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# Home Based Education in North Carolina, USA

## A Case Study of Policy, Coordination, and Social Acceptance

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## Abstract

Home based education is growing at enormous rates in the United States and the policy that provides the framework for this alternative form of education is often the center of much debate. This case study of home based education in North Carolina, USA investigates policies that are currently in place, the partnership between the public school sector and the home school sector, and the social factors that influence home school families. The study utilizes questionnaires to determine the primary reasons that families choose home school rather than a traditional educational environment, the attitude towards home based education as perceived by home school parents, and the experiences that home school families have encountered when interacting with the public school sector. Additionally, the thesis includes a comparative discussion of home based education in North Carolina, USA and Alberta, Canada demonstrating that home based education policies in North America vary greatly in regards to government regulation, financial support, and the partnership between the public school sector and the home school sector.

Findings reveal that North Carolina's home based education policies are open and government regulation is relatively low. Home school parents choose this form of education based primarily on quality and although they do seek policy reform concerning financial support, they prefer very little government involvement in the day-to-day operation of their home school. In addition, an overwhelming majority of study participants state that home based education is socially acceptable in their community, signaling a shift not only in policy and legality, but in society in general.

Key Terms: Home Based Education, Home Schooling, School Choice, Educational Reform

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Home based education, or ‘home schooling’, is changing society’s image of education as it grows in scope and popularity in many nations (Basham, 2001). This non-traditional form of education is expanding at enormous rates in the United States (Ray, 2011b). In fact, it is one of the fastest growing forms of education in the country (The Economist, 2012). During the last 20 years, the general public’s familiarity with home schooling has evolved from a level of almost complete ignorance to one of widespread awareness (Basham, 2001). Home schooling is no longer a social faux-pas but is openly accepted by the general public now more than ever before. Home schooling is no longer extreme; it has become mainstream (Basham, 2001). Encouraged by the expansion of freedom of choice in schools, home schooling is an issue that can no longer be disregarded by policy makers.

### 1.1 Background

Home based education is legal in the United States although legislation and administration of home based education issues are delegated to the state education boards. In 2010, there were an estimated 2.04 million home schooled children in the United States (Ray, 2011b). In relation to all students enrolled in school, approximately 3.7% of American students (Roberts & Stark, 2012) are home schooled.

The home school phenomenon in the United States is mainly one of choice, not necessity. Although the decision to home school rather than send their children to public or private school stem from many sources, some of the most common are:

- To offer an alternative pedagogical approach to the regimented and less creative public school in order to foster a more natural learning environment (Norman, 1999)
- To protect traditional family values, teach a certain worldview, or impart knowledge regarding a religious doctrine that parents’ feel are being undermined in the public school system (Norman, 1999)

- To accommodate children who do not fit the traditional mold of public schooling; children with physical, mental, or emotional challenges (Norman, 1999)
- Dissatisfaction with the local public school and/or the curriculum (Norman, 1999)
- To customize or individualize the curriculum and learning environment for each child, thus accomplishing more academically (Basham, 2001)
- To provide guided and reasoned social interactions with youthful peers and adults (Ray, 2011b)
- To enhance family relationships between children and parents and among siblings (Ray, 2011b)
- To provide a safer environment for children in response to the physical violence, drugs and alcohol, psychological abuse, and improper and unhealthy sexuality associated with institutional schools. (Ray, 2011b)

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate home schooling policies that are currently in place in North Carolina, a state that approaches home schooling with relatively open policies. The study will explain the concept of home schooling and how policies surrounding the topic are implemented. The study will explore home schooling legislation and change/reform in North Carolina in order to demonstrate the pathway to, and provide context for, the current regulations and legislation. Next, the study will investigate the partnership between the public school sector and the home school sector. The information from North Carolina will be complimented with examples of home school policy in Alberta, Canada in order to offer a different approach to home based education and provide a discussion of a comparative nature.

In order to offer a comprehensive understanding of the home school environment in North Carolina, it is important to consider the social factors that influence this alternative form of education. This study will utilize questionnaires to determine the reasons that families choose home schooling instead of a traditional educational environment, the attitude towards home schooling in North Carolina as perceived by home school parents, as well as the experiences that home school families have encountered when interacting with the public school sector.

Specifically, the study will attempt to provide information in response to the following research questions:

- What are the policies regarding home schooling in North Carolina, United States?
- Is there a link between the home school sector and the public school sector? Do they work together to enhance the educational experience of home schooled students? What is the reality? Are cooperative policies put into practice?
- What are the reasons that families choose to home school in North Carolina? What is the attitude of society toward home schooling as perceived by home school families?

The following concepts will be addressed:

- Educational Reform
- School Choice
- Home Schooling / Home Based Education

### 1.3 Limitations of the Study

This study will focus solely on the State of North Carolina. The United States delegates educational policy making and legislation to the state level, therefore focusing on one state allows for a more feasible study. North Carolina has been chosen due to its progressive approach to home based education and its liberal methods of managing the home school sector; this study does not intend to generalize the information herein to apply to the entirety of the United States. However, because 125 home schools, all located in various areas throughout the state, participated in the study, this information can be somewhat generalized throughout the State of North Carolina. The purpose of a case study research design is not to generalize to other cases or to populations beyond the case (Bryman, 2012). However, the findings of this study may, perhaps, be generalized by drawing on findings from comparable cases investigated by others (Williams, 2000).

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

Home schools are expanding at ever increasing rates. The home school movement has been mobilized by many factors, especially legislation and policy reform. In 2010, there were an estimated 2.04 million home schooled children in the United States (Ray, 2011b). Only ten years prior, that enrollment number was 791,000 (Bauman, 2001). The vast expansion of home schools as a recognized method of education has only gained momentum from the trend in expanding school choice for parents and students around the world. Parents are choosing to take full responsibility for their child's education by controlling curriculum, maintaining a desired classroom environment, and monitoring and adjusting the pace of learning to the individual needs of their child. Research on this emerging sector of education is scarce. Expanding knowledge of home schooling is vital in order to ensure quality, equality, and social understanding of home based education.

## 1.5 Structure of the Study

This study is organized into eight chapters. Chapter One offers an introduction including brief background information on home schooling, aims and objectives, research limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter Two describes concepts that are relevant to the understanding of the home school issue and will aid the reader in understanding the data presented in the study. Chapter Three provides contextual analysis of North Carolina, United States. Chapter Four outlines the methods used to compile information and data. Chapter Five provides an in-depth documentary analysis on North Carolina home schools. Chapter Six is an analysis of the collected data and a discussion regarding the findings. Chapter Seven contains a discussion on the home school environment in North Carolina as compared to the home school system in Alberta, Canada. Chapter Eight provides a conclusion to the study along with recommendations for future research on home based education.

## Chapter 2

### Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, the concepts that are relevant to the study will be defined. In order to better understand the case study of the home school education system in North Carolina it is essential to first examine the concepts of educational reform, school choice, and home based education/home schooling.

#### 2.1 Educational Reform

*A nation's priorities are typically reflected in its education system. As a result, when a country is subject to major societal shifts – political, demographic, or economic – it focuses attention on its education system and seeks to “reform” that system so it becomes more consistent with the changing societal context.*

(Rotberg, 2004, p. xi)

Educational reform takes many forms depending on what geographical location, economic system, development status, culture, and society it takes place in. Industrialized countries, such as the United States, have the necessary resources to provide both universal and high quality education in addition to making higher education more accessible for every student regardless of background or socio-economic status. However, even in countries with educational resources aplenty, student achievement does not meet expectations, thus sparking the need for reform (Rotberg, 2004).

Educational reform is not only a national or regional effort but, rather, a global movement where only time will tell if proposed reforms create a real change or simply demonstrate the politics of words (Hatwood Futrell, 2004). Education in the United States, as in many other countries, is a high priority and thus the center of debate in many political, legislative, and social circuits. Educational reform is looked to in order to improve and/or eliminate the perceived challenges in a system and is relied upon heavily to address the rapidly changing societal and global demands of a country. Decisions about education will ultimately facilitate or impede economic growth, improvements in the quality of life, and social justice (Hatwood Futrell, 2004).

The implementation and public awareness of international assessments and the unrelenting comparisons of their results have created an increased demand for educational reform in many countries. Countries are no longer able to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of their own education system without paying close attention to those of other countries as well. In countries with decentralized systems, such as the United States, these international assessments have shifted the competitive playing field from a national perspective to a global one. School districts must now compete not only with other districts in relation to the national average, but must meet the standards and compete with the entire world.

Educational accountability has long been a trend in educational reform. Educational accountability, in principle, emphasizes the need for schools to focus their attention on increasing student learning rather than on compliance with rules and regulations (Elmore, Abelman, & Fuhrman, 1996). However, in the United States, the implementation of educational accountability is curricula that are skewed more and more towards measureable knowledge rather than student learning, such as a focus on the “basics” in math and reading, emphasizing mastery of computational skills and decoding of words and sentences over the creative and analytical, and fact based multiple choice tests over assessment based on wider student portfolios such as essays and projects (Schrag, 2004). This idea was expanded upon with the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act which narrowed the curriculum, putting a premium on reading and math skills while ignoring other subjects that are included in a ‘well-rounded’ education (Finn & Ravitch, 2007).

Regardless of the reasons for educational reforms, many of the issues are the same.

- Resource allocation
- Equality of educational opportunity across diverse populations
- Access to higher education
- Student testing and tracking
- Teacher accountability
- School choice
- Innovation

(Rotberg, 2004)

## 2.2 School Choice

An education system based on school choice utilizes the free market in order to create a more consumer-focused educational offering. The idea is that schools will compete for students by marketing the advantages of attending their school instead of others. Competition between education providers is intended to increase the overall quality of the education offered in every school (Arsen & Ni, 2011). An assumption of school choice education reforms is that all households seek the same thing – quality education (Kleitz, Weiher, Tedin, & Matland, 2000). A second assumption is that all families have the same skills and knowledge to choose.

As market competition in schools grew in popularity, diverse social groups, including ethnic minorities, feminists, environmentalists, Roman Catholics, and high-tech professionals jumped at the opportunity to choose. However some of these groups were less concerned with excellence – as defined in terms of standards and standardized testing – than the initial proponents of school choice (Waks, 2003). As a result, school choice became less about academic achievement and more about promoting diversity; a contradictory policy aimed both at achieving common goals and at letting different groups seek their own goals (Waks, 2003).

In studies of school choice in the United States, the middle-class is seen to be strategic and calculating and is known as the ‘skilled choosers’ (Power & Whitty, 2006). In a study conducted by Bratlinger, Majd-Jabbari, and Guskin, mothers in the United States were interviewed about school choice. The following conclusion was made by the researchers:

*It was evident that the mothers we interviewed wanted to perceive themselves – and be perceived – as liberals who were just and compassionate about people. On the other hand, they harbored illiberal views related to desire for privileged status for their children. Ideological modes of operation maintained a liberal image and disguised self-interested school preferences. (Bratlinger, Majd-Jabbari, & Guskin, 1996, p582)*

The freedom given to parents and students through the school choice trend has made the choice to home school more available and accepted. The rationale is that if parents are given the choice of which school their child should attend, the choice of home education should also be an option. When parents begin selecting schools based on their family’s personal criteria and are given an increased number of options to customize their child’s educational experience, it is natural to reach the conclusion that home schooling may be an attractive option. The



longstanding trend of school choice has enabled the home based education movement to gain momentum and expand rapidly in the United States.

## 2.3 Home Based Education / Home Schooling

In the United States before the establishment of a public school system, children were educated at home. Children were taught by their parents, or in some communities, children were taught collectively in a home or church (Helder, n.d.). With the creation of formal schooling in the form of the public education system and the introduction of compulsory education, the schooling process was moved out of the home and into the public sector (Basham, 2001), marginalizing home schooling in the minds of educators and parents as an educational option. However, even after the creation of the public school system, many children continued to be taught at home due to illnesses that kept them from attending school, the family living in a rural area or isolated region, or because the family included foreign service workers or missionaries who by choice or necessity did not send their children to boarding schools (Helder, n.d.).

In recent decades, home based education has reappeared and is growing exponentially. In 1980, home schooling was illegal in 30 states. It has only been legal in all 50 states since 1993 (Basham, 2001). Parents have begun to question whether the public education system and existing private schools are the most beneficial option for their individual children and whether they may personally be able to provide a better education to their children (About Home Education, n.d.). This idea spread throughout American society and the modern home education movement was born.

