent  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Parent:

I am a doctoral student at Virginia Tech working on research to determine ways that public schools can better communicate and assist families who choose to home school their children. In light of the information gained from this study, public school officials may gain insight into: 1) how to effectively communicate with parents of home school pupils; 2) what services are needed to support the children in the home school settings in their division; and 3) what strategies need to be implemented to provide a positive transition from the home school setting to the public school setting in those circumstances where home schoolers return to public schools.

Enclosed is a questionnaire regarding the reasons and grade levels that families choose to educate their children at home. These questionnaires were sent to the division superintendents in four counties to be mailed to home schooling families in the divisions. I would appreciate your taking the time to complete the questionnaire and returning it to me by December 8, 1994. Confidentiality of all responses will be maintained at all times and no names will be used in any report. A stamped, self-addressed envelope has been included with your materials for your use.

Let me extend to you ahead of time my deepest appreciation for your taking the time to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Patricia S. Golding



APPENDIX F

Home Instruction Survey  
1994

1. In the following chart, list your children by sex, age, grade, and type of school they attend.

Child	Sex	Age	Grade	Home School	Private School	Public School	Other	Not in School
#1.								
#2.								
#3.								
#4.								
#5.								

2. How many years did your child(ren) attend public school? (Check the one that applies.)

none  
 1-2 years  
 3-4 years  
 5-6 years  
 7 or more years

3. Do you plan to enter your child(ren) in public school in the future?  yes  no  
(If yes, please indicate at which grade level)

Grade K                       Grade 7  
 Grade 1                         Grade 8  
 Grade 2                         Grade 9  
 Grade 3                         Grade 10  
 Grade 4                         Grade 11  
 Grade 5                         Grade 12  
 Grade 6                         Undecided

4. Why did you choose to educate your child(ren) at home? (Check the **one** that best describes your reasons.)

\_\_\_ Home instruction allows us to include **religious freedom** in our child(ren)'s education and to instill in them **religious/spiritual and moral values**.

\_\_\_ Home instruction allows us to have control over the **academic content and instructional methods** used in meeting the academic needs of our child(ren).

\_\_\_ Home instruction is more consistent with our self-sufficient **lifestyle** and integrates the learning of our child(ren) with our way of life.

\_\_\_ Home instruction allows us to develop the **social skills** of our child(ren) without negative peer pressure.

\_\_\_ Other reasons  
(Please specify these reasons.)

---

---

---

---

---

5. Would you be willing to be interviewed regarding ways that public schools could better communicate with and assist families that home school their children?  
\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no  
(If yes, please list your name and a phone number where you could be reached.)  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

**Your participation and your responses will be regarded at all times as confidential.**

When you have completed this questionnaire, please check to see if you have responded to each item. Then return the questionnaire to me in the self-addressed envelope. I wish to express my appreciation for the time and careful attention that you have given to the completion of this questionnaire.

APPENDIX G

December 28, 1994

Superintendent  
Street Address  
City, State, ZIP

Dear Superintendent:

Thank you so much for sending out the survey letters to your home schooling families. At this date, I have received responses from approximately 41 percent of the families.

I now need to send a follow up letter to those families that have not responded. I would like you to adhere an address label to these envelopes for families from your division which did not respond. Please mail these by January 5, 1995. This will be the last correspondence to them. The codes for your division who need the letter sent are as follows:

Once again, thank you for helping me in this project.

Sincerely,

Patricia S. Golding

PSG:jhc  
Enclosures

APPENDIX H

Follow-up Letter to Parents

December 13, 1994

Parent  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Parent:

About three weeks ago your family was invited to participate in a study of ways public schools can better communicate and assist home schooling families in the education of their children. As of this writing, I do not have a reply from you. As mentioned in the first letter you received, confidentiality for all returned materials and responses to interview questions will be maintained at all times.

In case you have misplaced the original questionnaire that I sent you earlier, I have enclosed another questionnaire including another stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Please disregard this letter if it has crossed in the mail with the materials that you have mailed to me. If you have already sent the materials back, I wish to extend my appreciation to you for participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Patricia S. Golding

APPENDIX I



## Protocol Questions

Introduction: I want to thank you for allowing me to visit in your home today. I am interested in finding out ways that home schooling parents believe public schools can interface and assist families who choose to home school their children. I would like to tape the interview so that I may have an accurate record of your responses when I begin the analysis of the data I collect. In no case will your name be identified nor will your comments be identified as yours. The following are questions that I would like you to answer. I would like for you to respond as fully as you can. If you need clarification of a question, please ask me for further explanation.

1. What resources would help you to do a better job educating your child(ren) in the future?
2. What ways can public schools effectively communicate with home schooling families in their division?
3. What types of information would you like the public schools to provide for you?
4. How can the public school system assist you in the education of your child(ren)?
5. Will you enroll your child(ren) in the public schools in the future? If so, what factors would influenced you to make this decision?