Rob Reich (2008), Associate Professor of Political Science at Stanford University, argues that there are tripartite interests at stake in the education of children: interests of the child, the parents, and the state. Traditional legal analysis of schooling, by contrast, considers only the interest of parents and the state (Reich, 2008). Reich argues that neither parents, nor the state, nor the child, ought to be permitted to exercise sole authority over the education of children. Many home school defenders invoke parental rights to educate their children, effectively giving parents complete authority over education when it comes to home schooling (Reich, 2008).

Education is not even mentioned in the United States Constitution so it is governed by individual states by default, therefore, attitudes regarding home schooling are highly divergent from state to state (Kay, 2001). The United States government defines home schooling as “the

education of school-aged children at home rather than at a school” (Lines, 1993). North Carolina defines a home school as “a nonpublic school in which one or more children of no more than two families or households receive academic instruction from parents or legal guardians, or a member of either household” (North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education, 2012a). In the simplest of terms, a home school is exactly what its name describes – an educational program that takes place in one’s home instead of in a traditional public or private classroom setting, where the instructor is the parent(s) and the student is their child(ren).

### 2.3.1 Existing Home School Research

*Research on home-based education has expanded dramatically since the first studies and academic articles of the late 1970s that dealt with the modern home school movement. Numerous researchers have examined the academic achievement of home-educated children and youth, their social, emotional, and psychological development, and their success into adulthood and various aspects of homeschool families. Researchers have also explored myriad other aspects and issues related to home education in disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, and law. Scanty research, however, has focused on a sample of home educators and their children in the state of North Carolina.*

(Ray, 2011a, p. 2)

A large amount of existing home school research is based on student performance and student socialization. These topics are controversial at best with convincing arguments and research on both sides. Many studies focus on demographics such as parent education levels, family income, number of children in the household, and ethnicity/race. There are few studies being conducted on specific home school policies and their implementation and effectiveness.

A study conducted in 2011 by Brian D. Ray, Ph.D. in cooperation with North Carolinians for Home Education revealed the following demographic information about home schools in North Carolina:

- The median income for home school families in North Carolina is \$70,000 - \$74,999 and is somewhat less than that for all married-couple families nationwide with one or more children under age 18.
- Home school parents have more formal education than parents in the general population. 62.7% of fathers and 58.2% of mothers have a college degree.

- Home school families are notably larger than families nationwide; 62.8% have three or more children.
- The percent of home school students in the study who were white/non-hispanic (92.5%) is disproportionately high compared to public school students nationwide.
- Almost all home school students (96.4%) are in married-couple families. Most of these home school mothers (79.7%) do not participate in the paid labor force; almost all home school fathers (97.3%) do work for pay.
- The median amount of money spent annually on educational materials is \$400 - \$599 per home schooled student.

(Ray, 2011a)

The study went on to compare North Carolina home school students to public school students. Student achievement was measured by results on nationally standardized tests. In this study, home school student achievement is exceptionally high, scoring well above those of American public school students.

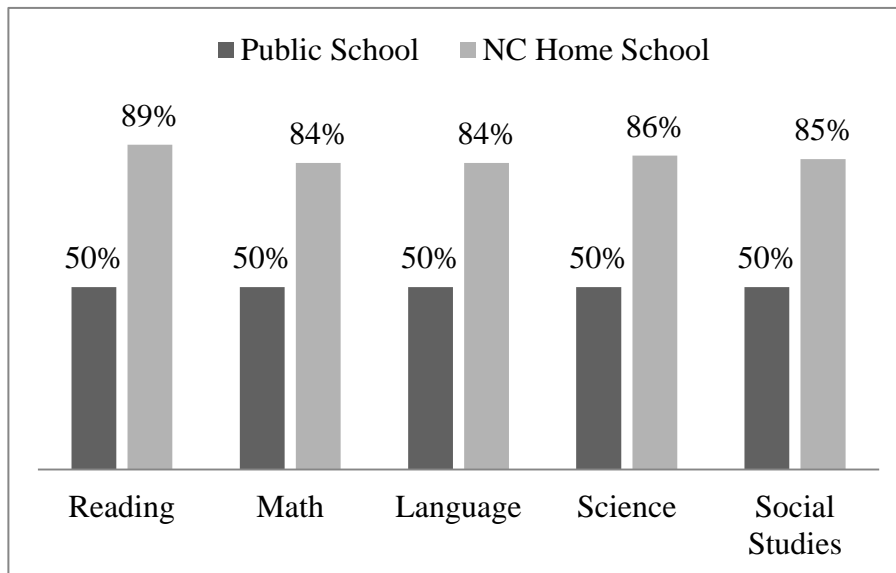


Figure 2.1 Percentile Mean Student Achievement Scores: North Carolina Home Schools and National Public Schools (Ray, 2011a)

However, when North Carolina home school students are compared with North Carolina public school students, the two groups show similar achievement scores.

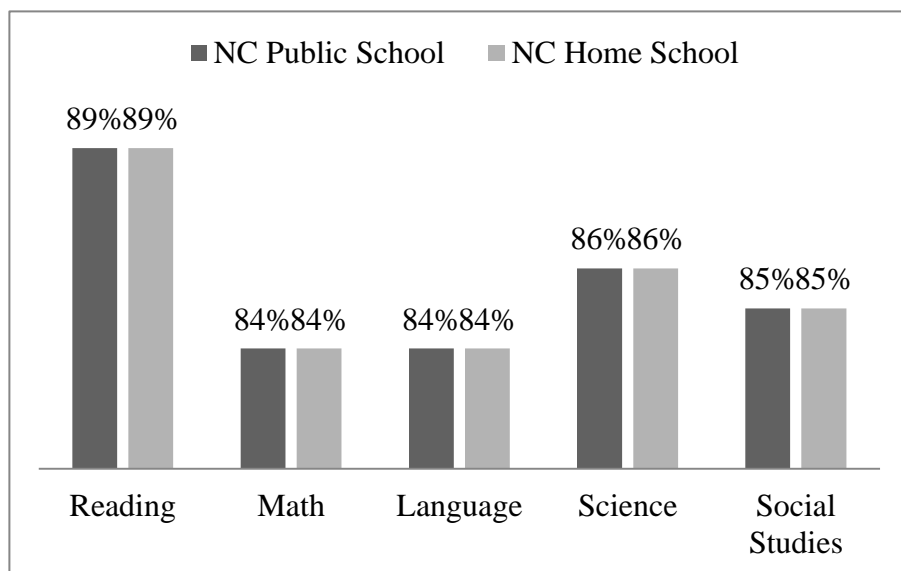


Figure 2.2 Percentile Mean Student Achievement Scores: North Carolina Home Schools and North Carolina Public Schools (Ray, 2011a)

Another study, conducted in 2009 by Home School Legal Defense Association published the following findings:

- Teacher certification of the home school parent does not make a significant difference in test scores. In fact, students without a teacher certified parent scored slightly higher than those who have a teacher certified parent.
- Government regulation of home schooling does not play a significant role in home school student achievement.
- Income of home school families has only a slight relationship to student achievement, where in public school this relationship is significant.

(Home School Legal Defense Association, 2009)

The results of Ray's study in North Carolina and Home School Legal Defense Association's nationwide study are consistent with previous studies of achievement of home school students (Rudner, 1999; Van Pelt, 2007). Rudner (1999) states, "This study simply shows that those parents choosing to make a commitment to home schooling are able to provide a very successful academic environment", but Ray (2011a) argues, "On the other hand, it may be that something

about the very nature and practice of home-based education in North Carolina and across the nation causes higher academic achievement than does institutional state-run schooling.”

## Chapter Three

### Contextual Analysis

#### 3.1 North Carolina General Information

North Carolina is located on the east coast of the United States with a land area of 48,617 square miles (US Department of Commerce, 2013). North Carolina has a wide range of elevations, from sea level on the east coast to 6,684 feet at Mount Mitchell, the highest point in the Eastern United States (N.C. Division of Parks & Recreation, 2013). The climate is considered a humid subtropical zone on the east coast and a subtropical highland climate in the western mountainous region. The population as of 2012 is estimated at 9,752,073 people, or 196 people per square mile (US Department of Commerce, 2013) ranking the state as the 10<sup>th</sup> most populous in the country. Population growth between 2010 and 2012 was 2.3%, higher than the 1.7% national average for the same period (US Department of Commerce, 2013). The population in 2011 was broken down by age as follows:

Table 3.1 2011 Population by Age

Persons under 5 years	6.50%
Persons under 18 years	23.70%
Persons age 18 – 64	56.60%
Persons 65 years and over	13.20%

Data Source: US Department of Commerce, 2013

North Carolina's population is diverse in comparison to the racial makeup of the United States as a whole; African Americans make up 22% of the state population, Hispanics make up 8.6%, Asians make up 2.3%, and American Indians make up 1.5% of the total population (US Department of Commerce, 2013). In 2007, 28.2% of the open firms in North Carolina were owned by women and 10.5% were owned by African Americans (US Department of Commerce, 2013).

High School completion rates are on par with the national average with 84.1% of people over the age of 25 obtaining a high school diploma or higher. The same is true of college

graduates; 26.5% of North Carolinians over the age of 25 hold a Bachelor's degree or higher (US Department of Commerce, 2013).

Historically, North Carolina's primary industries have been tobacco, textiles, and furniture making, however, throughout the last decades, the reliance on these industries has transitioned to a more diversified economy with major focus on engineering, biotechnology, and finance (Fleming & Everhart, 2009). On average, there are 2.5 persons per household and the median annual household income is \$46,291 USD, just slightly below the national average of \$52,762 USD. Between 2007 and 2010, 16.1% of North Carolina's population fell below the poverty level, a number slightly higher than the national average of 14.3% (US Department of Commerce, 2013).

### 3.2 Education in North Carolina

North Carolina educates 1.48 million students and employs 98,357 teachers in 115 districts, and 2,512 schools (LaFleur, Shaw, Coutts, & Larson, 2013). The student/teacher ratio is 15.2/1 and the per-pupil expenditure is \$8,414 USD (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2013). Compulsory school age begins at seven and goes through the age of 16, and while kindergarten is offered at all public schools, it is not a requirement (School Entry Age Legal Requirements, n.d.).

North Carolina leads the country in the number of National Board Certified teachers, with 19,193 teachers achieving the standard; this number accounts for 20% of the nation's total (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2013). In 2011, 1,244 state teachers achieved National Board Certification, which was the second largest state total in the country.

Each year, North Carolina issues the N.C. School Report Card that includes information about student performance, class size, school safety, and teacher quality. In 2011, North Carolina students were performing on or above regional and national averages, as shown in the following table.

Table 3.2 North Carolina Student Achievement Scores in 2011

	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science
North Carolina	245	286	221	263	148
National Average	240	283	220	264	151

Data Source: State Report Card, 2012

North Carolina has been recognized as a leader in early education; the state's pre-kindergarten program has been used as a model for other states and has been replicated across the country. The pre-kindergarten program focuses on approaches to learning, emotional and social development, health and physical development, language development and communication, and cognitive development (North Carolina Prekindergarten Program, n.d.). The state also provides Smart Start, a nationally recognized, award-winning early childhood initiative designed to ensure young children enter school healthy and ready to succeed with improved language skills and fewer behavioral issues (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2013).

Career & College Promise is a recent educational reform in North Carolina. This program prepares high school students for life after high school in the form of college and/or workplace preparedness. The program offers three pathways for students: (1) college transfer – the ability to earn tuition-free credits toward a four year college degree through North Carolina's community colleges, (2) technical careers – the ability to earn tuition-free course credits at a North Carolina community college toward an entry-level job credential, certificate, or diploma in a technical career, and (3) Cooperative Innovative High Schools – the ability to begin earning tuition-free college credits as early as grade nine by attending a Cooperative Innovative High School, also known as an Early College High School (Department of Public Instruction, n.d.). This program aims to aid every qualified student (students with at least a B average) in gaining access to an affordable college education.

The state's strongest educational asset is perhaps its higher education system. Nearly 120 institutions including 16 public universities, 36 private colleges and universities, and 58 community and technical colleges educate more than 300,000 students each year (North Carolina



Department of Commerce, 2013). North Carolina's community college system is recognized for pioneering customized workforce training programs and is widely regarded as having the nation's most comprehensive and advanced program of vocational and technical education (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2013).

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

#### 4.1 Research Strategy and Design

This case study seeks to examine three specific areas of home schooling: (1) home school policy, (2) home school policy implementation, and (3) societal views of home schooling as perceived by home school parents. As the study will investigate many different perspectives on home schooling and case studies allow for the employment of both quantitative and qualitative research (Bryman, 2012), a mixed methods approach is required in order to fully understand the topic at hand. The research design includes extensive documentary analysis and the distribution and analysis of questionnaires in order to provide a multifaceted and holistic representation of home schooling in North Carolina. The research strategy will utilize three aspects of the Bray and Thomas Framework for Comparative Education Analysis: geographical / locational groups (North Carolina), nonlocational demographic groups (home school families), and aspects of education and society (education policy and social acceptance) (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007). A study that engages all three dimensions of the Bray and Thomas Cube is explicitly comparative and recognizes the effect that each dimension has on the others (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007).

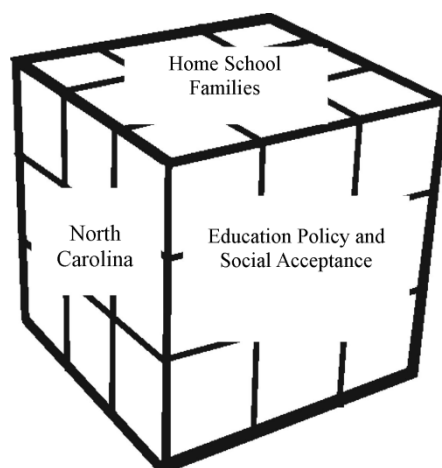


Figure 4.1: Comparative Aspects of the Study; Bray and Thomas Cube adapted from Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007

#### 4.1.1 Case Study

A case study entails the details and intensive analysis of a single case (Bryman, 2012) in which the research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in focus (Stake, 1995). The most common use of a case study tends to focus on a particular location, such as North Carolina, and the emphasis tends to be upon an intensive examination of the setting (Bryman, 2012). Case studies are distinguished from other research methods by their idiographic approach in which the researcher is interested in bringing focus to the unique features of the case (Bryman, 2012). It is important to note that the goal of a case study design is not to generalize the findings to represent a certain class of objects, for instance, this case study on home schooling in North Carolina is not designed to apply to home schooling in general, but rather serve as a sample of one specific case.

Case studies can be broken down into five categories: the critical case, the extreme or unique case, the representative or typical case, the revelatory case, and the longitudinal case (Yin, 2009). This study will serve as an extreme or unique case because North Carolina's home school environment was selected due to its progressive approach to home based education and its liberal methods of managing the home school sector.

#### 4.1.2 Documentary Analysis

Secondary documentary analysis is the analysis of data by researchers who were not involved in the collection of the data and may entail the analysis of quantitative or qualitative data. (Bryman, 2012) This method is used to analyze contextual information on home school policy in North Carolina as well as the implementation of those policies. Policy changes regarding requirements and legal status are analyzed to learn how the changes affected home school parents, students, and the public school sector. Finally, documentary analysis is used to explain what home schooling looks like in North Carolina today.

##### 4.1.2.1 State Documents vs. National/International Documents

The use of state documents produced within North Carolina are examined as well as national/international documents that focus on home based education issues in other geographical areas. The reason for this classification and the use of state and national/international documents is to demonstrate a balanced perspective of home based

education. State documents will be analyzed to gain specific knowledge on policy and its implementation in North Carolina; these documents are the backbone of the study. However, it is also essential to utilize national/international documents in order to gain perspective on home schooling in general, not only within North Carolina or the United States, but internationally as well.

#### 4.1.3 Questionnaires

Self-completion questionnaires, a set of organized questions that respondents complete themselves, were chosen for this study in order to maximize the number of respondents, for the ability to administer quickly and conveniently, and to remove the bias of interviewer variability (Bryman, 2012). Maintaining an absence of direct contact between the researcher and the respondents provides for a detached scientific perspective, an objective view, and research that is value-free (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007). Standardized questionnaires and random sampling were utilized to further reduce human bias (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007).

##### 4.1.3.1 Home School Parent Questionnaire

Questionnaires distributed to and collected from home school parents were utilized to gain perspective about society's attitude toward home schooling as perceived by home school parents. These questionnaires aimed to discover primary reasons for choosing home based education instead of public/private school educational options. Other questions pertained to home school policies and the support home school parents receive from the public school sector, if any. This information was collected by questionnaire due to the large number of home school parents in North Carolina and the researcher's desire to include as many of the parents as possible. Distributing a questionnaire through home school support groups proved to be the most efficient means of collecting this particular data. The questionnaire is included as Appendix A.

##### 4.1.3.2 Home School Director Questionnaire

In North Carolina the public government employs professionals to coordinate with the home school sector. Questionnaires were distributed to these leaders in order to retain knowledge regarding the reality of policy implementation. Questionnaires were selected as the primary means of data collection due to the time constraints of the home school directors. Administering

questionnaires allowed the respondents ample time to provide thorough and complete responses. The leaders were asked their opinion of the current home school policies and whether they felt that North Carolina encouraged or discouraged home schooling through the policies and their implementation. Other questions pertained to the support given to home schools from the public sector. The questionnaire is included as Appendix B.

#### 4.1.3.3 Questionnaire Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the administration of self-completion questionnaires in order to gain feedback on the format and content of the home school parent questionnaire. The pilot study was conducted using ten home school parents in the United States, outside of North Carolina, who were selected based on their location and comparability to the members of the study sample, previous awareness of the study, and their willingness to participate. The aim of the pilot study was to ensure that the research instrument as a whole functioned properly. Specifically, the pilot aimed to discover issues in the clarity of questions, the availability of probable responses in multiple choice questions, and adequate space for response in open-ended questions. The results of the pilot study were largely focused on the formatting of questions, availability of probable responses, and the ability/inability to answer appropriately through the Survey Monkey tool. Once the structure was improved, the questionnaire was released to the broader home school community in North Carolina.

#### 4.1.4 Sampling Design

The selection of participants was based largely on the availability of home schools that were willing to participate. Participation of home school parents was first based on their geographical location, a requirement being that they reside and conduct their home school in North Carolina. Second, participants who were connected with a local home school support group or other home school related organization were approached and offered the opportunity to participate. The researcher contacted all of the home school support groups that were registered with state home school boards. In addition, home school parents who the researcher knows personally and who were recommended to the researcher by home school administrators were also included in the sample group. Potential participants were contacted by email, given an overview of the study, and offered the opportunity to request additional information regarding their participation.

The selection of participants for the home school director questionnaire was straight forward because there are so few people in these positions. In North Carolina, there are only seven people working full time or part time who are responsible for the coordination of home schools.

Document selection regarding home school policy and implementation was based on availability of information within the scope of this study. Documents produced by government sources were prioritized, including documents published by state and national governments. Legal documents were the primary source of information regarding policy specifics. Journal articles and studies were selected based on the relevance to the topic of home based education, specifically policy and social acceptance, and their date of publication (2000 and later).

## 4.2 Data Processing

### 4.2.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Questionnaires were administered electronically via Survey Monkey, a web based survey service, reducing the amount of paperwork required to compile results in an understandable format. In addition to utilizing the built in analysis tool offered by Survey Monkey, the results of the questionnaires were exported into Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS for analysis. Univariate analysis, the analysis of one variable at a time (Bryman, 2012), was utilized in the form of frequency tables and diagrams. Bivariate analysis, the analysis of two variables at a time in order to uncover whether or not the two variables are related (Bryman, 2012), was utilized in order to discover relationships within the parent questionnaire data.

### 4.2.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis is most often defined as a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Berelson, 1952) or any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages (Holsti, 1969). Content analysis is firmly rooted in the quantitative research strategy in that the aim is to produce quantitative data from raw material (Bryman, 2012). In this study, content analysis was utilized in order to quantify home school parent questionnaire responses. Initially, subjects and themes were noted in order to categorize areas of

interest. Once themes were identified, the frequency of the use of certain words was noted in order to identify trends and common topics of interest for home school parents, especially in the area of home school policy reform.

### 4.3 Ethical Considerations

When a study includes human respondents, there are ethical issues to be addressed. The researcher recognizes that many home school parents may not wish to have their identity revealed with their responses and took action to ensure anonymity. Therefore, the home school parent questionnaire was distributed electronically and the results were revealed to the researcher without any personal information. The home school director questionnaire did not promise anonymity, as there were only seven potential respondents; therefore, the respondents were informed of this and agreed to complete the questionnaire openly, even though they may be identifiable in the findings. Their words were not taken out of context nor were the integrity of those words disregarded. Each participant was informed of the purpose of the study and how it will be used and published. Participants were also informed that they were able to withdraw their participation at any time throughout the study. These concerns were addressed in an introduction letter preceding the questionnaire. Each participant was asked to confirm their receipt and acceptance of these terms and conditions in addition to an opportunity to withdraw from the study if they did not accept the terms and conditions.

## Chapter 5

### Documentary Analysis

This chapter includes an overview of the results from a documentary analysis of home schooling in North Carolina. Secondary documentary analysis is the analysis of data by researchers who were not involved in the collection of the data and may entail the analysis of quantitative or qualitative data (Bryman, 2012). This method is used to analyze contextual information on home school policy in North Carolina as well as the implementation of those policies. Policy changes regarding requirements and legal status are analyzed to learn how the changes affected home school parents, students, and the public school sector. Finally, documentary analysis is used to explain what home schooling looks like in North Carolina today.

In order to fully understand the significance of this home based educational system, it is important to look at it first, from a historical perspective. This perspective demonstrates the uniqueness of the North Carolina home school environment. Next, the partnership between the home school sector and the public school sector will be discussed followed by an explanation of accountability practices within the home school sector.

#### 5.1. Historical Perspective

Since at least 1919 the State of North Carolina has enforced a compulsory attendance law as part of its General Statutes. The age range has varied over the years, but since 1946 the law has required all children who are seven but not yet sixteen to attend school (School Entry Age Legal Requirements, n.d.). Although education in North Carolina began in the home, the establishment of the public school system resulted in home schooling's near extinction until around 1980. With the passage of legislation in 1979 that deregulated conventional non-public schools, the stage was set for a major court case that, six years later, would officially recognize home schools as non-public schools.

##### 5.1.1 The Delconte Case

Due to the fact that legislation in 1979 did not define the word 'school', several court cases relating to home education followed; the defining one was the Delconte case (Helder, n.d.).



Larry Delconte, his wife, and two children moved from the State of New York to North Carolina in 1981. Delconte held a Bachelor of Science degree and taught his children at home legally while living in New York. Once his family moved to North Carolina he informed the Division of Non-Public Education of his intent to continue home schooling his two children. The State notified him that they could not acknowledge his school because a home school did not qualify as a non-public school. Delconte continued to home school his children and was prosecuted for violating North Carolina's compulsory attendance law. Although the charges against him were dropped, Delconte responded by filing a lawsuit against the State. In 1983, the State ruled in favor of Delconte, but the decision was sent to the Court of Appeals which then reversed the ruling. The case then went to the North Carolina Supreme Court which reversed the Court of Appeals decision and issued the following:

*"...we find nothing in the evolution of our compulsory school attendance laws to support a conclusion that the word 'school' when used by the legislature in the statutes bearing on compulsory attendance, evidences a legislative purpose to refer to a particular kind of instructional setting. The legislature has historically insisted only that the instructional setting, whatever it may be, meet certain standards which can be objectively determined and which require no subjective or philosophical analysis of what is or is not a 'school.'"*  
(Larry Delconte v. State of North Carolina, 1985, p.15)

*"...It would be anomalous to hold that these recent statutes were designed to prohibit home instruction when the legislature obviously intended them to make it easier, not harder, for children to be educated in non-public school settings."*  
(Larry Delconte v. State of North Carolina, 1985, p.15)

This ruling opened the door for the home school movement in North Carolina.

### 5.1.2 Department of Public Instruction Legislative Efforts

After the Delconte decision, the Department of Public Instruction began to address the issue of home schooling legislatively. In 1987, House Bill 837 and Senate Bill 779 were introduced in order to define the requirements to be placed on home schools (North Carolina House Bill 837, 1988; North Carolina Senate Bill 779, 1987). These bills were revised and Senate Bill 708 was proposed in their place (North Carolina Senate Bill 708, 1987). In 1988, North Carolinians for

Home Education, a privately funded home education advocacy group, submitted yet another rewritten version of the bill. The House and Senate amended this bill and eventually approved it. The result was legislation making home schooling legal in North Carolina with a set of very loose requirements that was put into effect in 1988 (North Carolina House Bill 837, 1988). A child in North Carolina now had three options: local public school, conventional non-public school, and home school. The final bill included the following requirements:

- Notify the Department of Administration, Division of Non-Public Education of intent to operate a school and include the school name and the name of the chief administrator.
- Certify that the persons providing the academic instruction hold at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Maintain attendance records on each student.
- Maintain immunization records on each student.
- Operate on a regular schedule, excluding reasonable holidays and vacations, during at least nine calendar months of the year.
- Administer a nationally standardized test, or other equivalent measurement, that measures achievement in the areas of English grammar, reading, spelling, and math, to every student each year, and maintain the results on file for one year, subject to inspection by a duly authorized representative of the State.
- Notify the Department of Administration, Division of Non-Public Education when closing the home school.