6. What could the public school system do to make the transition to public school more positive for home schooled students?
7. What are the important features you look for in choosing a curriculum?
8. Describe the setting where you conduct the schooling activities.
9. Describe the teaching methods or strategies that you use.
10. Describe the instructional materials that you use.
11. Describe the evaluation procedures that you use to assess your child(ren)'s progress. These can be both informal and formal.
12. What resources have you found to be helpful in educating your child(ren)?
13. Are you encountering any problems as you teach your child(ren) at home? If so, explain.

APPENDIX J

Checklist for Validation  
(To be answered by the pilot study family)

If you make reference to a specific item in your comments, please indicate the specific question in the questionnaire.

1. Are the questions to the respondents (parents) clear, concise, and correct?
  - a. yes
  - b. noIf no, please indicate the item number and comment.

Pilot Family-A    The question regarding evaluation needs to be clarified as to daily, weekly, etc.  
Pilot Family-B    The one question about teaching methods, maybe could be more clear if you had the word strategies included.

---

---

2. Are the questions clearly stated so that only one interpretation is possible?
  - a. yes
  - b. noIf no, please indicate the item number and comment.

PF-A    yes  
PF-B    yes

---

---

---

3. Are all the terms and words clearly understood by the parents? (readability level)
  - a. yes
  - b. noIf no, please indicate the item number and comment.

PF-A    Yes, we think so.  
PF-B    Yes

---

---

---

4. Are there any recommendations you have to improve this questionnaire?

a. yes

b. no

If yes, list the recommendations.

PF-A No, it seems fine.

---

PF-B No.

---

---

---

---

---

If necessary, please use the remainder of this page.

Thank you.

APPENDIX K



APPENDIX L



## COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS

- Thank you for your help.
- We have six children. Three have graduated (all girls). The reason we are home schooling our sixteen year-old son is because he would not try in school. He was very much involved with some rough boys. His attitude and personal likes and dislikes were changing drastically. He's doing much better since we took him out of school. We enrolled him in the American School program.

We are a very close family and we want to keep it that way. With school, we felt we were losing our son to this world and its ways. We had almost lost control. It took sometime, but I think we've got a handle on the situation again.

The last two in school are "A" students. I don't think we will take them out. We have always encouraged our children to at least graduate and get their diplomas.

It is sad that school systems will not do something about those who refuse to learn. When discipline was done away with, things really deteriorated.

I drive a school bus, so I know there are kids in school who are only there for the drugs they can get or the trouble they can cause. They disrupt the classes so much that no one learns.

My 14 year-old was so disgusted last year in one class because the only thing they did all year was sit or clean up the room as punishment because three or four boys always did something to irritate the teacher. First, I feel the teacher did not handle this situation well and second after two or three times of sending them to the office, I think they should have been dismissed from school. Why punish the children who really want to learn? I believe Canada has a ruling that you do one thing out of line and you're out of school. If I thought that would happen to me and I really cared about schooling, I know I'd behave. Anyway, thank you for your time.

- We allow our children to choose. They have been in public schools, private schools and home schooled. We have college educations, and I have a teaching certificate. Each year is different and we approach it

as how to best meet their educational needs.

- We are Jehovah's Witness and this child has asked to be home schooled so she may have more time to volunteer to our door to door public ministry.
- What's this "better" business? In the six years that I've been home schooling my daughter, I've never noticed any attempt to "communicate with and assist" us in our effort. Likewise, I have never approached the school to see if my child could partake of some of the resources available to others (e.g. occasional use of the gym or some math textbooks). This mutual avoidance of one another is a vestige of home schooling's history illegitimacy. We are just thankful to be left alone, but will surely change as home education continues to gain respect.

If, at that time, the public schools want to sit down with us and see if and how they can further enhance the education of our children, and if both sides can sincerely respect and honor the intentions and efforts of the other, then something very exciting could happen, something of enormous benefit to all of the children. But we seem to be a long way from that, both sides stuck in arrogance.

Communication and cooperation can lead to mutual respect, but without that respect in place, offers of "assistance" will most likely prove relatively fruitless.

- Public schools waste too much time; its a lot more efficient to teach one on one and have students responsible for their learning. Too much conflict in public schools. Students are too dependent on classmates. Public school schedule conflicts with personal schedule. Easier to do it our way than to conform to public schools. Home schooled students should be able to attend extracurricular activities just as other students do. We still have to pay taxes to support their activities.
- Home schooling allows him to work at his own pace and allows time for other activities.
- My children now get help when they can't do a class problem or don't understand a lesson. I would like to say that children's learning capacities cannot be put in a mold and they cannot be judged by some test as to

their IQ. With understanding, patience, real "care" and an effort to reach the students you have more than one child can make his "genius" blossom.