(Complying with NC Homeschool Law, n.d.)

### 5.1.3 Home Schools Today

In the first year in which home schools were officially legal (1985), there were 381 home schools enrolling 809 students (North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education, 2012b). The enrollment numbers have increased every year. As of the 2011-2012 academic school year, there were 47,977 home schools in North Carolina enrolling 79,693 students (North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education, 2012b).

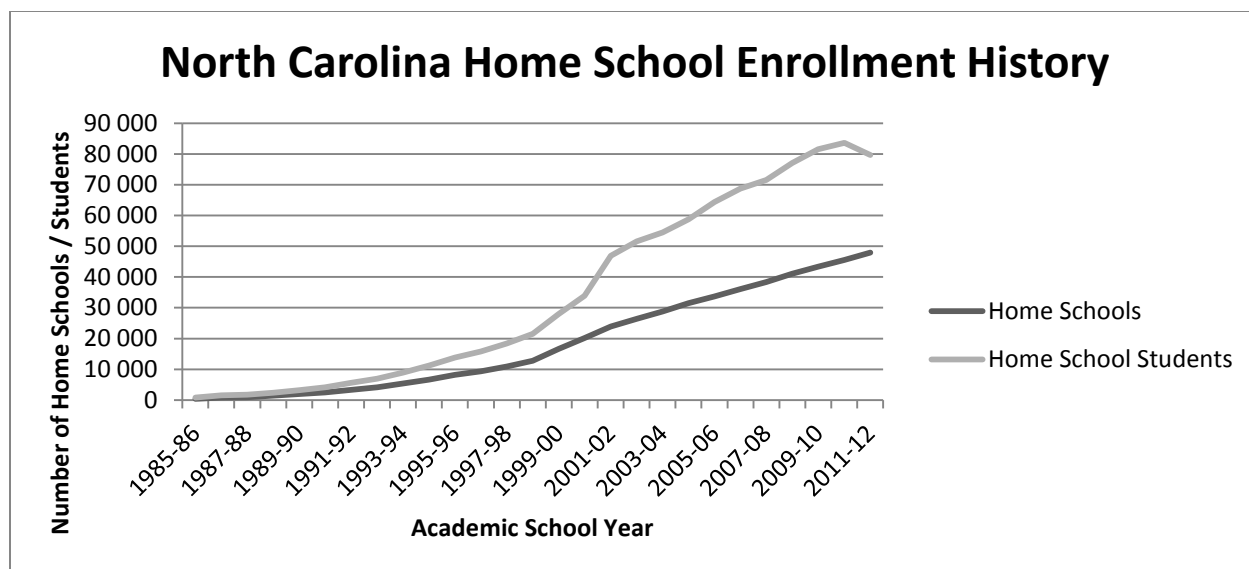


Figure 5.1: North Carolina Home School Enrollment History; Statistics from North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education

## 5.2 Partnership with Public School Sector

North Carolina does not provide many opportunities for partnership between home schools and the public school sector. Interactions are mainly based on regulations and compliance. The State expects home schools to organize themselves and to make use of resources from private companies (for instructional materials), online learning providers, and non-profit home school support organizations.

North Carolina community colleges allow high school students who are at least 16 years of age to enroll in courses at no cost (Department of Public Instruction, n.d.). Although it is not a partnership specifically meant to impact home schools, it is a public offering they may participate in (Mason, 2013).

### 5.2.1 Funding / Textbooks and other Learning Materials

North Carolina families engaged in home schooling are not dependent on public, tax-funded resources for their children's education. In fact, the expenses associated with home schooling in the United States represent over \$16 billion that American taxpayers do not have to spend since these children are not in public schools (Ray, 2011b). North Carolina does not provide any funding or tax credits for non-public schools. Neither state nor local government provides

textbooks or learning materials to home schools, nor is there a partnership with public schools regarding the sharing of materials (North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education, 2012a). The non-public school statutes are silent on the issue of curriculum and textbooks and since the non-public school community (and the home school community) wish to have freedom of choice in these matters, the State does not directly provide materials or information. If a home school were to inquire about such materials, they would likely be directed to a home school association or support group. Additionally, required standardized assessments are not provided to home schools by the State or local public schools; North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education simply provides a list of vendors to the home school sector from whom they may purchase assessments (North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education, 2012a).

### 5.2.2 Diploma and Credit Recognition

Each home school is responsible for administering their own high school diploma; the State of North Carolina does not administer or endorse home school high school diplomas (Frequently Asked Home School Questions Student Diplomas & Graduation, n.d.). Home schools are responsible for maintaining student academic records after graduation and for issuing transcripts as needed (Frequently Asked Home School Questions Student Diplomas & Graduation, n.d.). To what extent home school issued high school diplomas are recognized by colleges, the United States military, and the business community is determined individually by each of those entities (Helder, n.d.). Many parents in North Carolina check with colleges and military recruiting offices to determine if their diploma will be recognized and if it will not be, they either enroll their child in a home school distance learning program who will administer the diploma, or the student will take an assessment to earn a GED (General Educational Development/Diploma) that is, in many cases, recognized as an equivalent to a high school diploma (Frequently Asked Home School Questions Student Diplomas & Graduation, n.d.).

If a student leaves the home school environment and transfers into a public or private school, the decision of whether or not to accept the credits earned in home school, and which ones to accept, is made by the school principal (Frequently Asked Home School Questions Public Schools of North Carolina, n.d.). The principal is also responsible for determining the student's grade placement based on the recognized credits and standardized test results (Frequently Asked Home School Questions Assigning Student Grade Levels, n.d.).

### 5.2.3 Extra-curricular Activities

The only program offered by the State that home school students are permitted to participate in is Driver Education. Local public schools are not required to provide any other government service to home school students; however, if a local school chooses to allow home schools students to participate in non-academic courses or non inter-school competition type activities, they may do so (North Carolina General Statute 115C). However, public schools are not permitted to enroll home school students in academic courses or allow them to participate on athletic teams (North Carolina General Statute 115C). In many cases, home school students participate in athletic activities and extra-curricular academic activities within a local or state-wide home school association or support group. These groups are very active in North Carolina and offer a wide range of activities.

## 5.3 Accountability

In 1985, the North Carolina General Statutes 115C-549 and 115C-557 introduced the requirement that home school records “shall be made available...at the principal office of such school, at all reasonable times, for annual inspection by a duly authorized representative of the State of North Carolina” (North Carolina General Statute 115C). These statutes also include the requirement to administer a nationally standardized test or its equivalent to all students enrolled on an annual basis (States At A Glance, n.d.). The assessment must measure achievement in English grammar, reading, spelling, and mathematics. The results of the assessment are to be made available for inspection for at least one year after the assessment takes place (North Carolina General Statute 115C).

When a representative visits a home school they are required to give five days prior notice and the meeting is restricted to 25 minutes (North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education, 2012a). The State also organizes Record Review Meetings in which every home school within a one hour drive from the meeting location is given an invitation to attend (North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education, 2012a). These meetings are to monitor record keeping compliance, but they do not make an effort to assess quality of instruction and learning.

## Chapter Six

### Questionnaire Findings

#### 6.1 Parent Questionnaire

Electronic questionnaires completed by home school parents were utilized to gain perspective about society's attitude toward home schooling as perceived by home school parents. In addition, these questionnaires aimed to discover primary reasons for choosing home based education instead of public/private school education options. Other questions pertained to home school policies and the support home school parents receive from the public school sector. The questionnaire is included as Appendix A.

##### 6.1.1 Demographic Findings

The questionnaires were distributed through home school support groups with members in every region of North Carolina; 125 questionnaires were returned and are all included in the analysis contained in this chapter. Within this study, the majority of children in home school are between age 5 and 12, indicating that primary school aged children represent the vast majority of home school students. High school students were poorly represented in the sample.

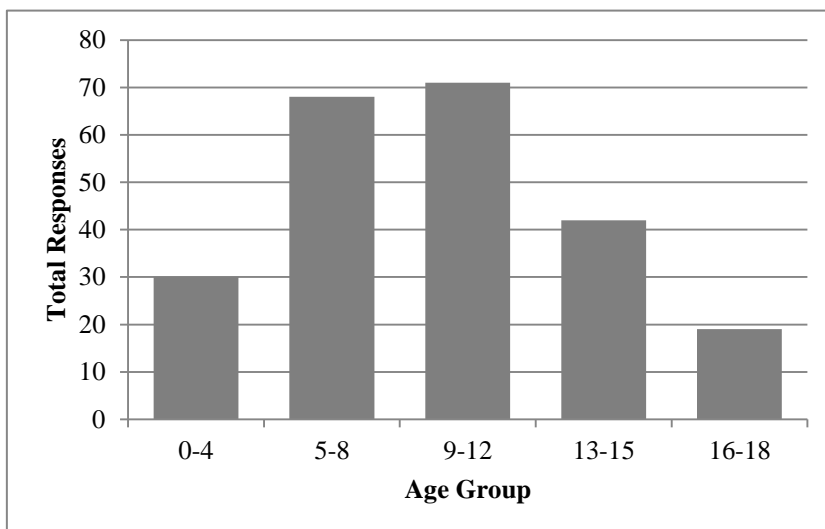


Figure 6.1 Home school student age distribution

Amongst home school parents, educational attainment is very high, with 73.6% of respondents indicating that they hold a four year college degree or higher.

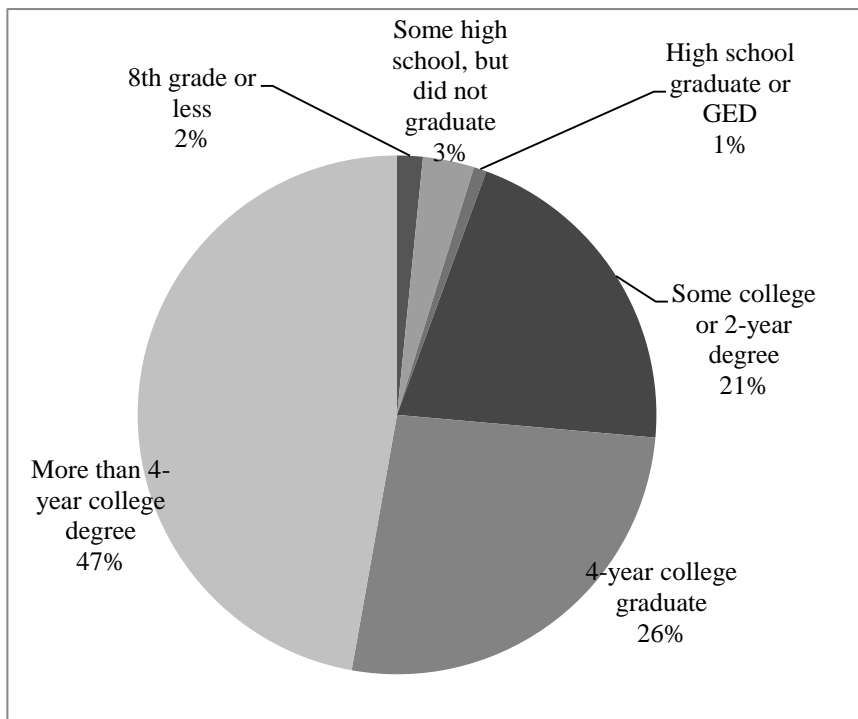


Figure 6.2 Educational attainment of home school parents

### 6.1.2 Why do parents in North Carolina choose to home school?

The most common reason cited for home schooling amongst survey participants is quality followed by religious consideration. This pattern holds regardless of the relationship of the primary instructor (mother, father, sibling, or grandparent) to the student or the educational attainment of the home school parent. The following spider web chart demonstrates quality as a significant outlier.

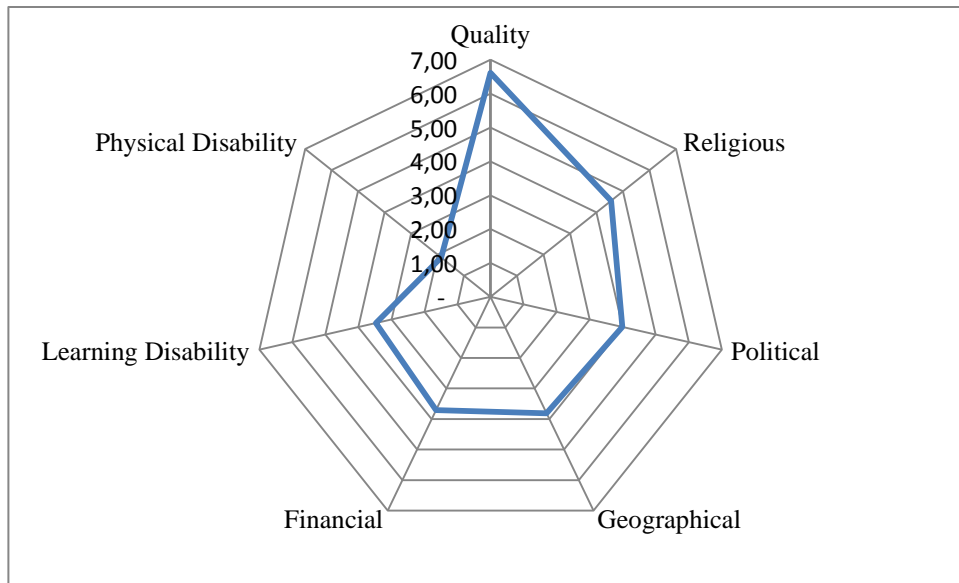


Figure 6.3 Why parents choose to home school

Table 6.3 Why parents choose to home school

Reasons ranked in order of importance. 7 is most important and 1 is least important.								
Answer Options	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Rating Average
Quality	88	22	11	1	0	0	0	6.61
Religious	23	37	12	11	11	7	21	4.55
Political	0	15	32	34	24	12	5	3.99
Geographical	1	20	23	30	20	15	13	3.81
Financial	0	13	22	27	41	14	5	3.70
Learning Disability	9	13	14	15	16	49	6	3.47
Physical Disability	1	2	8	4	10	25	72	1.86

Answer Options	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Rating Average
Quality	72.1%	18.0%	9.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.61
Religious	18.9%	30.3%	9.8%	9.0%	9.0%	5.7%	17.2%	4.55
Political	0.0%	12.3%	26.2%	27.9%	19.7%	9.8%	4.1%	3.99
Geographical	0.8%	16.4%	18.9%	24.6%	16.4%	12.3%	10.7%	3.81
Financial	0.0%	10.7%	18.0%	22.1%	33.6%	11.5%	4.1%	3.70
Learning Disability	7.4%	10.7%	11.5%	12.3%	13.1%	40.2%	4.9%	3.47
Physical Disability	0.8%	1.6%	6.6%	3.3%	8.2%	20.5%	59.0%	1.86

Nearly half (45.6%) of respondents reported working in the education sector before pursuing home schooling. While respondents with previous experience in the education sector indicated quality as a consideration for home schooling they were less likely to do so than



respondents who had no experience in the education sector. Specifically, 37.3% of respondents with educational experience indicated quality as a consideration compared with 54.3% of respondents with no educational experience.

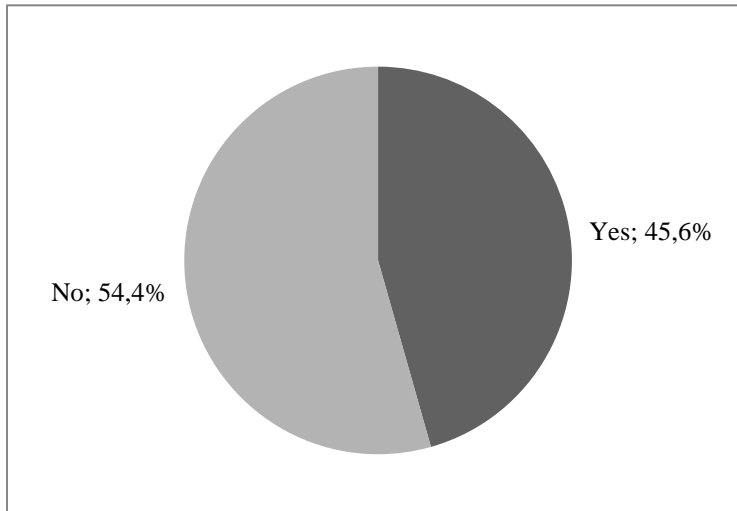


Figure 6.4 Parents with previous experience in the education field

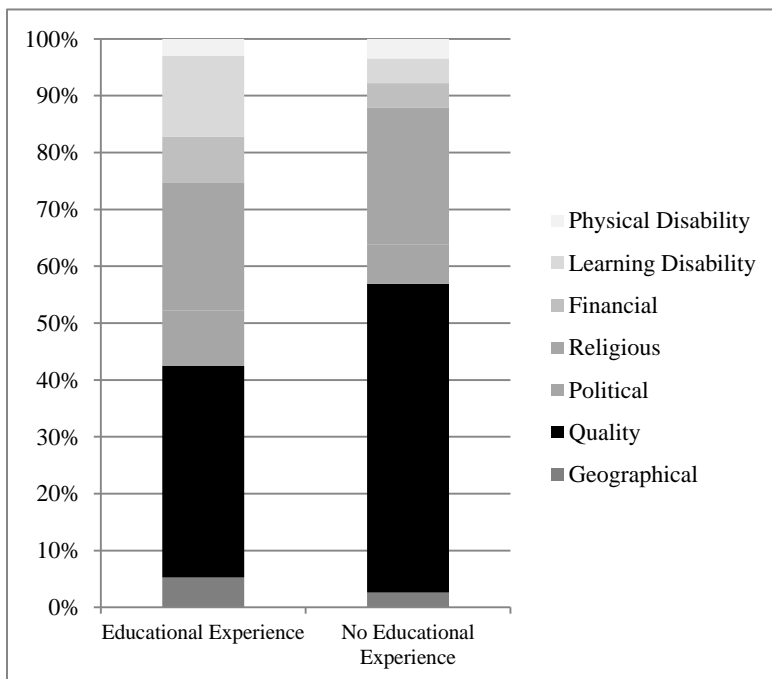


Figure 6.5 Frequency of quality as a factor in decision making compared to educational experience

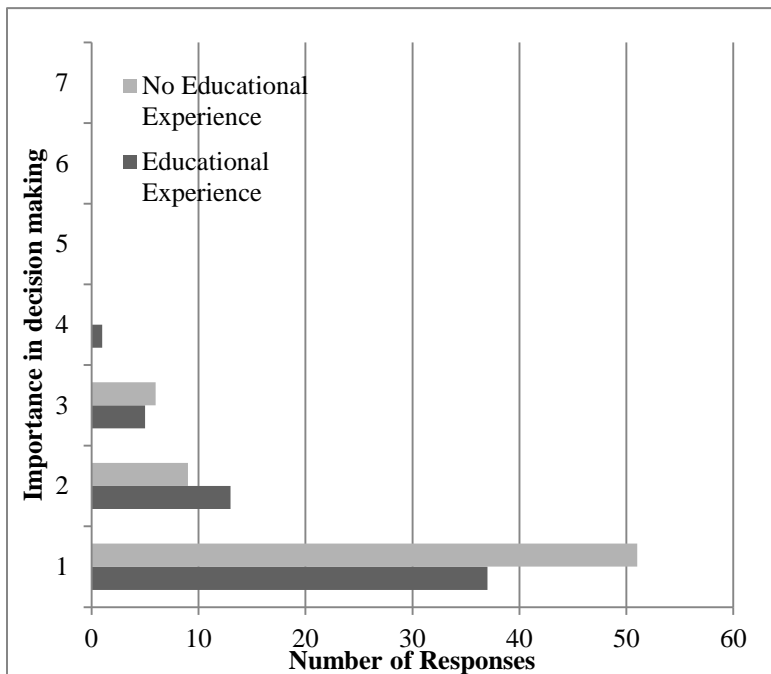


Figure 6.6 Ranking of quality as a factor in decision making compared to educational experience (1 is most important, 7 is least important)

This could indicate that home school parents with experience in the education sector have a greater knowledge of how the system operates and have the ability to measure the quality of their local school from a broader perspective than a parent who has not worked inside the education system. Their assessment of the quality of local schools is likely to be more informed and holistic. Another potential explanation of why parents with education experience were less likely to choose quality as the primary factor in their choice to home school is that they may better understand the limitations of a student only learning from one instructor (parent) throughout their educational career rather than many. When each teacher in a traditional educational environment specializes in only one subject, it can be assumed that the quality of instruction may be higher than if one instructor teaches multiple grade levels in multiple subjects.

However, a third explanation for parents with a background in education choosing quality as the primary reason for home schooling less frequently than parents without a background in education can be related to their child's learning style. Respondents with educational experience were more likely to indicate learning disabilities as their primary motivation for home schooling

than those without an educational background. In fact, 26.8% of respondents with previous experience in education report their primary reason for home schooling is a learning disability. This compares with 10.6% of respondents with no educational background. This could indicate that parents who have training in education are more likely to possess the ability to diagnose or notice signs of a learning disability and to accommodate the child's need accordingly. It is possible that these parents educate their child at home because they have the ability to do so, where parents who do not have training in education are more likely to rely on the public or private school system for these skills. In this study, 21 highly trained educators have left the system to focus on the needs of a specific child, thus potentially decreasing the quality of education in the public system, specifically for children with learning disabilities, due to a lack of qualified personnel.

A large number of parents who are currently home schooling intend to home school their child through high school graduation without plans of enrolling them in a public, private, or charter school.

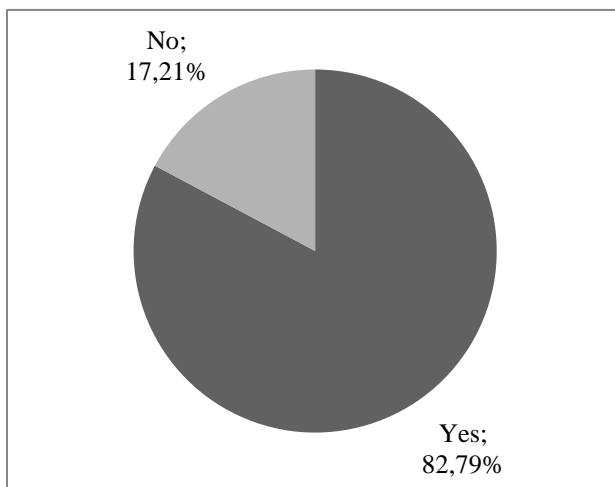


Figure 6.7 Number of parents who intend to home school through high school graduation

Of the 17.21% of parents who do not intend to home school their child through high school graduation, nearly half of them intend to enroll their child in public school. Most of these respondents plan to home school through grade eight and to enroll their child in public, private, or charter school in grade nine. These responses suggest questions for further research based on the reasons for enrolling their home schooled children in public school since the primary reason

for home schooling is quality. Based on an assumption that these home school parents do not believe public school to be of high quality (hence their reason for home schooling), further study of why nearly 50% of these parents plan to enroll their children in public school is of interest.

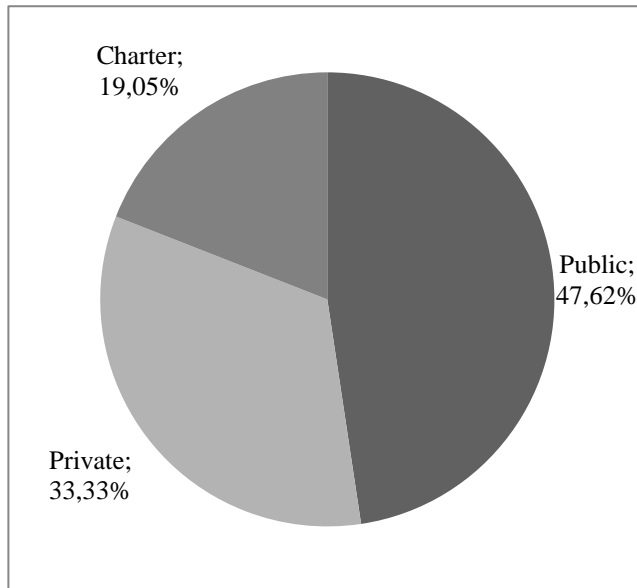


Figure 6.8 Intended school type enrollment after home school

### 6.1.3 Do home school parents believe that home schooling is socially acceptable in their community?

Nearly all of the respondents (93.45%) feel that home schooling is either very accepted or somewhat accepted in their community. A total of 36.07% of respondents feel that home schooling is very accepted and more than half (57.38%) of respondents feel that home schooling is somewhat accepted.