- Biblically, we as parents are charged with training of a child in the way they should go. That means every aspect of their nurturing, not leaving it up to someone else to handle.
- We home school because of public schools' class size and pupil/teacher ratio.
- Tutoring allowed time for specific weaknesses to be addressed and helped my child to "catch up" in those areas.
- Our child was bored with public school. Classes were not interesting. We had been given the idea on different occasions the idea from teachers and other school officials that no one cared if the children received an education or not.
- Our decision to home school was primarily influenced by a desire for control over content and methods of instruction; however, many other considerations also apply. We have resources available to enhance their learning experience: a computer each (CD-ROM, encyclopedia, etc.), an extensive reference and reading library, and one-to-one instructional capability. Lesson plans can be tailored to each child. Field trips are easily and frequently accomplished, and snow days, with their transportation hazards, are non-existent.
- We are equally concerned with instilling religious and moral values in our child and controlling the academic content and instructional methods he receives.
- I believe the communication with the public schools is adequate regarding home instruction and I am not requesting assistance regarding the same.
- We took our daughter out of public school in 2nd grade as she was learning everything at home anyway. In our opinion, the curriculum we have chosen is superior to any public school materials we've seen. also, we give our children individual instruction they cannot get in school.

- We home school because of the violence in schools. We like the ability to teach our children on a one-to-one basic, to be with our children and to really get to know our children.

The ability to teach our children without the labels of "honor" students or "dumb" students, but to teach them at their individual pace and abilities without comparing them with someone else, as superior or inferior.

- Home schooling is wonderful. Our children are thriving, responsible, and loving.
- Home schooling allows me to teach Christian perspectives to my child, with one-to-one learning and instructional methods that have superb academic content, with a Christian lifestyle needed with our way of life.
- I believe public schools should not become involved with any aspect of home schooling.

## WHAT I DIDN'T LEARN IN SCHOOL

(Monday, 9 November 1992)

It is startling and sobering to see how little my formal education (high school and college) prepared me for the life which I have chosen. None of the core values around which my life currently revolves were emphasized during those sixteen years, and most of them weren't even acknowledged. And this wasn't because the schools I went to were poor or disreputable. They were both excellent institutions, and both did an credible job of inculcating within their students the basic orientation and beliefs of the prevailing culture. Only in retrospect do I see how very narrow that orientation was and (I presume) is.

More specifically, this is some of what I didn't learn in school---I didn't learn how critically important good health is. Other than a couple of rather pathetic attempts in junior high school, there were no classes on how the human body transforms sunlight, water, air and earth into personal energy, and the specific ways in which this daily transformational process can be optimized. Nothing on the inter-relationship between energy level, mood and perception. Or between exercise, stress and wellness. No instruction in how to decipher and creatively respond to the manifestations of dis-ease. And no awareness of, let alone motivation toward, the higher octaves of health.

Nor did I learn very much at all about work. I learned how to work with my head, but not---again excluding one compulsory junior high shop course---how to work with my hands. Nothing at all about how to build a house, plant a garden, adopt a more appropriate diet, heat with wood, or use alternative energy. I wasn't taught how to properly maintain or repair an automobile, or how to manage personal finances and investments. Even more significant, there were no courses in the transmutation of some rather toxic cultural attitudes, so that work can be experienced as something pleasurable, rather than onerous; voluntary, rather than compulsive; playful, rather than overly serious.

Equally amazing, as I look back over my high school and college years, there was virtually no guidance offered in how to nurture either family or friends. None of the ingredients that go into a sustainable relationship---effective communication skills, sensual and emotional openness, how to discover and share gifts and goals, how to solve problems and resolve conflicts---none of these were presented as electives, let alone as an essential part of a core curriculum. Preparation for parenthood was likewise ignored. Apparently this most difficult of arts, like marriage and friendship, was something that the students

were expected to learn on their own, or pick up from the culture by osmosis.

Finally, my college had a chapel and offered courses in philosophy and religion. But there were no professors (at least that I was aware of) that went beyond an academic expertise in these fields. The search for a soul, the urgent need for meaning in one's personal and communal life, the perilous exploration of what Jung refers to as the collective unconscious, and the use of such inner disciplines as dreamwork, meditation and prayer as means of undertaking such a journey---all of this was entirely absent from the catalogues and course lists where I went to school.

This is not to say that there weren't many admirable and enriching aspects of my high school and college education. There were. Nor do I mean to suggest that our schools should be solely responsible for providing motivation and instruction in the above-mentioned areas. Other cultural institutions, such as the family and the church, obviously share this responsibility.