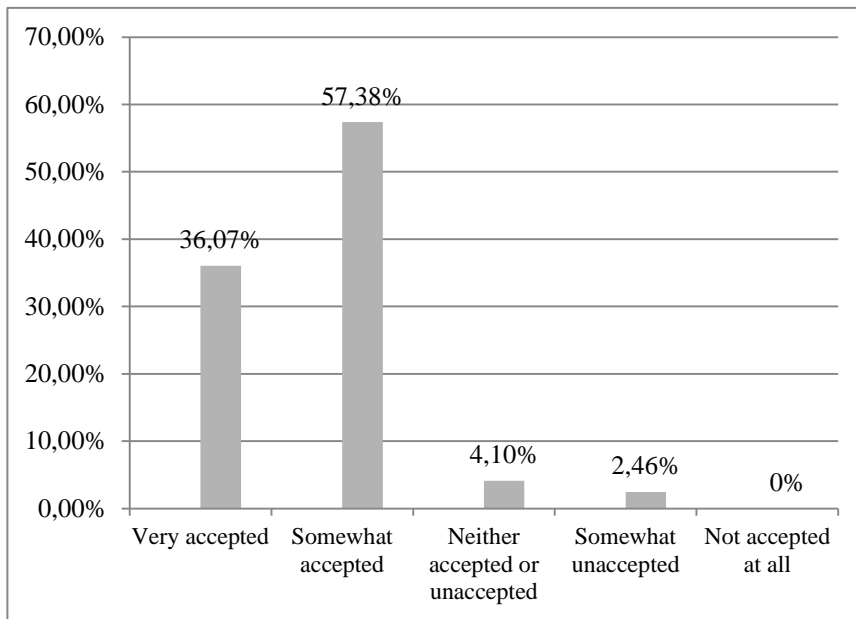


Figure 6.9 Community acceptance as perceived by home school parents

Respondents who have previous experience in the educational sector were less likely to report that home schooling is socially accepted in their community than respondents with no experience in the educational sector. Of parents with a background in education, only 30.36% chose that home schooling is “very accepted” in their community, where 40.91% of parents without a background in education gave the same response.

#### 6.1.4 Do home school parents believe that North Carolina encourages and/or discourages home schooling through current policy?

A total of 68% of respondents indicate that North Carolina encourages home schooling through legislation. However, content analysis reveals that most respondents feel that the State is overall neutral in their support of home schooling or that the State supports home schooling through their lack of regulation and oversight.

*North Carolina doesn't get in the way, but the state provides absolutely no support.*

*The requirements are minimal and much of the documenting is voluntary.*

*They don't offer a proverbial 'carrot' to home school, but they don't have a large 'stick' either. It's a relatively home school friendly state.*

*North Carolina encourages home schooling by staying out of it.*

*I think they ignore us.*

*It's pretty open to home schooling and doesn't regulate it much, but I wouldn't say that the law provides for the promotion of home schools.*

Similarly, 91% of respondents feel that North Carolina does not discourage home schooling through legislation. Again, content analysis reports that the state does this through an overall lack of regulation in general.

*While the requirements are minimal, any government intervention is really unnecessary.*

*North Carolina does not discourage homeschooling yet, but I think as more parents decide to home school, we will see more state interference.*

*It is much less restrictive in terms of what is required in many states in the U.S.*

*The North Carolina home school law is fairly benign and low regulation.*

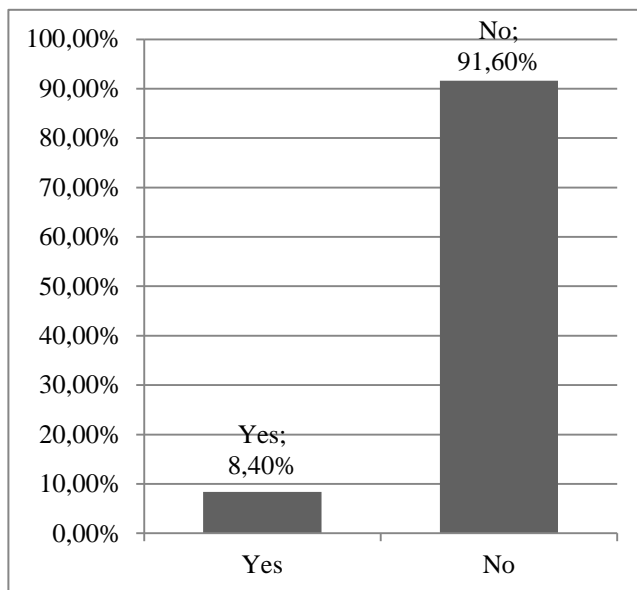


Figure 6.10 Do parents feel North Carolina discourages home schooling through legislation?

#### 6.1.4.1 Do home school parents believe that North Carolina provides adequate support to home schools?

A significant majority (71.3%) of all respondents reported that the existing home school policies provide the support they need as a home school parent. There is almost no tangible support from the state regarding home schooling which, according to overall questionnaire responses, seems to be well aligned with the home schooling community's desires and/or needs.

*The government policies give families a lot of independence to handle education as they see fit. Support comes from family-created support networks such as home school associations. As is typical in the US, there is no government support or prohibition to these voluntary associations.*

*I don't need the state's support to home school successfully. I simply need the state to not interfere to the point that I cannot accomplish my goals.*

*The laws in place do not support home school parents beyond giving us all the freedom we want to educate our children in the ways we feel are best.*

*My opinion is that the best support the government can give is to stay away.*

*I don't look for support from the government. I look for support from other home schools. As long as the government doesn't get in the way, I'm satisfied.*

*I don't need any policies for support. My support comes from other home schools and makers of educational products, not the government.*

*They are very lax on guidelines regarding home school. Children must show 'improvement' from the previous year, but that's all. I prefer the 'hands-off' approach when it comes to state guidelines, as we are a very proactive home schooling family.*

*They give us much more freedom to decide how to educate our son than many other states. We can educate our son at his own pace, which sometimes outstrips other children his age and is sometimes 'behind' by narrow-minded standards of what children should or should not be learning at a given age. We are content.*

*Lots of freedom. Much appreciated!*

*As required by law, we pay taxes that go to the school system but get very little direct benefit from that. I would not want government assistance though as that would allow the government to have some oversight in our home school.*

#### 6.1.4.2 Do home school parents believe they have access to public resources?

More than 80% of respondents said they have no access to public resources. The longer a parent has been home schooling, the less likely they were to feel they had access to resources from the public school sector. For example, 26.1% of parents who have been home schooling for two years or less believed they did have access to public resources, where only 15.8% of parents who have been home schooling for ten years or more felt the same way.

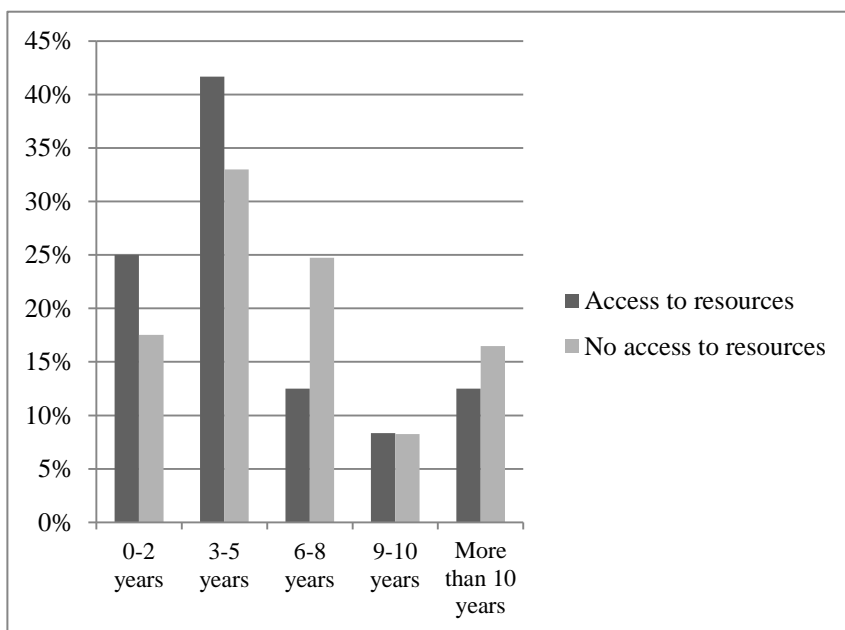


Figure 6.11 Perceived access to resources from the public school sector compared with number of years of home school experience

Deeper analysis reveals that few home school parents have attempted to access resources and furthermore, there is very little indication that respondents are seeking further resources. The resources cited include dual enrollment for high school students at community college (a resource that is also available to public/private school students) and the ability to participate in a state mandated driver's education course at a public school. Neither of these resources are deemed specifically for home school students, but rather, are public services that are offered to all students in North Carolina regardless of the type of school they are enrolled in.



#### 6.1.4.3 What policy changes do home school families seek?

The majority of respondents reported little or no desire for additional policies or regulation to assist in curriculum or structure but did overwhelmingly seek policy reform that would provide tax support, financial relief, extra-curricular activities, and the opportunity to participate in public school courses.

*We wish there was an option to play sports and take classes at our local public school.*

*Allowing some part-time participation in public school is a needed additional step. Students currently cannot take part in any public school program, including band or sports, if they are not enrolled full-time. Any homeschoolers in middle school or high school would like the option of part-time attendance for certain courses (science, advanced math, foreign language) and for extra-curricular activities.*

*Homeschoolers are still required to pay taxes for public school, and aren't permitted any tax breaks associated with the cost incurred for running a home school.*

*It would be helpful if public schools were more open to allowing students to take public school courses and participate in other activities.*

*I feel North Carolina could go a long way toward encouraging home schooling through legislation, i.e., tax credit for home school families, allowing home school students to participate in public sports teams, etc.*

*The fact that families cannot deduct home school educational expenses from their taxes is pretty discouraging, as well as the fact that home school kids cannot participate in public school sports in the district in which they live and pay property taxes.*

*There is a new law that allows home schooled high school students to take college level courses concurrently free of tuition, the same as public high school students, however, the public school students have all textbooks and equipment supplied whereas the home school students must pay out-of-pocket.*

*North Carolina does not allow home school families access to public school clubs, athletics, or enrichment activities, despite the fact that we share in the cost of every cent that goes into maintaining and running the public school system.*

### 6.1.5 Home School Support Organizations

Nearly all of respondents supplement their home schooling efforts outside of their home.

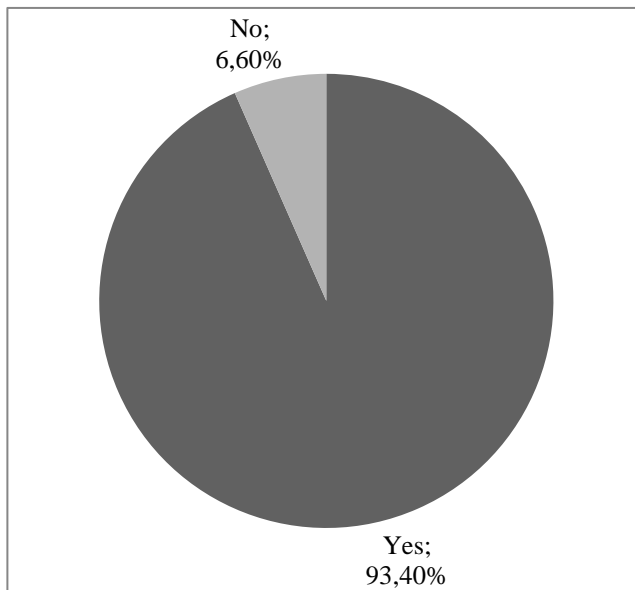


Figure 6.12 Number of parents who supplement home schooling efforts outside of the home

A total of 76% of respondents are members of an online or web-based home school organization and 93.4% report being members of a local home school organization or group. Feedback received on questions regarding governmental support or governmental resources indicate that many home school families rely heavily on these groups and networks for support. The policy gaps identified in questions regarding governmental or policy support are being filled by online and local support groups. The activities offered by support groups that are most cited by parents include social activities for students, extra-curricular activities such as sports, music, and language, social activities for parents, and courses in a classroom setting.