If the mission of our schools, however, is to help students be as fully prepared as possible for life after school, and if such preparation does not include learning how to achieve and maintain optimal health, how to find deep pleasure in one's work (be it mental or physical), how to establish strong and loving friendships and marriages, and how to discover meaning, purpose and wholeness (or holy-ness) in one's daily life, then our educational system runs the very real risk of becoming increasingly irrelevant to the young people who are coming of age in these perilously opportune times.

## VITA

Name: Patricia S. Golding  
Address: P. O. Box 281  
1212 Maple Drive  
Hillsville, Virginia 24343  
Telephone: (703) 728-3673 (Home)  
(703) 728-3191 (Work)

### Personal Information:

Date of Birth: March 11, 1948  
Place of Birth: Radford, Virginia  
Health: Excellent  
Marital Status: Married  
Children: 2 boys (ages 24 and 21)  
1 girl (age 16)  
Hobbies: Golf, reading, cross-stitch

### Education:

High School: Hillsville High School - 1966  
Degree: Academic  
College: Radford University - 1971  
Degree: B.S. Elementary Education  
Special Education  
Graduate: V.P.I.-S.U. - 1977  
Degree: M.A. Curriculum and Instruction  
Post-graduate: V.P.I.-S.U. - 1995  
Degree: Doctor of Education in Educational  
Administration  
Endorsements: Assistant Superintendent for Instruction  
Director of Instruction  
General Supervisor  
Elementary Supervisor  
Special Education Supervisor  
Elementary Education  
Special Education: Mental Retardation,  
Learning Disabilities, and  
Emotionally Disturbed  
Gifted Education  
Certification: Post-graduate Professional

Work Experience:

- 1971 - 1973: Fancy Gap Elementary School  
Carroll County Public Schools  
Teacher of Mentally Retarded Students  
(Ages 6-12)
- 1973 - 1974: Diagnostic Prescriptive Teacher with  
Federal Program SCORE serving the County  
of Carroll and the City of Galax
- 1974 - 1976: Fancy Gap Elementary School  
Carroll County Public Schools  
Teacher of First Grade
- 1976 - 1978: Hillsville Intermediate School  
Carroll County Public Schools  
Teacher of Learning Disabled Students  
(Grades 7-9)
- 1978 - 1988: Carroll County High School  
Carroll County Public Schools  
Teacher of Learning Disabled Students  
(Grades 10-12)
- 1978 - 1987: Wytheville Community College  
Wytheville, Virginia  
Part-time Adjunct Faculty-  
Reading and Verbal Studies
- 1989 - 1991: Carroll County Public Schools  
Coordinator of Gifted Education  
Coordinator of Special Education
- 1991 - 1995: Carroll County Public Schools  
Elementary Education Supervisor

Awards:

- 1973: Nominated and listed in Outstanding  
Elementary Teachers of America
- 1975, 1988,  
1993, 1994: Nominated and listed in Outstanding  
Young Women of America

Professional Experience:

- 1977, 1989: Served on Textbook Screening Committee



1979: Served on Southern Association Evaluation Committee; Chairperson for Special Education

1981 - 1989: Department Chairman of Special Education Department of Carroll County High School

1985: Junior Class Sponsor

1985: Chairman of Carroll County Special Education L.D. teacher's group

1984: Speaker for Regional Special Education Supervisors' meeting; V.P.I.-S.U.

1985: Conducted Faculty Inservice on Special Education

1986 - 1989: Senior Class Sponsor

1987 - 1988: Member of Faculty Council

1987 - 1989: Member of Special Education (L.D.) Advisory Committee  
New River Community College, Dublin, VA

1988 - 1990: Member of Virginia State Task Force of Learning Disabilities

1989 - 1990: Member of the Virginia Task Force for Certification in Special Education

1988: Presenter at the International Conference on Learning Disabilities:  
Topic-Transition: The L.D. Student from High School to College

1988 - 1989: Member of Carroll County Subject-Weight Committee

1988 - 1989: Project PERT liaison between Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services and Carroll County High School

1989 - 1991: Southwest Virginia Regional Representative Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities

1992 - 1994: Treasurer Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities

1995 - 1996: Vice President Southwest Virginia Supervisors Association

Professional Organizations:

1971 - 1995: Carroll County Education Association

1971 - 1995: Virginia Education Association

1987 - 1995: National Education Association

1992 - 1995: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Community Activities:

1982 - 1988: First United Methodist Church  
Substitute Teacher

1974, 1982,  
1983, 1985: First United Methodist Church  
Bible School Director

1982 - 1987: First United Methodist Church  
Family Life Committee

1988 - 1989: Blue Ridge Country Club  
Co-Chairman Tournament Committee

1990 - 1994: First United Methodist Church  
Pastor-Parish Relation Board

1995-Present: First United Methodist Church  
Board of Directors

  
Patricia S. Golding