Table 6.2 Activities organized by home school support groups

Answer Choices	Responses
Courses that provide an opportunity for learning in a classroom setting	75.68%
Tutoring services (one-on-one)	14.41%
Tutoring services (group)	25.23%
Social activities for students	100%
Social activities for parents	84.68%
Fundraising activities	14.41%
Extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, language, crafts, etc.	85.59%

The home school parents with the least experience, those who have been home schooling for two years or less, are more likely to use web based resources than home school parents in any other category (86.7% for 0-2 years experience vs. 66.7% for 3-5 years experience). Based on questionnaire responses, home school support groups tend to focus their resources on providing information about external resources, the home school framework, governmental regulations and policy, and home schooling advocacy. Overall, they provide very little operational support such as curriculum development, textbook selection, pedagogical training, or teaching materials. Further, financial assistance is virtually non-existent.

Table 6.3 Resources provided by home school support groups

Answer Choices	Responses
Curriculum development	33.33%
Textbook selection	26.13%
Information on government regulations and policy changes	64.86%
Home school advocacy information	65.77%
Training in pedagogy/teaching methods	17.12%
Information on available external resources that are available to home school parents and students	79.28%
Financial assistance	0.90%
Classroom supplies	7.21%
Teaching materials	16.22%

## 6.2 Director Questionnaire

In North Carolina the public government employs professionals to coordinate with the home school sector. A questionnaire was administered in order to gain knowledge regarding the reality of policy implementation. The participants were asked their opinion of the current home school policies and whether they felt that North Carolina encouraged or discouraged home schooling through those policies and their implementation. Other questions pertained to the support given to home schools from the public sector. The questionnaire is included as Appendix B.

### 6.2.1 General Information

There are currently 52,290 registered home schools in North Carolina and although it is not a requirement for home schools to share their enrollment, in the 2011-2012 academic year it is estimated that there were 79,693 home schooled students in the state. The state employs seven people on a full-time or part-time basis whose primary function involves the home school sector;

one of these individuals returned the questionnaire. The state performs audits of home schools through Record Review Meetings that are held in each county on a rotation cycle basis.

### 6.2.2 Home School Policy

The respondent believes that North Carolina encourages home schooling through policy and that there are some efforts at partnerships between the public school sector and the home school sector, stating, *“There are some school districts that try to work with homeschoolers and others that do not.”* When asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the current home school policies in North Carolina, the respondent stated that the current policies *“allow homeschoolers flexibility to customize an educational plan for each individual child”* and that *“As the homeschoolers see it, the law is fine without any weaknesses.”* According to the respondent, there are no current home school policy reforms ongoing. No mention was made about desired reforms that home school parents voiced in their questionnaire responses such as tax reform, financial support, or the ability to participate in public school classrooms.

## Chapter 7

### A Comparable Home Based Education System

This chapter will provide a brief overview of a comparable home based education system. By including information regarding a system outside of North Carolina, this chapter offers an alternative perspective on home based education and allows the reader to gauge the North Carolina system in relation to others around the world.

The system that will be discussed is Alberta, Canada. Alberta was chosen due to its large number of home schools in relation to other provinces in Canada and because it embraces the home school sector in a starkly contrasting way when compared with North Carolina.

#### 7.1. Home Based Education in Alberta, Canada

##### 7.1.1 Historical Perspective

Home schooling in Canada has always been legal. Unlike North Carolina, there is no pivotal court case or educational reform that legalized home based education, as its recognition as a valid form of education has never been legally questioned. In 2003, however, the Home Education Regulation in Alberta began a series of reviews and updates to the existing policies. The Home Education Regulation was updated to clarify responsibilities of parents, associate school boards, and associate private schools, and to further the province's commitment to home education (School Choice Questions and Answers, 2007). The first review took more than three years and involved consultation with school authorities, education organizations, parents, home education organizations, and other interested Albertans (School Choice Questions and Answers, 2007). The main updates to the Home Education Regulation were as follows:

- Home education roles were clarified. Specifically, the role of the associate school board/private school's responsibility to offer support to parents and the role of the parent to take responsibility for their child's education plan/program were explained in detail.

- Flexibility in accountability was emphasized. Associate boards and associate private schools will independently evaluate the progress of home educated students in parent-designed programs and the evaluation process will be chosen by the parent and associate school.

(Province of Alberta, 2006)

The updated Home Education Regulation was put into effect in 2006 and although it was reviewed again in 2011, there were no significant changes made.

### 7.1.2 Partnership with Public School Sector

Partnership with the public school sector is at the center of home schooling in Alberta. Throughout the policy documents and the home school handbooks this partnership is discussed, explained, encouraged, and in some cases, required. Although home schools are given the ability to refuse Alberta's Home Education Plan and government funding, these resources are available for those who wish to use them.

When a parent forms a home school in Alberta, they are required to partner with an associate board or private school associate board (Alberta Education, 2010). This board will support the home school in their education plan, evaluation of the student's progress, validity of home school credits, and extra-curricular activities (Alberta Education, 2010). The associate board may also provide possibilities for the home school student to enter into a 'blended' program, mixing traditional education with home education. A parent is encouraged to interview several potential associate boards, including their local school board, before making a decision about which one is best suited for their child.

#### 7.1.2.1 Alberta Home Education Plan

Alberta offers home schools the option to follow the Alberta Home Education Plan, a packaged program that is developed by the province and delivered by the parent. A parent may choose not to follow this plan, but must follow a set of guidelines when establishing their individualized education plan. At the very least, the parent is required to submit their detailed education plan to the associate board or associate private school board for approval and is able to receive aid from a teacher employed by the associate board or associate private school in the development and implementation of their home education plan (Province of Alberta, 2006).

### 7.1.2.2 Funding / Textbooks and other Learning Materials

The Alberta government funds public education and home education. Home schools do not receive the same amount of funding as public schools since they are not subject to the same level of public accountability, however, the amount of funding they receive is based on a number of factors (Province of Alberta, 2006). The associate board or associate private school that supervises a home school receives funding for the home school and is required to give at least 50% of the total amount directly to the home school (Province of Alberta, 2006). A parent who accepts funding must use it only for costs related to the student's program of study and must provide receipts to the associate board or associate private school in order to show how the funding was used. If the parent purchases instructional materials, such as textbooks, that will only be used once, they must return the materials to the associate board within one year of the student's completed use of the materials.

### 7.1.2.3 Diploma and Credit Recognition

Alberta offers two options for high school diplomas for home schools. First, they are permitted to take the diploma examinations required for an Alberta High School Diploma. Second, they are offered the opportunity to pursue a High School Equivalency Diploma. Universities, colleges, and employers have different entrance requirements, but in general, a home school student with either an Alberta High School Diploma or a High School Equivalency Diploma will not encounter difficulty regarding diploma and/or credit recognition.

### 7.1.3 Accountability

In Alberta, accountability practices are not only placed on the home school, but also on the associate board or associate private school. As stated in the Home Education Regulation a parent providing a home education program to a student must:

- Conduct an evaluation of the progress of the student at regular intervals by maintaining dated samples of student work and a general record of the student's activities.
- Be available for a regular review of the student's achievement with the associate board or associate private school.



- Ensure that the student is available for evaluation by the associate board or associate private school.

(Province of Alberta, 2006)

The requirements placed on the associate board or associate private school that is supervising a home education plan are as follows:

- Facilitate learning by offering assistance and advice to parents providing home education programs.
- Ensure that a student at a level equivalent to grade three, six, and nine is given the opportunity to take the appropriate provincial assessments.
- Arrange for teachers employed by the associate board or associate private school to conduct at least two evaluations of the progress of the student each academic year.
- Make recommendations to the student's parent on any matter that may assist the student in attaining a higher level of achievement.

(Province of Alberta, 2006)

## 7.2 North Carolina and Alberta

Home based education is facilitated, regulated, and implemented in many different ways. As the Delconte Case in North Carolina demonstrates, the home school environment can be drastically different even within one country. The policies and procedures put into place in North Carolina and Alberta provide an opportunity to visualize two contrasting philosophies in regard to home based education. The most significant difference in North Carolina and Alberta is the legal categorization of home schools; in North Carolina a home school is a non-public school, but in Alberta a home school is a public school. North Carolina chooses to simply regulate home schooling rather than provide assistance and resources to the home school sector. North Carolina does not provide a sample curriculum and does not impose learning outcomes on home school students, leaving the parent to determine what educational path is best suited for their child. Alberta, on the other hand, provides funding, an education plan, a partner school board, and the option of a blended program where the home school student also attends courses at a traditional public school.

It is worth noting the large difference in the number of home schools in Canada and the United States. In fact, the State of North Carolina alone has more home school students than the entire country of Canada (Ray, 2011b; Van Pelt, 2007). Although this study does not address the reason for this difference in depth and does not examine home school enrollment relative to population size, it leaves some questions for further exploration. Is this difference in home school enrollment due to the fact that Alberta's home school program is so thoroughly supported and regulated that it is not significantly unlike public schools? Is it because Alberta encourages blended programs that eventually lead home school students into public school on a full time basis? Perhaps it is the freedom given to home schools in North Carolina that attracts so many families to this form of education? This freedom comes at the expense of funding, support, and instructional materials, but perhaps it is this type of deregulation that gives home school parents the true choice that they were looking for when exploring educational options for their children. Although it is not the aim of this study to determine which practices are most beneficial, it is worthwhile to investigate their opposing approaches to home based education.

Not only do the policies and implementation practices in these two systems differ, but the driving force behind the reforms are different. In North Carolina, social demand seems to be the driving force behind the reforms to date. The reforms are based upon public opinion and are adjusted as that opinion changes. In Alberta, reforms have been incremental, simply defining roles and adjusting accountability procedures but making no significant changes. In fact, the most recent educational reform in Alberta, Education Act 2012, implemented no changes to the home school sector (Education Act, 2012). Perhaps the reforms in Alberta are incremental because there is a lack of social demand for them. A question for further research in the comparison of North Carolina and Alberta home school systems may be: Has demand led to reform in the home school sector or alternatively, has reform created demand?

Educational reforms provide a glance into what the goals and aims of a particular society are as well as what the values are in that society. For example, it is clear from this brief comparison of North Carolina and Alberta's home education policies that, in general, North Carolinians value choice and freedom within their right to home school while Albertans value the assistance and support of the provincial ministry of education.

## Chapter 8

### Summary of Findings, Recommendations, and Concluding Remarks

#### 8.1 Summary of Findings

Although the findings in this case study of home schooling in North Carolina are complex, an overview may be summarized into six bullet points:

- Home school policy in North Carolina is not highly regulated. There are no significant partnerships between the public school sector and the home school sector.
- When compared with other home school environments, such as Alberta, North Carolina offers very little regulation to home schools in exchange for very little government support. Home school parents are given the ability to manage their child's education in the way they see fit without significant government intervention.
- Home school parents in North Carolina want very little government involvement in terms of policy and support; rather, they turn to their peers in the form of support groups for assistance when it is needed.
- There are three prevalent policy reform issues that home school families would like North Carolina to pursue: tax credits or other financial assistance for home school expenses, the ability to participate in select public school courses, and eligibility to participate in public school extra-curricular activities such as sports, band, and clubs.
- The majority of home school families made the decision to home school their children based on quality.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents state that home schooling is either very socially acceptable or somewhat socially acceptable in their community.

### 8.1.1 Research Question: What are the policies regarding home schooling in North Carolina, United States?

Home school policy in North Carolina is open with little barriers to entry. The requirements are not restrictive and give parents the flexibility to design an educational program with little interference from the government. The following is a list of policy requirements:

- Notify the Department of Administration, Division of Non-Public Education of intent to operate a school and include the school name and the name of the chief administrator.
- Certify that the persons providing the academic instruction hold at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Maintain attendance records on each student.
- Maintain immunization records on each student.
- Operate on a regular schedule, excluding reasonable holidays and vacations, during at least nine calendar months of the year.
- Administer a nationally standardized test, or other equivalent measurement, that measures achievement in the areas of English grammar, reading, spelling, and math, to every student each year, and maintain the results on file for one year, subject to inspection by a duly authorized representative of the State.
- Notify the Department of Administration, Division of Non-Public Education when closing the home school.

(Complying with NC Homeschool Law, n.d.)

### 8.1.2 Research Question: Is there a link between the home school sector and the public school sector? Do they work together to enhance the educational experience of home schooled students? What is the reality? Are cooperative policies put into practice?

The link between the home school sector and public school sector is virtually non-existent in North Carolina. The Division of Non-Public Education monitors home schools and provides information regarding policy and legal requirements, but does not provide any partnerships

between the public and home school sectors. It is possible for home school students to take Driver's Education courses at public schools and to participate in early college courses at public institutions, but these are not partnerships specifically designed for home school students; they are available for every student regardless of enrollment status. According to the Division of Non-Public Education, there is no current plan in place that aims to increase this partnership.

**8.1.3 Research Question:** What are the reasons that families choose to home school in North Carolina? What is the attitude of society toward home schooling as perceived by home school families?

A large majority (72.1%) of the participants in this study cited quality as the primary reason they chose to home school their children rather than sending them to a public or private school. A second factor is religion followed by politics, geography, finance, learning disability, and physical disability.

Nearly all of the participants (93.45%) feel that home schooling is either 'very accepted' (36.07%) or 'somewhat accepted' (57.38%) in their community.

## 8.2 Recommendations for Further Research

There are two areas of common home school research that this case study did not address: student achievement and socialization. Although research in these two areas is significant, it would be worthwhile to conduct research on these two topics in North Carolina specifically. Because quality is the primary reason that most parents in the state choose to home school, it would be particularly interesting to expand upon Brian Ray's existing study on student achievement (Ray, 2011a) in order to gauge if home schools are achieving their goal of providing a higher quality education. It would also be worthwhile to examine what home school parents perceive as quality, as this concept can be interpreted in many different ways.

A second recommendation for further research is centered on home school policy. The study shows that home school parents are seeking significant policy reform in the form of tax credits for education expenses, the ability to enroll their children in public school courses, and the opportunity to participate in public school extra-curricular activities. A study that examines

these proposals and their implementation in other home school systems would be a valuable contribution to the home school community, not only in North Carolina, but throughout the United States and perhaps worldwide.

In addition, this case study shows that a vast majority of home school parents in North Carolina have a four year college degree or higher. Because home based education can be categorized under the wider research area of school choice, this is a relevant finding. It supports other research that argues that parents with higher education are more often ‘choosers’ than parents with lower educational attainment.

### 8.3 Concluding Remarks

The aim of this case study was to investigate homeschooling policies that are currently in place in North Carolina. Home schooling legislation and reform was discussed in order to demonstrate the pathway to, and provide context for, the current regulations and legislation. The study provided documentary analysis to investigate the partnership between the public school sector and the home school sector and offered an alternative system for comparison (Alberta, Canada). The study utilized self completion questionnaires in order to determine the reasons that families choose to home school, the attitude toward home schooling as perceived by home school parents, and the opinions of home school parents about current and desired home school policy. The concepts of educational reform, school choice, and home based education were explained and their relevance displayed throughout the documentary analysis and study findings. Specifically, the study provides information in response to the following research questions:

- What are the policies regarding home schooling in North Carolina, United States?
- Is there a link between the home school sector and the public school sector? Do they work together to enhance the educational experience of home schooled students? What is the reality? Are cooperative policies put into practice?
- What are the reasons that families choose to home school in North Carolina? What is the attitude of society toward home schooling as perceived by home school families?

Educational reforms provide a glance into the goals, aims, and values of a particular society. It is clear from this case study of North Carolina's home education policies that study participants value choice and freedom within their right to home school rather than assistance and support from the State's department of education that would, perhaps, lead to more regulation.

In 2010, there were an estimated 2.04 million home schooled children in the United States (Ray, 2011b). Only ten years prior, that enrollment number was 791,000 (Bauman, 2001). The vast expansion of home schools as a recognized method of education has only gained momentum from the expansion of school choice. A large number of American parents are choosing to take full responsibility for their child's education by controlling curriculum, maintaining a desired classroom environment, and monitoring and adjusting the pace of learning to the individual needs of their child. Expanding knowledge of home schooling through research is vital in order to ensure quality, equality, and social understanding of home based education.

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# Appendix A

North Carolina Home School Parent Questionnaire	
General Information	
<b>1. What is your relationship with the home schooled students in the house?</b>	
<input type="radio"/> Mother	
<input type="radio"/> Father	
<input type="radio"/> Grandparent	
<input type="radio"/> Sibling	
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify)	
<input type="text"/>	
<b>2. How many years have you been home schooling?</b>	
<input type="radio"/> 0-2 years	
<input type="radio"/> 3-5 years	
<input type="radio"/> 6-8 years	
<input type="radio"/> 9-10 years	
<input type="radio"/> More than 10 years	
<b>3. How many children age 17 or younger live in your household?</b>	
<input type="text"/>	
<b>4. How many children in your household are currently home schooled?</b>	
<input type="text"/>	
<b>5. How many children have you home schooled previously who are not currently in home school? (due to graduation, completion, enrollment in other type of school, or other reasons)</b>	
<input type="text"/>	
<b>6. What are the current ages of your children who are in home school?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 0-4 years old	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5-8 years old	
<input type="checkbox"/> 9-12 years old	
<input type="checkbox"/> 13-15 years old	
<input type="checkbox"/> 16-18 years old	
Other (please specify)	
<input type="text"/>	

## North Carolina Home School Parent Questionnaire

### 7. Have your children always been home schooled or have they also participated in public/private school?

- ☐ My child(ren) has/have always been home schooled.
- ☐ My child(ren) was/were previously enrolled in public, private, or charter school.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

### 8. What is the highest grade or level of school that you have completed?

- ☐ 8th grade or less
- ☐ Some high school, but did not graduate
- ☐ High school graduate or GED
- ☐ Some college or 2-year degree
- ☐ 4-year college graduate
- ☐ More than 4-year college degree

### 9. Before home schooling, did you have experience working and/or studying in the field of education?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please explain.

## North Carolina Home School Parent Questionnaire

### Choosing to Home School

**10. Which of the following factors influenced your decision to home school your child (ren)? You may choose more than one response.**

- ☐ Geographical
- ☐ Quality
- ☐ Political
- ☐ Religious
- ☐ Financial
- ☐ Learning Disability
- ☐ Physical Disability

Other (please specify)

**11. Below is a list of commonly cited reason that parents choose to home school. Rank these in order of importance to you. 1 is most important and 7 is least important.**

- Geographical
- Quality
- Political
- Religious
- Financial
- Learning Disability
- Physical Disability

**12. Do you supplement your home schooling efforts outside of your home? For example, do you enroll your child in public/private school for certain courses, utilize online learning, do they attend courses within home school communities, or other external learning activities?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please explain.

## North Carolina Home School Parent Questionnaire

**13. Do you plan to home school your child through high school graduation?**

☐ Yes

☐ No



## North Carolina Home School Parent Questionnaire

**14. At what grade will you enroll your child(ren) in public/private school?**

**15. What type of school will you enroll your child(ren) in?**

- ☐ Public
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Charter

## North Carolina Home School Parent Questionnaire

### Attitudes Regarding Home Schooling in your Community

**16. Do you feel that home schooling is socially accepted by the general public in your community?**

Very accepted

☐

Somewhat accepted

☐

Neither accepted or  
unaccepted

☐

Somewhat unaccepted

☐

Not accepted at all

☐

Additional Comments (optional)

**17. In your opinion, does North Carolina encourage home schooling through legislation?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Additional Comments (optional)

**18. In your opinion, does North Carolina discourage home schooling through legislation?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Additional Comments (optional)

**19. Do the home schooling policies that are currently in place give you the support that you need as a home school parent?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Additional Comments (optional)

## North Carolina Home School Parent Questionnaire

### Support & Resources

**20. Do you have access to resources from the public school sector? For example, the ability to enroll your child in public school courses or to participate in public school activities.**

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please explain.

**21. Do you have access to support from local, state, or federal government? (financial assistance, classroom supplies, curriculum development assistance, teacher training, ability to enroll your child in courses outside of the home, etc.)**

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please explain.

**22. Are you a member of an online/web-based home school organization/group?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**23. Are you a member of a local home school organization/group?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

## North Carolina Home School Parent Questionnaire

### 24. What activities does this community organize?

- ☐ Courses that provide an opportunity for learning in a classroom setting
- ☐ Tutoring services (one-on-one)
- ☐ Tutoring services (group)
- ☐ Social activities for students
- ☐ Social activities for parents
- ☐ Fundraising activities
- ☐ Extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, language, crafts, etc.

Other (please specify)

### 25. What resources do they provide?

- ☐ Curriculum development
- ☐ Textbook selection
- ☐ Information on government regulations and policy changes
- ☐ Home school advocacy information
- ☐ Training in pedagogy/teaching methods
- ☐ Information on available external resources that are available to home school parents and students
- ☐ Financial assistance
- ☐ Classroom supplies
- ☐ Teaching materials

Other (please specify)

### 26. What other organizations do you receive resources and/or support from, if any?

- ☐ None
- ☐ I receive resources/support from the following organizations:

## Appendix B

### North Carolina Home School Director Questionnaire

#### General Information

**1. How many home schools are currently operating in North Carolina?**

**2. How many children in North Carolina are currently enrolled in a home school?**

**3. How many people employed by the State of North Carolina have responsibilities that include working with the home school sector on a full-time or part-time basis?**

**4. Which of the following services, if any, does North Carolina provide to home schools?**

- ☐ Financial assistance
- ☐ Classroom supplies (not including textbooks)
- ☐ Textbooks
- ☐ Pedagogical training
- ☐ Curriculum development assistance
- ☐ National and/or State testing materials
- ☐ Not Applicable
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**5. Which of the following, if any, does North Carolina provide to home school students?**

- ☐ Free access to courses in public schools
- ☐ Subsidized courses in private schools
- ☐ Free online learning courses
- ☐ Subsidized online learning courses
- ☐ Group tutoring services
- ☐ Individual tutoring services
- ☐ Not Applicable
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## North Carolina Home School Director Questionnaire

### 6. Do you perform regular audits of home schools in North Carolina?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please explain how often each home school is audited. If no, please explain why audits are not performed.

## North Carolina Home School Director Questionnaire

### Attitudes Regarding Home Schooling in your Community

#### 7. In your personal opinion, how is home schooling perceived by the general public in North Carolina?

Very acceptable

☐

Somewhat acceptable

☐

Neither acceptable or  
unacceptable

☐

Somewhat unacceptable

☐

Not acceptable at all

☐

Additional Comments (optional)

## North Carolina Home School Director Questionnaire

### Home School Policy

**8. In your personal opinion, does North Carolina encourage home schooling through legislation?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Additional Comments

**9. In your personal opinion, does North Carolina discourage home schooling through legislation?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Additional Comments

**10. In your personal opinion, do the home schooling policies that are currently in place give adequate support to home schools in North Carolina?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Additional Comments

**11. Are there active efforts in North Carolina to create partnerships between the home school sector and the public school sector?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain.

**12. What are the strengths of the current home school policies in North Carolina?**

**13. What are the weaknesses of the current home school policies in North Carolina?**



## North Carolina Home School Director Questionnaire

**14. Are there any policy reform efforts currently ongoing in North Carolina regarding the home school sector? If so, please explain.**

**15. Please use this space to add comments and/or questions that were not covered in this questionnaire.**

## Appendix C

Table C.1 Home school student age distribution

Age Ranges		Responses
0-4	years old	30
5-8	years old	68
9-12	years old	71
13-15	years old	42
16-18	years old	19

Table C.2 Educational attainment of home school parents

Response Options	Response Percent	Response Count
8th grade or less	1.6%	2
Some high school, but did not graduate	3.2%	4
High school graduate or GED	0.8%	1
Some college or 2-year degree	20.8%	26
4-year college graduate	26.4%	33
More than 4-year college degree	47.2%	59

Table C.3 Frequency of quality as a factor in decision making compared to educational experience

	Geographical	Quality	Political	Religious	Financial	Learning Disability	Physical Disability	Total Respondents
Educational Experience	5.22%	37.31%	9.70%	22.39%	8.21%	14.18%	2.99%	
	7	50	13	30	11	19	4	134
No Educational Experience	2.59%	54.31%	6.90%	24.14%	4.31%	4.31%	3.45%	
	3	63	8	28	5	5	4	116

Table C.4 Ranking of quality as a factor in decision making compared to educational experience

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Educational Experience	66.07%	23.21%	8.93%	1.79%	0%	0%	0%	56
	37	13	5	1	0	0	0	
No Educational Experience	77.27%	13.64%	9.09%	0%	0%	0%	0%	66
	51	9	6	0	0	0	0	